

Cathar Castles, from Quéribus to Quillan

Your route in brief

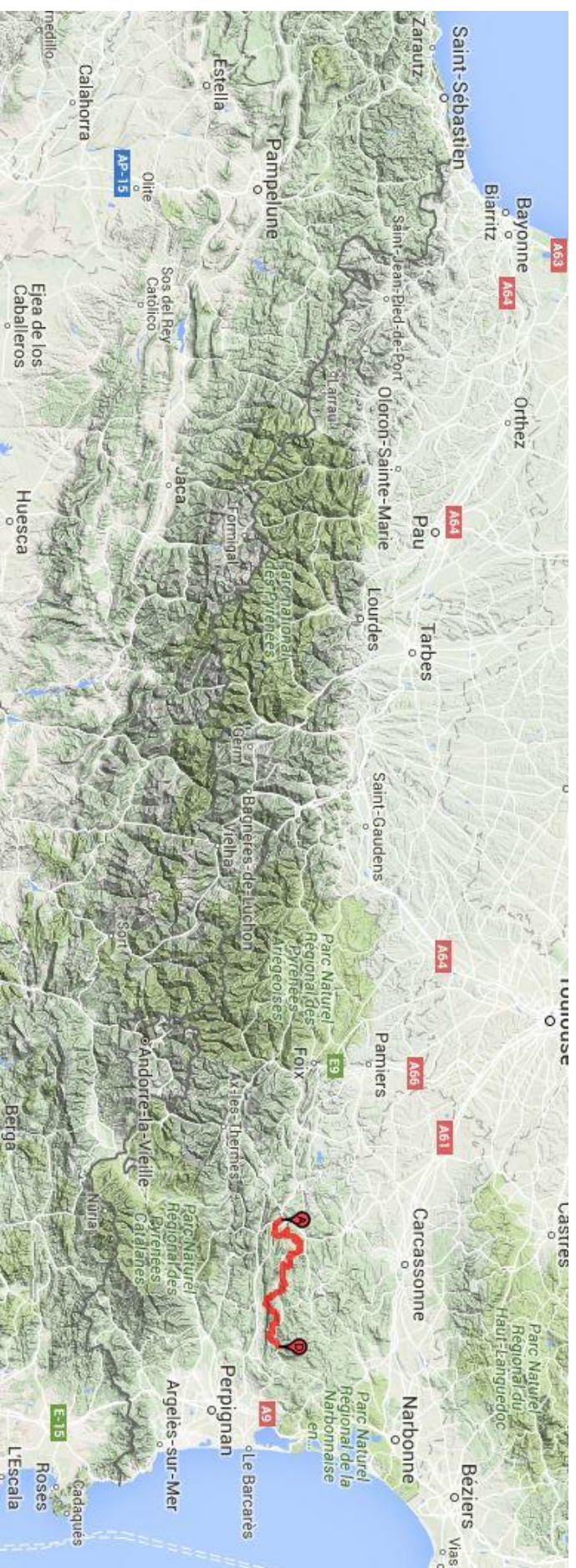
- Self-guided walking
- Walk with family, friends or as a couple
- Accommodation in hotels and guesthouses
- A mild and sunny climate, adapted to walking all year long
- Access to your luggage every evening depending on the option chosen
- Access and return facilitated via Quillan
- Duration 7 days / 6 nights

Strong points

- Walk in the heart of the Cathar country, between castles, vineyards and gorges
- Discovery of the Cathar castles of Quéribus, and Peyrepertuse
- Crossing the Garamus gorges and his hermitage
- Mystic villages of Bugarach and Rennes-le-Château
- A friendly welcoming in the different accommodations



Between the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean Sea, in the heart of the sunblessed region of the Corbières, you will find the imposing, mystic stone castles of the châteaux Cathares. These castles represent a tragic, political and religious intrigue that shook the South of France and marked the region. During the week's walking, you will discover landscapes of immense natural beauty, lush valleys and rolling hills. You will discover an interesting page of France's History along with some good local food and wines. The trails pass through a whole variety of terrain, each day is different, the vegetation, the 'garrigue', is fragrant and often full of colour. Your itinerary follows the 'Cathar Trail', a footpath that stretches from Quéribus to Quillan. This one week's walking represents the first half of the trail. We also propose Quillan to Foix which completes the route. The Cathare footpath can be walked separately, or linked together to become a two week walk.



•PROGRAM

Day 1 : Start of holiday in Quillan

Your holiday starts in Quillan, then transfer to Duilhac-sous-Peyrepertuse. Check into your accommodation and possibility to visit the village of Duilhac-sous-Peyrepertuse situated in the middle of a green circus and overlooked by Peyrepertuse castle.

It is also possible to hike to discover the Moulin de Ribaute and the Gorges du Verdoble (swimming possible in the natural basins of the Verdoble).

- Distance : 6km, duration : around 2h, altitude gain : +210m, descent : -210m.

