



GR700 (Regordane Way)

THE COMPLETE GUIDE



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Overview

GR700 (Regordane Way): Historic GR Route to the Mediterranean

The GR700 (Regordane Way) is a waymarked Grande Randonnée in **France**, running around 240 km from Le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Gilles. Allow 10-12 days for this moderate point-to-point walk across the southern Massif Central, Haute-Loire, Lozere and Gard. It suits hikers who want a quieter French thru-hike with real history, village lodging, upland forest, Cévennes chestnut country and a final descent towards the Mediterranean lowlands.

Route Overview

The conventional direction is north to south: start in Le Puy-en-Velay, cross the high Velay and Lozere country via Pradelles, Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Luc and Villefort, then continue through Genolhac, Chamborigaud, Portes, Ales and Vezenobres to Saint-Gilles near Nimes and the Camargue. The historic Regordane core is between Luc and Ales. This is a linear trail, not a loop, so plan end-to-end transport and accommodation in advance. For a different French GR mountain feel, compare the **Chartreuse Trail GR9 segment**; for a flatter southern option, see the **Canal du Midi Towpath**.

History of the Regordane Way

The Chemin de Regordane followed a geological fault line across the Massif Central and became a major land link between the Paris region and the Mediterranean. Its importance grew from the 9th century and peaked in the Middle Ages, when traders, mule-drivers, crusaders and pilgrims used it. Salt, oil and wine moved north; wool, hides, livestock and dairy moved south. Chapels, inns, monasteries and castles such as Portes developed along the road. The modern GR700 retraces this corridor.

Notable highlights

- **Le Puy-en-Velay:** Volcanic pilgrimage city and the northern trailhead. Its cathedral of Notre-Dame is a UNESCO-listed starting point of the Le Puy Camino, and Chapelle Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe stands on a volcanic plug.
- **Pradelles:** Hilltop Velay village classed among Les Plus Beaux Villages de France. Its arcaded squares and old houses make it one of the route's strongest early village stops.
- **Cévennes National Park:** The middle section crosses this UNESCO-listed cultural landscape, shifting from upland conifer forest towards chestnut groves, schist hamlets and Mont Lozere country.
- **Chateau de Portes:** A hilltop castle guarding the Regordane road, known as the "Vaisseau des Cévennes" for its ship-like prow. It marks the strategic value of this historic corridor.
- **Abbey of Saint-Gilles:** The southern finish is marked by a medieval abbey church on the Routes of Santiago de Compostela. Its Romanesque facade and crypt are the key heritage sights at the end.
- **Garrigue and the Petite Camargue:** The final approach swaps mountain forest for Mediterranean scrub, vineyards and the flatter Gard plains near the Petite Camargue.

Challenges to expect

The GR700 is not technical, but it is a sustained multi-day mountain route: around 4,000 m of cumulative ascent, stony paths, old cobbled mule tracks, forest roads and some lanes. The high point is 1,235 m, so winter snow and cold are possible on the uplands, while the Gard garrigue can be hot in midsummer. Navigation is helped by standard red-and-white GR waymarks. For another forested French upland option, compare the [Ballons des Vosges Park Trails](#).

Key Data

Country	France
Distance	240 km
Duration	10-12 days
Difficulty	Moderate
Trail type	Point to point
Elevation gain/loss	4000 m
Highest point	1235 m
Terrain & landscape	Mountainous, Forest
Trail surface	Dirt, Gravel, Rocky
Accommodation	Hotels, Guesthouses, Hostels, Campsites
Average daytime temp.	18°C
Chance of rainfall	Medium
Estimated cost	\$\$
Optimal season	Spring, Summer, Autumn
Accessibility	Family Friendly, Pet Friendly
Facilities	Restrooms, Water Sources, Campsites, Shelters, Picnic Areas
Permits & fees	No permits or fees

Introduction

The GR700, the Chemin de Régordane or Voie Régordane, is a quieter French long-distance walk from Le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. It suits hikers who want a serious, history-rich thru-hike with village lodging, red-and-white GR balises and fewer walkers than the GR70 Stevenson Trail.

This is one of France's oldest documented routes, in use from 843 and heavily travelled between the 11th and 14th centuries. It links two UNESCO World Heritage sites: the cathedral of Notre-Dame at Le Puy-en-Velay and the Abbey Church of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, once counted among the great pilgrim destinations of Christendom.

The history is not just background. At La Garde-Guérin, cart ruts carved into sandstone still mark centuries of traffic carrying Camargue salt north, and wines, cereals and wool south across the Massif Central.

The walk is also a full north-to-south landscape transition: volcanic Velay plateau, exposed Margeride and Lozère uplands, conifer forest, chestnut Cévennes, schist hamlets, then garrigue, vineyards and the flat Gard plains. The contrast between cold, open high country and the hot Mediterranean approach beyond Vézénobres and Nîmes is one of the route's defining rewards.

The GR700 is moderate rather than technical, but it is not a casual first multi-day walk: expect around 240 km, 4,041 m of ascent, stony paths, old cobbled tracks, quiet lanes and 10 to 13 consecutive walking days. Accommodation and transport need planning, especially on quieter stages where services are limited.

This guide covers stages, day choices, accommodation, food and resupply, transport, terrain, costs, navigation and common mistakes.

Stage-by-Stage Guide

The stages below follow the official 13-stage GR700 plan. Strong walkers commonly merge several of the shorter days into a 10-day itinerary, especially between Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud and Alès, but accommodation spacing should decide this rather than ambition alone.

Stage 1: Le Puy-en-Velay to Costaros — 20 km

This is a memorable start, leaving the cathedral quarter of Le Puy-en-Velay and climbing out of the volcanic basin onto the Devès plateau. The first kilometres feel urban-fringe at times around Vals-près-le-Puy, then the route opens into farmland, lava soils and broad views back over the volcanic landscape.

Underfoot, expect a mix of paths, tracks and lanes rather than technical walking. The plateau can be exposed, with limited shade in warm weather, so carry enough water from Le Puy and start early in summer.

Le Puy-en-Velay has the full range of services: shops, restaurants, accommodation, pharmacies and an SNCF station. Vals-près-le-Puy offers basic services on the way out, but Costaros is a small village, so do not assume late-opening shops or easy bed availability.

Costaros has a convenience store and bakeries, but accommodation is limited and should be booked ahead. Some walkers stay an extra night in Le Puy and make an early start, or push beyond Costaros if their accommodation plan allows.

Navigation is generally straightforward, with standard red-and-white GR balises and a brief shared line with the GR65 Camino route before the GR700 diverges. Take care not to follow Camino waymarks by habit once the routes separate.

Stage 2: Costaros to Langogne — 25 km

This is one of the longer days in the official schedule and crosses the open Devès plateau through cultivated country. The walking is not technically difficult, but the middle section can feel drawn out, with long, rolling or flat stretches and relatively little shade.

The stage passes Landos, an important early resupply point, before reaching Pradelles, one of the route's most attractive villages. Pradelles is classed among Les Plus Beaux Villages de France and makes the natural lunch stop, with its hilltop position above the Upper Allier valley.

Food planning matters on this stage. Landos has shops including a bakery, while Pradelles has a small superette with restricted opening hours and closures on Mondays; this should be checked before relying on it. Langogne is the first major resupply town, with supermarkets, bakeries, charcuteries, pharmacies, banks, ATMs, a tourist office and an SNCF station.

