

## GREAT VALUE - LA DECOUVERTE SMALL GROUP WALKING

Explore the Massif Central and headwaters of the Upper Loire



The La Decouverte hotels in France offer a unique concept that is ideal for active people of all ages wanting to explore the magnificent countryside on the French Massif Central. The hotels are maintained for the exclusive use of their guests, who want to spend a walking holiday in a relaxed small village environment. Each day there is a choice of walk offered: 'tranquille' and 'sportif' for those wanting more of a challenge. Both are led by knowledgeable & enthusiastic English speaking guides, both groups meet at lunchtime for a traditional picnic. Each centre has its own minibus providing the transport required for the walks.

There are guided walks each day and a rest day where you can explore on your own, visit the local markets & nearby towns or villages or to just relax by the hotel's pool! On each walking day, you can always arrive or depart with the picnic vehicle - as the mood takes you!

Guests are encouraged to make themselves at home. The hotels provide typical regional cuisine and dinners are enjoyed with fellow guests, sharing the table d'hote. French wine and drinks are available. Evenings may be spent at a variety of pursuits, from boules to barbecues.

<u>St Bonnet</u>	Per Person	Single	<u>Les Estables</u>	Per Person	Single
Sundays	(twin share)	Supplement	Sundays	(twin share)	Supplement
Start Date			Start Date		
May 9, 16, 23, 30,	<b>\$1150</b>	<b>\$185</b>	May 16, 23, 30	<b>\$1235</b>	<b>\$160</b>
Jun 6, 13, 20, 27	<b>\$1150</b>	<b>\$185</b>	Jun 6, 13, 20	<b>\$1235</b>	<b>\$160</b>
July 4 Wine Theme	<b>\$1195</b>	<b>\$185</b>	Jun 27, Jul 4	<b>\$1295</b>	<b>\$275</b>
Jul 11, 18, 25, 31; Aug 1, 8, 15	<b>\$1215</b>	<b>\$185</b>	Jul 11, 18, 25; Aug 1, 8, 15	<b>\$1360</b>	<b>\$320</b>
Aug 22 Mushroom Theme	<b>\$1150</b>	<b>\$185</b>	Aug 22, 29	<b>\$1295</b>	<b>\$275</b>
Aug 29; Sep 5, 12, 19	<b>\$1150</b>	<b>\$185</b>	Sep 5, 12, 19	<b>\$1235</b>	<b>\$160</b>
Sep 26, Oct 3 Mushroom Theme	<b>\$1150</b>	<b>\$185</b>			

**Inclusions:** 7-nights Twin/single accommodation with ensuite facilities in comfortable family run hotels, Full board (picnic lunch), Optional daily guided walks (with one rest day), Local transfers as necessary for walking, Evening activities.

**Not included:** Drinks (available at extra cost), Bed Tax (0.40€ per person per day paid locally), entrance fees for optional sightseeing, gratuities and any personal expenses.

**Transfers:** Standard transfers from & back to St Etienne Chateaucieux **TGV train station** (for St Bonnet) or Le Puy en Velay train station (for Les Estables) is included in the cost. Arrival & departure transfers from/to **Lyon Airport** are available at an extra cost of AU\$35pp each way for St Bonnet, or AU\$60pp one way for Les Estables,

**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations**



### **Saint Bonnet ~ in the Haute Loire/Auvergne**

The hotel at Saint Bonnet is a wonderfully restored former nunnery now a comfortable 2-star centre situated in a quiet, timeless corner in the foothills of the French Massif Central, just 60km south of Lyon. The hotel has a shady garden, heated swimming pool and glorious views over the Doux Valley & the headwaters of the infant River Doux. Walkers can enjoy exploring the deep valleys and the forests & lakes of the Haute Loire. Beyond is the Ardeche where tumbled masses of hills, often with exposed ridges and colourful chestnut-forested slopes, eventually descend to the vineyards and cornfields of the Rhone valley. West is the plateau of the Velay: gentler terrain shared by lush pastures, forests and fields of corn. Here, the farming methods are traditional and in May walkers will enjoy bright displays of wild flowers.

### **Les Estables ~ in the Haute Loire/Auvergne**

The hotel at Les Estables is a comfortable modern 2-star hotel with an indoor pool & panoramic views of the high plateaux of the Velay. It lies on one of the highest plateau in the region, on the slopes of Mt Mezenc. The centre is 32km from the historic pilgrimage & lace centre of Le Puy & close to the Gerbier des Joncs, one of the sources of the Loire. The walking takes you to a land of ancient volcanoes and the forested ridges of the Auvergne, with views of the Alps and time for a dip in a mountain lake.

### **Suggested itinerary and examples of day walks** (usually 11-16 kilometres):

**Day 1:** Arrival day. Meet at the designated time at the train station, to be greeted by your host. You will then be transferred to your La Decouverte hotel, to meet your walking party and your guides for the week.

**Day 2–7:** There will be a series of walks over the next few days, of varying standards – you are welcome to choose or to not walk at all & enjoy the hotel and it's surrounds, instead. There is also usually a free day for local, optional sightseeing, if preferred. The daily walking schedule is at the discretion of your walks leaders.

**Volcano walking:** The Auvergne is close to extinct volcano country, with a landscape of clear, circular lakes, as are often found in the extinct volcano cones.

**Auvergne Villages:** There are a series of pretty villages strung out below the hotel, linked by a series of ancient stone terraces and small waterways. You may also visit some Roman remains.

**To market:** On market day, visit Yssingeaux, by local bus. In the afternoon, you can take a short walk through the volcanic hills that surround the basin of Le Puy.

**Rest day in Le Puy:** A starting point for the St Jacques de Compostela pilgrimage route take time to explore the cobbled streets, museum, the imposing Virgin Mary statue, which overlooks the town and cathedral.

**Walking the Velay:** A large, granite plateau which offers great views & wide vistas, as well as rock pools, peat & moss bogs and ancient stone settlements. Around Rochebonne there is spectacular walking with excellent views of the surrounding landscape, on the way to the ruined castle.

**Day 8:** Departure day. After breakfast, you will be transferred back to the train station, where your tour arrangements end.

Contact **Outdoor Travel** or your travel agent for more details, travel brochures and reservations:

- Call Toll free 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743
- Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: [info@outdoortravel.com.au](mailto:info@outdoortravel.com.au)
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au/>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741 Australia
- Travel Agent Licence No 31102

# ST BONNET-LE-FROID & REGION – CENTRAL FRANCE



Call **OUTDOOR TRAVEL** on **1800 331 582** for details or reservations