

The entire Cathar Trail on foot

From Foix to Durban-Corbières

From the mountains to the sea

Circuit in two parts : two sets of 7 days, 6 nights, including 6 days of hiking
Or

Circuit in one go : 13 day, 12 nights, including 12 days of hiking



Level 3/5

The castles proudly stand on rocky peaks. You follow the path, carved out eight centuries ago, to reach the summit. Initially serving as military posts guarding the Spanish border, these majestic buildings served as refuges for the Cathars. These are true fortresses where one would live, train, defend and worship. From the summit, you'll take in a wide panorama, all the better to spot the enemy arriving...Following in the footsteps of hundreds of faithful men and women, you walk along paths soaked in heritage.

Visit the most remarkable Cathar chateaux, nestled in magnificent landscapes: from the limestone foothills of Plantaurel, the mountainous Ariégoises forests and the Plateau de Sault to the garrigue, vineyards of the Corbières and the smells of the Mediterranean.

KEY POINTS:

- A complete trail on foot.
- Diverse landscapes: from the Ariege forests to the Mediterranean garrigue.
- A string of châteaux from the Middle Ages, nestled in stunning scenery.
- The return transfer is included.

PROGRAMME

First leg from Foix to Quillan

D1 : From Montgailhard (Foix) to Roquefixade

18km / 5h30 Altitude Difference : +994m -623m

Transfer from Foix to Montgailhard in your own vehicle, shuttle bus (1€/person) or La Rébenne can organise a taxi if the shuttle bus is not running.

Set off on your hike towards the Pech de Foix before passing through the Pradière forests and finally reaching the magnificent Château de Roquefixade, from where we can take in the view over the peaks of the Massif de Tabe, including Saint Barthélémy.

Night in Roquefixade.

D2 : From Roquefixade to Pog de Montségur

Profile : 16,5km / 4h30. Altitude Difference : +750m -400m

Starting at the Château de Roquefixade, we walk through the forests towards the Château de Montségur, one of the most significant Cathar sites. Visit the castle (optional) and take in the Massif de Tabe with the towering backdrop of the Pic St Barthélémy. Night in the village of Montségur at the foot of the castle.

D3 : From Montségur to Comus

Profile : 14,5km / 4 h. Altitude Difference : +700m -500m

A quiet transition stage during which you will travel from Ariège to the Sault country and the beginning of Mediterranean landscapes. After the forest, we cross the superb Gorges de la Frau to arrive in Comus on the Plateau de Sault.

Night in Comus.

D4 : From Comus to Belcaire

Profile : 23km / 5h30. Altitude Difference : +570m -750m

Stroll through the beautiful royal forests of the Languerail Plateau, enjoying a splendid panorama over the Gorges de la Frau. We then reach the small village of Espezel before arriving in Belcaire.

Night in Belcaire.

D5 : From Belcaire to Puivert

Profile : 22km / 6h. Altitude Difference : +240m -780m

Leave the Plateau de Sault and cross the Lescal and Picaussel forests towards Puivert, which served as a refuge for poets and troubadours during the Middle Ages. Visit the castle (optional), then, if you wish, take some time to discover the traditional music of the region in the village and museum of Quercorb.

D6 : From Puivert to Quillan

Profile : 23km / 6h. Altitude Difference : +700m -950m

This stage takes you towards the capital of the Haute Vallée de l'Aude: Quillan. We pass through the beautiful forest of Quirbajou and the village of Nébias, nestled in the heart of the Audoises Pyrenees.

Return transfer to Foix and night spent in Foix.

J7 : Foix

End of trip after breakfast in Foix.

Or continue for another week of hiking...

PROGRAMME

Second leg from Quillan to Durban-Corbières

D1 : From Quillan to Quirbajou (or Labau) (D7 for those who follow the 2 circuits)

Profile : 16km / 4h30. Altitude Difference : +820m -320m

Following the River Aude, we arrive in Quirbajou via the chalets of Carach.

D2 : From Quirbajou to Aigues Bonnes (D8 for those who follow the 2 circuits)

Profile : 26.5km / 6h30. Altitude Difference : +400m -550m

Starting from the Gorges du Rébenty, we leave behind the green meadows and mountains in search of the Mediterranean climate. We stop at a real jewel of medieval architecture, the Château de Puilaurens (optional), perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking the Vallée de la Boulzane. Night stay on a farm.

D3 : From Aigues Bonnes to Labastide (D9 for those who follow the 2 circuits)

Profile : 22km / 5h30. Altitude Difference : +780m -875m

We continue our hike towards Caudiès de Fenouillèdes and cross the magnificent Gorges St. Jaume. The smells of the garrigue follow us as we continue on to the little village of Labastide. Night stay on a farm.

D4 : From Labastide to Peyrepertuse (D10 for those who follow the 2 circuits)

Profile : 22km / 7h. Altitude Difference : +690m -860m

We walk on to reach the start of the Gorges de Galamus. Then, passing between holm oak trees and juniper bushes, we arrive on the Corbières ridge, where we come across the imposing Château de Peyrepertuse (optional visit). Night in Duilhac-sous-Peyrepertuse.