Accommodation is much easier in Langogne than in the small plateau villages before it. Pradelles also has walking accommodation, including gîte-style options, but popular places should be booked ahead.

The GR700 shares this section with the GR70 Stevenson Trail, so waymarking is usually clear but dual-signed. After Langogne the two routes separate: the GR70 heads towards Florac, while the GR700 continues south into the Lozère uplands.

Stage 3: Langogne to La Bastide-Puylaurent — 24 km

From Langogne the GR700 leaves the Allier-side town and climbs onto the Margeride and Lozère uplands. The walking becomes wilder and more wooded, with forest paths, tracks and plateau sections rather than the open farmland of the previous day.

A key intermediate point is Luc, where the ruined Château de Luc stands above the Allier. Before Luc, the Gardille forest area and the étang with benches and shelter make a useful rest point.

Water and food need more planning here than on Stage 2. There is a long section between Langogne and Luc with limited water access, so leave Langogne full. Luc has a small café/restaurant and an SNCF stop on the Cévenol line, but it is not a large service village.

La Bastide-Puylaurent is a useful overnight halt with gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes, camping, some shops, cafés, a pharmacy and an SNCF station. It is also the last significant supply point before the route commits more fully to the Cévennes and Chassezac country.

Navigation is important after Langogne because the GR700 and GR70 separate. Check the correct red-and-white balises and carry a GPX file as backup, particularly if visibility is poor on the uplands.

Stage 4: La Bastide-Puylaurent to Villefort — 22 km

This is one of the finest stages of the GR700, crossing high ground above the Chassezac valley before descending to Villefort. The route uses forest paths, old paved lanes, plateau tracks and historic cobbled Régordane sections, with views towards Mont Lozère and the Cévennes.

The major highlight is La Garde-Guérin, a fortified medieval village standing above the Chassezac gorges. Its tower, stone lanes and viewpoint over the gorge make it one of the most rewarding stops on the whole trail.

La Garde-Guérin has limited but useful services, including an auberge, water, toilets and a rest area near the tower. Do not treat it as a major resupply point; carry food from La Bastide-Puylaurent unless accommodation or meals have been arranged.

Villefort is a well-equipped Lozère town with hotels, gîtes, chambres d'hôtes, camping, shops, restaurants, a tourist office and an SNCF station on the Cévenol line. It is a practical place to reset food supplies before the shorter but hillier Cévennes stages.

The descent to Villefort and the area around the lake and town roads need care, especially where the route meets traffic and roundabout approaches. There is also an optional detour towards Notre-Dame-des-Neiges from the La Bastide side, but current access and opening should be checked before planning around it.

Stage 5: Villefort to Génolhac — 14 km

Although short on paper, this is a serious walking day because of the ascent from Villefort and the climb over the Col de l'Ancise area. The route leaves the lake and Altier valley edge, then moves onto forest tracks, balcony paths and older Régordane ways.

This stage marks a strong change in landscape. Conifer forest gives way towards chestnut groves, schist valleys and the more intimate Cévennes terrain, including historic cart-rut sections linked to centuries of

traffic on the Régordane road.

Concoules is the main intermediate service point, with a small épicerie, but opening hours should be checked, especially on Sundays. Génolhac has shops, cafés, gîte and chambre d'hôtes accommodation, a seasonal tourist office and an SNCF station.

Some walkers continue beyond Génolhac to Chamborigaud, about 3 km further, to merge this stage with part of the next day. This can work well for a 10-day schedule, but only if accommodation is secured in advance.

The road sections around Villefort town centre and the lakeside roundabout are among the more awkward parts of the northern route for walkers. Use extra care where pedestrian provision is poor.

Stage 6: Génolhac to Portes — 14 km

This short stage continues through the schist Cévennes, chestnut woods and scattered hamlets before reaching the hilltop castle village of Portes. The walking is varied rather than long, with a steady amount of ascent for the distance.

Chamborigaud is the main place passed, notable for its railway viaducts over the Luech valley and its position on the Cévenol line. It is a useful alternative overnight stop for walkers adjusting the official staging.

Food and services are limited after Chamborigaud. The village has a café/bar, basic supplies and an SNCF station, while Portes is very small with limited services; any café opening should be checked locally.

Château de Portes is the day's landmark, a dramatic hilltop castle known as the "Vaisseau des Cévennes" because of its ship-like prow. It is open seasonally and gives excellent views when accessible.

Accommodation around Chamborigaud and Portes is mostly gîte-style and should be booked ahead using the official accommodation guide. This part of the route sits within the Cévennes National Park area, where autumn storms can be severe; in late September and October, monitor forecasts carefully.

Stage 7: Portes to Alès — 24 km

This is the transition day from the Cévennes highlands towards the Gard lowlands. The route gradually descends through former mining country and the outskirts of Alès, with a more urban feel in the final kilometres.

Saint-Martin-de-Valgagues lies on the approach to Alès, where the landscape becomes suburban and peri-urban. The final line follows the Gardon d'Alès river area into the city.

Services increase as the stage progresses, but do not rely on frequent rural stops before the Alès fringe. Alès is the major resupply city on the GR700, with supermarkets, bakeries, pharmacies, banks, hotels, gîtes, chambres d'hôtes and an SNCF station with rail connections to Nîmes and beyond.

This is a sensible place for a rest night, especially for walkers dividing the route into two halves. It is also a good point to replace worn gear, take out cash and reorganise food before the hotter, sparser southern stages.

Navigation needs attention on the urban approach because waymarks can be less obvious among streets, junctions and river-side paths. Keep the GPX to hand and check every turn rather than assuming

the route follows the most obvious road.

Stage 8: Alès to Ners — 17.5 km

The GR700 leaves Alès southwards and begins the shift into the Gardon valley, low hills and early garrigue. The stage is shorter than the previous day, but navigation becomes more demanding south of the city.

The main highlight is Vézénobres, a superb perched medieval village above the plain. Its historic centre and views south over the Gard are worth time, even if the walking day is otherwise moderate.

Services are available early around the Alès fringe, including Saint-Hilaire-de-Brethmas. Vézénobres has limited village services such as a small épicerie and café, but opening hours should be checked; Ners is a small village with basic services rather than a major resupply point.

Accommodation should be arranged before leaving Alès, particularly if aiming for Ners rather than stopping in or near Vézénobres. Baggage-transfer coverage is available on the GR700 as far as Vézénobres; arrangements south of that point should be checked before booking.

Waymarking south of Alès is less dependable, with faded or missing balises in places, so a GPX file is strongly recommended. A route diversion applies after Vézénobres in 2025; use the latest official GPX before setting off.

Stage 9: Ners to Saint-Chaptes — 15 km

This stage moves through rolling garrigue and the first stronger signs of vineyard country. The walking is generally easier underfoot than in the Cévennes, but heat and exposure become more important factors than ascent.

Mediterranean vegetation dominates: holm oak, cistus, wild lavender and scrubby tracks. In warm weather this can feel very different from the uplands, with long open stretches and limited shade.

Cruviers-Lascours and Moussac provide potential water points at churches or mairies, but local availability should always be checked on the day. Saint-Chaptes is a small Gard town with basic services, though café and bar opening hours can be unreliable.

Accommodation options are limited compared with Alès or Nîmes, so book ahead. Gîte-style accommodation and simple walker facilities may be available in the area, but this is not a stage to leave to chance.

Navigation is still more vulnerable here than in the north, so keep following the GPX as well as the GR balises. In summer, the practical warning is heat: start early, carry extra water and avoid relying on midday shade.

