

# Press Pack Travel Experiences

CITY TRIPS  
ALONG THE COAST  
IN THE MOUNTAIN  
IN THE COUNTRYSIDE







# Occitanie

## Sud de France



### FRANCE'S SECOND-BIGGEST REGION,

13 'departments' in an area bigger than Ireland



### 8 SITES INSCRIBED ON UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE LIST:

the Canal du Midi, Gavarnie - Mont Perdu, Way of St James, the Episcopal City of Albi, the Causses and the Cévennes, the Pont du Gard, the Historic Fortified City of Carcassonne, the Fortifications of Vauban (Villefranche-de-Conflent and Mont-Louis)



### 2 NATIONAL PARKS



### 1 MARINE NATURE PARK



### 7 REGIONAL NATURE PARKS



### 44 WINTER SPORTS RESORTS



### 40 TOP OCCITANIE SITES

Agde-Pézenas, Aigues-Mortes - Camargue Gardoise - Saint Gilles, Albi - Vallée du Tarn, Ariège médiévale : Foix - Mirepoix - Montsegur, Ariège préhistorique : Niaux - Tarascon - Mas d'Azil, Armagnac - Abbaye et Cités, Auch, Aux sources du Canal du Midi (Sorèze, Revel, Saint Ferréol), Bastides et Gorges de l'Aveyron (Villefranche de Rouergue, Najac, St Antonin, Caylus, Villeneuve d'Aveyron), Canal du Midi - Béziers, Carcassonne et les Citadelles du vertige, Cévennes, Cirque de Gavarnie - Cauterêts - Pont d'Espagne, Cirque de Navacelles - Lodève, Collioure en Côte Vermeille, Conques, Cordes et cités médiévales, Gorges de l'Hérault - Gorges du Tarn, Gorges de la Jonte - Causses & Vallées Cévenoles, Grand Figeac, vallée du Lot et du Célé, La Grande-Motte, Le Grand Montauban, Lourdes, Luchon, Marciac, Massif du Canigò, Massif du Néouvielle-Vallée d'Aure et du Luron, Mende coeur de Lozère, Millau-Roquefort (regroupement de deux candidatures), Moissac, Narbonne Méditerranée, Nîmes - Pont du Gard - Uzès, Perpignan Méditerranée, Pic du Midi, Rocamadour Vallée de la Dordogne, Rodez, Saint-Bertrand de Comminges, Valcabrière, Sète, Toulouse, Vallée du Lot, Cahors, Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, Puy-l'Evêque



### 28 THERMAL SPA CENTRES



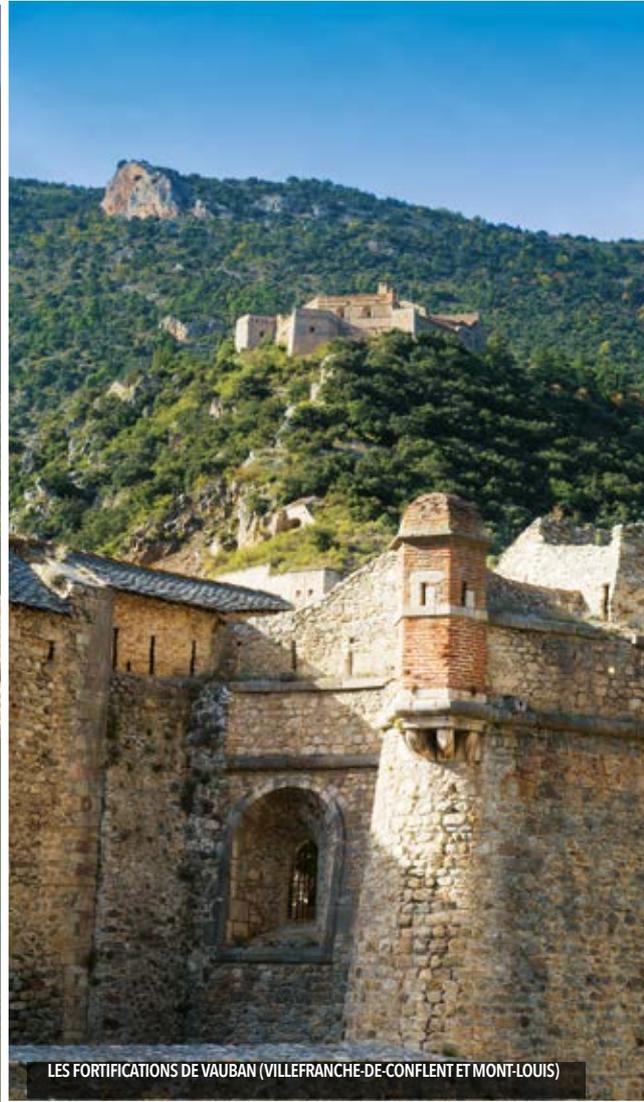
### 220 KILOMETRES OF MEDITERRANEAN COASTLINE



### MORE THAN 50 MARINAS



LE PONT DU GARD



LES FORTIFICATIONS DE VAUBAN (VILLEFRANCHE-DE-CONFLENT ET MONT-LOUIS)


**8 SITES INSCRIBED  
ON UNESCO'S WORLD  
HERITAGE**



LE CANAL DU MIDI



LES CHEMINS DE SAINT-JACQUES-DE-COMPOSTELLE



LA VILLE FORTIFIÉE HISTORIQUE DE CARCASSONNE



LES CAUSSES ET LES CÉVENNES



GAVARNIE-MONT PERDU



LA CITÉ ÉPISCOPALE D'ALBI



# Travel experiences

Join our experts in Occitania everywhere from its medium towns, the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean via the Gorges du Tarn and Gers countryside. They will share their must-dos with you and take you on their adventures in this selection divided into the Occitania region's four environments: city, sea, mountain and countryside. That way you'll get a real sense of how unique the Occitania South of France destination is with its blend of authenticity, warmth and diversity.

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/experiences-en-occitanie](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/experiences-en-occitanie)

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## 4th France's fourth biggest tourist region



with  
**15.9 BILLION**  
euros visitor spending



and  
**96 500**  
paid tourism jobs



or  
**10%**  
of regional GDP

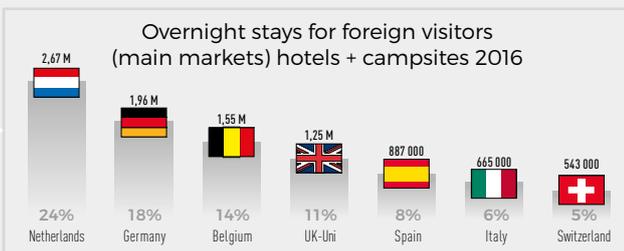


**1st**  
region for  
French tourists



**3rd**  
region for  
overseas tourists

**30 MILLION**  
visitors every year



## 1st The highest accommodation capacity in France



with  
**3.3 MILLION**  
beds



nearly  
**26.3 MILLION**  
nights at open-air accommodation sites  
(highest rank in France)



**16.3 MILLION**  
hotel nights  
(4th highest in France)



**1st France's most popular thermal spa destination**



drawing  
**188,000**  
spa users



around  
**1/3**  
of the national spa market

# CITY TRIPS

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/villes](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/villes)

Occitania brings you the best of urban tourism with its two major cities, Toulouse and Montpellier, plus its network of easy-to-reach medium towns and cities.



## Toulouse (Haute-Garonne)

Population of 480,000

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/villes/toulouse](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/villes/toulouse)



### A FAMILY ADVENTURE INTO THE WORLD OF SCIENCE

Children and adults flock to Toulouse, the capital of aviation and space, for adventure with a capital A.

Children pull on an astronaut's outfit at the Cité de l'Espace to explore the Cité des Petits, take part in interactive experiments or be blown away by shows at the Imax and Planetarium.

[www.cite-espace.com](http://www.cite-espace.com)

Back on Earth, sky adventurers can hop on board legendary planes at the Aéroscopia Museum: Concorde, Caravelle, Super Guppy and the A380, the giant of the skies.

[www.musee-aeroscopia.fr](http://www.musee-aeroscopia.fr)

Visitors to the Piste des Géants historical site can pop their aviators on for The Flight of the Pioneers, a virtual flight in a Bréguet XIV plane to relive the time of airmail pilots like Antoine de St Exupéry.

[www.lenvol-des-pionniers.com](http://www.lenvol-des-pionniers.com)

Adults and children then cross the runway to get a thrill and gape at the incredible machines at Halle de La Machine: they step into a magical funfair world packed with gigantic spiders and ride on Asterion the Minotaur's back!

[www.halledelamachine.fr](http://www.halledelamachine.fr)

## HAPPY DAYS FOR HEDONISTS

With its wholeheartedly Latin vibes, living life to the fullest and indulging the senses is natural in Toulouse. The local lifestyle is part of it and encourages you to make the most of everything, day and night.

