

## NEARBY



### \* Fort Saint-Roch

This *Maginot* line work of 4 blocks has a big artillery block. The fort protected the Sospel- Breil railway and the Agaisen fort on the north. It's been fitted for 220 soldiers, who were able, in case of conflict, to live underground in self-sufficiency during 3 months.

Nowadays it's a museum.

**Opening times :** weekends from April to June and September. Every day except Monday from 2 to 6 pm in July and August

**Entrance Fees :** 3 € children, 5 € adults, 4 € groups (+ de 15 pers.)

☎ 04 93 04 15 8



### \* Fort Barbonnet

This fort's construction started in 1883 and overlooks Sospel at 850 m high. This *Séré de Rivières* style work controlled the gap of Sospel, one of the main invasion corridors in the region.

With its two Mougins gun-turrets called *Jeanne d'Arc* and *Bayard*, it secured the area and became one of the three more armoured works in France.

**Opening times :** guided tours on Tuesday and Saturday in July and August at 3 pm.

**Entrance Fees :** children(6-13) 3 €, adults 4 €, groups 4 €

☎ 04 93 04 14 29 ou 06 85 96 72 88



### \* Fort de l'Agaisen

This location was chosen in 1929 in order to build a mixed work. The building and inner equipment staggered up to 1939. Nowadays an association takes care of it, you can visit the machinery which is still in working condition.

**Opening times :** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in July and August.

Guided tours at 10.30 am, 2.30 pm, 4.30 pm for individuals and groups.

**Entrance Fees :** 6€ ☎ 04.93.89.10.58 - [www.agaisen.org](http://www.agaisen.org)



## WORTH SEEING



### \* Les chapelles rurales

Around Sospel a lot of oratories and chapels as Saint-Sébastien, Saint-Roch, Saint-Antoine... mark out the footpaths.

A ceremony on their holy day still takes place in some of them.



### \* Le quartier Saint-Gervais

The chapel of the priory, still visible, might have been built by the Templars in 1180 and used up to early 14<sup>th</sup> century. The building has been used for different purposes since then. Nowadays it is private.



### \* L'ancien Hôtel du Golf

This stately building used to be a luxury hotel built around 1913 by *H-G Tersling*, one of the most famous architects of the Riviera during « *La Belle Epoque* ». Originally, it's the additional part of a golf which stretched as far as the Bévéra banks.



### \* Moulinet

Moulinet, a small village, 13 km away on the way to the Col of Turini, is an interesting stopover, famous with its cold rooms and the vertiginous sanctuary of *Notre-Dame de la Menour* overlooking the Bévéra gorge.



Les Vallées Roya Bévéra appartiennent au réseau national du Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication des Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire

### A proximité

Arles, Briançon, Fréjus, Grasse, Hyères, Martigues, Menton, Carpentras et le Comtat Venaissin, la Provence Verte et le Pays Serre-Ponçon Ubaye Durance bénéficient de l'appellation Ville et Pays d'art et d'histoire.

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## INFORMATION

### Office de Tourisme

[www.sospel-tourisme.com](http://www.sospel-tourisme.com) | ☎ 04 93 04 15 80

♦ **Guided tours :** city, cathedral and White Penitents chapel, all year long from Tuesday to Saturday at 2.30 pm (mini. 6 pers.). **Meeting point :** Tourist Office | **Fee :** 5 €

## ACTIVITES CULTURELLES

- ♦ Festival « **Les BaroQuiales** » beginning of July
- ♦ Festival de cinéma end of august
- ♦ Fête Agricole mid-september
- ♦ Gastronomy festival in autumn
- ♦ Exhibitions
- ♦ Multimedia library



*Sospello*, extrait du *Theatrum Sabaudiae*, 1682]

## A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY...

The valley was occupied by shepherds who inhabited the Albaréa cave 3000 years before our era.

Ligurians, who built « *castellaras* » on the tops, were romanized by emperor August in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. After parting from Ventimiglia County (1258), Sospel becomes a territory of the counts of Provence in the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century, then in 1388, it integrated the House of Savoy. In the Middle Ages the city was very busy and developed, thanks to the mule track of salt.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the construction of the « *Real Strada* » under *Charles-Emmanuel* duke of Savoy, Sospel is embellished by prestigious baroque style buildings.

The city becomes finally French in 1860. In 1928, the Nice-Cuneo railway arouses big expectations but the evacuation of the population in 1940 then the bombings in 1944 intensified the rural exodus.

