



NATURE , GASTRONOMY , WINE , CULTURE

type : Electric bike option Self-guided Linear cycle routes

hybrid : ●●●●○

e-bike : ●●●●○

duration : 16 days

comfort : ●●●●○

period: Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct

code: FR5B560



The Full Way of St James - From le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port

16 days, € 2025

Introduction



Cycle the full section of the Via Podiensis, one of the French Ways of Saint James, from the Haute-Loire to the Pyrénées-Atlantiques. The pilgrimage route to Santiago has been travelled for over 1000 years by foot, donkey and more recently by bike. Offering an incredible diversity of scenery and passing through some of the prettiest villages in France, this is an epic cycling route with a spiritual theme. This journey takes pilgrims from Le Puy en Velay to the pretty town of Saint-Jean-pied-de-Port, passing a multitude of churches and

monasteries, resembling a travelling museum of Romanesque art. With some steep climbs, followed by fast descents, this trip is ideally suited to fit cyclists keen to extend their experience to an iconic route. At night your hosts in the guesthouses and small hotels will ensure that you are well fed and immersed in their particular region with its culinary specialties.

Highlights :

- Cycling the full Via Podiensis
- Possibility of historic visits along this beautiful itinerary : Conques, Cahors...
- Experiencing the culinary delights of the region and the hospitality of your accommodation hosts
- Viewing the contrasting landscapes and architecture between the regions passed

Check out our video to discover the Way of St James:

Day to Day

Day 1 **Arrival in Le Puy-en-Velay**

Arrival in Le Puy-en-Velay, capital of Haute-Loire, the town is located in the South-East of the Massif Central, surrounded by a volcanic landscape which is dominated by rocky peaks rising from the valley floor. As the starting point of the famous Via Podiensis, one of the routes to Santiago de Compostela, since the Middle Ages, the Auvergne town is a major pilgrimage site, with its Romanesque Cathedral of Notre Dame and Hôtel-Dieu listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Make sure you purchase your pilgrim passport to have it stamped throughout the journey to your final destination.

Day 2 **Le-Puy-en-Velay - Monistrol-d'Allier - Saugues**

For your first cycling day, you start from the cathedral, the route climb out to leave the town of Le Puy. It goes through the Monts du Velay, where green lentils are grown, before going down into the Haut-Allier gorges. Then the itinerary takes you through a variety of landscapes and terrain before reaching the Plateau de la Margeride and its ascent just before Saugues, the last difficulty of this stage. Overnight in Saugues which is famous for mysterious Beast of Gévaudan and its mushrooms!

Challenge: 45.3km, 968m ascent, 670m descent

Day 3 **Saugues - Saint-Alban-sur-Limagnole - Aumont-Aubrac**

Saugues is a small town famous for its English Tower, its Mushroom Fair and the legendary Beast of Gévaudan. Starting there, the route continues into the Margeride plateau and through the Truyère valley before reaching the charming village of Aumont-Aubrac. On your way, pass front of St Roch Chapel, highest point of your stage with an altitude of around 1300m and cross pretty hamlets of Le Rouget, St Alban sur Limagnole and Les Estrets. Arrival in the town of Aumont-Aubrac, located in the heart of Lozère, an important point on the pilgrimage route.

Challenge: 44.4km, 728m ascent, 648m descent

Day 4 **Aumont-Aubrac - Nasbinals - Estaing**

Leaving Aumont-Aubrac, the route goes through pine groves before reaching the Aubrac plateau, you cycle above an altitude of 1000m, covered with pastures as far as the eye can see. Just after Nasbinals, famous village for the "transhumance" (end of May), you pass the highest point of the Way of St James (col d'Aubrac - altitude 1340m). Continue to the nice village of Aubrac where starts the long steep descent of almost 30 km!! Further down, in Saint Côme d'Olt (labeled one of the most beautiful villages in France), route becomes "flat" and you will discover the Lot Valley and the lovely village of Estaing.

Challenge: 77.2km, 325m ascent, 1059m descent

Day 5 **Estaing - Espeyrac - Conques**

Get ready today, one of the shorter stage but probably the most difficult (but what a beautiful!). Leaving Estaing and the Lot valley with a very steep ascent to Campuac. Continue direction Espeyrac, nice village with its ruined castle of the Middle Ages. Few kilometers later, you reach Sénergues also very interesting with its castle and the Tour Carrée. Then, a spectacular route takes you downhill towards Conques, jewel of Romanesque art and a must on the Via Podiensis!

Challenge: 36.4km, 639m ascent, 649m descent

Day 6 **Conques - Saint-Parthem - Figeac**

Start today along the river Dourdou de Conques which brings you back along the Lot river. Follow it to Livinhac-le-Haut and from there the road becomes uphill and goes on the next valley, the Célé valley. Last section on a steep ascent before reaching Figeac, pretty town of Art & History, by the Célé river. This is the home town of Champollion (the 'Father of Egyptology' who first deciphered hieroglyphics) and a very important pilgrimage connecting point.

Challenge: 42.3km, 716m ascent, 1028m descent

Day 7 **Figeac - Vallée du Célé - Bouziès**

Welcome to the secret Célé valley! Follow the road that winds the river through typical Quercy villages like: Espagnac and its lovely 13th century church, Saint Sulpice and its troglodyte houses, Marcihac and the ruins of its Benedictine abbey church, then Sauliac and Cabrerets with its prehistoric cave of Peche Merle. Few kilometers later, in Conduché, you will find the Lot river again and you will just have to cross the bridge for the overnight in Bouziès.

