It is here, in Conques, that Pierre Soulages found his major inspiration. And here, in Rodez, that the museum dedicated to him today represents the dynamism of contemporary French creation. It is here, in Millau, that the record-breaking viaduct takes flight to the Mediterranean Sea.

You need to take your time in Aveyron. The measure of the centuries needed to build the cathedral of Rodez, the abbeys in Conques and Sylvanès, the ordained walled towns such as Villefranche-de-Rouergue, the templar and hospitalier towns of the Larzac, the invincible castles and perched villages. The time of the seasons too, which spice up the landscapes with soft green in spring, bathe the rougiers in harsh light in summer, give the trees warm colours in autumn and cover the wide open spaces of Aubrac with a sumptuous white coat in winter.

The alchemy of eras and landscapes was made possible because the ambition for progress of Aveyron respects the balance of things, the richness of the heritages. With its philosophy “Vivre vrai !” [Real living], the Aveyron does not cheat either on the density of its history, or its ability of embracing modernism to turn it into a development asset. Welcome to this rigorous and sweet land, made of horizons and verticality. I invite you to travel for a while with us to share the rare privilege of a region with human dimensions.

Jean-Claude LUCHE
Senator of Aveyron
President of the Departmental Council of Aveyron

Welcome to Aveyron!
The Aveyron is a mosaic of regions. They each have their own landscapes and identity, their architecture and their language. A few kilometres, a valley crossed and you are in another world. Cows have replaced sheep, the beech trees succeeded to the walnut trees, the arid causses made room for large herbal fields. There is no similarity between a medieval castle in the Sévéragais region, a house with a tiled roof in a Bastide town, a wealthy residence in the valley of Marcillac, a dry stone farmhouse in Larzac and a buron covered with slates on the Aubrac plateau. They all have things in common however: authenticity and character.
Aveyron in colour

Valley of Marcillac

Porcini mushrooms

Laguiole knives

Vulture Gorges de la Jonte

Rouge de Camarès

Millau viaduct

Sheep Roquefort

Villefranche-de-Rouergue market

Buron on the Aubrac

You are in

Soulages Museum Rodez

Rodez Cathedral

Esplanade des Rutènes Rodez

Conques treasures

Valley of Marcillac

Michel Bras

Rougier de Camarès

www.tourisme-aveyron.com
5th Edition of the “Ça Déborde sur le Lévézou” Festival
This festival returns to the beach of Arvieu-Pareloup, where it all began 5 years ago. This year, once again, this cultural and artistic gathering that celebrates water in all its forms—tours, creative workshops, water activities, shows—will finish with the must-see parade of unidentified floating objects (OFNIS).

www.levezou-aveyron.com

Festival en Bastides
This street art festival wandering through the bastides of Rouergue aims to democratise culture and highlight local heritage.

Here there is a diverse crossing of disciplines, including circus, theatre, dance, singing, musical street performances... Each year, departmental, regional, national, and even international companies come to offer their performances for the pleasure of an audience that’s only getting bigger.

www.tourisme-villefranche-najac.com

20th Anniversary of the “Fers et Lames” Festival
In 1997, a passionate team initiated this must-see event on the Larzac plateau, and it has since become the top festival of foundry and cutlery in the Occitanie region. Demonstrations by blacksmiths, knife makers and farriers, exhibitions of original works, equestrian shows, bocce... This year will bring you a great festival once again!

www.fersetlames.com

From 24 June to 29 October

Calder - The Blacksmith of the Giant Dragonflies
From 24 June to 29 October 2017, the Soulages Museum is dedicating an exhibition to Alexander Calder (1898-1976), one of the greatest sculptors of the 20th century. The creator of renowned moving sculptures, in particular Stabiles and Mobiles, he is the inventive “high-wire artist” that modestly constructed circus figurines, animals, characters and faces.

The exhibition, organised thanks to loans from the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Calder Foundation (New York) and private collectors, retraces a lively career in thematic stages, from 1924 to 1976.


Alexander Calder (1898-1976) - Calder Foundation (New York) - Centre Pompidou (Paris) - Private collectors

Laissac Mountain Biking: for its 25th anniversary, the Roc Laissagais welcomed, on 25 and 26 June, the mountain biking world champions, with fifty nationalities competing around the forest of Palanges.

2CV Rally: from 4 to 8 May, over three thousand 2CV converged on Sévérac-le-Château for their annual meeting of this classic car: a complete success with a record crowd of 26,000 visitors.

Picasso Exhibition: from June to October, Picasso had the place of honour at the Soulages Museum, where a hundred works “concerning the master’s private life” were exhibited, including the famous portrait of Dora Maar.

Festival en Bastides
This street art festival wandering through the bastides of Rouergue aims to democratise culture and highlight local heritage. Here there is a diverse crossing of disciplines, including circus, theatre, dance, singing, musical street performances... Each year, departmental, regional, national, and even international companies come to offer their performances for the pleasure of an audience that’s only getting bigger.

www.tourisme-villefranche-najac.com

From 29 June to 2 July

The Natural Games: 10 Years of “Supernatural” Emotions
The ultimate gathering of the world elite in outdoor sports (Kayaking, Slacklining, Mountain biking...) and music (four scheduled concerts), this Millau festival will celebrate its 10th anniversary in June, at the heart of an authentic region. Competitions during the day, shows in the evening, get your fill of pure emotion with an intensive programme that’s completely free!

www.naturalgames.fr

From 31 July to 5 August

20th Anniversary of the “Fers et Lames” Festival
In 1997, a passionate team initiated this must-see event on the Larzac plateau, and it has since become the top festival of foundry and cutlery in the Occitanie region. Demonstrations by blacksmiths, knife makers and farriers, exhibitions of original works, equestrian shows, bocce... This year will bring you a great festival once again!

www.fersetlames.com

From 15 and 16 July

Passage of the Tour de France 2017
The Tour de France loves Aveyron. After already having stopped off in Rodez and crossed southern Aveyron in 2015, then followed the roads of western Aveyron in 2016... It is returning this year for an arrival in Rodez and a departure from Laissac-Sévérac l’Eglise, meaning two stages in the department.

www.letour.fr

More information p. 10
Conques and the Marcillac vineyards, Certified Vignobles & Découvertes

The wine-tourism destination of Conques-Marcillac received the famed certification of “Vignobles & Découvertes” in July 2016. A beautiful reward for this unique grape variety with 200 ha of vines, the majority of which is terrace cultivated.

The forty producers associated with the Vignerons du Vallon cellar and the thirteen estates of this region produce a million bottles every year. You will find them at the key events marking the oenological calendar: markets every Sunday and Saint-Bourrou on Whit Monday in Marcillac, a wine festival in Bruéjouls on the 2nd Sunday of August, a mountain bike wine tour in Clairvaux on the 3rd Sunday of September... So, to your tassous!*

* A silver vessel used for wine tastings.

Path Around the Lake of Villefranche de Panat - Alrance

Walk, run, ride, stroll - all possible on this path that follows the banks of the lake for over ten kilometres. On foot, by bike, by scooter, or even with a pushchair, you can follow its twists and turns, right at the water’s edge.

It is one of the 4 lakes of Lévézou that were set up by EDF in the 1950s and widely used ever since, to satisfy holiday-makers looking for a swim, to challenge themselves with water sports, or to go fishing. All along the route, the Peyrebrune Tower plays hide and seek, offering its proud profile at one bend, then hiding it again at the next. You will glimpse it proudly overlooking the lake from atop its rocky peak.

Le E, 5-star Hotel

The Bishop’s palace of Rodez, a 13th century building, is this year becoming Le E, a hotel with 32 rooms that is to join the very exclusive circle of 5-star accommodation establishments, a first for the department of Aveyron. Standing alongside the famous cathedral, right in the city centre, surrounded by a park of hundred-year-old trees, it offers a haven of peace for strolling down its country-style promenades, as well as some excellent facilities: a restaurant with a Michelin-star chef, a bar with an enormous terrace, a fitness centre, pool, shops... there’s even a vegetable garden. All only a few hundred metres from the Soulages Museum!

5 rooms will be available in the summer of 2017, and 15 in the summer of 2018.

Solar-powered Electric Boats on the Lot

Leaving from Sainte-Eulalie d’Olt, here is an original way of roaming the river and the lake of Castelnau Lassouts Louss over seventeen kilometres, in silence. With family or friends, no need for a licence to drive one of these two boats (the 6-seater Solarb’Olt and the 8-seater Kastor) that run entirely off solar energy. Enjoy an enchanted downstream journey at the heart of a wild, untouched countryside!

http://opaddledolt.jimdo.com

Before this “Laissac - Le Puy en Velay” stage, Saint-Geniez d’Olt, a pretty village located on the course, will give a sporting wink to the “Grande Boucle” on 11 June by modifying the organisation of its Marmotte d’Olt sports cycling challenge to allow all competitors to take the same route as those in the Tour de France for a distance of sixty kilometres.

The similarity won’t extend to the diets of the competitors, however, as those participating in the Marmotte d’Olt will then enjoy the local fare of sausage, aligot and Roquefort, which won’t be the case for the professional cyclists...

Opposite, Christian Prudhomme, Director of the Tour de France, already a fan of Aveyron!!!

As in 2015, the Tour de France is stopping over in Aveyron in 2017, first by scheduling an arrival on 15 July in Rodez, then, on 16 July, according it the honour of the departure of the 15th stage in Laissac-Sévérac l’Eglise, known and renowned for its famous livestock market, the second biggest in France.

Tour de France in Aveyron...

... and Marmotte d’Olt
Gastronomy
A gourmet land, Aveyron knows how to highlight everything that makes this region unique in its rich cuisine. Cheese making traditions, with Aligot in the north and Roquefort in the south. In the west, the certification “Vignobles & Découvertes” promotes the vineyards of the Vallon de Marcillac.

Metal
The harshness of the climate of Aubrac, a vast plateau of lava and granite, with seasons that can at times be harsh, contrasts with the heat of the forges, in which the Laguiole knife is crafted in the ancestral tradition. But steel and iron are also worked by an expert hand to create Larzac, or Sauveterre de Rouergue knives.

