





## Coats of arms



In 31 BC, Octavian defeated the fleet of Mark Antony and Cleopatra at Actium and established peace in the Roman world. Octavian can then establish the empire and assume the name of Augustus.  
A coin was struck in Nîmes to celebrate the event. On the reverse side was a crocodile chained to a palm surmounted by a laurel wreath, symbolizing the conquest of Egypt.

In 1535 they were authorized by king François 1 to adopt the palm tree and the crocodile as the town's coat of arms. Since then the inhabitants have been extremely proud of their crest.

Redesigned in 1986 by Philippe Starck, it can be found all over the town, even in the bronze studs set in the paving of the old town (on sale at the Tourist Office shop).

## The origins of Denim cloth

Nîmes was famous for textile manufacturing in the seventeenth century. Merchants traded mainly in woolen cloth and silk. The range manufactured broadened little by little. Cotton was imported and then indigo, a dye plant grown in Italy that was an economical source of a fine blue colour. *Serge de Nîmes*, a resistant fabric thanks to its oblique weaving with unbleached and indigo-dyed threads, is created. It differs from other serges by its progressive washing and its blue and white shades. At this time, commercial counters are established in the whole world.

The characteristics of this *Serge de Nîmes*, exported to the United States via the ports of Genoa and Manchester, are very similar to those of denim, a fabric used by Levi Strauss in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to make his famous jeans, sturdy and cheap trousers for American gold seekers. If this garment has now conquered all continents and has become a symbol of freedom, it is possible that its origins are Nîmoises.

### MAISON CARRÉE CITY PASS

Built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and dedicated to Caius and Lucius Caesar, the grandsons of the Emperor Augustus, the Maison Carrée is one of the best-conserved temples of the Roman world. It impresses by the harmonious proportions, elegant columns with Corinthian capitals and the finesse of the architectural decor.

The first Roman temple dedicated to imperial worship, this prestigious building is now a candidate for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Information and opening hours : [www.arennes-nimes.com](http://www.arennes-nimes.com)

### LES ARÈNES CITY PASS

Considered as being the best-conserved amphitheater of the Roman world, the Arena was built at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, shortly after the Coliseum in Rome. It had capacity for more than 24,000 spectators who watched hunts and animal and gladiator fights.

The amphitheater is now used for bullfights, congresses, concerts and sports events. On the spot, an audiopon will allow you to learn more about the history of this emblematic place!

Information and opening hours : [www.arennes-nimes.com](http://www.arennes-nimes.com)



### TOUR MAGNE CITY PASS

The 'Big Tower' stands above the Roman sanctuary and was part of the Augustan walls that ran for more than 6 kilometers. It was 36 meters high and was built around and over a previous Celtic tower that had been 18 meters high, disappeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is now reduced to 32.50 meters high. The view from the top is remarkable, running from Mont Ventoux to the Pic St Loup.

Information and opening hours : [www.arennes-nimes.com](http://www.arennes-nimes.com)



### PONT DU GARD, L'AQUEDUC DE NÎMES CITY PASS

Built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, the Pont du Gard is without a doubt the most spectacular structure of the aqueduct and is on the Unesco World Heritage List since 1985. The Romans built a bridge of exceptional dimensions to cross the Gardon valley: 275 meters long, 48 meters high (the highest of the Roman world) and three superposed tiers of arches.

Information and opening hours : [www.pontdugard.fr/en](http://www.pontdugard.fr/en)



### CATHÉDRALE NOTRE-DAME-ET-SAINT-CASTOR

Consecrated in 1096, the cathedral of Notre Dame and Saint Castor has been modified on many occasions over the centuries. The upper frieze is considered to be a major example of Romanesque sculpture in the South of France. The motifs of the pediment and the cornice - acanthus leaves and lions' heads - were inspired by the Maison Carrée.



