

Aubrac ahead

Great Taste of Camino Francês

Experience a bite-sized chunk of the classic GR65

Tour Highlights

- ☞ Choose between a hotel-led or a chambres-d'hotels-led format to suite your preference.
- ☞ Enjoy a slice of the 'best of' Europe's Classic Pilgrimage trail.
- ☞ Explore the cultural heritage of two of France's most inviting ancient regions: La Margeride and Aubrac.
- ☞ Hike the mythical 'UNESCO' World Heritage section from Nasbinals to St Chely across the Aubrac Plateau.



Fact File

- ✓ 4-night, self-guided, inn-to-inn walking tour through rural France crossing from Languedoc-Roussillon into Midi-Pyrenees.
- ✓ Graded as a moderate challenge - you average 12½ miles-20 kms a day.
- ✓ Convenient starting point of Aumont-Aubrac for ease of access.
- ✓ Start any day from 1st April to 8th October.
- ✓ Luggage transfers throughout.



Theme

Taste of Camino Francês is your chance to sample a carefully-selected, three-day segment of the world renowned 'Compostella Trail.' Whilst the whole route is a special human experience indeed, the Via Podiensis is by far the most popular of the 'Four French Ways.' The most-trumpeted section is from Le Puy-en-Velay to Conques and this 4-night tour lets you taste the best slice of that excellent gateau.

So whatever your reasons are for wanting to join the Camino Club, here is your chance to see what all the fuss is about whilst savouring the ambiance over three extremely varied days of walking and conversing with kindred spirits from the four corners of the human world.



Your common humanity unites you, complemented by your desire to walk moderate distances, sleep in private rooms in welcoming accommodations and feel spoilt by your hosts attention to detail. So cramped conditions and snoring neighbours are out; as too is the obligation to sport a shell on your rucksack and collect the full set of official or un-official stamps on your 'credential passport' to prove you have really been there and duly suffered along The Way.

You do your Camino your own way, meet whom you wish to meet, spend precious time with people of your own ilk and enjoy the memorable countryside in the companionship of new acquaintances who may just become lifelong friends.

What you share in common with everyone else along this section of The Way, pilgrim or not, is the following:

- ☞ a journey - alone or in a group of friends of your own choosing;
- ☞ encounters - with other humans [companionship], unique buildings [cathedrals, temples] objects [relics, tombs] and rituals [stories, legends];
- ☞ Exploration - experience the different and the new;
- ☞ Arrival at a destination - your own 'Grand Finalé', and
- ☞ Returning home a better, changed or 'enriched' person.

There you have the essential ingredients of our Taste of Camino Francês tour: an opportunity to enjoy the best of what the Way of St James has to offer in two accommodation-led formats to suit your preference. What differentiates this trip from other 'Camino' tours is the emphasis on accommodation excellence. You only get one bite at the cherry, so here's your chance to do it in style. And once bitten, we trust you'll be back for more in the not-too-distant future.

La chapelle de la Bastide



Taste of Camino Francés: four-night tour itinerary

[All distances, times and elevation figures are approximate] ¹

Day 1 Arrive in Aumont-Aubrac.

[The town is the best entry and exit point along the Le Puy to Conques section] See below for travel options.

Night in Aumont-Aubrac - hotel or chambres d'hotes.

Day 2 Aumont-Aubrac to Nasbinals.

[16½ miles-26½ kms, approx. 7½ hrs, +340ms -190ms]

You commence along an emblematic white sandy trail en route to La Chaze de Peyre, with its fine communal oven, past 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 speckled with blocks of granite and low, dry-stone walls.

Night in Nasbinals - hotel or chambres d'hotes

Day 3 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 and patchwork steppes, with a mosaic of colours composed of over 1300 species of indigenous flora. Descend to the picturesque village of Aubrac past the white porcelain statue of the Virgin Mary. A fine lunch-spot can be enjoyed in the village square near the Tour des Anglais before commencing your descent to the Boralde Valley and the charming St Chely.

Night in St Chely - hotel or chambres d'hotes.

Day 4 St Chely d'Aubrac to St Côme d'Olt or Espalion.

[10 miles-16½ kms, approx. 4½ hrs, +200ms -650ms or 16 miles-25½ kms, approx. 6½ hrs, +245ms -840ms.]

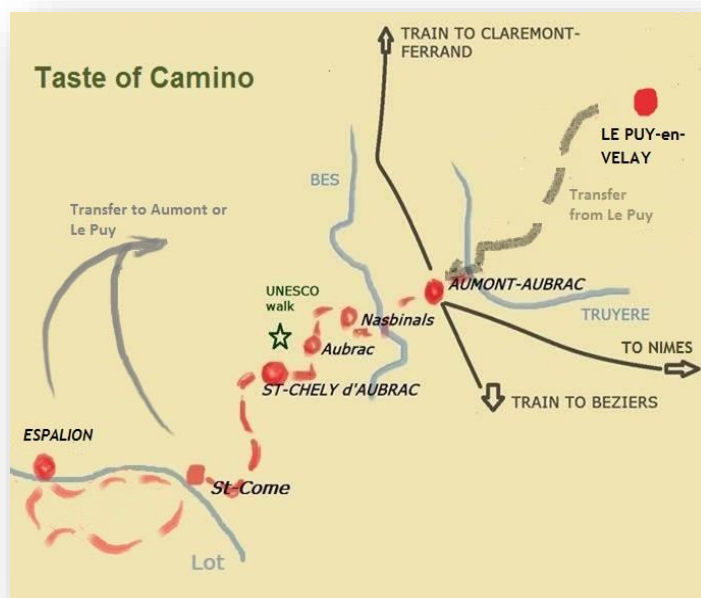
The final morning's walk through classic countryside has P.M. options to suit you:

