Definition: **Toulouse** from *Collins English Dictionary*

1 a city in S France, on the Garonne River: scene of severe religious strife in the early 13th and mid-16th centuries; university (1229). Pop: 444,392 (2006) Ancient name: **Tolosa**  (təˈloʊsə)

**Summary Article: Toulouse**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Administrative centre of Haute-Garonne département and of the Midi-Pyrénées region in southwest France, 200 km/125 mi southeast of Bordeaux on the River Garonne; population (2005 est) 437,100. It is the fourth city of France, a centre of communications, and the seat of an archbishopric and a university, founded in 1229. The town is a marketing, publishing, and banking centre, and its chief industries are textiles, chemicals, and metallurgy. It is also the hub of France's aircraft and aerospace industry; Concorde was built here. It has also become a major European centre of scientific research, especially in aerospace, electronics, data processing, and agriculture.

**History** Originally a Celto-Ligurian settlement, it was founded by the Romans in 106 BC as **Tolosa**. It was the capital of the Visigoths (see Goth) 419–507, and later of the former provinces of Aquitaine (781–843) and Languedoc. It became the cultural centre of medieval France in the 12th–13th centuries. In 1218 the Count of Toulouse was accused of complicity in the murder of a papal legate, and the town was captured by the elder Simon de Montfort in the pope's crusade against the Albigenses. De Montfort was then killed here later the same year whilst besieging the town for a second time. The last action of the Peninsular War was fought here in 1814 when the Duke of Wellington repulsed the French marshal Soult.

**Features** Toulouse is known as *la ville rose* ('the pink city') because most of the buildings are made from red brick. The old abbey, Basilica of St Sernin (11th-12th centuries), is probably the finest Romanesque church in France. It was the church of the Jacobins and belonged to a monastery founded in 1216. The cathedral of St Etienne is 11th–17th-century. The town's main square is the Place du Capitole, and the Pont Neuf, a 16th-century bridge, joins Toulouse to the western suburb of St Cyprien, southwest of which is the new town of Le Mirail ('The Miracle'), built to house 100,000 people. There are museums of painting, sculpture, archaeology, and natural history; art galleries; and libraries. The university, France's third-oldest, dates from 1230.

**images**
siege of Toulouse

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