

THE TOUR OF AUBRAC

The Aubrac is a place of vast solitudes, a plateau worn down by erosion which has left a landscape of gentle undulations. Originally forested, it was cleared long ago by the monks who lived there. Now it is mainly grassland, covered every spring by a rich new growth, sprinkled everywhere with millions of flowers.

“Images of a landscape divested of trees to an almost spiritual degree, a landscape which fills the walker with sensations of physical altitude and emotional elevation.”

Julien Gracq, Carnets du grand Chemin, Pléiade tome 2.

“Rarely do I think of the Cézallier or of Aubrac, without some strange transformation taking place inside me; on these almost limitless high plateaus where matter seems to become weightless, as it does over a moonlit sea, I am possessed with a kind of sideways vertigo which, instead of making me fall over, makes me want to run, to wander, to the furthest horizon and until I am completely out of breath”.

Julien Gracq, Carnets du Grand Chemin, José Corti Editeur, 1992.

“For in this kind of landscape you feel as though you can go anywhere, that you are the ultimate free spirit. It is this which, for me, constitutes the allure of the great plateaus, such as that of the Aubrac...”

Julien Gracq, Entretiens avec J Louis Tissier, Pléiade tome 2

Set foot on the Aubrac and you will understand!

PROGRAMME

8 days – 7 nights – 7 days’ walking

DAY 1: AUMONT - AUBRAC

Reception and settling in at the hotel.

DAY 2: AUMONT AUBRAC – MONTGROS: 23 Km, 5 to 6 hours’ walking

This is a longish first day’s walk, but without any special difficulty. You leave the Margeride and set off on to the Plateau of the Aubrac just after the place called ‘Les Quatre Chemins’! You then pass through the following villages, in this order: La Chaze de Peyre, Lasbros, Rieutort d’Aubrac and Montgros.

DAY 3: MONTGROS - ST CHELY D’AUBRAC: 20 Km, 5 hours’ walking **Or MONTGROS - AUBRAC: 12,5 km, 3 hours’ walking**

Today’s magnificent crossing of the Aubrac plateau takes you through Nasbinals and on to the village of Aubrac (a small village where you will find a picturesque bar!) There is a splendid 14th century Romanesque church built out of brown basalt.

It was in this village that Adalard, a Compostela pilgrim, founded the Hospice of Aubrac to shelter and care for other pilgrims; this was between 1120 and 1122.

After this you start to go down to Belvezet (where there are remains of castles and the valley of Boraldes). Then you go to St Chély d’Aubrac (where there is a 16th century cross).

DAY 4: ST CHELY D’AUBRAC – LAGUIOLE: 28 Km, 7 hours’ walking **Or AUBRAC - LAGUIOLE: 24 km, 4 to 5 hours’ walking**



A beautiful day's walk takes you through the state-owned forest of Aubrac and past the Croix du Triadou. Between the 15/09 and the 15/10, this part of the track is closed, because it is the rutting season for stags. Another route has been way-marked for use during this month. The track then takes you close to the old stone building called the Buron de la Pouade and the Croix du Pal. Then you reach Laguiole which is renowned for its knives and its cheeses. You can arrange to visit the knife factory at the entrance to the old town.

DAY 5: LAGUIOLE – ST URClIZE: 18.5 Km, 4 to 5 hours' walking.

This stage is less demanding than the previous day's walking, but it does include a significant uphill stretch from Laguiole (1032 metres altitude) to reach Pra-Selves in the Bois de Laguiole at 1304 metres. The route then goes downhill towards St Urcize and enters the department of Cantal. The village of Saint-Urcize stands 1000 metres above sea level on a basalt rock overlooking the valleys of the Hère and the Bès.

DAY 6: ST URClIZE – LA CHALDETTE: 17.5 Km, 4 to 5 hours' walking.

This is a country walk which crosses the Bès, a river which epitomises the landscape of the Aubrac and its lush grasslands.

In springtime the area offers you a festival of colours, not to mention the intoxicating fragrance of all the different kinds of wild flowers.

Your route takes you through a number of little hamlets such as Recoules d'Aubrac with its 12th century church, and then Le Pont du Gournier, which stands next to the river Bès and is well known as a gastronomic high spot. After this you reach Brion and then the small village of La Chalnette, which is situated at an altitude of 1000 metres. These days, La Chalnette is well known for its riverside thermal spa, whose buildings were designed by the architect Jean Michel Wilmotte.

