Technical sheet | Guided walking | Level 2/5 | 3 full days and 2 half-days of hiking

The Best of the Cathar Castles:

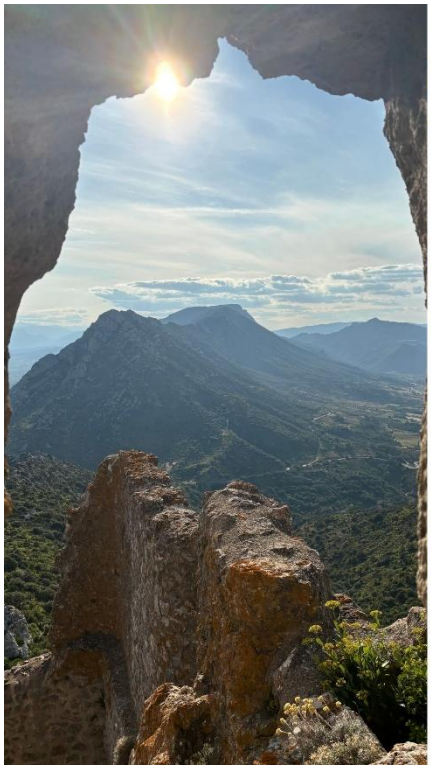
From Carcassonne to Foix

Your Tour briefly

- Guided hike with a certified mountain leader, specialist of the region
- Semi-itinerant tour
- Logistics tailored to discover the best of Cathar Country
- **Comfortable accommodation: 5 nights in hotels and 1 night in a guesthouse**
- **Easy access and return via Foix and Carcassonne train stations**
- Duration: 7 days / 6 nights

Highlights

- Hike through castles, vineyards, and breathtaking gorges in **small groups of 8**
- **The City of Carcassonne, a UNESCO World Heritage Site**
- **Visits to the castles of Quéribus, Peyrepertuse, Montségur, and Foix**
- Crossing the spectacular Galamus Gorges
- A favorite hike in Haute-Ariège, featuring a 100% "Foix market" picnic, held every Friday









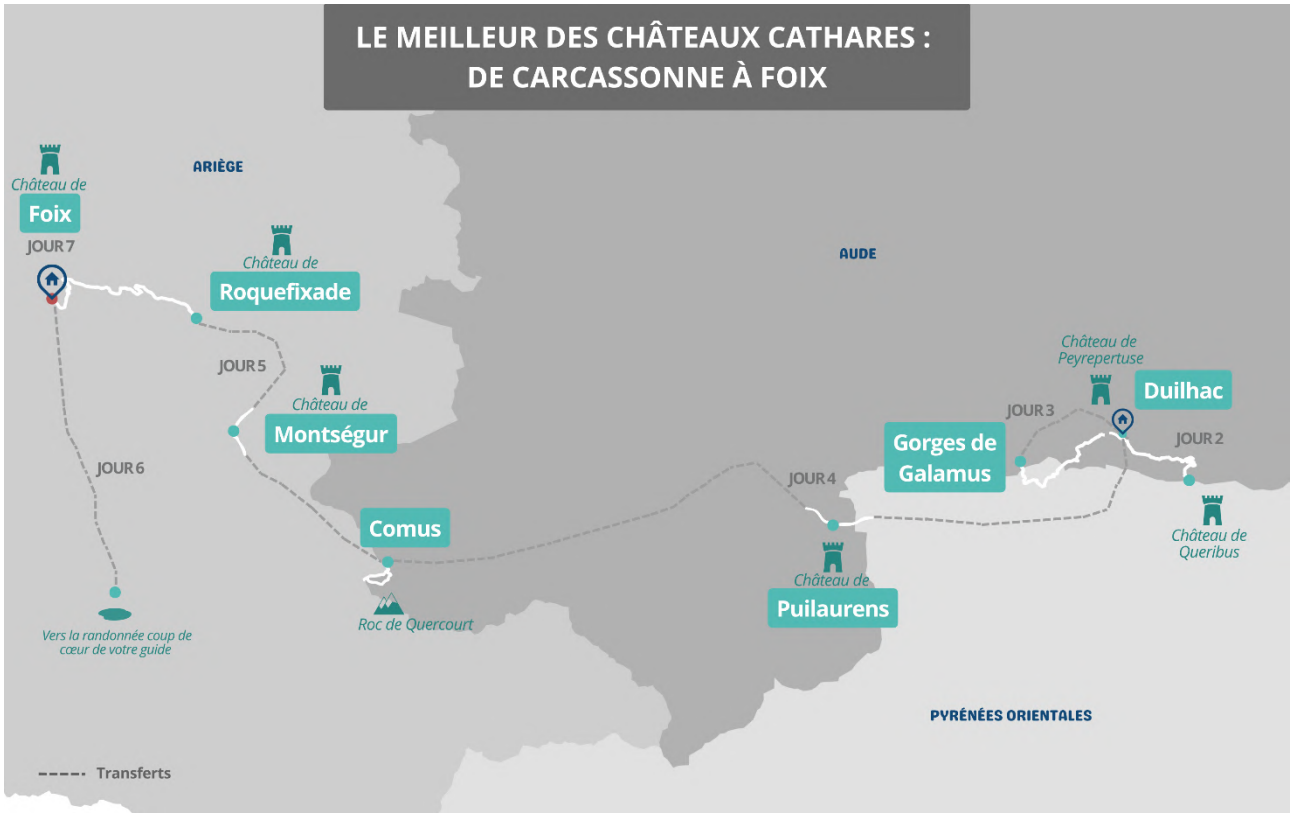
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Between the Mediterranean sea and Ariège, in the heart of the Pyrenean foothills, stand imposing stone citadels the Cathar castles. These fortresses are the living memory of a tragic history that marked the southwest of France during the Albigensian Crusade.