### ROOFTOPS, TERRACES & OUTDOOR BARS

When it comes to food and drink, fly high and try out the rooftop trend at places like Ma Biche on Mama Shelter's rooftop and Pier Hôtel's La Vue restaurant. Settle into the hundreds of terraces peppered all over the protected centre, one of the biggest pedestrian areas in France, wander around its many squares (Place du Capitole for its prestige; Place St-Georges for its village feel; Place Saint-Pierre for its hustle and bustle) or linger by the Garonne where open-air bars pop up in summer.



### A FESTIVAL OF FLAVOUR IN TOULOUSE

Feast your eyes on the famous Victor Hugo, St-Cyprien and Carmes markets in the morning (Tuesday to Sunday) or during the lively "nocturnes" evening events where the three markets invite visitors to soak up the festive feria-style feel.



### THE WOAD REVIVAL

What made the city wealthy and gave it its most beautiful monuments was the Renaissance trade of woad, a plant producing dye. One of them is the Hôtel d'Assézat that is now home to the Bemberg Foundation (an extensive painting collection, especially Bonnard's work). Woad is back in fashion, good for you and has cosmetic properties. It is showcased by local brands Graine de Pastel and Terre de Pastel and you can pamper yourself with it at the 5\* Cour des Consuls spa or brand new Bleu par Nature spa.

[www.fondation-bemberg.fr](http://www.fondation-bemberg.fr)  
[www.grainedepastel.com](http://www.grainedepastel.com)  
<https://terredepastel.com>



## COOL, ALTERNATIVE AND EXCITING TOULOUSE

### THE GRAFFI TOUR

Alongside Paris, Toulouse has been one of France's graffiti hotspots since the mid-1980s where street art fans love spotting the many murals and pieces by famous artists. The city has become an open-air gallery for visitors to explore, especially now it hosts the Biennale Rose Béton every two years.

[www.toulouse-tourisme.com/street-art-a-toulouse](http://www.toulouse-tourisme.com/street-art-a-toulouse)

### SLOW TOURISM ALONG THE CANAL DU MIDI: A GREEN VEIN IN THE PINK CITY

You can explore the UNESCO Canal du Midi on foot, by bike or by boat. As you venture along this masterpiece you'll see pretty barges in the docks like the Maison de la Violette for a foodie break to pick up souvenirs "made in Toulouse", have a cookery lesson on the water at La Classe des Gourmets, have lunch at Maison du vélo, a former lockkeeper's house opposite the station, try out yoga-pilates on the Moving Yoga barge and get a good night's sleep in quirky floating B&Bs like Péniche Amboise.

[www.peniche-amboise.com](http://www.peniche-amboise.com)



### Did you know?

The Toulouse area is home to a dozen Michelin-starred restaurants so real foodies should be happy.

## A day trip from Toulouse



### MUST-DO

the newly-opened Ingres-Bourdelle Museum will sate your appetite for culture and show off its treasures in the wonderfully restored former bishop's palace.

<https://museeingresbourdelle.com>

### MONTAUBAN (TARN-ET-GARONNE)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites-occitanie-les-villes/montauban](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites-occitanie-les-villes/montauban)

### STREET ART TOUR IN MONTAUBAN IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE TOWN'S FAMOUS NAMES

Montauban is a Town of Art and History whose artworks and street art pay tribute to the town's famous names and world-renowned artists including the painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and talented sculptor Antoine Bourdelle.



### CARCASSONNE (AUDE)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/carcassonne-et-citadelles-du-vertige](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/carcassonne-et-citadelles-du-vertige)

Get lost in the UNESCO medieval city's streets, one of the most spectacular fortresses in Europe. Climb to the top of the towers, close your eyes and go back in time 800 years to when knights and Richard Lionheart ruled to unleash your inner Robin Hood (Prince of Thieves was partly filmed in Carcassonne).



### MUST-VISIT

#### HÔTEL DE LA CITÉ

The greats (Walt Disney, Winston Churchill etc.) have passed through this legendary hotel whose suites and grounds give you jaw-dropping views of the city walls and castle. Live the dream with a night's stay, meal at La Barbanace (its Michelin-starred restaurant) or spa treatment!



## ALBI (TARN)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites-occitanie-les-villes/albi](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites-occitanie-les-villes/albi)

### EXPLORE ALBI THE RED TOWN, FAMOUS FOR ITS UNESCO EPISCOPAL CITY AND TOULOUSE-LAUTREC MUSEUM.

The biggest brick cathedral in the world and Southern French Gothic masterpiece, Sainte-Cécile Cathedral is a beacon for the town. Next door to the cathedral, like a jewel in the Palais de la Berbie's crown, Toulouse-Lautrec Museum was founded in memory of a local lad with the biggest public collection of art. Famous for his paintings, watercolours, and lithographs. He's best known for his candid Paris escapades. You'll fall for the charm of a youth here.

[www.musee-toulouse-lautrec.com](http://www.musee-toulouse-lautrec.com)



#### MUST-DO

Keep the magic alive in summer with an evening barge cruise on the Tarn for a concert and aperitif on the river with views of the cathedral.

## AUCH (GERS)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/auch](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/auch)

Auch is a lovely Gascony "Town of Art and History" that's best explored on foot. Take your time browsing local specialities on the market stalls on Thursday morning. In the lower town you can peruse the Gers banks to soak up the majesty of Sainte-Marie Cathedral (UNESCO site), the great staircase watched over by a statue of Auch's very own D'Artagnan and Armagnac Tower or take to the skies on a glider and let the wind take you over the town and its countryside.



#### When to visit?

During the Festival Circa, the Contemporary Circus Festival (in October) <http://circa.auch.fr>

## CAHORS (LOT)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/cahors-vallee-du-lot](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/cahors-vallee-du-lot)

### SOAK UP THE ATMOSPHERE AT ONE OF THE BEST MARKETS IN FRANCE

Cahors Market (one of the 25 best markets in France) has been setting up outside the UNESCO Saint-Etienne Cathedral every Saturday morning for 700 years. Traditional traders and local producers present their wares at the many colourful stalls brightening up the square. Make it a foodie day with a trip to Villa Cahors Malbec where you can sample Cahors wine in a wine bar-style setting before continuing to Pont Valentré bridge, the other jewel in this Town of Art and History.





## RODEZ (AVEYRON)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/rodez](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/rodez)

### IN THE STEPS OF CONTEMPORARY ARTIST PIERRE SOULAGES

Pierre Soulages was born in Rodez in 1919 and is the undisputed master of "outrenoir" (beyond black). He is the world's most popular living French artist. The Soulages Museum opened in 2014 and is devoted to his work. There are almost 500 pieces and documents in the collection (donated by Pierre and Colette Soulages) and the museum soon became one of the best in the region. Its corten steel architecture is jaw-dropping and the perfect fit for the city's heritage, just a few dozen metres from the gothic Notre-Dame de Rodez Cathedral in all its glory.

<https://musee-soulages-rodez.fr>



## Montpellier (Hérault)

Population of 285,000

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/villes/montpellier](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/villes/montpellier)

The ultimate pedestrian destination, visit Montpellier on foot, by bike or tram.

### ENJOY A BREATH OF FRESH ART

Can't decide between fine arts and contemporary art? Just don't miss these two: the Fabre Museum is considered one of the best fine arts museums in Europe housing European artworks from the Renaissance to the present day with a wing devoted entirely to the contemporary artist Pierre Soulages whilst the brand new contemporary art centre MOCO (opened in June 2019) hosts temporary exhibitions from collectors around the world.



## GET LOST IN L'ECUSSON'S MEDIEVAL LANES

There are lots of medieval lanes capturing the city's proud history in L'Ecusson, Montpellier's old town. Our top tip for exploring them? Leave your map at home and lose yourself in the narrow lanes. There's so much to do here from shopping in vaulted boutiques housing designers, antiques shops and tea rooms for a feast for the eyes and trip back in time!

## BE WHISKED AWAY ON AN ARCHITECTURAL ADVENTURE

Every district has its own personality here and tells the story of the city's 1000 year old history. A savvy blend of classic and contemporary architecture moving from medieval lanes to future-forward feats by big names such as Jean Nouvel (Town Hall), Philippe Starck (Le Nuage) and Sou Fujimoto (the White Tree: a futuristic building with a 17th floor rooftop with incredible views of the city).



## MONTPELLIER SLOW LIFE STYLE

Montpellier is the place to enjoy life, get together and soak up your natural surroundings: foodie fun on the restaurant terrace, Halles Laissac and Marché du Lez (Montpellier's trendy market), green transport with 4 tram routes (named best tram in France in 2019), bike ride to the sea (see inset) or canoe trip on the Lez in the city centre. Here, the word "enjoy" actually means something...



### CYCLE FROM MONTPELLIER TO THE SEA

Your bike ride starts in central Montpellier taking you to Antigone then Port Marianne where you can gaze at the work of the biggest architects around. Cycle along the Lez River bike path among the vineyards and lakes before you reach the beaches, 10km away, on a totally safe and flat route. If you're feeling curious then ride to Maguelone Cathedral, nicknamed the "cathedral of the sands", to sample the estate's wine in an idyllic setting. End the day on a high with a family dip.





