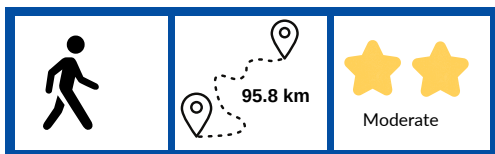


French Food Lover's Le Puy Camino



Overview:

This guided 'Food Lover's' along the Camino in France is destined to appeal to a wide range of palates. This exquisitely crafted and zesty itinerary captures the essence of the Way of St James pilgrimage and the many culinary delights to be found along the way. Beginning in Le Puy en Velay in the Auvergne, the journey on foot is a rich sensory experience taking in the best sections of the Camino between Le Puy and St Jean Pied de Port, including time in the historic and beautiful towns of Conques, Cahors, Moissac and Saint-Cirq-Lapopie. The foodie highlights are endless, with tastings of delectable cheeses, wines and truffles, interspersed with the rustic cooking style for which the region is renowned. From lunch at a typical Buron, to wine and Armagnac tasting, market visits, truffle hunting demonstrations and fine dining, this is a full-bodied experience. Most days include fully supported walks of 10 – 15 kms and each night you'll stay in atmospheric accommodations typically countryside inns and family run hotels.

Quick Fact:

Le Puy-en-Velay is a town in southern France. It's known for the green lentils grown in the area, and as a gateway to the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage trail. The 12th-century Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral has frescoes and a cloister. Perched on a volcanic rock, St-Michel d'Aiguilhe chapel dates from the 10th century. Nearby, an 1860 statue of the Virgin Mary looks over the town from another volcanic outcrop.

Day 1: Arrive Le Puy en Velay

On arrivals in Le Puy, make your way to the joining hotel on the edge of the historic town centre. In the mid-afternoon (usually 15:30), your escort will meet with the group and provide a brief introduction to the tour before heading out for a guided walking tour of the city (at 4pm for approximately 2 hours). You have the option to ascend high up to the iron statue behind the cathedral, the Notre-Dame de France (The Virgin Mary). From here there is a wonderful view of the town and surrounding old volcanic countryside. This afternoon you can also visit the cathedral sacristy to obtain a pilgrim passport and your first stamp. Enjoy a welcome dinner this evening.

Meals: Dinner

Day 2: Optional attendance at pilgrim service, follow camino sections to Sauges (6 hours)

Every morning the cathedral conducts mass at 7am followed by a pilgrim blessing and the option to attend before breakfast is the first activity of the day. Following breakfast, we'll gather lunch suppliers before commencing our food pilgrimage from the steps of the cathedral. Following the bronze shells through the old town, outside the gates and into the countryside evokes a sense of the journey to come. We follow a well-worn path, passing small chapels and sweeping vistas at a relaxed pace to St-Christophe-sur Dolaison (8.5km). From here, we'll transfer to St-Privat-d'Allier for our picnic lunch. Set high above the gorges of Allier, the next stage of the walk (7km) begins from this small town with a small ascent to one of the many Hundred Years of War watch towers which dot the surrounding valleys. The GR65 leads us down to the valley floor and the town of Monistrol d'Allier. Our driver will pick us up here and drive us to our accommodation in the medieval village of Le Malzieu-Ville. Tonight we are accommodated in a simple hotel with a gastronomic restaurant; a favorite with pilgrims and locals alike. Transfers: 31.5km, 65 minutes. Walk 15,5km.

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3: Walk on the Aubrac plateau, lunch at Buron and visit Laguiole museum (4 hours)

This morning, we transfer to Nasbinals and walk a section of the Aubrac Plateau to discover this vast volcanic granite landscape, a source of building materials for the local villages. The gothic church bell tower of Aubrac holds the great bell, the bell of the lost ones, which in the Middle Ages was rung in stormy weather to help lost pilgrims find their way. This is one of the most sparsely populated regions of France. Lunch today is in a typical Buron, which is found in Aubrac and was generally used in the past to house cheese-making operations. The buildings of stone construction found in the area have been modernised to create atmospheric restaurants serving local dishes such as aligot, charcuterie, and meat dishes. Following a satisfying lunch, we continue our walk to Saint-Chely d'Aubrac. An afternoon treat is in store as we next head to the Laguiole museum, where the famous knives are made. Dinner and overnight in Laguiole. Transfers: 103km, 2 hours. Walk 16km

