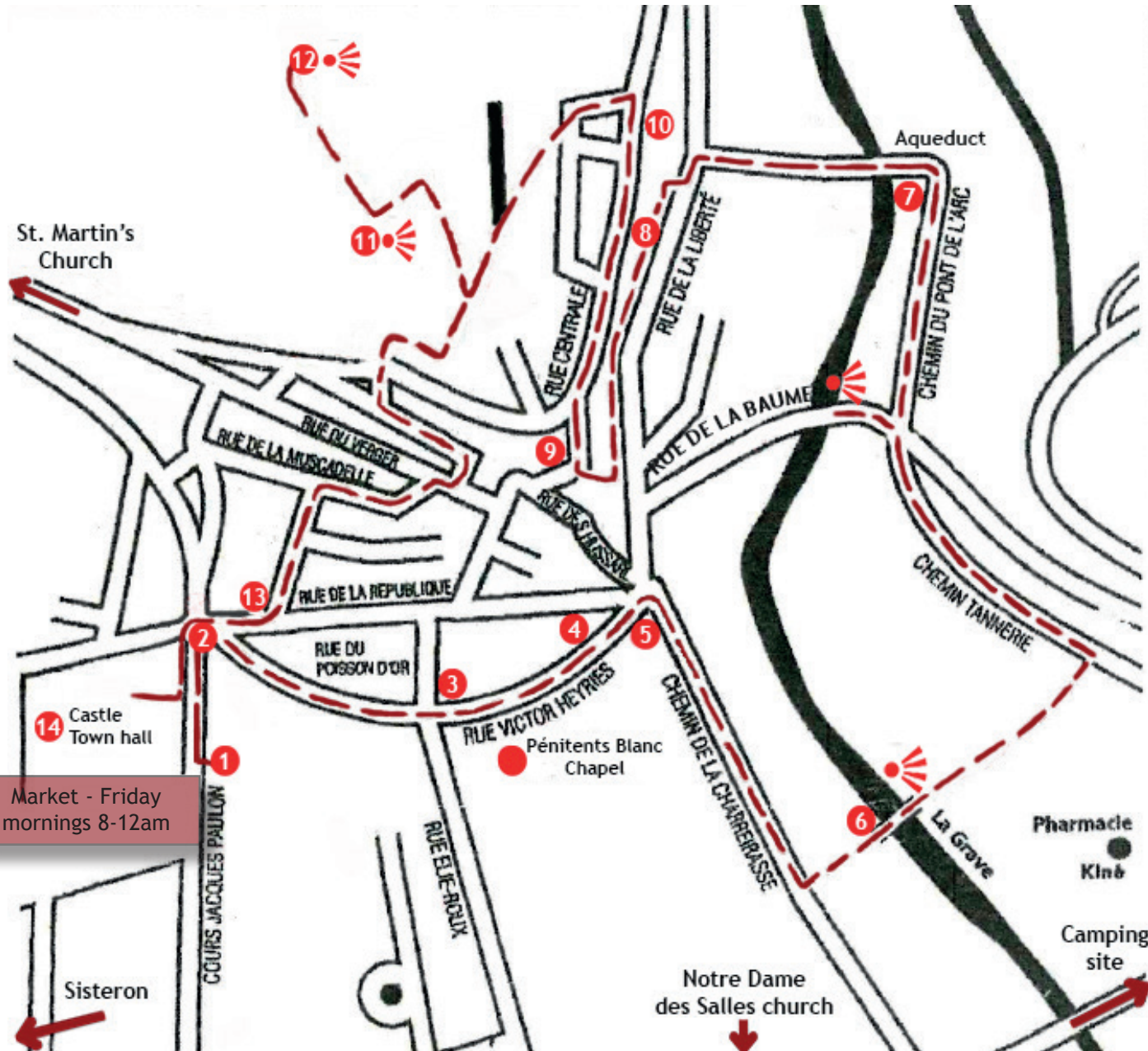


MAP OF VOLONNE



Market - Friday mornings 8-12am

- 1- Oil mill
- 2- Fountain
- 3- Auberge du Poisson d'Or
- 4- Main fountain
- 5- Seigniorial dwelling

- 6- Bridge on the Grave
- 7- Aqueduct
- 8- Rampart walk
- 9- Old gate
- 10- Doors

- 11- Clock tower
- 12- Watch tower
- 13- Andrône
- 14- Castle

- Tour
- Monument
- ☀ Viewpoint

Discovering
Volonne...

