



**Coteaux  
Béarn  
Madiran**  
Tourisme & Loisirs

# CONCHEZ-DE-BEARN

## An 18<sup>th</sup> century Bearn village

**Circuit : 300 m ♦ 1h**



At the dawn of the 11th century, the village of Conchez occupied a defensive position on the narrow ridge between the Léés and Lisau valleys. Surrounded by ditches and pickets, it was protected by a wooden castle, which has since disappeared, built on the feudal mound on the site of today's cemetery.

The stone-built Romanesque church of Saint-Germain-d'Auxerre stood in the Lisau valley (to the east of the village). It was reported to be in ruins in 1676. The only remnant of this building is a Chrism on the north-west wall (aisle) of the present-day church.

In 1385, even before Garlin, Conchez became the fifth village in the Lembeye bailiwick, with 38 ostaus (homes), and was mentioned as a fortified village.

In the 16th century, there were 24 plots in the "castet" surrounded by ditches. The gardens were outside the village.

The censier (land register) from the 17th century (1676) has enabled us to reconstruct the layout of the village. This document shows the existence of a Protestant church and cemetery. The church of Saint-Germain stood on the site of today's cemetery. The current church was built in 1770 and consecrated in December 1771, still under the patronage of Saint-Germain d'Auxerre.

A 16th-century house in the village (maison de Toulon) features the Béarn coat of arms (two cows) on its façade, as well as an inscription in old Béarnais, bearing the date 1517. Another bas-relief depicts two figures in medieval-style pleated garb holding a shield whose ornaments seem to have disappeared.

Conchez enjoyed its heyday in the 18th century. Several noble and middle-class families settled in the village for the summer. They built the fine residences we see today on the remains of the old houses. Wealthy merchants, doctors, surgeons, royal notaries, a lay abbot and two noble families, the de Brumont-Disse and the de Hiton, turned the former "castet" into a prestigious residential area. From then on, Conchez-de-Béarn had its own market, its own doctor, its own apothecary, its own notary, its own bakers and its own grocery shops, and in 1790, with a population of almost a thousand, it became the capital of a short-lived canton.

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### 1 Brumont residence

N° 11. Now a presbytery and dwelling. This large residence, consisting of three U-shaped buildings with a central pavilion, belonged to the De Brumont-Disse family, lords of Conchez, the family's home village. Jean de Brumont, a doctor born in this house, contributed to the revival of the spa industry in the 18th century. The de Brumonts donated part of this property to the commune in 1832 to be used as a presbytery.



### 2 Lamothe-Maucou residence

Between N° 11 and 5. This house once housed the Conchez apothecary. It is partly built on the ditches and includes a base that was used as a shed.



### 3 Dartigalas-Blandin residence

N° 5. This old residence was partly built on the moat, and the façade was extended and refurbished in the second half of the 18th century.

In 1769, Jacques Blandin, royal notary, married Dame Jeanne Dartigalas, daughter of a master surgeon. Some members of this family emigrated to Spain, then Cuba and the Americas.



### 4 Beulaygue House

To the right of N°19. Acquired by Sieur Paquaa in 1676, this house later became the village inn run by Sieur Beulaygue (meaning "drinks water" in Bearnais!).

In front of the inn, there used to be a square called "Lou Prat de Brumont".



### 5 House in Toulon

N° 235. 16th century origin. This is the only remaining house in the old Renaissance town.

It was built in 1517 by Arnauton de Portet, known as TOLO, hence the name TOULON.

In 1535 it belonged to Arnauton de Portet, then to Arnauton de Lacaze. The bas-relief on the façade with the coat of arms of Béarn (two cows) bears the inscription "L'an 1517, lo 13de fevre Bernat deu Porte aperat TOLO me fe. Bive la Baqua. HIS / A / M /."



### 6 Town Hall

*Opposite the Daniel Brus residence.* The current town hall, formerly a school, bears the date 1887. In the centre of the façade is the bust of Marianne, and on either side, above the windows, the mascarons of Jules Ferry, on the right, and a figure in officer's uniform, on the left



### 7 Daniel Brus residence

N° 209. Anterior wing dated 1721 D.B. This building was built by Daniel Brus, a wealthy merchant from Conchez who died in 1742 and whose family was certainly large. Built partly on the moat, this residence includes an elegant wooden gallery on the east side, visible from the D13. The south wing was converted in 1738.



### 8 Blandin residence

N° 191. A former bourgeois family (lawyers, notaries, apothecaries, etc.) found in Diusse and Thèze. In 1780, Pierre Blandin, a lawyer, married Demoiselle Ursule Brus, his neighbour. In those days, people got married in his street! The Conchez school moved into this house before the neighbouring village of Diusse joined the school system.



### 9 Hiton's residence

N° 115. Bernard de Hiton-Conchez, a comrade-in-arms of Henri IV, obtained the ennoblement of this house by letters patent in 1591. He was received into the States of Béarn under the title of Monsieur de Hiton-Conchez on 17 August 1594. The beautiful entrance door with its stone pediment dates from the 17th century. A little way from the house, a fine 16th-century barn can be seen from the main road.

## The church of Saint-Germain in Auxerre



The church, consecrated in December 1771, was built in 1770 to replace a church that occupied the space of the current cemetery. As early as the year 1000, a Romanesque church existed to the east of the village, in the Lisau valley. It was declared to be in ruins in 1620, and the only remnant is a Christ visible on the north side, outside the side aisle of the current church.

The interest of Saint-Germain d'Auxerre lies in its décor and furnishings from the second half of the 18th century, some of which are listed in France's supplementary inventory of monuments.

- Altarpiece in the choir, by Giraudy (1778), with its altarpiece (Christ on the Cross between the Virgin and Saint Germain d'Auxerre)
- Altarpiece in the side aisle (second half of the 18th century) Altarpiece: Virgin and Child giving the Rosary to Saint Dominic

- 1771: wrought iron choir screen, varnished oak pulpit, middle stoup with gadroons, "Grand Antique" marble from Hèches in the Hautes Pyrénées, lectern on walnut, oak and chestnut stand

- Gilded wood chandelier by Giraudy Cadet (1787)

- The oak and chestnut panelling (circa 1787) covering all the walls of the building, as well as the side benches, is a rare and precious piece of decoration.

- Grandstand bearing the date 1801

The three choir windows, Saint-Jean Baptiste, Saint Germain d'Auxerre and Saint-Pierre, are by the Delmas workshop (early 20th century). The two stained glass windows in the nave, the Virgin and Saint Paul, date from the 19th century. All the windows were recently restored by the Henri Chaudron workshop in Garos.

## The fountains



Two fountains still exist in Conchez-de-Béarn. They are supplied with water. Together with the well in the village square, they were the main public sources of drinking water before the water distribution network was installed in the 1960s.

**Paul's fountain** is rustic in appearance, with a brick vault and a stone-framed masonry façade opening onto a basin tiled in red terracotta. Its date of construction is unknown, but it was already on the 1819 land register. It is located at the bottom of a valley to the north of the village on the Chemin de La Motte. Recently restored, it offers a rest area in the hollow of a cool valley, with its stone bench and shady trees. *Signposted route.*



**The Buc fountain.** More carefully constructed than the Paul fountain, it is perhaps the oldest (*to the east of the village*).

