



stevenson's trail: the cevennes

active europe for you

GRADE:



Founded in 1973, Sherpa Expeditions is specialised in self-guided and escorted holidays throughout Europe and across the globe. We offer a wide range of self-guided inn-to-inn walking and cycling tours, escorted walks, as well as Walker's Britain, a pioneering collection of over 20 British walking tours which include the Coast-to-Coast Trail and Hadrian's Wall. We have refined self-guided holidays to an art. Over many years, our leaders, local representatives and clients have all contributed to the detailed trail notes provided to walkers, making them the definitive guide to the areas we visit, which includes 16 iconic European walking destinations across France, Spain, Italy, Cyprus and much more. Sherpa Expeditions has now joined forces with UTracks <<http://www.utracks.com>> and the World Expeditions Travel Group <<http://www.worldexpeditions.com>> to bring you the most exciting and extensive range of active European holidays available, all at great value. This means you have access to over 300 active itineraries covering more than 25 European countries, from Iceland to Greece, and from Ireland to Cyprus. UTracks offers affordable, self-guided and small group-guided active holidays across Europe. Choose from a wide variety of quintessential European outdoor experiences from trekking the French Alps, cycling through Tuscany, exploring the islands of Greece, Croatia or Turkey by bike and ship, making a pilgrimage along the Compostela Trail, or discovering the lesser known trails in Bulgaria, Romania, and Slovenia. UTracks offers many family-friendly itineraries and can also tailor make tours for private groups. Cycling or walking, 2-star or 4-star, small groups or self-guided, land or sea, introductory level or more challenging - Sherpa Expeditions and UTracks can help you explore Europe exactly the way you want.

TRIP COST

Joining Le Puy-en-Velay : \$1890

Trip Concludes: St Jean du Gard

All prices are per person

OPTIONS & SUPPLEMENTS

→ single supplement: \$350

→ Single Traveller Surcharge: \$630

As the trip price is based on twinshare, a single supplement is payable if a single room is required - or a single traveller supplement if you are travelling solo*. Please refer to the price options for costs or ask our office for details. Note regarding single rooms - The single supplement guarantees the privacy of your own room, however, rooms can at times be small and in some places may not enjoy the same facilities as double/twin rooms. **The single traveller surcharge is only available on trips deemed suitable for solo travellers. It is usually more expensive than the single supplement due to the extra cost for luggage transfers and organisation.

IMPORTANT NOTES

DN1: There is an 8 day version of this itinerary.

TRIP NAME: STEVENSON'S TRAIL: THE CEVENNES

TRIP CODE: JCV

TRIP DURATION: 10 DAYS

GRADE TEXT: MODERATE TO CHALLENGING - 4

ACTIVITY: SELF-GUIDED WALKING

ACCOMMODATION: 9 NIGHTS HOTELS

DATE DETAILS: DAILY 1 JUN TO 20 SEP (EXCEPT SATURDAY & SUNDAY)



highlights

- French Country Walking in the Massif Central
- Glorious Quiet Countryside, Meadows and Shaded Chestnut Forests.
- Pretty Riverside Strolls and Walks Over Low Mountains