Stone
Raw, chiselled or sculpted, stone withstands the test of time, and its nobility has allowed for the construction of the most beautiful monuments of our rural and historic heritage, such as the cathedral of red sandstone that overlooks Rodez, the capital of Rouergue. Gifted with age-old expertise, our artisans restore, innovate, and carve the sandstone of our villages, the flagstone of our roofs, as well as the earth, to dress and decorate floors across the world, or to create unique ceramic pieces.

Wood
Monumental structures, majestic staircases, doors with carved decorations - for a long time, wood has allowed our artisans to express themselves in many different fashions. Both the older and more recent buildings of Aveyron, such as the Thermes de Cransac, are testament to it. Able to adapt to new procedures, and armed with ancient techniques, our artisans innovate and renovate well beyond the borders of our department.

Discover the working of these materials by the artisans and entrepreneurs of Aveyron by taking the “Route des Matières” www.tourisme-aveyron.com “Circuits” section

In Honour of the savoir-faire of Aveyron
These crafts, exalting the way of life and expertise of the Aveyron region, are represented at L’Hirondelle in Sévérac-le-Château. Here you can discover excellent objects and products made by our savoir-faire experts all year round.

The Keys to the Exceptional Savoir-Faire of Aveyron
Driven by their passion for a job well done, the artisans and entrepreneurs of Aveyron combine, every day, the tradition of their region and the modernity of their techniques.
Les Nouveaux Troubadours
and the Musée des Arts Buissonniers

Les NouveauxTroubadours is a cultural and popular educational association created in 1987 in Saint-Sever-du-Moustier. It runs a cultural centre in this little village of South-Aveyron. Its many “fringe” activities - that is, activities on the margins of the art circuits of the major cities - have a central theme of living together in this region, encouraging and making more accessible artistic creation in rural environments, while also helping it spread to an international scale. The Musée des Arts Buissonniers, dedicated to unique, raw art, open April to October, is exported all year round for external exhibitions.

The Construction Insolite, an imaginary palace and permanent construction site to be visited, organises creation work sites, stays, and courses for teenagers and adults, in the spirit and context of popular education. Les Nouveaux Troubadours also offers weekly art and theatre workshops for children and adults.

Music is not forgotten, with a fanfare of Aveyron music “La Bérézina” and “Le Bartas Festival”, scheduled for the second weekend of July, to launch the museum’s exhibition with music, theatre, shows, and good cheer!

More information
www.lesnouveauxtroubadours.fr

NEW! Discover All of Aveyron’s Cultural News
For everyone, everywhere, anytime!
On a computer, tablet or even a mobile phone, the website of Aveyron Culture gives you access to the cultural life of the department. Discover the different aspects of culture in Aveyron. A culture blog is coming to complete the digital offerings, so that culture can be accessible to as many people as possible.

www.aveyron-culture.com

The 70th Anniversary of the Laguiole Bull

The Laguiole Bull, a sculpture created by Georges-Lucien Guyot, a strong symbol of the village of Laguiole and the Aubrac plateau, is celebrating 70 years. This bronze work, made to full-scale by the animal painter, was installed in the Laguiole fairground on 10 August 1947. To celebrate its anniversary, the people of Laguiole are offering a number of events centred on several themes: exhibitions of the works of Guyot and archive sources, showcasing of the Aubrac breed, conferences and round tables addressing the themes of gastronomy and agriculture...

There will be plenty of new encounters! This re-enactment of the inauguration of the sculpture of the bull will take place on 10 August with the Amicale La Laguioleaise and the shopkeepers. School students will also be involved in the project. Ready to wind back time 70 years? The departmental show in mid-October will give pride of place to the Aubrac breed.

More information
www.aubrac-laguiole.com

Première Biennale du Livre d’Artiste in Aveyron

This brand new event, which will take place on 4 and 5 November 2017 in Rodez, will offer a full programme with an overarching theme of placing the artist’s book in a cultural context. These books, located at the periphery of the classic edition with which every reader is familiar, will be exhibited as artworks in their own right! We are thus offering you a reflection on the book in its artistic form!
An essential stop
Installed in a former farm of the Causses, the visitor centre of the Millau viaduct invites you to discover this architectural prowess, listed Grand Site de Midi-Pyrénées, but also the natural, cultural and gastronomic heritage of Aveyron.

After walking to the belvedere that provides amazing views on the viaduct for a souvenir photo, the gourmets will most definitely taste the “capucins” of the three star-rated local chef Michel Bras. Those conical rolls filled with the best local produce re-invent the taste of fast food. Sweet or savoury: either way, you will be seduced.

The viaduct in figures
The longest cable-stayed bridge with 2 460 metres, the Millau viaduct also holds the record for the highest bridge: the pile N°2 and its pylons are 343 metres high or 19 metres more than the Eiffel Tower. The steel deck that culminates at 270 metres above the Tarn, weighs 36 000 ton or five times the Eiffel Tower or the equivalent of 70 TGV. 3 000 men and women have worked on the construction of this work of art that costed 400 million euro.

A steel and concrete giant
Designed by the French engineer Michel Virlogeux and drawn by the English architect Norman Foster, the Millau viaduct started operation in 2004 after thirteen years of technical studies and three years of work. Carrying motorway A75, it connects the causse Rouge and the Larzac by crossing the Tarn valley. In conformity with the choice of architect and the Aveyron local authorities, the viaduct very discreetly integrates in the fabulous landscape. Its fine metallic deck, supported by the immaculate white strut, forms a slight curve and is based on seven high piers that give it the look of a ship. Great emotion at first sight of this exceptional work, remarkable by its grace and balance. Whether you discover it from one of the numerous vantage points, or it dominates you when paddling on the Tarn in your canoe, you fly over it when paragliding or you cross it driving your car, it always is an extraordinary experience.

More information
Aire du Viaduc de Millau
www.tourisme-aveyron.com
Tel.: +33 (0)5 65 75 40 12
A living space
Guided tours, discovery circuits, interactive games, practical workshops and activity books are proposed to families to facilitate the understanding and appropriation of the work by Pierre Soulages.

In addition to the exhibition rooms the museum has an auditorium, a documentation centre with library, reading and work room and a shop.

As feeding the intellect often goes together with feeding the stomach, the Soulages museum also presents a gourmet space created by the star-rated chefs Michel and Sébastien Bras. At the bar you can eat a creative snack menu inspired by the typical Aveyron dishes. In the restaurant the unique lunch menu consists of contemporary cuisine, changed daily depending on the market.

This Year’s Exhibitions
Until 30 April 2017, the Soulages Museum is dedicating a large exhibition to contemporary creation. Centred on the theme of time, 50 works from 1948 to 1994, to produce 104 translucent stained glass windows. And when he was suggested to show models of the work in a museum the artist was just as enthusiastic. In 2005 and 2012 the cantor of the outre-noir made two donations to his native city. Some 500 items including all the preparatory work for the Conques stained glass and the printed work (etchings, lithographs, silk screen printing) but also oil paper on canvas, paint on paper including the famous walnut stain, bronze works and a major documentation fund.

On Conques page 44

A vessel at the centre of the city
Installed in a public garden of three hectares, the Soulages museum is a link between the new quarters and the historical centre of Rodez. Designed by the Catalan agency RCR Arquitectes, associated to the architect agency Passelac and Roques, the building is strikingly modern and sleek and consists of parallelepipedic volumes comparable to cleverly assembled boxes. The whole is reinforced with Corten steel, a material that creates a rust to brown patina when it oxidises, reminding of the work of the world famous Aveyron painter Pierre Soulages. Inside, lower and darker rooms succeed the high and light spaces, which produce very different light atmospheres that are cleverly alternating.

As the artist does not want a monographic museum, in addition to the 1 700 m2 destined to display his work, a 500 m2 room houses temporary exhibitions.

A unique donation for a remarkable fund
It is because he was touched by the beauty of the abbey church of Conques as a youngster that the Rodez native Pierre Soulages decided to become an artist. When he was asked to create the stained glass windows of this treasure in Romanesque art, he did not hesitate to work on the project for seven years, from 1987 to 1994, to produce 104 translucent stained glass windows. And when he was suggested to show models of the work in a museum the artist was just as enthusiastic. In 2005 and 2012 the cantor of the outre-noir made two donations to his native city. Some 500 items including all the preparatory work for the Conques stained glass and the printed work (etchings, lithographs, silk screen printing) but also oil paper on canvas, paint on paper including the famous walnut stain, bronze works and a major documentation fund.

THE SOULAGES MUSEUM, THE SPEARHEAD OF MODERN CREATION

Open in 2014, the Soulages museum is very successful, enlivened by the richness of the work by the artist and numerous temporary exhibitions.
Causses and Cévennes: in the tracks of the sheep

In addition to the GR65, Aveyron has a second treasure of the world heritage. The Causses and the Cevennes, a cultural landscape of the Mediterranean agropastoralism, were included in the prestigious UNESCO list in 2011. The site that stretches over more than 300,000 hectares south of the Massif Central presents a mountain landscape, huge plateaus and deep valleys created over time by the action of men and their flocks. The sheep pens, ‘drailles’ or transhumance routes and the ‘lavognes’, the natural drop installed as drinking troughs, bear testimony to that agri-pastoral activity whereas the stone villages reflect the organisation of monasteries and religious orders from the 11th century. Discover this region with a rich past that continues the traditions that shaped it.


In medieval times the Spanish town of Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle was a major destination for numerous pilgrims from all over Europe. The four French roads they travelled to go there have played a fundamental role in the development of religious and cultural exchange. This heritage led to the listing of the Roads of Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle in France in the UNESCO world heritage in 1998. The royal route to reach the “Christian Mecca” was the via Podiensis departing from Puy-en-Velay. On that road, today better known under the name GR65, the UNESCO has distinguished seven sections including two that cross the Aveyron over 102 km: Nasbinals / Saint-Chély-d’Aubrac and Saint-Côme-d’Olt / Estaing. Several remarkable constructions, built to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the pilgrims, dot the route and are also recognised: the bridges of Saint-Chély-d’Aubrac, Espalion, Estaing, Conques and the abbey church Sainte-Foy de Conques.

