

GRANDS CAUSSES & GORGES OF THE TARN & JONTE - SELF GUIDED



Itinerant walking holiday

Discover the spectacular gorges of the Tarn and Jonte and the vast limestone plateaux of "Les Grands Causses".

Beginning in a riverside village with a choice of exhilarating walks, you then cross the steppe-like landscape of the Causse Méjean, to descend into the Gorge of the Jonte. In the Tarn gorge you visit tiny cliff side villages accessible only by foot. Your walks are often accompanied by Vultures soaring overhead, adding to the drama of the landscape. This holiday offers you some of the best walking that the region has to offer. By not changing accommodation every day, you have time to relax, settle in and explore at your own pace.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN MILLAU

Transfer time 0h50

We will organise your transfer from Millau to Meyrueis, which will be your base for the first 3 nights of your holiday. You stay in a comfortable 3* hotel with a renowned restaurant, peaceful gardens and a swimming pool.

Either on this first evening, or the following morning, we will discuss your trip with you and answer any questions that you may have.

DAY 2: CLIFFS OF THE CAUSSE MÉJEAN

4h walking, 11.8km / 7.4 miles, ascent/descent 410m

This walk begins by climbing very gently out of Meyrueis, then skirts the lower edge of cool woods running along the valley of the Jonte. Having crossed over the valley, you follow a tiny path as it zig-zags gradually up to the causse. Once you reach the top you are in a different world altogether, with endless views across the rolling limestone plateau to Mont Aiguéal and the Cévennes mountains beyond. As you drop back down to Meyrueis you have some tantalising views back over the Gorge of the Jonte.

DAY 3: NÎMES LE VIEUX

5h walking, 14.6km / 9.1 miles, ascent 267m, descent 578m

You start with a short taxi transfer from Meyrueis, following the valley of the river Jonte towards its source on the slopes of Mont Aiguol. You begin walking at the Col de Perjuret at 1031m altitude. Few parts of the *causse* have such variety; small agricultural hamlets, extraordinary 'chaos' rock formations, dramatic cliffs, all the time contrasting with views across to the mountains of the Cévennes.

Paths take you right through the heart of 'Nîmes le Vieux' a range of limestone outcrops stretching over several kilometers, like the ruins of an ancient city. From Nîmes le Vieux rolling tracks lead you across the plateau until gently descending grassy slopes back towards the valley of the Jonte and Meyrueis.

DAY 4: THE CAUSSE MÉJEAN

6h walking, 19.1kms/12 miles, ascent 595m, descent 411m

Small paths lead you out of Meyrueis and up onto the Causse Méjean. Once you are up on the rolling *causse*, the walking is easy with long, open vistas. You pass the famous cave of Aven Armand and a little further on, a thriving cheese producer and a rural museum offering a fascinating insight into life on the *causses*. You spend the night in a rural *gîte* in a small farming village.

DAY 5: DESCENT TO LE ROZIER

5h walking, 16.5kms/ 10.3 miles, ascent 310m, descent 846m

This is one of your most varied and spectacular walking days. Tiny paths lead you through a forest of Scots pine, passing the site of a Gallo-Roman settlement as well as a cave where important Neolithic remains were found. Your path then winds through the centre of vast rock arches: examples of the extraordinary forms resulting from the erosion of the limestone. You have a choice of descents to Le Rozier, both offering impressive views of the gorges, often with the added excitement of vultures soaring overhead.

Your last 2 nights are spent in the pretty riverside village of Le Rozier. You stay in a family run hotel (2*), with its own restaurant and spa.

DAY 6: THE TARN GORGE

6h walking, 12.8kms/8 miles, ascent/descent 470m

Small paths lead you up the gorge side and through semi troglodyte village clinging to the cliff face. These villages are only accessible by foot, and their position defies belief. The views back over the gorges are equally impressive. From here, you continue climbing up onto the top of the Causse Sauveterre where the walking becomes easy, with soft forest paths underfoot, largely flat. You then have a dramatic descent with heady views ahead to Le Rozier in the valley below.

