Nature Occitane
VOYAGES SPORTS & NATURE
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STAR OF THE CÉVENNES - GUIDED WALKING TRIP

One centre, guided walking holiday

In the Southern Cévennes lies a magical landscape of ridges and valleys. Based in a small auberge, nestled in a sheltered valley, we invite you to discover some of our favourite walks. For more than 20 years this is the adopted home of Sarah our guide with a true passion for the region. This area is one of the last places in France where the 'transhumance' – the seasonal movement of sheep between the valleys and the high mountain pastures – still takes place, on foot, following ancient drovers' paths. Our walks follow these same paths, with stunning views, varied landscapes and pure, soft mountain air.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN MONTPELLIER, HIKING IN THE CÉVENNES

2h30 walking, 6 km, 280m ascent; Transfer: 1h30

Meet at 1:00 pm at Montpellier St Roch train station, or at 3:00 pm at your accommodation in southern Cévennes. Your guide will introduce the program, followed by a short walk from the hotel. You'll explore the village's historic alleys before stepping into the surrounding Cévennes landscape for your first immersion. The ancient chestnut trees ("bread trees") around the village are a testament to this tree's essential role in Cévennes life for centuries. In the late afternoon, the village's small cobbled squares and shaded market areas invite you to relax. Dinner and overnight stay at a hotel with a pool.

DAY 2: HIKING IN THE HIGH DOURBIES CÉVENNES

4h30 walking, 12 km, 400m ascent

After a hearty breakfast (sweet or savory), you'll set off to explore the valleys and ridges ("valats and serres") around the village of Dourbies. This hike showcases the full spectrum of Cévennes landscapes, with shaded forests leading up to granite-capped ridges overlooking the valley. Breathe in the fresh, fragrant air of high-altitude meadows, then descend along wild paths through Cévennes hamlets. Near its source, the clear and refreshing river waters offer an invigorating swim. Dinner and overnight stay at a hotel with a pool.

DAY 3: HIKING IN THE LINGAS MASSIF CÉVENNES

4h walking, 12 km, 350m ascent

Today, we explore the Lingas Mountain, the last major relief in southern Cévennes. Our trail winds through a lush forest before reaching a small summit with panoramic views. A popular spot for summer transhumance, thousands of sheep graze here each summer, drawn by the fresh grass (and like us, the cool air!). Dinner and overnight stay at a hotel with a pool.

DAY 4: HIKING IN THE BLACK CAUSSE STEPPES

4h30 walking, 13 km, 350m ascent

Today, you leave the Cévennes mountains of forests and rivers and head into the steppes of the Grand Causses Natural Park. This high plateau, "an island in the sky," is bordered by the Dourbie and Jonte gorges. As you walk through this wide, open landscape—a biodiversity hotspot—you'll reach trails along dramatic cliffs, where griffon vultures soar. Dinner and overnight stay at a hotel with a pool.

DAY 5: HIKING TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT AIGOUAL

4h30 walking, 13 km, 320m ascent

Today's journey takes us to the iconic summit of Mont Aigoual. On clear days, you can see as far as the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Mediterranean Sea. At 1,567m, it's the second-highest peak in the Cévennes and hosts France's last mountain weather station. A loop through forest paths provides stunning vistas. Dinner and overnight stay at a hotel with a pool.

DAY 6: FINAL HIKE, RETURN TO MONTPELLIER, DISPERSAL AT 2:30 PM AT THE TRAIN STATION

2h walking, 6 km; Transfer: 1h30

After a leisurely breakfast, you'll set out for one last walk to bid a gentle farewell to the charming Cévennes landscapes. Transfer to Montpellier follows. Dispersal is at 2:30 pm at Montpellier St Roch train station. After the picnic lunch, dispersal will be at the departure point for those using their own vehicles.

Note: Dispersal will be at 3:00 pm on June 16, 2024, at Montpellier St Roch train station for the "special transhumance journey."

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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.

