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The City Frozen in the Middle Ages Splendour Historic Fortified City of Carcassonne

This classic fortified city in southern France is eloquently described as “The city frozen in medieval times with a wave of an angel’s wand”.

Carcassonne is a town with a circumference of 1.7 kilometres located on the northern side of the Pyrenees Mountains.

The most characteristic feature here is the double-fortification encircling the city.

Carcassonne is situated in a strategic area of southern France that has suffered continuous warfare and plunders since ancient times.

The original fortified wall was built by the Romans during the 3rd century and an additional layer of wall was added during the 13th century.

Narbonne gate is attached to the inner wall and was a central feature of their defence system.

Arrows were fired from these narrow slits on this wall.

Guards were posted night and day along the wall, looking out for enemies.

“Enemy approaching!”

In the event of enemy or suspicious activity, the guards would inform other soldiers through this hole.

On each tower were installed projecting lookout decks.

Soldiers threw large rocks from here to ward off enemies.

Thrown rocks would bounce off the base of castle wall, knocking down enemies as they rolled.

Once you walk through the gate into the town, you will find a stone-paved townscape that remains unchanged from medieval times. About 3 million people visit here every year to experience the romantic medieval atmosphere of the town.

(interview with a father)

“My children always talk about castles and medieval knights so I wanted to bring them here to show them what a real medieval castle looks like.”

However, by the middle of the 19th century the castle was dilapidated.

Many people removed stones from the walls to use them as building materials. The walls were on the brink of collapse.

It was then a French architect Eugene Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc decided to launch a restoration project.

He appealed for the need to preserve the remaining old fortified cities of Europe and dedicated his life in restoring such heritage.

The towers were topped with conical roofs to avoid erosion by wind and rain. However, such architectural style was brought in from northern France and with building materials not from that region.



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These issues created a controversy and were disputed among the scholars. The results were that such debate dictated the method of later restoration methods.

Restoration of the castle walls changed the people's view on preserving the town itself. As a result, the town remained intact and in its original medieval condition.

The basement of this store also remains unchanged.

This basement room was built during the 11th Century as a secret shelter.

There is still some water left in the well.

(Voiceover)

“It is believed that some 27 wells were secretly dug in Carcassonne.

There is actually a river running nearby and when the city was under siege dead animals were thrown into the river to contaminate the water and spread contagious diseases.”

In the town where time has stood still since the Middle Ages, people find great peace in their mind.

(Interview with an old man)

“I thought it is time that I came to see Carcassonne since I'm not young anymore.”

Indeed, there is an old saying in France that describes this special town.

“You should not die without seeing Carcassonne.”