### TEMPLE DE DIANE

In the first century BC, this building was part of the Augusteum with the sacred spring, an immense portico, a small theater and a nymphaeum. Although its purpose is not clear and the origin of its name unknown, the rich ornamentation inside is well conserved. The romantic nature of the ruins has inspired many artists, such as the famous painter Hubert Robert.



### MUSÉE DE LA ROMANITÉ CITY PASS

16 boulevard des Arènes

Contemporary building designed by Elizabeth de Portzamparc, this new museum with international reputation is a splendid showcase for 5,000 heritage works. An innovative museum, an archaeological garden and a living space, the building has a triple ambition: preserve heritage, share it with visitors and pass this unique heritage on to future generations. The museum also hosts temporary exhibitions.

Information and opening hours : [www.museedelaromanite.fr/en/](http://www.museedelaromanite.fr/en/)



### JARDINS DE LA FONTAINE

The first inhabitants of Nîmes settled in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC near the sacred spring. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC the Romans set it in the Augusteum, a vast sanctuary dedicated to the god Nemausus and the emperor Augustus. This monumental set of buildings was rediscovered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the architects Jacques-Philippe Mareschal and Pierre Dardailhon designed a magnificent formal garden that respected the layout of the archaeological remains. The upper part of the garden was developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with Italian and English touches in the style of the time.



### MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS CITY PASS

Rue de la Cité Foulc

With its interior redesigned by the architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte in 1987, The "Musée des Beaux-Arts" presents a rich collection of more than 3600 works characteristic of the French, Flemish, Dutch and Italian schools of painting from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. An impressive Roman mosaic, "The Wedding of Admetus", occupies the central part of the atrium. It was discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the site of the covered market (les Halles).

Information and opening hours : [www.nimes.fr](http://www.nimes.fr)



### MUSÉE DU VIEUX NÎMES CITY PASS

Place de l'Abbé Pierre

Housed in the former bishop's palace built in the late seventeenth century, the "Musée du Vieux Nîmes" possesses collections illustrating life in Nîmes since the end of the Middle Ages. Exhibits range from the everyday to the extraordinary, cloth manufactured by the Nîmes textile industry and a room is devoted to 'serge de Nîmes' and jeans. Visitors to the theme exhibitions and the standing collection thus enjoy a trip back in time.

Information and opening hours : [www.nimes.fr](http://www.nimes.fr)



### MUSEUM - MUSÉE D'HISTOIRE NATURELLE CITY PASS

13 boulevard Armand Courbet

Created in 1895, the Museum has collections in the fields of natural sciences and human sciences. Themes such as Prehistory, ethnography of the 1930s and zoology are presented. The ethnography room has a presentation that has remained deliberately unchanged since the 1930s and reveals the dominant ideas of the colonial era.

Information and opening hours : [www.nimes.fr](http://www.nimes.fr)



### ABBATIALE DE SAINT-GILLES CITY PASS



Built at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the abbey church is a real architectural jewel. In the past, this major site drew pilgrims from all over the world. Today, the monument is listed as a World Heritage Site as part of the "Pilgrimage Route to Santiago de Compostela in France" series. Take the time to admire its sculpted façade, an authentic masterpiece of Romanesque art. Among others, you will find a frieze with an iconography dedicated to the Passion of Christ. Discover its monumental crypt, a full-sized lower church. Exceptional in its size and the quality of its vaults, it still contains the tomb of Saint Gilles.

Information and opening hours : [www.nimes.fr](http://www.nimes.fr)



### TUNNELS DE L'AQUEDUC

On the Vallon d'Escaunes site to Cantarelles, discover two tunnels dug into the rock dating from Roman times. The marks left on the walls by the tools of the Roman builders are still visible. These tunnels were part of the Nîmes aqueduct, which carried water from the Eure springs, near Uzès, to the Castellum Divisurium.

### MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN CARRÉ D'ART CITY PASS

16 place de la Maison Carrée

The collection of the "Musée d'art contemporain", a building designed by Norman Foster, consists of almost 600 works from the 1960s until today. French art movements, including 'Supports-Surfaces' in particular, and important foreign artists are represented. The museum holds two temporary exhibitions of international stature every year and also shows specific projects in a Project Room.