Stage 10: Saint-Chaptes to La Calmette — 18 km

The route continues through garrigue and increasingly through vineyards associated with the Costières de Nîmes country. It passes through or near Aubarne, Russan and Sainte-Anastasie before reaching La Calmette.

The walking is mostly moderate, but exposed sections can make this stage tiring in hot weather. Shade is patchy and the surface can include dry tracks, lanes and open field-edge paths.

Sainte-Anastasie is a useful stop with a bakery, while the Russan area may have a café depending on season and current opening. La Calmette has basic services and is the practical overnight stop in the official schedule.

Accommodation is available but should be booked ahead, as this section can feel surprisingly sparse between villages. Carry enough food and water from Saint-Chartes if walking outside core opening hours.

Navigation is less complex than the exit from Alès, but do not rely entirely on waymarks in the southern half of the route. A GPS track remains the safest backup.

Stage 11: La Calmette to Nîmes — 19 km

This stage crosses the garrigues north-west of Nîmes and then enters one of the route's major cities. The approach is a satisfying contrast: rural scrub and limestone paths give way to Roman landmarks and city streets.

A notable feature is the "Tape Cul" climb towards the Tour Magne, the Roman tower on the high point above Nîmes. The descent then leads into the city centre past major Roman sites including the Maison Carrée and Les Arènes.

Food and water are limited on the rural approach compared with the city itself, so leave La Calmette prepared. Once in Nîmes, services are comprehensive: supermarkets, restaurants, hotels, banks, pharmacies and all normal city facilities.

Nîmes is the main southern transport hub on the GR700, with a major SNCF station and TGV connections. It is the natural break point for section-hikers and a sensible extra-night stop for anyone wanting to avoid rushing the final plains.

Pilgrim-style accommodation is available at the Maison diocésaine, with advance booking required. City navigation needs attention, especially where GR balises compete with street signage and busy junctions.

Stage 12: Nîmes to Générac — 16 km

Leaving Nîmes, the route heads south into the flat and gently rolling Costières plains. The garrigue fades and the landscape becomes agricultural, with vineyards, orchards and open country.

This is not a mountain day, but it can still be demanding in heat because exposure is high and shade is limited. The walking is more about steady progress across the plains than landmarks or ascent.

Générac is a small Gard village with basic services and some accommodation. Check food, water and lodging before leaving Nîmes, where supplies are far more reliable.

Public transport options become more limited than at Nîmes, although the wider southern stages have small rail stops in the region. Any plan to leave or rejoin the trail here should be checked before travelling.

A route diversion applies in the Générac area in 2025. Use an updated GPX and check the latest route information before setting out from Nîmes.

Stage 13: Générac to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard — 12 km

The final stage is short, flat and completely different from the first half of the route. The GR700 crosses the open Petite Camargue lowlands, with orchards, drainage channels, reed-fringed roubines and long straight lines through the plains.

The landscape is exposed, with big horizons and little shelter. Birds such as herons and egrets are part of the lowland setting, but the practical issue is still water and sun protection, especially in summer.

Saint-Gilles-du-Gard is the southern finish, centred on the Abbaye de Saint-Gilles. The abbey's Romanesque façade and crypt are the final historic landmark of the Régordane Way, and the site is linked to the Routes of Santiago de Compostela.

Saint-Gilles has bakeries, supermarkets, hotels, chambres d'hôtes and pilgrim accommodation. The pilgrim welcome house should be booked ahead, and a Carnet du randonneur is useful for pilgrim facilities and abbey access arrangements.

There is no train station at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Return transport is by bus to Nîmes or Alès, or via Arles for onward rail connections; times should be checked before travelling, especially outside peak season.

Recommended Itinerary

The GR700 is commonly planned in two different ways: a faster 10-day traverse, or the more conservative 13-stage plan used by the main stage breakdown. For most independent walkers booking village accommodation, the 13-stage version is the safest default because it avoids forcing long days where beds, shops and water points are limited.

Distances below are approximate. Check current accommodation, opening days and any baggage-transfer arrangements before committing to a fixed schedule.

Standard itinerary: 13 walking days

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
1	Le Puy-en-Velay	Costaros	20 km	A manageable first day out of Le Puy, with a significant start to the upland walking. The route initially shares the GR65 Camino line before the GR700 separates at the marked junction.	Le Puy-en-Velay has the best pre-walk services, with gîtes, hostels, hotels and shops. Costaros is a small village with a gîte, an épicerie and a bakery, so arrive supplied rather than expecting town-level choice.
2	Costaros	Langogne	25 km	One of the longer early stages, crossing the Velay country through Landos and Pradelles before reaching a proper service town. It is a good test of pace before the wilder middle section.	Landos is useful for supplies. Pradelles has accommodation and shops, but supermarket opening can be awkward, including afternoon opening and Monday closure; this should be checked before relying on it. Langogne has full services, including shops, restaurants, pharmacy, accommodation and water in town.
3	Langogne	La Bastide-Puylaurent	24 km	This stage moves into quieter country via Luc and the Allier-side castle setting, then continues to the rail village of La Bastide-Puylaurent. It is long enough to require a proper food and water plan.	After leaving Langogne, allow for a long section without resupply. Luc has limited lodging options, and the Étang de l'Auradou makes a useful rest point. La Bastide-Puylaurent has limited provisions, a bar-pharmacy, water/WC and accommodation, but choices are not extensive.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
4	La Bastide-Puylaurent	Villefort	22 km	A key mountain stage, often remembered for La Garde-Guérin above the Chassezac gorges before the descent to Villefort. Keeping this as a single day gives time to enjoy the historic village without making the following day too long.	La Garde-Guérin has water, WC and seasonal hospitality, but accommodation and meals should be booked well ahead. Villefort has more services, including shops, restaurants, supermarket, campsite/gîte options and access to the Cévenol railway line.
5	Villefort	Génolhac	14 km	A short stage, but useful after the harder northern half and before the next Cévennes section. It can be combined with Day 6 by fit walkers, though that makes a much longer 28 km day.	Concoules has an épicerie and there are several village water points. A café at Vielvic cannot be relied on. Génolhac has shops, a bar-restaurant, accommodation and a Cévenol line station, making it useful for section hikers.
6	Génolhac	Portes	14 km	Another short day, positioning the walk at Portes before the longer push to Alès. This keeps the historic Régordane core unhurried rather than turning it into a forced march.	Chamborigaud has a campsite and a Cévenol line station. Portes has water and the Château de Portes nearby, but services are limited and café opening should not be assumed.
7	Portes	Alès	24 km	A longer stage out of the Cévennes towards the major town of Alès. It is a logical place to finish the mountain half of the route because accommodation, food and onward transport are much easier here.	Water points include Portes and Pradel. Saint-Martin-de-Valgalgues has accommodation options before Alès. Alès has full town services, restaurants, hotels and rail connections; take care on the urban approach, where waymarking near the Gardon can be less straightforward.
8	Alès	Ners	17.5 km	A moderate stage into the Gard plains, with Vézénobres as the main historic stop and a clear change from upland walking to lower, drier country.	Vézénobres has a bar/WC and is a worthwhile break. Ners is quiet with limited services, so accommodation must be arranged in advance. Moussac is a possible alternative overnight area with a Proxi supermarket.

