



Toulouse Area

POP 1.8M

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Michel Sarran (p701)
- ➔ Le Genty-Magre (p701)
- ➔ L'Epicurien (p707)
- ➔ La Table des Cordeliers (p711)
- ➔ Les Boissières (p708)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel St-Sernin (p699)
- ➔ Côté Carmes (p699)
- ➔ La Tour Ste-Cécile (p706)
- ➔ Au Chateau (p708)
- ➔ Les Bruhasses (p712)

Why Go?

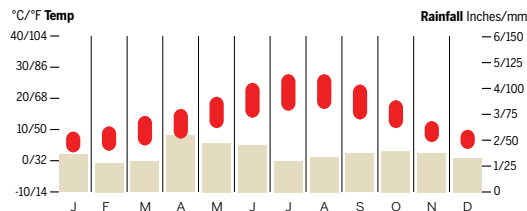
Rich food, good wine and slow living: that's what this sun-baked corner of southwest France is all about. Traditionally part of the Languedoc, the red-brick city of Toulouse and the surrounding area has been out on its own since World War II, but scratch beneath the surface and you'll discover the same old southern passions.

The capital city makes the perfect introduction: with its buzzy markets, stately architecture, crackling culture and renowned rugby team, Toulouse is one of France's liveliest provincial cities. Beyond the fringes of La Ville Rose lies a landscape dotted with sturdy *bastides* (fortified towns), soaring cathedrals and country markets, not to mention the historic province of Gascony, famous for its foie gras, fattened ducks and fiery Armagnac. And through it all runs the Canal du Midi, the undisputed queen of French canals.

Take things slow: life in this corner of France is all about the living.

When to Go

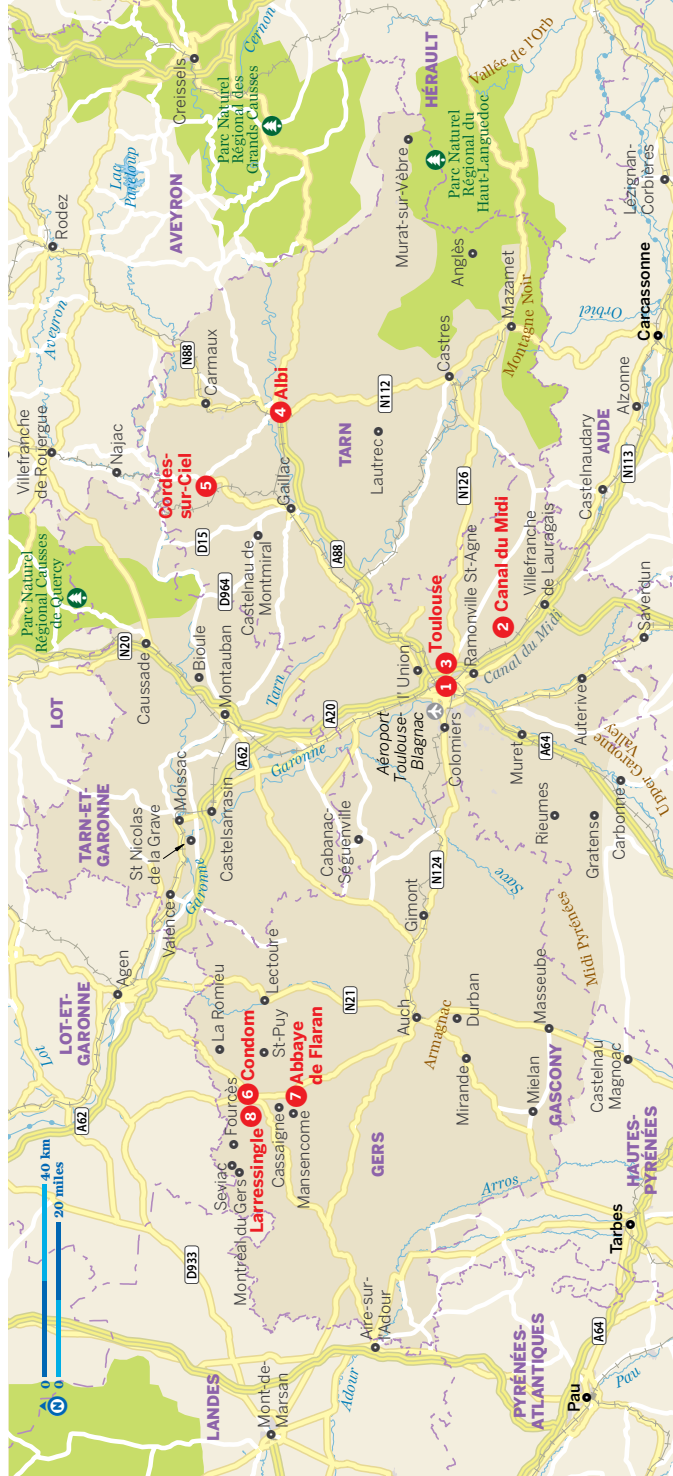
Toulouse



Feb Costumes and street parades announce the arrival of spring during Albi's Carnival.

July Cordes-sur-Ciel goes medieval during the Fêtes Médiévales du Grand Fauconnier.

Aug Harvest time brings a wine festival to Gaillac and a pink garlic festival to Lautrec.



Toulouse Area Highlights

- 1 Savouring the flavours of the southwest at one of Toulouse's fantastic **covered markets** (p702)
- 2 Catching a slow-boat or cycling the tow-paths of the stately **Canal du Midi** (p711)
- 3 Climbing inside a replica of the Mir Space Station at Toulouse's **Cité de l'Espace** (p695)
- 4 Marvelling at Albi's mighty medieval cathedral-cum-castle, the **Cathédrale Ste-Cécile** (p703)
- 5 Wandering the cobbled lanes of the beautiful hilltop bastide of **Cordes-sur-Ciel** (p706)
- 6 Sampling some brandy from the barrel at a traditional **Armagnac distillery** (p710)
- 7 Enjoying the silence of the **Abbaye de Flaran** (p712), southwest France's loveliest Cistercian abbey
- 8 Watching medieval catapults in action at the fortified village of **Larressingle** (p711)