


C259-ECO South part of Stevenson trail

In the autumn of 1878, R.L. Stevenson, the young Scottish writer who would become famous for his book *Treasure Island*, settled into a small village to the south of Le Puy-en-Velay so to prepare an initiatory Journey across Les Cévennes. One month later, he left Le Monastier-sur-Gazeille with his lone companion Modestine, the temperamental donkey which carried his baggage. His journey was to bring him in contact with the Cévenols, descendants of the Camisards who fought and were persecuted after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. For 12 days he traveled across Le Velay, Le Gevaudan and the Cévenol region to arrive in Saint Jean du Gard. He tells of this voyage in his book entitled *Travels with a donkey in the Cévennes*.

This hike covers the second part of R.L. Stevenson's journey. From Chasseradès you will cross the Goulet

Mountain to Le Bleynard and climb up Le Mont Lozère. You will descend into the Cévenol region, heading towards Le Pont de Montvert and the Tarn Valley, so to arrive in the magnificent little village of Florac. You will disappear into the Cévennes, a deep and mysterious region, and into the chestnut forests that cover the hillsides and valleys, hiding the peaceful, picturesque villages that sleep there. Slowly, you will descend towards Saint Jean du Gard and the Midi of France.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in CHASSERADES. A taxi will bring you from the *La Bastide Puy Laurent* train station to Chasseradès. Beautiful 12th century, roman-style church with a lauze-covered roof (lauze is a stone created by lava that is specific to this region of France) - Half-board accommodation in a one-star hotel.

Day 2: CHASSERADES – LE BLEYMARD (14 km – 3 and a half hour walk). You will make your way to Mirandol and its famous viaduct and continue on to l'Estampe, at the foot of the Goulet Mountain. The path zigzags through the forest, passes through the abandoned village of Serremejean, and then heads down the southern slope to Bleynard.

Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.

Day 3: LE BLEYMARD – LE PONT DE MONTVERT (18 km – 7 hour walk). Here starts the long climb up Mont Lozère. You will pass by Le Mazel, which holds ancient mines, and follow the long and difficult climb through the forest. When you need a rest, sit alongside one of the few waterfalls along the route. Just beyond Le Chalet du Mont Lozère, the landscape changes. The crests become covered by nothing more than a sad prairie from which rise towers of granite stone (called montjoies) marking the footpath. You will have a startling view of the Pic de Piniels at 1,699 meters. Finally your work will be rewarded with the downward conclusion of the hike, bringing you through the forest to Finiels, and then further still to Le Pont de Montvert, at the bottom of the Tarn Valley.

Half-board accommodation in a one-star hotel.



Day 4: LE PONT DE MONTVERT – FLORAC (28 km – 8 hour walk). You will visit the village where, in 1702, the assassination of the Abbot Chayla marked the start of the War of the Camisards. You will pick up the path again – though not that which R.L. Stevenson followed through the Tarn Valley, as it is too dangerous today, but the lovely route passing through the Montagne

de Bougès and the Col du Sapet (pass)– to arrive in Florac, a magnificent little village which you simply must visit! Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.



Day 5: FLORAC – CASSAGNAS (17 km – 4 and a half hour walk). After leaving Florac, you will climb up the steep-sided valley of La Minente to arrive in Saint Julien d'Arpaon and the looming ruins of its medieval château. You will follow the old train tracks to Cassagnas - Half-board accommodation in a guest house

Day 6: CASSAGNAS – SAINT GERMAIN DE CALBERTE (28 km – 8 hour walk). You will climb slowly through the forest to La Plan de Fontmort where stands an obelisk commemorating the martyrs of the War of the Camisards. You will arrive at the Pierre Plantée Pass where you will admire the dolmens, menhirs, and other roman ruins that decorate the route. The day ends above Saint Germain de Calberte, at the hamlet of La Serre de la Can, where your hotel is located - Half-board accommodation in a two-star equivalent hotel.

Day 7: SAINT GERMAIN DE CALBERTE – SAINT JEAN DU GARD (21 km – 7 and a half hour walk). You will climb down into the very typical village of Saint Germain. The 12th/14th century church houses the tomb of Abbot Chayla. The path will lead you down valleys towards Saint Etienne Vallée Française, a wonderful village of narrow streets. You will then climb towards the Saint Pierre Pass for a beautiful view of the region, and descend again, this time into the Valley of Gardon Saint Jean, to reach Saint Jean du Gard - Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.

Day 8 : SAINT JEAN DU GARD. Tour ends after breakfast.

Season

From beginning of May to middle of October but be careful this trail is very popular in summer time and there are few comfortable accommodations along the trail. We recommend you to reserve 4 or 5 months before.

What's included?

- 7 overnight stops on a half-board basis in small family-run hotels or guest houses with en-suite facilities
- Luggage transfer between accommodations along the trail.
- Taxi transfers as written in the description of the itinerary
- A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) or topoguide (with translation) with the route marked on and detailed route notes describing the trail.
- A daily itinerary together with information about facilities and places of interest along the trail.
- Emergency assistance.

Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the walk area - Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above – Drinks – Entrance fees – Additional meals - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls, are not included

Walk difficulty

Grade 3 - walks of between 5 and 8 hours a day with ascents up to 700 m. Some hiking experience is advisable. A reasonable level of fitness and some stamina are required for these walks.

Getting there and away

By car: Meet N88 (Saint Etienne to Mende) and go to Langogne. Continue to Chasseradés along Allier Valley. Shared taxis from St Jean du Gard to Chasseradès for trip back (contact us for reservation)

Where to park: free car park in Chasseradès.

By train: rail station at Chasseradès on the line Clermont-Ferrand –Nîmes (train le Cévenol). From St Jean du Gard, you will reach Alès or Nîmes stations by taxi or bus.