



Mérindol  
2024

GUARDIAN OF THE  
WALDENSIANS' MEMORY.

DESTINATION  
LUBERON  
www.destinationluberon.com



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WANT SOME  
SUGGESTIONS FOR WALKS  
from Mérindol

**1 Between Garrigue and Durance**  
4km - easy  
Starting point: the shady car park in the communal forest of La Garrigue.  
To appreciate the considerable diversity of fauna and flora in this part of the Luberon, set off along the trail from 'La Garrigue', in the shade of the Aleppo pines, and walk across this garrigue vegetation that will delight the botanists among you. Drink in the breathtaking view of the river, the orchards and the water.  
For more information, please contact the tourist office.

**2 In the footsteps of the Huguenots and the Waldensians**  
This path aims to shed light on the historical exile of the Huguenots and the Waldensians, as well as their gradual integration into their host countries, as themes that constitute a common European history and heritage. It also illustrates freedom, respect for human rights, tolerance, and solidarity as fundamental European values.

These walks, which are not difficult, should be avoided when the weather is at its hottest. From 15th June to 15th September, access to the Vaucluse forests is regulated by prefectural decree. If you want to stroll in the forest, contact your Tourist Office in advance or call +33 (0)4 28 31 77 11 (In French only).



**YOUR TOURIST OFFICE**  
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Check our office opening hours on our website here:  
[www.destinationluberon.com](http://www.destinationluberon.com)  
\*You will find a tourist information office at Mérindol town hall.



OTHER SITES TO EXPLORE IN MÉRINDOL  
• The ornithological observatory:

Located on the bank of the Durance heading towards Pertuis, the observatory gives you the chance to spot around 240 species of birds - some resident, others passing through - in complete discretion. This little walk begins at the 'La Garrigue' space, a picnic spot and the starting point for a fitness trail.  
For more information, please contact the tourist office.



• The Mill at the Old Castle - Boudoire Frères:

An olive mill located in a 16th-century building. The property was purchased by the Boudoire family in the mid-20th century. At that time, stone millstones were still used to crush the olives. Today, the equipment is fully compliant with European hygiene and safety norms, while maintaining the utmost respect for the ancient manufacturing traditions. Every year, the mill crushes some 200 tonnes of olives, brought here by 800 local producers.  
The mill is open to visitors.

**'INTRIGUE IN THE TOWN' RECREATIONAL VISIT!**

Travel back in time to Mérindol in 1528, at the height of the tension between Waldensians and Catholics.

Buy your investigator's pouch at the VIVAL shop or the Ambroisie Bar & Tobacconist.



LA TERRASSE  
DES CIGALES

Au cœur de Mérindol, petit village au pied du Luberon, Sébastien et Mathieu vous proposent une carte de spécialités provençales cuites au feu de bois. Abrités par des muriers platanes et figuiers, c'est à l'ombre que vous découvrirez poissons grillés et viandes mijotées de la région.

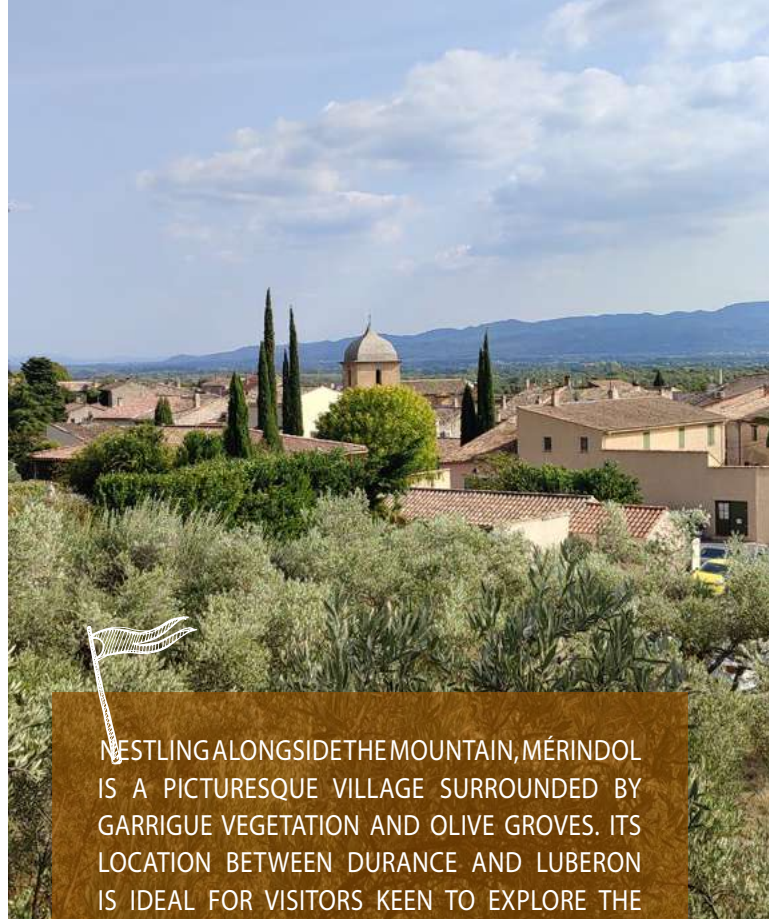
21 RUE DES CIGALES - 84360 MÉRINDOL  
09 80 42 66 49 - [www.laterrassedescigales.fr](http://www.laterrassedescigales.fr)