#### TOP TIP

Between outings, plan a lunch break at the restaurant on the Musée de la Romanité terrace, La Table du 2 (its menu is designed by Michelin-starred chef Franck Putelat and showcases regional produce at affordable prices) or at Ciel de Nîmes at the Carré d'Art (Nîmes' contemporary art museum designed by Norman Foster) opposite the Maison Carrée.



## *A day trip from Montpellier*

### **NÎMES (GARD)**

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/nimes-pont-du-gard-uzes](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/nimes-pont-du-gard-uzes)

With a proud past and incredible artistic legacy, Nîmes, a City of Art and History, has a very Latin lifestyle that keeps getting better with the recent opening (2018) of the fabulous Musée de la Romanité. What's amazing about the Roman arenas is how well-preserved they are. People flock here in spring to see the Great Roman Games, the biggest ancient history reenactment in Europe.

### **BÉZIERS (HÉRAULT)**

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/canal-du-midi-beziers](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/canal-du-midi-beziers)

Béziers is the hometown of the Canal du Midi's designer Pierre-Paul Riquet and famous for its Southern French vibes. We suggest you spend your time at the Fonsérannes 9 Locks on the right bank of the Orb across from the old town. These one-of-a-kind locks date back to the late 17th century and enable boats to cover a 210.5m elevation in a distance of 300m. The site's renovation was completed in 2017 so visitors can now appreciate this feat of civil engineering.

**NARBONNE (AUDE)**  
[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/narbonne-mediterranee](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/narbonne-mediterranee)

### 2000 YEARS OF HISTORY IN THE STREETS

Your view from the Episcopal Palace takes in a relic of the Via Domitia, the famous Roman road running from Italy to Spain. Not far away, the adventure continues underground with a tour of the horreum (Roman public warehouses) whilst the new Musée Narbo Via (architecture by Norman Foster) brings Narbonne a new home to exhibit its antique collections in the Town of Art and History.

### UNMISSABLE: THE HALLES 1900

This glass and steel Art Nouveau building is a go-to for food in Narbonne which the locals love and houses one of the most traditional markets in France.



**PERPIGNAN (PYRÉNÉES-ORIENTALES)**  
[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/perpignan-mediterranee](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/perpignan-mediterranee)

### PERPI TRENDY: SWITCH TO THE CATALAN LIFESTYLE

Go bargain hunting in the little fashion and vintage shops in central Perpignan, wander around the flea market in Allées Maillol on Saturday morning and keep the magic alive with a cocktail at the buzzing Halles Vauban where all the locals get together. Perpignan is great to visit all year round with its incredible sunshine (2460 hours/year). Make the most of it to visit some of its gems including Saint-Jean-Baptiste Cathedral, Hyacinthe Rigaud Museum, the Castillet, Hôtel Pams and Palace of the Kings of Majorca.



### INF+

looking for an Instaworthy view?

The Galeries Lafayette rooftop rivals the Castillet keep for 360° views of the town whilst you can gaze at the whole of Roussillon from the top of the Palace of the Kings of Majorca.



# ALONG THE COAST

From the Côte Vermeille to the Camargue Gardoise  
[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/decouvrir/mer](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/decouvrir/mer)

With a 220km coastline, the Occitania coast is carved into rocky coves or unfurls its vast sandy beaches from Argelès-sur-Mer (Pyrénées-Orientales) to Le Grau-du-Roi - Port Camargue (Gard) and the edge

of the Camargue to bring you an amazing array of landscapes and things to do. Adventure seekers can leave the seaside to uncover unexpected wonders just a few miles away...



## THE CATALAN COAST, HEAVEN BETWEEN THE SEA AND SUMMIT

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/collioure-en-cote-vermeille](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/collioure-en-cote-vermeille)



### ON THE CHEMIN DU FAUVISME (FAUVISM PATH) IN COLLIOURE

An explosion of colours (pink, tan, ochre, green, red, blue), traditional lanes bursting with flowers, Catalan boats, a majestic castle and beaches lined with café terraces and palm trees... Collioure is utterly magical. It's no wonder that countless painters were bewitched by its kingdom of light and colour. Collioure was the birthplace of Fauvism from 1905 with the arrival of Matisse and Derain who were soon joined by Picasso, Braque, Dufy and Chagall. It has since earned its name as the "City of Painters" on the international scene. The "Chemin du Fauvisme" is a path dotted with 19 reproductions of pieces by Matisse and Derain painted in Collioure that you can explore on your own or on a guided tour from Tourist Information.

[www.collioure.fr](http://www.collioure.fr)

## PAULILLES OR REWRITING HISTORY

Watched over by Madeloc Tower, Paulilles bay is a slice of paradise with turquoise water. This is certainly the most magical place on the Pyrénées-Orientales coast. It's such a joy to wander around its parks, uncover its fabulous industrial heritage, hike the coastal path to Cap Béar or chill out on the beaches! Unleash your inner adventurer on sea kayaks or try stand-up paddling so you can explore the little coves that you can't reach on land.

[www.paddlingparadise.fr](http://www.paddlingparadise.fr)

<http://blue-bear.org>



## CELEBRATE THE GRAPE HARVESTS IN BANYULS

The Côte Vermeille vineyards (1600 hectares making AOC Collioure and Banyuls wine) are still tended by hand by a multitude of small businesses that sculpt the landscapes with thousands of terraces and schist walls. Wine lovers host a huge annual festival on the 3rd weekend of October celebrating the end of the harvest with the highlight being the grapes coming in from the sea on board traditional Catalan boats followed by a huge feast on the beach.

[www.banyuls-sur-mer.com](http://www.banyuls-sur-mer.com)



## AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE AT THE RIVESALTES MEMORIAL

La Retirada was a tragic event when hundreds of thousands of Spanish Republicans escaped Franco's regime and sought shelter in France. It made a huge impression on Roussillon because these unfortunates were confined on the same sandy beaches that we love to laze on nowadays. The Rivesaltes Camp was built soon after to house some of these refugees before imprisoning Jews and gypsies in the darkest days of the Vichy regime and the harkis during the Algerian War. This is where a memorial has been built to reflect on these terrible tragedies.

This is part of your break in Catalan country that will stay with you!

[www.memorialcamprivesaltes.eu](http://www.memorialcamprivesaltes.eu)





## HEALTH & WELLNESS ON THE OCCITANIA COAST: THALASSOTHERAPY VS THERMAL WATERS

Sea water and the exceptional Mediterranean climate are your best partners for health and fitness. For a few hours, two days or more: pick your package, relax and let the sea work its magic on your body: Occitania's 5 thalassotherapy destinations bring you the best in sea water treatments.

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/visiter-bouger/thermalisme-et-bien-etre](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/visiter-bouger/thermalisme-et-bien-etre)



## THE AUDE COAST & NARBONNE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL NATURE PARK

[www.parc-naturel-narbonnaise.fr](http://www.parc-naturel-narbonnaise.fr)

The Mediterranean Regional Nature Park covers all the Aude's 42km coastline as well as over 12500ha of lagoons bursting with amazing biodiversity. On the coast, by the lakes or in nearby Les Corbières, it's packed with exciting outings and things to do in line with eco-friendly sustainable tourism.

### FLY WITH THE WIND

The Aude coast has over 300 days of wind a year and is popular for sports like kitesurfing. It's heaven on Earth for windsurfers and sailing fans of all kinds. The



Mondial du Vent (in April) is the perfect time to meet the windsurfing elite.

[www.mondialduvent.fr](http://www.mondialduvent.fr)

### BIRDWATCHING IN THE NARBONNE REGIONAL NATURE PARK

The Narbonne Regional Nature Park stands on a major migration route making it a great place for birdwatching with over 350 species of birds visible at different times of the year. The Nature Park has designed a free digital app, Birdwatching Narbonne, to help visitors get involved. Available to download for free on Android and Apple, it complements observation days run by the Nature Park and French Bird Protection League.

[www.parc-naturel-narbonnaise.fr](http://www.parc-naturel-narbonnaise.fr)

### A DAY WITH THE LEUCATE OYSTER FARMERS

Between the sea and lake, have a day out to remember in the colourful oyster farming village of Leucate



and indulge in their seafood to your heart's content. With rows of colourful huts covered in fishing nets, driftwood, old buoys, parasols and heaps of oyster shells, the oyster farming village of Leucate is picture-perfect and a real charmer.

[www.tourisme-leucate.fr](http://www.tourisme-leucate.fr)



### **A BIKE RIDE TO NARBONNE FROM THE BEACHES**

Whether you start on the Gruissan beaches among the vineyards and pine trees or Port-la-Nouvelle through the lakes and along the Robine Canal, the bike paths lead to Narbonne. Terns, seagulls and flamingos will join you on your way. Narbo Martius (as the Romans called it) will tell you all its secrets and amaze you with its incredible history once you arrive.

