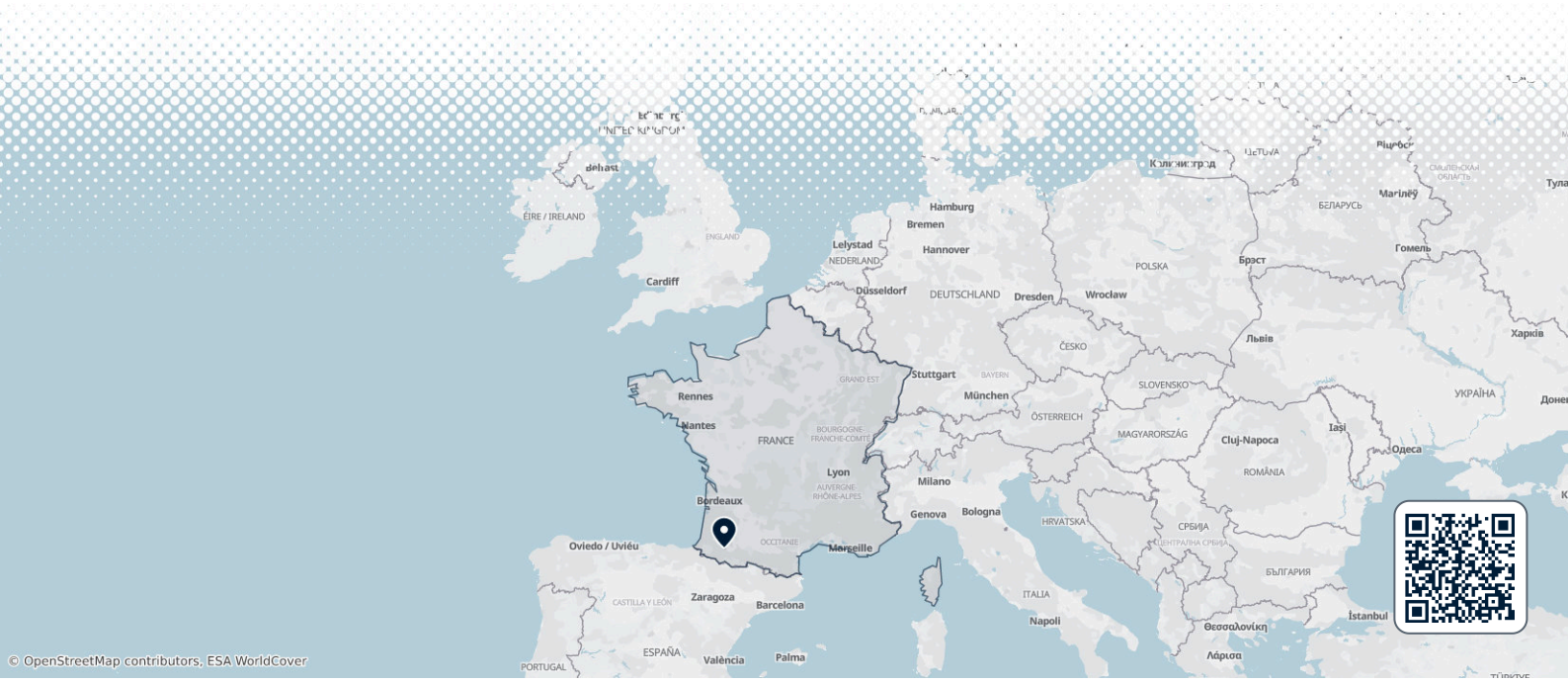


Pau

New Aquitaine · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Pau is a city of about 80,000 people in south-west France, at the foot of the Pyrenees. It is known for its long mountain views, its castle and its calm, green center. *Henri IV*, who became king of France, was born here in 1553. Many English visitors came in the 19th century for the mild climate, and some of that history is still visible today.

