

While you are here ...

There is plenty to explore.

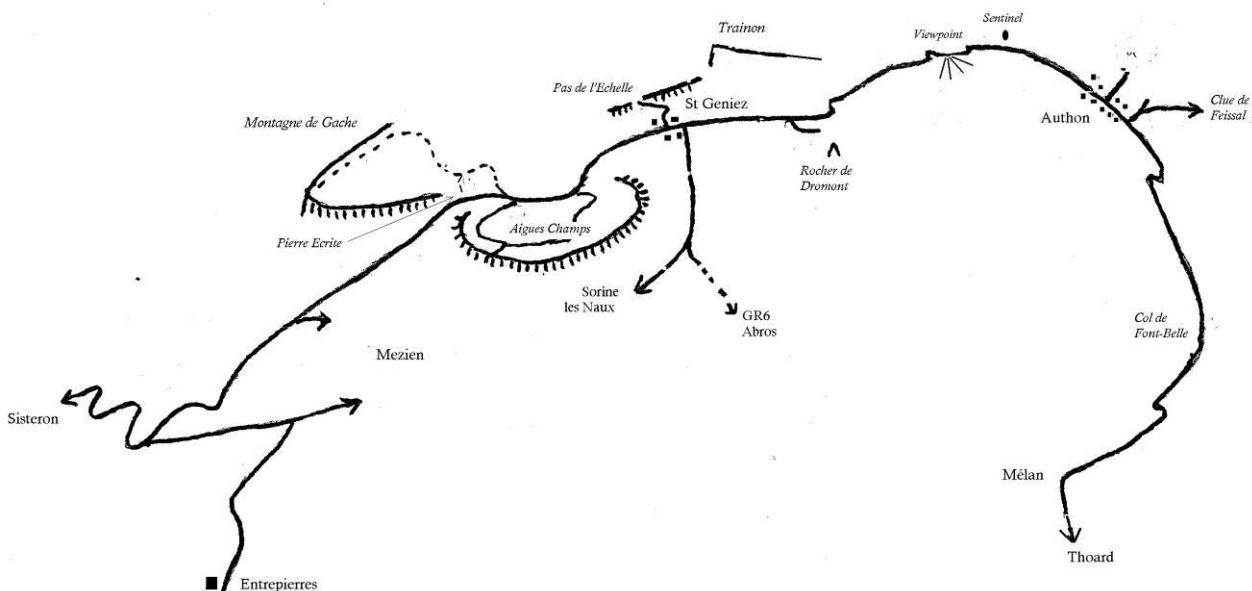
Sisteron itself is well worth wandering around, with its narrow streets and staircases. Visit its citadel, cathedral and the museum behind the cathedral. There is a small market on Wednesday morning, and a larger one on Saturday morning. [The local tourism website](#) is quite handy for finding out what's on locally.

If you need somewhere to cool off, there is a free [“plan d'eau”](#) in Sisteron. This is an open-air pool which is open from 9.30am – 9pm, with lifeguards from 11am to 7pm. There's a small café and it is next to the sports/leisure centre.



The local area is part of UNESCO's first ever Geopark, and there is much of geological interest. For example, just north of Digne, on the road to Barles (D900a), there is a spectacular wall of ammonites. Further north from there a fossil of an ichthyosaur in a fair state of preservation can be found hidden away in the hills. These are some distance away.

Closer to Entrepierres, the drive up to **Col de Font-Belle** is well worth doing. En route, you should stop at the Pierre Ecrite, a Roman inscription commemorating Dardanus, who settled nearby and corresponded with St Augustine. After passing through the village of St Geniez, there are some good views and then a 'sculpture' by Andy Goldsworthy. At the Col de Font-Belle itself, there is plenty of parking, picnic tables and an information board giving details of local walks.



A much shorter expedition is to the 16th century pack-horse bridge **Pont de la Reine Jeanne**, named after the 14th century Queen of Naples and Countess of Provence, who is supposed to have granted various privileges to local people as a reward for their keeping quiet about the birth of her illegitimate child. (Her marital history was somewhat chequered – her first husband was assassinated, her second caught a cold while bathing and died, her third was mentally unstable

and died, probably from poison, and her fourth outlived her.)

To reach the bridge, instead of turning left at the Entrepierres school to reach the old village, turn right and follow the road for about 7 km past Vilhosc and through the forest. There is some parking beside the road just before the bridge. You can walk across the bridge, up the forestry track (about 1½ km) to the ruined village of St Symphorien, in which one house has been restored and is inhabited. The school and church have been bulldozed for safety reasons. A few of the ruins have been adapted as shelters for sheep.



The [Gorges de la Meouge](#) are about a 25 minute drive from Sisteron and there's a series of small pools and waterfall to swim in.



There's a very friendly and reasonable [water sports](#) place in Volonne, the next town south of Sisteron. It is based in the campsite there, but it is open to the public. You may need to book in advance.

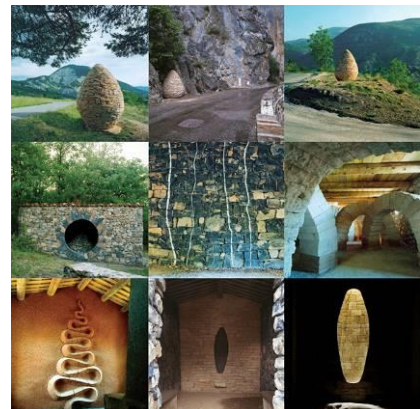
If you are looking for a bit of an adrenaline hit, head north east of Sisteron to the [Via Ferrata](#), for a bit of rock climbing, zipwires etc...



For a bit of relaxation and pampering, about 40 mins south east of Sisteron is Digne-Les-Bains, a spa town, we recently discovered the [spa](#) there. It was a pleasant way to spend a couple of hours, but just remember that men must wear swimming trunks (not shorts), and everyone must wear swimming hats. The minerals are meant to be particularly good for the treatment of respiratory and rheumatic problems.

The arty amongst you may be interested in Andy Goldsworthy's "[Refuge d'Art](#)", a 150km hike with the largest collection of his permanent works, which are placed along the hike in the area around Digne and Sisteron, including the sculpture mentioned above. Some of his work is also part of a larger trail of contemporary outdoor art, [L'Art en Chemin](#).

If you fancy visiting a market, the biggest one locally (about 45 minutes away) is Forcalquier which takes place in the centre of town on Monday mornings. You park on the outskirts and can hitch a ride on the horse drawn carriage into the town centre.



The beauty and skincare company, [L'Occitane](#) have their base just outside Manosque, (about 35 mins south - you can see the factory from the motorway). There are guided tours (book in advance) and a shop (10% discount).

Further afield...

[Aix en Provence](#) is a beautiful town with a pedestrianised centre, with lots of small streets to wander, various markets, fountains around every corner. It's international opera festival takes place from 4th to 24th July this year. If you get an early flight into Marseille, this is a lovely place to stop off for a wander around the town and have an early lunch!



[The Gorges du Verdon](#), nicknamed “the Grand Canyon of Europe” is a very dramatic gorge with various walks, water sports and has a huge man-made lake, Lac St Croix, at the end of it. You can kayak or paddle board up the gorge too!



If you are driving there from Sisteron, take the route across Valensole plateau, famous for its lavender fields.