[www.narbonne-tourisme.com](http://www.narbonne-tourisme.com)

### **DREAM CRUISES ON THE COAST**

#### **An unforgettable outing in an old sailing ship**

Hit the water and set sail from Leucate (Aude) on a 2.5 hour cruise on board the Limnoreia, a genuine old sailing ship from 1929 (one of the oldest in Europe). Have a magical experience in Sète, nicknamed the "Venice of the Languedoc", exploring its canals on board a real Venetian icon.

[www.limnoreia.com](http://www.limnoreia.com)

[www.vedivenetia.com](http://www.vedivenetia.com)

### **EXPERIENCE LIFE AS A JET-SETTER ON A CATAMARAN**

Barbecue party, DJ set, sardine parties, sunset cruise on a catamaran, from Port-Camargue (Gard) or La Grande Motte (Hérault) for a unique and magical experience at sea.

[www.catamaranlucile2.com](http://www.catamaranlucile2.com)

[www.leprovidence.fr](http://www.leprovidence.fr)

<https://catamaran-picardie.com>

### **CAP D'AGDE - SÈTE & ETANG DE THAU - LA GRANDE-MOTTE: ALONG THE HÉRAULT COASTLINE**

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/agde-pezenas](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/agde-pezenas)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/sete](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/sete)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/la-grande-motte](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/la-grande-motte)



### **JOIN COCKTAIL ROYALTY AT MAISON NOILLY-PRAT**

Dive into the world of oenology and mixology in Marseillan on the banks of the Etang de Thau at Maison Noilly Prat, famous for inventing James Bond's favourite cocktail. Create your own martini or unleash your inner bartender at a cocktail workshop where you'll learn cocktail-making techniques and make your own Dry Martini.

[www.noillyprat.com](http://www.noillyprat.com)





## OYSTERS IN ALL THEIR GLORY AT DOMAINE TARBOURIECH (MARSEILLAN)

The banks of the lagoon with views of Sète are the perfect place to learn about oysters with oyster farms fitted with solar panels and the "Spéciales Tarbouriech" oyster breeding cycle. The inventive Tarbouriech family has designed a Solar Tide, a system that reproduces the Atlantic's tides to give the Special Oyster its subtle, smooth yet exciting flavour. As well as oyster tasting, Maison Tarbouriech gives you the chance to pamper yourself with its "oyster therapy" treatments (treatments using the oyster's cosmetology assets) and enjoy a romantic sunset from Le Saint Barth bar looking out over the lagoon.

[www.tarbouriech.fr](http://www.tarbouriech.fr)



## SÈTE, AN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

Just like its neighbour Montpellier, Sète is a street art hotspot. Wander around the city streets and you'll see myriad pieces by street artists on the walls, doors, roofs... Keep your eyes peeled for graffiti, stencils and collages by guest artists at the annual K-Live festival that make Sète a true open-air museum. Make the most of your visit to enjoy the city's classic Mediterranean dishes on a trip to the Halles de Sète market open every morning. A feast for the senses! Local produce takes pride of place here: tuna, red mullet, bass, sea bream, monkfish, seafood and shellfish from the Thau lagoon that you can eat on-site or al fresco on the forecourt.

[www.tourisme-sete.com](http://www.tourisme-sete.com)



### When to visit Sète?

The Mediterranean's biggest meet-up for "old sailing ships" happens in Sète during the Escale à Sète event at Easter (every 2 years)

<https://escaleasete.com>

Watch jousting tournaments on the Grand Canal during the annual Saint-Louis festivities in late August

## LA GRANDE MOTTE SLOW LIFE STYLE

Don't bring your car to La Grande Motte, a sea resort renowned for its avant-garde architecture listed as "20th century heritage"! It's all about green transport here be it on foot or by bike. Take a morning stroll by the sea, explore the footpaths in the shade of the pine trees and head to Le Ponant peninsula to see Camargue horses before you end your day on the Lucile catamaran for a sunset cruise and cocktail.

[www.lagrandemotte.com](http://www.lagrandemotte.com)



## CAMARGUE GARDOISE

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/aigues-mortes-camargue-gardoise](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/grands-sites/aigues-mortes-camargue-gardoise)

### A WILD BEACH JUST FOR YOU IN L'ESPIGUETTE

With 10km of untouched sand, L'Espiguette is the wildest beach on the entire Occitania coast. It's constantly being reshaped by the wind and sea currents to create landscapes straight out of the Sahara Desert. It's heaven for naturists, people who hate big crowds and ideal for anyone who loves lots of space and quiet. Go on an adventure from Aigues-Mortes or Le Grau du Roi on a mountain bike or a 4X4 for an exotic safari taking you through the surreal pink salt marshes to a deserted beach where you can have a picnic or enjoy a Camargue meal in a setting straight out of Robinson Crusoe.

[www.visitesalinsdecamargue.com](http://www.visitesalinsdecamargue.com)

### A FRESH TAKE ON AIGUES-MORTES

Treat yourself to a wall walk on top of the ramparts for a trip back in time to when Louis IX set off to the Holy Land or an amazing little train ride at nightfall to see the sun set over the Aigues-Mortes ramparts from the salt marsh. Magic happens!

<https://ot-aiguesmortes.com>



### A DAY IN THE CAMARGUE GARDOISE WITH THE "GARDIANS" (MANADIERS)

The Camargue's gardians (cowboys) keep an ancient tradition alive as they tend the black bull herds that the region is famous for. Experience a day in the life of bull farmers in a manade just a few miles from the coast. When you get back from your outing, tuck into the classic "gardiane de taureau" (bull stew - a local signature dish) to the sound of gypsy music.

[www.letsgrau.com/manade-jullian.html](http://www.letsgrau.com/manade-jullian.html)



### A DAY AT SEA ON A FISHING BOAT

Experience life as a fisherman on a day to remember and try your hand at deep-sea fishing (tuna, shark). Available all along the sea including Le Grau du Roi (Gard), number 1 Mediterranean fishing trawler port.

[www.setefishing.com](http://www.setefishing.com)

[www.letsgrau.com/balades-en-mer-peche.html](http://www.letsgrau.com/balades-en-mer-peche.html)

# IN THE MOUNTAIN

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/decouvrir/montagne](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/decouvrir/montagne)



Surrounded by two mountain ranges with the Pyrenees to the south and Massif Central to the north east, the Occitania South of France destination brings you its unspoilt scenery and a fabulous playground for fans of outdoor sports and vast natural areas. On top of that it has incredible cultural heritage covering 20,000 years of history from the caves adorned with cave art to the next-generation Pic du Midi.

## HIKING HEAVEN

Whether you're a novice or hardened hiker, you'll find your happy place in Occitania along the thousands of signposted paths. The most iconic include the GR®10 (Pyrenean crossing), GR®367 or Cathar trail, GR®65 or Way of St. James and the GR®70 or Stevenson Trail.

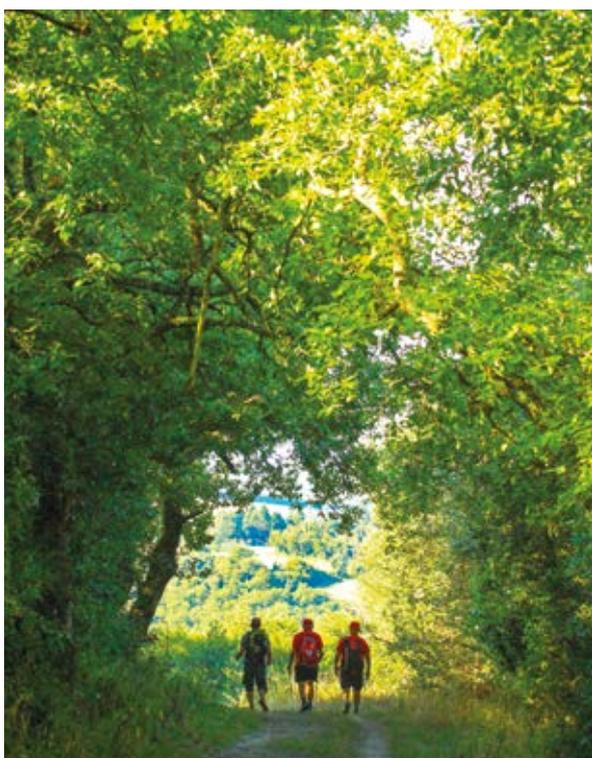
[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/balades-et-randonnees/a-pied](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/balades-et-randonnees/a-pied)

## MUST-DO HIKES IN THE OCCITANIA MOUNTAINS

### Hike the length of the Pyrenees on the GR®10

The GR®10 spans 400km from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean along the Pyrenean Mountains taking in mountain valleys, peaks and fabulous views with its regional nature parks (the Ariège Pyrenees and the Catalanian Pyrenees) as well as the Pyrenees National Park. Spending a day, weekend or 8 weeks (for the full trail) hiking part of the GR®10 feels a bit like taming one of the wildest mountains in Europe!

[www.gr10.fr](http://www.gr10.fr)



**INF+**

more or less running along the border ridge between France and Spain, the HRP® (Pyrenees High Level Route) is a parallel version of the GR®10 that's only for hardened hikers.