The center is compact and easy to see on foot in one or two days. Pau also works well as a base for the Pyrenees, with villages, ski resorts and hiking trails within about an hour or so by car. It suits travelers who want a quiet city stay with easy access to the mountains and the Basque coast.

When to visit

June and September are the best months for a city visit, with warm days and clear mountain views. May and October are also pleasant but can be wet. Summer is warm and often busy with open-air events. Winters are mild and grey, and the nearby ski resorts open in the mountains.

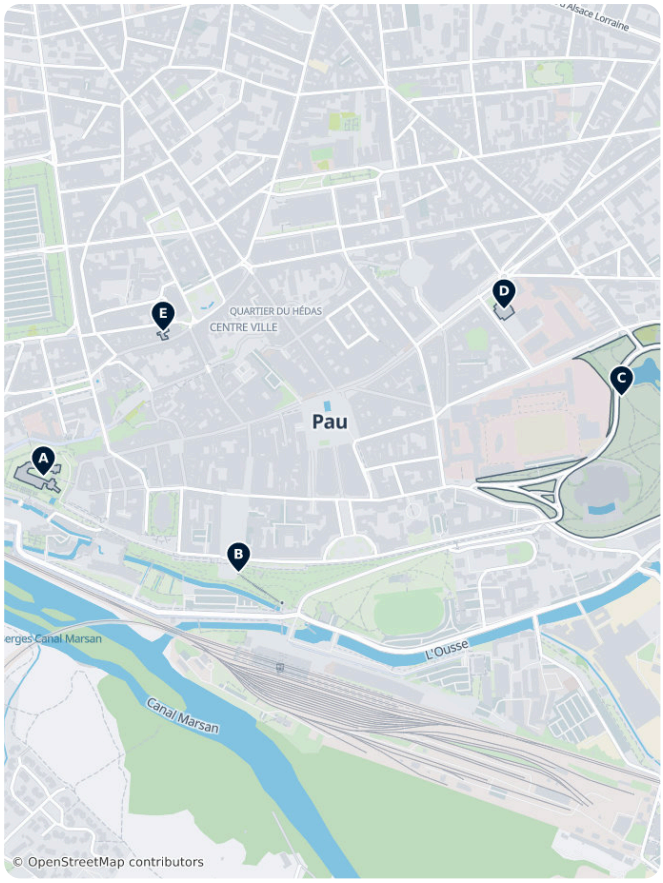
The main yearly event is **Hestiv'Òc**, a free four-day festival of the music and cultures of southern France. It takes place in the town center in August and includes concerts, dance and street shows.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for hiking	10° / 16° Feels like 7°	3° / -4°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Fair Fair for hiking	11° / 18° Feels like 8°	3° / -4°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Good Good for hiking	15° / 21° Feels like 11°	5° / -1°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for hiking	17° / 24°	7° / 2°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	20° / 28°	10° / 6°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 33°	14° / 9°	12 rainy days · Calm winds
July	Great Great for sightseeing	28° / 36°	15° / 12°	Calm winds
August	Good Good for sightseeing	29° / 37°	16° / 12°	Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 34°	14° / 9°	Dry air · Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 29°	11° / 4°	Dry air · Calm winds
November	Fair Fair for hiking	14° / 21°	6° / -1°	15 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Fair Fair for hiking	11° / 17° Feels like 8°	4° / -3°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: June, July, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Château de Pau is the symbol of the city. *Henri IV* was born in this castle. The rooms now hold the National Museum of the Château de Pau, with tapestries from the 16th to the 19th century.
- The **Boulevard des Pyrénées** is a long promenade on the edge of the upper town. It looks over the Gave de Pau valley and the mountain range. On clear days you can see the Pic du Midi d'Ossau. It is a good place for a walk in the evening.
- B Pau funicular links the train station to the boulevard. It opened in 1908 and is free to use. It is a short, useful ride up the hill.
- C Parc Beaumont is a park in English landscape style, built in the late 19th century. It has a lake and shaded paths, and it is a short walk from the center.
- D Musée des Beaux-Arts shows European paintings from the 15th to the 20th century. The collection includes works by *Degas*, *Rubens* and *El Greco*. Entry is free.
- E Musée Bernadotte is in the house where *Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte* was born in 1763. He became a marshal of France and later King of Sweden. The small museum is free.