Connected walkers www.st-jacques-aveyron.com

GR 65 and Causses & Cévennes, UNESCO world heritage sites

www.sortir-aveyron.com

Aveyron moves!
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www.sortir-aveyron.com
Aubrac, the end of the world

Freedom area
North of the department the high volcanic and granite plateau of the Aubrac is a unique region. Between a Siberian steppe and the Scottish highlands, its unspoilt nature presents a bewitching view. Skiers skiing amongst the pine trees, picking daffodils in the fields, fishing for trout in the crystal clear water... In this endless lunar landscape, each day represents a new adventure to be experienced, either on foot in the footsteps of the pilgrims of Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, mountainbiking on the draillies traced by the herds, or simply sitting at a good table enjoying an aligot.

Two key villages
The village of Aubrac is indissociable of the via podiensis, one of the busiest routes departing from Puy-en-Velay to reach Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle. The ‘domerie’, a monastery-hospital built in the 12th century to act as a reference and refuge for the poor and the pilgrims against bad weather and highwaymen. Laguiole stands for a cheese, a legendary knife famous all over the world, but it is also a village! From the Place du Foirail, where a bronze statue of a bull, reputed as a good luck charm, proudly stands, the climb to the church gives you panoramic views of the houses built in basalt and granite, covered with slate roofs.

To know, taste and smell everything of the Aubrac, visit the Maison de l’Aubrac.

A regional nature park
Whereas the typical heritage of the Aubrac is still well preserved, its environmental and cultural heritage, its history and traditions, its gastronomy and know-how remain vulnerable and threatened. To protect and promote the richness of this exceptional region, a regional nature park is being created.

The Aubrac species
With their black eye make-up the Aubrac cows stand out among thousands. Bred for work, for milk and meat production, they would have been overlooked in favour of more profitable species if a handful farmers would not have lauded their remarkable qualities (adaptability, fertility, robustness) to avoid them disappearing in the late 1970s. Associated with the ‘burons’ where their milk was transformed into fresh Tome and Fourme in summer, they contribute to the production of so many delicacies that they have become cult figures. Every year, at the end of May, the transhumance is a big popular festival. Adorned with flowers, pompoms, rosettes and other ribbons, the cows leave the stable to join the wide open pastures on the plateau from where they will not descend until October, for the “Davalada”.

The Aubrac, bare and sublime high belvedere, more lunar, more bare, more windswept than the paramos in the Andes.

Julien Gracq, author.

The Laguiole Bull Celebrates 70 Years
(more information page 14)
Land of splendour

When he visited the fortified tower that has the same name as him in the medieval town of Mur-de-Barrez in the spring of 2014, Prince Albert II of Monaco has granted his daughter Gabriella the title of Countess of Carladez a few months later. Given by Louis XIII to the princes of Monaco in exchange for the lost land in Italy, Carladez has the greatness and majesty of its monarchs. Its heritage treasures are surrounded by two giants of nature: the Plomb du Cantal (largest volcano in Europe) and the plateau of Aubrac. Fabulous surroundings that will make you want putting your comfortable shoes on to discover the six themed routes of the “Sentiers de l’imaginaire”.

The Gorges de la Truyère: A Château of water

The Truyère, a tributary of the river Lot, has dug some deep and majestic gorges over time. A natural landscape of spectacular beauty, offering contrasts and surprises: islands and peninsulas, corries on the distant shores, mysterious twists and turns, wooded valleys... The view from the donjon of the Valon château is breath-taking. The river’s powerful flow has led to the construction of a series of hydro-electric dams, whose artificial Reservoirs form a number of lakes, inviting picnics, swimming, fishing, and water sports. At Samans, a water reservoir extending across 1000 hectares, and on its magical peninsula of Laussac, you will be spellbound from sunrise to sunset.

Picturesque Conques

North of the valley, this major stop on the road of Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle is a gem. Its houses build from schist with half-timbered facades, covered with slates installed in tiers create a typical unit. The paved streets lead to two gems in the world heritage: the Romanesque abbey church and the treasure.

A “little Nice”

At 20 km from Rodez, the valley of Marcillac is a Mediterranean enclave that exudes the dolce vita. Its rougier, its typical villages, the concentration of manors and town houses, the high perched chapels... A Provencal-type inventory that brings us closer to life as it is lived. In the afternoon you can discover the splendour of Conques or you take a walk at the foot of the waterfall of Salles-la-Source. One motto: carpe diem.

Divine wine

The ‘mansois’, a grape variety of the Cabernet family, also called ‘fer servadou’ grows on the arid soil of the Marcillac region, that combines Causses chalk and red clay. This unique and robust wine, that benefits from an “appellation d’origine controlée” labelled since 1900, here has its place on the table - just like water and bread. To the greatest pride of the wine-growers, they have recently received the celebrated certification of “Vignobles & Découvertes” for their terroir.
The Lot Valley

A river runs through it

The Lot crosses the North Aveyron from east to west. The first section is a gold thread to which sumptuous villages are linked, including three listed among the most beautiful in France: Sainte-Eulalie-d'Olt, Saint-Côme-d'Olt and Estaing. They represent a remarkable architectural heritage (like Espalion, Saint-Geniez-d'Olt and Entraygues-sur-Truyère) and show the rich history of the land of Olt. Downstream, the walker will not regret the effort to reach the perched villages of Fel and La Vinzelle when discovering the breathtaking views of the valley. Further on, the river quiets down and broadens to make room for vegetable and plant cultivations of the sector of Livinhac-le-Haut, last stop before the border with the neighbouring department of Lot, materialised by Capdenac.

The estofinado

Introduced in France by the soldiers of Louis XIV after the Holland wars, stockfish arrived in the Aveyron with the intervention of the Rouergat boatman. Loaded with coal, wine and cereals they sailed on the Lot to the port of Bordeaux from where they brought back salt, spices and dried cod. The famous fish has become the basic ingredient of the estofinado - a dish based on potatoes, eggs, nut oil, garlic and parsley.

The memory of the coal Basin

The five municipalities of the basin of Decazeville-Aubin have produced more than 10 million tons of coal from the 19th to the 20th century. To walk in the footsteps of the “black faces” you should visit the Mining museum in Aubin, the museum of Memory in Cransac-les-Thermes, the museum of industrial and mining heritage in Decazaville, and see the mine headframe in the active outdoor site of La Découverte.

In the depths of Bozouls

Between Rodez and Espalion, on the panoramic balcony of the Place de la Mairie of Bozouls, the views of the houses clinging to the edge of the precipice make your head spin. 100 metres under their feet (and ours) you will find one of the most beautiful natural attractions of the Aveyron: the canyon of Bozouls. For thousands of years the Dourdou river has been digging the abyss of 400 m diameter in the shape of a horse shoe in the chalk of the Comtal Causse. Are you interested in geology? A visit to Terra Memoria in Bozouls is a must.

The landscapes crossed by the Lot and the light that shines on it are magnificent. The pleasure of staying here is increased by the convivial and warm welcome by the Aveyron people.

Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, former president of the Republic and owner of the château d’Estaing.

More information

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Tourist office - VALLEE DU LOT
12300 Flagnac
Tel. +33 (0)5 65 63 27 96
www.tourisme-valleedulot.com

Tourist office - CAPDENAC-GARE
12700 Capdenac-Gare
Tel. +33 (0)5 65 66 74 67
www.tourisme-flygour.com

In ten fun rooms the Terra Olt scenographic centre in Saint-Parthem immerses you in the life of the people of the valley at the start of the past century. For a cultural and gourmet excursion in harmony with nature you can board the ship-restaurant “Bateau d’Olt” that will cast off in Flagnac.

Unwind in the spa before placing your bets at the casino in Cransac (see p. 45).
The green lung of the department

The west tip of Rouergue has many names: Land of the 100 valleys because of its location between the Viaur and Aveyron rivers, Ségala in reference to its agricultural history, Land of the bastide towns for its concentration of new towns in medieval times. Whatever you call it, activities are plentiful: jump on your bike for a breath of fresh air amidst the grove landscapes, stroll in the paved narrow streets of Villefranche-de-Rouergue before lunch with the young and talented chef Quentin Bourdy, visit the craft and designer shops of Sauveterre-de-Rouergue in the shadow of the arches...

Take your time!

Aveyron gorges, the veins of the Ségala

The granary barn of the Aveyron Rye is not very demanding and for a long time was the only cereal grown on the arid soil of the Ségala to which it gave its name, from the Occitan segal. But with the arrival of the railways and the use of chalk to reduce the natural acidity of the soil, this rural sector has taken its revenge by becoming the farm and the vegetable garden of the Aveyron. Rolled tripeaus of Naucelle, farm veal with a label, rissoles filled with Rieupeyroux prunes... there definitely is enough to eat here.

To discover the history and production of the famous tripeaus, visit La Naucelloise in Naucelle.

More information

Tourist office - VILLEFRANCHE-DE-ROUERGUE
12202 Villefranche-de-R. Tel. +33 (0)5.65.65.31.18
www.tourisme-villefranche-najac.com

Tourist office - NAJAC
12270 Najac. Tel. +33 (0)5.65.29.72.05
www.tourisme-villefranche-najac.com

Tourist office - PAIS SEGALI
12160 Baraqueville. Tel. +33 (0)5.65.45.10.76
12800 Naucelle. Tel. +33 (0)5.65.67.16.45
12800 Sauveterre-de-Rouergue. Tel. +33 (0)5.65.72.02.52
www.aveyron-segala-tourisme.com

Tourist office - AVEYRON SÉGALA VIAUR
12240 La Salvetat-Peyralès (mai à septembre) Tel. +33 (0)5.65.81.88.43
www.ot-rieupeyroux-lasalvetatpeyrales.fr

Tourist office - CRANSAC-LES-THERMES
12110 Cransac-les-Thermes. Tel. +33 (0)5.65.63.06.80
www.cransac-les-thermes.fr

Tourist office - DECAZEVILLE
12300 Decazeville. Tel. +33 (0)5.65.43.18.36
www.decazeville-tourisme.com

Tourist office - VILLENEUVE D’AVEYRON
12260 Villeneuve d’Aveyron. Tel. +33 (0)5.65.81.79.61
www.villeneuve-aveyron.com

2017, Year of the Viaduc du Viaur

In 1902, the railway bridge built by Paul Bodin allowed trains to pass over the valley of the Viaur. Later on, a second, more modern one, allowed a double-track line to cross this superb valley. It is one of the gateways of the department. More than ever before, this steel structure ties together eras and regions.

