

SAINT JAMES OF COMPOSTELA PILGRIMAGE ROUTE THROUGH FRANCE BY BICYCLE

From Le Puy-en-Velay to St Jean Pied de Port (670 Km)

For hundreds of years, these tracks have been used by pilgrims and walkers. Following these footpaths which are steeped in history and visit so many different places, you will be captivated by both the variety and interest of the countryside you pass through. This long-distance walk may be the world's oldest, following as it does the Roman road known as the "Via Agrippa" which linked Lyon and Toulouse.

Using roads parallel to or close to the pilgrims' way, we offer you a nine-day cycling holiday, which includes opportunities to vary the distances travelled.

The places you stay at each evening are selected on the basis of the comfort of the hotel and the interest of the village or town where the hotel is situated.

PROGRAMME

VL001

DAY 1 : LE PUY

Arrive in Le Puy en Velay.

DAY 2 : LE PUY - SAUGUES : 52 km.

From the hotel on the way out of Le Puy you are free to go through part of the old town and, if you wish, extend your time there a little by climbing the great staircase leading to the cathedral, which dates from the 11th and 12th centuries. As you leave Le Puy you will see a wonderful view over the whole Le Puy basin. Then you cross part of Velay (the land of green lentils and black sheep). You will see very different landscapes as you pass through the gorges of the Allier and then climb up the other side to reach the plateau of the Margeride before arriving at Saugues.

DAY 3 : SAUGUES - ST CHÉLY D'AUBRAC : 95 km.

During this stage you will see the plateau of the Margeride, avec its characteristic villages, its lost hamlets, its crosses and its pastures enclosed by drystone walls. Each village has its own charming features (granite houses with sculptured stone doorways, gardens etc)

This leg of your journey crosses the plateau of the Margeride until you reach Aumont, which is the gateway to the Aubrac district.

Now you leave the Margeride and cross the Plateau of Aubrac (a wide upland occupied by grazing land, small stone buildings called burons, drystone walls, and great swathes of flowers if the season is right !!). In succession you pass through La Chaze de Peyre, Lasbros, Rieutort d'Aubrac and Montgros before arriving at NASBINALS (where there is a splendid Romanesque church built of brown basalt and dating from the 14th century.



After going through the village of Aubrac, you descend to Belvezet and arrive at St Chély d'Aubrac.

DAY 4 : ST CHÉLY D'AUBRAC - CONQUES: 90 km.

You enter the valley of the Lot. After crossing part of the Rouergue district, you go through the old town of St Côme d'Olt, before arriving at Espalion (the biggest town since Le Puy en Velay). Then you come to Estaing (said to be one of the loveliest villages in France) with its château and its steep narrow alleyways which criss-cross the old quarter. After this you travel through Espeyrac and Senergues before arriving at Conques.

Conques*** is one of the highlights of the pilgrims' way from Le Puy to Santiago de Compostela and merits several hours of sightseeing.

DAY 5 : CONQUES - CABRERETS : 95 km.

This stage takes you to Figeac where a short exploration of the town is recommended. Leaving Figeac your road travels through rolling hills and crosses the valley of the Célé. There are several villages worth looking at: Espagnac, Ste Eulalie, Marcilhac and Cabrerets .

DAY 6 : CABRERETS - LAUZERTE : 82 km.

Today, you have to visit Saint Cirq Lapopie : this is a veritable eagle's nest perched on a huge rock overhanging the river Lot. This too is considered one of the most beautiful villages in France, and has kept all the character of a fortified medieval village. Leaving St Cirq Lapopie, you reach Cahors by following the river Lot. You leave Cahors by heading for Labastide-Marnhac and then Lauzerte which is 7 km further on.

DAY 7 : LAUZERTE - LECTOURE : 81 km.

From Lauzerte you keep going until you reach Durfort Lacapelette; after this you come to Moissac. The town is charming with its pastel-coloured frontages of its buildings. The church of St Pierre and its cloister are well worth visiting. When you leave Moissac, you cross the river Garonne and enter the land of the Musketeers. After a fairly flat section you will find yourself pedalling through a landscape of green hills which stretch as far as the eye can see, all covered with neat fields. You pass through Bayne, then Espalais and then come to Auvillar. The old town of Auvillar is well worth a closer look with the Place à Couverts and its circular covered market with its colonnade, and then the vaulted arcade of the Tour de l'Horloge. You continue towards Condom, passing through Lectoure.

DAY 8 : LECTOURE - NOGARO : 85 km.