Pau – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

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What to experience

The best experiences here follow the seasons.

- Watch the sun go down over the Pyrenees from the Boulevard des Pyrénées on a clear evening.
- Join the *Fête du Roi* in early August, a free historical festival in the castle quarter with medieval and Henri IV days.
- Join a summer evening at the open-air cinema or at the *L'Été à Pau* concerts.
- Watch a match of *cesta punta*, a fast Basque ball game, during the summer tournaments.
- See a Section Paloise rugby match at the Stade du Hameau during the rugby season.
- Play a round at Pau Golf Club, founded in 1856, which is among the oldest golf clubs in Europe.

Day trips

Pau is a good base for wine villages, small towns and the mountains. The closest trips are listed first.



- Jurançon: about 10 min by car. The hills south of Pau are known for Jurançon wine, both sweet and dry. Many small producers welcome visitors for tastings.
- Oloron-Sainte-Marie: about 35 min by car or train. This old town sits where two mountain rivers meet. It has a Romanesque cathedral and a historic pilgrim route nearby.
- A Lourdes: about 40 min by car or train. It is one of Europe's major Catholic pilgrimage sites. The Sanctuary is the main sight, and the castle and the Pic du Jer funicular are also worth a visit.
- Ossau Valley: about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 min by car. The valley leads to Pic du Midi d'Ossau, a famous twin-peaked mountain that is visible from Pau. In summer, roads and trails lead to mountain lakes. In winter, Gourette is the nearest ski resort, about 1 hour 15 min by car.
- B Bayonne and C Biarritz: about 1 hour 15 min to 1 hour 30 min by car. These two towns on the Basque coast offer a mix of old streets and Atlantic beaches.

Where to explore

Larger destinations near Pau:

- Lourdes is a pilgrimage town in the Pyrenees foothills, to the east.
- Bayonne is a historic Basque river town, to the west.
- Biarritz is a seaside resort on the Atlantic coast.
- Bordeaux is a large wine city to the north, reached by train.

Getting there

- **By air**: Pau Pyrénées Airport is about 10 km north-west of the center. It has flights to Paris (Orly and Charles de Gaulle) and a few seasonal routes. IDELIS bus line 17 takes about 30 min and costs €1.50, paid to the driver. It does not run on Sundays and public holidays. A taxi costs about €35 in the daytime. Biarritz airport, about 1 hour 30 min away by road, has more routes. Pau Pyrénées Airport
- **By train**: Direct TGV trains run to Paris, and the trip takes about 4.5 to 5 hours. Intercités trains link Pau with Lourdes, Tarbes, Toulouse, Bayonne and Hendaye. Regional TER trains serve Bordeaux, Dax and Oloron-Sainte-Marie. The station is below the center, and a free funicular goes up to the town. SNCF Connect
- **By road**: The A64 motorway links Pau with Toulouse to the east and Bayonne to the west. It is a toll road.

Getting around

- **On foot**: The center is compact and mostly flat. The station is about 30 m below the town, so use the funicular or a short climb.
- **Public transit**: IDELIS runs the city buses. Buy a ticket from the driver on board, at a ticket machine, or in the MODALIS app. A free shuttle called Coxitis also runs in the center. IDELIS
- **Taxi**: Taxis serve the station. Book ahead on weekends and public holidays.
- **Cycling**: Cycling is practical in the center and along the river. The upper town has some slopes.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The center is compact and mostly flat. The station is about 30 m below the town, and a free funicular climbs the slope.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Cycling is practical in the center and along the river. The upper town has some slopes.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the city center, which is easy on foot. A car is useful for the mountains and villages, where public transport is limited.
- **Parking**: Paid car parks are in the center, for example near Place de Verdun and Place Clemenceau.
- **Restrictions**: Parts of the old center are pedestrian-only. Park at the edge and walk in.