Day	From	To	Approx. distance	Why this stage makes sense	Services/accommodation notes
9	Ners	Saint-Chaptes	15 km	A short southern stage that suits the sparser accommodation pattern after Alès. It keeps the approach through the Gard villages manageable rather than forcing a very long day.	Water is available early at Saint-Hilaire-de-Brethmas church. Saint-Chaptes has limited services and accommodation needs careful advance booking. Sainte-Anastasia nearby has a fountain, group accommodation and café options around Russan.
10	Saint-Chaptes	La Calmette	18 km	This is a practical link through vineyards and garrigue before the approach to Nîmes. In hot weather, the stage can feel harder than its distance suggests because shade is limited.	Carry enough water, especially in summer. La Calmette has a bakery and pharmacy, but accommodation is limited; book before setting out.
11	La Calmette	Nîmes	19 km	A natural city-stage and one of the best places for a rest night before the flat final approach to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. The climb to the Tour Magne gives a clear transition into Nîmes.	Nîmes has the broadest range of services on the southern half: accommodation, restaurants, shops and major rail links. Pilgrim-style and hostel accommodation exists, but booking ahead is still sensible.
12	Nîmes	Générac	16 km	A shorter day out of the city, transitioning towards the flatter Gard plains and Petite Camargue edge. It keeps the final stage short enough to allow time at Saint-Gilles.	Générac is a small town with basic services and limited accommodation. Check beds before leaving Nîmes, as this is not a place to assume walk-up availability.
13	Générac	Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	12 km	The shortest stage, deliberately leaving time to reach the Abbey of Saint-Gilles and sort onward travel. It is often combined with Day 12 by faster walkers.	Saint-Gilles-du-Gard has pilgrim accommodation, other lodging, bakery, supermarket and the abbey with pilgrim stamp. Bus connections run to Nîmes, Arles and Aigues-Mortes; times should be checked before travelling.

Slower variant: 14–16 days

A slower schedule suits walkers who want more time in the historic villages, are walking in hot weather, or prefer not to string together repeated 20 km-plus days with a full pack.

Good ways to add time include:

- **Split Day 2 by overnighting in Pradelles.** This eases the 25 km Costaros–Langogne stage and gives more time in one of the strongest villages on the northern half. Check official mapping and

accommodation before booking.

- **Add a night around La Garde-Guérin or Villefort.** La Garde-Guérin can be treated as a stage end by some walkers, but beds and meals are limited and should be reserved well ahead.
- **Keep Génolhac and Portes as separate short stages.** The 14 km + 14 km pattern may look inefficient on paper, but it works well in the Cévennes core and avoids a tiring 28 km day.
- **Add a rest night in Alès or Nîmes.** Alès is useful after the mountain section; Nîmes is the most practical rest stop before the final flat approach to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard.

For a relaxed itinerary, expect 14–16 days rather than trying to force every day into a fixed distance target. The main constraint is not mileage but confirmed accommodation, especially south of Alès.

Faster variant: 10–12 days

A faster itinerary suits fit walkers who are comfortable with consecutive long days and who have accommodation fixed in advance. It is less forgiving in hot weather, and it leaves less room for delays on the quieter southern stages.

The most practical accelerations are:

- **12 days:** combine **Nîmes → Générac → Saint-Gilles-du-Gard** into one longer final stage of about 28 km. This is mostly flatter country, but it can be hot and exposed.
- **11 days:** also combine **Villefort → Génolhac → Portes** into one 28 km Cévennes day, provided the walker is happy with a longer mountain-stage effort.
- **10 days:** a further merge is normally needed on the southern half after Alès. Because accommodation is thin around Ners, Saint-Chaptes and La Calmette, choose this only after beds are secured; check official mapping before booking.

The 10-day version is best treated as an efficient thru-hike rather than a cultural walking holiday. The first half carries most of the ascent, while the southern half is easier underfoot but more exposed and more dependent on advance accommodation planning.

Planning the Route

How many days to allow

There are two useful ways to think about the GR700: the compressed 10-day itinerary and the more relaxed 13-stage plan used by the official stage breakdown. Fit walkers can complete the route in 10–12 days, but the 13-stage version is often the more practical choice if you want shorter days, time in the villages and less pressure around accommodation.

The 10-day approach means several long days of around 20–25 km and leaves less room for heat, closures, shopping delays or a slow morning after a tough stage. The 13-stage approach keeps more days in the 14–19 km range, especially through parts of the Cévennes and Gard, where the terrain, heat and village spacing can make a shorter stage feel sensible.

This is a route that rewards a steady pace rather than a fast crossing. Pradelles, La Garde-Guérin, the Villefort–Génolhac–Portes section, Vézénobres and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard are all better planned as places to arrive with time spare, not simply as overnight stops.

Let accommodation dictate the stages

Daily planning is strongly shaped by where there is lodging. The GR700 is not a high-infrastructure Camino with beds every few kilometres; stages are naturally dictated by towns and villages with gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes, hotels, hostels or campsites.

Small gîtes are common, and many have limited capacity. Places of around 10–20 beds are typical on parts of the route, while larger centres are found in towns such as Alès and Nîmes. In smaller villages, one closure or a full gîte can force a significant rethink, so accommodation should be planned before committing to a daily schedule.

The Voie Régordane association publishes accommodation lists by region, and the FFRandonnée topoguide also includes contacts. The carnet du randonneur is available through the association and participating gîtes; allow about €5 and check the current price before ordering.

For off-peak walking, many hikers can book as they go with phone calls a day ahead, but July–August needs more caution. Nîmes and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard can fill quickly, and smaller pilgrim lodgings should not be assumed to have space late in the day.

Choosing a fast, standard or relaxed schedule

Approach	Best for	Planning implications
10 days	Strong walkers wanting a direct crossing	Expect long daily distances, fewer recovery margins and tighter accommodation planning.
10–12 days	Most fit long-distance walkers	A good balance between progress and flexibility, especially if stages are adjusted around lodging.
13 stages	Walkers who prefer shorter days or more time in villages	Easier daily totals, better for hot weather, and more time in the historic Cévennes core.

The historic Régordane core runs roughly from Luc to Alès. If there is one part of the route not to rush, it is this section: the walking through La Garde-Guérin, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud and Portes carries much of the character of the old route.

In the southern Gard, speed is often less useful than timing. In warm weather, start early, carry extra water and plan longer breaks through the hottest part of the day rather than trying to push through exposed garrigue and plains.

Section hiking and shortening the route

Section hiking is one of the GR700's strengths because the Cévenol railway line shadows much of the route through Lozère and the Cévennes. Useful rail points include Langogne, Luc, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Alès and Nîmes. Le Puy-en-Velay also has an SNCF station.

Saint-Gilles-du-Gard is not on the main rail line, so the final departure needs separate planning by bus or local connection from Nîmes or Alès. This should be checked before travelling, especially on Sundays and public holidays.

Good section-hiking blocks are:

Section	Typical time	Why it works
Le Puy-en-Velay to La Bastide-Puylaurent	About 3 days	A self-contained opening across the Velay and Margeride country, with rail access at La Bastide-Puylaurent.
La Bastide-Puylaurent to Alès	About 4–5 days	The strongest section for scenery and Régordane history, with several Cévenol railway stations.
Alès to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	About 3–4 days	The Mediterranean finale through garrigue, vineyards, Nîmes and the Gard plains.

The railway also provides useful exit points if a walker needs to shorten the hike. Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud and Alès are especially practical places to leave the route and continue by train towards Nîmes.

