

## Jézeau - The Stones' Crest

In a few steps, climb up to admire, over the top of the "Crête des Pierres", the view of the Arreau basin; further the charming little village of Jézeau and its exceptional church are waiting you.



Duration : 2h15    Ascent : 230 m    Difficulty : easy

- > Location: Pailhac, at 27 km from the south of Lannemezan by the D939, D929 and D19
- > Car Park: Town Hall Square
- > Paths marking: From 1 to 2 ,white and red - From 2 to 1 ,yellow.

>> *It's also possible to do this path : from Arreau (rue Calamum) following the GR105 (path mark up white and red – 2,5 km and approx. 40mn round trip)*

1-From the city hall, go towards the village centre, then from the square, take the alley on the left (North). Follow it for 250 m, and before the corner, take the path on the right. Follow it for 700 m until an intersection.

2-Leave the GR105 and take the path on the right. Climb the winding track through the woods.

3-Lead out to the "Crête des Pierres" 's lawns. Go up leisurely and go on the slope flank in the middle of the ferns (*viewing point*).

4-After walking the length of the hill, walk down the winding path to a road next to the "Jézeau cemetery". Follow the road until the "Saint-Laurent" church. Continue towards the village, then go down to the right. Join lower road and follow it to the right for 150 m.

5-At the calvary, take the path on the right that goes back to Pailhac.



### Church « St Laurent de Jézeau » – Registered on the list of the properties of « the way of Saint James »

In the valley of Bareille, uphill of Arreau, the village of Jézeau was, in the Middle Ages, the chief place of a lordship whose castle and a part of the village were destroyed by a fire in 1534. It was a crossing place for the pilgrim who was walking to Spain by the Aure valley. Many heritage elements testify to this.

At the church of Jézeau, we are greeted by a portal with a reused chrismon (chi-rhô symbol) of the XIIth century, that accesses to the magnificent south-facing cemetery and to the belvedere (kind of viewpoint building) on the village. From there, we discover the XIIIth century chevet of the church (the end of the church, seen from the enter, composed with walls, roof and openings of the choir, the choir and the ambulatory), whose exquisite Romanesque architecture is reflected in the superposition of geminated arcatures full arch, resting on the axial opening, itself framed by two columns whose capitals hooks (topmost member of a column) are characteristic of this period. A cornice with modillions surrounds the chevet revealing scallop shells, the pilgrims' emblems. We find also shells in the churchyard and on the geminated opening of the bell-tower wall. The interior decor of the church is exceptional.



The panelled vault, moulding exactly the rafters' underside, is composed in two parts: the choir surmounted by historiated scenes about the Passion of Christ and the nave covered with scenes from the New Testament. The retable, main piece of the church, is notable for its Renaissance style. Dated from the second half of the XVIth century, it survived at the counter reformation. This is one of the rare examples of the Renaissance retable in Midi-Pyrénées.

Inspired by the newly imported classical architecture from the antique Rome, the composition is organized by the vertical lines of the pilasters and the horizontal friezes that position the retable in eighteen panels. The iconography is inspired by Saint-Laurent martyr, who died on the grill, but also by "the hanged not hanged man", miracle of St James.