That’s why, in September 2017, a French-Chinese twinning will be celebrated, between the Viaduct and the Faux-Namti Viaduct, in the province of Yunnan, in China.

This day of celebration will be the subject of a number of activities and events: a steam locomotive, firework displays, the construction of a footbridge over the Viaur...

The crafts: a sector of excellence

With a centuries old traditional craftsmanship, the former royal bastide town of Sauveterre-de-Rouergue continues to write history in the present tense. Fifteen creative craftsmen (knife maker, leather worker, hat maker, stained glass maker, iron craftsman, ceramist etc.) established in the region have joined force in a sector of arts professions. In the LaPerouse area, workshops and exhibition spaces allow the public to meet passionate craftsmen who combine ancient know-how and avant-garde innovations.

The crafts: a sector of excellence
**Rodez and the Aveyron valley**

**Rodez, capital of the Rouergue**

The prefecture of the department holds the label “Pays d’art et d’histoire” and that is not by accident. From the winding alleys in the public garden to the pedestrian streets in the historic centre, from the pink sandstone of the Notre Dame cathedral, to the mineral vastness of the Ruthenes esplanade, Rodez is a subtle mix of tradition and modernism. At its feet, the Aveyron river leads to Séverac-le-Château via Laissac and the huge forest of the Palanges, the meeting point for mushroom pickers.

**With the family**

In Grand Rodez, there are many sports and cultural amenities, which open a broad activities package for young and old.

To breathe in fresh air, go to the domain of Combelles, Layoule on the banks of the Aveyron or the Vabre complex. An 18 hole golf course and the “Aquavallon” aquatic centre are a stone’s throw away. For culture you need to enter the media library, the cinema multiplex, the numerous theatre and concert venues.

**Three museums, three styles**

Let’s follow the chronology of history and start with the Fenaille museum, that hosts the largest menhir-statues collection in France: 17 original items, sculpted some 5 000 years ago. Jumping to the 19th century we open the door of the Denys-Puech museum, a temple to the fine arts and a modern art centre at the same time. Finally we return to the present day and the future at the Soulages museum that hosts more than 500 pieces by the world famous Ruthenois painter and regularly organises temporary exhibitions.

**Laissac**

Upstream from Rodez, Laissac is known for its cattle market, the second largest in France. Every Tuesday at 8 am, some 1 600 cattle are presented in the hall. The breeders and cattle farmers in full transaction, discretely negotiating and finally shaking hands is a sight to behold. It is the patcha, the deal is closed.

Not far from there, the Bourines domain, a former outbuilding of the Aubrac domerie, groups a 13th century castle and impressive farm buildings that are still in use (pigsties, coach house, drinking troughs, threshing floor and fortified attic-dungeon). Two marvels to be discovered on guided tours.

**Sévérac-le-Château**

The region of Séverac is at the crossroads of the Aveyron valley, the Grands Causses and the gorges du Tarn marking each the entrance. After strolling in the paved alleys, visiting the medieval stalls and admiring the half-timbered houses, you reach the top of the hilltop, occupied by a 10th century castle where the medieval light and sound show La légende de Jean le Fol attracts the crowds every summer.

**More information**

Tourist office RODEZ AGGLOMÉRATION 12000 Rodez - Tel. +33 (0)5.65.75.76.77 www.tourisme.myrodez.fr
Tourist office - LAISSACGNAIS Laissac - 12310 Laissac - Sévérac l’Église Tel. +33 (0)5.65.70.71.30 www.laissac-tourisme.com
Tourist office - PAYS SÉVÉRAGAIS Sévérac-le-Château 12150 Sévérac d’Aveyron Tel. +33 (0)5.65.47.67.31 www.aveyron-tourisme.fr

« When I return to Rodez, I feel I belong with the inhabitants of this region, those apparently rough peasants, but very refined, simple and with great finesse. »

Pierre Soulages, painter born in Rodez whose museum has opened its doors in 2014.
Amidst mountains and lakes, stock up on energy in Lévézou

100 % nature
At the core of the department, the dominating colours of the plateau du Lévézou are green and blue. In this preserved natural area, the fields are close to four artificial lakes (Bages, Pont-de-Salars, Pareloup and Villefranche-de-Panat) generated by the construction of an hydroelectric complex. Coming here to recharge your batteries then can be taken literally. When you have had your fill of swims and sailing activities, you can visit the numerous castles nearby, take in a 360 degrees panorama from the Virée des lacs or discover the unique and fragile ecosystem of the Rauzes peat moor.

+ about fishing p. 60-61

The sea in the countryside
Pareloup: the fifth largest water reservoir in France, second of the South, 1290 hectares, 130 km of shores...

A cruise on board of the Papillon jaune sightseeing boat will unveil the treasures of the Pareloup lake and explore the endless beauty of this reservoir in a different way.

François Fabié, Durenque born poet whose native house, the Moulin de Roupeyrac, was transformed into a museum dedicated to his life and work.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2017 SEASON
All throughout the season, an exceptional programme is waiting for you:

- a CANON opening with a very special event, from 4 to 9 February: “the insects are on the rampage”.
- from 1 to 17 April: “panic among the insects”.
- Carnivorous plants spill the beans! And maybe the others too? Surprise! Enter a garden of carnivorous plants and discover how to cultivate them, care for them, and grow them at home...
- from 6 July to 3 September: only in summer, enter a temporary greenhouse welcoming magnificent local butterflies, and enjoy the incredible spectacle of these shimmering insects all around you!
- from 21 October to 5 November, special event. On Halloween, it’s a tradition for creepy crawlies to come out of their hiding places! Come meet them, and get ready to shiver... brrr!

AN INFINITELY SMALL WORLD FOR EVERYBODY
Over the course of your visit, Micropolis invites you to dive into the fascinating world of insects and biodiversity. All along the inside trail through 15 exhibition halls, encounter more than 70 species of living insects from all four corners of the world, tropical butterflies, beetles, leafcutter ants, bees, tarantulas... Discover all their secrets!

With a great diversity of forms, colours, and behaviours, insects are ingenious and capable of many feats. In addition to these quirky encounters, be surprised at the giant interactive tactile wall by the hectic lives of insects that form their own society, get ready for a change in scale at the 3D cinema, and discover the traps of carnivorous plants. Little ones will be able to look inside the nests, take themselves for ants, and even pretend to be a dung beetle...

Experience a unique and unforgettable day at any age!

At Micropolis, adventure is everywhere: even outside, with the carnival of insects, a journey tinged with humour and poetry...

In July and August, you can also discover the birthplace of Jean-Henri Fabre, a famous entomologist born in Saint-Léons. To finish off the day, join in our new activities that are available to everyone, from the very youngest (ages 3 and up) to teenagers and adults, create your own schedule! Everything is included in the admission pass.

www.micropolis-aveyron.com

SPEND A FANTASTIC DAY AT MICROPOLIS!
In the heart of the Lévézou mountains, stroll with the butterflies, observe the hard-working ants, roam the hall of vivariums to discover the many species of tropical insects, build a web with the spiders and try to charm the praying mantises...
This rich and diverse programme is offered at the heart of Lévézou, in Saint-Léons.

www.levezou-aveyron.com

Amongst mountains and lakes, stock up on energy in Lévézou
Land of sensations

South of the Aveyron, Millau opens the portal to the South. The accent becomes Mediterranean, the cicadas start chirping and in the sun you will be tempted by farniente, a game of boules or an improvised aperitif. The calm before the storm, because here you will soon be bitten by the desire to move, even to surpass yourself. Water, earth, air: in this immense playgarden all the elements are present to stimulate you. Getting your T-shirt soaked while crashing down the wild waters of the gorges du Tarn, the Jonte or the Dourbie, communicate with the cliffs during a climbing or via ferrata session, soaring through the air with the birds of prey during an initiation to paragliding; in short: living for the present.

Historic town and glove capital

You visit Millau as you would turn the pages of a history book: caves, dolmens and menhirs for pre-historic times, pottery of the archaeological site of Graufesenque for Antiquity, ruins of the Pont Vieux and Tower of the Kings of Aragon for medieval times, town houses for the Siècle des Lumières, hall in Baltard style for our contemporary era and the Millau viaduct, the first artwork of the 21st century.

No barriers between those different eras, but rather continuity as demonstrated by the core industry of the city: leather and glove making. The know-how of excellency continued over the centuries by manufactures and workshops is today chosen by haute couture and many stars.

More information - Tourist office
MILLAU GRANDS CAUSSES
12100 Millau
Tel. +33 (0)5.65.60.02.42
12640 Rivière-sur-Tarn
Tel. +33 (0)5.65.59.74.28
www.millau-viaduc-tourisme.fr

Major landscapes

— on savoir-faire excellence p. 12-13

Five causses - Méjean, Noir, Rouge, Larzac and Sauveteterra - deeply carved by the Tarn, Jonte and Dourbie, in the Millau region, create a western backdrop in the moors beaten by the wind, rocky chaos and vertiginous canyons. Here you are surrounded by grandeur on all sides.

+ on Millau viaduct p. 16-17
+ about art and savoir-faire p. 48-49
+ about outdoor sports and activities p. 54-55

The nature park of the Grands Causses

(Parc naturel régional des Grands Causses)

It stretches over 327 000 hectares, covers 97 municipalities and unites 66 000 inhabitants. Created in 1995, its aim is to protect and promote that wide inhabited rural space, its traditions, its culture and its vitality. From the causses to the prairies of the Lévézou, from the rougiers to the foothills of the Cévennes and the Aubrac, the heart of the Grands Causses beats to the rhythm of the dairy sheeps' passage of Roquefort and the men who lead them.

www.parc-grands-causses.fr

"Millau viaduct was to take place in the unspoilt and spectacular landscape of the gorges du Tarn. To respect that incredible region in France, the most elegant solution, the most minimalist intervention and the finest structure were opted for."

Norman Foster, British architect who designed Millau viaduct.

To admire numerous Gallo-Roman ceramic items, visit the site of the Graufesenque and the museum of Millau.

"Millau viaduct was to take place in the unspoilt and spectacular landscape of the gorges du Tarn. To respect that incredible region in France, the most elegant solution, the most minimalist intervention and the finest structure were opted for."

