



Chemin de CLUNY : GUYENNE - GASCOGNE

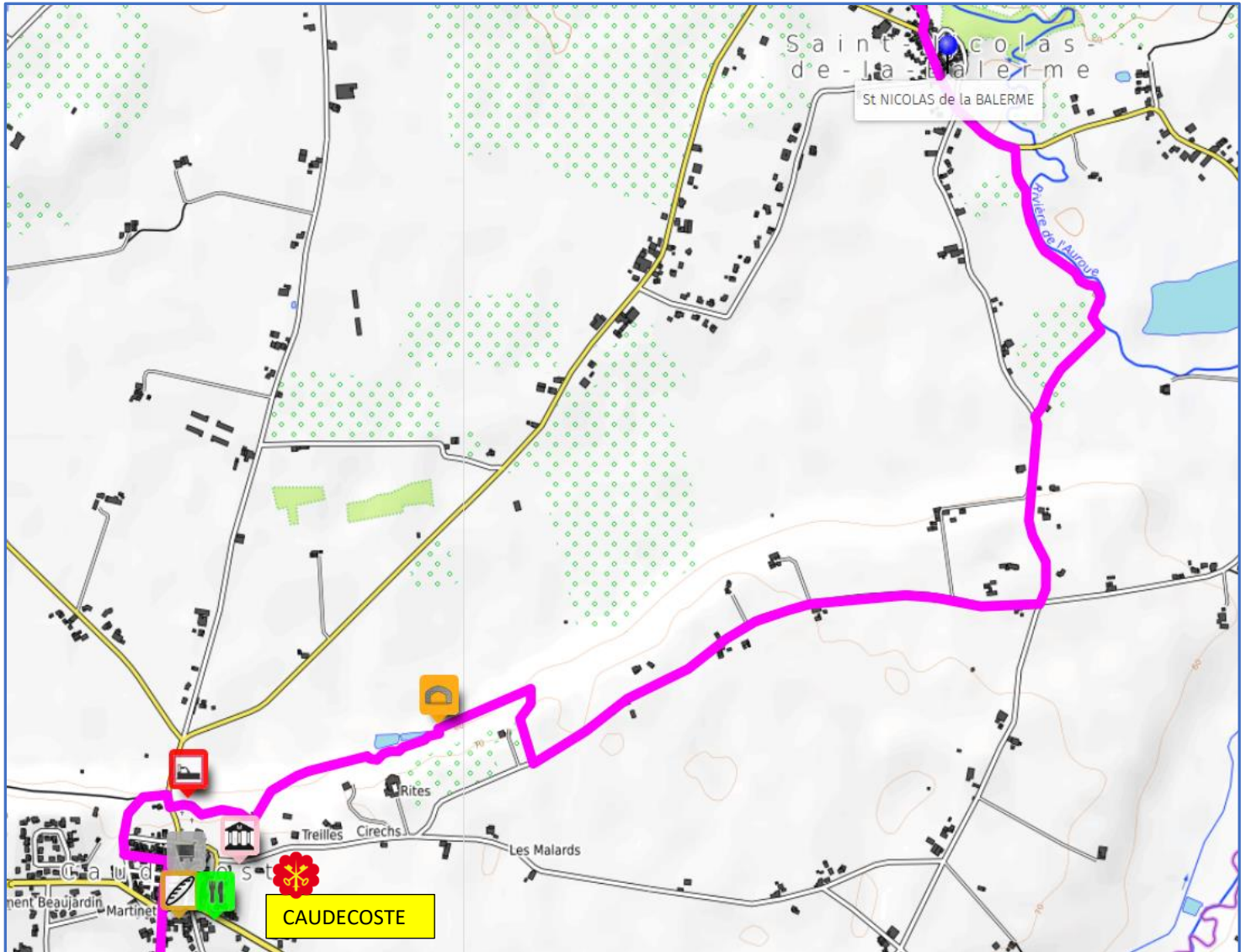


DIRECTION WEST - EAST : Agen - Moissac



Stage 9 R: - Caudecoste - Saint Nicolas de la Balerm

Section length: 5,1km Allow: 1h15mn Height difference: + 22m / - 43m – Difficulty: Easy



Waymarking: Red and green



Driving distance to Caudecoste is 16.5km from Agen and 36km from Moissac.

Parking: Place de la Mairie (additional parking near the D129 close to the school)

Start point: Place de la Mairie

From the main square (**Place de la Mairie**) turn left into '**Rue Roger Dublin**'. At the end of Rue Roger Dublin turn right along the road. After about **40m**, fork left down a grass track between vegetable gardens.

At the bottom of the track, turn right. After approximately **75m**, this arrives at a main road (**D114**). Turn right along the road. After about **20m**, cross over the road and turn left over a small stone footbridge.

Continue onto a tree-lined track, passing a *lavoir* (former wash-house) on your left. After about **50m**, as the track turns to the right, turn into a smaller woodland path on the left. Continue on the woodland path till you come to a chain link fence next to a house. Shortly before the chain link fence ends, turn left onto a grass track. Cross a small mound over a stream and follow the path to the right.

At the end of a fence, turn right and the immediately left near an old shed. Continue on this path with a lake on your left. After a small pump house, turn left over a small bridge crossing a ditch. Turn right, keeping a mature hedge on your right.

The grass track meets a farm track. Turn right and immediately take the left fork, which leads uphill along a grass track between trees. At the top of the hill turn left onto a road and continue for approximately **1.5km** until you come to a crossroads (just after a house on the right called '**Au Carrefour**').

Turn left at the crossroads. The road leads slightly downhill between houses. Eventually there is a house called '**Couleau**' on your left, followed by a wood-clad house on your right. Immediately after the wood-clad house, turn right onto a track. This becomes a grass track and passes through orchards. Follow it round to the left. At the end of the orchards, follow a mature hedge next to a stream. Keep going until you come out on a road (**D284**). Turn left and follow the road into the village of St. Nicolas de la Balermé.

St Nicolas de la Balermé:

*The 15th century **chateau of St. Phillippe** is a fine example of a Gascony style castle. It occupies an exceptional site above the flood zone on the left bank of the Garonne. It can be seen from the nearby bridge over the Garonne.*

*The **church of Saint Nicolas de la Balermé** was destroyed during the religious wars and was reconstructed towards the end of the 16th century. It is a mixture of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. It houses a wooden statue of Saint Roch, who became the patron saint of the parish. This listed statue was carved by a local craftsman in the 15th century.*

Caudecoste:

Caudecoste is the only bastide (fortified village) founded by a religious order (Cluny).

Its history dates back to ancient times. Neolithic objects have been found here. There is also a listed Bronze Age site a few hundred meters from the village.

The first inhabitants, from 1200 BC, were Ligurians. They believed the local spring – now known as 'La Fontaine de St Jean' - had healing properties. The Ligurians were driven out around 500 BC by the Iberians, who then settled here.

The archives indicate that a village was on the present site from the year 900 AD, then belonging to the Viscount of Bruilhois. In 1049, Caudecoste (which belonged formerly to the church of Saint-Martin de Layrac) became a dependency of the Cluniac abbey, the Prior of Layrac being the "Seigneur" (Lord).



The 'lavoir' provides a stopping place for walkers and hikers on the Cluny Way, which passes through Caudecoste.