Information and opening hours : [www.carreartmusee.com](http://www.carreartmusee.com)



### MUSÉE DES CULTURES TAURINES HENRIETTE ET CLAUDE VIALLAT CITY PASS

6 rue Alexandre Ducros

Just a stone's throw from the Amphitheater, the "Musée des Cultures Taurines" is a unique institution in France. Opened in 2002 on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Feria de Nîmes, it offers the public a chance to discover a culture that is still active, a rich and varied heritage. Here, works of Art and everyday objects bring to mind both regional and international traditions. Many temporary exhibitions feature great artists such as Picasso and Goya.

Information and opening hours : [www.nimes.fr](http://www.nimes.fr)



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### SENTIER DU COUGOURLIER

Situated to the south-west of Saint-Gilles, the Cougourlier trail allows you to discover the richness and beauty of the Camargue's natural heritage. During this family walk, you can admire a rich and varied fauna and floral Egrets, herons, horses and bulls will give you a unique welcome to this exceptional landscape! The more curious can climb to the top of the escalassoun to enjoy a magnificent panorama of the whole of the Camargue Gardoise!



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### RÉSERVE DU SCAMANDRE

Located in the heart of the Petite Camargue, the "Etang de Scamandre" is a freshwater lagoon covered with reedbeds and home to an abundance of wildlife, including many bird species: herons, falcinella, ibis and of course flamingos. In order to enhance the local natural heritage, a regional nature reserve was created on the edge of the lagoon where it is now possible to hike along various interpretation trails. The landscape is characteristic of the wetlands of the Mediterranean, which here are called *sansouïres*.



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### MAISON DES GORGES DU GARDON

Hameau de Russan, 2 rue de la pente, 30190 Sainte-Anastase

Fun, educational and interactive, the "Maison des Gorges du Gardon", located in the heart of the old hamlet of Russan, will help you discover all the riches of this remarkable environment. Fauna, flora, cliffs and caves are the different themes highlighted in this museum space which will transport young and old to the heart of this natural site that has been inhabited since Prehistoric times!

Information and opening hours : [www.gorgesdugardon.fr](http://www.gorgesdugardon.fr)



### GORGES DU GARDON

A canyon carved by the crystal clear water of the Gardon: an ideal spot for hiking where you will be amazed by this sumptuous regional nature reserve classified as a "biosphere reserve" by UNESCO. To enjoy a breathtaking panorama of the most impressive meander of the gorges, go to the Castellans belvedere located a stone's throw from the village of Russan, where birds of prey and other birds swirl in the heart of this majestic environment.

Informations : [www.gorgesdugardon.fr](http://www.gorgesdugardon.fr)



### LA COMBE DES BOURGUIGNONS

In the heart of the garrigue, in the commune of Marguerittes, you will find the "Combe des Bourguignons", an interesting valley that will delight young and old alike! Along a 2 km long interpretation trail, discover the astonishing remains of the construction work of the "rachalans", local farm workers from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. During your walk, you can admire the famous "capitelles", fascinating dry-stone huts built by these farmers! So, for a walk or even a picnic, you will love this landscape typical of the hinterland of Nîmes!



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### TERROIR DES COSTIÈRES

A kingdom of rolled pebbles deposited by the Rhône and the Durance, the Costières terroir will surprise you with the diversity of its landscapes! Underfoot you'll see a mosaic of different types of soil: white limestone, reddish pebbles, yellow sand or red clay, you'll be amazed by the many colours! Now look up and contemplate the vineyards and orchards that reign supreme on the Costières plateau.



### BOIS DES LENS

A massif composed of several steep hills. Garrigue, insects and protected bird species will delight those who are passionate about botany, ornithology or archaeology. It was in the heart of this space that the Romans came to collect the blocks of stone for the construction of the Maison Carrée. An area to discover on foot or by bike.