Lourdes is a city in the south of France. Located in the high Pyrenees, it is a big place for pilgrimages since the middle of the 18th century and receives over 6 million visitors every year.

**Population**: 14,282 inhabitants

**Population Density**: 387 inhab/ km²

**Name of Inhabitants**: Lourdais

**Région**: Midi-Pyrénées

**Postal Code**: 65100

**Maps**: [Google Maps](https://www.google.com/maps)
2/ TRANSPORT

BY CAR

The network of roads connects Lourdes to the highway A64 as well as other large cities like Toulouse, Tarbes, and Pau. Route Nationale N21 that crosses the entire region also goes through Lourdes.

Additionally, the city has many parking lots that let you easily park downtown.

BY BUS

For those who aren’t coming by car, or if you want to leave your car in the parking lot for the day, you can also get around the city center by bus. The MonCitybus network services the downtown area and major tourist attractions.
### BY TRAIN

The city of Lourdes is lucky enough to have a TGV train station connected to the stations Paris-Montparnasse, Bordeaux-Saint Jean, Tarbes, Toulouse-Matabiau, Paris Austerlitz, and Geneve-Cornavin. The Midi-Pyrénées TER train network connects the city of Lourdes to its neighbors, like Toulouse, Muret, Saint Gaudens, Tarbes, Pau, Bayonne, and Hendaye.

During pilgrimage season, the city is also serviced by trains coming from different regions in France, but also Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic. It is during the summer that these national and international connections run the most.

### BY PLANE

Located 14 kilometers to the north of Lourdes, the airport Tarbes-Lourdes-Pyrénées makes the connection between Lourdes and the airports Paris Orly (Hop), Madrid (Iberia), Brussels (Thomas Cook Airlines, Jetairfly), London-Stansted (Ryanair), and Milan (Ryanair). Buses run regularly between the city center and the airport, especially during their busy season.
3/ WHEN TO GO?

The city of Lourdes is especially touristic and this attraction is really connected to the city’s history. In 1858, the young Bernadette Soubirous witnessed 18 appearances of the Virgin Mary in one of the caves in Lourdes. After verification by the clergy, the appearances were declared true and Lourdes then became one of the most touristic cities in France, thanks to the many pilgrims that go to the cave and follow the steps of Bernadette Soubirous (or Saint Bernadette since she was quickly canonized after her death in 1879). It also appeared that the cave’s spring has therapeutic properties, and many sick people flock there every year hoping to be miraculously healed by the water.

The city is mostly visited from Easter to October. August is the time when most pilgrims flock, especially during Assumption (August 15th). Additionally, at the beginning of the month of February (usually the 11th), the city celebrates the anniversary of the first appearances. Also, if you go to Lourdes for a pilgrimage, we recommend this time of the year during which you will undoubtedly appreciate the many celebrations in honor of the Virgin Mary and Saint Bernadette. You can also attend the Torchlight Marian Processions in the old city that take place every evening from April to October at nightfall. Additionally, all catholic celebrations throughout the year are generally celebrated with great fanfare in this city heavily touched by Catholicism. Lourdes is an active city that offers many activities to the faithful and the pilgrims throughout the year.

If you have decided to go to Lourdes for touristic reasons and wish to avoid the religious gatherings as well as the celebrations of the appearances, we recommend avoiding the main religious holidays as well as the season that stretches from April to October.

Those who love hiking will be able to enjoy the beautiful weather during the summer and avoid the crowds by exploring the heights that surround the city, far from all religious and pilgrimage sites.

In October after the end of the busy season, we recommend the Quinzaine Littéraire et Artistique that offers numerous cultural events as well as practical and fun workshops related to French culture.

During winter, you can also enjoy the mountain ranges located in the city’s surrounding area that offer an unforgettable ski trip on the most beautiful mountains in the Pyrenees.
4/ INFORMATIONS AND USEFUL ADDRESSES

Useful:
Tourism Office of Lourdes: http://www.lourdes-infotourisme.com/web/EN/?langRedir=1
Numéro d’urgence: 112 (Euro zone, 112 redirects to numbers 15, 17, 18 115, and 119)
Fire: dial number 18
Ambulance (medical emergency): dial number 15
Police: dial number 17
Missing children: dial number 116

Transportation:
MonCity Bus: http://www.moncitybus.com/
Gare de Lourdes: http://www.gares-en-mouvement.com/fr/flde/accueil/
Aéroport de Tarbes-Lourdes-Pyrénées: http://www.tlp.aeroport.fr/home

Museums and Touristic Sites:
- In the footsteps of Bernadette:
  The birth home: http://fr.lourdes-france.org/sejour-a-lourdes/carte-de-lourdes/le-moulin-de-boly
  Le Musée Sainte Bernadette:
  Maison Paternelle:
  Hospice Sainte Bernadette:
  Eglise Paroissiale du Sacré Cœur:
  Ancien Presbytère:
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Musée de Cire: [http://www.musee-de-cire-lourdes.com/](http://www.musee-de-cire-lourdes.com/)
Grotte de Lourdes: [http://fr.lourdes-france.org/sejour-a-lourdes/carte-de-lourdes/la-grotte-de-lourdes](http://fr.lourdes-france.org/sejour-a-lourdes/carte-de-lourdes/la-grotte-de-lourdes)

- **History and Local Artisans:**
  Musée du Gemmail

- **Excursions:**

5/ **BUDGET IN LOURDES**

Lourdes is the second most touristic city in France. Also, you can find hotels and restaurants to eat at with no problem, no matter your budget. We have put together a little price scale with a few good places so you can calmly prepare your stay.