DAY 7: DEPARTURE: TRANSFER TO MILLAU

Transfer time 0h30

We will provide your return transfer to Millau to coincide with your onward travel plans.

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Disclaimer

The above itinerary may be modified due to weather or terrain conditions, equipment concerns or the physical condition of the participants. The final choice of the walks will be decided by the guide who may adapt the programme for reasons of security.

SEASON DATES

From the 3rd April to the 19th October 2018

Choose whatever dates suit you best within this season.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS :

From 2

PRICE OF THE HOLIDAY:

895 €

OUR PRICE INCLUDES :

- Advice from a local 'Accompagnateur en Montagne' (mountain leader) at the start of the holiday
- Telephone back up in English throughout your holiday to ensure all runs smoothly
- 7 nights half board accommodation in a shared double room: 3 nights in a 3* hotel, 3 nights in a 2* hotel and 1 night in a rural gite
- Transfers between the train/bus station in Millau and your accommodation at the start and end of your holiday
- 1 picnic midweek (Day 5)
- Bag moves throughout the trip
- Maps and detailed directions that are checked and updated regularly

OUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Travel to reach Millau
- Booking fees (15€ per person) – FREE if you pay by French cheque or by bank transfer
- Personal expenses, drinks
- Picnics (except for day 5)*
- Cancellation or repatriation insurance
- In a general sense, everything that is not included in 'Our price includes'

**As there are small shops and bakeries near your hotels most people enjoy shopping for their own picnics and therefore these are not included in your holiday. On day 5 your picnic is provided by your gîte (and included in the holiday price) as there are no shops available. If you would prefer to have picnics provided throughout your holiday then please contact us.*

COMFORT

ACCOMMODATION:

3 nights in a 3* hotel with gardens, swimming pool and a renowned restaurant, 3 nights in a 2* riverside hotel with a spa and 1 night in a rural gite. Twin and double bedded rooms available.

MEALS:

Dinners are served in your hotels and gite. Traditional recipes with a modern twist using seasonal local produce.



PRACTICAL INFO

MEETING POINT:

We will meet you at the train/bus station in Millau and organise your transfer to your first hotel. Millau is served by regular buses from Montpellier and trains from Beziers and Toulouse.

AT THE END OF THE HOLIDAY:

On day 8, we will organise your return transfer from your last hotel to the train/bus station in Millau.

MANAGEMENT:

A local Accompagnateur en Montagne (mountain leader) will oversee your holiday. They will meet you at, or near, the start of your trip (dependant on availability) to answer any questions that you may have and remain contactable by telephone should you be in need of assistance.

HOW TO GET HERE:

In order to limit your carbon missions, we encourage you to use public transport.

IF YOU COME BY TRAIN:

Millau train station (Aveyron).

IF YOU COME BY CAR:

The village of Meyrueis is situated at the head of the gorges of the Tarn and Jonte, 42 km from Millau (Aveyron). Take the autoroute A75 until Aguessac (5km north of Millau) then the D907 and D996 to Meyrueis. Parking (non-supervised) is available in the village for the duration of your stay.

IF YOU COME BY PLANE:

Montpellier: direct flights from London (Easyjet). There are regular buses between Montpellier and Millau see link : [Herauld Transport](#)

Beziers: direct flights from London, Bristol, Edinburgh, Manchester. There are regular trains between Beziers and Millau see link to the [SNCF website](#).

Toulouse: a little further away but served by numerous international flights, Toulouse airport is certainly worth considering - there are regular connections by train and bus to Millau (4 hours). See link to the [SNCF website](#).

Should you want to book accommodation in Millau or Le Rozier/Peyreleau at the start or end of your holiday, please see the following websites:

MILLAU: <https://www.millau-viaduc-tourisme.fr/planifier/dormir-a-millau-grands-causses-et-dans-les-gorges-du-tarn>

PEYRELEAU: <https://www.tourisme-aveyron.com/fr/decouvrir/villes-et-villages/peyreleau/hebergements>

EQUIPMENT

RUCKSACK

This should be large enough to carry your personal affairs for the day, ie. around 30 litres. A rucksack with a hip belt will be more comfortable (as this allows the weight to be spread more evenly, notably across the hips), padded shoulder straps, and a chest strap. You should always carry a warm piece of clothing, a rain coat, water

bottle, first aid kit and personal items including part of the picnic. As well as these daily necessities, a bin bag and 2 freezer bags are invaluable to protect your belongings in case of rain.

