



Walking the Gardon Gorge

The Gorge bottom

A 'Grand site de France' with a grand finalé: Le Pont du Gard

Tour Highlights

- ☞ Light, 7-night tour.
- ☞ Experience the Pont du Gard as few others do.
- ☞ Explore a fabulous limestone cavern*.
- ☞ Stay in good hotels and chambres d'hotes du charme, incl. two nights in a 4-star hotel in Collias⁴
- ☞ Start in Medieval Vezenobres (near Alès) and finish in Uzès [First Duchy of France].
- ☞ Walk a Roman trail linking fine hill-top villages and the Gorge itself, a Grand Site de France.



Fact File

- ✓ Self-guided, inn-to-inn tour along the Gardon Valley.
- ✓ Average 5 to 5½ hours and 10 miles/16 kms a day.
- ✓ Convenient access from Nimes by rail.
- ✓ Departures any day from 1 March to 31 October.
- ✓ Luggage and people transfers throughout.
- ✓ Superior accommodation.



Theme

Walking the Gardon Gorge is a light walking holiday that sees you following the course taken by one of France's most enigmatic rivers as it sweeps its way from the Cevennes foothills, across Mediterranean Garrigues and into deeply-incised limestone canyon. You discover its multi-faceted history as you follow an ancient hill-top trail dating back to Roman times.

A geological and historical site of major importance in southern France, the Gardon Gorge Massif is a member of the 'Grands sites de France' network. The Massif and Gorge offer a succession of surprises to those who venture along its course and explore its contiguous limestone plateau: agricultural dales, olive groves and white cliffs; sand dunes and the special tree-speckled vegetation lining the river that the French call 'ripisylve'; pot-holed limestone pavement river banks, decayed water mills, hermitages and grottos.

Your learning curve acquaints you with two millennia of history along the 'Gardonnenque', plus the human and physical geography of the Garrigues and the Gorge. Like the River itself, you meander through the sun-drenched, oft-sandy-but-normally-stony soils of greater Provencal Nimes and its Costière region, where arguably some of France's best regional wines [Indication Geographique Protégé as it is now called] are produced on domains that date back to the Roman era.





Pont St-Nicolas

The latent botanist will be rewarded by camomile, cacti and fig, alongside the omnipresent and traditional olive and vine; whilst the avid ornithologist can enjoy raptors and the exploration of a fabulous limestone cavern that's closed during hibernation and mating periods*.

Walking the Gardon Gorge is a hiking odyssey that helps you understand why the tour's grande final  is known as Le Pont du Gard rather than Le Pont du Gardon; and as you have learned that you appreciate things more if you have to work for them, you earn the right to experience this architectural masterpiece as few tourist ever will - and you'll have the photos to prove it!

Your last two nights are spent in Uz s, the First Duchy of France, a fine Proven al town that is bustling with cafes and restaurants and exudes its historical importance, with castle, keep, cathedral and circular Fenestrelle tower. You get to enjoy a short walk to discover the source that fed the Pont du Gard and, subject to timing, possibly explore Western Provence's best Saturday-morning market? Please ask us for details.

* This grotto is open from 15 March to 1 May and 15 August to 15 November.



The Roman aqueduct aka Le Pont du Gard

7-night Itinerary¹

Day 1 Arrival Day in Vezenobrès
[40-minute train journey from Nîmes]. Then a short taxi ride, which is included in your tour. Get there early and explore this medieval masterpiece. Night in Vezenobrès.

Day 2 Vezenobrès to Moussac
[7½ miles-12 kms, + 60 ms, - 85 ms].

The Roman trail laces together four fine villages and a remarkable fortified hamlet along this section of The Gardonnenque. Each oozes character and history as you enjoy the peaceful, scenic garrigues at its best. Collection and transfer back to Vezenobrès. *Possible over-night stay near Moussac subject to availability.*

Day 3 Moussac to Russan [10½ miles-17 kms, + 55 ms, - 60 ms].