Norman Foster, British architect who designed Millau viaduct.
A region with an exceptional destiny

A chalky plateau dotted with rocks and grasses, the Larzac is the largest and most Mediterranean of all the causses. At the centre of the regional nature park of the Grande Causses, its landscapes, witnesses of an ancient pastoral tradition are listed in the Unesco world heritage. It is in the strategic nooks of this wind beaten land that the Order of the Templars and then the Hospitallers took their quarters from the 12th to the 14th century.

Larzac and the land of Roquefort, legendary regions

Between Raspes and rougier

To the south of the mountains and lakes of the Lévézou, a succession of climate phenomenons (high floods, long periods of drought and biting cold) have shaped the Raspes that are named after the Occitan raspar which means embedded, unspoilt narrow, grated by erosion.

Along the waters of the Tarn and the steep cliffs in black schist you will see typical hamlets unveiled including Brousse-le-Château, one of the Most beautiful villages in France. More to the south, between the Larzac cauze, the Tarn river and the Lacaune mountain, the rougier de Camarès has the look of Colorado. Hikers and mountainbiking fans will enjoy the numerous signposted circuits.

Roquefort, a miracle of nature

Millions of years ago, the seismic activity and the alternance of glaciations and thaw caused the ledge of plateau of Combalou to collapse. This geological accident created the ‘fleurines’, natural chimneys that ventilate a cavity of 2 km long by 300 m wide, and maintain a constant temperature and hygrometry. It is in those caves that the king of cheeses matures and refines for the greatest pleasure of our tastebuds.

A mythical cheese

The unofficial history narrates that a shepherd had abandoned his herd, his bread and his sheep’s curd in the mountain of Combalou to follow a pretty girl. When he returned some time later, he found his lunch covered in mould. As he was extremely hungry he took a bite of the cheese... and relished it.

Roquefort was born.

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The abbey of Sylvanes

In exceptional natural and heritage surroundings, the old abbey of Sylvanes is the high place for culture, art and spirituality of the region. A must see, both for its architecture, its festival of sacred music and the serenity the place exudes.

More information

Tourist office
PAYS DE ROQUEFORT ET SAINT-AFFRICAIN
12350 Roquefort-sur-soulzon
Tel. +33 (0) 5 65 58 35 00
12400 Saint-Affrique
Tel. +33 (0) 5 65 98 12 40
www.ot-dusaintaffricain.com

Tourist office
LARZAC ET VALLÉES
12230 Nant
Tel. +33 (0) 5 65 62 23 64
www.tourisme-larzac.com

Tourist office
ROUGIER DE CAMARÈS
12360 Camarès
Tel. +33 (0) 5 49 53 76
www.ot-camares.com

Roquefort, a miracle of nature

Millions of years ago, the seismic activity and the alternance of glaciations and thaw caused the ledge of plateau of Combalou to collapse. This geological accident created the ‘fleurines’, natural chimneys that ventilate a cavity of 2 km long by 300 m wide, and maintain a constant temperature and hygrometry. It is in those caves that the king of cheeses matures and refines for the greatest pleasure of our tastebuds.

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PAYS DE ROQUEFORT ET SAINT-AFFRICAIN
12350 Roquefort-sur-soulzon
Tel. +33 (0) 5 65 58 35 00
12400 Saint-Affrique
Tel. +33 (0) 5 65 98 12 40
www.ot-dusaintaffricain.com

Tourist office
LARZAC ET VALLÉES
12230 Nant
Tel. +33 (0) 5 65 62 23 64
www.tourisme-larzac.com

Tourist office
ROUGIER DE CAMARÈS
12360 Camarès
Tel. +33 (0) 5 49 53 76
www.ot-camares.com
With 10 sites listed among the Most beautiful villages in France, the Aveyron is the French department that has most. Recognized for the exceptional quality of their heritage, these towns have resisted the effects of time without being closed to development and turn their back to the future. Preserved and valued, they are not only famous for their remarkable architecture, but also for their history, the land they are anchored in, the culture and the inhabitants that shape their identity.

Belcastel, Brousse-le-Château, Conques, Estaing, La Couvertoirade, Najac, Peyre, Saint-Côme-d’Olt, Sainte-Eulalie-d’Olt and Sauveterre-de-Rouergue take you on an extraordinary journey and have nice surprises in store.

More information
www.plusbeauxvillagesdefrance-aveyron.com
www.tourisme-aveyron.com ("discover" section)
In the early 12th century, the strong demographic growth and the necessity to organise the social and economic life incite the powers to develop a policy to organise the territory. Between 1229 and 1373 more than 300 bastide towns are built in the South West of France. Six of those medieval new towns with innovating city floorplans can be found in the western part of Aveyron: La Bastide-l’Évêque, Najac, Rieupeyroux, Sauveterre-de-Rouergue, Villefranche-de-Rouergue and Villeneuve-d’Aveyron.

Venture in the labyrinth of narrow streets without fear of getting lost. They all lead to a central square surrounded by arches where in the past the economic, political and judicial activities of the city were concentrated and that today live at the rhythm of the markets, guided tours, festivals and cultural encounters.

More information www.tourisme-aveyron.com (‘discover’ section)
In the late 12th century the Order of the Temple is granted land on the Larzac where is organised a network of commanderies which could contribute to the war effort of the knights who left for the Orient and participate in the maintenance of the fortresses built in the Holy Land to protect the tomb of Christ. The Templars helped La Cavalerie, La Couvertoirade, Sainte-Eulalie-de-Cernon, Saint-Jean-d’Alcas and Viala-du-Pas-de-Jaux to prosper for two hundred years, before their order was abolished by the pope and their property was transferred to the Hospitallers who fortify the towns during the war of Hundred Years. The landscapes created by those religious and military orders are untouched. At the foot of the thousand years old walls, time seems never to have stopped, the land exudes eternity. Close your eyes and listen. Do you not hear the sound of the swords and the shields, the short breaths of the soldiers in armour, ready to engage combat?

More information
www.tourisme-aveyron.com (‘Discover’ section)
Conques, Romanesque treasure and light

Encased in a green shrine, on the sunny mountainside, Conques is named after the shell-shaped basin (from the Latin concha and the Occitan conca) it is nestled in. Few locations can boast such an accumulation of richness. As Conques is a major stop on one of the four big French roads leading to Compostelle, its abbey church and the bridge that crosses the Dourdou river were listed in the UNESCO World Heritage in 1998 in the routes to Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle. The town is also one of the Most Beautiful Villages in France. Conques is an international reference, a masterpiece of Romanesque architecture with its abbey church, of medieval goldsmith’s arts with its treasure or of contemporary art with the stained glass windows by Pierre Soulages.

Sylvanès, the enchanted abbey

The Cistercian abbey was built in the 12th century by a knight who, touched by God, decided to stop committing crimes to dedicate himself to prayer and penance in a remote location. The monastery shone at religious, social, economic and cultural level for several centuries until it was deserted by the community and abandoned at the Revolution. Listed as a historic monument in 1854, the site was acquired by the municipality of Sylvanès in 1970 and invested by a group who started its restoration in 1975. A rare location of cultural alchemy, it has since experienced an extraordinary renaissance and recently became one of the largest cultural meeting centres in rural settings.

The treasure
Consisting of relics, including the famous majesty of Sainte-Foy, it is one of the five great European treasures of medieval goldsmith’s arts and the only in France to unite so many objects of the High Middle Ages. The word treasure not only evokes the material and artistic wealth of the gold and silver coverings decorated with gems, pearls or enamels. It also refers to the worship and devotion of the relics, those precious saint bodies that attracted countless pilgrims and made Conques wealthy and famous.

The tympanum
Located on the west portal of the abbey church, this representation of the Last Judgement is one of the major works of Romanesque sculpture in the first half of the 12th century. At 3.60 m from the ground, the frontispiece of 6.70 m wide remains strikingly legible despite it being crowded with 124 figures and a diversity of scenes. On both sides of the central Christ figure, twenty compartments separate the righteous from the damned.

The stained glass windows by Pierre Soulages
Since 1994, the abbey church of Conques has space entre 104 stained glass windows designed by the Rodez born painter Pierre Soulages. The material used – uncoloured, translucent glass that respects the variations in natural light while shaping them - suggests, inside and outside of the building - a quite exceptional surface continuity between walls and windows.

More information
Tourist office Conques-Marcillac
Tel.: +33 (0)5.65.72.85.00
www.tourisme-conques.fr

Classical history mecca
“Conques, le lumière du roman”
(Conques, the romanesque light)
Organised by the European Centre of Medieval Art and Civilisation, this summer programme presents numerous instrumental and vocal ensembles that present medieval music with modern sounds in the prestigious surroundings of the Romanesque abbey church.

International festival of sacred and world music in Sylvanès
The special architecture of the Cistercian church provides remarkable acoustics. Every summer the voices of the sacred global traditions arise through music, song, poetry and dance. The event with international scope confirms the will of the abbey to promote the meeting of cultures, religions and men.

More information
Abbaye de Sylvanès
Tel.: +33 (0)5.65.98.20.20
www.sylvanes.com

Stained glass windows by Pierre Soulages
Majesty of Sainte-Foy
Tympanum of the abbey church
Sylvanès
Enter the privacy of Toulouse-Lautrec
The Albi born painter spent his childhood in the family home of the Bosc castle, located in Caupic. Discover his bedroom and his sketches in a world full of memories, far away from Montmartre and its cabarets which inspired the fantastic work we are familiar with.

Châteaux

With more than one hundred castles, out of which half can be visited, the Aveyron allows you to revise your history knowledge. Castles, but also fortresses, towns protected by ramparts, towers and forts represent all the eras and all the architectural styles. They represent the power of the Rouergue lords and later the prosperity of the local aristocracy.

Although the department was not spared by wars (Hundred Years and religious), the Revolution or the pillaging by the barbarians, these men managed to protect, rebuild or expertly restore the treasures of the local heritage in order to preserve their former splendour.

About the museums

The Aveyron has more than 80 museums which represent a broad range of themes. Geology enthusiasts will visit Terra Memoria in Bozouls and the Pierre Vetter museum in Decazeville.

