A LIVING SYMBOL OF HISTORY

PRESS KIT

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WORLD HERITAGE & GRAND SITE DE FRANCE®

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THE PONT DU GARD

WORLD HERITAGE WITHIN THE NATURAL SETTING OF A GRAND SITE DE FRANCE

One of the most beautiful monuments in the world is located in France, in the Gard, 20km from Avignon and 23km from Nîmes.

The Pont du Gard is the highest aqueduct built in the Roman empire 2000 years ago. Because of its historical value and exceptional condition it has been inscribed in the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage Site list since 1985.

**Built in only 5 years,** this human masterpiece of colossal dimensions and unique architecture enabled the inhabitants of Nîmes to have running water for close to 5 centuries, making Nemausus an immensely influential and prestigious city throughout the south of France.

The Pont du Gard is a quiet and restful place whose history dates as far back as Prehistoric times. The stone giant (360m long, 50m high and on three levels) is set against a verdant backdrop classified as a « Grand Site de France® » since 2004.

After first marvelling at the site's captivating beauty, visitors can satisfy their curiosity by learning about the technical prowess behind its construction as well as exploring the Roman civilisation that built it.

There are several interior and open-air areas to discover that recount the history of the monument, of Roman aqueducts and of the area when it was built over 2000 years ago.

Visits to the monument, guided tours, outdoor walks and picnics along the water's edge are only some of the activities that everyone can enjoy at their own pace.

The Pont du Gard, with its ideal location bordering the Mediterranean, is an exceptional destination for tourists in the south of France. Only an hour from the sea, 1hr 30 from Marseille, 21km from Avignon and 23km from Nîmes (2 hrs 50 from Paris by train), the area benefits from the outdoor lifestyle so typical of the south and this region, infusing its delicious cuisine with the colours and smells of vines, olives, thyme and rosemary ...
The Pont du Gard, master of all it surrounds

A unique monument, the Pont du Gard is the main component of an ancient aqueduct built by the Romans around the year 50 CE in order to bring running water in large quantities to the city of Nîmes.

Water was collected from the source of the Eure, at the foot of the town of Uzès. It used a 50km-long canal with an average gradient of 24cm per km, using the natural topography to flow as far as Nîmes.

Originally 48m high and 490m long, the bridge possesses a central arch extending 24.5m across the Gardon, making it one of the biggest arches to be built anywhere in those times. Formed by three bridges, one on top of the other, composed of 6, 11 and 35 arches respectively, this masterpiece demonstrates the outstanding technical expertise of Roman engineering.

There are several remains along the route of the aqueduct of which the Pont du Gard - which is almost intact - is the most prestigious.

In 1840, the Pont du Gard appears on the first list of classified French historical monuments drawn up by Prosper Mérimée.

In 1985, it was awarded the status of World Heritage Site by UNESCO as a mark of a masterpiece of human creative genius, similar to the Great Wall of China or the Taj Mahal.

Admired by visitors from all around the world, the Pont du Gard is set within a beautiful, authentically Mediterranean natural landscape, itself afforded special protection by the French law of 1930.
• **Water, stone and sunshine : Set within 165 ha of natural landscape**

A long history connects humankind with nature at the site of the Pont du Gard. In other eras a fertile ground for populations who lived from hunting, fishing and gathering, whose traces have been found in the excavations of the prehistoric caves, the landscape around the aqueduct has since been shaped by man.

• **A vibrant Mediterranean landscape**

The proximity of the river (Gardon), lends to the presence of specific fauna that often come here to reproduce. Beavers and kingfishers are only two of these. Some visitors will be lucky enough to witness the flight of Bonelli’s Eagles criss-crossing the gorges of the Gardon.

The labyrinths carved along the subterranean streams house several species of bats. A number of different species live, reproduce and hibernate here. The European free-tailed bat, found in the cracks of the Pont du Gard, is one of the largest chiropters in Europe.

High and low-lying garrigue, holly oaks, pistachios, oaks, rosemary and thyme are the main natural features of the area.

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**The Pont du Gard, Grand Site de France® label**

The Pont du Gard was the first French site to receive the label of ‘Grand Site de France®’ in 2004, awarded by the Ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development. This label will be renewed in 2010. This recognition certifies the quality and sustainable development approach undertaken by the public authorities to combine tourism, local life and the protection of nature. There are now 10 sites in France with this prestigious label.
The site’s layout offers permanent Discovery Areas, the most recent of which, « Mémoires de Garrigue », was opened to the public in spring 2003.