A TOUR IN THE
OLD VILLAGE



English



Do not throw it away in the street, thank you!
In Volonne, we recycle! (Paper=blue recycling bin)

According to various testimonies, this land was inhabited as early as the prehistoric times. However, it was first mentioned in a written document only at the beginning of the 11th century. The centre of the village is built on a rocky peak above the Grave torrent, facing south.

The original settlement has grown little by little, first towards the Grave, then spreading downwards the rocky peak to eventually reach the shores of the Durance.

Traces of its history can be seen everywhere in Volonne: in its streets, on its monuments...During this walk through the old town you'll see old towers, aqueduct, castle, mills and various old habitations!

1 - OLD OIL MILL (15TH CENTURY). You can still see the water wheel that was set in motion by the canal water and could then move the grindstone. Volonne nearly is the most northern place for olive tree cultivation and olive oil production. Nowadays, it's our tourist information centre.

2 - FOUNTAIN-MEMORIAL MONUMENT, up the main street, is unique in the Alps of Haute Provence. It replaced another fountain which used to be in front of the bakery.

This place is the main square and used to be called *Place du Béalage* (*béal* meant canal). This canal used to supply water to the wheat mills and oil mills of the town ; it's now hidden under the place.



Source: *La Vieille Pierre Volonnaise*

3 - AUBERGE DU POISSON D'OR. It was an old country inn, located at the corner of the *Rue du Poisson d'Or*. Napoleon stopped here to have lunch on his way back from Elba on March 5th, 1815. When you're there, you can look up to see a nicely sculpted beam at the corner of the house: it is said to have been sculpted by a rafter when the Durance was frozen. At that time, roofs were larger and used to protect the beam. You can also see a beautiful old door (n°19).

4 - The MAIN FOUNTAIN. It was built on this place which used to be the main square of the village during the *Ancien Régime* (monarchy); a lavoir was added later. This fountain replaced the one that used to be a bit further at the crossroads close to *Rue de la Baume*.

5 - The house at n°44 used to be the **OLD SEIGNIORIAL DWELLING** (15th to 17th centuries, then in the 17-18th century), its beautiful door is special because of its horizontal knocker. Later, a part of the building (now n°42) became the village hall and the office of the clerk of the peace.

6 - The GRAVE. When on the bridge above the torrent, you can have a general view of the towers and the old town.



7 - The AQUEDUCT was built between 1550 and 1650. It was still supplying the town's mills and a fountain at the beginning of the 19th century.

8 - The RAMPART WALK was actually a simple access path to the medieval town, but the high walls of the houses built on the rocky peak used as protection walls.

9 - The OLD GATE. It used to mark one of the entrances of the town and were closed in case of invasions or epidemics.

10 - The **DOOR FRAMES** of houses n°42 and 43 of the Rue Centrale are traces of the town's medieval past.

11 - The *relogi* - town's clock - is on the **CLOCK TOWER** since the end of the 16th century.

12 - The **WATCH TOWER** is the highest tower of the village, a relic of the 12th century. In the 14th century, it was described as Volonne fortress, composed of this tower and a building which foundation was used as a seigniorial dungeon.

From the esplanade, you have a beautiful view on the town's roofs - traces of the evolution of the village -, the Durance meanders - from Sisteron to the edge of the Valensole plateau - and the *Pénitents des Mées*.

13 - An **ANDRÔNE** is a covered passage with a vaulted ceiling. There are several *andrônes* in the old town.

14 - The **CASTLE**, also called *château-bastide* in Provence. It was built by Melchior de Valavoire, lord of Volonne at the beginning of the 17th century, as a symbol of his marriage with Julie de Rousset. You can see their armories and monogram among the decorations of the beautifully carved ceiling (these decorations are called the *gypseries*) decorating the main stairway. The *gypseries* of this castle are one of the rare (4 in the region!) and most beautiful relics of that time. Classified as historic monument, you can get in the castle to see them with your own eyes...

OTHER MUST SEE : St. Martin's church, Notre-Dame des Salles church, Pénitents Blancs chapel, St. Jean de Taravon chapel, St. Antoine's lookouts, Tigne summit...