

TAUTAVEL PREHISTORY MUSEUM

INFORMATIONS

Tautavel Prehistory Museum

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Sources

Tautavel Museum website
European Centre for Prehistoric
Research website

Bibliography

Chroniques de la Préhistoire
(Museum publication) by Jacques
Pernaud,
illustrated by Jean-Claude Assalit
Museum Guide

Websites

www.tourisme-pyreneesorientales.com
<https://visitpo.fr/musee-de-la-prehistoire-de-tautavel-pyrenees-orientales/>

Arago Cave

Arago Cave is a cavity 3km away from the village of Tautavel, where scientific excavation work began in 1964. Over 15 m of rubble has allowed scientists and researchers to learn about the climate variations of the southern Corbières and Roussillon dating back 700,000 and 100,000 years.

Some bone remains of big mammals have been collected by Mankind and **more than 50 levels of occupation have been identified**. The most common prey was horses, deer, reindeer, sheep, bison, rhinoceros, fallow deer and musk ox, depending on the era. The abundance and diversity of paleontological remains means that Arago Cave has a key role in the description of some species. A great number of lower Paleolithic lithic tools have been found in amongst wildlife remains. Depending on the level, there are varying quantity and diversity of cut stones, bifacial pieces, core tools, reworked tools (scrapers, serrated tools, chisel, etc.), rough chippings and debris. Human remains are the real treasure of Tautavel. Up until now, **150 human remains have been discovered**, including the famous **Arago 21** (head of a homo Heidelbergensis) et 5 jaws that are particularly well conserved. **Arago 148 and 149 are two human incisors that were found in 2014 and 2015, and Arago 150 is a milk tooth discovered in 2018 in the levels dating back around 560,000 years**. These findings represent children and adults, women and men, cranial and postcranial remains and they are essential to be able to build up a precise idea of what Homo heidelbergensis looked like.

The Tautavel Man

The Tautavel Man was twenty years old and measured 1m60 in height. He was a man of the homo Heidelbergensis species, lived 450,000 years ago and had all the characteristics of the very first Europeans: a receding forehead, a protrusion above the eye sockets, prominent cheekbones and a protruding jaw. He hadn't yet figured out how to make fire but he was an excellent hunter. We believe he chose to settle in Arago Cave due to the ideal location: he could see over the valley, had access to a water source and consequently, his prey.

The Prehistory Museum

Musée de France -

More than 1,500 m² of exhibition space

Tautavel Prehistory Museum is a complex that is centred around the Tautavel Man. The history of humanity in Europe is presented here, from the very first Europeans to Modern history. The wide range of entertainment and activities on offer for the whole family are another great reason to come and visit Tautavel Prehistory Museum. During the French school holidays in the afternoons, there are fun and cultural workshops and activities that bring prehistory to life, create an immersive experience for everyone, to meet our prehistoric ancestors. Tautavel Prehistory Museum organises exciting cultural events all year round (entertainment, exhibitions, meetings, etc.) for visitors. Detailed programme available on the Museum's website.

Interpretation Centre, the First Inhabitants of Europe

Palais des Congrès in Tautavel

This museographic centre will take visitors right to the origins of European humanity, through the history of mankind from 1,800,000 years ago, using 21st century technology.

More than 300 exceptional archaeological items all in one place, an interactive visit with virtual theatres and replicas of the habitat of the very first Europeans.

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