

Ideas for excursions- Day trips

On the road in Languedoc, destination Navacelles!



I had heard of this pretty road which goes from Montpellier to the Cirque de Navacelles, following the schoolchildren's route. It is no exaggeration to say that all the joys and pleasures of a day's getaway await you !

There is an epicurean trip if you stop at the traditional inns, and there is the pleasure of a family experience when discovering the rich and equally surprising flora and fauna. And why not experience the countryside on the back of a donkey, venturing into free, vast and, at the same time, intimate spaces? Or, when it's warm, take a dip in the Vis or Herault gorges? This is also a trip for cyclists and bikers and there are abundant trails for hikers.



So where to start and where to go? Coming from Montpellier, head towards Gignac and then the road branches off to go through Lagamas, Montpeyroux and Arboras. Passing Vineyards, olive groves, cypress trees, colourful Languedoc villages and small relaxing squares, it connects to the "Col du Vent" route to La Vacquerie.



It's a hard climb up through this sun-glazed Hérault valley, with hairpin bends offering glimpses of magnificent scenery with views over the wine plain, followed by dense forests of oak and pine with deep greens immersing me in a mid-mountain range atmosphere.

We are now at 703 metres and crossing the pass, and again there is a change of scenery! The Larzac Causses and their sublime silence. This is a vast limestone plateau, with cropped vegetation, dolmens, menhirs, lavognes (drinking places for animals), rustic local farms ... the grazing territory of sheep and goats ... an area classified in 2011 as a UNESCO world heritage site for its agropastoralism. What more can I say !



For a 360 ° view, continue to Mount St. Baudille (843m): this is simply breathtaking! From here you can see the peaks of St. Guilhem-le-Desert, Saint Loup, Vissou, Séranne mountain and the Salagou hills, with a backdrop of the mountains of the Haut Languedoc natural park, and the Larzac and Cévennes foothills.

Then continue on to the Cirque de Navacelles, better expressed as THE GRAND CANYON of the Vis river. An exceptional natural wonder that can be admired from the Gard and Herault viewpoints.



To travel down to the bottom of the Cirque, an adventure in itself, and then back up the other side to appreciate all its facets, is a sight which leaves you speechless.

I chose to continue to Madières at the heart of the Vis gorges, which are deep, narrow and wild. This exceptional river with pure water and well stocked with fish flows down some rapids and beautiful waterfalls to end gently in the Hérault river above Ganges. Montpellier is 30 km away after another series of gorges, more wide and open to the light but equally impressive in their looks : the Hérault river has taken over.

What a perfect day



My Tips

- Stops for gourmets
 - At La Vacquerie: L'Auberge des Causse and the Larzac Cafe
 - At Cirque de Navacelles: Auberge de la Baume Auriol panoramic restaurant and brewery on the Hérault side and the Le relais du Cirque restaurant in the Grand Site house on the Gard side. At the bottom of the Cirque, there are some places to refresh yourself, recharge your batteries and relax to the sound of a beautiful waterfall.

You can have picnics at the designated areas of two Grand Site houses or, where authorised, on any accessible banks of the Vis and Hérault rivers.

- Ideas for gifts and for stocking up on good local produce
 - At the two "Boutique" spaces in the Grand Site houses
 - At the artisans and producers in the small towns and villages
 - At the winemakers in their cellars and also in cooperatives (including, among others, Montpeyroux, a superb craft cooperative, open from March including Sundays and bank holidays).
- Experience a different way of life on the Larzac and Blandas Causse
 - Day walks with donkeys with Sherpanes tours.
 - Hikes on foot or with donkeys, mountain biking, orienteering races, safaris ... with Ecole Buissonnière.
 - For children, do not miss the Theil Park in Caylar (picnic area on site).
- Extended stays for hiking or simply wandering around
 - Hikers accommodation, bed & breakfast, family hotels, country campsites... visit the websites below.

And to find out even more, check with the territory ambassadors: the Gard and Hérault tourist offices of the Grand Site, the tourist offices of the territory and also the following websites:

www.lodevoisetlarzac.fr & www.cc-paysviganais.fr