Day 2 : From Duilhac to Queribus castle

From Duilhac, this walk in loop allow to join through the fragrant garrigue vegetation on a vineyard background, the prestigious castle of Queribus, built on a rocky peak. Castle of Queribus, real eagle's nest, will be last place of Cathar strength during the crusade of the Albigensians in 1255. Perched at 788m, from the top terrace of the keep, magnificent landscapes unfold before our eyes, from Canigou to the Roussillon and Corbières plains.

- Distance : 17,5km, duration : around 6h, altitude gain : +705m, descent : -705m.

Day 3 : From Duilhac to Cubières

A particularly picturesque walk with the opportunity to visit Peyrepertuse castle and the Galamus Gorge that has been carved out by the river Agly. Galamus gorge has become a favourite for those practising the sport of canyoning and you can sometimes hear the echoes below as they journey down, swimming and cascading over waterfalls, tumbling through the pools and chutes of the canyon. A narrow road passes through the gorge at mid level, half way up the cliffs, it was built in 1884. Your path leads directly past the Galamus hermitage, a humble home in a cave, now a small sanctuary, the entrance is found between small oaks and a shrubby box tree vegetation.

- Distance : 18,5km, duration : around 6h30, altitude gain : +780m, descent : -700m.

Day 4: From Cubières sur Cinoble to Rennes les Bains

You leave Cubières to reach the charming postcard village of Sougraigne, nestled in a green setting, the village of the last known Cathar, Guillaume Bélibaste. At the Col du Linas, the view towards the Pech de Bugarach is breath-taking. The village of Bugarach, a few hundred metres away from the route, is worth a visit, for the ruins of its castle dating from the 16th and 17th centuries and its century-old houses. Via the Col de la Pourteille (694m), you will reach Sougraigne and then Rennes les Bains, a famous spa in the region.

- Distance : 22km, duration : around 7h30, altitude gain : +800m, descent : -950m.

Day 5: From Rennes les Bains to Domaine de Pailhères

From Rennes les Bains, you will head towards the river Blanque and the bizarre landscapes of the Haut-Razès, on paths often shaded by huge beech or chestnut trees. In the heart of these forests, historical relics or natural curiosities will enhance your journey. Halfway along the route, the site of Rennes-le-Château will surprise you, with its exceptional location and its mysteries due to the tumultuous life of Abbé Saunière in his days. You will then reach the peaceful hamlet of Pailhères.

- Distance : 13km, duration : around 4h30, altitude gain : +500m, descent : -415m.

Day 6 : From Pailhères to Quillan

The trail leads through varied terrain, often in forests and through a succession of small villages. The local communities are welcoming and time seems to have stood still in the squares of sleepy villages, such as Saint Ferriol or Saint Julia de Bec. The Sentier Cathare goes from valley to valley, before entering a wooded terrain at the foot of the Col des Trois Quilles. Once crossed, the 555m high col overlooks Quillan, the capital of the upper Aude valley.

- Distance : 20km, duration : around 6h30, altitude gain : +545m, descent : -640m.

Day 7 : Tour ends at Quillan

End of your stay in Quillan after breakfast at your hotel. You can choose to do a circular route from Quillan.

Circular walk from Quillan

The itinerary offers a remarkable diversity of Mediterranean and mountain vegetation. You will see the unusual chalet of Carach and the village itself that is famous for its XI century church. The return route meanders back along the river Aude.

- Distance : 12,5km, duration : around 4h, altitude gain : +375m, descent : -375m.

This program is an example of the itinerary we aim to adhere to. It may be necessary, if situations arise that are beyond our control, for the itinerary to be modified.

• DATES AND PRICES

Departures

Every day from the beginning of April to the end of October (depending on availabilities).
Booking from 2 people (solitary traveller: consult us).

From 01/04/2023 to 31/10/2023 :

Prices with luggage transfer :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	705€
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	635€
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	600€
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	580€
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	565€

Prices without luggage transfer :

Price per person for a group of 2 persons	585€
Price per person for a group of 3 persons	560€
Price per person for a group of 4 persons	545€
Price per person for a group of 5 persons	535€
Price per person for a group of 6 persons	530€

Extras :

- Extra 5 picnics : 65€/pers
- Extra single room option : 165€/pers
- Extra night in Quillan half board double room : 70€/pers
- Extra night in Quillan half board single room : 90€/pers

The price includes:

- Half board accommodation
- Transfer day 1
- Luggage transfer depending on the option chosen
- Dossier containing maps, route notes (1 for 4 persons, given in 1st accommodation)
- GPS tracks if you ask us + access to the detailed itinerary on the Mhikes GPS mobile application

Le price does not include:

- Holiday and travel insurance
- Additional transfers
- Entrance fees, additional activities
- Drinks and picnics
- 15€ : booking fees

• TAILOR MADE HOLIDAYS

We can put together a suitable holiday for you taking into account all your specific requests and budget. Many individuals and trekking companies have relied on us for years. With our tailor-made holidays we always aim to provide you with the best quality at the fairest price.

