



## Saint-Guilhem Way

### Occitanie's quintessential transhumance trail

*Jonte  
Gorge*

#### Tour Highlights

- ☞ One of the best walking tours in southern France.
- ☞ Cross remote Lozère, Gard and Herault.
- ☞ Explore an ancient transhumance, medieval trading and pilgrimage trail.
- ☞ Enjoy a variety of landscapes, including Causses, Gorges and the magnificent Cirque de Navacelles.
- ☞ Overnighters in picturesque villages.
- ☞ Big finish in Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert.



#### Fact File

- ✓ Self-guided, inn-to-inn tour across historic Languedoc.
- ✓ 11-night moderately-challenging tour, with 9-night option.
- ✓ Start in rural Aubrac, finish in medieval Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert
- ✓ Walk 115 miles/185 kms, averaging 12 miles or 19 Kilometres per day.
- ✓ Best access from Aumont-Aubrac SNCF.
- ✓ **Selected arrival/start days from May to mid-September - see last page.**
- ✓ Luggage transfers throughout.
- ✓ A comfortable range of 3-star hotels and 2-star-standard hotels/auberges.

#### Theme

Le Chemin de Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert or The Saint Guilhem Way is an ancient transhumance route linking the lush green plateaux of Aubrac in the Massif Central to the parched Mediterranean lowlands of the Languedoc.

The Saint Guilhem Way was, from the early Middle Ages, bustling with caravans of mules and traders eagerly transporting their produce to the fairs of Meyrueis and Le Vigan: salt, wine, oil, cheese, lace and leather. Close on their heels were pilgrims, keen to visit the abbey of Gellone: resting place for Saint Guilhem of Aquitaine, 812 AD, with its relic of the Holy Cross donated by his cousin, Emperor Charlemagne. From here they would join the Arles Route and kick on eastwards to Rome or westwards to Santiago de Compostela.

This is Languedoc's drovers' trail par excellence which, unlike its more famous cousin to the east, Le Chemin de St-Gilles, has not fallen foul to tarmacking and the automobile. The path offers an extraordinary variety of landscapes en route as you cross the three departments of Lozère, Gard and l'Herault: the Northern Causse, the Causse de Sauveterre, the River Lot and the Tarn Gorge; Causse Mejean, the Mont Aigoual massif and the Causse de Blandas, before plunging into the topographic marvel that is La Cirque de Navacelles. Explore the Vis Gorge on the penultimate day before enjoying one of the best day's hiking Le Midi has to offer as you descend to the grande finalé of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert.





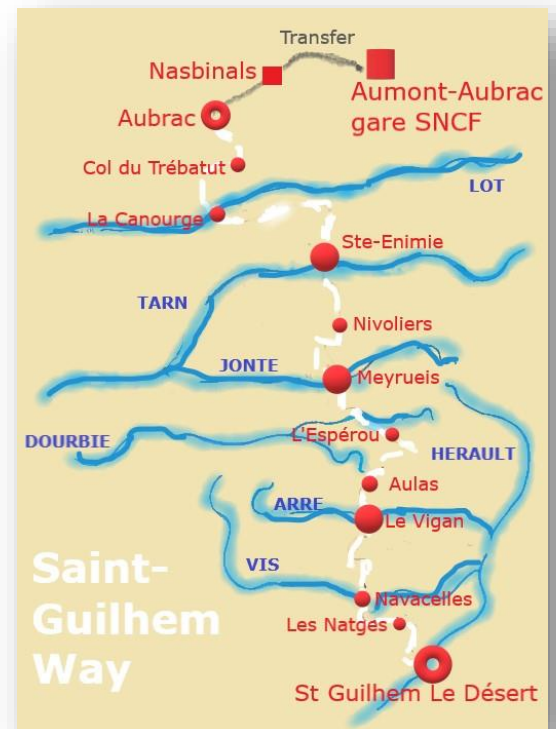
*La Cirque de Navacelles*

This self-guided walking tour offers a moderate challenge, with a total distance of 115 miles/185 kms, averaging 12 miles or 19 Kilometres per day. The Trail follows a selection of top GRs from the highlands of World Heritage Aubrac in the north (1350 ms altitude) to UNESCO's Saint-Guilhem (105 ms) in the south. En route your hiking trip is punctuated by some of southern France's most picturesque villages, farmsteads and churches; an impressive assortment of stone crosses, menhirs, bridges and hermitages; and complemented by a mix of small-scale characterful and comfortable accommodations. Due to bottlenecks, the maximum group size is eight.

The chemin de Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert or The Saint Guilhem Way is best accessed by train via Aumont-Aubrac (full tour) or Banasac-La Canourge (abridged version) and the trail best walked in May, June, September and the first half of October. Customers who have already walked our Le Puy to Conques and Tarn Gorges trails can fear not: you will not re-walk any paths hitherto hiked, but you do get the chance to revisit the bijou villages of Aubrac, Ste-Enimie and Meyrueis!