## ... URBAN DESIGN

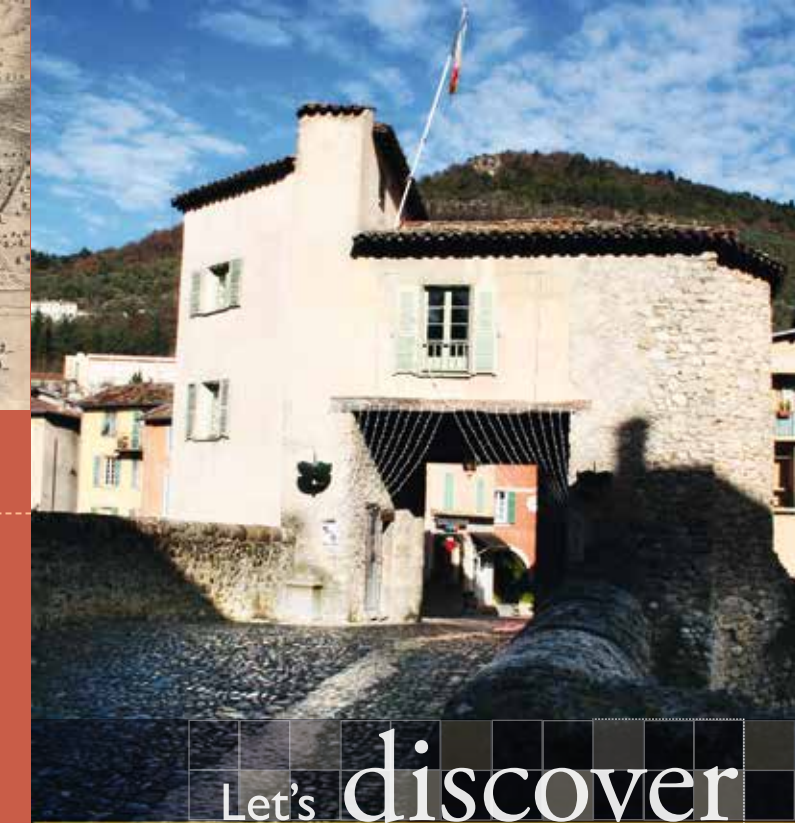


Sospel is an amazing example of the late middle ages urban design which developed in the valleys,

around the link formed by the Bévéra and protected by a belt of hills.

Small areas and narrow streets testify of the medieval past. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the town development increases. The *rue Saint-Pierre* which leads to the place Saint-Michel welcomes the visitor in a baroque setting where religious and civil building facades turn into a theatre set.

• crédits photos | ADTRB, Michèle ROUGIER, Nicole Alumi



Let's discover  
**Sospel**

## 1 Place des Platanes



On this marketplace (market on every Thursday morning) used to be standing St Pierre Church, erected in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, fortified in the 17<sup>th</sup>, it was completely destroyed at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some remains of columns and capitals of the 15<sup>th</sup> century can still be seen here and there on the square, a few capitals are exhibited above St Pierre fountain.

## 2 Le Pont-Vieux



This bridge over the Bévéra river has been attested on the road between Nice and the Piedmont as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Partly rebuilt in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, only the lower part of the pile remains from medieval age. The watchtower was inhabited and housed a shop until 1960. The two arches were destroyed by the Germans in October 1944 and then rebuilt faithfully to the original in 1951.

## 3 Place Saint-Nicolas



It was also called Place du Saint- Esprit during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the central building, which formerly belonged to the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit, the governor of Sospel held his meetings. On the ground floor, the loggia was used for the gatherings of the Parliament of men of Sospel. In 1793 this building became the Town Hall. The sculpture of the Paschal Lamb embodies the divine protection. The fountain dates back to 1788.

## 5 Sainte-Croix



The Chapel Sainte-Croix of the White Penitents was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century on the site of a romanesque church dedicated to St Nicholas. The triangular bell-tower illustrates baroque theatricality. Inside a large liturgical furniture belonging to the penitents is preserved : lanterns, banners, procession crosses, cartelami, a recumbent figure and a baroque style « *trompe l'œil* » scenery.

## 6 Place Garibaldi



On this square up to the Middle Ages took place fairs and markets when animal rearing and agriculture were the main sources of Sospel economy. L'octroi, contribution indirecte perçue par les municipalités sur les marchandises importées sur le territoire, était perçu ici au XIX<sup>e</sup> s.

## 7 Place de la Cabraïa



This fountain had two functions : the lower part was used to water the cattle, the upper part for household needs. Salt warehouses on the mule track used to be in the vicinities. The name cabraïa is the local dialect for herd of goats. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the goats used to be gathered there before being led to pasture.

## 8 Place Saint-Michel



This magnificent display of baroque architecture is overlooked by the huge facade of the church topped by a triangular pediment. The winding steps lead down to the square which is cobbled with white and grey stones. On the south stand the Grey and Red Penitents chapels. The 13<sup>th</sup> century Lombard bell tower is the only remaining part of the former Romanesque church erected before the baroque style reconstruction. This urban setting is completed by the Palais Ricci des Ferres on which is affixed a plaque commemorating the fleeting visit of Pope Pius VII on 10<sup>th</sup> of August 1809.

## 9 Cathédrale Saint-Michel



Rebuilt in baroque style in 1641, the facade and the choir were modified in 1762. The bishop's seat attests the Great Schism era when Sospel was raised to the status of Diocese (end of 14<sup>th</sup> century). In the Chapel on the left of the choir, the altar piece of the Immaculate Virgin by François Bréa is a Renaissance masterpiece. Opposite a Pieta from the 15<sup>th</sup> century is one of the oldest depiction of penitents. Above the main entrance, the tribune holds the organ built in 1843 by the Agati Brothers, famous Italian organ builders.