The main themes developed and presented in the Discovery Areas take a look at:

- The Roman way of life
- The management of water
- The history of the ancient aqueduct of Nîmes
- The construction of the Pont du Gard
- The ancient quarry and its techniques, the stone work
- The archaeology
- The observation of the nature
- The Mediterranean landscape

Cultural Areas

Mémoires de Garrigue

Ludo

Cinema

Museum

Temporary Exhibitions

An outdoor discovery trail through a rediscovered Mediterranean landscape.

The history of the aqueduct from Uzès to Nîmes and the Roman civilisation of towns and water.

An activity area for children aged from 5 to 12 years.

The most beautiful images of the Pont du Gard.

Artistic exhibitions or scientist culture in connection with the themes of the site.
Visitors to the Pont du Gard can now delve deep into Roman history in the Museum that tells the story of the Roman aqueduct in Nîmes and the Pont du Gard by way of a 2400 m² multimedia route.

The full range of museum exhibits is used to tell this epic: scale reproductions, models, experiments, artefacts, maps, image shows, multi-screen displays, films, sound theatre and more.

The Museum invites you to discover a work of art, the construction of which in the 1st century CE, bears witness to the remarkable technical and architectural abilities of the town and river civilisation with its multiple and sophisticated skills.

You can take three routes around this journey of discovery:

• the town and river's Gallo-Roman civilisation, the why and wherefore of such a feat of engineering: the power of water and power over water, water: the ultimate symbol of the town, the town's civilisation seen through the uses of water;

• the Pont du Gard building site: the project, the trades, the materials, the layout, the stone masonry, the route of the aqueduct, the operation;

• the Pont du Gard through the ages and its representations.

Practical information:

Duration: From 1hr to 3hr

Multiple languages: French, English, German, Spanish

Location: Left inside bank of the river
• **LUDO, for children from 5 to 12**

  **Ludo** is a 600 m² universe of fun and learning for children from 5 to 12. Young visitors can take part in several discoveries and learning games. In this space, the child determines their own visit, touching, experimenting and discovering. The perfect area for fun learning.

  **There are four themes developed in this space:**
  - **time travel**: through role-playing games, a child can become a Gallo-Roman schoolchild, a vegetable seller or a water carrier, acting just like the Gallo-Romans at the time.
  - **Taming the waters**: water has always been an essential element for life. Here children use experiments to learn to master the water and perceive the difficulties encountered during the design and construction of hydraulic works such as an aqueduct;
  - **Finding the traces of the past**: the child becomes an archaeologist, prospecting, searching and studying the traces of the past;
  - **Observing nature**: learning to recognise and respect the environment, discovering the real inhabitants of the site: vegetables, animals.

  Ludo is also ideal for schoolchildren and their teachers during the school year for excursions and discovery lessons.

  **Practical information:**
  - **Duration**: 50 mins for school groups, unlimited for families
  - **Multiple languages**: French, English, German, Spanish
  - **Location**: Inner left bank

• **CINEMA, discovering the Pont du Gard from new angles**

  In a room with 300 places, 6 of which are reserved for disabled persons, a documentary projected on a 45 m² large screen in Dolby Stereo provides the most important information for gaining an insight into the Pont du Gard with beautiful images of the monument.

  **Practical information:**
  - **Duration**: sessions alternate between the French and English versions
  - **Location**: Inner left bank
  - **Sessions**: Every day

• **“MÉMOIRES DE GARRIGUE”, explore the heart of Mediterranean nature**

  An open-air exhibition and a voyage through the agricultural history, local territory and remains of the Roman aqueduct. Through 15 hectares of restored agricultural plots, “Mémoires de Garrigue” is a 1.4km round trip that reveals the secrets of the Mediterranean landscape. An accompanying booklet complements the visit, acting as a guide and offering mine of information on the garrigue, its agriculture, its typical climate and the evolution of the surrounding landscapes.

  **Practical information:**
  - **Multiple languages**: French, English, German
  - **Location**: Outer left bank
  - **Duration**: From 1hr to 3hrs
HISTORY ROUTES THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE

• The vestiges of the ancient aqueduct of Nîmes

The Pont du Gard constitutes the most prestigious vestige of the ancient aqueduct at Nîmes but is certainly not the only one. The 50km aqueduct is lined with bridges, culverts and tunnels required for negotiating the mountainous terrain of Uzès to Nîmes.

On the site, several of these are accessible through signposted routes. (See plan) Visitors can therefore hike through a site that is fully pedestrianised and rehabilitated, which features over 7km of walks and paths to discover the remains of the aqueduct and its landscape.

• On the top of the aqueduct

Since being restored and made safe, the channel of the aqueduct located on the 3rd level of the bridge at 48m is now open to the public. It can be crossed accompanied by a guide. Understanding the flow, the build, and the watertightness of the water route is now possible.

