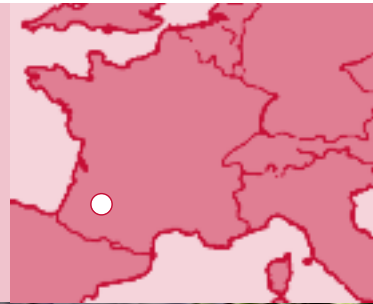


# Holiday: Gastronomic Walking in the Tarn



Rating:  level

Holiday type: Independent Walking

- Breathtaking scenery: sweeping plateaux, plunging gorges, gushing rivers, fantastic rock formations
- Authentic “Belle Epoque” style hotel: heated pool, private beach, tranquil gardens, gastronomic cuisine
- Some of the finest walking in France: Tarn and Jonte Gorges, Aven Armand, Cévennes National Park
- 4000+ species of wild flowers; vultures, beavers, butterflies



Our walking base on the banks of the River Tarn is the \*\*\* very stylish Grand Hôtel de la Muse et du Rozier. It’s a lovely, light and airy building (with big picture windows and conservatories), in a tranquil spot, with wooded hills behind and gardens leading down to the river. There’s a heated swimming pool, private riverside beach and trout fishing is possible in the Tarn. English-speaking owner, Sandrine Bonneville, is a mine of local information and will be pleased to discuss routes with you.

There is an extremely varied choice of walks on offer - we provide fully detailed route notes for 13 options ranging from  to  levels - with many ranking amongst the most popular in France. Some of the best start directly from the hotel and, by car, you can easily get into the Cévennes National Park too - superb additional walking choices.

During your stay, you will traverse the vast limestone plateaux of the Causses where the lovesick Robert Louis Stevenson and his donkey, Modestine, travelled in 1878. You can picnic



“In the Cévennes National Park, there are over 4,000 varieties of wild flowers, including 80 different orchids, and countless species of butterflies.”

beneath the impressive plunging gorges, cool your feet in fresh mountain streams and visit the ancient rock city of Montpellier-le-Vieux nestled in the shelter of sheer cliffs. Other regional highlights within a short drive include the Tarn gorges, Aven Armand, the caves of Dargilan, the Cirque de Navacelles, Roquefort with its caves harbouring 5,000 tons of maturing cheese and the royal hermitage of St-Guilhem-le-Désert.

In the evenings, chef Samuel Breux combines traditional country menus with exotic new flavours - always using on the freshest of seasonal ingredients - to produce gastronomic and innovative dishes.



## Gastronomic Walking in the Tarn: Day by day

### Day 1 Arrive at Le Rozier

You arrive at our \*\*\* hotel in Le Rozier in time for dinner.

### Day 2 The Tarn Gorge 10km/6mi/2.5hr or 13km/8mi/3.5hr or 16km/9mi/4.5hr

Today's walk follows the river along the gorge then up to the troglodyte villages of Eglazines and St Marcellin. Lots of shaded picnic spots and lovely little river beaches - look out for vultures gliding effortlessly on the eddies!

### Day 3 The Sauveterre Corniche 9km/6mi/3.5hr or 16km/10mi/6hr

This walk takes you up onto the spacious Causse de Sauveterre to the north of the Tarn. There are great views of the gorge, lots of birds, fantastically shaped rocks, prehistoric cave dwellings and an abandoned troglodyte village. (Longer or shorter route variations are possible depending on how energetic you feel.)

### Day 4 Aven Armand 18km/10mi/5hr

On the Causse Méjean is the Aven Armand, one of Europe's most remarkable caverns. It was discovered in 1897 by the energetic speleologist, A-E Martel. The 200m deep sinkhole, reached by a little funicular train, contains a "petrified forest" of tree-shaped stalagmites, formed by limey water dropping from the roof 60m above.

### Day 5 The Causse Noir Corniche 11km/7mi/3.5hr

This walk takes you through open pine woods interspersed with box and juniper. You pass the C11 ruins of St Michael's Hermitage and the extraordinary Prehistoric Mushroom rock, with wonderful views along the way.

### Day 6 The Tarn & Jonte Corniches 12km/7mi/4hr or 21km/13mi/7hr

Lots of choice today as you set off on one of the most dramatic walks in France, with spectacular views across the Tarn and Jonte gorges. You will see the vultures which were reintroduced here in 1978: at over 8ft, their wingspan is colossal! Many of the amazingly shaped rocks have appropriate names - see if you can recognize the Anvil, the China Vase and the Vase of Sèvres. You also pass the Baus de Biel, an enormous natural arch. (There are longer versions of the walk detailed in our notes.)

### Day 7 Montpellier-le-Vieux and the Dourbie Gorges 17km/10mi/6-7hr

Drive south then take the path to the amazing Roques Altes. From these rock towers, around 40m high overlooking the gorge of the Dourbie, you can follow the path along the Corniche du Royal to Montpellier-le-Vieux. Or you might decide just to drive straight there and spend a few hours exploring this atmospheric rocky chaos (the local people once thought it was a fairy city forgotten in the woods).

### Day 8 Leave Le Rozier



For departure dates, prices and travel options, please visit our website at:  
[www.headwater.com](http://www.headwater.com)

## Walking Details

This holiday offers a wide variety of independent walks ranging from gentle to challenging options. Our graph shows a suggested itinerary. A compass is useful as some walks pass through isolated areas. Depending on your choice of route, there are some steepish sections from the valley to the Causse - beautiful views of the gorges of both the Tarn and Jonte rivers. Walking boots are essential.