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the trip

In the autumn of 1878, the Scottish writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, author of *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, set out from Le Monastier in the Auvergne to walk south across the Cevennes accompanied by "a small grey donkey called Modestine, the colour of a mouse with a kindly eye". It took this pleasing pair eleven days to complete the trip, and the book that Stevenson wrote about their journey, *Travels with a donkey in the Cevennes* was his first successful book and one, which has since become a travel classic. Stevenson should have put the Cevennes "on the map", but despite his account of his travels through this region, it remains little known. His book did however inspire the establishment of the Robert Louis Stevenson Trail ("Trace Historique de Stevenson" on French maps) in 1978, the centenary year of the original walk. The local people encouraged by a Scotswoman, Madame Pat Villette, decided to retrace and waymark the trail. The route was partially waymarked by blue and white markers carrying the St. Andrews Cross of Scotland. More recently the Stevenson's Trail has been designated as GR70 and waymarked with the usual white over red GR marks. The walk starts near Le Puy en Velay in the Auvergne, a hilly region of extinct volcanoes in the north of the Massif Central and follows a winding route southwards across the Cevennes, a more mountainous area on the eastern flank of the Massif Central. The Cevennes National Park covers 3,284 sq kms, of which 914 sq kms in the central zone are protected. The headquarters of the park are at Florac and it is the only generally inhabited French National Park. The region that Stevenson chose for his journey boasts great natural beauty and is almost totally unspoilt. Depopulation as drastic as that in Stevenson's native Scotland has left a region full of sad romantic ruins. The walk itself is not difficult; the hills are not particularly high. However, the trail does cross two significant mountains: Mont du Goulet (1,497m) and Mont Lozere (1,699m); for the most part we are able to follow quite closely the route taken by Stevenson over a century ago. It is not known the exact route that he went on all the days however and some parts that he did walk on have become road, so the GR trail heads off on different cross country routes.

itinerary at a glance

Day 1	Arrive Le Puy-en-Velay
Day 2	Le Puy to Arlempdes - 14.5 km /9 miles, 4.5 hours
Day 3	Arlempdes to Pradelles - 22.5 km/14 miles, 6 hours or 34km/21 miles
Day 4	Pradelles to La Bastide Puy Laurent - 22 km/14 miles or 35km/22 miles
Day 5	La Bastide Puy Laurent to Le Bleynard - 24 km /15 miles, 6 hours
Day 6	Le Bleynard to Le Pont de Montvert - 22 km /14 miles, 5.5 hours
Day 7	To Florac - 23.5 km /15 miles - GR68, 25.5 km / 16.25miles - GR70, 7.5 hours
Day 8	Florac to St Germain de Calberte - 29 km /18 miles, 7.5 hours
Day 9	St Germain de Calberte to St Jean de Gard - 21 km /13 miles, 7 hours
Day 10	Arrangements end after breakfast

detailed itinerary

Note: This trip is not available starting on Saturday or Sunday because of hotel closures.





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DAY 1 Arrive Le Puy-en-Velay

For your first nights accommodation you stay in the historic city of Le Puy not far from Le Monastier where the Stevenson's Trail begins. Le Puy is a wonderful town to explore and you may wish to add an extra night. Its most striking attraction is the Cathédrale Notre-Dame du Puy, dating chiefly from the first half of the 12th century. Each morning, pilgrims gather at the cathedral to be blessed before starting their journey to Santiago de Compostela. The cathedral has been a Unesco World Heritage Site since 1998, as part of the "Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France". The iron statue of Notre-Dame de France (The Virgin Mary) overlooking the town was designed by the French sculptor Jean-Marie Bonnassieux, and is made from 213 Russian cannons taken in the Siege of Sevastopol (1854–1855). Fountain Crozatier is also worth visiting in the centre of town.

Accommodation: Stay in a comfortable 2 star hotel a few minutes walk from the train station.

meals: **D**

DAY 2 Le Puy to Arlempdes - 14.5 km /9 miles, 4.5 hours

Taxi transfer (included) from Le Puy to Le Monastier where the Stevenson trail starts. As today's walk is not long, there is time for a look around Le Monastier before you start the walk. You could visit the Abbey Church with its 15th century organ or the Chateau, part of which is now the Municipal Museum and the Town Hall. You walk on via the village of St. Martin de Fugeres to Goudet where we cross the River Loire. It is an hour or so's walk upstream to Arlempdes.