Le Moulin à huile du Vieux Château date du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Il se trouve au cœur du village de Mérindol. Depuis quatre siècles, la fabrication d'huile d'olive se perpétue sous sa voûte chargée d'histoire. C'est la cinquième génération de la famille Boudoire qui perpétue la tradition. Particularité du Moulin : on broie les Olives à la meule de pierre.

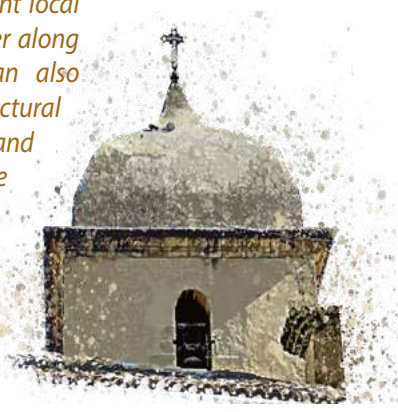
On y propose trois catégories d'huile d'olive :  
• Huile d'olive vierge extra tradition  
• Huile d'olive vierge extra AOP  
• Huile d'olive vierge à l'ancienne

**MOULIN À HUILE DU VIEUX CHÂTEAU**  
8 Rue du Moulin à Huile 84360 Mérindol  
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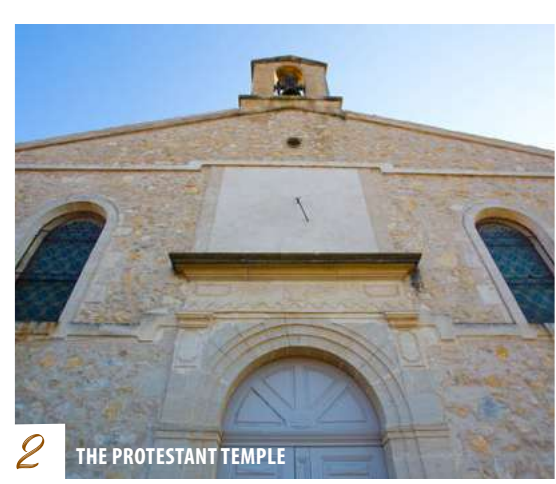


NESTLING ALONGSIDE THE MOUNTAIN, MÉRINDOL IS A PICTURESQUE VILLAGE SURROUNDED BY GARRIGUE VEGETATION AND OLIVE GROVES. ITS LOCATION BETWEEN DURANCE AND LUBERON IS IDEAL FOR VISITORS KEEN TO EXPLORE THE REMARKABLE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS. WALKERS WILL LOVE IT. THE VILLAGE IS ALSO KNOWN FOR ITS CONNECTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF THE WALDENSIANS, A PERSECUTED RELIGIOUS MINORITY, WHO FIRST SETTLED HERE IN THE LATE 15TH CENTURY. ENTIRELY DESTROYED IN 1545, THE VILLAGE OF MÉRINDOL REMAINS, TO THIS DAY, THE GUARDIAN OF A MEMORY THAT HAS VERY MUCH LEFT ITS MARK ON MODERN-DAY PROVENCAL REGION.

*This document invites you to travel back in time from the present-day village to the ruins of Old Mérimindol, guided by the most important local monuments. As you meander along the village streets, you can also admire many small architectural details (such as dates and inscriptions engraved on the stone) which will tell you the history of the sites and the religion.*