## **GAUBE LAKE AND CIRQUE DE GAVARNIE: THE HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES' GEMS**

From Cauterets, the ascent to Gaube Lake is a real classic getting you up close to the highest peak in the French Pyrenees: the Vignemale (3298m). See another side to the jaw-dropping Pyrenees National Park on a walk to the heart of the Cirque de Gavarnie to gaze at its huge waterfall (400m high, the biggest in Europe) and gaze in wonder at the "Coliseum of Nature" as the author Victor Hugo described.  
[www.pyrenees-parcnational.fr](http://www.pyrenees-parcnational.fr)

## **FROM AUDE TO ARIÈGE ON THE CATHAR TRAIL (GR®367)**

This 244km trail from the Mediterranean shores to Foix through Les Corbières brings you the beauty of nature paired with the power of history as it takes you to the main Cathar castles, one-of-a-kind defensive sites nicknamed the "hilltop citadels".  
[www.audetourisme.com](http://www.audetourisme.com)



**INF+**

The GR® 107, known as the "Chemin des Bonshommes" takes you from Foix in Ariège to Berga in Catalonia in a dozen days. It follows in the footsteps of the Cathars (who were known as "Bonshommes") when they crossed the border to seek shelter in Berga in Spain with the Crusaders hot on their heels.  
[www.ariegepyrenees.com](http://www.ariegepyrenees.com)

## **CLIMBING CANIGÓ (2784M), THE SACRED CATALAN MOUNTAIN**

The Pic du Canigou (Canigó in Catalan) stands proud over the entire Roussillon plain with its recognisable silhouette. It has always been respected on either side of the French and Spanish border and climbing it is something any good Catalan hopes to do at least once in their lives.  
[www.tourisme-canigou.com](http://www.tourisme-canigou.com)





## HOW ABOUT THE MASSIF CENTRAL?

### The Stevenson Trail through Lozère and the Cévennes Gardoises

Follow in the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson and his donkey Modestine on their life-changing journey in 1878 for a unique experience exploring the jaw-dropping unspoilt landscapes in the Cévennes National Park.



#### The Stevenson Trail is suitable for everyone

The "Sur le chemin de Robert Louis Stevenson" association has made it their mission to make the trail disabled-friendly. Disabled visitors can hit the Stevenson Trail on the "escargoline", a 3-wheeled cart drawn by a donkey. Visually impaired visitors can use the Open Way app with its audio-description of the trail.

[www.chemin-stevenson.org](http://www.chemin-stevenson.org)



## A NEW WAY TO TREK

### HORSE RIDING ADVENTURES IN LOZÈRE

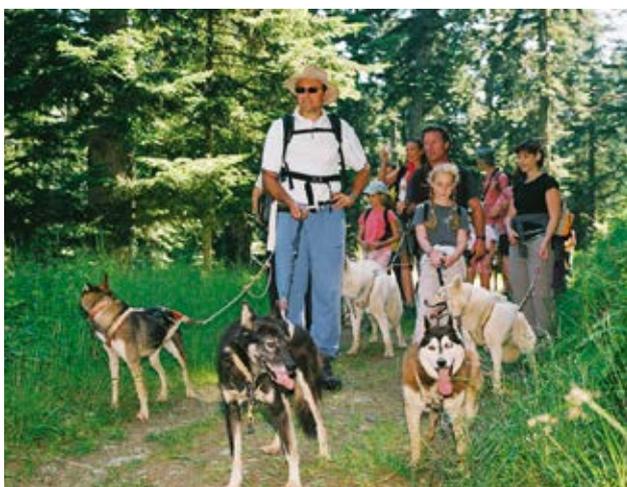
Lozère's diverse landscapes and vast wild areas make it heaven for horse riders. The Filière Cheval Lozère association has designed fifty-odd routes suitable for horse riding.

[www.lozere-tourisme.com/promenades-cheval](http://www.lozere-tourisme.com/promenades-cheval)

### DOG TREKKING

Hook your harness onto a sled dog for a fun-filled and original trekking experience bonding with man's best friend. It's more than just an outing (suitable for children aged 6 and over), it's a journey where you learn about the lead dog's role, pair work and the importance of training.

[www.vallee-du-louron.com/en](http://www.vallee-du-louron.com/en)



## BIKE TOURISM & CO (BIKE, MOUNTAIN BIKE, SCOOTER ETC.)

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/balades-et-randonnees/a-velo](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/balades-et-randonnees/a-velo)

### IN THE BIKE TRACKS OF TOUR DE FRANCE RACERS

The greatest cycling event in the world, the Tour de France always goes through the Pyrenees every summer. Watching the cyclists zip by on a Pyrenean stage is a unique experience on many a bucket list. If you want to put yourself in the pedals of a pro and climb the legendary mountain passes that have made the "Grande Boucle" famous then you can.

[www.letour.fr](http://www.letour.fr)

### LE PYRÉNÉES CYCL'N TRIP (JULY)

Every July after the Tour de France's visit, the mountain passes of the Hautes-Pyrénées are reserved for cyclists for 5 days (temporary road closure). Before the ascent you'll be greeted, informed and encouraged whilst a welcome snack break awaits at the top of the mountain pass. After posing for a souvenir photo and stamping the passport to prove you've accomplished the ascent, you can go back down the valley flying on the wings of your success! Over 2500 people take part in this event for passionate and hardened cyclists, families and friends of all abilities on regular bikes or e-bikes.

[www.tourisme-hautes-pyrenees.com](http://www.tourisme-hautes-pyrenees.com)



### ON PIC DU JER (LOURDES - HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES), IN A MOUNTAIN CYCLING WORLD CHAMPION'S SKIN

The Pic du Jer cable car takes you from Lourdes to an altitude of over 950m in a matter of minutes. Thrill-seekers flock to the Pic du Jer that hosted the best sprinters on the planet for the mountain bike descent world cup in 2017. Now it's your turn to hit this legendary track with unobstructed views of the holy city.

[www.lourdes-infotourisme.com](http://www.lourdes-infotourisme.com)

### THE GRANDE TRAVERSÉE DU MASSIF CENTRAL, 1380KM ON THE PEDALS

The Grande Traversée du Massif Central is a 1380km trail from the Morvan to the Mediterranean! The route has 6 stages in Lozère so you can soak up its diverse landscapes from Margeride's moors and lakes to the lush Lot Valley, Mont-Lozère's ridges, Cévennes Valley's forests and the Gorges du Tarn.

[www.la-gtmc.com](http://www.la-gtmc.com)



## ROAD TRIPS BY MOTORBIKE OR CAR MOTORBIKE, ALIGOT AND SPA: THE PERFECT COCKTAIL FOR A LOZÈRE ADVENTURE

Bikers will enjoy the quiet and breath-taking roads in France's least-populated region, ideal for riding to their heart's content. On the agenda: motorcycling, obviously, plus breaks to gaze at the views, food & drink with a stop at a "buron" (cheesemaker) to try the famous aligot and a dip in thermal waters... As you can tell, there's everything you need for a great break!

[www.lozere-tourisme.com/moto](http://www.lozere-tourisme.com/moto)



## DRIVE THROUGH THE HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES

With 6 turnkey routes, the Hautes-Pyrénées invite you to explore a land without borders: the Pyrenees. Armed with your roadbook packed with lovely places to visit and useful information about must-see sites, you can snake through the valleys and climb the legendary Pyrenean mountain passes. It's written like a travel diary full of explanations and anecdotes, trip ideas, quirky tours and unique experiences.

[www.pyrenees-trip.com](http://www.pyrenees-trip.com)

[www.pyrenees-trip.es](http://www.pyrenees-trip.es)

[www.pyrenees-trip.uk](http://www.pyrenees-trip.uk)

## THE SIDE ROADS ON BOARD A MYTHICAL TRAIN

### THE YELLOW TRAIN, A CATALAN COUNTRY ICON (PYRÉNÉES- ORIENTALES)

The "canary" (our nickname for it) will grab your attention with its age-old charm as it runs through the Catalan Pyrenees Regional Nature Park. Take your place by the driver and admire the technological feats that the railway builders had to achieve (viaducts, bridges, tunnels and dozens more structures) and two fortresses designed by Vauban, Villefranche-de-Conflent and Mont-Louis (both UNESCO sites), that you'll see along the way.

[www.pyrenees-cerdagne.com](http://www.pyrenees-cerdagne.com)



## SNOW & ICE ACTIVITIES

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/loisirs/ski-et-neige](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/loisirs/ski-et-neige)

### WHEN THE MOUNTAIN PUTS ON ITS WINTER COAT, IT'S TIME FOR SNOW SPORTS!

With over 40 ski resorts and Nordic sites from the Pyrenees and Aubrac to Margerides and the Cévennes, the Occitania South of France destination has an exciting, diverse and social schedule for snow sports fans. Let's look at some unusual things to do...