Accommodation: Stay in a welcoming 1 star hotel in this tiny village overlooking the upper Loire valley. The hotel is a traditional logis with a homely wood-beamed restaurant.

meals: **B,D**

DAY 3 Arlempdes to Pradelles - 22.5 km/14 miles, 6 hours or 34km/21 miles

There are two alternative itineraries for today. The longer alternative follows the GR70 Stevenson's Trail all the way for 34km/21miles. Walk through Montagnac, Ussel, Le Bouchet St Nicholas, Landos and Arquejol to Pradelles. The shorter alternative 22km/14 miles goes more directly via La Sauvetat to rejoin the GR70 at Landos and follows it to Pradelles. This old fortified village overlooks the Upper Allier Valley. It used to be an important stopping place for merchants importing goods from the South of France.

Accommodation: We use a centrally located 2 star hotel offering ensuite accommodation and for dinner a regional menu boasting 'Specialites Auvergnates.'

meals: **B,D**

DAY 4 Pradelles to La Bastide Puy Laurent - 22 km/14 miles or 35km/22 miles

Again there are longer (GR70; 35km/22miles) and shorter (22km/14miles) alternatives. Walk to Langogne and cross the River Allier. A series of paths past mills and wayside cavalries brings us to the ruined village of Fuzilhac. Of this region Stevenson wrote, "Moor, heather marsh, tracts of rock and pines, woods of birch, green and stony cattle tracks wandered in and out...." Little has changed. Pass through the village of Cheylard and the Chabadoures ravine on to La Bastide Puy Laurent a tiny village with approx. 200 inhabitants. The shorter alternative leaves the GR70 at Langogne and rejoins it just before Luc.

If you would like to add a rest day to the tour we suggest La Bastide, from which it is an easy day walk to the abbey of Notre Dame des Neiges, where Stevenson spent several nights.

Accommodation: A simple 1 star hotel, all rooms have ensuite shower and there is a restaurant.

meals: **B,D**



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DAY 5 La Bastide Puy Laurent to Le Bleynard - 24 km /15 miles, 6 hours

Head south away from the river through woods and past dolmens to reach Chasserades. A walk over the Montagne du Goulet ridge brings us to Le Bleynard. This small village rises to an altitude of 1087m and will surprise you with its heritage, Chapel of Saint Jean du Bleynard, Priory of Saint Jean du Bleynard, known as Peytavin House and beautiful old houses with slate roofs of Tournel.

Accommodation: Overnight in a high standard two star hotel traditionally appointed, with ensuite facilities and a fine pine beam and stone restaurant surrounding a large hearth.

meals: **B,D**

DAY 6 Le Bleynard to Le Pont de Montvert - 22 km /14 miles, 5.5 hours

Continue south along an old drovers road, over the Col de Finiels, past the Chalet du Mont Lozere. The col with its fine viewpoint over the Cevennes, makes a delightful lunch stop. There is an opportunity in clear weather to reach the Sommet de Finiels (1698m), the highest point in the Lozere range. We descend to Le Pont de Montvert.

Accommodation: A 2 star modern hotel, which sits on the riverbank of the Tarn, ensuite, with balconies and a restaurant specializing in the regional fare.

meals: **B,D**

DAY 7 To Florac - 23.5 km /15 miles - GR68, 25.5 km / 16.25miles - GR70, 7.5 hours

From Le Pont de Montvert walk south along the Martinet valley and ascend the ridge of the Montagne du Bouges. From here continue along the crest of the two valleys of the Tarn and Mimente. At the end of the ridge descend into Florac. You can discover the region's history and geology at the imaginative exhibition house in the old chateau. The town itself is quite small, but has two large open squares with restaurants and a few shops. The quaint boulevards of the old town offer a tempting array of cafes.

Accommodation: Stay at a 3 star hotel in the centre of town. All rooms are ensuite and the property includes a traditional restaurant, landscaped gardens and pool.

meals: **B**

DAY 8 Florac to St Germain de Calberte - 29 km /18 miles, 7.5 hours

Continue up the valley of the Mimente to reach the Col de Jalcreste. From here an old shepherd's trail leads through the forest, chestnut groves and deserted farms to St Germain de Calberte.