DATES & PRICES

FROM	TO	PRICE	STATUS
26/04/2027	01/05/2027	**€915**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
17/05/2027	22/05/2027	**€930**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
10/06/2027	15/06/2027	**€960**	**GUARANTEED** *(Spécial fête de la Transhumance)*
28/06/2027	03/07/2027	**€930**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
12/07/2027	17/07/2027	**€930**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
26/07/2027	31/07/2027	**€930**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
09/08/2027	14/08/2027	**€960**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
16/08/2027	21/08/2027	**€960**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
23/08/2027	28/08/2027	**€960**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
20/09/2027	25/09/2027	**€930**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min.
27/09/2027	02/10/2027	**€960**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min. *(Spécial "Brame du Cerf")*
11/10/2027	16/10/2027	**€960**	Guaranteed with 4 pers. min. *(Spécial "Brame du Cerf")*

NB: prices are per person.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

4 to 15

PRICE OF THE HOLIDAY

From 695 €

Special departure "Transhumance" in June 725€

We also organise holidays on request for ready constituted groups.

OUR PRICE INCLUDES

- Guiding and management by a local 'Accompagnateur en Montagne' (mountain leader) throughout the holiday
- 5 nights in a charming auberge with swimming pool, in a shared double room
- Transfers between the train station in Montpellier and your auberge at the start at end of the holiday
- Full board accommodation from the picnic on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 6
- The visits as mentioned in the programme

OUR PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Travel to reach Montpellier
- Registration fee: €20 per booking file
- Personal expenses, drinks
- Cancellation / Assistance / Repatriation Insurance (7.5% of the total cost of your trip – must be taken out at the time of booking)
- In a general sense, everything that is not included in 'Our price includes'

OPTION

Single room supplement : 290€ / person . Subject to availability at the time of booking

REDUCTION

Price reduction for those coming with their own car: -50€ / person

NB: those receiving this price reduction will need to use their own car to reach the departure point of the walks

2 SPECIAL DEPARTURES "TRANSHUMANCE":

HOLIDAY FROM 11 TO 16 JUIN 2019 ASCENT OF THE TRANSHUMANCE

The transhumance is the seasonal migration of flocks of sheep from the valleys up to the high mountain pastures. In the Cévennes this ancient practice still exists today in its traditional form, that's to say that the shepherds walk their flocks on foot, a journey that can take 4 or 5 days. To be in the mountains and see hundreds of sheep pass by is a moving and unforgettable experience. The ascent of the flocks in June marks the arrival of summer and there is a celebratory atmosphere. The shepherds walk with a light tread and the sheep are eager to rediscover the sweet mountain grass… This holiday gives us privileged moments with the transhumant shepherds of the Cévennes in breath taking landscapes. The final morning of the holiday is spent at the "Fête of the Transhumance" in the mountain village of L'Espérou. Throughout the trip we follow broadly the same itinerary as described for the other departure dates but with certain walks adapted in order to maximise our chances of meeting the flocks of sheep.

HOLIDAY FROM 31 AOÛT TO 5 SEPTEMBRE 2019 DESCENT OF THE TRANSHUMANCE

The descent of the flocks in September has a different atmosphere. The shepherds and flocks have a certain nostalgia for « les hautes terres ». Their passage marks the end of the summer, they leave the fresh mountain air and their life of solitude and freedom to rejoin the warmth of the valleys and the plain. They cannot delay their descent because soon the first lambs will be born and the annual cycle begins once again…

OPTIONS

OPTIONS, SUPPLEMENTS AND REDUCTIONS:

REDUCTIONS	
Discount for people coming with their own vehicle	-€50
SUPPLEMENTS	
Single room supplement	€230
SUPPLEMENTARY NIGHTS AT THE BEGINNING OR END OF YOUR TRIP	
Extra night in a double room with half board at the hostel	€85
Extra night in a single room with half board at the hostel	€110

NB: prices are per person.

HOSTS

HÔTEL AVEC PISCINE CHAUFFÉE ET JACUZZI

Petit hôtel familial dans un village typique situé aux portes du Parc National des Cévennes.
Jardin, piscine chauffée et jacuzzi surplombant la rivière.



On Day 1 there are 2 meeting points possible:

- At 13h00 at Montpellier train station (Saint Roch)
- At 15h00 directly at your auberge if you have your own transport

Meeting point at Montpellier Train Station:
In front of the car hire office, which is situated on level 1, just before the exit 'Pont de Sète'.