**Accommodation**

The following prices are indicative. They refer to a one night stay in a standard double bedroom and may be subject to confirmation at the time of booking.

- **Really good deal from 25 to 50 euros.** For that price you will enjoy a very simply decorated room in an establishment that is sometimes far from the city centre. Ideal for small budgets, but not much if you are looking at the comfort level.

- **Good deal from 50 to 75 euros.** At this price, there are comfortable but modest hotels that welcome you, including a few in the city center.

- **Average prices from 75 to 100 euros.** Starting at 75 euros you can count on quality hotels (2 and sometimes 3 stars) with comfortable rooms and many services.

- **Higher prices, from 100 to 150 (or more) euros.** For the bigger budgets, you can enjoy hotels with 3 or 4 stars that are particularly well-located and offer high quality services and rooms.

Take a look at our website to find a place to stay in Lourdes.
Restaurants:

The following prices are indicative, they refer to the price of one course or a menu for one.

- **Snacks: less than 10 euros.** For a small budget and just a little hunger (or desire to snack), we recommend Angelo’s ice cream at his Gelateria Artigianale. At this Italian ice cream shop, you will discover traditional ice cream, but also original flavors that change every day. You won’t get tired of this must-visit location.
  
  (Angelo, Gelateria Artigianale, 44 boulevard de la grotte)

- **Eating on the go: 5 to 15 euros.** For a quick and economical lunch or dinner, we recommend two good places. First, the Mountain Café, a trendy bistro that offers simple and fresh dishes (salads, sandwiches, pastries) to try there or to go.
  
  For those who love sweet or salty crepes, we recommend the Comptoir des Crêpes, a Breton crepe shop with a pretty terrace that opens up on the shady courtyard. The menu has a good variety and it is all for a completely affordable price!
  
  (Mountain Café, 1 rue St Pierre)
  (Comptoir des Crêpes, 7 rue de la grotte)

- **Unpretentious: 15 to 30 euros.** Curious visitors and those who love local cuisine will be thrilled to find many traditional restaurants at Lourdes, but beware of tourist traps! To help you in your choice, we suggest two locations. First of all, Le Cabanon, a lovely and chic bistro that offers a menu made up of regional specialties, all made with fresh and local products.
  
  Le Parc Restaurant offers a very traditional menu made up of French specialties and also has a magnificent view of a large park for its customers.
  
  (Le Cabanon, 37 rue de la grotte)
  (Le Parc Restaurant, 16 avenue de la gare)

- **Fine dining: 30 to 70 euros.** Le Majestic offers a gourmet menu that has variety and is especially refined in a relaxed atmosphere that will remind you of the intimate ambiance of a boudoir.
  
  La Table de Fébus welcomes you into a refined and elegant setting so that you can try original and inventive dishes.
Of course, the city’s activities have a lot to do with the appearance of the Virgin Mary and the Catholic religion. In this high place of pilgrimage, you will also discover many museums that retrace the life of Bernadette Soubirous or that illustrate the history of Christianity throughout the centuries. However, Lourdes is also a city rich in history that offers a unique and original heritage. We have put together an exhaustive list of stops that won’t fail to entice you during your stay in the region.

The life of Bernadette Soubirous:

Different museums will let you retrace the life of Bernadette Soubirous, the young woman that made the city Lourdes and its cave famous. You will be able to visit Le Cachot in which she and her family lived in poverty during Bernadette’s teenage years. After that, go to her birth home (her father’s home) where the young girl started her life (also known as the le Moulin de Boly). Finally, you can visit in the famous cave where the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette, or go to the Musée Sainte Bernadette that retraces the young girl’s entire life and contains some personal items.

Le Musée de Cire de Lourdes: Lourdes, like Paris and London, has its own wax museum. However, contrary to those in other European cities, Lourde’s museum only contains wax statues that are involved with Catholicism. You can discover the three kings, but also the Last Supper or wax statues representing the most famous popes.

Sanctuaire Notre Dame de Lourdes: This is undoubtedly the must-see location for your stay. It is in the heart of the open air sanctuary that religious celebrations take place from April to October. You can attend or even take part in the Torchlight Marian Procession.

Le Musée de Lourdes: This museum allows you to discover the state of the city in the middle of the 19th century, when Bernadette witnessed the Marian appearances. You will be able to admire the beautiful reenactment as well as a lovely sound and light show.
**Le château fort de Lourdes**: It’s impossible to leave Lourdes without having visited its castle. Perched on a rocky peak, it has dominated the city for more than 700 years and will show you its traditionally medieval architecture that is full of history, as well as a museum for art and popular traditions.

**Le Cirque de Gavarnie**: This limestone cirque is the work of glaciers that are now gone. Go there for a hike in a unique and timeless atmosphere along the border of France and Spain.

**Le Pic du Midi de Bigorre**: Lourdes is lucky to be located at the foot of the large mountain chain that is the Pyrenees and close to one of its most majestic summits: the Pic du Midi, perched at 2,877m high, where you can also find a famous observatory.

*This travel guide was published in November 2014, prices may then vary.*