

## **Tour of the médiéval city**

### **1. Porte de France**

This is the most important of the 5 gates of the town which has been encircled by ramparts since 1345. These were destroyed by an earthquake in 1428. They were rebuilt only to be destroyed again by the troops of Louis XIV, in reprisal for the rebellion of the “Les Angelets de la Terra” during the Salt War. Finally, in 1683, they were rebuilt by the villagers under the supervision of Marshal Vauban’s engineers.

To the left of the gate is a monument by the sculptor Manolo Valiente erected in 1982. It pays tribute to the Catalan traditional dance, the Sardane, and draws attention to the title “Ciutat Pubilla” bestowed on the town in 1982 as the leading centre of the Sardane in North Catalonia

### **2. Place Josep de la Trinxeria**

This square is named after the valiant captain who, together with his brave hand of “Les Angelets de la Terra” stood firm against the troops of Louis XIV from 1661 to 1670. To the right is the town hall, built between 1613 and 1614. There is a plaque commemorating the 1000 years of the town’s history and the date on which the first church was consecrated (928 A.D.). To the left is the house in which the Catalan writer Charles Bosch de la Trinxeria was born.

### **3. Place d’Armes**

Military parades were held in this square from 1659, when Prats became a garrison town on the settlement of the Treaty of the Pyrénées, until 1939.

### **4. « Escotes de la Creu de Missió »**

Steps climbing up to the “Creu de Missió”

### **5. « Croix de Mission »**

The cross which represents the torture inflicted on Christ.

### **6. The fortified church**

Dating from 982 this was the first church built in the village, only the monolithic front to the left of the entrance remains. Of particular interest are; the Romanesque doorway (1245); non-rusting door fittings forged by a traditional technique; the gilded wooden altarpiece by the famous sculptor Louis Generes, considered one of the finest examples of its style, the whale bone embedded in the right facing wall which was a votive offering. It is open daily from 9am to 6pm.

### **7. Chapelle de la Piétât (entrance through the church, at the back)**

This chapel contains statues which were paraded at Easter processions and a Christ in Majesty.

### **8. Chemin de Ronde**

Rampart walkway, built for the protection of the church.

### **9. Porte de la Fabrique**

This gate is named after the religious institution, formed by elected representatives of the faithful, which managed religious buildings in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The gate leads to Fort Lagarde by a covered way followed by a tunnel (there is also an open-air footpath alongside).

A visit to the fort takes approx 1 hour 30 mns (see overleaf). From outside the gate the ramparts and their foundations dating from 1345 can be seen as well as the ruins of the Château de Parella, to the right of Fort Lagarde, built by the counts of Bésalu in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and destroyed during the time of Louis XIV.

### **10. Passage de la Dôme**

Rampart walk with the powder magazine and defensive loopholes. Excellent view of the Romanesque bell tower built in 1245.

### **11. Le Pont de la Guillème**

Fortified bridge with Romanesque culvert below with iron grills to deny access by enemies from the river approach.

### **12. Plaça del Rei (King's square)**

In this square in the 11<sup>th</sup> century stood the summer residence of the counts of Bésalu, who were the Seigneurs of the town. The square has been restored by the local artist Jean Lareuse.

### **13. Rue des Marchands**

This was the street of weavers and embroiderers who formed powerful guilds in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. A few of the original medieval houses are still in existence.

### **14. Rue et Place de Vila d'Amunt (Ville haute)**

A cobbled street and square of the upper town.

### **15. Racons d'en Burguera**

Picturesque Narrow Street.

### **16. Porte du Verger**

From this gate the upper Tech valley can be seen to the west with Mount Costabona (2464m) and the Esquerdes de Rotja. To the South is the Tour de Mir (1540m) a signal tower dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

### **17. Rue des Rois d'Aragon**

Follow this street through the upper town and you will see on the left a particularly outstanding building, supposed to be the summer residence of the Kings of Aragon, but more probably the weaver's guildhall.

**18.** Continue down the steps of the street of Vila d'Amunt and pass through the Portal del Rector into the lower town.

### **19. Porte d'Espagne**

Go through the ancient Spanish gate to the narrow bridge below which can be seen the remains of the medieval arches of the original bridge.

### **20. Chapelle des Saintes Juste et Ruffine**

From the Porte d'Espagne, walk back through the lower town to the place d'Armes and then take the rue des Stes Juste et Ruffine to the chapel decorated by the local artist Jean Lareuse.

### **21. « Rincon »**

Take the narrow alleyway next to the chapel and follow the « Chemin de Ronde du Rincon et du Pont d'Espagne » which leads out onto the firal.

### **22. Le Firal (Foiral)**

This is the square where markets and fairs have been held since 1308, it was redesigned in 1767. On the South side is the School (1907) and the Foyer Rural (1968), on the East side is the Office Municipal du Tourisme (1985)

**In the vicinity of Prats :** Ermitage de Notre Dame du Coral (route du col d'Ares), la Réserve Naturelle (14 Kms direction la Preste), les Thermes de la Preste (7 kms direction la Preste)