Those wishing to discover local personalities will visit the mill of Roupeyrac, the birth house of the author François Fabié in Durenque, the Espace Georges Rouquier in Goutres and the Ostal Jean Roudou in Crespin. Nature lovers will immerse themselves in the infinitely small world of the insect town Micropolis in Saint-Léons, whereas history fans will push the doors of the Mining Museum in Aubin and the Memory Museum in Cransac. As for art lovers, after exploring the rooms of the museum Denys-Puech in Rodez, they will not hesitate to take a stroll to the unmissable Soulages museum. Those with nostalgia will make a come-back to the era of sixties pop, in Villeneuve d’Aveyron, in front of the photos taken by Jean-Marie Périer.

For ideas for excursions with children go to, pages 58-59.

Museum of the traditions of Aveyron
Three areas with the ‘Musée de France’ label unveil the Aveyron history and traditions. To reconnect with the daily life in the past you need to cross the threshold of the museum of traditional arts and crafts in Salles-la-Source, of popular arts and traditions or customs and habits in Espalion. The archaeological area of Montrozier presents the objects discovered in various dig sites in the department and proposes numerous animations.

www.musees.aveyron.fr

Fenaille Museum
Museum of traditional arts and crafts
Castle of Najac
Castle of Calmont d’Olt
Castle of Bosc

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CULTURE, HERITAGE AND SAVOIR-FAIRE

Enter the privacy of Toulouse-Lautrec
The Albi born painter spent his childhood in the family home of the Bosc castle, located in Caupic. Discover his bedroom and his sketches in a world full of memories, far away from Montmartre and its cabarets which inspired the fantastic work we are familiar with.
In Aveyron the ancient savoir-faire, quality of production, nobility of the materials and a strong identity create a unique and powerful alchemy, the privileged soil for high end products. Leather and textile, stone cutting and sculpture, knife making, woodwork, ceramics or earthenware, all those ‘factories’ satisfy demanding criteria for an authentic and aesthetic result. Each product has its own history and without forgetting its roots, turns to the future and the new trends. Welcome to one of the birthplaces of French manufacture.

Heritage of savoir-faire and art

Tanners and glove making
The world capital of leather and gloves in the inter war period, Millau managed to resist the competition of the emerging countries and the massive arrival of synthetic materials. With a century old tradition and excellent know-how, the work of the tanners, tawers and glove workshops in Millau is preferred the world over, promoted by fashion designers, displayed in the windows of the luxury boutiques and worn on the hands of the biggest stars. Prestige at the fingertips.

Pottery and ceramics
A production workshop, gallery, initiation and training centre, Le Don du Fel is a permanent showcase for contemporary creation. In the heights of the eponymous village, near Entraygues-sur-Truyère, in a building with sleek and modern lines, the founder Suzy Atkins presents her salt vapour-enamelled work. The European pole also welcomes seven high-flying temporary exhibitions every year.

Knife production
Born in 1829, from the meeting of the capuchadou of the Aubrac peasants and the Spanish navaja, the Laguiole knife is simultaneously typical and legendary. Between heritage and innovation, it has inspired numerous designers and exceeded the stage of a simple functional tool to become an essential table art accessory and even a work of art for collectors. In Laguiole, the knife makers, including some of the best workers in France, carry out all the stages of manufacture in front of your eyes.

Bricks, tiles and earthenware
Adjacent to the Graufresenque, one of the largest ceramics production sites in Antiquity, the Terres cuites de Raujolles continue history in Millau. This family house founded in 1830 has added the creation of floor tiles, ‘tomettes’ and earthenware to the manufacture of bricks and tiles. One-off pieces are used for the restoration of historical monuments such as the Chijmes convent in Singapore, for the tiling of a room in the Louvre museum or to decorate a restaurant in Tokyo.
Festive times

In Aveyron, we like to party. Throughout the year, at weekends and on week days, we meet up, we share, we laugh, we drink, we eat, we sing, we dance. Votive and patron saints festivals define the rhythm of the seasons, mark the big stages of the work on the land, highlight the local produce. Bridging past and present, these authentic, fun and convivial meetings rub shoulders in the diary with concerts, gastronomic events, cultural events and diverse festivals.

Millau jazz festival
In July, for eight days, the city of gloves’ heart beats to the rhythm of jazz. This festival’s philosophy: reach an audience that is as broad and multiple as its music. Poetic jazz or vocal brass, swing and manouche invade the strongpoints of the city and the neighbouring municipalities with concerts, hikes and musical meals, shows for young people and nocturnal dance floors.

Derrière le hublot in Capdenac
Spring is theatrical, Circassian, dancing, humouristic and musical in May in Capdenac-Gare. With lots of companies with eclectic and daring projects, L’Autre festival, supported by the association Derrière le hublot, proposes a beautiful range of street art. Life is thoroughly enjoyed in the various venues of the city and the park of Capèle.

Medieval fairs
Wandering troupes of troubadours and acrobats, taverns, a blacksmith’s workshop, street entertainment, sparring between armoured knights, and a great banquet plunge us into the daily life of a village in the medieval era. So that you’re fully absorbed in the atmosphere, costumes are a must...

“Hier un village”
From late July to mid August, Flagnac becomes the backdrop to a large living fresco in sound and light. 350 inhabitants put on their costumes for a series of shows that take us back to the beginning of the previous century. Jeannou, the Rouergue farmer and Marinou, the grandmother narrate the work and the torments but also the good memories of that era.

Fête de l’estive and transhumance
On the last weekend in May hards leave the stables in the valley to join their summer pastures on the plateau of Aubrac. The breeders decorate the cows with flowers and holly before starting the long procession to the sound of bells. From Espalion to Aubrac, from Saint-Côme-d’Olt to Saint-Chély-d’Aubrac or Saint-Geniez-d’Olt, we walk part of their way by their side before partying.
ON HORSEBACK

Every year in memory of the salt trade route, between the Mediterranean Sea and Rouergue, passionate riders travel part of the Aveyron. This equestrian travelling adventure demonstrates the infinity of the trips that can be made.

As initiation, accompanied by a guide for beginners or in complete freedom for experienced riders, you will feel the bond with the animal and go on a conquest of the wide open spaces. At a trot pace, trotting or galloping, 1000 km of equestrian paths are open to you.

Thousand and one ways of going hiking

Are you one of those people with ‘ants in your pants’?

Aveyron is made for you. A playground with multiple facets, the department has numerous disciplines among its major ‘spots’ and the views of preserved nature are omnipresent.

ON FOOT

The GR65 that leaves from Puy-en-Velay and leads to Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle, the variant of “the voie jacquaire Conques-Toulouse”, the Templar circuit in Larzac (GR71), the cause Noir - Lévezou - Rouergue (GR62) circuit and the tour of the gorges de l’Aveyron (GR14) are the major routes among the 5 000 km of signposted trails the department has on offer. Whether you go on a day trip or a journey of several days, hiking in the Aveyron is always a synonym for change of scenery and cultural discovery.

More information on hiking in Aveyron and for guide books:
Comité départemental de la FFRandonnée
Tel. +33 (0)5.65.75.54.61
http://aveyron.ffrandonnee.fr
+ on the GR65 p. 20
+ on sports events p. 56-57

CYCLING

With more than 15 000 km of departmental roads and municipal roads, some 52 listed mountain passes, picturesque sites and diverse environments, the Aveyron is a paradise for cycling tourists. It is not by accident that two legs of the Tour de France took place here in 2015 and numerous races are organised. An itinerary of 700 km connecting the 10 Most beautiful villages in France in Aveyron was even created. Amateur cyclists, riders, sprinters or climbers: there is something for everyone here.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Family circuits, robust routes or infernal descents, the variety of the terrains and landscapes of the Aveyron are a treat for all the mountain biking enthusiasts. Forest circuits with narrow paths, grass surfaces with pebbled terrains and rocky passages, from physically demanding climbs to technical descents, for novices or experts, there is always a suitable circuit for your level of agility and your wishes. Communion with nature, the discovery of hidden marvels and panoramic views certainly are worth hanging on to the handlebars.

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LEISURE AND ACTIVITIES

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The geography of the Aveyron provides numerous opportunities for water-related activities. How fun it is to explore the loops of the lake of Pareloup in a drifter, a canoe, stand up paddle or kite surf. White water fans will go for canoe-kayak, rafting and canyoning in the gorges du Tarn and the Dourbie, the valleys of the Lot or the Aveyron. Irrespective of the place and the discipline, laughter and swimming are guaranteed.

With the cliffs that surround the causse du Larzac and dominate the Tarn valley, Millau benefits from exceptional air currents which make it the free flight capital. All the paragliding and hang gliding enthusiasts meet here to soar from the sites of Brunas, Pouncho d’Agast and the summit of Andan. Soaring over the city of gloves, with its majestic viaduct and the immensity of the Grands Causses as a backdrop is simply magical.

Nature in Aveyron generated grandiose sites, ideal to go potholing and climbing. The gorges du Tarn, de la Jonte and de la Dourbie are among the 10 most beautiful climbing spots in the world, but places suitable for initiation are also dotted all over the region (Salles-la-Source, Gages, gorges de la Truyère). Always harnessed to get up to the acrobatic circuits in the trees or experience strong sensations on the via ferrata of Boffi, of Liaucous and Baltuergues, among the 20 most beautiful in France.

Outdoor activities for every taste on www.tourisme-aveyron.com « Play » section
+ on the international festival of outdoor sports Natural Games p. 56-57
+ on unusual activities p. 63
Aveyron
for sport enthusiasts

In Aveyron, we have a taste for effort, we like to exceed ourselves, to face challenges. But our competitive spirit does not lead to unhealthy rivalries, it stands for fair-play and conviviality. That philosophy turns athletes into big champions and sports events in the Aveyron into moments of pure happiness.

Traces du fromage
On foot or snowshoes, in March, two loops of 20 km take you from ‘buron’ [chalet where cheese is made] to buron to taste the Laguiole cheese, gentian, mulled wine... before a convivial meal in the village of Aubrac where the ‘aligot’ [mashed potatoes with cheese] is served.

Marmotte d’Olt
In June, this cycling sports challenge offers routes of 70, 104 and 150 kilometres, of which, this year, 60 kilometres will be located on the Tour de France route. Cycling enthusiasts can take part in the cyclo-tourism circuit with four circuits to choose from.

Festival des Templiers
It is the no.1 trail event. In October, some 10 000 riders of 45 different nationalities race each other for four days, cheered on by 70 000 people. 16 different races unveil the beauty of the Grands Causses region.