Food & drink

Béarn food is hearty and mountain-style. Try *garbure*, a thick soup of cabbage, beans and meat, and *poule au pot*, the poached chicken linked to *Henri IV*. Duck confit is common. Look for Ossau-Iraty, a sheep's milk cheese from the Pyrenees. Jurançon, from the hills just south of the city, is the local wine and comes in sweet and dry styles.

For where to eat, go to the covered market (Les Halles), which has food stalls and local products. The streets around Place Clemenceau and the center have many restaurants and cafés.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Croissant
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

LUNCH

Ratatouille
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

DINNER

Coq au Vin
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Baguette
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

Cheese · Fromage
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Crepes · Crêpes
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

Macarons
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

DRINKS

Wine · Vin
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

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Scan to download the app

Safety & health

Pau is a safe, calm city. Petty theft is rare, but keep bags closed in crowded places and around the station.

The weather in the nearby mountains can change fast, even in summer. Check the forecast before a hike and carry water and warm clothes. Rain is common in the Pyrenees foothills, so bring a light waterproof jacket.

History

Pau grew around a castle on a hill above the Gave de Pau. It became the capital of Béarn, a small mountain state. *Henri IV* was born in Château de Pau in 1553. He later became King of Navarre and then King of France. The castle became a national museum in 1929.

In the 19th century, English visitors came for the mild climate. They brought golf and fox hunting, and Pau Golf Club dates from 1856. In 1909 the Wright brothers set up a flying school here, and Pau became an early center of aviation.

Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte was born in the city in 1763. His birthplace is now Musée Bernadotte. He became King of Sweden in 1818, and the Swedish royal family descends from him. Pau has also hosted motor racing on its streets since 1933, but the yearly event has been paused in recent years.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



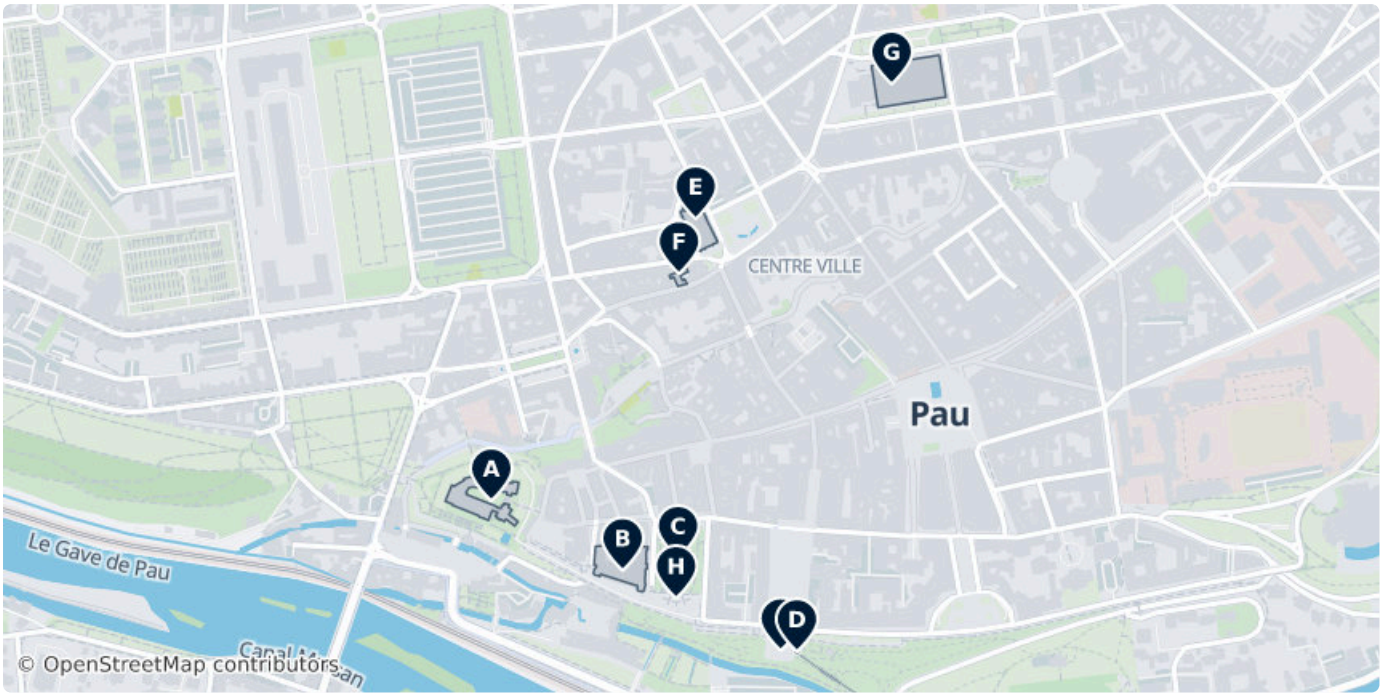
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Pau Essentials