LUGGAGE

This will be transported for you between your hotels and gîte, all you need to carry with you are your personal affairs for the day (see above).

WALKING BOOTS

Choose boots with ankle support and non-slip but supple soles. Your shoes are one of the most important elements of your walking holiday. They should be above all comfortable, light, water proof and breathable. **Do not come on holiday with brand new shoes ! Make sure that you have already done at least 2 or 3 walks in them before your trip.**

CLOTHES

- A wind and waterproof jacket that is breathable (GORETEX or similar). Ponchos are not acceptable.
- A fleece (the mountain weather can be changeable and turn cold)
- A pair of walking trousers, a pair of shorts, t-shirts (choose modern breathable, fast drying materials rather than cotton)
- A change of clothes for the evenings
- A swimming costume and towel

OTHER ITEMS

- Water bottle (2 litre minimum per person).
- A pair of telescopic walking poles (highly recommended)
- Sun glasses and sun cream Sun hat Personal toiletries and a towel
- A pair of sandals/comfortable shoes (for the evenings)
- Camera
- Small first aid kit (plasters, compeed, elastoplast, head ache pills, after bite etc)

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY OF THE WALKS :

Medium (M) – between 4h and 6h30 walking per day. Between 400m et 700m uphill each day.

AMOUNT CARRIED :

All you need to carry each day is a small rucksack with your water, picnic, first aid kit and other personal essentials (see equipment list).

PUBLIC :

Exercise regularly and undertake an endurance sport (walking, cycling) at least twice a week for the 2 months prior to the trip.

NATURE OF THE TERRAIN :

The walking is on the whole easy but is on rocky paths that may be uneven and steep in places. Accessible to all those in good physical condition.

WALKING TIMES:

These are given as a general guideline only and take into account the terrain. They are based on an average walking speed and do not allow for breaks, picnic stops etc. They are calculated by using an average speed of 300m per hour for a climb uphill and 450m per hour for a descent.

WATER:

The use of a “camel back” (water pouch which fits in your rucksack with a tube and mouth piece) is recommended. (You may also want to bring a small thermos flask for a tea or coffee during your walk).

THE WALKING ITINERARIES:

These may be modified due to weather or terrain conditions, equipment concerns or the physical condition of the participants. The final choice of the walks will be decided by the guide who may adapt the programme for reasons of security.

THE CLIMATE:

For local forecast see link: [Meteo France](#)

REVIEWS

5* "A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE"

In September 2018, my husband and I experienced a memorable 7 day hike in the Cevennes created and organized by Sarah Wright from Nature Occitane. We would highly recommend this experience to anyone who enjoys walking in wonderful landscape ending each day with comfortable accommodation and excellent food.

The Cevennes is a beautiful and remote part of southern France where rivers cut through limestone to create gorges while high above, you see dramatic rock formations and gliding vultures. Part of the walk also takes place high above these gorges in areas known as Causses which feature rolling hills with impressive views. It was a wonderful experience enjoyed by both of us from start to finish. Sarah is well-organized and thorough, providing us with details of our daily walks which we did independently except for one day. On that day, Sarah took us on a walk which was highly memorable and educational. Her knowledge of the area, its history as well as its flora and fauna is extensive. She is highly qualified to guide individuals and/or groups through this area. It was certainly one of our travel highlights.

Throughout our time in the Cevennes, we could easily stay in touch with Sarah as she was diligent in ensuring that there were no difficulties and that we were enjoying the experience. She also was a good listener and when one of us expressed some vertigo issues, she easily redesigned the route for us which was greatly appreciated. In summary, we loved every moment of those seven days and would highly recommend Sarah's guidance to anyone who enjoys walking in order to see and understand the landscape of this region. We will always have wonderful memories of this experience.