FRENCH BIKE TOURS

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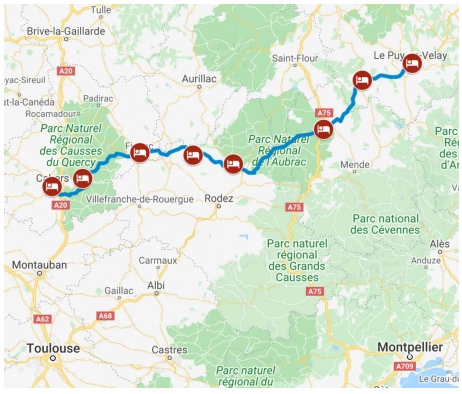
NATURE , GASTRONOMY , CULTURE

type :	Electric bike option Self-guided Linear cycle routes
hybrid :	●●●●○
e-bike :	●●●○○
duration :	9 days
comfort :	●●●○○
period:	Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct
code:	FRSB520

The Way of St James - From Le Puy-en-Velay to Cahors

9 days, *€ 1150*

Introduction



Cycle seven stages of the Way of St James in France, from the Haute Loire to Lot Valley. Delve into the past on the pilgrimage route to Santiago, a one-thousand-year-old journey historically done on foot or by donkey and -in recent times- by bike. Span diverse scenery, check sites off the 'list of lovely villages', and test your legs on this epic cycling route with a spiritual theme. The French Way, or Via Podensis, takes pilgrims from Le Puy en Velay to Cahors, a living museum of Romanesque art. Assorted steep climbs followed by quick descents make this an ideal trip for fit cyclists keen to experience an iconic time-tested route. Keep your energy up while tasting each village's culinary specialities and relax at welcoming guesthouses and small hotels along The Way.

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, in the southeastern sector of the Massif Central. Take in the impressive volcanic scenery, where rocky peaks rise up from the valley floor. Starting point of the Via Podiensis and a major pilgrimage site since the Middle Ages, Le Puy boasts UNESCO-listed World Heritage Sights such as the Hôtel-Dieu and Romanesque Cathedral of Notre Dame. Get ready to ride and purchase a pilgrim's passport to be stamped at stops on your journey.

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

Start cycling directly from the cathedral as you follow the pilgrimage route up out of Le Puy. Traverse the Monts du Velay among fields of green lentils, then glide down into the Haut-Allier Gorge. A scenic mosaic of landscapes unfolds as you ride across La Margeride Plateau. Conquer one last ascent just before Saugues, home to the mysterious man-eating Beast of Gévaudan and a yearly Wild Mushroom Fair.

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

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

Tremble at the terrible legend of the 18th-century Bête du Gévaudan and pause to take pictures of the English Tower, then roll off toward Truyère Valley. Crowning the highest point at St Roch Chapel, elevation 1300m, you'll pedal past the hamlets of Le Rouget, St Alban-sur-Limagnole and Les Estrets. Your day of cycling ends in the very heart of Lozère, for centuries a key stop on the pilgrimage route.

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

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

Take off and traverse pine groves to reach Aubrac Plateau, then hit higher terrain with panoramas as far as the eye can see. Just after the nomadic shepherds' site of Nasbinals, you reach Col d'Aubrac, elevation 1340m, the highest point on the Way of St James! The lovely village of Aubrac signals the start of a long steep descent, nearly 30km leading to Saint Côme d'Olt, one of 'Les plus belles villages de France'. Coast along on a relaxing flat stretch through Lot Valley and end your day in picturesque Estaing.

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

Day 5 **Estaing - Espeyrac - Conques**

Steel yourself for a short but tough stage, starting with the steep ascent up to Campuac. Once you catch your breath, continue riding to reach Espeyrac's medieval castle in ruins. Stop in Sénergues to explore the Tour Carrée and yet another castle. Then revel in a spectacular descent on your way to Conques, a Romanesque gem and must-see on the Via Podiensis!

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

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

Set off on the Dourdou de Conques, pedalling pleasantly toward the River Lot. Sail along to Livinhac-le-Haut, then press uphill into the Célé Valley. The last bit is a steep ascent up to Figeac, a pretty pilgrim town packed with art and history. Set on the banks of the Célé, this lovely location saw the birth of Champollion, 'Father of Egyptology' and the first to decipher hieroglyphics.

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

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

Slide into secret Célé Valley and wind alongside the river, stopping at quintessential Quercy villages. Espagnac boasts ancient troglodyte dwellings and the lovely 13th-century church of Saint Sulpice, and Marcilhac will move you with its Benedictine Abbey in ruins. Next, Sauliac leads to Cabrerets and the

prehistoric cave of Peche Merle. In Conduché you meet up with the River Lot and cruise across the bridge into Bouziès.

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

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

Your last day ... and what a ride we have in store! Leaving the cycling variant behind, you join hikers on the main pilgrimage route. Then you take off on a breath-taking stretch, cut right into the rock above the River Lot. Pause to rest in gorgeous Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, perched on a rocky outcropping, and check off another of France's 'most beautiful villages'. Surge onward along a steep ascent with panoramic views, take a break in Aujols then pedal toward Flaujac-Poujols. A stunning 5-km descent leads to the medieval town of Cahors, your final destination.

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

Day 9 **Departure from Cahors**

Your cycling trip comes to an end this morning after breakfast. An extra night(s) may be booked to extend your stay in Cahors, with its Valentré Bridge.

Prices, Data, Booking

Practical Info

8 Nights included

2/3* hotels and B&B's

Breakfasts and 5 Dinners included (not included in Le Puy, Figeac and Cahors)

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)

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 information on request

GPS tracks are available on request