100 kilomètres de Millau
Since 1971 numerous contestants have attempted the “100 stretch”, this running race is one of the most prestigious ultra long distance races in France. In September you can choose from a marathon and the famous 100 km to be completed in less than 24 hours.

Rallye du Rouergue
For two days, in July, some 150 drivers face each other in four special races of this French rally championship. With technical and fast sections, jumps and sharp turns, spectacle is guaranteed.

Aveyronnaise Classic
700 km with some 90 % of dirt tracks, that is on the menu for those three days of endurance motorcycle racing organised in August where the riders alternate quiet sections and special ‘against the clock’ races.

Roc laissagais
This Spring, in addition to the ‘Randos d’or’ of the French Cylcism Federation and the traditional mountainbiking meet that counts for the world cup and attracts, many international racers, Laissac welcomes the world championships of mountain bike marathon. The Roc Laissagais is offering a new challenge, the Roc Enduro.

Natural Games
This must-see event celebrates its 10 year anniversary this year with a round of the Enduro Mountain Biking world cup as icing on the cake. Over four days in June, outdoor sports lovers will meet in Millau. At the heart of nature zones, the event combines concerts, demonstrations and competitions in kayaking, paragliding, rock climbing, mountain biking, and even slacklining.
**Children's corner**

In Aveyron, like anywhere else, all the generations, from granddad to the latest addition via the nephew twice-removed, like to meet up and share. Nature discoveries, sports activities, cultural visits... here, you can experience nice adventures with the family.

Space and freedom, fun and joy, appropriate and secure equipment, everything is done to ensure children learn while having fun.

All the activities to share with the family are on www.tourisme-aveyron.com, “Visit” and “Play” sections.

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**Animal parks**

From medieval beasts to exotic species, farm animals to wild fauna, ostriches to reptiles, bears to birds of prey, children will enjoy petting, feeding or simply observing the numerous species present in the six animal or zoological parks in the Aveyron.

**Adventure**

When the sun burns a little too much, we look for the shade and the freshness for our little ones. It’s the right time to go to the forest for an acrobatic circuit in the tree tops. Installations suitable for all ages make it possible to safely move between ziplines, monkey bridges, pathways and tunnels.

**Noria, water house**

In Saint-Jean-du-Brueil, this Xllith mill was restored to house an interactive eco museum. 20 rooms propose a fun and educational circuit along the Dourbie to learn everything about the water quality and resources, today’s stakes and tomorrow’s challenges to protect that vital resource.

www.noria-maisondeleau.com

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**Les sentiers de l’imaginaire**

In the Carladez region, six easy, free hikes, accessible throughout the year highlight a theme (water, stone, fire, wind, wood). Discovery in the great outdoors dotted with sculptures and ingenious systems designed by the population.

www.carladez.fr

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**Cap Mômes, the children’s festival**

In July the village of Laissac becomes a huge playground for a day. The streets and the squares are taken over by groups that present theatre shows, magic, juggling, puppetry and circus, dedicated to the “pitchouns” and to all the big kids that we are.

www.capmomes.fr

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**At the farm**

Do you crave authenticity, a return to your sources, to (re)discover the joys of the countryside? Visit the farms of the Aveyron to pet animals, understand how a farm works, meet breeders and producers and taste their products during a convivial meal.

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**Micropolis, the city of insects**

(page 33)
Fishing, touches and hits home

Rivers with abundant, limpid, fresh and oxygenated water. Deep and tranquil lakes with carved out shores. Attentive management and low human impact.

All these are assets that make the Aveyron the kingdom of anglers.

The Charouzech fishing school base in Pareloup
Second base of the fishing school, this site, established on a branch of the Pareloup lake opened in 2015. At a stone's throw from the shore, very useful for the boats, a building welcomes leisure centres, schools and groups independently whereas the green spaces that surround it are suitable for the installation of camps.

RECORD TO BEAT:
1.37 M AND 19.6 KG
FOR A PIKE

A major fishing department
With 7000 waterways listed in first and second category and some 40 lakes, the Aveyron is a true anglers' paradise. Whether you are beginner, experienced or competitive, the most difficult thing will be to choose the sector where to throw your line. The Tarn, the Lot, the Aveyron and the reservoir lakes are the domain of the meat eaters (catfish, pike, pike perch, black bass and crucian) and carps. The numerous waterways originating from the basins of the Truyère, Lot, Aveyron, Viaur and Tarn, often tumultuous, are suitable for fishing wild trout. Finally, whether you opt for tranquil or wild waters, rivers or lakes, with coarse fishing you could catch the almost totality of the white fish species in France.

Testimonial
« A treasure in the Lot river »
« In my long career as an angler the technique that has given me the strongest sensations is fishing with natural bait in a large river. When you face a wild waterway of 60 m wide and you catch a large wild trout, you know that the moments that follow will stay engraved in your memory forever. It is in the Lot river that I caught that 63 cm, 2.5 kg trout. The party was far from over with that extremely powerful specimen that fought me for some 45 minutes. What joy to master Mother Nature for a few moments with a simple nylon wire of little more than 1 mm diameter and to touch that wild treasure of exceptional beauty. I know perfectly well that during my next outings everything will have to be redone from scratch, that that time nature will win, and that is good. »
Alain Marragou

More information
www.tourisme-aveyron.com
« Play » and « Circuit » section
More fishing on our video channel:
vimeo.com/tourismeaveyron
Get yourself a fishing card:
Fédération de pêche de l'Aveyron
Tel.: +33 (0)5.65.68.41.52
www.pecheaveyron.com
Fun-ebike
What’s that? An all terrain trip on wild and picturesque paths with hybrid machine between an electric mountainbike and a motorcycle. Fun, accessible to all, without noise nuisance or toxic gases, it is a perfect balance between respect for the environment and the sensations of mechanic sports. Whether you go for an hour or a day, there are many itineraries and packages. www.fun-ebike.com

Excursion on camel back
It could be Morocco or Tunisia... Don’t look that far, these four footers do their thing in Aveyron! The Blaquière farm, in Verrières, has been breeding camels for twenty-five years and proposes excursions. To discover the Grands Causses and to admire the gorges du Tarn from above, follow the guide of a caravan of 14 camels. www.lablaquiere.com

Vélorail
As a couple, with family or friends you can make an original journey on the former railway of Larzac. In a pedal vehicle or the new tourist train « Larzac Express », the journey, punctuated by tunnels and viaducts provides an exceptional panorama of the valley of the Cernon, the templar town of Sainte-Eulalie, and the perched village of La Bastide-Pradines. www.surlesrailsdularzac.com

The joys of winter sports
Board sports without stress
Two family resorts of human dimensions provide an area suitable for first steps on snowshoes or boards but also satisfy more experienced boarders. Laguiole is divided in two slopes (La Source and Le Bouyssou) and has 15 Alpine ski pistes from green to black, 15 ski lifts, 50 km of cross-country tracks, five snowshoe circuits, two Nordic walking tracks, a luge track and a child care centre. The smaller Brameloup resort is an intimate and warm peaceful haven with eight Alpine ski pistes, two cross-country tracks, one border cross, a luge track and three snowshoe circuits. Let’s go, schuss!

Original activities
To appreciate the immensity of the Aubrac plateau and (re)discover its immaculate landscapes, you can try new activities. The combined driving school of Aubrac proposes cart horse-drawn carriage trips in the snow. Nord Aveyron Mushing invites to sledge and initiation sessions with its dog packs. You can also try ‘tam-raquette’ where, equipped with snowshoes and a belt linked to a husky’s harness with a lead you are pulled forward in the powdery snow. Emotions guaranteed.

In Aveyron, unusual experiences are also lived through the original accommodation. Give it a try by spending your holiday in a caravan, a ranch, a yurt, a teepee or a tree house. Find these unusual accommodations on www.tourisme-aveyron.com « Sleep » section

Unusual Aveyron
**Sensations of well-being**

**Natura Bien-être in Brommat**
In Carladez, on the edge of a beech forest, this wellness centre has 1 000 m² amenities: top of the range hydrotherapy room, aquatic garden, swimming pools, but also sports rooms, tennis and squash courses and massage area. The broad range of proposed activities targets the whole family with various aquatic courses to feel like a fish in water, yoga, qi gong, tai chi sessions and sophrology in the zen corner as well as zumba, gym, step and line dancing lessons in the tonic area. Everything is in place to revitalise body and mind.

www.naturabienetreencarladez.fr

More information
Tourist office - Carladez
Tel.: +33 (0)5.64.66.10.16
www.carladez.fr

Although Aveyron presents numerous assets that incite to practicing sports, one of its intrinsic values is also taking your time. In addition to the serenity of nature, all the appropriate structures to let your hair down, relax and take care of yourself are present here.

**Aqua fun areas**
For relaxing moments with the family, several aquatic centres await you in Aveyron, with hydrotherapy areas, massaging jets or bubbling baths for adults and fun pools with slides for children.

**The spa of Cransac**
The mountain has been burning for centuries in this city in West Aveyron and exudes warm natural gases, powerful in the treatment of arthritis. Cransac-les-Thermes is the only resort in Europe to provide this type of spa treatments with recognised benefits. The building with a contemporary wood and glass architecture, overlooking the valley of the Enne is a real peaceful haven. You will find a spa area, a beauty parlour and a multi activity room where you can follow physiotherapy and dietetic cuisine workshops, practice sophrology, qi gong, Pilates and soft gymnastics. In other words, heaven!

More information
Tourist office - Cransac-les-Thermes
Tel.: +33 (0)5.65.63.06.80
www.cransac-les-thermes.fr

**Place your bets!**
Opened in 2015, the casino of Cransac is a fun and convivial space with 50 slot machines, electronic roulette and a black jack table. Try your luck! In between plays you can relax in the lounge and elegant atmosphere of the bar or have a bite to eat in the luminous restaurant or the terrace of the brasserie. Animations (discovery of games, concerts) are regularly scheduled.

Find all the wellness establishments and aqua fun centres on www.tourisme-aveyron.com » play » section
Breakfasts

In summer, in Aveyron, there are village fests every weekend. And not a single one does not comply with tradition: they all organise breakfasts. But here, you will not find coffee, croissants or jam tartines. People turn up from 8 am to noon to eat tripous, tête de veau sauce gribiche, deer with sorrel or snails, depending on the location. These are not snacks but real meals. The breakfasts of Rouerges are a moment of conviviality where the elderly of the village cross the young party goers who turn up to regain strength. Join them!