Extending the GR700 is less common, as it is already a substantial long-distance route. The most logical link is at Le Puy-en-Velay, where the GR65 / Le Puy Camino also begins.

Food and water planning

Food planning matters more on the GR700 than the overall difficulty might suggest. Some villages have limited opening hours, rural shops may close on Sundays and Mondays, and not every stage has reliable resupply.

The Langogne to Luc stretch has no food resupply, so carry provisions from Langogne. On some stages, there may be no dependable water for 15 km or more; in summer, carrying at least 2 litres is sensible, with more if conditions are hot.

Specific service cautions include Concoules, where the épicerie may be closed on Sundays and Mondays, and Pradelles, where supermarket opening has been afternoon-only. Opening hours change, so this should be checked locally before relying on either stop.

Ners should not be treated as a guaranteed water point on the trail. In the Gard section, assume heat, fewer natural water opportunities and longer exposed stretches, then plan accordingly.

Navigation and route information

The GR700 is waymarked with standard red-and-white GR balises, but the signing is not perfect throughout. A GPX file should be carried alongside the FFRandonnée topoguide or the Régordane – GR®700 app.

Pay particular attention south of Alès, where missing or inconsistent waymarks have been noted around the Alès–Moussac–Vézénobres area. Do not rely solely on paint marks when leaving towns or crossing more developed lowland sections.

There has also been a route modification between Pont-de-Rastel and Chamborigaud, using the D278 and D906 because of erosion. Use current GPX data and current guidebook information rather than an old saved track.

Transport, baggage and end-to-end logistics

This is a linear route, so arrival and departure logistics should be arranged before the first walking day. Le Puy-en-Velay has rail access, while the finish at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard requires onward bus or local transport to Nîmes or Alès.

The Cévenol line is central to planning: it helps with section hikes, emergency exits and repositioning before or after the walk. Nîmes is the most useful southern rail hub, with mainline connections.

Baggage transfer is available on the route. Transbagages operates baggage and shuttle services for the Voie Régordane, and La Malle Postale is also used by walkers; book ahead and ensure each overnight stop is on the operator's covered itinerary.

Weather, closures and permits

No walking permit is required for the GR700, and the Cévennes National Park section does not impose a special access permit for ordinary walkers. Normal respect for waymarked paths, private land, livestock areas and local restrictions still applies.

Seasonal planning matters. Winter can bring snow and cold on the uplands, while July and August can be very hot in the Gard garrigue and plains. In midsummer, check the Gard department's daily fire-risk information before walking southern stages, as closures are possible during extreme fire danger.

In September and October, Cévenol episodes can bring intense rainfall and short-term disruption. Forecasts should be checked carefully before committing to exposed or remote stages, and the train line gives useful escape options if conditions deteriorate.

Towns, Villages and Overnight Stops

Accommodation on the GR700 is a mix of hotels, chambres d'hôtes, gîtes d'étape, pilgrim-style lodging and campsites. The Le Puy-en-Velay to Langogne section benefits from overlap with the GR70 Stevenson Trail, while the Cévennes core and several Gard villages have much thinner capacity.

Book ahead rather than relying on turning up, especially in July, August and September. The official Voie Régordane accommodation lists are particularly useful for the smaller southern stops such as Ners, Saint-Chaptes, La Calmette and Générac, where lodging can be limited. Current opening dates, prices and half-board arrangements should be checked before travelling.

Le Puy-en-Velay

Le Puy-en-Velay is the northern trailhead and the best place to prepare properly before starting. The GR700 sets off near the cathedral of Notre-Dame, in the same broad pilgrimage environment as the Le Puy Camino / GR65.

This is a full-service city, with supermarkets, outdoor gear shops, pharmacies, banks, restaurants, brasseries and a wide range of accommodation. Options range from budget hostels and pilgrim-style lodging to hotels and chambres d'hôtes.

Le Puy-en-Velay has an SNCF station, with TER connections including links towards Clermont-Ferrand, Issoire, Lyon via Clermont or Saint-Étienne, and coach options from Paris. It is the most convenient place to arrive the day before walking, collect a Carnet du Randonneur if wanted, buy food and deal with any gear problems.

Vals-près-le-Puy

Vals-près-le-Puy is effectively the first suburban settlement as the trail leaves Le Puy-en-Velay. It is not normally used as an overnight stop, but it marks the transition from city streets to the open Velay plateau.

Use Le Puy for all meaningful resupply before departure. Once beyond the city edge, services become noticeably thinner until the next planned overnight.

Costaros

Costaros is the usual first overnight in the 13-stage plan, about 20 km from Le Puy-en-Velay. It is a small plateau village rather than a service town, so it works best as a booked bed rather than a flexible resupply stop.

Accommodation is limited to small gîtes d'étape and chambres d'hôtes. Shops and restaurants should not be assumed beyond what is provided by the accommodation, so arrange dinner, breakfast and packed lunch details when booking.

Landos

Landos lies between Costaros and Pradelles on the Velay section. It is mainly a route waypoint, with a historic washhouse and the Église Saint-Félix, rather than a strategic overnight stop.

Services are minimal. Carry what is needed from Costaros or the previous accommodation, and do not rely on Landos for a full shop or meal stop.

Pradelles

Pradelles is one of the route's most attractive villages and is classed among Les Plus Beaux Villages de France. It sits on the hilltop section before Langogne, with arcaded medieval streets and views towards the Allier country.

It can be used as a lunch stop, a shorter-stage overnight or a more characterful alternative to pressing directly on to Langogne. Accommodation includes gîte-style options such as Brasserie du Musée and Le Stevenson, but capacity is limited and should be booked ahead.

The GR700 shares this Velay approach with the GR70 Stevenson Trail, so walker infrastructure is better here than in many later villages. Even so, Pradelles is not a major resupply point; use it for a pause, food if available, and an overnight if pre-arranged.

Langogne

Langogne is the first major service town after Le Puy-en-Velay and is one of the most important overnights in the northern half of the GR700. It lies on the Allier, around the end of the second standard stage from Costaros.

This is a proper resupply stop, with shops, a supermarket, bakeries, cafés, restaurants, a pharmacy and a tourist office. Accommodation options include guesthouses and walker-friendly establishments close to the GR70 / GR700 corridor.

Langogne also has an SNCF station on the Cévenol line, making it a useful access, exit or section-hike point. The GR70 Stevenson Trail and GR700 diverge around this point, so from here south the route becomes quieter and planning becomes more important.

Luc

Luc is a tiny hamlet above the Allier gorge, best known on the route for the ruined Château de Luc above the river. It sits between Langogne and La Bastide-Puylaurent.

This is a scenic and historic waypoint rather than a reliable service stop. The Cévenol railway passes through or near Luc, but services are limited and it should not be treated as a main transport hub.

Carry food through this section unless accommodation has specifically arranged meals. The practical overnight for most walkers is La Bastide-Puylaurent.

La Bastide-Puylaurent

La Bastide-Puylaurent is a key mountain village and a crossroads for several GR routes, including the GR7, GR70, GR72, GR700, GR470 and GRP Cévenol. It is a strong overnight after the Langogne to La Bastide-Puylaurent stage.

Services are unusually good for this rural section: pharmacy, grocery store, butcher, post office, newsagent, garage and other basic village facilities. Accommodation includes hotels, guesthouses and

camping nearby, with L'Étoile, La Grande Halte, Les Genêts and Camping de l'Allier among the known options.