Pau's identity is anchored by the Château de Pau, the 16th-century birthplace of King Henry IV. The city is famous for the Boulevard des Pyrénées, a 1.8-kilometer promenade offering panoramic views of the mountain range. This selection features the historic Funiculaire de Pau, which connects the railway station to the upper town, alongside neo-Gothic churches and the Musée Bernadotte, located in the childhood home of the Napoleonic general who became King of Sweden.





A Château de Pau

The Château de Pau is a castle in the centre of the city of Pau, the capital of Pyrénées-Atlantiques and Béarn.

(Unnamed Road), Pau 64000, France (43.29481, -0.37543)

May 01-Sep 16 Mo–Su	08:00–19:30
Sep 17-Apr 30 Mo–Su	08:00–18:30

chateau-pau.fr, +33 5 59 82 38 00



B Hôtel de Gassion

A former luxury palace built between 1867 and 1872. This grand Belle Époque building served as a premier hotel for European aristocracy before being converted into a private residence.

(43.29403, -0.37342)



C Église Saint-Martin

A neo-Gothic church constructed in the 19th century. It features a prominent spire and houses notable religious art and organ works near the Boulevard des Pyrénées.

1 Rue des Gontaut-Biron, Pau 64000, France (43.29417, -0.37257)

pau-pyrenees.com/fr/decouv_hist_pat_... , +33 5 59 11 60 70



D Pau funicular

The Funiculaire de Pau, or Pau Funicular, is a funicular railway in the city of Pau in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques département of southwestern...

22 Boulevard des Pyrénées, Pau 64000, France (43.29313, -0.37075)

Mo–Sa	06:45–21:40
Su	13:30–20:50

pau.fr/article/le-funiculaire



E Église Saint-Jacques

A 19th-century neo-Gothic church located near the Palais de Justice, characterized by its twin spires and historical role in the city's religious life.

5 Rue Jean-Baptiste Carreau, Pau 64000, France (43.29795, -0.37230)

pau-pyrenees.com/fr/decouv_hist_pat_arch_religieuse_eg...



F Musée Bernadotte

Set in the 18th-century childhood home of Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, a Marshal of France who became King of Sweden. The museum details his life and the history of the house.

Rue Tran 8, 64000 Pau (43.29734, -0.37256)

Tu–Sa	10:00–12:00, 14:00–18:00

+33 5 59 27 48 42

G Halles André Labarrère

A central covered market featuring local Béarnais produce, regional specialties, and traditional food stalls.

Rue de la République, 64000 Pau (43.29945, -0.36930)

Tu–Sa	07:00–15:00
Su	09:00–15:00

hallesdepau.fr, +33 5 59 27 85 80

H Monument aux morts de 1914-1918

A commemorative memorial dedicated to the soldiers from the region who died during the First World War.

