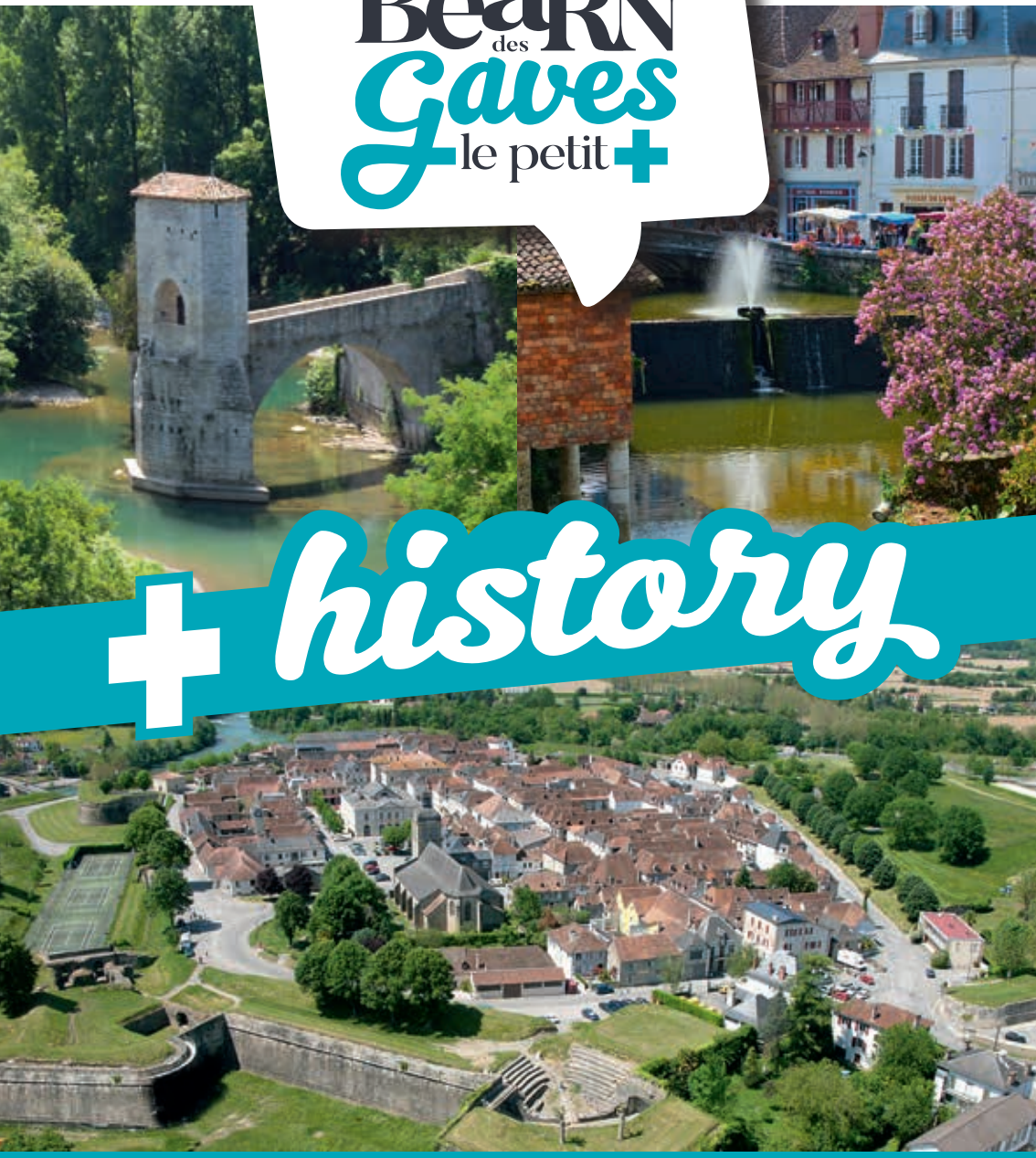
Tourist maps 2020

Béarn des Gaves le petit +

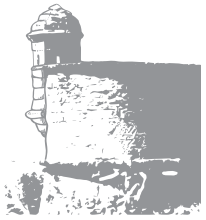


+ history

www.tourisme-bearn-gaves.com

Navarrenx

The bastionned city



Navarrenx's tranquil appearance belies a rich and powerful history.