Accommodation: A modern resort style hotel (hotel de tourisme) with limited ensuite facilities and good regional food and a swimming pool.

meals: **B,D**

DAY 9 St Germain de Calberte to St Jean de Gard - 21 km /13 miles, 7 hours

From St Germain the route leads through the sleepy village of St Etienne. Pass a picturesque manor house before your final walk through forest to St Jean de Gard.

You may wish to have an extra night in St Jean du Gard as it is a lovely town to explore. On Tuesday there is a colourful open air market with garments made in the famous Tissu Provençal, Faïence de Moustiers (colourfully glazed pottery) and "Poterie d'Anduze." You may wish to take the steam train to Anduze. The steam railway runs every day from mid-June to the end of August, with a more limited service (mainly at weekends) from the end of March to mid-June and in September and October.

Accommodation: Built in 1882, our excellent 2 star hotel here offers fine facilities in an idyllic setting. The rooms are ensuite and there is a swimming pool.

meals: **B**

DAY 10 Arrangements end after breakfast

Trip concludes after breakfast.

meals: **B**



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additional supplements

At the time of booking we aim to offer our usual choice of accommodation, however if these are not available then alternatives are used (and on occasion a small supplement may apply). If these are of a different standard and / or a supplement applies you will be informed on confirmation of your booking.

inclusions

- 9 breakfasts, 7 dinners
- 9 nights accommodation in country hotels on a twin share basis with ensuite facilities where available
- Luggage transfer
- Information pack including route notes & maps
- Emergency hotline

items not included

- 2 dinners & lunches & beverages
- Entrance fees
- Travel insurance
- Travel to the start and from the end point of the trip
- Personal expenses such as laundry and phone calls
- Unscheduled transfers required during the trip

trip grading - moderate to challenging

'Moderate – Challenging' (grade 4) with a few long days. For reasonably fit and experienced walkers. The grade reflects the length of the days and the roughness of the terrain. The longest day can be shortened, but no clients have indicated that the grade should be lower. Day Stages: up to 35km (22miles) per day over hilly terrain. But on this long day there is a shorter alternative as well.

way marking

Most of the route is now a GR (official long-distance trail) and has been recently waymarked with red and white signs; on days 2, 3 and 4 our route deviates in part from the GR and it is necessary to follow the route descriptions provided together with the maps. Day Stages: up to 35km (22miles) per day over hilly terrain. But on this long day there is a shorter alternative as well.

route notes

Please note that one set of route notes per room booked is included in the cost of the holiday. If you require more sets of notes then there is a charge of £30 per set ordered. For bookings received four weeks or less prior to the tour departure, courier fees may be applicable to ensure you receive your final documentation in time. As rates are variable, please contact your consultant for details. Sherpa will try to avoid these costs where possible.

meal inclusions

In countries such as France breakfasts are usually coffee and toast/bread/croissant, if you want more for breakfast then we would suggest you purchase some food the night before. Special Dietary Requirements: It is important for you to tell us if you have any dietary requirements when you book your holiday so that we can inform everyone that you are staying with.





dietary requirements

Provided we are advised in advance we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance to determine whether we can cater on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

accommodation

DURING TOUR

The hotels described are our usual choice of accommodation, however if these are not available then alternatives are used and if these are of a different standard you will be informed at the time of booking. Baths/showers: Many rooms with ensuite/private facilities have a shower rather than a bath, usually because of limited space. Some hotels/guesthouses may however have a separate room in the house where a bath is available to guests. Half-board 6 nights (evening meal, bed and breakfast) throughout in country hotels of 1, 2 and 3 star standard with en suite facilities where possible, but these cannot be guaranteed. Bed & breakfast only in Florac. The last night in St Jean du Gard is on a bed and breakfast basis only. Bring a swimming Costume? At Arlempdes (night 2) swimming in the river is possible. On nights 7 (Florac) and 9 (St. Jean de Gard) our usual hotels have pools. Obviously we cannot guarantee that they will be open when you happen to pass through. Note: that the hotels we use vary in quality, sometimes there is little else at a location we can use or other hotels will not give us one night bookings. You should be reassured to know however, that Robert Louis had to often make do with his home made fur lined bivvy bag or stayed in pensions with several to the bed, eating 'pot luck.' You won't need to do this !