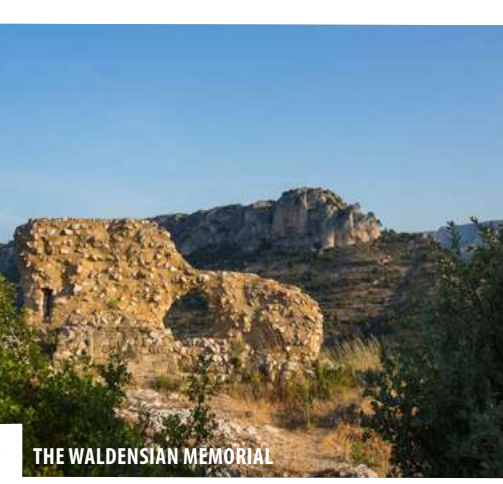
1 CHURCH OF SAINTE-ANNE



2 THE PROTESTANT TEMPLE



3 LA MUSE (MUSEUM OF WALDENSIAN HISTORY)



4 THE WALDENSIAN MEMORIAL

The Church of Sainte-Anne was built after the Waldensian episode. It dates back to the 1750s, when a permanent building replaced the wooden chapel built in 1667. The latter had become too cramped by that time, in light of the forced conversions caused by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The church fell into disrepair during the Revolution, before being restored and enlarged during the 19th century. The blond shell limestone façade is geometrical and sober in appearance. Its Saracen onion dome bell tower, unique in the region, soars above the village. The interior walls are covered with a light-coloured plaster, leaving only the main elements in red limestone visible: the arcades punctuating the bays of the nave, the arcades of the side chapels, the band encircling the nave and the choir at the base of the vault. The decorative elements include a number of works from the 18th and 19th centuries, among them two wooden altars, a Madonna and Child in polychrome wood and, on either side of the choir, a painting depicting Saint Anne and Mary and another depicting the Virgin in glory.

2 THE PROTESTANT TEMPLE

Over the course of history, the village of Mérimindol has had a number of buildings devoted to Protestant worship. The first, built in the mid-16th century, was enlarged a century later and then destroyed in 1685. The remains of its bell tower can still be seen today at the corner of the Rue des Gascons and Rue des Écoles. This tower is referred to as the 'belfry'. The current temple dates back to 1808, thanks to Napoleon, who allowed the restoration of worship at the end of the Revolution. Its architecture is of great simplicity, without figurative images, in accordance with the Protestant ideal. The facade, topped with a simple bell tower, is adorned with a large sundial. On the building's left-hand exterior wall, a panel made in 1998 recalls the significant dates of Protestantism in Mérimindol. The building was last restored in 2012.

3 LA MUSE (Museum of Waldensian History)

La Muse is a space devoted to the memory of Mérimindol's Waldensian past and, in a broader sense, to the Waldensian movement throughout Luberon. A themed library for use by students and researchers complements the exhibition hall. This cultural institution is run by the Association d'Études Vaudoises et Historiques du Luberon (Luberon Association for Waldensian and Historical Studies). It is located in an old sheep pen, itself built on landscaped grounds with a picnic area. One of the main long-distance hiking trails in the region (the GR 6) passes through it.

See our website for the museum's opening times: [www.destinationluberon.com](http://www.destinationluberon.com)

4 THE WALDENSIAN MEMORIAL

The Waldensian Memorial stands on a rocky spur of the Petit Luberon, at the site of the old village of Mérimindol, which has overlooked the Durance Valley since the first half of the 13th century. At that time, a town was gradually built and then fortified around a castrum, or stronghold. By the early 14th century, it had some 40 dwellings (around 200 inhabitants). The village was abandoned in 1348 in the aftermath of several decades of war and, especially, the Black Death epidemic that was ravaging a large part of the region at the time. From the end of the 15th century, more than a thousand Waldensian families from the Alps were invited to settle in sixteen villages in the Luberon. The lords of that time wanted to repopulate their fiefs and restore the ruins of abandoned villages. In 1504, the site of the perched village of Mérimindol was once again occupied. The Waldensian brought with them their culture, and above all, their faith inherited from Vaudès, a Lyonnais preacher from the end of the 12th century. This preacher, also known as Pierre Valdo, advocated an ideal of poverty that, according to him, was in line with the Gospel.

In 1532, the Waldensian officially joined the Protestant Reformation at the Chanforan Synod. Identified by the inquisitor Jean de Roma, they were then pursued as heretics. Persecutions against them intensified until 1545. In that year, in April, a royal decree was enforced by the Parliament of Aix, represented by its president, Jean Maynier d'Oppède. He demanded "the total extermination of the Waldensian and Lutherans". From April 13th to 21st, the Luberon was invaded by royal and pontifical troops. The village of Mérimindol was razed, along with a dozen surrounding villages. The number of all victims of the massacre was estimated to be nearly 3,000 people.

From 1560 onwards, the survivors rebuilt their village, which expanded in the 18th century into the plain, the current site of Mérimindol. The old village was gradually abandoned in the 19th century. The entirety of its ruins then became highly evocative of the infamous massacre of 1545. Excavations carried out on the site in 1992 revealed the ancient dungeon and the castle chapel. Between these two remnants, the Waldensian Memorial was inaugurated at the summit of the castrum, from where the view extends from the Alps to the Étang de Berre and the Alpilles (orientation table).

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VIEWPOINT INDICATOR



VIEWPOINT INDICATOR



THE DURANCE VALLEY



RUE DE LA MUSE



RUINS OF THE OLD CASTLE



THE DURANCE DRAINAGE CANAL