The city has a very important strategic position. Marguerite de Moncade gave it the stature of Bastide in 1316.

In the 16th century Henri d'Albret, grandfather of the future king Henri IV, decided to fortify the town. He wanted to protect Bearn from the greedy clutches of Spain and France.

An Italian architect, Fabricio Sicilano, built here the first fortified town in France, based on the Italian model. The recently completed ramparts proved themselves in 1569 during an attempt to annexe Bearn by the French troops of the Charles IX.

The last bastion loyal to Jeanne d'Albret, defended by Baron d'Arros, the resistance of Navarrenx allowed Bearn to maintain its sovereignty. The fortifications are still intact and can take you on a journey through time.

Le petit + de Navarrenx
by Monique

"I am attracted by the beauty of the majestic ramparts…

… So I would like to take you to the cannon from where the 360° viewpoint shows you: St Antoine's door leading to Spain from the town. The bridge over the Gave (Oloron river) is famous for its salmon, the Charron isle, the peaks of the Pyrenees; snow capped in winter and green in summer !
Turn around and admire the rooftop and the 16th Century gunpowder house."

Discover the first fortified city in France

Leaving the **tourist office (i)**, you will see the **St Antoine's Barracks (1)** ancient military barracks built after the fortifications to accommodate up to 500 soldiers. In front of you, is the **St Antoine's Gate (2)**, one of the only two ancients gates of the city. This gate is protected by an "orillon" and provides shelter from direct artillery fire. Built at the same time as the ramparts, the gate was accessed by a drawbridge, if you look up you will see the two recesses for the drawbridge chains.

Return to St Antoine's Barracks, on your right, you will see the ancient military prison. Take the steps situated on the right, and you will reach the **terrace (3)**, which face the Gave of Oloron, famous for its salmon. On top of the 13th century bridge, there was a sentry tower. Directly to your right you can make out the foundations of the Castérasse, a former castle of the Earls of Béarn. In the middle, the military well permitted to activate the drawbridge. Facing the river, above the orillon, the "échauguette" (sentry box) served for surveillance and defence.

Leave this part of the ramparts and few yards from here and you arrive at the **bastion of the bell (4)** protector of the bridge and the St Antoine gate. This is a lovely viewpoint. A copy of one of the cannons reminds us of the system of defence between the bastions. This cannon named **"Si You ti baü"** is named after motto of the city. A Bearnaise exclamation which means "If I go there."

Head towards the **"Poudrière" (5)** which is the only gunpowder store in the square. It was built in 1580 to free up space in the side-aisle of the church that had previously served that purpose. It can hold up to 25 000 pounds of explosives. The beautiful interior vault resonates with an echo one corner to the other. You ought to try it.

Next take "rue St-Antoine" where you will find **Jeanne d'Albret's house (6)**. It's a beautiful renaissance house. The door is situated within an elliptical arch topped with a triangular pediment. In 1555 Jeanne d'Albret became queen of Navarre and of Bearn. She adopted the calvinist religion and Bearn became part of a small group of protestant nations.

Carry on toward the **St Germain's church (7)**. The church has had a turbulent history. It was completed in 1562; Jeanne d'Albret converted it to a protestant church. In 1620, Louis XIII gave it back to the catholic church. You will notice that the vaults and arches are decorated with sculpted heads, one of which is of a Compostella pilgrim. This illustrates the importance of the chemin du Puy to Navarrenx. Displayed in the porch are copies of the beautiful invoice for three from paintings produced by Murillo, Dubois and Carrache which were presented by Emperor Napoleon III during his visit. As is traditional in the region the church has a special door for the Cagots, who were numerous in the Navarrenx area.

On leaving the church, go up to "rue des échos" until you reach the **Bastion of «Contremines» (8)** which as a distinctive feature of having an underground gallery. To visit it you take the stairs down to the bottom. You will need a torch. By following "le chemin de Ronde" you reach **Bastion of echos (9)**, It protected the St Germain gate which has now been destroyed. It's an example of a primitive fortification without orillons or covered flanks. The openings on the right hand side produce a seventime echo. The steep staircase on the right leads to the Potern of l'Abbatoir which served as an escape route in case of attack.

Turn right again on «rue des Echos» and carry on up to the **military fountain (10)** which was converted at the same time as the ramparts. This, during that area, was the only source of water in the town. It was essential in times of siege. After closing in 1952, afterof typhoid epidemic, it was reopened and restored in 1989.

