

Season

From mid-April to mid-October

We recommend you to book this tour 3 or 4 months before the departure date if you plan to walk it in summer time. Great demand and few rooms!



Difficulty: grade 3

No major difficulty, you walk 6 to 8 hours a day. The grade 3 reflects the length of some stages (between 25 or 30 kilometers) and the nature of the terrain. The total altitude gain is about 500 to 700 meters a day, some ascents or descents could be steep. This walk requires a reasonable degree of walking experience and a current good state of fitness. The trail is well marked.

Itinerary

8-day and 7-night self-guided walking holidays

Day 1: Arrival at ESPALION. This little city, located in a beautiful spot in the heart of the Lot Valley, is an important stop on the pilgrimage route of Santiago de Compostela. Weary pilgrims arrived in this city after a labored hike across the Aubrac River and the fearful heights of its plateaus. Here, they felt immediately embraced in the mildness of the Midi. Espalion holds an important cultural heritage that you will enjoy while strolling through its narrow streets. Admire the Pont-Vieux (Old Bridge) and the old palace reflecting in the sparkling waters of the Lot.

Half-board accommodation in a 2-star hotel

Day 2: ESPALION - ESTAING (13 km – 3 and a half hour walk). This phase is short, allowing you to discover Espalion before crossing through the Lot Valley to Saint Pierre de Bussuejols. Look around the 16th century rose-sandstone church, then continue on to Estaing. You will enter Estaing by a Gothic bridge, and will enjoy visiting the city, built around a strange château topped by a keep and many times altered throughout the centuries.

Half-board accommodation in a 2-star hotel

Day 3: ESTAING – ESPEYRAC (24 km – 7 hour walk). You will cross back over the river to exit Estaing and climb above the gorges of the Lot, crossing through dark forests and tiny, isolated villages. You will reach the village of Golinac whose church, built on the remains of an ancient priory, welcomes pilgrims on their journey. Your trek will continue across the countryside, through several small hamlets and villages of Rouergue. You will finally arrive in Espeyrac, an old city once dependant on the Conques Abbey. During the middle Ages, the city held two châteaux, but today there remains only one building and a turret.

Half-board accommodation in a 2-star hotel

Day 4: ESPEYRAC – CONQUES (13 km – 3 and a half hour walk). This is a short phase, passing through the charming village of Senergues before descending towards Conques for the discovery of this pearl of Romanesque art, lying quietly against a lush green backdrop.

The abbey church houses more than 250 sculpted domes as well as, on the western facade, a gorgeous tympanum illustrating the Last Judgement. All around the serpentine basin lie the remains of the roman cloister that once stood there. Conques' treasury holds numerous pieces of priceless statuary, including La Majesté de Sainte Foy, a 10th century golden statue inlaid with jewels offered by pilgrims. The medieval village has preserved its old streets lined with wooden houses, its roman fountains, the city doors and a few remains of ancient fortified walls - Half-board accommodation in a 1-star hotel near the Pont romain



Day 5: CONQUES - DECAZEVILLE (18 km – 5 hour walk). After a final stroll through Conques, admiring once again the tympanum of the abbey church, you will pick up again your hike. You will follow Charlemagne Street through La Porte du Barry (Barry's Gate) and will cross the medieval bridge dating to the 14th century and named "pont romain" ("romain" being an adaptation of the word "roumieu", meaning "pilgrim") on the Dourdou River. You will walk uphill to the Saint Roch Chapel, once a place of pilgrimage, and will make your way along the plateau. You will pass through Noailhac and Saint Roch Chapel, Laubarède to reach Decazeville, a city founded in the 19th century and named for Duke Decazes, who initiated the mining industry in this area - Half-board accommodation in a 2-star hotel

Day 6: DECAZEVILLE - FIGEAC (30 km – 8 hour walk). You will start out for Livinhac-le-Haut, situated in a curve of the Lot River and continue to Montredon, built on a rounded hillock and overlooked by Saint Michel's church. You will soon reach the hamlet of Guiranle and Sainte Marie Chapel. The path jogs windily through the countryside so to avoid the roads. You will cross through La Cyprière, Saint Félix and by the Sainte Radegonde Church (Romanesque church), and arrive in the village of Saint Jean Mirabel, whose church possesses a 13th century tympanum. Finally, you will begin your descent into the Le Célé Valley to arrive in Figeac, a city that still holds numerous testimonies of its rich medieval past. Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel

Day 7: FIGEAC - CARJAC (31,5 km –8 and a half hour walk). Through the country you will head to Faycelles. This village will reward the traveller who takes time to stroll through its streets and admire the gorgeous view of the Lot Valley. After having absorbed the beauty of Faycelles, you will head to Beduer, whose castle still holds a 13th century keep. Beyond this village, the landscape changes and becomes arid: you are now on the Causse de Carjac, a large area sparsely covered with grass and stunted oak forests. The path, lined by low stone walls, will take you to Le Puy Clavel and Gréalou where you will admire the small Romanesque church, Notre Dame de l'Assomption. Dolmens spot the route, making for a fascinating journey. You will reach the Lot Valley and descend to Carjac, located along large limestone cliffs carved out by several grottos - Half-board accommodation in a small guesthouse

Day 8: CAJARC - Tour ends after breakfast.

Access to and from

Outward journey

By train: Go to Rodez by train and take a bus to reach Espalion.

By car: from Paris follow the A10 motorway to Orleans, A71 to Clermont-Ferrand and A75 to La Canourgue. Then continue along the Lot river (D988 road) to Espalion

Where to park : several free unguarded car parks in Espalion

Inward journey to Paris

By train: first, take a bus to Figeac rail station where you catch a train to Paris or Toulouse with a connection at Cahors

Getting back your car: bus to Figeac train station. Direct trains to Rodez where you take a bus or a taxi to go to Espalion

Accommodation

6 overnight stops in 1or 2 star hotel or guesthouse on a half-board accommodation.

1 overnight stop in 2-star hotel, lodging and breakfast

Accommodation is normally in large bed or twin-bedded rooms, with en-suite facilities (at least shower, washbasin and toilet) when available, which is 95% of the time. However, you can stay in remote spots or small villages where there is little or no choice of accommodations and where facilities may be limited. In this case, you will share a bathroom or shower room and toilets with some other people on the same storey.

Picnic lunches are not included in the tour but are available from the hotel on request the previous evening, alternatively picnic materials can be bought at the stop village or at each of the towns and villages along the route. We indicate in the route notes where there are suitable restaurants or cafés for lunch stops. We recommend you to carry food and drinks if there are none convenient to the trail.

Included

- Twin share accommodation with private facilities
- Baggage transfer between hotels (except for STD option)
- Route notes and maps
- 6 dinners
- Emergency phone number (8:00am to 7:00pm every day)

Not included

- Visa fees, transportation fees to and from the walk area
- Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips)
- Transfers except those mentioned above
- Drinks
- Additional meals
- Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls,...



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