Starting from Carcassonne and its famous medieval city, you will set out to discover the most renowned sites and castles of Cathar history, surrounded by breathtaking and diverse landscapes that your guide will be delighted to unveil. In the Aude department, you'll have the chance to visit the eagle's nest of Quéribus, the incredible fortress of Peyrepertuse, and Puilaurens, the epitome of a stronghold.

In Ariège, you'll explore Montségur Castle, the highest of the Cathar castles, perched on its "pog" at an altitude of 1,207 meters. Then, before reaching the city of Foix and its castle, you'll visit Montségur's close neighbor, Roquefixade, perched atop an impressive cliff.

Beyond discovering a region and its heavy, ever-present history, Cathar Country is rich in stunning and varied landscapes, shaped by the blending influences of Mediterranean and mountain climates. It is also sculpted by nature's work, which carved gorges into limestone, shaped rocky outcrops, and provided mankind, throughout the ages, with natural resources to explore and cherish.



•PROGRAM

Day 1: Start of the Trip in CARCASSONNE or FOIX



- For those arriving by train: Meet at 6:45 PM at the hotel in Carcassonne (located 300m from the train station).
- For those arriving by car: Meet at 5:15 PM in front of Foix train station (09). (Free, unattended parking available on site). Transfer to Carcassonne.

Settle into your accommodation. A welcome drink and trip briefing will take place in the heart of the medieval city, where you will also have dinner. What a wonderful medieval setting for your first evening!

Day 2: From Carcassonne to Quéribus



Castle In the morning, visit and discover the famous medieval city of Carcassonne. Late morning, transfer to Quéribus Castle, the "citadel of vertigo." Built on its rocky peak, this true eagle's nest was the last stronghold of Cathar resistance during the Albigensian Crusade in 1255. Perched at 788m, the summit terrace of the keep offers breathtaking views, from the peak of Canigou to the plains of Roussillon and Corbières. Then, head to Duilhac-sous-Peyrepertuse for a short hike through the Corbières vineyards, fragrant scrubland, and overlooking the refreshing Verdouble gorges with their turquoise pools. Overnight in Duilhac-sous-Peyrepertuse. Overnight in Duilhac sous Peyrepertuse.

- **Distance: 8 km, elevation gain: +200 m, elevation loss: -200 m, transfer: 1h40**

Day 3: From the Galamus Gorges to Peyrepertuse



Castle Short transfer to the Galamus Gorges. The day's hike begins at the entrance to the gorges, an impressive canyon carved into limestone, an extraordinary natural site. The Agly River, known as the "eagle's river," has carved its way through the rock with cascading waterfalls, while a road built in 1884 clings midway up the cliff. The route continues towards the fortress of Peyrepertuse: the castle stands at 800m altitude on a limestone ridge. It is one of the finest examples of Cathar fortresses, part of the former defense line known as the "five sons of Carcassonne." Overnight in Duilhac-sous-Peyrepertuse.