If you want to :

- increase the comfort of your accommodations,
- change the duration of your trip,
- organize additional activities or visits,
- get a transfer from/to an airport,
- organize an extra night

Contact Gaetan

Tél : 0033 5 34 14 51 50

gaetan@respyrenees.com

• ORGANIZATION

We propose a self-guided, independent formula. You choose your departure date and we will take care of all the rest from the initial meeting time through to the dispersion point. We transport your bags between the accommodations (depending on the option chosen), we provide you with the maps and good walking route notes sent to the first accommodation as well as an access to the detailed itinerary on the Mhikes GPS mobile application. This is a way of enjoying complete flexibility, you dictate the pace and rhythm of your holiday. Moreover, our team will answer all your questions, and will provide all useful advice in order to make this holiday a success.

Your transfers during the walk :

Day 1 : At 3 PM (or at another time, set with you in advance), transfer from Quillan (11) railway station to your accommodation in Duilhac sous Peyrepertuse (11).

• TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Level 3/5

Regular walker, in good physical condition with experience of mountain hiking. Hiking 6h-7h per day on average, altitude difference 700m-1000m on average, on fairly easy trails, with some small technical difficulties. The walking times mentioned are given as an indication, they are average times that only take into account the duration of the actual walking without counting the break times. Depending on the weather conditions, the walking pace can also vary, ranging from +300m to +500m of climb per hour.

Guide

Self-guided walking, without guide.

Carrying

You will need to carry a day backpack only. Our bag-moving service means you can travel light during your walks. Your main luggage (that should please be easily transportable) will be transported by vehicle between the different night stops, unless you have chosen the version without luggage transport.

• ACCOMMODATION / FOOD

Accommodation

Half board

1 night in hotel *** in room day 6

1 night in a family hotel in room on day 4

4 nights in quality guesthouses days 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Food

- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, butter, jam)

- Evening meals in gites, often based on local specialties, include a starter, a main course and a dessert.

- Picnics not included. (Can be provided by each accommodation).

- Drinks not included.

• PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Starting : Day 1 at 3PM (15h00) (or other schedule agreed with you), in front of the Quillan train station (11).

Ending : Day 7 in Quillan (11) after breakfast.

How to get to Quillan :

- By train :

Regular trains from Matabiau train station from Toulouse to Carcassonne ; then from Carcassonne, train or bus service SNCF to Quillan. Sundays, only SNCF buses, from Carcassonne, in the courtyard inside the train station, Sernam quai, arrival in Quillan.

<https://www.oui.sncf/>

- By car :

Quillan is situated at 39km from Carcassonne, chief area in the departement of Aude, via the D118, passing through Limoux. From Toulouse, allow 140km ; motorway to Carcassonne.

PARKING :

In Quillan : Free parking, no surveillance : Quillan train station, opposite the hôtel Cartier.

Caution : on July and August they may be some events on this parking, we advise you to enquire about availability before coming.

• WHAT TO BRING AND PACK

Your main luggage:

For logistical reasons, we ask you not to bring more than one item/person. Its weight should not exceed 12kg - 15kg.

Your day backpack

The size of your bag varies upon the type of activity.

For a walk without portage : 30L minimum

For a walk with partial portage : 50L minimum

For a walk with portage : 60L minimum

Whatever activity you participate in, you should always carry in your rucksack:

- Rainwear, warm clothing, spare T-shirt, sunglasses, sun cream, first aid kit, picnic kit, personal items, etc.
- Picnic lunch of the day (bring a plastic box)
- Sufficient water (minimum 1.5 litre water bottle)

Walking Boots

The type of boot depends upon the activities you take part in, however they are one of your most important items. They should be comfortable, waterproof and breathable. For the best protection we advise ankle boots.

We recommend our young walkers to wear flexible walking boots with a good sole and back.

For mountain walking for more than 4 hours long we recommend a boot with a fairly ridged sole.

If you need to buy a new pair of boots, we advise you wear them in before the start of your holiday. Don't wear boots that are too small because feet have a tendency to swell up. Be careful with your shoes that have been left in the wardrobe for too long. The lifespan of a shoe is 2 to 5 years. After a while the soles will come off and the seams can tear.

Clothes:

- A wind and rainproof jacket
- A thick jumper or a fleece
- Comfortable walking trousers
- Shorts, t shirts as well as breathable base layers
- Spare clothes
- Swimwear and towel
- For the start and end of season, hat and gloves suitable for GR10 walks at altitude.

For Sleeping

- Sleeping bag liner for all nights spent in the gites and mountain shelters (blankets are provided)
- Earplugs

For Picnics

- Sealed plastic box (0.5L) to carry salads
- Cutlery (folding knife and fork)
- A 1,5L minimum flask

Small equipment

- A pair of tennis shoes, or sandals for the evening
- A pair of telescopic poles (optional)
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Hat, cap or bob
- Camera...
- A small toilet bag, with towel
- Torch or headlamp
- Toilet paper
- A mini-pharmacy: personal medication, Compeed for blisters, elastoplast, gauze, disinfectant, arnica granules and aspirin in case of minor injuries, a survival blanket.