There is a chance to stay here for an extra day's half board to benefit from a session's recuperation at the thermal spa.

DAY 7: LA CHALDETTE – TERMES: 28,5 Km, 6 hours' walking.

The walk for today leaves the valley of the Bès and heads for St Juery across the Barony of Apcher. One of the relics of this old barony is the Château de Fournels, a former keep remodelled back in the 16th century. You then enter the area known as the Terre de Peyre, uplands of the old district of Gévaudan, in order to reach Termes.

DAY 8: TERMES – AUMONT AUBRAC: 20 Km, 5 hours' walking.

Your final day's walking is across the Terre de Peyre between Aubrac and the Margeride. You pass through a succession of pretty villages whose houses are solidly built of grey granite. One place you go to is Le Fau de Peyre. Here it is worth stopping to look at the 18th century church which has a 'peigne' (comb-shaped) belfry of a style characteristic of this area. Then you pass through the little village of Vareilles as you make your way along the side of La Rimeize. Following this you reach Aumont Aubrac, which is the finishing point of your circuit of the Aubrac. Your holiday ends in the late afternoon.

DATES

From the beginning of May until the end of October, on dates convenient to you.

There is a risk that the weather in May will not always be ideal, since there can be snowfalls at this time of year.

THE PRICE INCLUDES

- Half board accommodation
- A guide book with maps showing the walking routes
- Transportation of luggage.
- Accommodation tax



THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Midday meals
- Insurances
- Drinks and personal expenses
- Transport to and from your home to the place where the holiday starts and finishes.
- Booking fees
- The cost of sending information overseas

ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE

Reception takes place at the hotel of Aumont Aubrac at the end of the afternoon. If you have come by car, you can leave it in front of the hotel.

The holiday ends in the afternoon.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium.

ACCOMMODATION

Comfortable 2** hotels and guest houses, depending on availability

Bedrooms are open after 16 h.

FOOD

Picnics or packed lunches are not included in our prices.

You will be able to buy food in the shops that you come across.

If you wish to order a packed lunch from the hotel, we suggest you ask the hotel keeper the evening before.

TRANSPORT OF LUGGAGE

Your luggage will be carried for you during each walking stage by taxis at the end of every morning or during the afternoon.

We ask you to put your luggage in the entrance hall of each place of accommodation in the morning before you set off walking. **Make sure that you have only one bag per person and that each bag does not exceed 14kg weight.**

You are advised to have a small rucksack (30 litres) to carry whatever you will need during the day.

If you are a member of a group we ask you to show on your luggage labels the NAME of the group leader (the person who booked the holiday).

ACCESS

BY TRAIN:

Railway station (Gare SNCF) Aumont Aubrac. Take the service from Paris to Béziers via Clermont Ferrand.

To check these times: www.voyages-sncf.com

BY CAR:

Michelin Map n° 76, fold 15.



Drive along the A75 until you reach Aumont-Aubrac.

Parking:

You can leave your car next to the hotel.

INFORMATION PACK

So that you can find out more about the walking routes, we will send you, after we have received payment, the guidebook: **TOUR DE L'AUBRAC , (1 guidebook for 1 to 2 people).**

THINGS TO BRING WITH YOU

A good quality rucksack (minimum 30-40 litres) for packed lunches and whatever you may need to carry with you when walking

A small individual first-aid kit, including Elastoplasts (sticking plasters), 'new skin', disinfectant/antiseptic for treating blisters or small wounds etc

Other first aid items: paracetamol/aspirin, plasters for preventing blisters

A pair of strong, comfortable walking boots/shoes suitable for lower level mountain walking. Ideally they should have good ankle support and be waterproof. Beware of bringing new footwear which has not been tested for comfort!

3 pairs of socks – wool or cotton (synthetic fibres not recommended)

A waterproof or cape

A tough pair of walking trousers or shorts

A warm 'fleece' jersey (the weather in this area can be chilly)

Warm and/or light pullover (evenings can be cool even if the day is warm)

Sun-glasses, sun-cream and a sunhat

Rain-wear

Swimming costume/trunks

Light footwear for the evenings.

A water-bottle or thermos: you will need to drink 1.5 to 2L of water each day.

A knife

A woolly hat in case the wind is cold

A small torch (optional)

Binoculars (optional)

Camera

Paper handkerchiefs/tissues

Needle, thread and a couple of safety pins

High energy snacks such as cereal bars or dried fruit (if you are in the habit of eating these)

Airtight containers in case you want to take salads on your picnic

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.

