



*The Aubrac Plateau*

## Camino Solo®

Lone but in comfort and good company along the Via Podiensis

### Tour Highlights

- ☞ Discover yourself and make friends along France's Classic Pilgrimage trail.
- ☞ Enjoy single en suite rooms in a mix of comfortable accommodations: Chambres d'Hotes, walkers' inns and 2 or 3-star hotels.
- ☞ Explore the cultural heritage of three of France's most inviting regions: Auvergne, Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrenees.
- ☞ Fine start - Le Puy en Velay, World Heritage site.
- ☞ Great Finishes: the 'UNESCO' section from Nasbinals to St Chely across the Aubrac Plateau or the medieval cité of Conques.



### Fact File

- ✓ 7 or 11-night, self-guided, inn-to-inn walking tour through the best of rural France.
- ✓ Graded as a moderate challenge - you average 13½ miles -22 kms a day over a total distance of either 134 miles-215 kms [full tour] or 82½ miles/133 kms [7-nighter], with options to shorten or lengthen stages to suit you.
- ✓ Convenient access from either Lyon or Claremont-Ferrand
- ✓ Start any day from early-April to 12th October.
- ✓ Luggage transfers throughout.



### Theme



**Camino Solo®** is the quintessential solo hiker's tour, affording you the chance to meet other unaccompanied travellers from all over the world. If your aim is to escape the confines of your current life and meet other free spirits, then this adventure is a must. Our tour, graded a moderate physical challenge, takes you along the most popular section of the classic Via Podiensis/GR65, from Le Puy en Velay to St Chely d'Aubrac.

**Camino Solo®** along the Le Puy Route has all the trammels of a special human experience. Everyone you meet will have their own particular reasons for walking the trail; their own critique of modernity, their own 'take' on relationships, remedies that have worked, regrets to share.

So what about the trail itself? Can thirty-five thousand walkers per annum really be hiking up the wrong path? Surely not! The Way is extremely varied -





*Climbing out of the Allier Gorge*

never boring, always in flux - and is a total immersion in rural France as you traverse the ancient regions of Gevaudan, Margeride and Aubrac in the 7-night tour, and additionally Pays d'Olt and the Lot in the full 11-night tour. All in all you hike in the three modern-day regions of Auvergne, Languedoc-Roussillon and into Midi-Pyrenees.

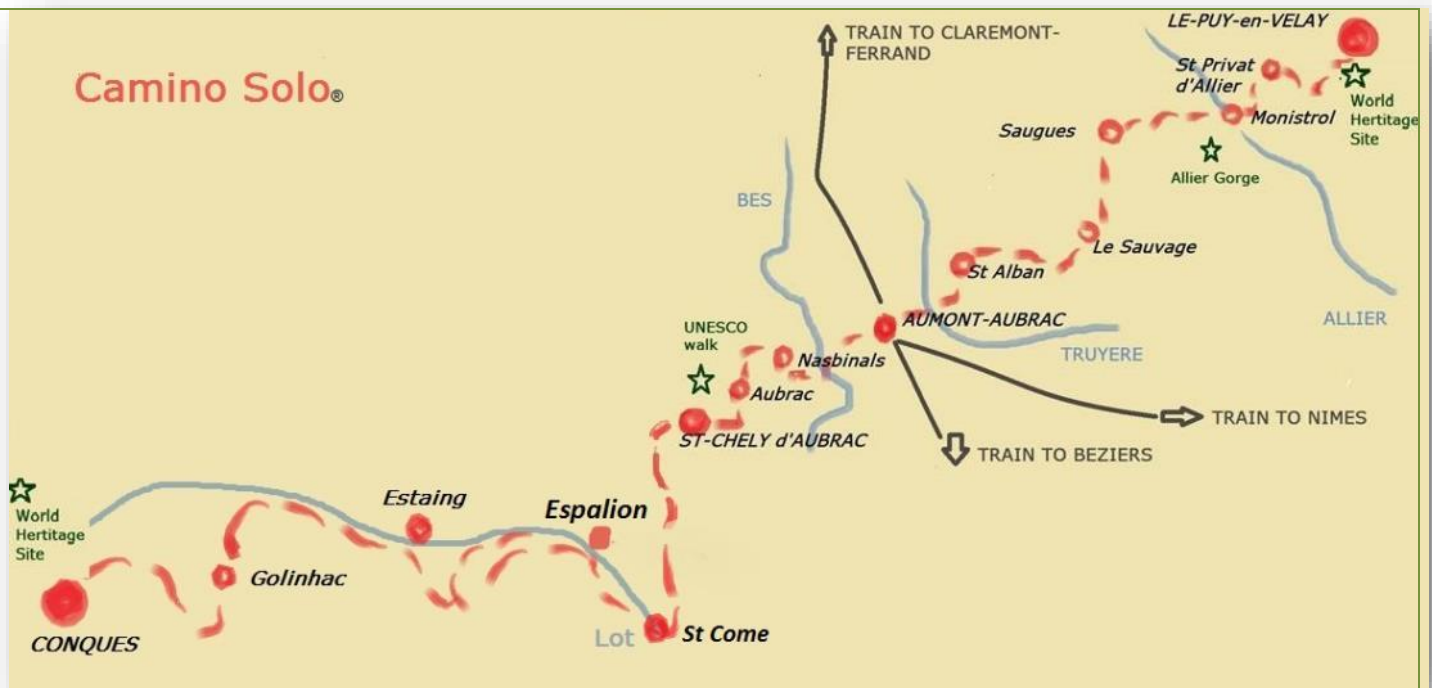
*However, whilst others leave much to chance and struggle to find a bed in a shared dormitory at the end of each day, you relax in the knowledge that you will be staying in your own, very comfortable private room in a variety of meticulously-selected, top-end accommodations.*