60 Boulevard des Pyrénées, Pau 64000, France (43.29372, -0.37260)

anosgrandshommes.musee-orsay.fr/monument/606



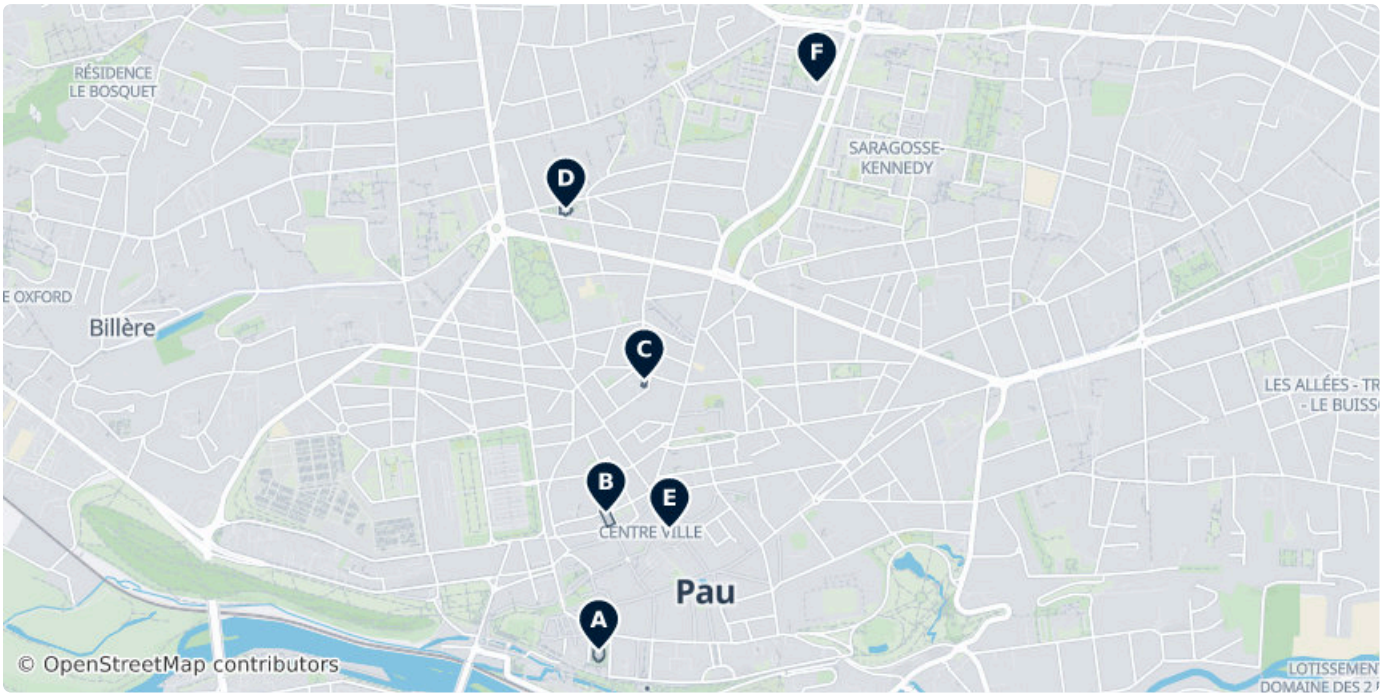
I Pavillon des Arts

An exhibition space and cultural center housing the Architecture and Heritage Interpretation Center, located at the top of the funicular.

24 Boulevard des Pyrénées, Pau 64000, France (43.29314, -0.37100)

Historic Churches of Pau

Pau’s religious architecture reflects a diverse history, ranging from the neo-Gothic grandeur of Église Saint-Martin and Église Saint-Jacques to the unique 19th-century Anglican Saint-Andrew’s, a vestige of the city's British heritage. The landscape includes the understated Église Réformée, representing the region's Protestant roots, and 20th-century additions like the Art Deco-influenced Église Saint-Joseph and the contemporary Église Saint-Pierre, showcasing the evolution of ecclesiastical design in the Béarn capital.





