


The Route of Stevenson

From Puy-en-Velay to St Jean du Gard

Self-guided circuit, with double bedroom or 'gîte'

14 days 13 nights with 12 days of hiking



Activity : Hiking
 Difficulty Level : 2,5/5
 Period : April to October
 Support: Self-guided

Key points

- ✓ A legendary route
- ✓ The Velay and its volcanic plateaux, forests and high-altitude pastures
- ✓ The rural heritage of the Gévaudan villages and highlands
- ✓ Mont Lozère (1699m)
- ✓ The land of the Camisards, the ridges and valleys of the Cévennes

From Puy-en-Velay to Saint Jean du Gard, follow in the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson and his donkey Modestine, who walked this route in 1878.

The Chemin de Stevenson takes you through the volcanic landscape of the Velay, the rugged highlands of the legendary Gévaudan region, Mont Lozère and the ridges and valleys of the Cévenne des Camisards.

Following in Stevenson's footsteps, each day you will discover a different country, landscape and story...

Translated with DeepL.com (free version)



Programme

Day 1 : Arrival at Puy-en-Velay

You arrive in the afternoon at Puy-en-Velay, which served as Robert Louis Stevenson's first base in 1878 before he went on to Monastier-sur-Gazeille. Before reaching your accommodation, let yourself be transported in this story-filled town. Walk through the medieval alleys of the old centre and do not miss the Cathedral with its magnificent Roman cloister, the Statue of the Black Virgin of Puy, and the chapel of St Michel, perched up high on an 80m peak.

Day 2 : From Puy-en-Velay to Monastier sur Gazeille

Distance : 19km Approximate duration : 5h Altitude difference: +550m

For your first stage, you leave Le Puy by climbing up to the Plateau du Pays Vellave, a volcanic platform at about 1000m altitude. From here you can admire panoramic views across the Puy-en-Velay valley. Heading south, you descend towards the River Loire, which you will cross in Coubon, before climbing up on to another plateau. In turn this leads you on to the Monastier sur Gazeille, «a small town of character», and the real starting point of Robert Louis Stevenson and his donkey Modestine's adventure, in September 1878.

Day 3 : From Monastier sur Gazeille to Bouchet Saint Nicolas

Distance : 24 km / Approximate duration: 6h30 / Altitude difference: +600 m

It was from here that Robert Louis Stevenson bought a donkey which he named Modestine, and with whom he set off for Saint Jean du Gard. Before rejoining the volcanic plateau, follow the Gazeille valley. You criss-cross many small villages before descending through gorges to the River Loire. Follow the river on to Goudet and the ruins of its former castle. Having passed through several hamlets and meadows, you arrive at Bouchet Saint Nicolas.

Day 4 : From Bouchet Saint Nicolas to Pradelles

Distance : 21 km / Approximate duration : 5h30 /Altitude difference: +180 m

Exiting the village of Bouchet-Saint-Nicolas, you come across an imposing wooden sculpture, depicting Stevenson and Modestine's journey. Sticking between the Loire and Allier rivers, you pass through the villages of Landos and Arquejol before arriving in Pradelles, a small medieval town which has been officially named as one of the «most beautiful villages of France». A former trading centre for salt, oil and wine, Pradelles has many historic examples of medieval architecture: old ramparts, small streets, arcades and fountains.

Day 5 : From Pradelles to Cheylard l'Evêque

Distance : 22 km / Approximate duration : 5h30 /Altitude difference: +300m

You start by crossing the River Allier, and passing through Langogne where you will discover its beautiful Roman church and its 85 carved granite capitals (carved column tops). The route then re-enters the province of Gévaudan from where the legendary «beast of Gévaudan» terrorised the inhabitants for over 100 years.

On this stage of your journey, you will encounter moorland landscapes, marshes covered in heather and imposing granite rocks. Crossing Brugeyrolles and Fouzilhac, you arrive at Cheylard L'Evêque.

Day 6 : From Cheylard l'Evêque to La Bastide Puylaurent

Distance : 26km /Approximate duration: 7h / Altitude difference: +320m

This part of the route takes you to the Château de Luc, one of the region's most significant castles from the Middle Ages. You then continue on to Laveyrune, Rogleton and the summit of Espervelouze (1225m), before arriving at Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, a Cistercian abbey where the monks produce wine. Stevenson spent three days there!

You then head on to La Bastide Puylaurent.

Day 7 : From La Bastide Puylaurent to Chasseradès

Distance : 12,5km / Approximate duration : 3h / Altitude difference : +300m

This short final day of hiking takes you up a forest track, offering a beautiful view of the surroundings as you cross the forest of Gardille to reach La Mourade (1310m). You pass through a wind farm before re-descending towards the pretty hamlet of Chasseradès.

