



*Cheyldard castle
and the Mont
Lozere skyline*

Hiking the Upper Cèze Valley

Explore the valley that time forgot

Tour Highlights

- ☞ Discover the pristine hills and valleys of eastern Cévennes
- ☞ Enjoy an oasis of alternative lifestyles and organic farming
- ☞ Get acquainted with delightful and forgotten hamlets & villages
- ☞ Hike fine ancient drovers' trails and hill crests
- ☞ Cross the impressive Senechas dam
- ☞ Optional visits to Cheyldard castle, an organic farm, organic wine growers and a chestnut drying house.

Fact File

- ✓ 4-night, self-guided tour featuring two circular hikes and one inn-to-inn walk.
- ✓ Tour rated as quite challenging, due to notable ascents and descents.
- ✓ Dual-centre tour, so you do not change hotels each night.
- ✓ Commence any Thursday, Friday or Saturday from early March to mid-November or any day in July or August.
- ✓ Tour starts and finishes in Alès, with convenient access from Nimes via train.
- ✓ A countryside walkers' inn and a comfortable hotel in Alès or Nimes.



Theme

Life in the Cèze Valley continues as if caught in a time warp. Sandwiched between the Ardeche to the north and the Gardon to the south, The Upper Cèze Valley has a unique charm and status as the 'Valley that Time Forgot.'

Upper Cèze Valley Walking is arguably one of the best short walking tours France has to offer: the chance to immerse yourself in a rural world of isolated homesteads and 'alternative' farming. Don't bring your laptop as this is a 'broadband-free zone' and hillwalking heaven.

You get close to the source of the river Cèze and well acquainted with some beautiful countryside on the eastern flank of the Cévennes and Mont Lozère. Late sixties hippies have built alternative lifestyles here, and wooden solar-powered eco-homes inhabit the same valley as the typical stone 'mas', many of which remain bereft of running water. You'll hear the second generation chopping wood or pass them carrying bales of hay along the way.



Water, or its absence, is the resource par excellence in this isolated territory, to which the terraced hillsides and Senechas Dam bear testimony. You have the opportunity to visit the only surviving chestnut-drying house still functioning in Le Gard - La Clede - subject to opening times; an organic wine grower of 'illegal' Clinton grapes, whose wine still cannot be sold commercially - by appointment only; a water mill being meticulously restored, and search some of France's purest river waters for crey fish. The imposing Cheylard castle is never far away, keeping a watchful eye over the surrounding countryside from its hilltop vantage point.

With the Planet getting ahead of itself with the passing of each day, Upper Cèze Valley Walking is a unique opportunity to stop the world, get off, savour the delights of traditional [now alternative] life, before climbing back on board with an amended worldview.

4-night model Itinerary¹

Day 1

Alès.

Arrive in Nimes by air, road or rail. Short onward Train journey to Alès² [40 mins] and transfer to Aujac. Night in Aujac.

Day 2

Le Cham Bonnevaux.

[9 miles-13 kms, approx. 5 hrs, +570 ms -315 ms]
Transfer to Aujac, check in, followed by a short transfer to a nearby pass. Starting high up, you enjoy fabulous views over Eastern Cevennes as you climb to the Cham, plunge into pine forest towards a lost hamlet and then climb again to reach the village of Bonnevaux. Second night in Aujac.



Day 3

Aujaguet.

[9.5 miles-14 kms, approx. 5 hrs, +425 ms -435 ms]
A memorable walk that takes you across a dam, various bridges, past a water mill, into the water itself (optional swim), through two very different villages, to an organic farm, a recently-restored church and all under the watchful eye of the imposing Cheylard castle. Third night in Aujac.

Day 4

The Crest of the Waves.

[10 miles-15 kms, approx. 5½ hrs, +380 ms -710 ms]
This fabulous high trail follows the watershed as you descend towards Bordezac and Bessèges. Une sacré balade on which to finish your Upper Cèze Valley visit. Collection and transfer to Alès. Night in Alès or Nimes according to your preference.

