

In 6 Km

8th STOP-OFF : SOLIGNAT AND THE PUY OF YSSON (856m)

Solignat is located at the foot of the volcanic puy of Ysson. This high point of the Lembron reaches 856m. It's in fact an old extinct volcano, which only remains the neck (old lava base). It offers a 360° panorama, which overlooks the dry plateaus and the hills of the Allier valley. This site is integrated in the Natura 2000 network, and reachable by a pastoral marked out path. Solignat was, for 2 centuries, the property of the Dauphiné of Auvergne, and then for 2 others centuries, the one of the Bourbon's family.

In 9 Km

9th STOP-OFF : BOUDES AND THE SAINT'S VALLEY



Established since the Gallo-Roman age, the vineyard, cultivated in the Middle Ages in a cloistered setting, has known its height in the 19th century. The village still have prosperous-looking houses that testify of this prosperity, ended because of the ravages of the phylloxera (disease caused by a destructive aphid) in the early 20th century. Some enthusiasts recreated the vineyard; a fruity and heady wine (Côte d'Auvergne) is due to that recreation, and its reputation goes over the regional boundaries. The Saints valley is at 30 minutes walking. This site, remains of the tropical climate of the tertiary era and classified "Natural and Sensitive Area", is to discover. Its name comes from red-ochre columns, eroded in clay soils saturated in iron oxide, reminding monk outlines in frieze dresses. This 5 km walk will allow you discover the gaseous spring of "The cauldron" located in Bard.

In 10 Km

10th STOP-OFF : VICHEL AND THE PEAK OF MONTCELET (738m)

The village is dominated by the Tower of Montcelet, only vestige of a fortress dating back to the 11th century, with 3 surrounding walls, of which only remains vestiges. A beautiful stroll will make you discover this site, dominating the whole plains at 738m high (about 30 minutes walking). Vichel's richness is also present outside the village, with faunistic and floristic species protected at the European level. This natural heritage, recorded on the whole of whitewash, is part of the xerotherminal area of valleys and hills (hottest and driest areas) of Couzes and Limagnes areas, classified in Natura 2000 Area.

Return to Ardes - 16 km



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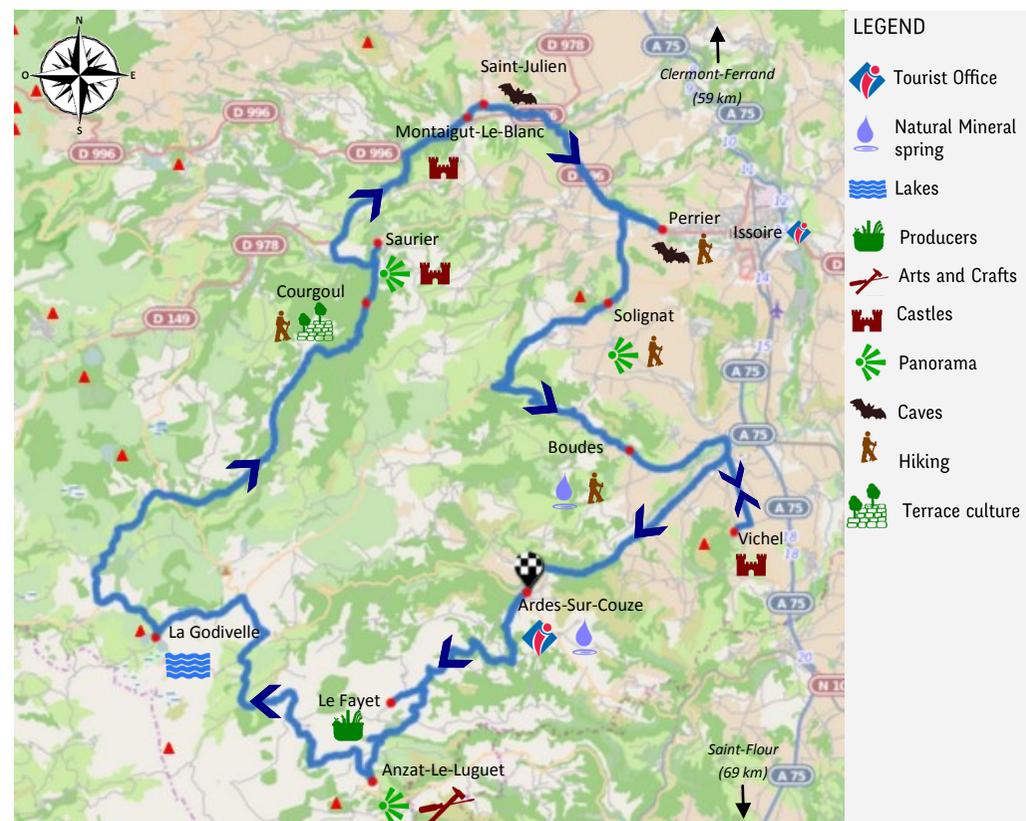
Volcanism, Local Traditions and Cheese Savours



The Cezallier, located at the South West of the area of Issoire and the Allier Valley, is characterized by an immense area of volcanic plateaus in altitude. The high point is the Signal du Luguët at 1551m. Life is paced by the mountain summer pasture and by northern activities during the winter.