**Camino Solo®** addresses your Walk-Life balance and its cathartic qualities are an end in itself: chill out and exchange life's lessons with complete strangers in 'the middle of nowhere' and then re-join 'normal life' re-charged and re-vitalised. All the benefits of Person-centered therapy and everyone gets a turn to be both Counselor and Active Listener.

**Camino Solo®** is the French self-discovery trail 'par excellence.' You will experience something unique and 'ecumenical' along the Way and return home rejuvenated having done it your way - alone, but in good company!

*At La Chapelle de la Bastide*





## Walking Camino Solo®: tour itinerary

[All distances, times and elevation figures are approximate] <sup>1</sup>

### Day 1 Arrive in Le Puy en Velay.

Steeped in Christian history, the monuments and squares of Le Puy merit your attention - get there early, check into your centrally-located 3-star hotel and have a good look around.

Night in Le Puy.

### Day 2 Le Puy to St Privat d'Allier. [14½ miles-23½ kms, approx. 7 hrs, +600 ms -300 ms].

Climb out of the Puy basin to the Velay Plateau and its volcanic cones and follow the trail above the Dolaizon river to St Christophe. Cross the Devès, France's largest basalt Plateau, via a series of charming villages and arrive at St Privat, with its Roman-style church and castle vestiges.

Night in or near St Privat.



### Day 3 St Privat d'Allier to Saugues. [12 miles-19 kms, approx. 6 hrs, +600 ms -500 ms]

You climb to a majestic belvedere before gaining Rochegude with its fine hillside chapel and castle ruins on the Velay-Gevaudan border. Then descend into the Allier Gorge with its own 'Pao de Açucar' outcrop before crossing the Eiffel bridge and climbing up past the semi-troglodyte St Madeleine chapel and into the granite mountains of Margeride. The descent to Saugues is a delight.

Night in Saugues.



**Day 4**    **Saugues to St Alban sur Limagnole.**  
[20½ miles-33 kms, approx. 8 hrs, +370ms -390ms]

A long but uncomplicated stage, with modest climbs and descents, so simply make an early start. The hamlet of La Clauze is dominated by its 12th century tower perched atop a vast granite outcrop. Further on, the walk along the Virlange Valley is a treat and the climb up through the Ranchoulet woods never dull. Say hello to the friendly 'wild horses' before descending to Le Sauvage for lunch.

Suitable rested and refreshed, climb to Hospitalet col and visit the Chapelle de Saint Roche before crossing into Lozere [Languedoc-Roussillon] and descending to St Alban and its Romanesque church. Then enjoy the evening in your comfortable chambres d'hotes.

Night in or near St Alban.