AT THE END OF THE HOLIDAY:

On day 6, your holiday will finish :

- At 11h00 at Montpellier train station or after breakfast, if you are leaving directly from the auberge with your own transport * ***For the special departure "Transhumance" in June, the holiday will finish at 15h00 at Montpellier train station or at midday at your auberge if you have your own transport***

TRANSFERS BETWEEN MONTPELLIER AND THE AUBERGE

There will be one outward and return transfer only at the times shown above. This will be in a 5 or 9 seater vehicle, driven by your guide

GUIDING AND MANAGEMENT:

This walk is accompanied by Sarah WRIGHT, local Accompagnateur en Montagne (mountain leader). You may have a different guide on certain departure dates.

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HOW TO GET HERE:

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

→ IF YOU COME BY TRAIN

Montpellier train station (Saint Roch)

→ IF YOU COME BY CAR

You will receive the address of the auberge before departure

→ IF YOU COME BY PLANE

Montpellier 'Méditerranée' airport

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 remains in the auberge throughout this walk in the Cévennes.

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 tolietries 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

Easy (E) – between 2h30 and 6h walking per day. Between 280m et 560m 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 above equipment list).

PUBLIC :

To prepare for this holiday you should 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

This is dominated by a Mediterrannean influence. Conditions can change quickly in the mountains. For local forecast see link: Meteo France

REVIEWS

2018 SEASON

TRANSHUMANCE IN THE CÉVENNES WITH THE SHEEP

A superb walking experience, meeting the flocks of sheep leaving on transhumance. Marvellous landscapes and contact with locals, enriched by the comments of our guide Sarah, passionate about Cévenol culture. Nice accommodation, on a gastronomic level appreciated as much for the picnics as for the dinners. Good coordination between the guide and the hoteliers.
Daniel 04/06/18

SPECIAL DEPARTURE 'TRANSHUMANCE'

The auberge was perfect. As for Sarah, our guide, she deserves credit: warm, competent, reliable, adaptable to the fitness level of the group and the weather, a professional who knows just when to make you smile, a gifted photographer, bilingual, with the tact to give just a touch of help to my Anglophone friends when needed, whilst all the time maintaining a great feeling of group solidarity. In addition what wonderful moments shared with shepherds and farmers who obviously have respect for her. And sautéed wild mushrooms that she gathered for us in the forest!
Albert 04/06/18

2017 SEASON

"THE CÉVENNES - UNMISSABLE"

This walk in the Cévennes is top. The guide introduced us to fascinating people, who love their land and their work. The walks are all really nice. The food is good and the accommodation offers a view that makes you happy. Didier, July 2017

"STAR OF THE CÉVENNES "

Wonderful stay in the Cévennes : the discovery of the transhumance paths, meetings with shepherds and producers, the ascent of wooded summits… with Sarah, our guide, attentive, informative, who shared with us her enthusiasm for this region and those who live in it. Corinne, August 2017

"WALK IN THE CÉVENNES"

This walk iin the Cévennes was a very lovely discovery, and that thanks to Sarah, our guide. Sarah is enthusiastic, kind, attentive to our needs and our innumerable questions. She loves sharing her knowledge of the region (she knows it really well) and it shows! I highly recommend this walk of discovery with Sarah. Patricia, August 2017.

"MORE THAN ONE STAR"

We were the pioneers of the first departure of this holiday – what a success! Our charming guide Sarah knew how to share her knowledge and her passion for this very beautiful region with cheerfulness, energy and humour. A special mention too for Louise et David, our welcoming hosts who spoilt us each night after a dip in the pool, with their delicious authentic cuisine and Robert the shepherd, Michel, the producer of chestnuts etc… astonishing meetings. The Cévennes, with stars in our eyes. Sylvie, July 2017

"THE CEVENNES WITH SARAH"

A really enjoyable stay, especially thanks to our guide Sarah, who shared with us her enthusiasm, her great knowledge and her love for the Cévennes, always with good humour and kindness. Sarah is one of the best guides that I have met. Nathalie, July 2017

"ON THE TRANSHUMANCE PATHS OF THE CÉVENNES"

Excellent experience in a wild and authentic setting. Sarah, our passionate and fascinating guide knew how to introduce us to sumptious landscapes and local characters, both emblematic and sometimes hidden, following the tracks of flocks of sheep. Thierry, August 2017

(Above comments translated from French)