## 11-night Itinerary<sup>1</sup>

- Day 1**     **Arrival Day in Aumont-Aubrac.**  
Arrival in Aumont-Aubrac (own arrangements) by train and hotel check-in.  
Night in a hotel in Aumont-Aubrac.
- Day 2**     **Aubrac to Col du Trébatut.**  
[Approx. 14.5 miles/23 kms, 6.5 hrs walking]  
Short transfer to Aubrac where you see the first of the eponymous cows before descending to an ancient Roman trail. Cross a denuded plateau to Laz Croix de la Rode before branching out across prairie to isolated Rajas. Enjoy refreshments at the Relais des lacs de Bonnecombe (1391 ms) before descending through forest to the col des Trébatuts  
Night in a comfortable auberge in Col des Trébatuts.
- Day 3**     **Col du Trébatut to La Canourgue.**  
[9.5 miles/15.5 kms, 5 hrs walking]  
Descend through forest and across prairies to picturesque Saint Germain du Teil. Climb to the Croix du Bois du Juge belvedere before enjoying some fine countryside trails en route to the River Lot at Banassac and its twin village, La Canourgue. Night in La Canourgue.





*Chaos at  
Rajas*



**Day 4    La Canourgue to Sainte-Enimie (9-night tour starts in Banassac-La Canourgue).**

[13 miles/21 kms, 6.5 hrs walking]

An after-breakfast transfer cuts out an initial 450 mètre climb and drops you onto the plateau du Plo de la Can. Cross the Causse de Sauveterre, a vast limestone plateau and home to herds of grazing sheep roaming between isolated hamlets, testimony to the harsh life of the few who still choose to live here. After picturesque Champertoux, we start the impressive descent into the Tarn Gorge for your overnight stay in the honeypot village of Sainte Enimie. Night in Sainte-Enimie.

**Day 5    Ste-Enimie to Nivoliers.**

[9.5 miles/15 kms, 4.5 hrs walking]

Another morning climb gives up some glorious views back down to the village and along the Gorge. Take your time and take it all in! The tree-covered western Causse Mejean is a delight to hike and we prefer the wilder GR60 crossing favoured by transhumance. The village of Nivoliers is a peach, and the auberge comfortable and with great food. Night in Nivoliers.

**Day 6    Nivoliers to Meyrueis.**

[8.5 miles/13.5 kms, 4 hrs walking]

Another reason we favour the GR60 is that we couldn't bear the thought of you missing this day's walking - short but very, very sweet. Unforgettable countryside, a lost hamlet and the GRP with jaw-dropping views of the Jonte Gorge and eventually of Meyrueis itself. Enjoy the descent and your evening canal-side. Night in Meyrueis.



**Day 7    Meyrueis to L'Espérou.**

[14.5 miles/23 kms, 6.5 hrs walking]

Another morning climb and this time via a variant that is off-road and much more interesting than the standard GR6/66. Pass the menhir de la Pierre Plantée and arrive at the abime de Bramabiau (impressive sink hole and river source, paid visits only) and its restaurant (optional visit). Your path climbs 'Happiness Valley' and continues in the shadows of Mont Aigoual via the Serreyride and Espérou cols before you descend to the latter. Night in L'Espérou.

**Day 8    L'Espérou to Le Vigan.**

[Approx. 12 miles/19½ kms, +105 ms/-980 ms, 5½ hrs walking]

Leaving the foothills of Mont Aigoual, we follow the Great Languedocienne Drover's Trail. From the col de la Broue (1100 ms) we descend to Le Vigan, capital of southern Cévennes via the quaint medieval village of Aulas. Night in Le Vigan.



*Descent to Ste-Enimie*

**Day 9 Le Vigan to Navacelles.**

[Approx. 14 miles/23 kms, +540 ms/-555 ms, 7 hrs walking]

Climb up to Causse de Blandas and lunch at Montardier. An irate farmer has caused a long detour, but we recommend a short passage along a B road with some interesting menhirs, dolmens and stone circles, testimony to neolithic man's presence on the plateau. Refreshments at Blandas before stepping out towards the Navacelles visitor centre and the panoramamic Cirque de Navacelles itself. The descent into the Vis Gorge is steep but spectacular, and your overnigher in the hamlet of Navacelles, memorable. Night in Navacelles.

**Day 10 Navacelles to Les Natges.**

[Approx. 11 miles/17½ kms, +600 ms/-310 ms, 5½ hrs]

The climb out of the Gorges is rude but exhilarating and you follow a water canal carved into the rock before rejoining the plateau and arriving in the village de Saint Maurice de Navacelles for your picnic lunch by its XVII century Château. Then it's a gentle descent down valley to the tiny farming hamlet of Natges. Collection and return to Navacelles. Second night in Navacelles.

