



Approaching the heights of Mont Lozere

Stevenson Trail

Walk the World's Original Recreational Hike

Tour Highlights

- ☞ **A World's top Travel Adventure - Forbes Traveler**
- ☞ **Our tour is recommended by The Times: see on-site tour page**
- ☞ **Cross four historic natural regions**
- ☞ **Enjoy sub-alpine to Mediterranean flora**
- ☞ **Hike volcanic plateau, schist valley and the best of Cévennes' hillcrests**
- ☞ **Marvel at the lunar-like landscape of Pic Finiels [1699 ms]**
- ☞ **Stay in the best accommodation available at each stage.**



Fact File

- ✓ **Ten-night, self-guided, inn-to-inn tour though rural France**
- ✓ **Graded moderate - you average 14 miles a day**
- ✓ **Three longer days: option to halve two and reduce one**
- ✓ **Luggage transfers throughout, up to 13 kgs per person**
- ✓ **Best access from Lyon**
- ✓ **Start any day from mid-April to mid-October**
- ✓ **Welcoming '2-star standard' hotels, auberges and guest houses.**



Theme

Stevenson Trail [GR 70] is not only a modern classic, but the benchmark for recreational hikes. You walk from Le Monastier, near Puy-en-Velay in Haute Loire, to St Jean-du-Gard in Cévennes, a distance of 125-miles/201 kms. Walked by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1878, the route inspired him to write 'Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes' (1879), a ground-breaking novel and classic of outdoor literature that set the standard for travelogues thereafter.

Stevenson was, in many ways, the pioneer of the modern hiking movement, as the book presents hiking and camping outdoors as a recreational activity. RLS was also keen to explore the theme of the Religious Wars and the trail takes you through the heart of Huguenot and 'Camisard' country. Other Cévenol themes to explore can be found on our website.

Stevenson Trail sees you walking what's now considered one of the top-ten trails in France, increasingly popular with hikers wishing to retrace RLS's footsteps. If you enjoy inn-to-inn trails, then this hike across volcanic upland and through schist valley is guaranteed to delight your senses.

Stevenson often slept out under trees in a prototype sleeping bag. You enjoy wholesome food in welcoming, en-suite accommodation as you trek across southern Auvergne and northern Languedoc with just your light backpack.

If you only ever experience one hotel-to-hotel hike, this is arguably the one to do; and if that's not enough, Causses & Cévennes has recently gained UNESCO World heritage status, so there's never been a better time to savour the delights of France's last frontier region.



Walking le chemin de crêtes

10-night Itinerary¹

- Day 1** Le Puy. Arrival and hotel check-in.
- Day 2** Le Monastier to Le Bouchet St Nicolas.
[13 miles-21 kms, approx. 6.5 hrs, +460 ms -175 ms]
Taxi transfer (20 kms) to LE MONASTIER and the start of the trail.
Descend into the magnificent Upper Loire Valley, before climbing through charming hamlets and across volcanic plateau to Stevenson's first stopover.
- Day 3** Le Bouchet St Nicolas to Pradelles.
[12 miles-19 kms, approx. 5 hrs, +285 ms -375 ms]
Descend to the majestic Arquejøl Viaduct before climbing to the fine and historic granite 'City of the High Prairies'.
- Day 4** Pradelles to Cheylard l'Eveque.
[11 miles-18 kms, approx. 6 hrs, +310 ms -320 ms]
Descend to Langogne and into the land of the 'Beast of Gevaudan.' Then continue through forest and charming hamlet en route to the medieval village of Cheylard, replete with hill-top chapel.
- Day 5** Cheylard l'Eveque to La Bastide Puy-Laurent.
[12 miles-19 kms, approx. 5 hrs, +240 ms -380 ms]
Climb through the Gardille forest and lunch beside its eponymous lake, before descending to the impressive ruins of Luc castle. Then follow the medieval Regordane Way across the Allier River to your historic resting place.
- Day 6** La Bastide to Bleymard.
[18 miles-28.5 kms, 8 hrs, +610 ms -550 ms. Option to split the day in two.]
Climb to Chambonnet Plateau, cross the Atlantic-Mediterranean watershed and head down valley to picture-postcard Chasseradès. Enter the Cevennes proper and enjoy a fine walk alongside the fledgling River Lot.
- Day 7** Le Bleymard to Pont de Montvert.
[10.5 miles-16.5 kms, approx. 6.5 hrs, +630 ms -824 ms]
A memorable ascent to Mont Lozere, and the highest point in south-central France, Pic de Finiels (1699 ms). Then descend through a chaos of boulders to Finiels and a fine walk into Camisard Country.
- Day 8** Pont de Montvert to Florac.
[17.5 miles-28 kms, approx. 7 hrs, +545 ms -875 ms. Take the GR68 and save 4 kms!]
The day is blessed with some memorable views over the 'blue waves' of the Cevennes hills as you walk mountain crest, crossing from Mediterranean to Alpine flora and back along the fabulous watershed.
- Day 9** Florac to St Germain de Calberte.
[18 miles-28.5 kms, 7 hrs, +470 ms -263 ms. Option to split the day in two.]
You enter the steep-sided, red-rock Mimente Valley, past the ruins of the château d'Arapon en route to Cassagnas. Then climb to Pierre Plantée Pass [891 ms] and past several menhirs and chestnut groves, the traditional staff of Cévenol life.
- Day 10** St Germain to St. Jean du Gard.
[13 miles-21 kms, approx. 6 hrs, +350 ms -900 ms]
A memorable last-day's trek that has you walking the Corniche des Cevennes and climbing to a 360 degree vantage point for those last-gasp photos. A foot-soaking in the Gardon de St Jean is a fitting finalé.
- Day 11** End of Tour. Breakfast and bus or optional transfer to Ales. Bon retour et à bientôt!