Want to soar? Try snowkiting, the winter take on kite-surfing. Have you heard of skijoering, horse-drawn skiing? Wild about huskies? Get yourself to the forest for some dog sledding. Do you love sledding? Give yourself a thrill on a dizzying sled descent or try the snake-gliss (snake-style sledding). Want to unleash your inner Winter Olympian? Laser biathlon is perfect for you. Miss cycling? Hop on a fat bike, a "special snow" bike with fat tyres e.g. in Ax-les-Thermes (Ariège). Take things to another level: try climbing ice cascades or ice diving.

[www.tourism-occitanie.co.uk/mountains/holidays-pyrenees](http://www.tourism-occitanie.co.uk/mountains/holidays-pyrenees)

#### INF+

The Angaka base on the Beille Plateau (Ariège) provides overnight stays in its Nordic village. Take your pick from a night in a cosy yurt, tee-pee or, if you're feeling brave, an igloo that you build yourself.

[www.ariegepyrenees.com](http://www.ariegepyrenees.com)



#### MUST-DO

Take a cable car to the top and rocket down the untouched pistes on the Pic du Midi (2877m - Hautes-Pyrénées) and its 1500m elevation... Get your adrenalin pumping on one of the world's top 50 free-ride descents!

<https://picdumidi.com>





### Did you know?

The Luchon Vaporarium is unique in Europe. The temperature in the natural hammam deep in the mountain depths is between 38 and 42 degrees.

[www.luchon-bien-etre.fr](http://www.luchon-bien-etre.fr)



## IN THE WATER

### UNWIND IN THE HOT THERMAL WATERS IN OUR MOUNTAINS

Two thirds of the spa resorts in Occitania, France's number 1 spa region, stand in its mountain ranges, mainly in the Pyrenees but also in Lozère and the Massif Central. If you want to unwind after a busy day of sports or you fancy a wellness break, the variety of Occitania's spas will take your breath away.

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/visiter-bouger/thermalisme-et-bien-etre](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/visiter-bouger/thermalisme-et-bien-etre)

## UNDERGROUND

Our mountains are teeming with caves and chasms and the Henne-Morte network in Haute-Garonne, with over 100km of galleries identified, is among the world's vastest underground networks to be explored. Experience adventure in the darkest depths!

Going underground into a unique atmosphere where time holds no sway is a chance for you to see another side to "tourist" caves and chasms. Have a feast for the senses at a classical music concert in Lombrives Cave (Ariège).

[www.grottedelombrives.com](http://www.grottedelombrives.com)



### TRAVEL BACK TO PREHISTORIC TIMES IN ARIÈGE

The Prehistoric Park in Tarascon introduces children to cave art with their own attempt at it, Magdalenian everyday life hunting with an assegai spear, fire making, flint carving and recognising animal tracks. Delve even deeper into the period and visit during the "Prehistoric Night": lit by torches and candles, the park creates a unique atmosphere where your imagination can run wild...

[www.sites-touristiques-ariege.fr](http://www.sites-touristiques-ariege.fr)

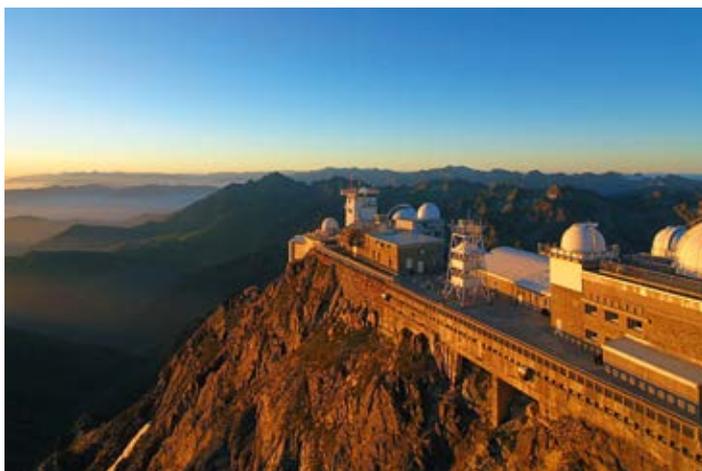


## REACH FOR THE STARS

With its vast spaces free of any light pollution, Occitania has some of the world's most spectacular starry skies. With two official dark-sky reserves, our region shines bright on the list of favourite destinations for astronomers.

\* the Pic du Midi and Cévennes National Park

## ROOMS WITH A VIEW



### IN THE HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES

## A NIGHT ON THE PIC DU MIDI

Ascend to an altitude of almost 3000m on the cable car from La Mongie resort to the "starship". You'll have an adventure to remember here. Feast your eyes on the best views of the Pyrenees. Test your mettle on the "bridge in the sky", a footbridge perched several hundred metres over the void. Watch a dazzling film screening at the planetarium and have dinner with views of the mountain. Gaze at the stars alongside astronomers and doze off with stars in your eyes in one of the highest altitude hotels in Europe!

<https://picdumidi.com>

### When to visit?

All year round and bring the magic of stars and song together with a concert at the Piano Pic Festival (late July), on the Pic du Midi terrace.

[www.piano-pic.fr](http://www.piano-pic.fr)



### IN THE CÉVENNES (LOZÈRE)

## A ONE-WAY TICKET FROM THE HAMLET OF LES ESPÉRELLES TO THE MILKY WAY

Perched in the Saint-Frézal-de-Ventalon hills, the hamlet of Les Espérelles literally has its head in the clouds. This is where Hervé Roche, an astronomy enthusiast, has opened his 2 holiday homes, Le Paillet and La Clède. Hervé loves introducing his guests to astronomy with his powerful Dobson 406/1800 telescope and promises you a peaceful stay brought to life by nature, evenings on the terraces... and "starry sky" sessions.

[www.lesesperelles.com](http://www.lesesperelles.com)

## THE CALL OF THE WILD

### SLEEP WITH BEARS, WOLVES AND PRAIRIE DOGS

You can stay in modern lodges up close with the animals at the Pyrenees Animal Park. Sleep safe and sound next to the bear, wolf or prairie dog enclosure.

[www.parc-animalier-pyrenees.com](http://www.parc-animalier-pyrenees.com)



### Keep the magic alive: spend a day as a keeper behind the scenes at the Pyrenees Animal Park

Spend a half-day working as a keeper feeding the otters, marmots and bears before spending some free time exploring the park.

### GET UP CLOSE TO THE LAST WILD HORSES

Venture deep into the UNESCO "Causses et Cévennes" to meet Przewalski's horses, the last surviving subspecies of wild horse. They are critically endangered in their natural habitat, the Mongolian steppes, but have been introduced here and are thriving. The reserve is now open to the public! Join a passionate guide to get up close with the horses ("takh" in Mongolian) and learn about their rescue.

[www.takh.org](http://www.takh.org)



## CULTURE IN THE MOUNTAIN

### Popular traditions, festivals & festivities

#### TRANSHUMANCE

If there's one tradition that's very much alive and unique to our mountains, it's moving livestock in summer or transhumance.

#### Transhumance in Aubrac (Aveyron - Lozère): a floral celebration bursting with colour

Every year around May 25th, farmers walk with their flower-adorned cows to the Aubrac plateau. The festivities begin on Thursday and continue through the weekend. A farmer's market, traditional dance and music, aligot tasting, blessing and walk with the decorated cow herds make this popular get-together magical.

[www.aubrac-laguiole.com](http://www.aubrac-laguiole.com)  
[www.aubrac-sud-lozere.com](http://www.aubrac-sud-lozere.com)

#### Summer pastures with the Mérens

Making the transhumance move with Mérens horses, a black Pyrenean breed, means being part of the troop, at its side and guiding it.

[www.merens-ariege.com/la-transhumance](http://www.merens-ariege.com/la-transhumance)



#### THE FLOWER FESTIVAL IN LUCHON

Luchon, the "Queen of the Pyrenees" celebrates flowers every year in late August. This colourful day is brought to life by flower parades, dances and the Miss Fleurs contest. Just make sure you don't miss the waiter's race... What a day!

[www.luchon.com](http://www.luchon.com)

#### THE GAVARNIE FESTIVAL, DRAMA AND EXCITEMENT DEEP IN A UNESCO SITE (HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES)

Every summer the Gavarnie Theatre Festival treads the boards at the foot of the Cirque de Gavarnie on La Courade prairie on the edge of the Pyrenees National Park. This is your chance to experience something unique and timeless as the staggering setting that Victor Hugo called "the Coliseum of Nature" Night falls and spectators hold their breath. Curtain up! Highlight: to keep the magic alive after the show ends, the audience returns to the village in torchlight...

[www.festival-gavarnie.com](http://www.festival-gavarnie.com)

#### SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES IN LOURDES

The popular pilgrimage destination is brought to life by its processions. Every night at 9pm between April and October, you can join the torchlight processions from Massabielle Grotto (where the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous) to the Rosaire esplanade. Whether you're a believer or not, this is an incredible way to experience community passion with people who have come from all over world.