- Amble round arguably the most appealing of all the villages along the trail - the walled cité of St Côme d'Olt, located on a beautiful stretch of the River Lot, whose unpretentious style has avoided the over-commercialisation of some stop-overs, or,
- Continue onto Espalion via either the 'low route' that hugs the river Lot or the more challenging 'high route' that sees you clambering up to a hill crest with fabulous views from the statue of the Virgin Mary all the way along the LOT Valley from Espalion back to St Côme. Either way, the trails are considered worthy enough for another UNESCO inscription.

Night in either St Côme d'Olt [chambres d'hotes] or Espalion [hotel].

Day 5 End of St James' Way tour.

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





Approaching Aubrac

What's Included

- ✓ 4 nights' meticulously-selected accommodation.
- ✓ 4 breakfasts and 4 evening meals.
- ✓ Themed dossier, Hiking Insight Notes and 1: 50,000 maps. The Way is very well way marked and we consider this scale of map as entirely adequate for this particular trail.
- ✓ Luggage transfers throughout ²
- ✓ Telephone help-line service with 7/7 and 8 till 8 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: three 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.
- ⊗ Single rooms - unless booked at the single-person rate
- ⊗ Travel to and from the tour start and finish points.



Comfortable Hotels and Superior guest houses

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

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. We are thus delighted to bring you two options from which you can choose according to your own personal tastes:

1. Taste of Camino [Guest house-led]

sets out with the express aim of placing our customers in two fine guest houses along the trail. Bedrooms are all, of course, en suite and comfort levels are high. 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 in this option. 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.

Both homes are all on the trail itself. Depending on your dates, one of your hosts may not provide an evening meal, simply because the village in question offers a multitude of local options to suit most tastes less than 100 metres away.

Both chambre-d'hotes have something unique to offer to their guests, both in terms of the style and warmth of the accommodation but also in the insight it provides into life at each place the particular stages along the trail.

As a result of COVID-19, there are no longer suitable chambres d'hotes in Nasbinals nor St Chely. We thus place you in centrally-located two- and three-star hotels, respectively.

2. Taste of Camino [Hotel-led]

allows you to experience the trail by day whilst focussing the evenings on you, your family and close companions. You set the social agenda in the welcoming environment of your hotel bar, restaurant or room. **You stay in two 3-star hotels and two 2-star hotels.**

Our commitment is to bring you your preferred accommodation option, Guest house-led or Hotel-led, in its purest form. However, we cannot guarantee that corresponding accommodation will always be available at each stage and so this cannot be a precondition of your booking. **Where we are unable to accommodate you in the desired chambres d'hotes or hotel stay on a particular night, you will be placed in the equivalent hotel or guest house, respectively, with a corresponding price adjustment.**





En route to St-Chely

Access & Departure

How to get to Aumont-Aubrac

Aumont-Aubrac lies on the regional SNCF railway line [TER] that runs north-south connecting Clermont-Ferrand to Beziers.

Arrival:

- By air: to Paris, Clermont-Ferrand or Beziers.
- **By rail:** from Paris and change for Clermont-Ferrand and onward to Aumont-Aubrac. See website page for full details and examples or visit:

<https://www.sncf.com/en>,

or

<https://www.ter.sncf.com/occitanie/horaires/recherche>,

or

<https://www.rome2rio.com/>.

Departure:

- We can get you transferred back to Aumont-Aubrac [or onto Le Puy-en-Velay] after breakfast on departure day on demand, subject to availability. Please reserve this at the time of booking.

Le Puy-en-Velay is better for those wishing to travel onto Lyon.



The Lot at Espalion

Near Les Quatre Chemins



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- ❶ Best accommodation, better service and recommended by The Times
- 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 the tour to suit your preferences.
- ❺ Industry-leading walking notes make orientation easy
- ❻ 1:50 000 scale maps & insightful dossier
- ❼ 7/7 and 8 till 8 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 limited³.
- 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 picturesque Lot Valley - the low route seen from the High Route

Near Finieyroles



2024 prices:

Per person rate in double or twin-bedded room:
Taste of Camino Francês [Guest-house-led]
£580.00 Pounds Sterling or €660.00 Euros

Taste of Camino Francês [Hotel-based]
£635.00 Pounds Sterling or €730.00 Euros

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 You can bring one piece of luggage each, weighing up to 13 kgs. 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.

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