

ITINERARY FOR THE SAINT JAMES'S WAY Part 1: Le Puy to Conques

Price: 3190 euros

Single Supplement: 360 euros

Distance : 72 km

Walking : moderate +



Conques

This week starts at the beginning of one of the most famous and historic paths in Europe. Back in 951AD Godescalc, Bishop of Puy, decided to walk with his retinue to the newly found relics of St James in Santiago de Compostela and tradition has it that this was his path. Many people get a pilgrim's call in their heart to do this. We cross four distinct landscapes from the soft volcanic hills of the Auvergne to the wooded cow-filled Elysian fields of the Margeride and onto the high rolling moors of Aubrac. We finish along the Lot river valley peppered with castles and chateau. It is an exciting path!

The Walking Party was founded by James Tamlyn in 1998. James moved to his eighteenth century farmhouse nearly thirty years ago enthused by the romance and beauty of the area. His love of flora and fauna combined with his fascination for the food, wine and local traditions and the personal contacts he has accumulated since his arrival in France, from local truffle producer to small production wine maker making world class wine, make this a special experience that you could not enjoy as an individual traveller. James will be walking with you every day through the week.

« I don't usually write thank-you letters after paid-for holidays but you have the ability, and it must be a natural talent as well as something you work at, to make your guests feel utterly at home. Like spending a holiday with close friends» H.B.

Day 1 Arrival

You will be met at Toulouse Blagnac airport by James and driven to Le Puy en Velay for your first night. Stop for lunch at Rodez to see the Pierre Soulages museum. This is the ideal way

to start the St James Way week because Pierre Soulages paints just in black. From the black comes the light ... a good subject to start with! Light lunch in the very modern Bras bistro. We will continue driving to Le Puy to arrive by 18.00. Dinner will be in Puy. You will stay in the three star Hotel Regina or L'Epicureum. All bedrooms have bathrooms en suite. There will be time to wander around the old town and to get an idea of the history of this historic place.

Day 2 Walk out of Puy en Velay

There is a blessing for the pilgrims in Le Puy cathedral (Notre Dame de l'Annonciation) church of St Mary at 7.00am for those interested but as we are only doing a part of the Way then I feel this is not compulsory! You will set off from the cathedral on foot down the steps and for a picnic by the chocolate brown church. In the afternoon you continue on foot along the plateau with the distant soft undulating volcanic hills of the Auvergne to the well at Ramourouscle. Continue to the table football café at Montbonnet. where the vehicle will pick you up and drive you back to Puy en Velay for your last night in this historic town. Dinner in town. *Walk: 12km*

Day 3 Walk in the Margeride region

After an early morning breakfast, we take an hour's drive to start walking in the Margeride area towards Ste Eulalie. Picnic at Ste Eulalie before continuing to Lasbos for the afternoon's walk on the moors towards the village of Nasbinals. After a café drink we shall continue down the road in the vehicle to Aubrac and La Colonie. La Colonie is an old resting house converted into a large spacious and comfortable hotel. All bedrooms are roomy with lots of light. All bathrooms are en suite. This is a lovely atmosphere in a beautiful remote setting. We will eat out at a nearby local village St Urcize. You will spend two nights here.

Walk: 15km



St Chely d'Aubrac

Day 4 Walking on the Aubrac moors and towards the valley

We drive to Nasbinals and walk back to Aubrac. It is a lovely walk with expansive views.

You are quite high here at around 1300 metres and it is barren and strewn with large rocks and threaded with small burns. Lunch in Aubrac before continuing on foot down to St Chely d'Aubrac. After a drink here we shall return to the hotel. Dinner at the hotel.

Walk: 15km

Day 5 Walk from the Lot river valley to Espeyrac

You leave in the vehicle after breakfast for Estaing which sits on the river Lot. Estaing is where the family of Giscard d'Estaing comes from and is another very beautiful village. We drive out of Estaing and start walking from beneath the Madonna on the hill. A picnic lunch on rounded rocks in the middle of nowhere and with lovely views. After lunch we continue on the GR65 to Espeyrac. A drink in the bar and return to Estaing to very simple rooms in the Hotel Aux Armes d Estaing. Dinner at the hotel.

Walk: 15km

Day 6 Walk from Espeyrac to the Romanesque abbey of Conques

We drive out of Estaing and start our walk to Conques from Espeyrac. After three hours and a half we should arrive above the village of Conques for a picnic *en plein air* by a sweet local church. In the afternoon all descend on foot to the famous village of Conques, see the abbey and relax! You stay at the two star Auberge de Saint Jacques because the three star Hotel Sainte Foy is closed on Thursdays since Covid! There are staff problems. It is quite common in rural France now. They have a very good restaurant. Dinner at the hotel. *Walk: 18km*

Day 7 Departure

We drive to Toulouse from Conques for the return midday flight arriving at Toulouse at 10.30.



Aubrac moors

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