- **Distance: 11 km, elevation gain: +620 m, elevation loss: -500 m, transfer: 25 min**

Day 4: From Duilhac to Comus, Between Castle Visits and Panoramic Hiking



Transfer from Duilhac to Puilaurens (45 min) and visit the eponymous castle. Perched on a rocky spur at 697m, in the heart of a coniferous forest, this majestic site is accessed via a botanical trail. Then continue towards Comus and the Sault Plateau for a hike to Roc de Quercourt, offering magnificent views of the high peaks of the Ariège Pyrenees. Overnight in Comus.

- **Distance: 2.5 km, elevation gain: +170 m; elevation loss: -170 m (Puilaurens Castle)**
- **Distance: 5 km, elevation gain: +200 m, elevation loss: -200 m (Roc de Quercourt)**

Day 5: From Comus to Foix, via Montségur, a major and emblematic site of Catharism



In the morning, we visit Montségur Castle, perched on its "pog." It symbolizes the resistance of the declining Cathar Church against the Roman Church, the King of France, and Northern lords seeking the fertile lands of the South. They seized the site after the surrender and the infamous burning of 1244. After this visit, we head to the beautiful bastide village of Roquefixade for a hike along the Cathar Trail to Foix. This panoramic hike also reveals the perched ruins of Roquefixade Castle. Overnight in Foix.

- **Distance: 16 km, duration: about 6 hours, elevation gain: +500 m, elevation loss: -800 m, transfer: 40 min**

Day 6: A Favorite Hike in the Stunning Ariège Pyrenees



For this final day, we suggest gaining some elevation—your guide has carte blanche! Foix is the final stage of the Cathar Trail but also an ideal starting point for exploring the high valleys and viewpoints of the Ariège Pyrenees. This is your chance to discover them. Water is omnipresent here, so we'll opt for a hike to one of our magnificent mountain lakes! **And the cherry on top: since Friday is market day in Foix, the picnic will feature fresh, ultra-local products!**

- **Maximum distance: 12 km, duration: about 6 hours, maximum elevation gain: +650 m, maximum elevation loss: -600 m, transfer: 30 min**

Day 7: Free Exploration of Foix and Its Castle, End of the Trip at Foix



Train Station The trip ends in the morning or during the day, depending on your train schedule. We recommend setting aside time to visit the historic old town of Foix with its charming alleys, followed by a visit to the Count's Castle (optional, entrance fee not included. More info at https://www.sites-touristiques-ariege.fr/chateau-de-foix/). Check the "Practical Information" section of this guide.

The itinerary was prepared based on the latest available information at the time of writing: unforeseen circumstances and situations beyond our control may affect the program.

•MEETING POINT & END OF THE TRIP

Meeting point:

- People arriving by train: Day 1 at 6:45 PM at the hotel in Carcassonne (located 300m from the train station).
- People arriving by car: Day 1 at 5:15 PM in front of the Foix train station (09). (Free, unguarded parking available on-site). Transfer to Carcassonne.

For those arriving by car, the meeting point is mandatory in Foix.

End of stay:
Day 7 at Foix (time is flexible).

•DATES AND PRICES

Number of participants:
Group of 4 to 8 people.

Departures:
Departure guaranteed with 4 people.

From Sunday 28/03/2027 to Saturday 03/04/2027
From Sunday 11/04/2027 to Saturday 17/04/2027
From Sunday 02/05/2027 to Saturday 08/05/2027
From Sunday 16/05/2027 to Saturday 22/05/2027
From Sunday 13/06/2027 to Saturday 19/06/2027
From Sunday 05/09/2027 to Saturday 11/09/2027
From Sunday 19/09/2027 to Saturday 25/09/2027
From Sunday 24/10/2027 to Saturday 30/10/2027

Price per person: 1045€

Supplements/Discounts:

- Single room supplement: 230€/person (Note: During the night in a guesthouse, the room is private, but the bathroom is shared between 2 people).

The price includes:

- Full-board accommodation from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 7 **(Note: Picnic on Day 7 is not included).**
- Transfers during the stay.
- Luggage transport during the stay.
- Supervision by a BE AMM guide living in the Cathar Country.

- Access and visits to castles **(EXCEPT FOIX).**

The price does not include:
- Insurance.
- Meals not mentioned in "The price includes"
- Transfers not included in the program
- Visits not included in the program
- Drinks
- Visit to the Foix castle
- €15 registration fee

•TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Terrain type:
Fairly easy hikes on good trails, with varied but often rocky terrain.

Level 2/5
These trips are designed for those seeking an active vacation. A reasonable level of physical fitness is required. The hikes average 5-6 hours per day, with elevation gains of 400m-700m on easy trails and paths. The walking times mentioned are indicative, based on average timings that account only for actual walking time, excluding breaks. Depending on the weather conditions, the walking pace may also vary.