Several guided tours are organised for the public in the summer, and all year round for groups.
A LEISURE AND RELAXATION DESTINATION

In addition to discovering the monument and the new cultural spaces, visitors can enjoy the countryside and the garrigue at the water’s edge with picnics, hiking, canoeing, swimming and walks ...

Bask in the Mediterranean sun in the shade of the trees and at the water’s edge:

- **The « River Rendez-vous » from mid-June to mid-August**

  For those who love riverside relaxation, at 30 m from the Pont du Gard, beaches have been set up along the Gardon with the temporary installation of 60 shaded wooden rafts for visitors to the site.

- **Restaurants**

  The restaurant « Les Terrasses » offers the opportunity to savour a cuisine inspired by Mediterranean flavours, created by a top chef, with an exceptional view of the monument.

  **Snacks**: there are also restaurants suitable for families offering snacks and sandwiches on both banks of the river. Ice-creams and cold drinks are available in the summer months.

  At the left bank, a shady terrace in the grounds of an old 19th century windmill gives visitors the opportunity to relax in an authentic and magical atmosphere.

- **Souvenirs, art, bookshop and local flavours**

  To complement the visit, souvenirs of the site or the South of France can be purchased in the visitors’ shops on both banks of the river. The local cuisine and regional flavours are also represented. Those who love the south can find honey, olive oil and wines, alongside an array of salted and sweet delicacies. In addition, ceramic, porcelain, glassware and accessories illustrate the region’s arts and crafts.

- **Additional services**

  The site offers the public all the services required for complete relaxation during their visit, such as supervised parking spaces, toilets, wheelchairs, first aid room, cashpoints and letterboxes... The site is multilingual and accessible to persons with disabilities.
THE SITE’S ANNUAL EVENTS

Events form an essential part of the Pont du Gard. The aim of the events programme is to bring the site to life as a living and creative symbol of the past.

Throughout the year, there are a variety of cultural events such as:

• **« Garrigue en fête » in April**
  The quintessential spring country event
  A few steps from the bridge, in the « MÉMOIRES DE GARRIGUE » nature area, a country fête invites all visitors, kids and adults alike, to convene and celebrate the return of Spring. Nature workshops, food-tastings, and artists (street theatre, music and circus) add charm to the countryside, forests and fields of the « MÉMOIRES DE GARRIGUE ».

• **Summer at the Pont du Gard**
  From June to August
  Every year, the Pont du Gard invites artists from around the world to perform at the foot of the monument during summer (Carl Cox, De La Soul ...) Since 2011, a festival of contemporary music called « LIVES AU PONT » attracts more than 20,000 people every year with its high-quality programme.

• **Architectural illumination**
  All summer
  Every summer, at nightfall, the monument is bathed in a thousand lights to offer visitors a moment of magic and contemplation in the evenings. An incredible show of lights and colour.

The aims of the cultural programme and the artistic events are:

• To provide unique events in an exceptional site
• A show of eclecticism that reflects the diversity of the public that visits the site
• To provide these at accessible prices
• Universality reflecting a monument belonging to the world’s heritage

• **Temporary science or art exhibitions**
  The public organisation behind the Pont du Gard produces or co-produces temporary exhibitions linked to the themes of the site (water, man, and stone in a Mediterranean environment) as part of its cultural programme. The temporary exhibitions are accompanied by a full programme of performances and activities such as conferences, meetings, and films projected in the workshops.
• Adults
A reservations system dedicated to welcoming international visitors to major sites enables thousands of groups from around the world to come each year and visit this World Heritage site. The professional staff gives advice and devises formulas tailored to the needs of tourism professionals. Several formulas are proposed so that all requests can be met and visitors can discover this world-famous monument in the best way possible.

• A real destination for young and school
A genuine site for discovery and learning, the area is ideal for enjoyment and relaxation, whilst discovering and learning new things. These are the guidelines suggested by the education department within school or extracurricular activities. From a simple school trip to the design of a long-term project, teachers can benefit from a range of formulas to enrich the visit. This tailored programme is based on the diversity of the themes available on site and their learning potential, from history to the environment and from archaeology to Roman civilisation.

• Business travel / Seminars and Congresses
The Pont du Gard site offers companies all the equipment and facilities necessary for organising their gatherings—from congresses and conventions to AGMs, seminars or incentives - within a prestigious and unique location. The Congress Centre welcomes companies throughout the year from France and abroad. Auditoriums (300 places with integrated production room), meeting rooms equipped with plasma screens, plenary conference rooms, sub-contractors, and restaurants have already played host to several hundred important events.