[www.lourdes-infotourisme.com](http://www.lourdes-infotourisme.com)



# IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/decouvrir/campagne](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/decouvrir/campagne)



From the Garonne Valley orchards to the Armagnac vineyards, from the Gorges du Tarn to the Languedoc heaths, in Occitania, the countryside brings you a kaleidoscope of scenery, unique sites, a bounty of villages listed as among the most beautiful in France and lots of things to do. Sample the region's produce (over 250 have the official quality standard), meet local artisans, experience outdoor sports in incredible settings, go on a spiritual or cultural journey... Delve into our selection of ideas and join us in the celebration of the lifestyle and quiet beauty of the Occitania countryside.

**WITH THE FARMERS  
AND ARTISANS IN OUR  
COUNTRYSIDES**  
Get a warm welcome from  
Occitania's farmers and  
producers

**IF YOU WANT A SOCIAL, ECOLOGICAL  
AND INEXPENSIVE HOLIDAY, TRY  
WOOFING**

Woofing is a trendy new and innovative way to travel on the cheap. The idea is to pay for your stay by working at an organic farm in exchange for bed and board. You can count on having a great time chatting, meeting people and having fun together whilst you

learn the basics of farming. Ariège, true to its alternative values, takes pride of place in this area  
<https://www.woof.fr>

**SAFFRON, OUR COUNTRYSIDE'S RED  
GOLD**

Did you know this subtle and delicate spice has been grown in Occitania for a long time? The best time to visit saffron farmers to learn about growing the flowers to make saffron by-products is April. Don't miss the saffron festival in October in Cajarc.  
[www.tourisme-figeac.com/le-safran](http://www.tourisme-figeac.com/le-safran)





### SAFARI VIBES AT LA FERME AUX BUFFLES IN AIGNAN (GERS)

Hop on board a 4x4 army truck in Aignan (Gers) taking you deep into a water buffalo park. Settle down on a terrace above the spring where the animals bathe and enjoy a 100% Gascony meal with views of the Pyrenees peaking on the horizon. You can also go the classic route and visit the farm's restaurant for their signature dish: buffalo stew slow-cooked in Saint-Mont red wine, a tantalising treat.

[www.lafermeauxbuffles.fr](http://www.lafermeauxbuffles.fr)

### TASTEBUD-TINGLING TRIP TO A CHEESE CELLAR IN ROQUEFORT-SUR-SOULZON (AVEYRON)

The village of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon is the one and only place where France's top AOC designation, the iconic Roquefort cheese, is matured in the Rocher du Combalou's rock fissures. Almost a thousand people work here maturing the "king of cheese". Join them on a modern sensory sound and light tour to learn about each and every stage of making Aveyron's gourmet gem. Then taste it for yourself!

[www.roquefort-societe.com/les-caves](http://www.roquefort-societe.com/les-caves)



### IN THE OCCITANIA ARTISAN WORKSHOP

#### GLOVES HAVE THE UPPER HAND IN MILLAU (AVEYRON)

Celebrated by the biggest designers and celebrities (Nicole Kidman, Kylie Minogue, Sharon Stone and Madonna), Millau's leather gloves are exported far beyond our borders. A trip to one of the working factories in Millau is your ticket to the glamorous world of fashion and luxury as you explore the work of artisan glovemakers.

[www.maisonfabre.com](http://www.maisonfabre.com)



The renowned Causse Gantier factory was taken over by the iconic haute-couture brand CHANEL in 2012.

[www.causse-gantier.fr](http://www.causse-gantier.fr)

#### LEARN THE TECHNIQUES OF WOAD DYE

Meet Denise Lambert and learn about her passion for woad at Carré Bleu de Pastel (Roumens - Haute-Garonne). She'll reveal all the secrets behind the multi-faceted plant (dye, cosmetology) that made the area in and around Toulouse rich. She'll teach you how to dye your own fabrics.

[www.auxsourcesducanauldumidi.com/atelier-de-teinture-carre-bleu-de-pastel](http://www.auxsourcesducanauldumidi.com/atelier-de-teinture-carre-bleu-de-pastel)





### MILLINERY: UNCOVER UNIQUE EXPERTISE IN CAUSSADE (TARN-ET-GARONNE)

Maurice Chevalier wore his Caussade boater hat with pride and made it famous. The last milliners in Caussade are open to visitors as is L'Épopée Chapelière Museum where visitors wear a boater headset to learn the secrets behind making the straw hat. Delve a little deeper and meet Didier Laforest, one of the last hat-block makers in France. Before your very eyes he'll sculpt lime tree wood blocks used as moulds to make hats on: priceless expertise that is among the exceptional fine arts listed as UNESCO World Heritage.

#### When to visit?

During the Estivales Du Chapeau in July  
[www.chapeau-caussade.fashion](http://www.chapeau-caussade.fashion)  
[www.hatsblocks.com](http://www.hatsblocks.com)

## LOCAL MARKETS

### FATTENED DUCK AND GOOSE MARKETS / TRUFFLE MARKETS

South-West France is famous for breeding and fattening ducks and geese and the place to be part of an amazing event between November and March: the fattened duck and goose markets. These noisy and colourful markets are a real feast for the eyes (and ears) to whet your appetite before the taste sensations.

Truffles are Occitania's black gold that ripen from



the first frost and are picked until late February. It's a unique experience seeing the ceremony that goes into one of the region's truffle markets. If you want to soak up a truffle market's unique atmosphere then Lalbenque-Limogne Tourist Information hosts "truffle days". Explore the market before visiting a truffle patch, watching a truffle hunting demonstration with a pig and tucking into an "all truffle" meal at one of the village restaurants.

[www.lalbenque.net/truffles/journées-truffes](http://www.lalbenque.net/truffles/journées-truffes)

## CULTURE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

### Yar-round events and festivals

### APPLAUD THE BIG NAMES IN JAZZ IN MARCIAC (GERS)

The small village of Marcillac has been belting out jazz music in the 1st fortnight in August for over 40 years.

[www.jazzinmarciac.com](http://www.jazzinmarciac.com)



### ROCAMADOUR HOT-AIR BALLOONS (LOT)

People flock to Rocamadour on the last weekend in September for the jaw-dropping sight of hot-air balloons gathering in the sky at an event that's unique in Europe. Ideally you'll be standing alongside a balloonist so you can soar over this fascinating pilgrimage town clinging to the cliffside.

[www.rocamadouraerostat.fr](http://www.rocamadouraerostat.fr)



### THE FLAME OF ARMAGNAC (GERS), A LITTLE LIGHT AND HUMAN WARMTH IN THE HEART OF WINTER

It's time to distill Armagnac in the Gers vineyard and estates between November and January. Following the still on its journey is a good excuse to have a party as you sample France's oldest brandy: Armagnac of course...

[www.gers-reservation.com/flamme-armagnac.html](http://www.gers-reservation.com/flamme-armagnac.html)

### LIMOUX (AUDE), THE WORLD'S LONGEST CARNIVAL

Taking part in the Limoux Carnival means keeping a 400 year old tradition alive. The party lasts for three winter months with Pierrots dressed in bright colours who dance to heady traditional music. A feast for the eyes and ears!

[www.tourisme-limoux-in-aude.fr](http://www.tourisme-limoux-in-aude.fr)

### MEDIEVAL FESTIVALS IN CORDES-SUR-CIEL (TARN)

The fortified hilltop town of Cordes-sur-Ciel whisks you away to medieval times every year in mid-July. Costumed characters, artisans, market, parades and street shows surround you in the fascinating world of the Middle Ages.

<https://medievale-cordes.fr>



#### Did you know?

Occitania is the region with the most UNESCO World Heritage sites connected to the Way of St. James in France: there are almost 40 of them.

### THE COUNTRYSIDE IN SLOW MO HIKING TRAILS

#### A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE ON THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES (GR®65)

Voie du Puy, Voie d'Arles, Voie du Piémont: the 3 major "camino" come together in our region before moving into Spain and play host to legendary stages packed with iconic UNESCO sites. You'll be blown away by the unspoilt beautiful villages you walk through (Conques, St-Guilhem-le-Désert and St-Bertrand-de-Comminges), try a variation taking you to Rocamadour where you can make like a medieval pilgrim and climb the steps to the Black Madonna on your knees. Feast your eyes on Saint-Pierre de Moissac Abbey (Tarn-et-Garonne) with its richly illustrated cloister's capitals and, most importantly, make new friends and memories along the way.

[www.chemins-compostelle.com](http://www.chemins-compostelle.com)

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE TEMPLARS AND HOSPITALLERS ON THE GR®71

Deep in the Grands Causses Regional Nature Park (Aveyron) on the Larzac plateau, the GR®71 brings together the main towns built by the Knights Templar in the 12th century then fortified and maintained by the Knights Hospitaller until the 18th century. This is your chance to explore the Larzac plateau's vast untamed landscapes, picture yourself in this exciting period of French history and uncover some architectural gems: La Couvertoirade, Sainte-Eulalie-de-Cernon and Saint-Jean d'Alcas etc.

