



*A lost hamlet on
Walk One*

Walking Cèzarenque

The Valley of lost hamlets & alternative lifestyles

Tour Highlights

- 🌀 Discover the pristine hills and valleys of eastern Cévennes
- 🌀 Enjoy an oasis of alternative lifestyles and organic farming
- 🌀 Find Megalithic man's footprint - dolmen, capitelle and grotto
- 🌀 Get acquainted with delightful and forgotten hamlets & villages
- 🌀 Hike fine ancient drovers' trails and hill crests
- 🌀 Optional visits to Cheylard castle, an organic farm, organic wine growers and a chestnut drying house.

Fact File

- ✓ 6-night, self-guided tour featuring four circular hikes and one inn-to-inn walk.
- ✓ Two of the day walks are quite challenging, and three are moderate.
- ✓ 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 Nîmes via train.
- ✓ A countryside walkers' inn and a family-run and welcoming hotel.



Theme

You follow the river Cèze towards its source and get 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 where many ancient, stone houses are still inhabited but bereft of running water.

Walking Cèzarenque has you escaping from modernity into a world of eco-friendly farming and lifestyles. You walk in and around the Upper Cèze Valley, nestled between the eastern flank of the Cévennes and Ardèche; an unspoiled and under-explored area of great natural beauty.

Late sixties hippies built alternative lifestyles here amidst a movement to re-populate rural villages. Their products are on sale in many of the Valley's markets. The second generation has installed solar-powered and wooden eco-dwellings, yet many homesteads, whether stone or wooden, are still without running water - a scarce resource in these parts. The river water, however, is some of the purest in France, to which the crayfish bear testimony.



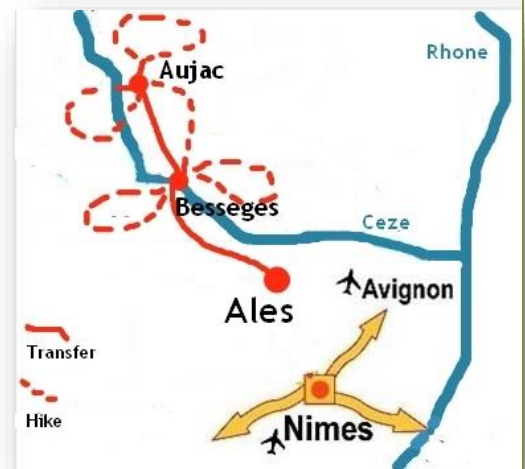
Alternative farming is well implanted, and you have the opportunity to visit one of the few surviving chestnut-drying houses [La Clede] still functioning in France, an organic farm and an organic wine grower of Clinton-based wine - a grape variety still considered dangerous, outlawed commercially since the 1930s and consigned to 'consomation familiale.' Visits by arrangement. The imposing Cheylard castle is never far away, keeping a watchful eye over your perambulations from its hilltop vantage point.

You commence with a 75-minute transfer to Aujac, which gets you immediately high up, away from modernity and straight into the trip's unique ambiance. If you can arrive in Ales no later than 17.30, then we will transfer you up to Aujac the same day, otherwise the transfer takes place after breakfast on Day Two. Your walker's inn is a 'French-fries-free-zone' of meticulously-prepared fresh dishes showcasing local 'produits du terroirs.'

Two fine walks later you hike a fabulous hill-crest trail down to Bessèges, where two more moderate, but equally fascinating, walks are to be enjoyed. We then transfer you back to Alès and civilization in the knowledge that this land of ancient drovers' trails and hidden hamlets that characterizes the Forgotten Valley will remain long in the memory.

6-night tour 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]
Short transfer to nearby pass. 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 Ceze Valley visit. Night in Bessèges.
- Day 5 Tour de Castillon.**
[9 miles-14 kms, approx. 5½ hrs, +/-450 ms]
Short morning transfer to the start of the walk, which takes you into the world of repopulated hamlets, meticulously preserved and with their alternative lifestyles. Second night in Bessèges.
- Day 6 Le Ronc Rouge.**
[6½ miles-10 kms, approx. 5 hrs, +/-290 ms]
A microcosm of Gardoise life is to be found - dolmen, capitelle, grotto, a secluded twelfth century chapel with Roman vestiges (complete with visiting book and annual pilgrimage), remains bearing testimony to the industrial revolution and mining plus some outstanding views over the surrounding countryside. Third night in Bessèges.
- Day 7 End of your hiking tour.** Breakfast followed by transfer to Ales SNCF station for onward train to Nimes for connections to Lyon, Marseille, Montpellier or Paris.





Le Cham Bonnevaux

What's Included

- ✓ 6 nights' accommodation [incl. local taxes]
- ✓ 6 breakfasts and 4 evening meals
- ✓ 3 picnic lunches in Aujac
- ✓ Industry-leading hiking notes, 1:25,000 maps and themed dossier
- ✓ Luggage and people transfers relevant to the tour².
- ✓ Telephone help-line service with 7/7 native English and locally-based support.



Not included

- ⊗ Any other meals and all drinks and extras
- ⊗ 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 Alès.



The source of life at Aujaguet





Courry through the trees

**A small,
family-
run 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 all meals, packed lunches included, in the first three days of the tour package for your convenience, allowing you enjoy your tour to the full without distractions.

You stay three nights in two different hotels selected on the basis of location, service and welcome. Bessèges is not a recognized holiday location and only has one hotel. However, it is a long-standing, family-owned affair that is very much part of the local fabric, with its own restaurant and en suite rooms.



Your charming walkers' inn at Aujac 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.

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 Alès 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 Alès from Paris, with change at Clermont-Ferrand.

Our customers recommend Bahn.com for research and ticketing.

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





The paved trail to Castillon

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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 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: We'll look after you like family!



*Hillside chapel
near Courry*



The Cezarenque landscape

2024 prices:

Per person in double or
twin-bedded room:
£825.00 Pounds Sterling
or **€975.00 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 Please ensure you arrive in Alès for your transfer no later than 17.00. Supplements are payable for later arrivals. Ask us for details.



Our Guarantee

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Delighting Mind, Body and Sole!