*All the way from Geneva - you just carry a day pack!*

**Day 5**    **St Alban sur Limagnole to Aumont-Aubrac.**  
[9 miles-14½ kms, 4 hrs, +280ms -185ms.]

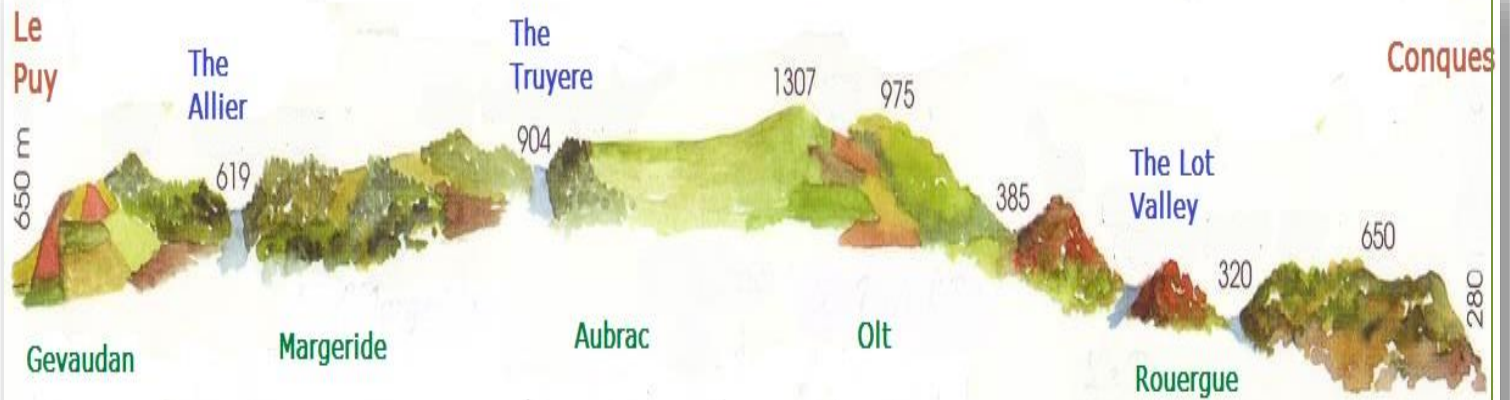
You finish crossing the granite Margeride and enter volcanic Aubrac. A short day full of fine and varied trails and boulder-speckled scenery.

Night in or near Aumont-Aubrac.

**Day 6**    **Aumont-Aubrac to Nasbinals.**  
[16½ miles-26½ kms, approx. 7½ hrs, +340ms -190ms]

Our favourite day takes you to La Chaze de Peyre, with its fine [still used] communal oven, then onto the charming Chapelle de Bastide before you arrive at Les Quatre Chemins and a welcome beverage. By now the forest has given way to enormous expanses of rolling green and cattle-laden pastures.

Night in Nasbinals.



**Day 7 Nasbinals to St Chely d'Aubrac.**  
 [10½ miles-17 kms, approx. 4½ hrs, +135ms -490ms.]

A World Heritage-rated walk blessed with more fabulous rolling hillsides before you descend to the picturesque village of Aubrac, overseen by its white porcelain statue of the Virgin Mary. A fine lunch-spot, with its Tour des Anglais, you then commence your protracted descent into the Lot Valley and enjoy your over-nighter in charming St Chely.

Night in St Chely.

**End of Camino Solo 7-night tour or continue onto Conques.**



*Before Nasbinals*





## Day 8

### St Chely d'Aubrac to Espallion

[16 miles-25½ kms in 6½ hrs with approx. +245ms -840ms]

Cross the Unesco bridge and climb through several hamlets in Le Pays d'Olt before crossing the Cancels and descending through aged vines to the first glimpses of the delightful walled village of St Come on The Lot. Then choose between the high or the low road to Espalion via either the riverside or the hillside route.  
Night in Espalion.

## Day 9

### Espallion to Estaing

[7 miles-11 kms, 3½ hrs, with approx. +455ms -260ms]

For this semi-rest day, we traverse Le Rouergue along the left bank of the tranquille River Lot, pass the Chateau de Calmont before enjoying lunch at the charming village of Armagnac with its fine domaine. Then continue the oenology lesson upon arrival in Estaing, home to the once powerful Valery-Giscard and its Wine House and Museum.  
Night in Estaing.



## Day 10

### Estaing to Golinhac

[10 miles-16 kms, 5 hrs with approx. +420ms -90ms]

Drag yourself across Le Pont Vieux and enjoy a prolonged meander along the banks of the enchanting Lot before climbing Le Chemin des Croix to your comfy overnight resting place.  
Night in Golinhac.