The SNCF station, La Bastide-Saint-Laurent-les-Bains, is around 300 m from the village centre and sits on the Cévenol / Clermont-Nîmes rail corridor. This makes La Bastide-Puylaurent one of the best places to start, stop or rejoin the route in the upland section.

La Garde-Guérin

La Garde-Guérin is a fortified medieval village on a granite plateau above the Chassezac gorges and one of the finest overnight locations on the GR700. It is also classed among Les Plus Beaux Villages de France.

The village is tiny, so the main practical option is the Auberge la Régordane, a hotel-restaurant in a renovated historic building. There are very limited alternatives and no meaningful shops, so book well ahead and arrange meals at the same time.

The official shorter-stage approach often treats La Garde-Guérin as its own stop between La Bastide-Puylaurent and Villefort. Faster 10-day itineraries may continue to Villefort, but staying here gives a shorter day and time to explore the village and Chassezac viewpoint.

Villefort

Villefort is one of the best service points between Langogne and Alès. It sits beside Lac de Villefort and is a natural overnight after the descent from La Garde-Guérin or La Bastide-Puylaurent.

The town has year-round services including bakeries, butchers, mini-markets, restaurants, cafés, pharmacy, doctors and a newsagent. Accommodation includes hotels, guesthouses, gîtes and camping around the lake area, including Camping Lac de Villefort.

Villefort has an SNCF station on the Cévenol line, which is valuable for emergency exits, section hiking and meeting baggage or shuttle services. It is a good place to resupply before the quieter Cévennes villages to the south.

Concoules

Concoules lies between Villefort and Génolhac. It is a small Cévennes schist village with a notable Romanesque church, but it is not a major service stop.

Treat Concoules as a scenic and historical waypoint. Food, onward lodging and any transport arrangements should be planned around Villefort and Génolhac instead.

Génolhac

Génolhac is a useful overnight at the Cévennes crossroads, on both the GR700 and GR68 Tour du Mont Lozère. It works well at the end of the shorter Villefort to Génolhac stage.

The village has restaurants, bars and small shops, with a better spread of accommodation than many surrounding settlements. Options include a communal gîte d'étape, camping, guesthouse lodging and hotel-restaurant accommodation near the station; prices and opening dates should be checked before booking.

Génolhac has an SNCF station on the Cévenol line, making it a strong access point for walkers joining or leaving the historic Régordane core. It is also a sensible place to reset food supplies before the Portes and Alès section.

Chamborigaud

Chamborigaud is a small Cévennes village between Génolhac and Portes, on the Cévenol rail line. It is known for the railway viaduct and can be useful for walkers needing a transport link or a non-standard overnight.

Village services are limited. The main accommodation anchor is the Centre de Vacances de Chausse, a larger holiday centre with facilities including a swimming pool and a shuttle from Chamborigaud station; current availability and prices should be checked before travelling.

Portes

Portes is a strategic overnight before the longer stage into Alès. The route's landmark here is the Château de Portes, nicknamed the Vaisseau des Cévennes because of its ship-like ridge profile.

Services in and around Portes are very limited, so this stop must be booked and provisioned carefully. Gîte-style accommodation exists in the area, but opening seasons can vary and should be checked before travelling.

The following stage to Alès is one of the longer southern days. Make sure breakfast, water and food for the day are arranged before leaving Portes.

Saint-Martin-de-Valgalgues

Saint-Martin-de-Valgalgues sits on the approach to Alès and is effectively part of the wider Alès urban fringe for GR700 planning. It is not usually a key resupply stop, but it can work as a quieter overnight before entering the city.

Accommodation is available in the area, including chambres d'hôtes such as Mas de La Filoselle. Independent village services are limited, and Alès is the practical target for supermarkets, banks, pharmacies and onward transport.

Alès

Alès is the major city between Le Puy-en-Velay and Nîmes, and one of the most important logistical stops on the GR700. It is a common overnight, rest-day point, section-hike break or emergency exit.

The city has full services: supermarkets, pharmacies, outdoor shops, banks, restaurants, brasseries and a post office. Accommodation ranges from chambres d'hôtes and independent hotels to chain hotels such as Campanile and ibis, with options close to the railway station.

Alès SNCF station is on the Cévenol line, with rail links towards Nîmes and the Clermont-Ferrand corridor, plus bus links to Nîmes. This is also a practical place to coordinate baggage services such as Transbagages and La Malle Postale.

For hikers continuing south, Alès is the last large urban resupply before the Gard garrigue and the smaller villages towards Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Stock up properly here rather than assuming the next few

stages will have full services.

Vézénobres

Vézénobres is a perched medieval village on the descent from the Cévennes into the Gard plain. It is one of the most memorable southern stops and a good place to break the Alès to Ners section if preferred.

There are restaurants and bars in the village, but the medieval core has limited grocery shopping. Accommodation includes hotel lodging such as Logis Le Relais Sarrasin, with current rates and availability to be checked before booking.

Vézénobres is useful for walkers who want a more characterful overnight than the smaller lowland villages. It also marks the change in feel from Cévennes schist and forest to vineyards, garrigue and warmer lowland walking.

Ners

Ners is a small Gard village on the Gardon and is used as an overnight in the standard 13-stage plan after Alès. It is a much quieter stop than Alès or Nîmes.

Services are very limited, and Ners should be treated mainly as a pre-booked lodging stop. Check accommodation, dinner options and breakfast before committing to the stage.

Saint-Chaptes / Boucoiran

Saint-Chaptes and Boucoiran sit in the Gard lowland section, after Ners. This is garrigue and vineyard country, with smaller settlements and less obvious walker infrastructure than the earlier rail-served Cévennes towns.

Accommodation and services are limited and should be checked before travelling. This is a section where the official accommodation lists are especially useful, as daily stage planning depends on what is open and willing to host walkers.

La Calmette

La Calmette is a village on the approach to Nîmes and is used as a stage stop in the official shorter-stage structure. It is practical rather than scenic in GR700 terms: a place to sleep before the final approach to the city.

Services are limited compared with Nîmes. Book lodging in advance and plan meals rather than relying on late-arrival options.

Nîmes

Nîmes is the second major city on the route and a key transport hub, although the GR700 continues beyond it to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Many walkers use Nîmes as a rest point, exit point or place for a more comfortable city overnight.

The city has full services, including supermarkets, pharmacies, banks, restaurants, hotels and budget accommodation such as the Auberge de Jeunesse la Cigale. It is the obvious place to deal with gear issues, laundry, food shopping and onward travel questions.

Nîmes has major rail connections, with TGV and TER services including links to Paris, Marseille, Montpellier, Lunel and Alès. For hikers not completing the final lowland stages, it is the easiest southern exit point.

Générac / Garons

Générac and Garons sit on the garrigue plateau between Nîmes and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. The standard stage structure uses Générac as the penultimate overnight before the finish.

Services are minimal compared with Nîmes, and this is primarily a lodging stop. Book ahead, carry food from Nîmes if needed, and check whether dinner and breakfast are available at the accommodation.

Saint-Gilles-du-Gard

Saint-Gilles-du-Gard is the southern finish of the GR700, in the Petite Camargue lowlands. The route ends at the medieval Abbey of Saint-Gilles, whose Romanesque façade and crypt are part of the Santiago de Compostela World Heritage context.