Finally follow "rue de la Fontaine" and "rue de la prison" towards **L'Arsenal (11)**. This ancient home of the Kings of Navarre was transformed into a storehouse for weapons, ammunition and rations. Today it's the cultural and touristic centre of the town.

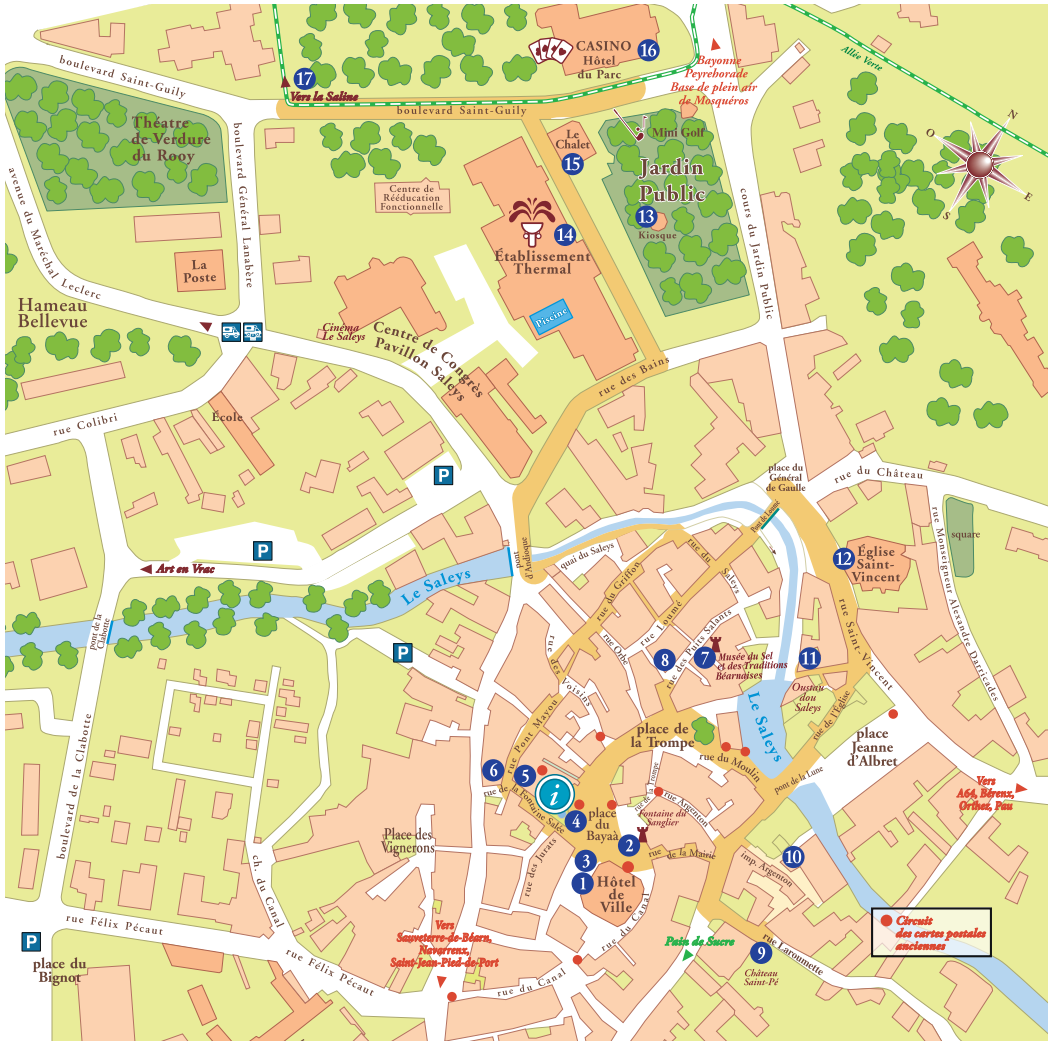
Salies-de-Béarn

The city of salt

This small town owes its fame to the salt and this has written the course of its history.

Its discovery was attributed to a wild boar that was found next to a spring with its bristle covered by salt. Since, Salies has looked after its treasures. It is an inexhaustible spring of salt water which provides health and well being. It still belongs to 500 Salisiens known as Part-Prenants. This tradition has carried on since 1587.