## Day 11

### Golinhac to Conques

[13 miles-21 kms, 6½ hrs with approx. +200ms -600ms]

Continue along Le Chemin des Croix via the charming watering holes of Espayrac and its twin Senergues before descending into the Ouche and Dourdou Gorges towards the medieval cité of 'Concha', nowadays known as Conques, the grand finalé to a great tour.  
Night in Conques.



## Day 12

### End of tour and departure.

Breakfast followed by check out. Please enquire about our transfers to Aumont-Aubrac, Le Puy or Figeac.  
Bonne continuation and we hope to see you next year.

## What's Included

- ✓ 7 or 11 nights' stay in single rooms with en suite facilities in carefully-selected accommodation.
- ✓ Breakfasts plus 5 or 8 evening meals, respectively.
- ✓ Themed dossier, Hiking Insight Notes and 1: 50,000 maps. The Way is very well way marked and we consider this scale map as entirely adequate for this particular trail.
- ✓ Luggage transfers <sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Telephone help-line service with 7/7 and 8 till late native English support.



## Not included

- ⊗ Remaining meals and all drinks and extras - lunch and dinner options are listed in your dossier and walking notes.
- ⊗ 1: 25,000 scale maps: nine of these would be required to cover the tour, which we are happy to supply at a supplement. Please enquire.
- ⊗ Personal expenses
- ⊗ Entrances into any optional cultural visits and venues
- ⊗ Hiking, personal and travel insurances
- ⊗ Travel to Le Puy and from St-Chely d'Aubrac or Conques.



<sup>2</sup> Important note: You are entitled to take one piece of luggage per person, each weighing up to a maximum of 13 kgs each. Supplements are payable for extra or overweight luggage.

**Note:** we are able to arrange for your excess luggage to be securely stored for the duration of your tour and delivered to the final hotel before your departure. Please ask us for further details of this service if it is of interest to you

*St Privat d'Allier in the morning sunshine*



## Comfortable hotels and guest houses

### *“Matching your needs to meticulously-selected accommodation”*

We have literally combed the trail to find the best accommodation that the St. James' Way has to offer so that you enjoy the over-night stay as much as the hiking.

Camino Solo® boasts the optimum fusion of both guesthouse and hotel accommodation, designed as a ‘best of’ mix that maximises both comfort, convenience and the opportunity to meet other kindred spirits.

Our guest houses and walkers’ inns offer high levels of comfort. The objective is to allow you to meet interesting travellers along The Way, who value the same comforts as you, and spend time with hosts who know the area and its history and enjoy sharing it with their guests.

The human factor and the personal touch is thus writ large. Your hosts are accustomed to welcoming Anglophones into their homes although, as with anything in life, your extra effort will be handsomely rewarded and so practicing some French [however rudimentary] is highly recommended.

The homes are on The Way itself. Where your hosts do not provide an evening meal, the village in question offers local options to suit located nearby.

Our hotels are comfortable and welcoming, with bar and restaurant. They are on the trail and of 2- or 3-star standard.

We have chosen to place you in a 3-star hotel within walking distance of the railway station in Le Puy en Velay to give you maximum flexibility re your arrival time and excellent comfort from the start.





## Access & Departure

### How to get to Le Puy-en-Velay

#### Arrival:

- By air: to Lyon or Paris

- By rail: see bahn.com

From UK, Eurostar to Lille and change for Lyon

From Paris to Lyon by TGV 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:

We can arrange for you to be transferred you back to Aumont-Aubrac or onto Figeac after breakfast at the tour's end for easy onward travel. Please reserve this at time of booking.

or

opt for a transfer back to Le Puy-en-Velay. Please ask us for details.

Aumont-Aubrac lies on the regional railway line that runs north-south connecting Clermont-Ferrand to Beziers. Onward transport leaves here from around 11am and it takes approx. 2 hours to go north to Clermont-Ferrand or 3½ south to Beziers. Alternatively, you can travel east across by SNCF bus to Mende [the capital of Lozere] followed by onward train to La Bastide-Puy-Laurent and onto Nimes in approx. 5½hours.



