

# C211-ST Tarn and canoeing



One of the most beautiful places in France! The Tarn River flows rapidly towards les Causses from its source at Mont Lozere in the Cevennes. It rushes through this chalky region, through a succession of natural faults that it has enlarged, deepened, sculpted, and carved out to create a sequence of imposing and splendid passes and corries. The river is fed only by resurgence waters, which come from the surrounding Mejean and Sauveterre Causses. What splendid contrast between the old villages and hamlets, sometimes completely abandoned, located on the shadowed bank of the Tarn, and those that bloom and flourish in the sun on the opposite bank! From Florac to Peyreleau, the path will lead you from the heights of the cliffs to the depths of the passes. You will be filled

with awe by these glistening landscapes and will feel the earth closing in around you as you slip down the Tarn, cliffs rising high around you, towards the Cirque des Baumes.

## Itinerary

**Day 1** - Arrival at FLORAC, a small city at the foot of the Causse Mejean cliffs, and nestled in the confluence of three rivers. It is the entrance to the Gorges of the Tarn. The afternoon will leave you plenty of time to visit Florac, the château and the wonderful narrow roads and squares of the old quarters- *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a 3-star hotel*

**Day 2** - ISPAGNAC – SAINTE ENIMIE (19 km). *Transfer by taxi to the village of Ispagnac.* You will walk through the village and admire the 11th and 12th century church. You will cross the old gothic bridge of Quezac, the same bridge trod by pilgrims for many years as they came to pray at the feet of the statue of the Quezac Virgin. Head to the banks of the Tarn and pass around the perimeter of the village of Montbrun, near the château de Charbonnières. You will then reach the surprising village of Castelbouc, where the houses lean against the cliffs, and gaze up to the ruins of the château perched 60 meters high on the rock surface. A resurgence of waters from the Causse Mejean gush out into the village from three different spots. You will see the Château de Prades on the opposite bank and will soon after arrive in Sainte Enimie - *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel*

**Day 3** – SAINTE ENIMIE - descent of the tarn from Saint Enimie. The canoeing is an original way of discovering Gorges-du-Tarn. You will discover along with the current the luxurious landscapes of Gorges and a protected nature. You can during your descent stop to take advantage of numerous beaches of the Tarn to picnic, sunbathe or bathe in summer. We offer you 2 trips:

- A 4 hour (13 Km) trip from Sainte Enimie to La Maléne for beginners. You will discover Sainte Enimie, St Chély du Tarn one of the only left bank villages with a bridge connecting it to the right bank and a beautiful waterfall rushing waters in the Tarn, Pugnadoire, Chateau of La Caze, Hauterive and La Maléne.
- A 6 hour (22 Km) trip from Sainte Enimie to Les Baumes Basses with after La Maléne the crossing of the Straits.

Back to La Maléne by car at the end of afternoon – *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in the same hotel*





**Day 4 - SAINTE ENIMIE – LA MALENE** (15 km). We invite you to explore the old village of Ste Enimie, clinging to the cliff's walls, to discover its picturesque, narrow streets and to climb to the cave where Sainte Enimie (Merovingian princess) lived. You will leave the village and cross the river to head to Saint Chely du Tarn, a beautiful village situated at the edge of a huge, desolate corrie and at the foot of intimidating cliffs. You will then discover the corrie of Pugnadoires and the small, cliff-side village. Further along the path, you will come across the beautiful, romantic château of La Caze, and arrive at La Malène, used as a crossing point of the Tarn and is also a place of seasonal transhumance. Have a stroll through the narrow streets towards the 12th century Romanesque church before

heading to the 16th century château where you will be staying the night. *Lodging and breakfast in a 2-star hotel*

**Day 5 - LA MALENE -- LES VIGNES** (14 km). In the morning, we invite you to take a boat trip along the straits of the Tarn (at your expense) if you don't discover the Straits yesterday. This part of the river is one of the narrowest and most beautiful of the Gorges. The cliffs rise several hundred meters, and in some places, several kilometres, above the water's surface and widen to form the fantastic cirque of Baumes. In the afternoon, a taxi will drive you to the village Les Vignes and you will return to La Malene by way of a path that runs along the edge of the cliffs which overlook the straits of the Tarn. You will find here a different view of the gorges, but no less impressive! *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in the same hotel*

**Day 6 - LES VIGNES – LE ROZIER** (15 km). Transfer by taxi to Les Vignes. You will descend into the Gorges of Tarn by following the left bank of the river. You will pass under the ruins of the Château de Blanquefort and the impressive Rocher du Cinglegros, a huge, threatening rock separated from the cliff. You will pass through isolated hamlets, such as Sablière, provided with supplies by a cable system from the road on the opposite river bank! You'll get into Le Rozier and Peyreleau, two villages just separated by the Jonte River. *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in a two-star hotel*



**Day 7 - LE ROZIER** – an unforgettable hike (between 12 and 20 km) on the edges of Causse Mejean, above the gorges of the Tarn and the Jonte rivers. This sloping foot path leads you to the small deserted hamlet of Capluc, from where you can reach the Capluc rock. The most daring among you may choose to follow the vertical metal ladders to the Rocher de Capluc, from where an outstanding panorama of the Tarn and Jonte stretches. (This route is not recommended, though, to those suffering from vertigo.) Once you have recovered, you will climb towards the Francbouteille pass. From here, several different paths of varying difficulty – Le Vase de Sèvres (the vase of Sèvres), Le Vase de Chine (the vase of China), and Le Balcon du Vertige (Vertigo's Balcony)

– offer breath-taking views as they bring you across the Causse and to the pass that will lead you back to Peyreleau – *Dinner, lodging and breakfast in the same hotel*

**Day 8 - LE ROZIER.** Tour ends after breakfast.

## Season

From end of April to end of October but be careful this area is very crowded in summer time and we recommend you (if you can) to come outside this period. Nevertheless this area attracts a lot of tourists and you have to reserve earlier to get the best rooms.

## What's included?

- 7 nights' accommodation in selected 2 and 3-star hotels
- 7 breakfasts – 6 dinners
- Hotel to hotel luggage transfer along the trail.
- Taxi transfers : Florac-Ispagnac, La Malène-les Vignes (X2)
- A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) 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 - Additional meals – Entrance fees - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls,... are not included*

## Getting there and away

**By train:** The nearest rail stations are Ales or Mende. Taxi or bus from Alés (1 bus a day from April to end of September). To return, taxi from Peyreleau to Millau rail station

**By car:** Florac is on N106 road between Mende and Ales.

**Where to park:** Free unguarded parking in Florac. Return by taxi from Peyreleau to Florac. (At your expense)

## Walk difficulty

**Grade 2** - walks of 4 to 6 hours a day. Some stages could be more 20 km (13/15 miles) and rolling uplands, ascents mainly gradual than steep of up to 500 m. An average level of fitness or some experience with walking is recommended.