Day 8 : From Chasseradès to Bleymard

Distance : 17 km / Approximate duration : 5h / Altitude difference: +300m

The route starts by climbing up through the Lizard forests, towards the top of Goulet (1413m), offering a beautiful panorama over Mont Lozère. Following tracks alongside the streams that feed the Tarn river, you will eventually reach the hamlets of Alpiers and Le Bleymard. You are now at the foot of Mont Lozère.

Day 9 : From Bleymard to Pont de Montvert

Distance : 19 km / Approximate duration : 5h30 / Altitude difference: +650 m

This is the stage with the biggest climb! Ascend Mont Lozère, on to the Summit of Finiels, passing through forests, moors and fields to arrive in Les Cévennes. An exceptional panorama opens up to you. The route continues on, down the southern slope, passing through the small hamlet of Finiels towards the Pont de Montvert, the village from which the Camisards uprising began in 1702.

Day 10 : From Pont de Montvert to Florac

Distance : 28,5 km / Approximate duration : 7h / Altitude difference: +550 m

The longest stage of your hike takes you across the River Tarn to climb the third highest massif of the Cévennes National Park: Bougès (1421m) stands in the heart of the Camisards. Following the Col du Sapet and Bedouès, then along the River Tarn, you finally arrive at Florac, the 'capital' of the Cévennes.

Day 11 : From Florac to Cassagnas

Distance : 18 km / Approximate duration : 5h / Altitude difference: +150m

Following the old railway through the Mimente valley, you reach St Julien d'Arpaon and its famous castle. You then arrive at Cassagnas.

Day 12 : From Cassagnas to Saint Germain de Calberte

Distance : 15 km / Approximate duration : 5h / Altitude difference: +370m

This short stage takes you across the Cévennes National Park, through the Fontmort forest and down towards the Col de la Pierre Plantée, before arriving at Saint-Germain-de-Camberte.

Day 13 : From Saint Germain de Calberte to Saint Jean du Gard

Distance : 22km / Approximate duration : 5h30 / Altitude difference: +375m

The last leg of your hike following in the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson takes you first to Saint-Etienne-Vallée-Française to cross the Gardon valley. Passing by the Col de Saint-Pierre, you continue your crossing of the Camisards, before finishing your hike with a descent into Saint-Jean-du-Gard, a typical village of the lower Cévennes valleys, and the place where Robert Louis Stevenson ended his adventure.

Day 14 : Saint Jean du Gard

End of the trip after breakfast.

During your stay

Key information and support

Self-guided formula :

You can go on your own, as a couple, with your family or with friends. We'll look after your accommodation, meals, luggage transfer and group.

You have a good experience of hiking. From one stage to the next, you follow the maps and detailed digital roadbook that we have carefully prepared for you.

Going on your own means hiking lightly, at your own pace, and taking full advantage of the pleasures of nature without worrying about the logistics of your stay. It also means being free to interpret and imagine what the landscapes have to say.

Luggage

Two options to choose from:

- **With luggage transfer:** You only need to carry what is needed for the day and your picnic. Your other luggage is transported by vehicle. Please respect the luggage limit of one bag per person, maximum weight of 13kg/bag.
- **Without luggage transfer:** you carry all of your belongings throughout the trip with no organised luggage transfer by vehicle.

Accommodation

The whole of your stay is 'half-board' (dinner, overnight accommodation and breakfast included). There are two options to choose from:

- **Accommodation in a 'Gîte' :** Gites are selected specifically for their warm welcome and friendly atmosphere. More often than not, you will share a dormitory of 4-6 beds. Sheets and towels are not provided (ensure that you include them in your luggage).
- **'Selected' Accommodation:** Accommodated in a private double or triple room in a 'gîte', bed and breakfast or hotel, normally with a private ensuite bathroom and toilet. On certain stages, and according to availability, you may be offered sanitary facilities (private or communal) which are accessible from the landing or hallway. We will inform you of the type of facilities available. Sheets and towels are provided.

Food

This is not the time to go on a diet! Instead, it is an opportunity to taste local cuisine and specialities. The quality of your food is paramount and we take great care to ensure a good dietary balance, a sufficient calorie intake and that each meal includes local specialities.

You can dine at your accommodation or in the associated restaurants.

Picnics (lunch) are not included. Available as an additional option.

Number of participants

From 2 people.

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Before your departure

Prices

See the price table on our website <http://www.larebenne.com>

Register

At La Rébenne, we place great importance on having contact with our travellers. We love to talk to you about our travels and trips, and would like to maintain a close relationship with you. Exchanging, sharing and enjoyment remain the key objectives for every La Rébenne trip.

 contact@larebenne.com
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 +33(0)6 81 53 77 75

To contact us and register it's easy! Call us or send us a quick email.

Sales contract and deposit

We will send you the sales contract, the insurance form, as well as the general sales conditions and any special sales conditions. Registration is complete once we have received your signed contract with a deposit of 40% of the total cost of the stay. A receipt will then be sent to you for your records.