You will also discover a nature reserve whose aim is to protect the Cezallier peat land and its exceptional polar vegetation. This reserve was created in 1975 and is managed by the Regional Nature Reserve of Auvergne.

Over the several Couze rivers, you will refine your tour by the discovery of the savoir-faire and the cheese-makers' and farmers' traditions in Auvergne.



START

1st STOP-OFF : ARDES-SUR-COUZE



This charming village is located on a basaltic headland and has kept several testimonies of its medieval past. The part in the bottom of the city, crossed by the Couze of Ardes, doubled up religious and handmade functions. The upper part of the village, as for it, was created in the 13th century. Its History is linked to the one of the powerful family of Mercoeur. Ardes-sur-Couze is famous for the bottling and commercialization of the gaseous natural and mineral water Ardesy by the Company of waters of Cezallier.

👍 Meeting point in Mazoires, at the placed called "Fayet" on the road D23. Jean-Luc and Mathieu form the GAEC (association of farm-workers) of Fayet, and propose their Saint-Nectaire cheeses with that so particular taste. Phone number : 06.50.34.69.04.

In 21 Km

2nd STOP-OFF : ANZAT-LE-LUGUET AND THE SIGNAL DU LUGUET (1551m)

Located in the heart of Cezallier, this endless pasture territory was, in the past, a beech forest and a plantation that was destroyed by clearings and that disappeared in the Middle Ages. Nowadays, this territory is mainly dedicated to pastures and therefore to mountain summer pasture for bovine farming, that's why there are mountain houses, called "burons". Tourism expands itself little by little thanks to winter sports, this territory being really favourable towards doing northern ski and hiking with snowshoes (northern domain of Parrot). The Signal du Luguët, made of volcanic rock, is the high point. It saw the light with solidified lava flows, eroded by glaciers. There, there is an unique panorama on the whole territory. Below, you will discover one of the most beautiful valleys of the Massif-Central: the corrie of Artoux, where we still can find moraines on the sides.

The most interesting in Anzat-le-Luguët: La forge du Luguët. A "medieval" blacksmith will take you to the heart of logic filling with life the forge. Phone number : 04.73.71.74.10.

In 21 Km

3rd STOP-OFF : LA GODIVELLE ITS LAKES



Human beings have developed this territory incorporating bovine farming and using the gentian. This municipality offers two very different lakes. The lake in the bottom of the village has a glacier origin and dates back to 10 000 years. Before wide of 50 ha, it's only 15 today because the vegetation colonized the lake, forming a peat land after several thousand of years. In 1975, this pond and its sides were classified natural reserve under the name of Sagnes, in order to protect the exceptional biodiversity of the peat land. The lake in the upper part of the village, not far at all from the other one, is a volcanic lake. This lake has a crater old of 113 000 year and it's 44m deep. It covers a circular area of 14 ha, whose sides in gravels are void of vegetation. Its cold and transparent waters are poor in nutritive elements: it's one of the most oligotrophic lakes in Europe. It's also the water reserve of the village.

In 25 Km

4th STOP-OFF : COURGOUL AND ITS « PAILHATS »



Courgoul is located in a valley hollow by the Couze of Valbeleix. Human beings have known how to control the craggy slopes of this valley to cultivate them by shaping them into terraces of rocks, also called "giant's stairs". In Auvergne, we use the word "pailhat" to define these plots fitted out with rock terraces and consolidated with little walls in rocks. You can discover this tradition through the walk called "Entre saules, chênes et pailhats" ("Between willows, oaks and pailhats", edited by the departmental council and the Balirando association).

In 5 Km

5th STOP-OFF : SAURIER



This village was fortified in the Middle Ages and was part of the Dauphiné of Auvergne. It was for a long time isolated because of the lack of roads and because of the important flooding risks. But, in the 19th century, the opening of the road from Issoire to Condat (Cantal) opened up this territory. Overlooking the village, the Pic of Brionnet peaks at 927m, it's part of the most beautiful points of view on the territory. This volcanic peak, surrounded by beautiful basalt columns, offers an exceptional panorama. Moreover, a little chapel, Notre-Dame of Mount Carmel, rises on its top.

In 12 Km

6th STOP-OFF : MONTAIGUT-LE-BLANC AND THE 140 CAVES OF SAINT-JULIEN

This medieval village was built around a castle perched on a rocky spur. We can see by far the outline of its donjon recently restored. Below, you can discover the church with its Romanesque capital and its beautiful baptismal cistern of the 13th century. 2km away from Montaigut-le-Blanc, you can discover the village of Saint-Julien and its 140 caves hollow in the soft volcanic tuff of its hills. In the past used to age wine and keep apples fresh, it's nowadays used to age Saint-Nectaire cheeses.

In 12 Km

7th STOP-OFF : PERRIER AND ITS CAVES



4 million years ago, the huge volcanic eruption of Mounts Dore caused a vast mudslide that buried the whole area. Today, the erosion cleared this mudslide, which, by inversion of the relief, overlooks the riverbed. In 1824, numerous animals' fossils were discovered and the city of Perrier has been subjected, for several years, to geological and paleontological studies. On the slope of the plateau, floored-caves have been hollow by human beings. They've been used for several years as housing, and more recently, as wine cellar. A fitted out walk allows visitors to discover these caves.