[www.tourisme-aveyron.com](http://www.tourisme-aveyron.com)



## BIKE RIDES

### A MAGICAL BREAK ALONG THE CANAL DES DEUX-MERS

The Canal des Deux Mers green path is a bike route running from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean for almost 800km (520km in Occitania). It runs along the Garonne Canal's towpath then the UNESCO World Heritage Canal du Midi's towpath. It's ideal for families (no elevation or motor vehicles allowed) and everyone will love the path's shade and myriad landscapes and atmospheres. Little villages of character, historical towns (Moissac, Toulouse, Carcassonne, Béziers, Sète etc.), vineyards and canal structures pepper the route with lots of places to stop and one piece of advice: enjoy.

[www.canaldes2mersavelo.com](http://www.canaldes2mersavelo.com)



bends. Must-visits include Puy-l'évêque, Albas, Luzech, Caillac, Mercuès or Cahors, Town of Art & History. [www.francevelotourisme.com/itineraire/la-vallee-du-lot-a-velo](http://www.francevelotourisme.com/itineraire/la-vallee-du-lot-a-velo)

### FROM ONE VILLAGE TO THE NEXT ALONG THE AVEYRON GORGES (TARN-ET-GARONNE)

With a river on one side and cliffs on the other, the Aveyron Gorges are wild and majestic. The leisurely pace of cycling is the best way to enjoy them. Take lovely pitstops in villages with sing-song names like Montricoux, Bruniquel or Saint-Antonin-Noble-Val. [www.francevelotourisme.com/itineraire/vallee-et-gorges-de-l-aveyron-a-velo](http://www.francevelotourisme.com/itineraire/vallee-et-gorges-de-l-aveyron-a-velo)



### THE LOT VALLEY BIKE PATH: A SURPRISE WITH EVERY PEDAL

The Lot Valley bike path winds 160km through orchards and vineyards along a kaleidoscope of authentic villages on the hilltops or tucked into the river



### THE ROUTE THROUGH AVEYRON'S 10 MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES IN FRANCE

The idea of this 7 day route covering 700km is to bring together cycling, scenery, heritage, food and drink on the theme of Aveyron's "10 most beautiful villages in France". Between the causses and valleys, mountains and gorges, this path introduces you to listed villages with famous names such as Estaing in the jaw-dropping green Lot Valley, Najac overlooking the Aveyron Gorges and Conques and its treasure.

[www.tourisme-aveyron.com](http://www.tourisme-aveyron.com)

### BOAT TRIPS By boat on the Canal des Deux-Mers, Lot or Baïse: the antidote to burn-out

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/balades-et-randonnees/en-bateau](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/balades-et-randonnees/en-bateau)

#### ALONG THE CANAL DES DEUX-MERS

Sail the Canal des Deux-Mers on your permit-free houseboat rental, go through the locks like a pro, gaze at the area's signature belltower-walls, canal structures that pepper the route and, at cruising speed of 6km/hr, simply enjoy time as it flows by... There are lots of places to rent boats (capacity: 2-12 people) from the main river ports along the route.

[www.leboat.com](http://www.leboat.com)

#### FLOATING ROOMS

For a touch of luxury, go for a cruise on a barge hotel with the crew or treat yourself to a night on a floating B&B at the dock...

[www.barge-rosa.com](http://www.barge-rosa.com)

[www.hotelbargealegria.com](http://www.hotelbargealegria.com)



### A DREAM CRUISE ON THE LOT ON BOARD THE FÉNELON

There are over 70km of river to sail through the vineyards, downstream from Cahors (Lot) or up to St-Cirq-Lapopie upstream. Set sail on board the Fénelon for a cruise to remember. You'll catch the herons whilst they're fishing, gaze at the peregrin falcon's lightning swift flight and be dazzled by the staggeringly beautiful Saint-Cirq-Lapopie about which André Breton said: "when I saw it, I stopped wanting to be somewhere else." It will be the highlight of a magical day.

[www.tourisme-lot.com](http://www.tourisme-lot.com)

### A NATURE CRUISE ON THE BAÏSE, IN D'ARTAGNAN'S HOMELAND

People have sailed on the Baïse since the reign of Henri IV and it's been given a new lease of life with 65km of waterways from Valence-sur-Baïse (Gers) to its connection with the Garonne Canal. To the sound of the locks along a winding and wild route, you'll sail the old barge and gabarre boat route as you uncover the Cistercian Flaran Abbey, a popular Gers tourist attraction, Château de Cassaigne and the Episcopal City of Condom, a good excuse for an Armagnac in one of the area's many cellars.

[www.tourisme-condom.com](http://www.tourisme-condom.com)





## BY BOAT, CANOE, KAYAK, PADDLEBOARD: GLIDE ON THE WATER IN HARMONY WITH THE RIVER

The Occitania countryside is bursting with rivers in spectacular valleys making it the perfect place for boat or canoe rides. The Gorges du Tarn and Aveyron Gorges, Dodegne and Célé Valleys and the Baise River bring you magical moments up close and personal with unspoilt nature.

[www.tourisme-occitanie.com/sports-aquatiques/canoe-rafting-canyoning](http://www.tourisme-occitanie.com/sports-aquatiques/canoe-rafting-canyoning)

## THE SHOW-STOPPING TARN VALLEY AND GORGES DU TARN

Downstream from Millau (Aveyron), join the Bateliers du Viaduc on a boat trip to see the viaduct from a unique angle in Creissels. This concrete giant has been heralded for its bold concept and design by Sir Norman Foster and its central pylon exceeding 300m makes it the tallest viaduct in the world.

[www.bateliersduviaduc.com](http://www.bateliersduviaduc.com)

Upstream from Millau where the Tarn Valley funnels into staggering gorges, the Bateliers des Gorges du Tarn (Lozère) will take you on a boat trip into the most spectacular part of the canyon safe and sound.

[www.gorgesdutarn.com](http://www.gorgesdutarn.com)

### INF+

Keep the magic of the Gorges du Tarn alive with an evening paddle ride to meet the river's quiet residents, the beavers.

[www.canoeblanc.com/fr/paddle](http://www.canoeblanc.com/fr/paddle)

The great Gorges du Tarn (Lozère) canoe/kayak trek is a family-friendly must with a more challenging section upstream of Saint-Enimie, one of the most beautiful villages in France, then easier for all ages downstream.

[www.canoe-gorges-tarn.com](http://www.canoe-gorges-tarn.com)

## THE COUNTRYSIDE GETS SPORTY Underground thrills

### PADIRAC CAVE BY LANTERN, JUST LIKE IN THE TIME OF ITS DISCOVERER, EDOUARD-ALFRED MARTEL

Spend an evening on an incredible underground adventure at Padirac Cave just as Edouard-Alfred Martel experienced it in 1889 on his first descent into the "Devil's Hole" as it was called at the time. Hear the story of the cave by lantern light from the many texts and testimonials that Edouard-Alfred Martel left us... an extraordinary multi-sensory experience to enjoy as a VIP guest.

[www.gouffre-de-padirac.com](http://www.gouffre-de-padirac.com)

### A CAVE ADVENTURE 200M UNDERGROUND AT CABRESPINE CAVE (AUDE)

Thrill-seekers head to the giant Cabrespine Cave to experience a new underground adventure trail that is totally safe and suitable for children aged 12 and over. The more timid among us will settle for walking 200m above a bottomless pit on a glass footbridge on the regular cave tour!

[www.gouffre-de-cabrespine.com](http://www.gouffre-de-cabrespine.com)





## SPORTS EVENTS FOR LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

### RUNNER'S HIGH ON THE MILLAU VIADUCT

The biannual Course Eiffage du Viaduc de Millau in Aveyron is the place for any runner whether they're athletes or just run for the joy and health it brings. The affordable race is popular and amateurs are cheered on by their family... 23.7km of pure joy. Almost 300m over the Tarn, the route between heaven and earth will give you a real runner's high!  
[www.tourisme-aveyron.com](http://www.tourisme-aveyron.com)

### A TRAIL LIKE NO OTHER

With its untouched landscapes and endless horizons, the Occitania South of France region is heaven for trail runners. Some of them are world-renowned and attract the trail world's elite. The Festival des Templiers (Aveyron) in October brings you a unique 78km trail through the Grands Causses so you can put yourself in the (running) shoes of a Knights Templar.  
[www.festivaldestempliers.com](http://www.festivaldestempliers.com)



## THE COUNTRYSIDE BY NIGHT

As one of the least populated areas in France - under 7 people/km<sup>2</sup> in certain parts of the Causses du Quercy (Lot) - the Occitania countryside is the perfect place for stargazing. There's no light pollution here and you can hear a pin drop. With your feet on the ground and your head in the stars, join our astronomy experts on a trip to the cosmos.

### GET TO KNOW THE STARS IN THE BLACK TRIANGLE (LOT)

The Causses du Quercy Regional Nature Park is home to among the clearest skies in France and has set up three stargazing sites for amateur astronomers. The Gigouzac Astronomy Club also runs astronomy trips. Even better, some accommodation providers offer guests telescopes to observe the stars, a great opportunity to stay in the heart of the black triangle.  
[www.parc-causses-du-quercy.fr](http://www.parc-causses-du-quercy.fr)



# Notes