There are two quarters; the oldest like the shape of a snail's shell unfolds from the salt well. Here you can find typical houses of the 17th and 18th centuries and narrow streets decked with flowers. By taking a detour from one of them, you meet the Salt and Béarnais Traditions' Museum. Nearby, the Thermal quarter has a totally different feel. You are immersed in the Belle Epoque era with the Moresque style Spa, the music kiosk and the splendid Hotel du Parc, which houses the Salies casino. Together they ooze an old-fashioned charm which is pleasing to visitors.



Le petit + de Salies-de-Béarn
by Magalie

"My favourite view is definitely the one from the "Pont de la Lune"...

... I always stop there as in my opinion it is THE postcard of Salies. The view of houses on pillars, the river bed, the Marrou house completely restored by its owner.
In the background the bell tower and steeple of St Vincent's Church draw the eye upwards. A perfect composition, ever changing in different lights and weather... I never tire of it !"

Guided tour

SALIES-DE-BÉARN

Starting from the **Tourist Office (1)**, next to the Town Hall, you will find the Fountain of the **Fountain of the Sanglier (Boar) (2)**, erected in its honour. It tells the story of a wild boar which was injured during a boar hunt. It was discovered dead a few days later in a marsh with its bristles sprinkled with salt. This monument carries the slogan of Salies de Bearn "Si you nou y eri mourt arès n'y bibéré" - if I had not died no one would live here.

Under the arcades of the **Town Hall (3)** rebuilt in 1810 there is an information board about the Cite du Sel. The ground floor houses temporary exhibitions.

At the heart of the "Cite du Sel", the "**place du Bayaà" (4)** has stood over the saline spring since 1865. This underground basin is called the Crypt even though it has nothing to do with religion. It was built for reasons of hygiene in order to protect the saline spring. Nowadays it is open to the public (information at the tourist office) it possesses a beautiful stone vault supported by 1 metre wide pillars. They are supported by an eight metre bed of chestnut. In the square at the corner of the town hall on the first floor you canfind the headquarters of the Corporation of the Part-Prenants direct descendants of the "besis" the original owners of the well since 1587.

In "rue de la Fontaine Salée", on the facade of the cobbler, you can admire **the low relief (5)** which relates the visit of Jeanne d'Albret to Salies in 1568. Take "rue pont Mayou". At number 8 you will find **"coulédé" (6)**. This stone trough, which is now covered, held the salt water which was carried there in the traditional wooden buckets. The water, pushed into the basin in "Place du Bayaà" was carried to the workshop in "sameaux" 92 liters wooden receptacles. Carry on to the left, "rue des Voisins", then right, "rue du Griffon" and on to the end of "rue du Saleys". Take in, on your right, "rue Loumé" with its pretty floral displays. At the end of "rue du Saleys" turn right into "rue des Puis Salants".

The **Salt and Béarnais Traditions' Museum (7)** is housed in the three storeys of a typical 17th century house, recently renovated. You discover a workshop of a salt manufacturer and a rich collection of items evoking the history of Salies and Bearnaise traditions from their origins up until the present day. Opposite the museum is **the Bourg House (8)**, owned by the "Amis de Vieux Salies". You can consult their archives and documents here.

Head towards the "place de la Trompe" then "rue du Moulin", on the right "rue Elysée-Coustère" and "rue Larroumette" and you will see the "**Château St-Pé (9)**", which was rebuilt at the end of the 16th century. In the 17th century, witchcraft tribunals were held here. Nowadays it's a private house. Straight ahead, take the alley, then the gallery, on the right which brings you out "impasse Argenton". You are now in front of **the house of Michel de Bergeras (10)** "Maitre Charpentier" who was cabinetmaker from the school of Salies which developed between the 18th and 19th centuries. He is said to have been descended from the Cagots, pariahs in the Pyrenees up until the Revolution.

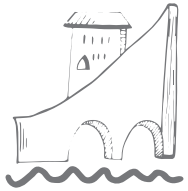
At the end of "l'Impasse Argenton", turn right, cross the "pont de la Lune" over the bed of the Saleys river take a look at half-timbered **houses on pillars (11)** including the "maison Marrou" with its wooden galley and suspended bread oven. By following "rue de l'église", you will reach **St-Vincent's church (12)**. Its bell tower, a former watchtower, played its part in a system of fortifications long since disappeared.

