



Prehistory Museum of Bélesta

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PHOTO CREDITS

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Bélesta, straddling the valleys of Agly and Têt, was built around its fortified castle, dating back to the reign of Louis IX. Today, the building houses the Prehistory Museum of Bélesta. The museum showcases what life was like for the first herders and farmers who lived here 6,000 years ago, with an engaging and enjoyable visitor's tour.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING, THE DISCOVERY OF THE LA CAUNE CAVE

In 1983, the locals of Bélesta discovered a **collective burial site** dating from 4500 B.C. inside a cave. Excavations led by Françoise Claustre, Head of Research at the CNRS, unveiled the treasures of this site: eight metres of sediment layers had preserved evidence of the life and activities of the people who occupied the cave over more than 6,000 years (pottery, food remains, hearths, weaving and farming tools, and more). The local council wished to make these treasures accessible to the general public. The medieval castle was purchased to create a museum dedicated to recent prehistory.

THE MUSEUM

Museum designers from Paris worked on an **engaging and visually appealing display** to showcase the collections. **Authentic objects** were presented in glass display cases and a part of the cave was recreated to give visitors an idea of what life was like in the Neolithic era. In addition, **life-size reconstructions** explain the excavation work conducted by archaeologists, and an exact replica of the burial chamber invites visitors to walk in the footsteps of the people who originally discovered the site.

THE ACTIVITIES

As well as the permanent and temporary museum collections, the Château-Musée de Bélesta also organises **educational activities for school pupils**, fun activities for children in the summer, and cultural events for adults all year round (temporary exhibitions, talks, demonstrations, etc.).



Find out more at tourisme-roussillon-confient.fr