The town has proper end-of-walk services, including shops, restaurants, cafés, bakeries, a pharmacy and a supermarket. Accommodation includes hotels and guesthouses, with some pilgrim-oriented options because Saint-Gilles also lies on the Chemin de Saint-Jacques / Via Tolosana.

There is no SNCF station in Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Plan onward travel by bus or shuttle towards Nîmes or Alès, or use other regional links towards Arles, Nîmes and Montpellier; current timetables should be checked before travelling.

Getting to the Start

The GR700 starts in Le Puy-en-Velay, Haute-Loire. The official starting point is Place du Plot in the lower town, with the route passing beneath the cathedral of Notre-Dame de France as it heads south.

Le Puy-en-Velay is also a major departure point for the GR65 and GR70, so the town is well used to walkers. When booking transport, check the destination carefully: Le Puy-en-Velay is not the same place as Le Puy-Saint-Bonnet near Cholet.

By train

Le Puy-en-Velay has its own SNCF station, Gare de Le Puy-en-Velay, served by TER Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes regional trains. There are no direct TGV services to Le Puy-en-Velay, so long-distance journeys require at least one change.

Saint-Étienne Châteaureux is the key rail interchange for the final TER leg to Le Puy-en-Velay.

From	Typical route	Approximate journey time	Notes
Paris	Paris Gare de Lyon to Saint-Étienne Châteaureux, then TER to Le Puy-en-Velay	4h 30m–5h 30m	Some routings also change at Lyon Part-Dieu. Around 9–11 trains per day on this corridor.
Lyon	Lyon Part-Dieu or Lyon Perrache to Saint-Étienne Châteaureux, then TER to Le Puy-en-Velay	2h 15m–2h 30m	Usually the simplest major-city approach.
Saint-Étienne	Direct TER to Le Puy-en-Velay	About 1h 20m	Useful if arriving the evening before and overnighing in Saint-Étienne.
Clermont-Ferrand	Usually via Issoire or Brioude	About 2h 10m	Fewer services; check timings carefully.

Paris services leave from Paris Gare de Lyon, not Gare du Nord or Montparnasse. Advance Paris–Le Puy-en-Velay fares are commonly around €31–€66, while Lyon–Le Puy-en-Velay TER fares are often around €15–€25; flexible fares can be higher.

Book and check current times through SNCF Connect. Regional TER timetables vary by season and are thinner on Sundays, public holidays and late evenings; this should be checked before travelling.

By bus

Long-distance coach services to Le Puy-en-Velay are less useful than the train. FlixBus and other coach operators may serve Le Puy-en-Velay from cities such as Lyon, Paris and Clermont-Ferrand, but frequencies are limited and vary by date.

Local and regional buses in Haute-Loire are operated by Mobilité en Velay. These are more relevant for short local journeys around Le Puy-en-Velay than for reaching the GR700 start from another region of France.

Do not rely on a Sunday or public-holiday bus without checking the current timetable. This should be checked before travelling.

By car

Le Puy-en-Velay is straightforward to reach by road, but the GR700 is a linear trail ending at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Anyone driving to the start needs a clear plan for returning to the vehicle after the hike.

Approximate driving times are:

From	Approximate distance	Approximate driving time	Main approach
Lyon	130 km	1h 30m	Via the RN88/A47 corridor through Saint-Étienne
Clermont-Ferrand	130 km	1h 30m	Via RN102/A75
Saint-Étienne	75 km	45 min	Via RN88
Paris	520 km	4h 30m–5h	Via A71/A75 through the Auvergne
Nîmes	210 km	About 2h	Useful for end-to-end logistics

The two practical car strategies are to leave the vehicle in Le Puy-en-Velay and return by public transport from the south, or to arrange a lift or shuttle between the start and finish. Transbagages covers baggage transfer on the Régordane Way and is also a useful contact for route logistics.

Long-stay hiker and pilgrim parking is available in Le Puy-en-Velay, but it should be reserved ahead. Options include:

Parking option	Location / operator	Indicative cost	Notes
Parking Foch	6 Avenue Maréchal Foch	About €30 per week / €60 for two weeks	Open daily, with video surveillance. Advance booking recommended.
Parking des Carmes	1 Rue Pierre Farigoule	Similar to Parking Foch	Same operator; confirm current rates when booking.
Municipal park-and-ride facilities	Bertrand de Doue, Estroulhas, Montredon, Quincieu	About €10 per week / €20 per month	Operated by Mobilité en Velay. Booking and payment are required at the Mobilité en Velay office. Height limit 2.20 m and length limit 5.50 m.

Parking prices and conditions can change. Confirm current prices, opening arrangements and reservation requirements before travelling.

From the nearest airport

Le Puy-en-Velay has a small local airport at Loudes, about 7 km from the town centre. It has a seasonal domestic Paris Orly service operated by Twinjet, typically running roughly March to October, but no

regular international network. A taxi or private transfer is needed between the airport and Le Puy-en-Velay.

For most walkers arriving from outside the region, Lyon Saint-Exupéry is the most practical airport. From Lyon airport, take the Rhônexpress tram to Lyon Part-Dieu, then TER trains via Saint-Étienne Châteaureux to Le Puy-en-Velay. Allow roughly 3h 30m–4h 30m from the airport to the trailhead by public transport, depending on connections.

Paris Charles de Gaulle and Paris Orly are workable for long-haul arrivals. Transfer into Paris, then travel from Paris Gare de Lyon towards Saint-Étienne Châteaureux and on to Le Puy-en-Velay by TER. From Charles de Gaulle, the full airport-to-Le Puy journey is typically around 5h 30m–6h 30m.

Saint-Étienne Bouthéon and Clermont-Ferrand Auvergne are regional alternatives, but both have more limited flight options. From Saint-Étienne Bouthéon, take a taxi to Saint-Étienne Châteaureux, then the TER to Le Puy-en-Velay. From Clermont-Ferrand Auvergne, onward rail connections are less frequent and should be checked carefully.

Weekend and evening arrivals can be awkward because regional TER services reduce later in the day. This should be checked before travelling, especially if the first walking day is booked for the following morning.

Where to stay before starting

Staying in Le Puy-en-Velay the night before starting is the simplest option. It gives time to deal with late transport, buy food or missing kit, and start from Place du Plot without rushing.

Walker-friendly options include gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes, hotels and pilgrim hostels. The Gîte d'Étape des Capucins is the main pilgrim and hiker hostel in town, with dorm beds from about €18.50; it is popular with GR65, GR70 and GR700 walkers, so booking ahead is wise.

Hotels near the station are convenient for late arrivals by train. Options include ibis budget Le Puy-en-Velay opposite the station, Hôtel Le Regina, Dyke Hotel, Deltour Hotel and B&B Hotels Le Puy-en-Velay.

Le Puy-en-Velay is busy in spring and in July–August because several long-distance walking routes start here. Book accommodation several weeks ahead in peak periods, and confirm check-in times if arriving late by train.

Before leaving, allow time to collect the Carnet du randonneur if using one, and to check current trail information with the tourist office or the Voie Régordane association. The town is also the last easy place to solve equipment issues before the first stage south to Costaros.

Getting Home from the Finish

The GR700 finishes at the Abbey of Saint-Gilles in Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, a small town in the Gard lowlands about 19–20 km south-west of Nîmes. Saint-Gilles has no SNCF railway station, so almost all public-transport exits begin with a bus or taxi to Nîmes.

For most walkers, the sensible default is to finish, stay overnight in Saint-Gilles, then travel the next morning. This is especially important if arriving late in the day, on a Saturday, or on a Sunday when bus options are very limited or absent.