## 10 Place du château



On this area, you can see a loopholed tower built by the Counts of Provence in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the walls which surrounded the city at this era. Nearby the washing place, you can remark the only gate preserved. Towards the west you perceive the ruins of the old convent of the Discalced Carmelite (18<sup>th</sup> century).

## 11 Rue Saint-Pierre



Formerly known as « *carriera dretcha* », this street displays several old family coats of arms on lintels. Here is the former « Palais de la Viguerie » which housed the administrative centre of the Counts of Provence in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This building in cut-stones owns a Renaissance window, carved cornices and the signature of its builder.

## 12 Rue du Pont Vieux

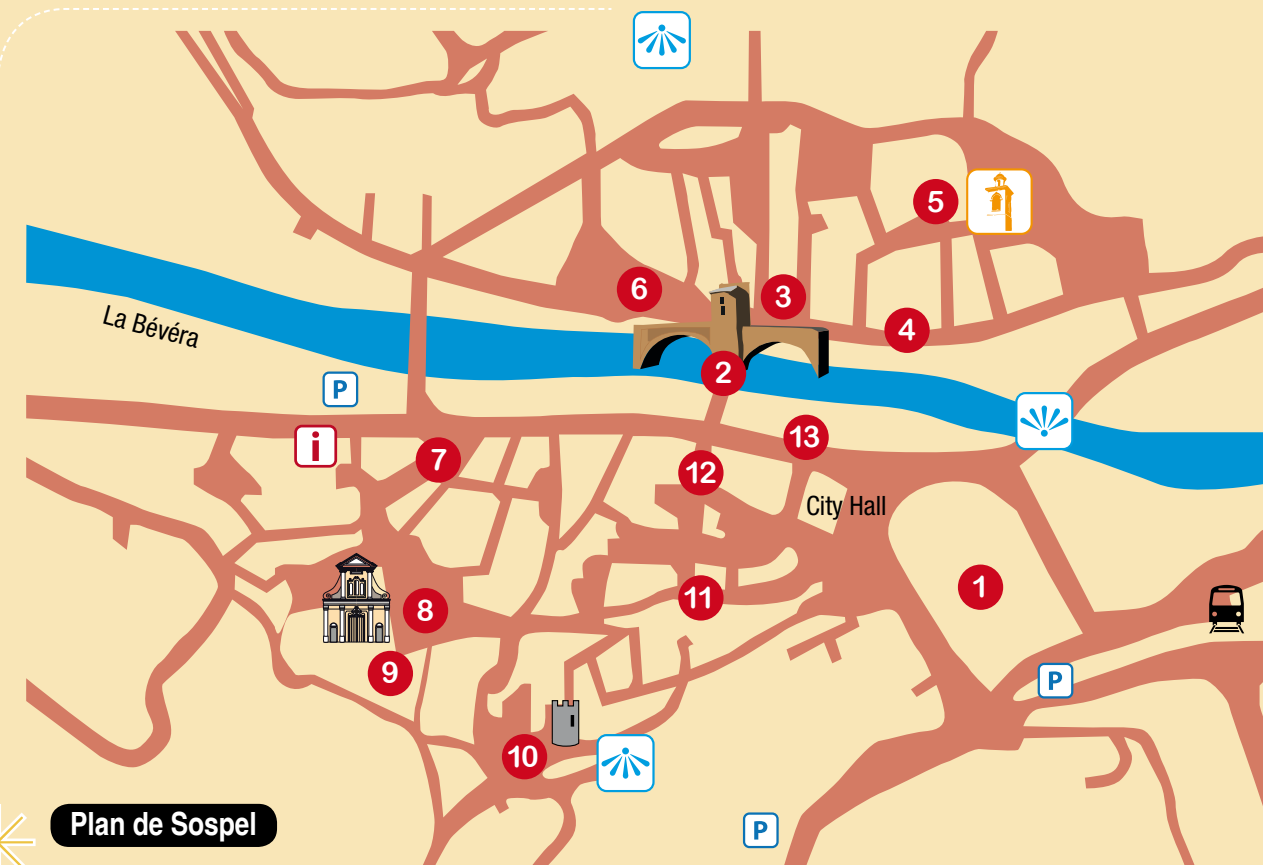


In the middle of this street stands the Place Pastoris where you can observe a nice framework of a boss carved door. This narrow street links the centre to the bridge. On one of the facades you can notice a mullioned window and around it some carved lozenges which probably were painted in bright colours in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

## 13 Banks of the Bévéra



Houses display « *trompe l'œil* » facades with rich decoration painted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This settings painted by Italian craftsmen were less expensive than sculpted facades. Most of them were restored in the nineties by G. Ceppa.



Walk around Sospel... « *Surrounded by mountains, a greenery setting around a river..* »