

C276-ST The Huguenots way from Grenoble to Genève



In this second part of the Huguenots trail, you will leave Grenoble and go up the Grésivaudan valley walking on the first heights of the Chartreuse massif made up of steep walls and cliffs. You will reach Chambéry, the historic capital of the Duchy of Savoy before reaching and bypassing Lake Le Bourget via Aix les Bains. You will continue your journey between the Rhône and the first foothills of the Alpine massif covered with pastures, forests and vineyards. You will cross some nice and typical villages like Seyssel or Frangy before reaching Geneva and Switzerland, a Protestant land..

Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrival at GRENOBLE. The city has a long history that begins in Gallo-Roman times. The Counts of Albon, lords of the Dauphiné, made Grenoble the capital of their province, which later became a strategic military city, facing the Duchy of Savoy. The city benefited fully from industrial development with gloves and then white coal. Thanks to the 1968 Olympic Games, the city became internationally renowned and is now a major world scientific centre. Night and breakfast in a 2-star hotel

Day 2 – from GRENOBLE to SAINT ISMIER (16,5 Km - Vertical rise +900m). The day begins with the ascent of the Bastille, a huge limestone massif that plunges into the Isère, transformed into a fortified town in recent centuries to ward off any attack from the Duchy of Savoy. Over more than 300 metres of difference in height, the bastille unrolls its ramparts, casemates, staircases, barracks, a fortified complex, very imposing which finally underwent the test of fire only in...1944 ! From the fort, the panoramic view of Grenoble is magnificent! You will turn your back on the city and discover the Chartreuse massif. You will walk on the slopes of Mont Rachais and Mont Saint Eymard under Fort St Eymard, which also defended Grenoble. In the forest, you will cross some torrents which rush into the valley which you will join at the level of St Ismier. Night and breakfast in a 2-star hotel. Restaurants in the vicinity.

Day 3 – From ST ISMIER to CROLLES. (18.5 Km - Vertical drop +1,450m) You will leave the valley and climb back up the mountainside to the tower of Arces, an imposing square keep, the remains of a fortified castle that defended the valley against the invasions of the Counts of Savoy. You will continue through the forest, cross some streams and torrents before joining the Manival torrent which you will follow to the hut of the same name. Then it will be a long climb in bends towards the Col de Baure then towards the village of Saint Pancrasse before going down into the valley towards Crolles by the castle of Craponoz. Dinner, night and breakfast in a 3-star hotel

Day 4 – From CROLLES to SAINT BERNARD DU TOUVET. (18 Km - Vertical drop + 900m) You will climb towards Craponoz castle then continue the ascent along the stream of the same name and pass near the Pissarote waterfall. You will reach the village of St Pancrasse, dominated by the Crolles tooth. You will pass by the Bec Margau and its orientation table and then over the Oule waterfall, an impressive waterfall! You will reach the upper station of the funicular railway of St Hilaire du Thouvet built in 1924, one of the oldest in Europe. You will follow the edge of the cliff and enjoy an extraordinary panoramic view of the Grésivaudan valley, the peaks of Belledonne and Mont Blanc. You will enter the forest again to reach the ruins of the Porte Trainee mill, a witness to an old activity on the plateau. You will climb again towards the belvedere of Le Puy and join the hotel in the hamlet of Les Guillots. Dinner, night and breakfast in a comfortable hostel.

Day 5 – From SAINT BERNARD to CHAPAREILLAN, hamlet of Bellecombe (23,5 Km - Difference in altitude +950m) From the hotel you will reach the Col de Marcieu then continue on this small road towards the forest hut of Bresson passing some hamlets and isolated farm. You will leave the plateau by going down along the brook of Granges towards the village of Barraux and will pass under the fort Saint Barthelemy built in 1597 and modified several times over the centuries, notably by Vauban in the 17th century. You will go up to the hamlet of Bellecombe where you will find the ruins of a castle that controlled the region and your hotel. Dinner, night and breakfast in a 3-star hotel.

Day 6 – From BELLECOMBE to CHAMBERY (23 Km) Through the forest, you will reach the Granier pass and then the Joigny barns. You will pass at the foot of the points of Gorgeat, Lentil and Essort, rocky spurs that emerge above the forest, playground for rock climbers and join the cross of La Loche. From there, you will start the long descent to Chambéry. Just before the hotel, you will visit the Musée des Charmelles, an old house where Jean-Jacques Rousseau lived and which became, at the beginning of the 19th century, a symbol and a place of pilgrimage for all the literary and political celebrities of the time. Dinner, night and breakfast in a 2-star hotel.

