FRENCH BIKE TOURS

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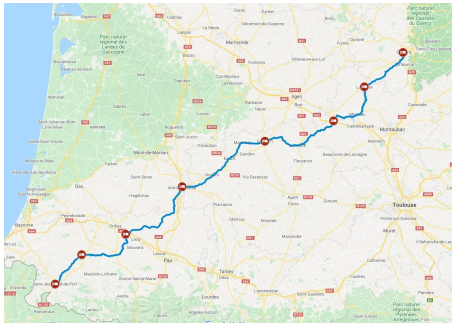
NATURE , GASTRONOMY , CULTURE , WINE

type :	Electric bike option Self-guided Linear cycle routes
hybrid :	●●●●○
e-bike :	●●●○○
duration :	9 days
comfort :	●●●○○
period:	Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov
code:	FRSB540

The Way of St James - From Cahors to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port

9 days, *€ 1075*

Introduction



Cycle the second section of the Way of St James in France from the Lot 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, along the Via Podensis, the French Way of St James, takes pilgrims from Cahors 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 second section of the Via Podiensis to Saint-Pied-de-Port
- Possibility of historic visits along this beautiful itinerary
- Discover regions of Lot et Garonne, Gers, Basque Country
- Enjoy the excellent french cuisine
- 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 Cahors**

Arrival in Cahors, after check-in, visit the beautiful historic capital of Quercy, its old center and the splendid Valentré bridge, the most beautiful bridge in France. After seeing this medieval bridge with its 3 fortified towers from the 14th century, you can only agree. When you cross the Valentré bridge on foot (it is pedestrian), its 700-year-old history will transport you ... Impossible to remain indifferent to this masterpiece.

Day 2 **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 3 **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 Gascogne", 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 4 **Auvillar - Lectoure - Condom**

This morning, you leave the département of “Tarn et Garonne" and enter the “Gers” department. 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 5 **Condom - Eauze - Aire sur l'Adour**

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

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

Day 6 **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, 704m ascent, 703m descent

Day 7 **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 8 **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 9 **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

8 Nights included

2/3* hotels and B&B's



Breakfasts and 6 Dinners included (not included in 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 (14 kg maximum)



For time tables and further information check the **website of SNCF** or **rome2rio** for all French National trains (SNCF).
We strongly advise you to **download the sncf mobile app** prior to departure.
If you want to travel on a train with your bike, you can find more information **via this link**.



Parking informations on request



GPS tracks are available on request