check in/out

It is generally normal practice when staying in hotels that you check-in on or after 2pm and checkout by 10am the following morning. Guesthouses/bed & breakfast establishments are normally check-in on or after 4pm and checkout by 10am.

luggage

We do not offer porter service on our holidays. You must be able to move your own luggage to and from your rooms. This more than likely involve stairs as many of the properties we stay in do not have lifts. Sometimes your luggage will have been taken to your room awaiting your arrival however do not be surprised if it is waiting for you to take up to your room and you are asked to bring it down again the next morning.

language

When travelling in less frequented areas you will not necessarily come across people speaking English. Remember you are experiencing a different culture, buy a phrase book and try to learn a little of the local language!

getting there

BY AIR

The nearest International Airport is Lyon. We recommend a morning flight. On arrival take the Rhone Express tram to Lyon Part Dieu Station which takes 30 minutes. Catch the TGV to St Etienne Chateaucieux where you change for Le Puy. Flying into Paris, Charles de Gaulle Roissy Airport there is a TGV Station at the airport that will take you to Lyon to change trains to Le Puy. The tour ends in St Jean du Gard. From St Jean local bus (not Sundays) or taxi (approx. €80.00) to Ales (45 minutes), and train via Nimes to Lyon for late afternoon flights.



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insurance

All clients must have appropriate cover for the activities included for the duration of our trip.

fast facts

COUNTRIES VISITED	France
VISAS	Visas not required for citizens of Australia, Canada, USA and New Zealand for up to 90 days in a period of 180 days for all Schengen countries (see www.schengenvisainfo.com/schengen-visa-countries-list/ for countries part of the Schengen). Please ensure your passport is stamped on arrival in the Schengen area. For all other nationalities and for longer stays in countries covered by the Schengen Agreement (Australian New Zealand, Canadian and US passport holders), please contact the relevant embassy. Stays of longer than 90 days in the Schengen area require a long stay visa for the country you are spending most time in. However long stay visas are unlikely to be issued unless there is a valid reason (eg. studying in country). Unfortunately we cannot assist in obtaining visas for long stays due to individual country visa requirements.
MIN GROUP SIZE	1
MAX GROUP SIZE	10

how to book

To book this trip go to our website to make a booking online or download our booking form. A booking form can also be found at the back of our Active Europe brochure. If you complete a paper booking form, email, fax or post the form to our office – contact details can be found on our website.

e-newsletter

To keep up to date with our new and exciting adventure opportunities, special promotions and adventure news, subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter! You can do this on line through our website, www.sherpa-walking-holidays.co.uk or contact our office.

social networks

You can make sure you are up to date with all our latest information by liking, following or pinning us on the following social networks:

[facebook.com/Sherpa-Expeditions](https://www.facebook.com/Sherpa-Expeditions) <<http://www.facebook.com/Sherpa-Expeditions>>

[@Sherpa_Exp](https://twitter.com/Sherpa_Exp) or [@Sherpa_Exp](https://twitter.com/Sherpa_Exp) <http://twitter.com/Sherpa_Exp>

www.pinterest.com/sherpaexp <<http://www.pinterest.com/sherpaexp>>

IMPORTANT NOTE

THESE TRIP NOTES REPRESENT THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE FOR THIS ITINERARY, AND SUPERSEDE ANY INFORMATION DETAILED IN THE CURRENT BROCHURE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO THE ITINERARY AND PRICE.