A few steps further on you, leave the Old town by the Quai de Saleys and you reach the thermal quarter. The high days of thermalism at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century saw great hotels and palaces blossom. Cross the public garden with its **music kiosk (13)** and you will see in front of you the, **Thermal Baths (14)**. The first building was constructed in 1857 and was destroyed by a fire. It was rebuilt in Mauresque style in 1888. The right wing is reserved for therapy. The benefits of the water help to heal gynaecological, rheumatological and paediatric complaints. The right hand side houses "Les Bains de la Mude", a fitness centre with up to date installations which mix pleasure with well being. New! sensory journey through the "Grotte de Sel" (Salt Cave) and the "Lagon de la Mer Morte" (Dead Sea's Lagoon). Imagine the poet Paul-Jean Toulet on the terrace of **Café Cercle du Chalet (15)**.

Don't hesitate to go into the "Hôtel du Parc", built in 1983 with its splendid entrance hall in the form of an reversed nave. Since December 1999, it has housed the Salies' **Casino (16)**, gaming tables slot machines, a restaurant and a three star hotel. Head toward the "quartier de la Gare", follow the "avenue Gabriel Graner" and then on your right the "avenue Jacques Dufourcq", you find the **salt manufacturing (17)**. This is where is extracted the Salies Salt (IGP), from the Oraàs' salt water spring, pure white and 100% natural. Bayonne ham must be salted with this salt and no other in order to receive the label "Indication Géographique Protégée".

Sauveterre-de-Béarn

The medieval city



«Here you will find some of the most beautiful countryside in France...

... The works of man ooze with force and nobility amongst the splendour of nature. The dreams and reflections of travellers know no limits." This is how Léon Bérard (academician and Mayor during the thirties) described the "pearl of Béarn".

Welcome to a land fashioned by legends. It is a land of mystery that invites discovery. Let your curiosity carry you away for an hour, a day or even longer. Here the slightest detour tells a tale.

This is an ancient moated camp strongly defended inside its stonewalls. Over the centuries it contributed to the maintenance of the sovereignty of Bearn. The gateway to Spain at the foot of the Pyrenees, the countryside surrounding Sauveterre is picturesque.

Since the 10th and 11th centuries pilgrims passing through here have always been greeted with hospitality.

Le petit + de Sauveterre-de-Béarn
by Evelyne

"Without doubt the Datter gateway is my favourite spot even if it is a little bit tucked away!...

... One can enter or leave the old centre of Sauveterre via this historic gateway which was once strongly defended. Above the archway was a look-out post for the guards. Imagine walking over the drawbridge covering the deep ditch. In the evening this drawbridge was raised to prevent entry and to protect the town during the night.
I love the idea of moving from the Medieval town to the river Oloron, and from nowadays back to the past.

Walk in the medieval city

Start your walk on the esplanade of the **Town Hall (1)** that has as backdrop splendid views of the superb chain of the Pyrenees. This edifice, in renaissance style, was the property of the family of the Marquis de Nays, Earls of Salettes from the 16th century. The town purchased it in 1972.

In front of you stands **St André's church (2)** constructed at the end of the 12th century. There is a mixture of architectural styles. The imposing semi-circular chevet framed by two chapels harmoniously supports the building. Roman influence dominates with beautiful sober facades with only three long, narrow windows piercing the wall. The northern wall is worth a detour with its reverse chrism, its angled tower and its rose window. Unusually, St André's church was fortified. This is proved by the fact that its beautiful bell tower was crenelated. It played an important part in the defence of the city. On the southern facade, overlooking the river you find the Cagots' door. The Cagots were also called crestiaas.

Mystery surrounds this population, which was rejected by the Bearnais people. Nobody knows the reason. Were they descended from lepers, Visigoths or Saracens? Finally above the main door the tympan displays some magnificent stonework. It shows a majestic figure of Christ flanked by four apostles in their symbolic form. The interior illustrates the transition in style from roman to gothic. The central nave is vaulted with beautiful lancet arches. Remark the tales told by the two columns. The first, adjoining the transept represents lies and greed. The second in the north aisle shows a nativity.

