



Fostering the enduring tradition of the Camino

Vía Podensis (Le Puy)

General Description: The Le Puy Route, the old Vía Podensis, is one of the four medieval pilgrim routes through France described in the Codex Calixtinus in the 12th century. 736 km starting in Le Puy-en-Velay then passing through Conques, Cahors and Navarrenx to Ostabat, the small town where three of the French routes converge a short distance north of Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port.

Waymarking: The route is well marked throughout with small yellow and blue shells.

Terrain: The Le Puy route generally crosses river drainages, resulting in continual climbs and descents. Much of the route passes through forest.

When to go: April through October is the recommended window. Climate table for [Le Puy](#).

Accommodation: Accommodation is generally in hotels, *chambres d'hôte* and *gites d'étape* although there are an increasing number of pilgrim-oriented albergues.

Guidebooks: Confraternity of Saint James: [Le Puy to the Pyrenees](#) (2006) by Alison Raju. Also available from the Confraternity is [GR65-GR651, La Voie du Puy](#), Miam-Miam-Dodo, Editions du Vieux Crayon. Very comprehensive guide to accommodation and services, updated annually. Its schematic presentation makes it easy to use for non-French speakers. (French)

Internet links: The Confraternity of Saint James has an [overview](#) page for the Le Puy route. [Godesalco](#) has a most interesting and useful route planner for the Le Puy (Vía Podensis) route. One can download an elevation profile as well as a customized file containing stages. [Backpack45](#) has a huge amount of information including spreadsheets with towns, distances and elevations. The four original routes to Santiago de Compostela through France have been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. For further information, visit [UNESCO's site](#). The association [Les Amis de st-Jacques de Compostelle dans le Gers](#) maintains a website which has information on the Le Puy route as it passes through the department of Gers. (French) The [Société Landaise des Amis de Saint Jacques et d'Etudes Compostellanes](#) has a [section on the Le Puy](#) with a list of stages, albergues and general information. (French, English and German)

The French government has a powerful map/satellite image facility at [geoportail.fr](#). In the search box "Nom de la commune" below the world map enter Le Puy. Click "J'y vais". In the resulting list of Le Puy's select the Le Puy En Velay department 43. A satellite image of Le Puy should appear. On the left (Catalogue) click the Cartes folder open and check the Cartes IGN box. On the right set the vertical slider to Ville. Angling southwest from Le Puy you will see the red dashed line marked "GR65". You can use the drag hand in the map to follow the course of

GR65. Experiment with the zoom slider for levels of detail but the GR65 route seems to disappear zoomed out above Ville and isn't prominent at zoom levels below.

Other remarks: The Le Puy route extends back to Geneva, Switzerland as the Vía Gebennensis as the GR65. This in turn makes connections into Germany and Central Europe.

Rev 02/18/16