Return transfer to Moussac after breakfast. Then enjoy a leisurely walk across the scenic Gardonnenque followed by a gentle climb into the dry, limestone Garrigues. Descend to picturesque Russan, perched at the mouth of the Gorges du Gardon, with a fine vantage point over the River, which in summer is subterranean. Night in Russan.

Day 4 Russan to Pont St Nicolas [5½ miles-8½ kms, +145ms/-155ms, 3 hrs.]

Picture-postcard Russan enjoys a fine vantage point over the Gardon. In summer the river is subterranean. Castellans offers a classic, vertiginous U-bend and cliff-face and the ridge to the bridge is enchanting. Collection from Le Pont and transfer to your 4-star hotel in Collias.

Day 5 Pont St Nicolas to Collias [8 miles-13 kms, +125ms/-145ms, 3½ hrs.]

After breakfast transfer back to Pont St Nicolas and descent into the deeply-incised gorge. We visit La Baume featuring La Chapelle St Vérémede, Grotte de la Baume and the ruins of le moulin de la Barque. From here the trail oscillates between limestone causeway and wooded path that hugs more closely to the cliff. Second night in Collias.

Option to combine days 4 and 5 - ask for details.

Day 6 Collias to Pont du Gard and beyond
[7 miles-11 kms, +128 ms, -110 ms, approx. 4 hrs].

Enjoy more of the gorge, and unspoiled views over an important historic chateau, before reaching a disused aqueduct, one of France's most-visited 'grand sites' and varying numbers of tourists according to season. Your approach is second to none and enjoy the prime belvederes [and the perfect lunch spot] before seek out other Roman hydraulic remnants along the way to your collection point in Vers Pont du Gard. Transfer to, and night in, Uzès.

Day 7 Uzès circular walk - Gorge d'Alzon. [3 hrs, 5.5 miles - 8.5 kms.]

Enjoy a bucolic hike around the Uzès hinterland in search of the source of the waters that fed the Pont du Gard and supplied Roman Nîmes with water. Second night in Uzès.

Day 8 End of Tour - although there's plenty to enjoy if you want to stay for an extra day/night. Please ask us for details.





Walk the high plateau and riverside

What's Included

- ✓ 7 nights in comfortable accommodation - see below.
- ✓ 7 Breakfasts and dinner included in Russan
- ✓ Industry-leading hiking notes, 1:25,000 maps and themed dossier
- ✓ Luggage transfers throughout ²
- ✓ 6 people transfers relevant to the tour - see itinerary above - including transfer to Uzès at the end of the tour.
- ✓ 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 notes
- ⊗ 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 Alès and from Uzès.



A mix of fine Chambres d'Hotes & Hotels

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

Accommodation is of a high standard and comprises a range of carefully-selected, charming and characterful chambres d'hotes [guest houses], a comfortable 2-star hotel in Vezénobres and a sumptuous 4-star hotel in Collias⁴. All offer a fine welcome and en suite facilities.



Evening meals are either in the your accommodation [at your own expense except for in Russan] or in a restaurant in the village. This allows you greater choice and personalisation according to budget and taste. 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.



Sunflowers and venerable Vezenobres

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. Your hiking commences in Vezenobres, located in the Cevenol foothills.

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.

Into the grotto



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- ❽ We transport your luggage from hotel to hotel. Option to travel along with your luggage if you need a rest day: subject to availability³.
- 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: Brexit means business as usual!



Early morning at Collias



Follow the vestiges of the aquaduct

2024 prices:

Per person in double or
twin-bedded room:
£995.00 Pounds Sterling
or **€1240.00 Euros⁴**



Booking

Email, phone 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 This covers one piece of luggage per person up to 20 kgs in weight. Supplements apply for overweight luggage and we accept no responsibility for lost valuables. We advise you not to bring computers and business-related equipment.

⁴ Note that certain dates in the 4-star Collias hotel are subject to a €30.00 euros/£27.00 GBP supplement per night. Best avoid Saturday stays. Please ask us for details.

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Delighting Mind, Body and Sole!