Facing the monument, the fully renovated restaurant ‘Les Terrasses’, has a capacity of up to 400 guests, including 220 inside places.

**Practical information:**

Group reservation service : +33 (0)4 66 37 50 14

Business travel : Estelle SABATIER / +33 (0)4 66 37 51 10

Additional services for groups :

• Free meals for drivers (on presentation of group reservation receipt)
• Personalised welcome and fast-track entry for groups
The Pont du Gard

A pinnacle of excellence and an ambassador for the territory

The site enjoys increasing success year on year and has become an important stopping off point for tourists and for all who love studying Roman culture. In order to enable us to understand the mechanisms of how an area becomes a must-see, Mr Paolo Toeschi, the General Director of the site explains how to make a spot built in 50 CE come alive, whilst at the same time preserving it!

- Discovering one of France’s most visited heritage and cultural sites

The Pont du Gard site is the most emblematic site in the department of the Gard and the region of Languedoc-Roussillon. Since the major renovation works in 2000 carried out by the Council, this major historic site has had a facelift. Rid of traffic, it has now become a protected site as a result of local development policy. This site is so unique within its region that it was awarded World Heritage Site status by the UNESCO in 1985 and labelled a Grand Site de France in 2004 (renewed in 2010). This distinction is one that only two sites (in Languedoc-Roussillon) possess in France and one that makes the highest Roman aqueduct in the world an must-see destination for tourists. For three years we have seen a marked increase in the number of visitors, which can be explained by the policy of continuous improvement of the site, based on offering a new cultural experience to provide a more profound knowledge of the area. Visitors to the Pont du Gard are given a real insight into the place thanks to the largest interpretive centre in France, covering the creative genius of Roman times with models, virtual reconstructions and soundscapes but also a play centre, a cinema and much more. These are all assets that add value to the place whilst respecting it, at the same time giving it a modern perspective.

- A site with a healthy economy

Set against the backdrop of an international crisis, the Pont du Gard site is witnessing significant growth. 103 employees work in the establishment, and the site supports 1,600 jobs in the region, from those in hotels and restaurants to associated tourism jobs ... We have doubled our income in three years and we generate €160m of economic benefits for the region each year. Because we promote social cohesion and provide a window to our territory, we add value to the products and knowledge of the region. Within this context we have undertaken the representation of all « South of France » branded products and have created our own brand in parallel (« Pont du Gard ») to integrate this unique site even more within a department and region for which the past is the future at present.
General Information

Opening times of the site:
7 days a week all year round
Opening times of the discovery areas: all year round.
The site is multilingual: French, english, german, spanish.

Opening times:
Opening times of the Discovery Areas and the shops:
- July, August: from 9 am to 8 pm
- May, June, September: from 9 am to 7 pm
- March, April, October: from 9 am to 6 pm
- From November to the end of February: from 9 am to 5 pm

Parking:
Shaded supervised parking areas for buses and cars at
500 m from the Pont du Gard on the left bank (800 places)
and on the right bank (600 places).
From 7 am to 1 am.

Visitor services and reception:
Meeting point with information at the entrance to the
building on the left bank.
Visioguides available in French, english, german, spanish,
italian, dutch, chinese and Japanese.
Toilets, facilities for people with reduced mobility, ticket
sales, first aid room.

Shops:
Shops on the left bank and the right bank: cuisine
celebrating regional flavours, tableware, scents, leisure,
bookshop, souvenirs.

Refreshments:
There is a fast food area on the left bank and an open-air
café all year round. A traditional Mediterranean restaurant
can be found on the right bank.
Group reservations telephone: + 33 (0)4 66 37 51 10
« Les Terrasses » restaurant (individual visitors):
+ 33 (0)4 66 63 91 37

Recommendations:
For your comfort during summer open-air events, we
recommend you bring a hat, sunglasses, cushions,
tablecloths, napkins, etc...

- Adress:

- Location / Access:
The Pont du Gard site is located between Remoulins (RN100) and Vers-Pont du Gard (D 81).
There are two entrances: left bank (Vers-Pont-du-Gard) or right bank (Remoulins)
Nîmes : 27km, Avignon : 21km
These towns can be accessed by national and international airlines and train routes. Train: Paris-Nîmes - 2hrs 50 mins

- Information or reservations:
PUBLIC helpline: + 33 (0)4 66 37 50 99
School/Adult groups: + 33 (0)4 66 37 50 55
Tourism professionals - Business travels: + 33 (0)4 66 37 50 55
Tourism professionals: + 33 (0)4 66 37 50 24
Reservation - « Les Terrasses » Restaurant: + 33 (0)4 66 63 91 37
Sales: commercial@pontdugard.fr
Information: contact@pontdugard.fr

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