A Église Saint-Martin

A 19th-century neo-Gothic church located near the Château de Pau, featuring a prominent spire and intricate interior decorations. It was built to replace a medieval structure that once stood on the site.

1 Rue des Gontaut-Biron, Pau 64000, France
(43.29417, -0.37257)

pau-pyrenees.com/fr/decouv_hist_pat_... , +33 5 59 11 60 70



B Église Saint-Jacques

Situated adjacent to the Palais de Justice, this neo-Gothic Catholic church was constructed in the 1860s. It is characterized by its twin spires and central location in the city's historic core.

5 Rue Jean-Baptiste Carreau, Pau 64000, France
(43.29795, -0.37230)

pau-pyrenees.com/fr/decouv_hist_pat_arch_religieuse_eg...

C Église Anglicane Saint-Andrew's

Located on Rue O'Quin, this 19th-century Anglican church reflects the historic influence of the British community in Pau. The building features traditional English architectural elements and serves the local English-speaking congregation.

2 Rue O'Quin, Pau 64000, France (43.30158, -0.37086)

standrewschurchpau.org.uk

D Église Saint-Joseph

A Catholic church built in 1935, notable for its Art Deco architectural influences and distinctive bell tower, serving the residential districts north of the city center.

57 Rue de l'Abbé Brémont, Pau 64000, France (43.30627, -0.37381)

pau-pyrenees.com/fr/decouv_hist_pat_... , +33 5 59 32 44 06

E Église Réformée de Pau

A historic Protestant temple representing the city's Reformed tradition. The architecture follows the understated liturgical style typical of French Protestant places of worship in the Béarn region.

21B Rue Serviez, Pau 64000, France (43.29751, -0.36991)

eglise-reformee-de-pau.org, +33 5 59 27 32 50

F Église Saint-Pierre

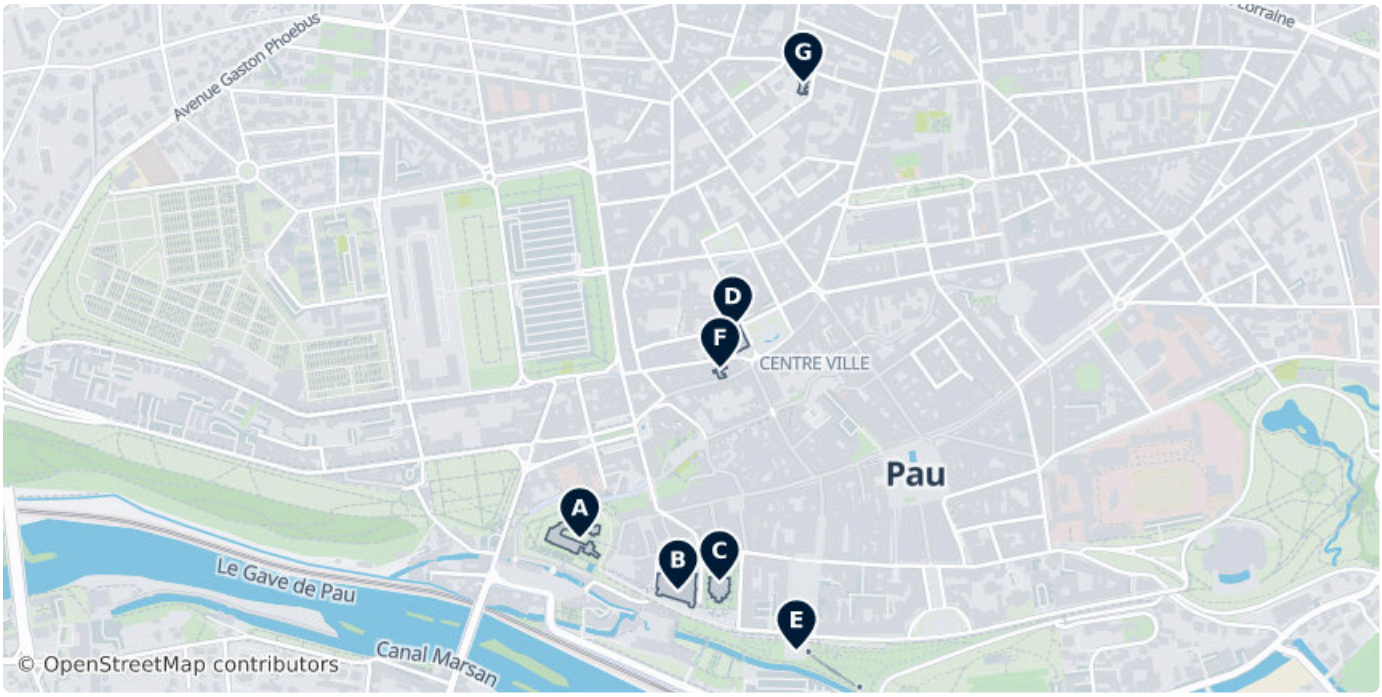
A modern Catholic church constructed in 1970, featuring contemporary architectural lines and minimalist design, located in the northern part of the city.

