

THE WALKING PARTY

ITINERARY FOR FAIRYTALE FRANCE: QUERCY

Distance: 50km approx

Walking: moderate



James Tamlyn moved to his 18th century farmhouse in France 15 years ago, enthused by the romance and beauty of the area. James' love of the flora and fauna and his fascination for the food, wine and local traditions and personal contacts make the week a special experience that you could not enjoy as an individual traveller.

This area of south west France, known as the 'Quercy', was given by Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henri d'Anjou in 1152, two years before he became Henry II of England, and its beauty and timelessness has changed little since. Not only that but it is still known today as being the gastronomic heart of France.

Day 1 After meeting up with James and the rest of the group in the morning at Toulouse airport you will be driven into Toulouse for lunch at a favourite restaurant of James'. Then you shall be driven to Albi. This has one of the most beautiful and important cathedrals in France. A papal statement of the thirteenth century. We will visit the cathedral after lunch before driving on a beautiful medieval cliff hanging village famed for being one of the prettiest villages of France. This has an outstanding position over the river and is surrounded by iron red and manganese blue cliffs. As we are there off season it is a truly magical experience, especially at night: beautifully floodlit and quiet. You stay at a charming auberge in the centre of the village where you will spend your first three nights in easy comfort and with wonderful views. Dinner in the village.

Day 2 We set off on a good walk from the village towards Chateau Cénévieres. This chateau was first built by the famous Gordon family of Scotland, it has been in the hands of the same family since they bought it from the former Minister for War to Louis XVI (not a great position to have at the time of the Revolution!). In the afternoon there is an optional walk back to St Cirq Lapopie along the river. Dinner in the village. *Walk: 7km. 7km optional in the afternoon.*



Day 3 We drive to a different river valley from where we walk along under the cliffs and down along the river littered with lofty poplars and chequered with fields where corn can be seen stacked in stooks. Picnic lunch on the banks in an historic village by a ruined abbey. In the afternoon we set off for the caves of Pech Merle further down the river. Visit the caves and then walk back to St Cirq Lapopie. Dinner in St Cirq.

Walk: 8km

Day 4 We will drive to a bustling market after breakfast. This takes us along roads chiselled through the cliffs before reaching the ancient city of Cahors for the hustle and bustle of market day. Excellent *cuisine* at our favourite restaurant before a drive to the famous Pont Valentré bridge and on to the village of Lascabannes for a circuitous walk before driving to Lario, my home, where you can relax before dinner on the terrace. You will stay in the cottage full of charm and authenticity for three nights! There is a swimming pool.

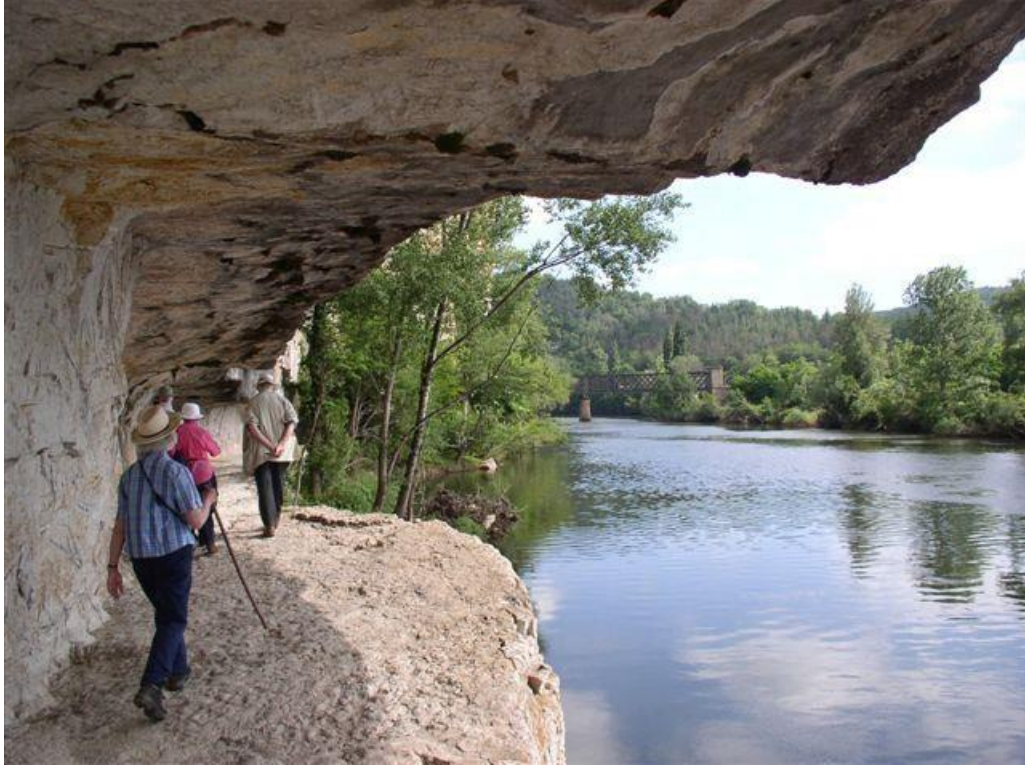
Walk: 6km

Day 5 After breakfast we will drive to a local village for a walk through the beauty of the Quercy Blanc. We will lunch in the village of St Matre. In the afternoon we shall drive to see the beautiful castle of Bonaguil developed by Berenger le Roquefeuil in the sixteenth century as a fail-safe method of staying alive! It was never taken. It was never attacked! Return in the vehicle to Lario for time to relax before drinks and a dinner party with local friends at Lario.

Walk: 9km

Day 6 After breakfast we will drive to Sainte Matré to start a walk back towards lario where we shall have lunch on the terrace. In the afternoon a circuitous walk to se the village. Drinks in Montcuq. Dinner at Lario. *Walk: 12km*

Day 7 You leave in the morning for Toulouse airport.



NOTE: This tour starts and ends at Toulouse airport. The itinerary is subject to change according to local conditions. All mileages shown are approximate.