Challenge: 53.3km, 730m ascent, 790m descent

Day 8 **Bouziès - Saint-Cirq-Lapopie - Cahors**

What a day for your last cycling day... First, join the common track with the hikers before starting a breathtaking route, cut in the rock on the edge of the Lot to reach Saint-Cirq-Lapopie. Take the time to discover this gorgeous village perched on a rocky, labeled one of the most beautiful villages in France. Leave Saint-Cirq-Lapopie and the valley on a steep ascent with panoramic views. Take a break in the village of Aujols! Then, continue towards Flaujac-Poujols and go for a beautiful 5 km descent, which will then take you to the medieval town of Cahors, your final destination.

Challenge: 34.6km, 616m ascent, 638m descent

Day 9 **Cahors - Lauzerte**

You start today by leaving Cahors on the Valentré bridge. After an ascent for to leave the suburbs, you reach the village of Labastide-Marnhac and meet the hikers. Continue on small tracks & roads to Lascabannes. After few kilometers, you leave the Lot department and enter in the Tarn et Garonne on a road up to Lauzerte. The town of Lauzerte is spectacularly located on a hill overlooking a landscape of vineyards, limestone plateau and green valleys. Spend some time wandering the upper village with its medieval architecture, ramparts and picturesque town square.

Challenge: 39.4km, 406m ascent, 297m descent

Day 10 **Lauzerte - Moissac - Auvillar**

The day begins with a great descent to Moissac, a former major stage of The Way of St James, before continuing into the Lomagne or "hunchback Gasconne", an area of natural beauty. Straddling the Tarn et Garonne and the Gers, this former dependency of the duchy of Gascony is the land of white garlic, interesting houses and churches. Later you reach Auvillar, built on a promontory and classified as one of the "most beautiful villages in France". With its circular market built in 1824, clock tower and old stone houses, there is much to see around the town.

Challenge: 47.2km, 309m ascent, 418m descent

Day 11 **Auvillar - Lectoure - Condom**

This morning, you leave the département of "Tarn et Garonne" and enter the "Gers" département. On the way you will cycle through quaint villages as Flamarens, Miradoux, Lectoure, Marsolan, and La Romieu. Leaving La Romieu, the expansive views of the open countryside of the Gers are inspiring. The area represents the transition between the 'haute' Armagnac around Lectoure and the 'bas' Armagnac around Eauze where thick black oak woods are found and 57% of the wine crops of Armagnac are located. Condom is one of the principal Armagnac towns and is located on a spur of the rivers Gèle and Baise. The key attraction is the Gothic styled cathedral of St Peter's, the last built in the Languedoc style.

Challenge: 59.2km, 786m ascent, 812m descent

Day 12 **Condom - Eauze - Aire sur l'Adour or Barcelonne du Gers**

The cycle route this morning takes you to Montréal-du-Gers, one of the most ancient walled towns of Gascogne (1289). On the way, we recommend a little detour through Larresingle, another of the 'Most Beautiful Villages in France'. Continue to Eauze, the capital of the current Gascogne. Take time to admire the slender steeple of St Luperce and the half-timbered house of Jeanne d'Albret. At the end of the day, you will come out on the Adour plain, a very open and intensively cultivated landscape. Aire sur l'Adour is separated into two parts; the lower section which is by the river and dominated by the cathedral of St Jean Baptiste, and the high town or Mas d'Aire, which is dominated by the Eglise de Sainte Quitterie where a Benedictine monastery once stood. Accommodation this evening will be in Aire or Barcelonne du Gers

Challenge: 79.3km, 836m ascent, 846m descent

Day 13 **Aire sur l'Adour - Arzacq - Maslacq**

After the rough stage yesterday, you start the day on a small departmental road between farms and cornfields until Troussin, Latrille then Miramont-Sensacq after finding again the Way of St James, still marked with shells. Further on, you enter the Béarn area, the relief gradually changes to make way for chestnut and ferns, announcing your entry into the Pyrénées-Atlantiques before arriving at Arzacq-de-Béarn before reaching the small village of Maslacq.

Challenge: 67.5km, 1688m ascent, 1601m descent

Day 14 **Maslacq - Navarrenx - Saint-Palais**

Today you will transition between the Béarn area and the Basque country, in the very heart of the Pyrenean. After the ancient fortified village of Navarrenx, you will cross the Gave d'Oloron. Along the way discover the Montgaston and Joantho castles before reaching St Palais, a cultural town which plays host to colourful festivals and markets. Here the street signs are in the Basque language which is typical of the region. This is also the entry point into the Lower Navarre, formerly the Kingdom of Navarre. There are a number of sights to visit including a museum containing historic pilgrim relics and a statue of St James the pilgrim.

Challenge: 47.6km, 581m ascent, 612m descent

Day 15 **Saint-Palais - Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port**

It's your last cycling day, and you don't have many kilometers left. You are in the beautiful Basque country, with its white houses and their typical red tinted half-timbering. You still have to cross the Col des Palombières. After enjoying an exceptional view, the descent is very beautiful and will lead you to Jaxu, before descending a valley to reach Bustince-Iriberry, then Saint-Jean-le-Vieux. The last kilometers will lead you to "the gate of Saint-Jacques", at the entrance of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, where you will not fail to visit this very picturesque fortified citadel.

Challenge: 34.7km, 430m ascent, 309m descent

Day 16 **End in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port**

End of your trip after breakfast. We advise you to extend your stay in order to take the time to visit the pretty town of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port.

Prices, Data, Booking

Practical Info



15 Nights included



2/3* hotels and B&B's



Breakfasts and 11 Dinners included (not included in Le Puy, Figeac, Cahors and Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port)



Maps and tourist information on all the places of interest



24/7 Bilingual Emergency hotline



Luggage transport to your next accommodations. Luggage accepted per person: 1 suitcase or travel bag (13 kg maximum)



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Parking informations on request



GPS tracks are available on request