*Leaving Aumont*





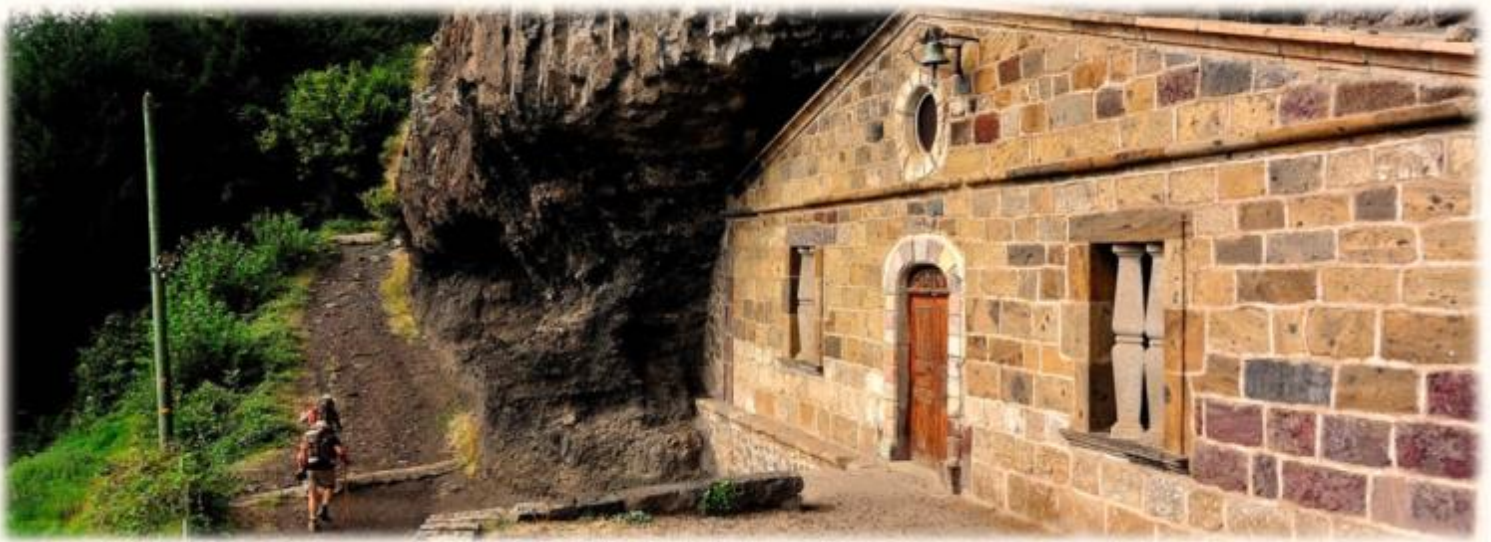
*Shephard near Le Puy*



## Ten reasons to book with The Enlightened Traveller®

- ❶ Best accommodation, better service
- 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 suit your own requirements
- ❺ Industry-leading walking notes make orientation easy
- ❻ 1:50 000 scale maps & insightful dossier
- ❼ 7/7 and 8 till late 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: subject to availability, places are limited<sup>2</sup>.
- 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: become one of the family!

*The semi-troglodyte  
Chapelle de la  
Madeleine above the  
Allier Gorge*





*Tower at Clauze*



## 2023 prices:

### **Camino Solo® - single person rate:**

**7-night tour: £1230.00 Pounds Sterling or €1430.00 Euros**

**11-night tour: £1675.00 Pounds Sterling or €1940.00 Euros**

- **Extra nights: On Request**

## Booking

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

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> We reserve the right to alter parts of the above programme for the benefit of safety and the quality of the overall experience.

<sup>2</sup> This covers one piece of luggage weighing up to 13 kgs and supplements apply for overweight luggage.

We can arrange for your excess luggage to be securely stored for the duration of your tour and delivered to the final hotel before your departure. Please ask us for further details of this service if it is of interest to you.

We accept no responsibility for lost valuables. We advise you not to bring computers and business-related equipment.

Travelling with your luggage must be booked the night before and is subject to availability and a fee of approx. 30.00 Euros per person.

### The Enlightened Traveller®

**Walking Holidays in France Ltd.**

12 Park Lane, Tilehurst,  
READING, RG31 5DL, England

UK: (0800) 4488 404

France: 06 95 04 12 63

Email: [info@walking-holidays-france.com](mailto:info@walking-holidays-france.com)

Inter: <https://walking-holidays-france.com>

Skype: [theenlightenedtraveller](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/theenlightenedtraveller)

Facebook.com/TheEnlightenedTraveller

Instagram.com/the.enlightened.traveller



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