At the bottom of "la place des Salières" is the **« tour Monréal » (3)**. Its name is due to the family that purchased it in order to save it from destruction, in the 19th century. This defensive tower, dating from the 13th century is 33 metres high. It is built with Bidache stone, as is the church. The facade is interspersed with arches and bay windows on the southern side. Nowadays it houses an astonishing model of the city as well as an exhibition explaining Sauveterre in the Middle Ages.

Take the stairs and at the bottom of the tower turn right then take the footpath that leads to the fortified bridge named The **« Pont de la Légende » (4)**. Built under Gaston VII Moncade during the 13th century then remodelled under Febus in the 14th century, it's the route towards the kingdom of Navarre. Originally equipped with a drawbridge it provides access to the "île de la Glère". During the 18th century, a violent rise in the water level washed away part of the bridge and gave it its current appearance. It takes its name from the legend of Queen Sancie, in 1170, she was subjected to a terrible judgement of God in the presence of three thousand people. Accused of having killed her newborn son she was thrown, hands and feet tied together, into the river. The crowd waited anxiously until the sovereign drowned. But it didn't happen ! She floated to the surface and the current carried her to the bank. Queen Sancie, now proved innocent, was acclaimed by the public, and transported with joy.

Carry on along the footpath which runs alongside the campsite and you can reach the "île de la Glère" and admire its flora which has been protected and preserved.

Climb up again taking the "**porte de Lester**" **(5)**. The upper part of this medieval bridge no longer exists; it has been replaced by a footbridge. The thickness of the walls does, however, testify to the town's fortifications.

Next, take "rue Pléguignou" to the "**maison fortifiée**" **(6)**. On the left you find the **arsenal (7)**, now renovated as a dwelling house. It served as a warehouse for weapons. It is linked with the beautiful **fortified "porte du Datter" (8)** which opens on to the town from the west. Even nowadays it has preserved its arched form. In the past the upper brackets supported the ramparts and the chamber housing the mechanisms of the drawbridge, which was needed to cross the deep ditch encircling the town.

Retrace your steps to reach the "rue des Innocents". In passing, you will notice the remains of **"château vicomtal" (9)**. Probably constructed by Gaston VII Moncade, it was remodelled by Gaston Febus and became both his residence and hunting lodge. Polygonal in dressed stone, it was largely destroyed in the 16th century. Finally turn to your right and return to the church by "rue Léon Bérard".

It's beautiful here, isn't it?
Would you like to take some of it home with you?

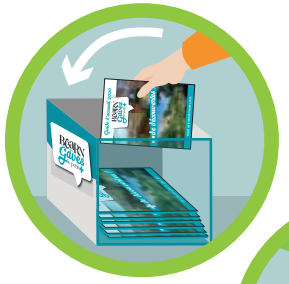
At **the Tourist Office**, we have plenty of good things on offer or to treat yourself to.

To taste, to discover, to read, or to send... there is something for every taste and every pleasure!

A fine selection of gastronomic products, local crafts and souvenirs awaits you in **our shops**!

Instructions for use

Le petit + to this guide that I hold in my hand, is that I can share it with others, or keep it for life !;)



If you wish, you can drop them off in one of the boxes installed for this purpose in front of the tourist offices in Navarrenx, Salies-de-Béarn and Sauveterre-de-Béarn so that it can be used by other visitors.

A positive action, generous and anti-waste... it's up to you!

And thank you!

Office de Tourisme

Béarn des Gaves le petit +

NAVARRENX
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Phone. 05 59 38 32 85

SALIES-DE-BÉARN
8 rue de la Fontaine Salée
BP 26 - 64270 Salies-de-Béarn
Phone. 05 59 38 00 33

SAUVETERRE-DE-BÉARN
Place Royale - 64390 Sauveterre-de-Béarn
Phone. 05 59 38 32 86

ACCESS

+ BY AIR

Airports of Pau and Biarritz are 45 minutes away

+ BY CAR

Toulouse - Pau - Biarritz - Motorway A 64
Exits 7 (Salies) or 8 (Orthez)

Bordeaux - Bayonne Motorway A 63
Exit 8 (St Geours de Maremne)

+ BY TRAIN

TGV Dax connection Salies-de-Béarn/
Sauveterre-de-Béarn by bus

TGV Orthez connection bus Salies-de-Béarn/
Sauveterre-de-Béarn by bus line 809 or taxi

Puyoô railway station connection Salies-de-Béarn/
Sauveterre-de-Béarn by bus or taxi

le petit +

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