The Mimente Valley trail along the former Florac to St Cecile railway line closed in the 1960s

What's Included

- ✓ 10 nights B & B in comfortable, '2-star standard' accommodation or higher - see below
- ✓ 8 evening meals & all local hotel taxes
- ✓ Transfers from Le Puy to Le Monastier on Day Two
- ✓ Hiking notes™ maps and themed dossier
- ✓ All luggage transfers²
- ✓ 7/7 and 8am till 8pm telephone/SMS help-line service with local native English support.



Not included

- ⊗ Remaining meals and all drinks and extras - options are listed in your dossier and ask us re packed lunch supplement at time of booking
- ⊗ Personal expenses
- ⊗ Entrances into any optional cultural visits and venues
- ⊗ Hiking, personal and travel insurances
- ⊗ Single rooms - unless booked at the single-person rate
- ⊗ Travel to and from the tour start and finish points.



Auberges, Chambres d'hotes & Hotels.

“Carefully-selected accommodation based on knowing our providers intimately and matching them with your preferences.”

As always, and subject to availability, our commitment to our customers is to offer the best accommodation in every stage along the trail. The RLS trail traverses France's most isolated regions, so don't expect luxury hotels to be the order of the day. However, our RLS mix comprises a range of comfortable, family-run hotels, chambres d'hotes and auberges, essentially of '2-star standard.' En-suite facilities are offered throughout with one exception, where WCs are in the corridor a few steps away from your room.

Evening meals follow a fixed menu format for all half-board guests and do not include drinks. Most hotel menus provide a meat or fish dish, plus a vegetarian option; whilst chambres d'hotes and auberges tend to function around one common meal of which all guests partake, bar vegetarians, who would have an alternative dish. All showcase 'produits du terroirs' typical of the regions through which you walk. Vegetarians are generally well catered for, vegans less so, but fruitarians need not apply!

Lunches can be enjoyed en route or the contents of a packed lunch purchased before you commence each day's walking. Relevant details are in the tour dossier and walking notes.





If you have a particular preference for any of the accommodation-types above mentioned, please let us know on your booking form and we will do our best to weight your accommodation mix in that direction. However, options are limited in some locations, and all accommodation is small-scale, so such preferences cannot be a precondition for your booking.

Finally, note that all French hotel star ratings underwent a major review by the relevant authorities in 2012/2013, as ratings had lost touch with reality. Such a review was long overdue, but expensive and individual hotels are now expected to pay the bill. Many haven't bothered, preferring to remain 'starless' out of choice. Why? Some resent state interference and profiteering; others don't want to have to increase their prices to pay for it and those in traditional stone buildings are unable to provide wheelchair access, the minimum requirement for even one star! Amidst this organized chaos, knowing one's accommodation suppliers intimately is now more important than ever!

Access & Departure

- **By air:** to Lyon or Paris
- **By rail:**
From UK, Eurostar to Lille and change for Lyon
From Paris to Lyon in 3½ hours.
From Lyon, change for regional [TER] train to Le Puy via St Etienne in 2½ hours.
- **By car:** leave your car in the central Le Puy car park - ask us for details.
- **Departure from St Jean:** by bus [bar Sunday] or taxi
- **Departure by rail:** is from Alès [15 miles from St Jean] to Nimes in 40 minutes and onward train to Lyon [60 mins], Paris CG airport [3½ hours] or Lille [4½ hours].
- **Departure by air:** from Lyon, Paris, Montpellier or Nimes to Luton via RyanAir.
- **Optional return transfer to Le Puy** at tour's end - please ask us for details.



A camper leaving Pont de Montvert - you just carry a day pack!

2024 price:

Per person in double/twin-bedded room:

10-night tour: £1220.00 Pounds Sterling# or €1425.00 Euros

- Extra nights: On request

Booking

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



An alternative way of walking the RLS, popular with some of our customers.

Ten reasons to book with The Enlightened Traveller®



Our Guarantee

In accordance with "The Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992" all passengers booking with The Enlightened Traveller® are fully protected for the initial deposit and subsequently the balance of all monies paid to us, including repatriation if required, arising from cancellation or curtailment of your travel arrangements due to the insolvency of The Enlightened Traveller®.

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- ❶ Better service and recommended by The Times: see on-site tour page
- ❷ Benefit from French-based expertise and our total focus on France
- ❸ Buy direct from us, the tour provider, and get great value for money
- ❹ Personalise your tour to meet your own preferences
- ❺ Industry-leading walking notes make orientation easy
- ❻ Insightful dossier & 1:50,000 scale maps - 1:25 000 full scale maps are available for a supplement.
- ❼ 7/7, 8am to 7 pm telephone support in native English
- ❽ We transport your luggage from hotel to hotel. Option to travel along with your luggage if you need a rest day: supplement payable, subject to availability & places are limited².
- ❾ Peace of mind: your money is safe when booking with us - all passengers are fully insured for the initial deposit and balance, irrespective of the means of payment, in the unlikely event of insolvency.
- ❿ Anglo-French family business that tries harder: We'll look after you like one of the family!



Notes

¹ We reserve the right to alter parts of the above programme for the benefit of group safety and the quality of the overall experience.

² You are entitled to take one piece of luggage per person weighing up to 13 kgs. Supplements are payable for extra or overweight luggage.

You are travelling to the Eurozone. Please contact us to check for the latest Sterling prices. Sterling prices are confirmed at the time of booking.



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