2 Avenue Robert Schuman, Pau 64000, France (43.30972, -0.36435)

pau-pyrenees.com/fr/decouv_hist_pat_... , +33 5 59 14 24 19

Historic Heritage of Pau

Explore the architectural evolution of Pau through its most significant landmarks. The collection features the medieval Château de Pau, the 16th-century birthplace of King Henry IV, alongside grand 19th-century structures like the Hôtel de Gassion. Religious heritage is represented by the Neo-Gothic Saint-Martin and Saint-Jacques churches, and the Anglican Saint-Andrew's, reflecting the city's historical British influence. The list also includes the Musée Bernadotte, dedicated to the Pau-born soldier who became King of Sweden.





A Château de Pau

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chateau-pau.fr, +33 5 59 82 38 00



B Hôtel de Gassion

A former luxury palace hotel built between 1867 and 1872 for Jean Lafourcade-Camarau. This grand 19th-century building has since been converted into a private residential complex.

(43.29403, -0.37342)



C Église Saint-Martin

A 19th-century Neo-Gothic church designed by architect Émile Boeswillwald. It stands as a prominent religious landmark in the city center, replacing an older medieval structure.

1 Rue des Gontaut-Biron, Pau 64000, France (43.29417, -0.37257)

pau-pyrenees.com/fr/decouv_hist_pat_... , +33 5 59 11 60 70



D Église Saint-Jacques

Located near the Palais de Justice, this Neo-Gothic church features two slender spires and was constructed in the late 19th century to accommodate the city's growing population.

5 Rue Jean-Baptiste Carreau, Pau 64000, France (43.29795, -0.37230)

pau-pyrenees.com/fr/decouv_hist_pat_arch_religieuse_eg...



E Pavillon des Arts

An exhibition space that houses the Architecture and Heritage Interpretation Center. It offers insights into the urban development and history of Pau.

24 Boulevard des Pyrénées, Pau 64000, France (43.29314, -0.37100)



F Musée Bernadotte

The birthplace of Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, a Marshal of France who became King Charles XIV John of Sweden. The museum details his life and the history of the House of Bernadotte.

Rue Tran 8, 64000 Pau (43.29734, -0.37256)

Tu–Sa	10:00–12:00, 14:00–18:00

+33 5 59 27 48 42

Église Anglicane Saint-Andrew’s

Built in the 19th century to serve the city's significant British expatriate community. It features distinctive Victorian-influenced architecture and remains an active place of worship.

2 Rue O'Quin, Pau 64000, France (43.30158, -0.37086)

standrewschurchpau.org.uk

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