Payment of outstanding balance :

The total balance must be paid one month before the departure date. If you register less than one month before departure, you will pay the full cost of the trip when you register.

Validation and confirmation :

Upon receipt of the total balance, you will be sent your 'trip file'. This will include details of the meeting point, the list of required equipment as well as all necessary contact details, etc.

Formalities

- A valid official ID.
- We recommend travel insurance with repatriation included.

Difficulty Level (2,5/5)

This hike is aimed at adults who are in good physical condition. You should be able to walk for 4 to 7 hours per day (for queries concerning younger people, please contact us directly). The chosen route does not present any technical difficulties. You must be able to orientate yourself using a map and a TopoGuide.

The footpaths are well signposted.

Period

From April to October.

Departure and meeting point

Puy-en-Velay

First day of the circuit: we recommend arriving on Sunday. The start of the hike will be on Monday.

How to get there :

- By car : Access via the Route Nationale 88 or 102. You can park your car for 7 days in one of the car parks in Puy-en-Velay (around 25€ for 7 days).
- By train : Puy-en-Velay SNCF station.
- By plane: Arrive at Le Puy-Loudes Airport, then take a taxi to Puy-en-Velay.

The price includes

- Half board accommodation for hikes.
- Luggage transportation (only if Luggage Transfer option is selected).
- IGN map with route highlighted, topo-guide and map holder.
- GPS tracks in GPX format.
- Organisation and logistics costs

The price does not include

- Drinks.
- Picnics.
- Insurance.
- Personal expenses and visits to monuments.
- The return transfer.

Options

- A single bedroom if the 'Selected Accommodation' option has been chosen.
- Return to Puy-en-Velay by shuttle bus.
- Rental of a GPS device with the saved route
- Trip without any luggage transfer

Insurance

In accordance with the regulations of our profession, La Rébenne is insured for Professional Civil Liability. However, each participant must hold an individual liability policy as well as individual multi-risk coverage in order to protect themselves from incidents or accidents that may occur before or during the hike or trip. Any additional insurance shall be invoiced on an individual basis and must be purchased on the day you register for the trip.

We offer 2 options (coverage provided by APRIL Voyages):

Package no. 1 - Multi-risk: full guarantee in the case of cancellation, loss of baggage, repatriation assistance, medical expenses, interruption of stay.

Package no. 2 - Cancellation: guarantee only in the case of an impediment prior to departure.

Please refer to the price list on our website, practical information - insurance (infos pratique - assurances): <http://www.larebenne.com/infos-pratiques/assurances.html>

Recommended equipment

As good preparation is synonymous with a successful trip, here are a few tips regarding equipment you should take to ensure your trip goes as smoothly as possible (non-exhaustive).

Your luggage

As far as possible, please do not exceed one large bag per person: sports bag of around 55L. These bags will be transported to your accommodation by vehicle. We will provide you with address tags to attach to your luggage.

Your backpack

1 medium-sized backpack to carry the essentials for the day (55 litres).

To include in your backpack

- A compass and altimeter for self-guided trips
- A raincoat
- A minimum of two 1 litre water bottles
- A first aid kit (contents as advised by your doctor): dressings, bio-gauze disinfectant, strips, sterile gauze, purification tablets for drinking water, aspirin, any personal medications and a survival blanket.
- Personal items: a camera, hat, binoculars etc.

Shoes

Good quality hiking boots. They must be comfortable, waterproof and breathable. Shoes which support the ankle are essential. If you need to buy a new pair, we advise you to test out your shoes prior to the start of your trip. Do not take a smaller size as feet tend to swell during hiking.

Clothes

- A jacket that is both windproof and waterproof (gore tex, poncho, etc.).
- A big sweater or a fleece jacket.
- Comfortable walking trousers.
- Shorts, t-shirts..., and breathable underwear.
- A change of clothes.
- A warm hat and a pair of gloves.
- A swimsuit (for some stays).

Sleeping (for nights in a 'gite' or dormitory):

- A sleeping bag or bedsheets
- Earplugs (you never know!)

Picnic

- An airtight and waterproof plastic lunchbox, with a section for salad and with your initials marked on both the lid and box.
- Cutlery (fork, folding knife, spoon).
- 'Race food' (energy bars, dried fruit etc.)

Extras

- Light and airy shoes for the evenings (trainers or sandals)
- A pair of telescopic hiking poles or a 'shepherd's stick'.
- Sunglasses, sunscreen and protective lip balm.
- A cap or sunhat.
- A small toilet bag with a towel and toilet paper.
- A torch or head torch with spare batteries.

And your mobile phone should be fully charged before each day of hiking.

After your return

Tell us what you think ! And to ensure that these great travel memories are not lost, we would be extremely happy to receive your photos, videos, montages, comments...created during your trip.

AT YOUR SERVICE

The entire La Rébenne team is at your disposal to ensure your stay goes to plan, so please do not hesitate to contact us: we will do everything possible to make your trip a success.

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