D5 : From Peyrepertuse to Tuchan (D11 for those who follow the 2 circuits)

Profile : 23.5km/ 6h30. Altitude Difference : +650m -750m

This stage starts with a descent through the garrigue towards the village of Cucugnan, famous for its legendary parish priest. We then arrive at the Château de Quéribus, guardian of the form Spanish border. Finally another pleasant descent to the château and village of Padern. Night in Tuchan.

D6 : From Tuchan to Durban (D12 for those who follow the 2 circuits)

Profile : 28km/ 7h. Altitude Difference : +450m -800m

In the morning, we pass by the Château d'Aguiar and walk on through the land of a thousand Mediterranean smells. The vines gradually take over the scrubland.

Return transfer and night in a hotel in Quillan (or in Foix for those who follow the 2 circuits).

D7 : Quillan (D13 for those who follow the 2 circuits)

End of trip after breakfast.

DURING YOUR STAY

KEY INFORMATION :

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:

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 15kg/bag.**

ACCOMMODATION: HALF-BOARD (dinner, night stay and breakfast included)

Accommodation options to choose from:

- **'Gite' option:** 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.
- **Double bedroom option (depending on availability):** Sleep in a comfortable 2 person bedroom in a hotel, B&B and sometimes, in a 'gite'. 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 specialties. The quality of your food is paramount and we take great care to ensure a good dietary balance, sufficient calorie intake and that each meal includes local specialties.

Picnics (lunch) are not included.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

From 2 people.

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.

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

contact@larebenne.com Tél +33(0)5 61 65 20 93 Ou +33(0)6 81 53 77 75
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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: 3/5

4 to 7 hours of hiking per day. No technical Difficulties: 900m maximum positive altitude. You are in good physical condition and you are prepared to hike for several days.

PERIOD :

From end of April to October.

DEPARTURE AND MEETING POINT for the first leg or the two weeks: Meet at Montgailhard - Foix

How to get there:

By car : RN 20 from Toulouse then exit at Foix.

By train: Foix SNCF train station.

By plane: Toulouse Airport then bus to Foix SNCF train station.

DEPARTURE AND MEETING POINT for the second leg: Meet on Day 1 at Quillan (SNCF train station)

How to get there:

By car: Motorway to Carcassonne then D118 to Quillan.

By train : Carcassonne SNCF train station, then TER bus to Quillan.

By plane : Carcassonne Airport then shuttle bus to Quillan bus station.

THE PRICE INCLUDES :

- Half-board accommodation
- Luggage transportation
- Return transfer to departure point.
- Digital roadbook
- Maps with marked tracks

THE PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Drinks
- Insurance
- Personal expenses
- Picnics
- Accommodation the night before departure
- Visit to castles.

OPTIONS :

- Accommodation in a gite or hotel for the night before departure.
- Picnics for Day 2 to Day 12
- Single bedroom.

Consult us

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 - Multi-risk and Cancellation

Package no. 1 - Multi-risk: full guarantee in the case of cancellation, loss of luggage, repatriation assistance, medical expenses, interruption of stay. Coverage provided by APRIL Voyages.

Package no. 2 - Cancellation: guarantee only in the case of an impediment prior to departure. Coverage provided by APRIL Voyages.

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.
- Camera, binoculars
- A small toilet bag with a towel.
- A torch or head torch with spare batteries.
- Toilet paper.
- Mobile phone

A FEW WORDS ON THE HERITAGE OF THE REGION:

Catharism :

At the end of the twelfth century, an alternative to Christianity spread across the south of France. This deviance boiled down to a belief in two entities: Evil (the material, living world) and Good (the immaterial world, after death) This was considered as profanity by the Church, which, in response, launched a crusade (1208) to eradicate the heretics - the Cathars.

The Cathars were completely integrated into society, existing even in the families of lords (for example the Trencaval, the Counts of Foix...). The battle began, sieges went on for months as the population resisted, or not (Simon de Montfort seized, in the name of the King, Béziers, Narbonne and Carcassonne, amongst others). The Cathars fought on, preferring to end up with their heads on a stake rather than deny their faith.

The Treaty of Paris (1229) marked the end of the conflict, and the beginning of the Inquisition. The Cathars remained outlaws and the Inquisitors used their power to seek them out: putting a price on their heads. The surviving Cathars went into exile, seeking refuge in the castles which guarded the border, where they continued to prosper for a few more years.

They were finally removed by Louis XI, who came to power in 1241. It is for this reason that 'Saint Louis' became known as Louis le Sanguinaire (Louis the Bloodthirsty), in the region.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Les Pyrénées, Claude Dendaletche, collection la bibliothèque du naturaliste, éditions Delachaux et Niestlé, 1997

Histoire des Cathares, Michel Roquebert, collection Tempus, éditions Perrin, 1999

Les Nouvelles Pyrénées, Jean-Claude Flamand, collection verre et assiette, éditions Glénat, 2003

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.

Your can contact us by:

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