The fraternities

The Aveyron, land of nice food, has a plethora of typical products. Aligot, Laguiole cheese, estofinado, tripous or trenels in the south of the department or Marcillac wine lead to copious often festive banquets. But the dedicated Epicurians of the local fraternities speak best about those key specialities. In the spirit of Rabelais those congregations promote and showcase them during festivals where they parade in costume. Local personalities are introduced to the fraternities during long and great discourses. Thanks to them, the region, customs and folklore are still alive and well.

Appetisers

To know everything about the history, the cycles, the culture, harvest and transformation of chestnuts, cherries or truffles, visit the houses that are dedicated to them in Ayssènes, Paulhe and Comprégnac. Furthermore, a group of duck breeders and foie gras producers have created a museum in Villefranche-de-Rouergue to show how the methods have evolved over time and raise awareness for the art of good eating.

Speak about the cuisine of Aveyron with a gourmet and you will see their eyes light up. High quality products with unsurpassed savours generated a simple, authentic and right cuisine that combines beautiful and good. “An emotional cuisine that relates more to love than science” says Michel Bras quite rightly. Above all, Aveyron must be tasted.
Cooked meats
Everything is good in a pig, especially when it comes from Aveyron! The most noble parts are transformed into ham, sausages and saucissons. The more fatty meat, the rind and the offal are transformed into pâté, fricandéau, blood sausage, coarse or pressed fritons. Poultry is also very present as ducks and goose produce confits, magrets, foie gras, gizzards, stuffed necks, rillettes and pâtés. That makes for a well-filled basket, very hard to resist.

Meat
The meat from Aveyron, renowned for its quality, is present on the best tables. Farm beef of Aubrac, veal of Aveyron and Salers, farm lamb of the Pays d’Oc, suckling lamb of Aveyron, Lacaune heritage lamb, pork of Aveyron, Gaalin rabbit… in all sectors, the animals are bred by passionate men, before being rigorously selected. Follow the labels!

Cheeses
The thick grass that grows abundantly in the wide open spaces makes the Aveyron a dairy and therefore a cheese region. In the south, tomes, pérails and of course the famous Roquefort are made from sheep’s milk whereas the Bleu des causses is made from cow’s milk. In the north the Laguiole, the Ezir and the Thérondels are also made from cow’s milk. In the west the goats provide the fabulous cabécou that is best eaten fresh, dry or in between.

Sweet treats
No real meal without dessert. At that level, eclecticism prevails. The foassane and the gâteau à la broche (conical cake baked on a skewer) are great classics, but there also are the saucis d’Ussel, the flausse (based on goat’s whey), tomme tart (with cow’s curd), the Râlég d’Ussel (with sheep’s butter and raspberry jam) and in individual portions. Also try echaudés, rissole with prunes, chocolates from Bonneval abbey and many other sweet delicacies.

Wines
Drumons and Barchos, the gods of vines and wine, looked at the Aveyron with benevolence. They helped man to tame the soil, have given unique and typical grape varieties like the Mansois (or fer servadou) and provided the ideal conditions for them to flourish. As a result, four typical nectars benefit from a Appellation d’origine contrôlée (AOC) label; the wines of Marcillac, Entraygues – Le Fel, Estaing and the côtes de Millau.

Unique land, exceptional products

THE TOP 10 of Aveyron specialities


Farçous
This sweet treat, scented with orange blossom and sprinkled with sugar, was always present on the festive tables at the occasion of the arrival of the kings for Epiphany, to rejoice in the coming good weather at Easter, celebrate a baptism or a wedding.

Ingredients / 1 kg potatoes, 400 g fresh Aubrac tome, 250 g crème fraîche, 2 garlic cloves (optional), salt, pepper.

Preparation / Peel the potatoes and parboil them for 10 minutes. Cut them in slices, add cream and cook them gently. Serve with melted butter and some grated cheese on top.

Fouace
This aromatic bread with a thin crust is made in Aveyron with beeswax. It is sometimes glazed with honey, powdered sugar or red wine. It is usually eaten hot, as it becomes dry after a few minutes.

Ingredients / 55 chard leaves, 1 parsley branch, a few twigs of cloves, 1 onion, 1 clove of garlic, 100 g sausage meat, 1 rasher of smoked bacon or 75 g of lardons, 4 eggs, 2 tbsp of flour, 10 cl milk, salt, pepper.

Preparation / Chop the parsley, chives, onion, garlic, sausage meat and bacon. Mix everything. Fry the chard, remove the green, chop finely and add to the mix. Set aside. Mix the eggs, the flour and the milk in a bowl. The paste must have the texture of a donut paste, thicker than pancake paste. Add the mince and season to taste. Take a big tablespoon of the mix, shape a small pancake in a hot previously oiled frying pan and fry it 1 to 2 minutes on each side.

Find more recipes on deguster.blog.tourisme-veyron.com
Michel and Sébastien Bras
Le Suquet / Hôtel****
Route de l’Autre - 12210 Laguiole
www.bras.fr

At nature’s rhythm we create a moving, intuitive and precise cuisine, that transcribes the emotions you feel when you come into contact with it and when it becomes an experience for the other.

Guillaume Viala
Le Belvédère / Hôtel***
11, route du maquis Jean-Pierre - 12340 Bozouls
www.belvedere-bozouls.com

A militant act in the defence of authentic products, originated from natural rural polyculture, close to the environment, my cooking comes into contact with it and when it becomes an experience.

Michel Truchon
Le Sénéchal / Hôtel****
12200 Sauveterre-de-Rouergue
www.hotel-senechal.fr

As a nature ambassador, I like to share my passion for plants. Every morning I go searching for wild flowers and shoots and I strictly select my local producers in order to propose a harmonious combination of savours.

Hervé Busset
Le Moulin de Cambelong / Hôtel****
38, rue de Ronald - 12000 Rodez
www.moulindecambelong.com

Throughout the seasons, my cooking is inspired by the market, fed with high quality local produce, between references to the Aveyron roots and the modernism of the form and the imagination.

Jean-Luc Fau
Goûts et couleurs / Hôtel****
12800 St Guilhem-le-Desert
www.goустsetcouleurs.com

Discover all the restaurants in Aveyron on www.tourisme-aveyron.com

Interview with Nicole Fagegaltier, a Michelin-star chef of Belcastel

Nicole Fagegaltier
Le Vieux Pont / Hôtel***
12390 Conques
www.restaurant-belcastel.com

Nicole Fagegaltier is well-known and highly appreciated by the people of Aveyron for both her cooking and her personality. She welcomed us to her family home in Belcastel, where her restaurant Le Vieux Pont is located. She responded to our questions on her vision of gastronomy in Aveyron.

Which ingredient or speciality should you take home from Aveyron?
Right away, I think of the cheeses of Aveyron. Those that are taken away, of course, like Laguiole or Roquefort. After that, a sois de Marcolle or a “pêne à la broche”. Whenever I go somewhere, I go to the markets, so I would go to the Place du Bourg on Saturday morning in Rodez, and just let myself be swept along. I would bring back some charcuterie perhaps, a good ham...

When staying in Aveyron which dish do you recommend to definitely try out?
I would recommend some estofados, even if it’s hard to find all year round... It’s really mainly a winter dish. So, in summer, you need to taste a “Taume” (tart found in Millau).

What is your favourite Aveyron dish?
I am a total fan of stuffed cabbage, which I love making - the real thing - with carrots!

And your favourite sweet delicacy?
I love “soleil de Marcillac” and “Échaudés”.

Where do you go for a digestive walk in Aveyron?
Between Mirabel and Prévinquières, not to mention Belcastel. Leaning from the Mirabel church on the right bank of the Aveyron, you climb up to Prévinquières, and then back down the other side. That makes a walk of 3.5 Hours. In summer, it’s magnificent, I wish I could just stop time whenever I’m there.

Which adjective(s) would you use to describe the Aveyron cuisine?
Generous! I don’t see how you can cook if you’re not generous. In Aveyron, loving to cook means loving others, you’re giving to others what you make yourself, it’s sharing.

Colour, texture, smell, taste: senses developed in childhood. Respect for nature and the seasons, products and producers: values acquired while growing up. Rich with this family and local heritage, the chefs of Aveyron go straight to the essential and, without artifice, turn every plate into a poem of memories and emotions.

Guillaume Viala
Le Belvédère / Hôtel***
11, route du maquis Jean-Pierre - 12340 Bozouls
www.belvedere-bozouls.com

A militant act in the defence of authentic products, originated from natural rural polyculture, close to the environment, my cooking is inspired by nature, dynamic, moving and fragile.

Interview with Nicole Fagegaltier, a Michelin-star chef of Belcastel

Nicole Fagegaltier
Le Vieux Pont / Hôtel***
12390 Conques
www.restaurant-belcastel.com

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The local producers’ markets

Often organised on summer evenings, these markets encourage direct contact between farmers and craftsmen and consumers. You will find authentic products with a nice rural smell on each stall, presented by men and women who are happy to share their passion and present them for tasting. You can take your purchases or eat them on site around big tables to enjoy the musical atmosphere and chat with your neighbours, informally. Find information on the nearest local farmers market to your holiday location on www.marches-producteurs.com/aveyron

The Aveyron farm in your plate

The market is a sacred place!

Once or twice a week, each town or village in Aveyron organises its food market. People here have not given up on the art of living. They wouldn’t miss this lively, colourful and scented rendez-vous for anything in the world. Whether in a hall or outdoor, markets are moments that encourage exchanges and conviviality that unites all the generations. On the stalls, vegetables are covered in soil and sometimes misshapen, the apples are not Snow white red, but all the products are fresh, healthy and tasty.

From the fork to the mouth

Aveyron, rich with its agricultural productivity, has turned it into a real strength. Numerous breeders and producers have created associations to promote the fruit of their work and limit the intermediaries of the big supermarkets. These alternative sales networks privilege local and seasonal produce, guarantee traceability and freshness, prioritise a direct relation of proximity and support the local economy. A surprise farmer’s hamper or one that you select, farm drive, direct sales or pickings at the farm... each has their own formula.

Find a market on www.tourisme-aveyron.com « Taste » section

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