Day 5

End of your hiking tour. Breakfast followed by train from Ales SNCF station to Nimes or onward train from Nimes to Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier or Paris.



*Relax near the
Old Mill*



What's Included

- ✓ 4 nights' bed and breakfast/B & B [incl. local taxes] in a countryside walkers' inn and a 3-star town centre hotel - see below.
- ✓ 3 picnic lunches and 3 evening meals
- ✓ Industry-leading hiking notes, 1:25,000 maps and themed dossier
- ✓ Luggage and people transfers relevant to the tour².
- ✓ Telephone help-line service with 24/7 native English support.



Not included

- ⊗ Any other meals and all drinks and extras
- ⊗ Personal expenses
- ⊗ Entrances into any optional cultural visits and venues - castle, cleden, etc.
- ⊗ Hiking, personal and travel insurances
- ⊗ Single rooms - unless booked at the single-person rate
- ⊗ Travel to and from Alès.



*The source of life
at Aujaguet*



*Cairn in the home of
French stone*



**One 3-star
hotel
and a
welcoming
walkers'
inn**

“Carefully-selected accommodation based on knowing our partners well.”

You are walking in a remote part of eastern Cevennes, where accommodation and dining options are few and far between - thus our decision to provide three evening meals and packed lunches in the tour package for your convenience, allowing you enjoy your tour to the full without distractions.

You stay in two different accommodations selected on the basis of location, service and welcome.

Your charming walkers' inn at Aujac, where you spend three nights, has a welcoming bar, vaulted dining room and adjacent shop for those essential items. Rooms are on the first floor and contain both shower and wash-basin, with WCs in the corridor. It's small and rustic, with a log fire, and very much a Wifi-free and TV-less zone!



Your young hosts are proud of their 'chip-free' restaurant that showcases the best of freshly grown local produce and fine wines. Vegetarian meals are a specialty.

You are collected late afternoon on Day Four from Besseges and transferred to Alès. You decide whether you wish to spend your last night here or take the short onward train [40 minutes] to Nimes. Either way, we put you up in a conveniently-located 3-star hotel.

Access & Departure

How to get to Alès

Due to the popularity of Nîmes, the options for getting to the City are plentiful. Once there, Alès is just a short onward regional train journey of 40 minutes away.

We will gladly send you the relevant Alès-Nîmes timetable, which comes out two or three times a year. However, the service is efficient and connections regular.

Your tour commences in Alès², from where you are met at the rail station and transferred to Aujac.

By Air

Getting to Nîmes is relatively straightforward from the following airports:

1. Nîmes airport - flights from the UK and Brussels via RyanAir.
2. Lyon International Airport, with onward connections by fast train [60 mins] to Nîmes.
3. Montpellier International Airport, with onward connections by train [30 mins] to Nîmes.
4. Avignon International Airport, with onward connections by train [30 mins] to Nîmes.
5. Marseille International Airport, with onward connections by train to Nîmes.
6. Clermont-Ferrand Airport, with onward connections direct to Ales by regional [TER] train on 'Le Cevenol'.

By Rail

Best access is via SNCF [TGV] railway station to Nîmes [4 hrs fast train/TGV from Paris or Lille, 1½ hrs from Lyon]

Alternative regional [TER] train ['Le Cevenol'] direct to Ales from Paris, with change at Clermont-Ferrand.

Our customers recommend RailEurope.com for research and ticketing.



Your train is likely to be more modern than this one, but the Cévenol line is the same





The Senechas Dam

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*A lost hamlet on
Walk One*



The Cezarenque landscape

2023 prices:

Per person in double or
twin-bedded room:
€655.00 Euros or £570.00
Pounds Sterling

Booking

Email, phone, Live Chat or Skype us
and we will email you everything you
need to reserve your tour.



Notes

- ¹ We reserve the right to alter parts of the above programme for the benefit of safety and the quality of the overall experience.
- ² Please ensure you arrive in Ales for your transfer no later than 17.30. Supplements are payable for later arrivals. Ask us for details.

The Enlightened Traveller®

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