**Day 11 Les Natges to St Guilhem Le Désert.**

[Approx. 10 miles/16 kms, +60 ms/-590 ms, 5¾ hrs]

After-breakfast transfer to Les Natges. The final stage will remain long in the memory as you enjoy multiple panoramas on the cirque de la Seranne and the summits of Peyre Martine and Roc Blanc. The magnificent descent on dolomite rock and through Salzmann pines is a pleasure to behold and is guaranteed to delight your soles. Pass the Notre Dames hermitage and the clifftop castle ruins overlooking the Languedoc Plain before arriving in Saint Guilhem. Night in St Guilhem Le Désert.

**Day 12 End of Tour** - Breakfast, bon retour et a la prochaine! Onward Bus, or taxi transfer and bus, to Montpellier or Millau - own arrangements and not included in the tour fees.





*Tree-less  
Causse Mejean*



## What's Included

- ✓ 11 (or 9) nights Bed and Breakfast in '2 or 3-star standard' hotels and auberges and all hotel taxes - see below
- ✓ 11 (or 9) evening meals, plus four (or two) picnic lunch/es, respectively.
- ✓ Incoming taxi transfer from either Aumont-Aubrac (11-night trip) or from Banassac SNCF station to La Canourge (9-night trip). Plus morning transfer from La Canourge.
- ✓ Industry-leading hiking notes, 1:50,000 maps and themed dossier
- ✓ Luggage transfers throughout <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 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 Aumont-Aubrac or Banassac and from Saint-Guilhem.

## Three- star hotels and two- star- standard hotels & auberges

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

As always, and subject to availability, our commitment is to offer the best accommodation in every stage along the trail. You stay in comfortable accommodation of a good standard, with private rooms and en suite facilities throughout, that has been carefully selected on the basis of superior facilities, location, service and welcome.



Accommodation comprises four 3-star hotels and three 2-star hotels supplemented by four charming 2-star-standard auberges. All offer excellent levels of comfort and a warm welcome.

All evening meals are included and four (or two) packed lunches for your convenience in certain locations.

*The view  
from Pauperelle*



## Access & Departure

### How to get to Aumont-Aubrac (11-night tour)

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

See:

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

or

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

or

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

### Arrival

Full details of various arrival options can be found on our website on the St Guilhem tour page. However, without a doubt, **best access is from Clermont-Ferrand**, with onward SNCF train or bus to Aumont-Aubrac.

Examples from Clermont-Ferrand gare SNCF are:

- departure at 10.50 by SNCF coach, arriving in Aumont-Aubrac at 12.32; or
- dep at 13.03 by train, arriving in Aumont at 15.53.

*These examples are non-contractual and subject to change, so please check the websites above for the latest details and leave yourself plenty of time between connections.*

### How to get to Banassac-La Canourge (9-night tour)

Banassac-La Canourge lies on the same regional railway line as Aumont-Aubrac - just three stations further south. Once again, best access is afforded via Clermont-Ferrand in three-and-a-half hours.

Example: depart at 10.50 by SNCF coach, arrive in Marvejols at 13.05; change for Banassac-La Canourge, departing 13.53 by train, arriving at 14.17.

Alternatively, from Montpellier gare SNCF to Beziers by train (49 mins), for onward train to Banassac-La Canourge (2 hrs 50 mins).

Example: depart from Montpellier gare on SNCF train at 08.20, arrive Beziers at 09.09; then onward train at 09.37, arriving in Banassac-La Canourge at 12.27.





## **Departure:**

Best departure is via bus to Montpellier.

From St Guilhem Le Désert (Bus line 308, excl. Sundays) to MONTPELLIER in 55 minutes. There is one bus per day departing at 12.45 and arriving at 13.40 in Montpellier (tramway at Mosson stop) for onward travel by tram on Lines 1 & 3 into the city centre and the gare SNCF.

Alternatively, a taxi to nearby GIGNAC opens up options to MILLAU (Bus line 301/381 in 100 minutes) and MONTPELLIER (in 30 minutes).

Further details from: [herault-transport.fr](http://herault-transport.fr) or <https://www.rome2rio.com/>

## **Ten reasons to book with The Enlightened Traveller®**



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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 limited<sup>3</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: We'll look after you like one of the family!

Arrival in  
St -Guilhem



## 2024 prices:

**Per person based on two sharing a double or twin-bedded room**

☞ 11-night tour: best start days are Sunday or Monday #: £1395.00 Pounds Sterling or €1640.00 Euros

☞ 9-night tour: best start days are Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday#: £1140.00 Pounds Sterling or €1360.00 Euros

## Booking

Email, phone, LiveChat 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. Distances, times and elevations are approximate.

<sup>2</sup> This covers one piece of luggage per person up to 13 kgs in weight. Supplements apply for overweight luggage.

Excess luggage can be securely stored for the duration of your tour and delivered to the final hotel before your departure. Please ask for details.

We accept no responsibility for lost valuables. We advise you not to bring computers and business-related equipment. Hard-shell cases are not recommended.

Travelling along with your luggage must be booked the night before and is subject to space/availability and a supplement.

**# Please ask us for details**

## Our Guarantee

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## The Enlightened Traveller®

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