During this part of the journey you will pass by the vineyards whose produce goes into the making of Armagnac. The final part of this leg between Condom et Montréal du Gers is fairly level. At Montréal, the pilgrims' way called "Le Chemin de Vézelay" joins up with the "Chemin du Puy" branch coming from Le Puy. From Montréal du Gers you travel to Eauze. The centre of Eauze is worth looking at. Eauze is the Romanesque capital of the region with a priory and some old stone houses. You continue through the small town of Nogaro which is best known for its automobile race-track.

DAY 9 : NOGARO - MASLACQ : 92 km.

After Nogaro you head for Barcelonne-du-Gers and then to Aire-sur-L'Adour where you enter the department of Les Landes and the region of Aquitaine. You will not leave Aquitaine again until you reach the Spanish border. At the end of this stage there are some rather steep hills which bring you to the little village of Miramont Sensacq. This stage is marked by a succession of little hills. First you go to Arzacq-Arraziguët; then, from Mazerolles you follow a flattish route that passes through a number of small villages before reaching Arthez de Béarn. You then cross the Le Gave de Pau and reach Maslacq.

DAY 10 : MASLACQ - ST JEAN PIED DE PORT : 83 km



After Maslacq you continue to la Sauvelade and Vielleséque across a flat district before going down to Navarrenx. From Navarrenx you cross the bridge over the Gave d'Oloron and then continue to Castetnau-Camblong before going on to St Palais. The town of St Palais is very typical of the area and worth looking at more closely. Three of the pilgrims' ways leading to Santiago de Compostela join up near to the old town. Then a little more cycling will bring you to your last stopping-place on this journey: St Jean Pied de Port. This fairly easy stage will give you time to explore St Jean the narrow streets hemmed in by the old walls which protect the town. *In addition, why not make a return trip up to the Col de Roncevaux.*

DAY 11 : END OF THE HOLIDAY.

The holiday ends after breakfast.

DATES

These walking holidays can be arranged between the 1st May and the beginning of November, at any time convenient to you and subject to the availability of hotels.

Please indicate on the booking sheet any other dates which would suit you (for example if you were able to change the dates of your walking holiday by one or two days either before or after your preferred date ...): this is in case one or several hotels etc are not available on your preferred date.

We would also ask you to **make your booking as early as possible**. We don't keep permanent reservations and certain places of accommodation can be filled up several months in advance.

THE PRICE INCLUDES

- Half board
- The carriage of luggage
- A guidebook (one guidebook for 1-2 people)
- The tourist tax ('taxe de séjour')

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- The midday picnic
- Insurance, drinks; personal spending
- The cost of getting from your home to the starting point, or getting home again after the holiday
- Any taxis or shuttles taking you back to your car; any extra transport for shortening sections of the walk
- Parking fees.
- Booking fees
- Extra charge for postage outside France.

TRAVEL FILE

A travel file for the journey including marked maps and a guidebook will be sent to you as soon as we have received payment for the holiday.

GETTING THERE

Train:

Arriving: Railway station – Le Puy: Gare SNCF du Puy en Velay (tel: 04 71 07 71 63)

Don't get off at LAFAYETTE. Wait until you reach the main station.

Returning: Railway station - St Jean Pied de Port: Gare SNCF à St Jean Pied de Port (05 59 37 02 00).

Railway information from the French railway service SNCF: tel: 36 35 or website: www.sncf.com

LA PELERINE - WALKS IN FRANCE
32 place Limozin - 43170 SAUGUES
04 71 74 47 40 / contact@lapelerine.com / www.walksinfrance.co.uk/



WELCOME/DEPARTURE

The welcome takes place in the first hotel, the evening before the first day's journey. Your holiday ends on the morning following your last day's journey, after breakfast.

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

Half-board, holiday tax ('la taxe de séjour'), the transportation of luggage and the provision of route-maps and a guidebook for 2 people.

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

Packed lunch, insurance, drinks and personal expenditure, transport from or to your home at the beginning and end of the holiday, shuttles or taxis for getting back to your car or for shortening stages of your journey, or parking fees.

TRANSPORT OF LUGGAGE

Your baggage will be transported between each of the places where you spend the night, **either late in the morning or during the course of the afternoon.**

ATTENTION :

We ask you to put your bags in the hallway/lounge of each hotel every morning at 8am. **We also insist that each person has only one bag of belongings for transportation, and that no bag must weigh more than 14 kilos.** If you have more than one bag, or if your bag weighs more than 14kg, the transporter can either demand a supplement at the end of the holiday, or simply refuse altogether to carry your baggage if it is too cumbersome.