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4: Cheese factory visit then walk into Conques, explore the town (3.5 hours)

After picking up some picnic supplies, we visit a typical farm to discover Tome and Fourme cheese. Transfer to Espeyrac on the GR65 and enjoy a stage of the Way into Conques. The route we follow is largely on quiet country roads (tarmac) with some sections on paths, with the last steep descent into Conques on a stony track. The rewards are great as we make our way into one of the most beautiful towns in France, brimming over with history and with a wonderfully preserved medieval heart. On arrival, there's free time to explore the town and Abbey or relax at one of the many cafes. Transfer: 50km, 1 hour. Walk 12 km – 350m, + 265m

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5: Guided tour of Conques, wine tasting and walk to Figeac (3 hours)

Following a guided tour of Conques, we transfer to Domaine Corbies where wine growing has been a tradition for centuries. Following a lunch and tasting we continue to the church of Sainte Radegonde and walk a section of the Camino. The route crosses the countryside to arrive in Figeac, with its lovely medieval architecture. The birthplace of Champollion (mainly known as the decipher of Egyptian hieroglyphs), this small town is home to the excellent museum

dedicated to his work. There is also a Benedictine abbey from the ninth century. Overnight Figeac. Transfer: 50km, 1 hour.
Walk: 10km

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6: Visit the truffle orchard, Camino walk, Michelin dinner

This morning we pick up our picnic suppliers before continuing to a truffle orchard with its oaks, hazel bushes, vines and hedges. We learn about this mysterious fungus; its history, cultivation, soils required and ageing. A truffle hound will give a demonstration of 'cavage' or truffle hunting. We have the opportunity to sample the truffle. Armed with fresh picnic goodies we transfer to Grotte de Pech-Merle and enjoy an al fresco lunch during our walk to Saint Cirque Lapopie, another of the 'plus beaux village de France'. We transfer to Cahors on the Lot River, with its lovely 14th Century bridge, "Pont Valentre". Since Celtic times, the town has had a rich history. It is known as the centre of AOC 'black' wine which has been produced since the Middle Ages and exported via Bordeaux, long before that famous region developed its own viticulture industry. This evening is a special treat where we head to a chateau for wine tasting and a Michelin star dinner.

Overnight: Cahors. Transfers: 3 hours. Walk: 9.7km

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7: Walk a section of the trail between Lauzerte and Moissac, visit the abbey (1.5 hours)

This morning, we spend time at the Cahors markets and purchase our lunch supplies. Cahor's local produce market is centred around the cathedral on Wednesdays and Saturday and is well attended by locals. Selling anything from flowers to local cheeses, freshly bake bread, colourful spices spilling out of hessian sacks and dried sausages and much more, the markets are a thoroughly enjoyable sensory experience. Armed with fresh goodies for our picnic lunch we transfer to Lauzerte, to continue our walk (5.6km) along the Le Puy Camino. For those interested in architecture and engineering, in Moissac you can take a walk along the canal to the 'Canal Bridge' which enables the barges travelling along the Canal de Garonne to cross the Tarn River (356m below). The aqueduct is one of the largest canal bridges in France and was built in 1846. Later this afternoon, we have a guided tour of the abbey of Saint-Pierre, which with its Romanesque cloister and ornately carved Tympanum is a UNESCO World Heritage listed site. The abbey is home to an array of remarkable sculptures. This evening, we have a typical dinner in a centrally located restaurant. Overnight Moissac. Transfer 55km, 1 hour. Walk 5.6km

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8: Visit Auvillar, walk to Montréal, guided tour of Armagnac producing estate (3 hours)