Supervision:
Hiking supervised by a qualified guide living in the Cathar Country. The RESPYRENEES guide team is 100% local. Based in the Pyrenees, the landscapes, culture, and history of these mountains hold no secrets for us!

Luggage transport:
Only your personal items for the day and your picnic. Luggage is transported by vehicle. Please bring a follow-up bag that is easy to carry (see our advice on equipment).

•ACCOMMODATION / FOOD

Accommodation:
Full board:
3 nights in a ** hotel
2 nights in a *** hotel
1 night in a guesthouse

Meals:
- Continental breakfast (tea, coffee, milk, bread, butter, jam).
- Dinner often featuring regional specialties, including a starter, main course, and dessert.
- Drinks not included.

•PRACTICAL INFORMATION

How to get to Carcassonne (11) and leave Foix (09) by train:

- Getting to Carcassonne:
  There are many TER trains from Toulouse to Carcassonne, via Castelnaudary, during the week and on Sundays. Numerous INTERCITES trains also come from Lyon, Nice, and Marseille. For schedule confirmation: https://www.sncf-connect.com/
- Leaving Foix:
  You will first take a TER to Toulouse. Then, from Toulouse, there are many TGV or INTERCITES trains to all regions of France. For schedule confirmation: https://www.sncf-connect.com/

Feel free to contact us if you need information about train options. You can also use the following very useful websites:
- https://www.sncf-connect.com/
- https://www.tictactrip.eu/

- https://www.rome2rio.com/

How to reach Foix by car:
From Toulouse, follow signs for Montpellier, then Foix.
Location: Paris 765km, Bordeaux 330km, Toulouse 85km, Nantes 602km. For route confirmation:
https://www.google.fr/maps/

Day 7 in Foix: why not take the opportunity to visit the town?
The Foix tourist office publishes several brochures, available for download, about the castle, the abbey, the medieval old town... You can download them (preferred viewing mode) via the page below, or order them on the same page:
https://www.foix-tourisme.com/pratique/brochures/

•TO TAKE WITH YOU IN YOUR LUGGAGE

Your follow-up bag:
For logistical reasons, we ask you to limit the weight of your follow-up bag to a maximum of 12kg or 15kg, no rigid suitcases, and only one follow-up bag per person.

The backpack:
The size of the backpack is very important and may vary depending on the type of trip.
- For a hike without luggage transport: minimum 30L
- For a hike with light or partial luggage transport: minimum 50L
- For a hike with full luggage transport: minimum 60L

This should contain:
- Bottom of the bag (rain gear, warm clothing, spare t-shirt, sunglasses, sunscreen, first aid kit, picnic essentials, personal items, etc.)
- Picnic lunch for the day (bring a plastic container)
- Sufficient water (minimum 1.5L water bottle)

Shoes:
This is one of the most important elements. They must be, above all, comfortable, waterproof, and breathable. Good ankle support is essential. If you need to buy a new pair, we recommend trying them before your trip. Don't choose a pair that's too small, as your feet will tend to swell. For shorter hikes, we recommend soft trekking shoes with a good sole and solid heel support. For hikes over 4 hours in the mountains, plan for high-top shoes with a stiff sole. Be careful of shoes that have been left in the closet for too long. The lifespan of shoes is 2 to 5 years. After some time, the soles may detach, and seams may tear.

Specific clothing for hiking:
- A waterproof windbreaker (Gore-Tex)
- A fleece jacket or sweater
- Hiking pants, shorts, and t-shirts (preferably breathable materials)
- Spare clothes and personal items
- A swimsuit and towel
- For the start and end of the season, pack thin gloves and a hat for high-altitude hikes

Sleeping gear:
- A sleeping bag liner is essential for all trips involving nights in guesthouses or refuges (blankets provided).
- Earplugs.

Picnic:
- Cutlery (fork, folding knife)
- Minimum 1.5L water bottle or Camelback (much more practical)

Small equipment:
- A pair of tennis shoes or sandals for the evening
- A pair of telescoping poles (optional)
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Hat, cap, or bucket hat
- Camera
- A small toiletry kit, with a towel

- A flashlight or headlamp
- Toilet paper
- A mini first aid kit: personal medication, Compeed for blisters, elastoplast, gauze, disinfectant, arnica pellets, and aspirin for small injuries... and a survival blanket.