Day 7 – From CHAMBERY to BOURGET DU LAC (20.5 Km). From the hotel, you will descend towards the old Chambéry by crossing the Parc de la Calamine. You will not miss to visit the old town, the Elephants fountain, the cathedral, the castle of the Dukes of Savoy, the rue de la Croix d'Or, the rue de la Juiverie or the rue de Boigne. You will continue this walk by following the banks of the Hyère and then the Leysse to reach the shores of Lac du Bourget and the hotel. Dinner, night and breakfast in a 2-star hotel.

Day 8 – From BOURGET DU LAC to LA BIOLLE (19,5 Km - Difference in altitude +300m). You will follow the lake and reach Aix les Bains via the leisure area of Les Mottes, the beach of Lido and the castle of Le Bon Port at the foot of the hill of Les Poètes, destroyed by a fire in 2008. You will follow the beach of Aix les Bains, the small port and then the large port before leaving the shores of the lake and discover the spa of Aix. You will pass at the foot of Mont de Corsuet and follow the forest which extends over the slopes of the massif and reach the village of Biolle. Transfer by taxi to Aix les Bains where you will spend the night. Night and breakfast in a 2-star hotel. Restaurants nearby.



Day 9 – From LA BIOLLE to RUFFIEUX (17,5 Km - Vertical drop +700m). Return by taxi to the church of Biolle in the early morning. You will leave the village in the direction of the mountain of La Biolle. You will pass in front of the castle of Longefan, an old fortified house before climbing through the forest to the top of Mont de Corsuet. Then you will start the descent with a path that passes just below the belvedere of La Chambotte and pass over the village of Chindrieux at the northern end of Lac du Bourget. You will pass at the foot of the Croix de Beauvoir which dominates this village and cross the first vineyards on the Chevigneux side before reaching the guest house in the hamlet of Chessine. Night and breakfast in a charming guest room. A taxi will take you to the restaurant in the nearby village and take you back after dinner.

Day 10 – From RUFFIEUX to SEYSSEL (19 Km - Difference in altitude + 500m). The beginning of the stage is done by the forest and you will cross some nice villages before going down towards the Rhône and along it to Seyssel. This village has played a major role since Roman times because many bridges were built there, all destroyed by the floods of the Rhône which was no longer navigable beyond the village. People and goods came from Geneva by land and boarded at Seyssel to descend southwards and into the Mediterranean. Dinner, night and breakfast in a charming hotel on the banks of the Rhône.

Day 11 – From SEYSSEL to FRANGY (15.5 Km - Vertical rise +600m). You will reach the foot of the Princes Mountain and walk through the countryside to the village of Desingy which has one of the oldest churches in the region (12th century). You will cross the river Les Ussets to Frangy, a small town that developed along the old Roman road that linked Geneva to Vienna. Since the 14th century, the city has been famous for its white wines, the Roussette. Dinner, night and breakfast in a comfortable hotel.

Day 12 – From FRANGY to NEYDENS (25,5 Km - Vertical rise +600m). You will continue your journey through the countryside to the village of Chaumont. You will go down then walk at the foot of the Vuache mountain towards the hamlet of Cortagy and then towards the village of Murcier. You will continue towards the village of Chênex by the hamlets of Jurens and Chez Vauthier then continue towards Neydens by the villages of Germagny and Feigères. You will be very close to Switzerland but you will not be able to enter Protestant territory for customs and luggage reasons. Night and breakfast in a 3-star hotel. Restaurants nearby.

Day 13 - GENEVE – Transfer by taxi from Neydens to Geneva station in the early morning. End of the hike.

Season

From May to middle of October but be careful this trail is more and more popular and we recommend to reserve earlier to get (the best) rooms. Best time is May, June and September

What's included?

- 12 nights in 2 & 3 star hotel or guest house with breakfast
- 7 dinners
- Hotel to hotel luggage transfer 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.
- Phone emergency assistance 24/24

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

Getting there and away

By road: easily accessible by motorway, Grenoble is at the junction of the A41, A48 and A51 motorways.

By rail: many trains and TGVs to Grenoble from most major French stations

Where to leave your car: several paid car parks in Grenoble

From Genève

Numerous trains and TGVs from Geneva to France

Return to Grenoble: direct connections between Geneva Cornavin and Grenoble (journey time 2h10)

Difficulté de la randonnée

Level 3 and 4 for some stages - The stages require 6 to 8 hours of walking per day. We are in very hilly, rugged or mountainous terrain. The total difference in altitude is about 500 to 700 meters but beware of certain stages, not too long, which have a difference in altitude of more than 1000 m. You must be in good physical condition and have prepared beforehand.