After breakfast we have a short drive to Auvillar, another picturesque village. Situated on a rocky outcrop overlooking the Garonne river, the town dates back to the Romans and is surrounded by ancient fortified walls with gateways granting access to the centre. One of the gateways passes under a 17th-century clock tower whose alternating levels of white stone with the typical red brick of the region give it a distinctive character. After a short, guided tour of the historic heart we continue to a Roman Pont d'Artigues just after the impressive village of Larressingle in the Gers. The fortified walls of the village of Larressingle date back to the 13th Century, when it was the home of the bishops from Condom in the Middle Ages. At the Roman pont, 1000km from Santiago and UNESCO classified, we continue on foot to Montreal, before transferring to Eauze, an historic market town in the Midi Pyrenees. There's some free time to explore before we head to an Armagnac producing estate to visit the distillery and the ageing cellars. Transfer to our hotel in Saint-Palais (2 hours) for dinner and overnight. Transfers 300km, 4.5 hours.

Walking 11.5km

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9: Transfer then walk into St Jean Pied de Port (5 hours)

This morning, we have a short transfer to the start of our last stage of the Camino. It's one of the most scenically beautiful sections of the route through the Basque countryside, passing through forest to reach the Pyrenean foothills and the town of St Jean Pied de Port. Many pilgrims begin their journey here, travelling on foot, by bike or with a donkey to cross northern Spain to reach Santiago de Compostela. As a result, the town will be full of pilgrims. On arriving at the gate, we enter the old town with time to relax and absorb the atmosphere before we take an orientation walk to view the town's attractions. Later we transfer to our hotel in the countryside and enjoy a farewell dinner of local ingredients.

Transfers: 45 min. Walking 15,5km

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10: Group transfer to Pau where the trip concludes

After breakfast, there is a group transfer at 9 am to Pau train station (approx. 1.5-2 hours drive), where the trip concludes. It is possible to be dropped off at St Jean Pied de Port en route (approx. 30 min drive), from where you can take a train to Bayonne if you are heading to Spain after the trip. We recommend booking a train departure after 10 am from St Jean and after 11:30 – 12pm from Pau.

Meals: Breakfast

At a Glance:

- **Duration:** 10 Days
- **Type:** Guided Walk
- **Grade:** Moderate
- **Accommodation:** 9 Nights
- **Meals:** 9 Dinners and 9 Breakfasts and 2 Lunches
- **Number of People:** From 1

Included:

- 9 Breakfasts, 2 lunches and 9 dinners (drinks included on day 6)
- 9 nights at specially selected hotels from 2 - 4 star on a twin-share basis with private facilities
- Tour escort throughout
- Private vehicle and driver for transfers including luggage during walking sections - luggage should be kept to a minimum. One bag weighing no more than 20 kg's plus your day pack to wear while walking. Luggage room is limited in the vehicle.
- Guided visits: Le Puy en Velay on day 1, day 3 (Museum Laguiole), day 4 (cheese factory), Conques on day 5, truffle orchard on day 6, guided tour on the abbey of Moissac on day 7, Auvillar on day 8 and St Jean Pied de Port on day 9.
- 2 Wine tastings - AOC Cahors Malbec on day 6 and Armagnac on day 8
- Detailed program and general cultural information booklet
- Group departure transfer to Pau on day 10
- Emergency hotline
- Travel Insurance
- E-Sim

Not Included:

- Travel to Le Puy from Pau
- Meals not listed as included
- Beverages except at wine tastings, breakfast and with dinner on day 6
- A supplement if you are booking a single room
- Entrance fees not noted as included
- Transfers not listed as included
- Optional arrival transfer: Lyon airport to Le Puy En Velay can be booked as extra cost.
- Hotel taxes
- Items of a personal nature.
- Flights
- Visas

Grading:

Introductory to Moderate - Grade 2. This trip involves walking between 2 to 5 hours during 7 days over undulating terrain, on a mixture of asphalt, dirt and rocky paths, with some short steep ascents and descents. Walking distances range from 7 - 12 km except on day 2 which is 18,2 km. As there is a support vehicle in the vicinity, there are options to shorten some stages. The trip is graded introductory to moderate and is considered suitable for active people who have a reasonable level of fitness.

Departure Dates:

14 Sep - 23 September 2025

Enquire for more dates