You are advised to take a small day-sack or rucksack to carry your personal belongings during the day's walk.

MIDDAY MEALS

Packed lunches are not included in our prices.

You can order them directly from the hotel the night before (by paying around 6-8€ for each person at the time - depending on the establishment). Alternatively you can buy food in the villages, where there are shops etc.

ACCOMMODATION

Tourist class hotels, *, **, *** and bed and breakfasts. Showers and WCs may be on landings or on the next floor in certain establishments.

FOOD

Breakfasts will be traditional (often taking the form of buffets) and are served at around 8am.

If you want an earlier breakfast than this, talk about it to the hotel-keeper the evening before to find out if it is possible.

Dinner is usually served from 7.30pm onwards. It usually consists of the meal of the day. Most hotels do not offer a choice of menu.

WE ADVISE YOU TO BRING WITH YOU



- a small rucksack for your packed lunch and anything else needed during the day
 - basic first aid – eg plasters, antiseptic fluid, alcohol for feet etc
 - repair kit (for punctures etc)
 - sun-glasses, sun-cream and sun-hat
 - waterproof garments, preferably luminous
 - light shoes for the evening
 - water bottle; it is important to drink 1.5 to 2 litres per day
 - a knife
 - torch (optional)
 - binoculars (if desired)
 - paper handkerchiefs
 - needle, thread, safety pins

Mobile phones:

Mobile phones do not work everywhere along the route. You may wish to have a phone card with you as well.

INSURANCE

Our insurances, Contrat Assistance Plus (Assistance étendue) and Contrat Sérénité (Premium) are individual and optional. If you sign up for them it must be **AT THE LATEST, 14 WORKING DAYS** after booking the holiday, and the insurance cannot take effect until after you have paid the full cost of the holiday. Anybody can take out one of our insurances, whatever their country of residence.

The total cost of the Contrat Assistance Plus (insurance for Assistance/Rapatiation) is set at 1.70% of the cost of the holiday. It takes into account only the cost of the holiday.

The total cost of the Contrat Sérénité (insurance for Assistance/Repatriation, cancellation and interruption of the holiday) is set at 3.6 % of the price of the holiday. It takes into account the cost of the holiday and the extra charges (for individual bedrooms, for a single holidaymaker, extra nights and possible extra transportation etc).

If you cancel the holiday yourself, if you haven't taken out our insurance for cancellation, the cancellation fees will be retained by us.

The size of the cancellation fee depends on the date of cancellation:

- 1) more than 30 days before the planned departure: 50 € of administration fees per person.
- 2) between 30 days and 22 days before departure: 25% of the total cost of the holiday.
- 3) between 21 days and 15 days before departure: 50% of the total cost of the holiday.
- 4) between 14 days and 8 days before departure: 75% of the total cost of the holiday.
- 5) between 7 days and 2 days before departure: 90% of the total cost of the holiday.
- 6) less than two days before the departure date: 100% of the total cost of the holiday.

In all cases of cancellation, even if it is more than 30 days before the planned starting date of the holiday, a fee of 50 € per person will be retained by us to cover administration costs.

➤➤ If the person with whom you planned to share a bedroom cancels their holiday, you will be billed for the individual supplement for that bedroom.

If you have to cancel your holiday **before you set off**, contact La Pèlerine on +33 (0)4 71 74 47 40, and we will do whatever is necessary.

During your holiday, your first action in such a situation should be either to contact **ASSISTANCE MUTUAIDE** on +33 (0)1 45 16 43 47 (if you have taken out the insurance contrat assistance plus) or **SERVICE SINISTRE ASSURANCE** on +33 (0)5 32 09 21 81 (if you have taken out the insurance contrat sérénité).



If you have any questions about your insurance contract, please contact the Hot Line on **05 32 09 21 81**.

Not turning up at the beginning of the holiday, or abandoning the holiday after you have begun it with no explanation, will disqualify you from reimbursement.

An example of an insurance contract, detailing the guarantees it gives you and the procedures you have to follow to make a claim, will be sent to you either at the time you make your booking – or at any other time if you ask for it.

CHANGING YOUR BOOKING:

ATTENTION!

Administration fees (50 €) will be kept by us for **any change you make in a booking already made** (e.g. for type of bedroom, departure dates, number of people etc).

If you want to book **extra nights** at the beginning or the end of your holiday this **must** be done **at the time of booking** and be specified on the booking confirmation sheet. Once bookings have been confirmed, if you want to arrange extra nights this must be done directly with the establishments concerned, and paid for at the time.