By train

There is no train station in Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. The nearest practical rail hub is Nîmes, reached first by TANGO bus or taxi.

From Nîmes, onward rail connections are straightforward on the main Paris–Marseille axis and regional TER network:

Route from Nîmes	Typical use	Approximate journey time
Nîmes → Paris Gare de Lyon	TGV northbound, international onward travel	Fastest trains about 3 hours
Nîmes → Lyon	Northern France / airport connections	About 1.5–2 hours
Nîmes → Marseille	Marseille airport, south-east France, onward rail	About 1 hour
Nîmes → Montpellier	Montpellier airport connections	About 30 minutes
Nîmes → Alès	Returning to the Cévenol line / route towns	About 1h30

Book longer-distance SNCF journeys through SNCF Connect and reserve early for busy summer weekends. If connecting the same day from Saint-Gilles, leave generous time between the bus or taxi arrival in Nîmes and any booked TGV.

Some pilgrims and long-distance walkers extend the journey on foot to Arles, about 21 km beyond Saint-Gilles, to finish at another historic route hub with mainline rail connections. That is an optional extension rather than part of the GR700 finish logistics.

By bus

The main public-transport link from the finish is TANGO line 42 from Saint-Gilles to Nîmes. It runs via Caissargues to the Costières Parnasse tram/bus interchange in Nîmes, where you can continue across the city or connect towards the SNCF station.

Key points for line 42:

- Journey time: roughly 31–40 minutes.
- Frequency: roughly hourly, Monday to Saturday.
- Sunday service: no regular Sunday service; this should be checked before travelling.
- Fare: approximately €2.

- Timetables: check current times at tangobus.fr before fixing train tickets.

Line 219 also links Saint-Gilles with the wider TANGO network, but line 42 is the standard practical exit towards Nîmes. Public-holiday and Sunday travel is the main trap: if finishing at the weekend, plan an overnight stop or arrange a taxi in advance.

By car/taxi

A taxi from Saint-Gilles to Nîmes takes about 20–25 minutes in normal conditions and typically costs around €45–60. Confirm current prices before booking, particularly for evening, Sunday or public-holiday journeys.

Local taxi options include:

Operator	Contact
Taxis Crumière	04 66 87 08 70 / 04 66 87 31 25
Le Saint-Gillois SK	06 88 81 61 62 / 04 66 29 22 80
Axel Vidal	06 98 79 95 15

Axel Vidal also offers longer-distance transport and group or vehicle transfers, covering the southern part of the route including Génolhac to Saint-Gilles. This can be useful for parties with tight onward connections, luggage, or a car left elsewhere.

If being collected by car, the abbey is in the town centre, so agree a clear pick-up point in advance rather than relying on meeting directly outside the finish. Saint-Gilles is small, but town-centre streets and parking can still make a vague rendezvous awkward at the end of a long day.

From the nearest airport

The closest named airport is Nîmes-Alès-Camargue-Cévennes Airport, also called Nîmes Garons. It is about 8 km south-east of Nîmes city centre and is useful only if its limited flight network matches your plans.

As of 2025, Nîmes is served by Ryanair routes including Brussels Charleroi, Dublin, Fès, Marrakech and Porto, some seasonal. From Nîmes city, use the TANGO airport bus or a taxi, typically around €20–25; current flight and bus schedules should be checked before relying on this option.

For most international hikers, Montpellier, Marseille or Lyon are more useful:

Airport	Practical route from Saint-Gilles	Notes
Montpellier-Méditerranée	Bus/taxi to Nîmes, TER to Montpellier, then airport shuttle line 620	Nîmes–Montpellier is about 30 minutes by TER; shuttle 620 runs frequently and costs about €2
Marseille-Provence	Bus/taxi to Nîmes, TER/TGV to Marseille, then airport shuttle from Marseille St Charles	Larger airport with broader European and long-haul connections via hubs
Lyon-Saint Exupéry	Bus/taxi to Nîmes, TGV towards Lyon	Useful for northern European connections

Airport	Practical route from Saint-Gilles	Notes
Paris CDG / Orly	Bus/taxi to Nîmes, TGV to Paris Gare de Lyon, then cross-city transfer	Usually impractical on the same day unless finishing very early on a weekday

For airport departures, avoid booking a tight same-day flight from Saint-Gilles. A missed bus, a Sunday finish, or a delayed arrival into Nîmes can quickly make the connection fragile.

Where to stay at the finish

Staying in Saint-Gilles on the final night is often the easiest and least stressful plan. The town has several accommodation options, but it is small and bed numbers are limited, so book ahead in summer and around weekends.

Useful finish-town options include:

Accommodation	Notes
Maison des pèlerins, on the abbey square	Pilgrim hostel by the abbey; dormitory (about 13 beds); inexpensive (around €12/night); generally open roughly March to early November; check-in from 15:00 and departure by 09:00; the Carnet du randonneur / credential is required; call around 48 hours ahead to reserve. Exact prices and dates should be checked before travelling
Les Logements du Midi, 19 Place de la République	Central option near the abbey
Un Sourire en Chemin, 9 Rue Porte des Maréchaux	Small-town accommodation close to the centre
Hôtel Restaurant Le Saint Gillois	Hotel with restaurant and terrace
Mas d'Auzières	Accommodation with garden, bar and terrace

Saint-Gilles has basic services, including a bakery and supermarket, but evening dining is more limited than in Nîmes. If arriving late, do not assume there will be a wide choice of food without checking opening times or booking a meal with the accommodation.

Which Direction Should You Walk?

The GR700 is best walked **north to south, from Le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard**. This is the traditional, published and most practical direction, and it fits the route's history, terrain, accommodation pattern and transport links.

Walking south to north is technically possible, but it is a reverse itinerary rather than the normal way to plan the Régordane Way. Most independent hikers will have an easier trip by following the standard northbound-to-southbound flow used by the main guidebooks, stage plans and local services.

Standard direction: Le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard

The historic logic of the route points south. The Régordane was a medieval road towards the Abbey of Saint-Gilles, an important pilgrimage destination and a halt on the Via Tolosana route to Santiago de Compostela. Trade also moved south from the Massif Central towards Mediterranean ports, so walking towards Saint-Gilles follows the old movement of the road.

This direction also gives the most satisfying landscape progression. You begin on the volcanic uplands around Le Puy-en-Velay, cross the higher Velay and Lozère country, then move into the Cévennes before dropping into vineyards, garrigue and the flat Gard plains near the Petite Camargue.

The finish at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard feels like a true endpoint. The abbey, with its Romanesque façade and crypt, gives the walk a clear historical destination rather than simply ending at a convenient town.

Reverse direction: Saint-Gilles-du-Gard to Le Puy-en-Velay

Walking south to north can work for experienced hikers who deliberately want a harder-feeling finish. The first stages across the Gard are lower and flatter, then the route climbs progressively towards the Cévennes and the colder, higher uplands.

That makes the reverse less suitable for most walkers. The highest and most exposed sections come late in the journey, when fatigue is more likely, and the natural scenic "reveal" of descending from the Massif Central to the Mediterranean is lost.

Le Puy-en-Velay is a superb town, but on this route it functions more naturally as a starting point than as the final goal. Ending there is logistically possible, but it does not match the historical pull of Saint-Gilles.

Terrain, climbing and weather

Both directions involve broadly the same cumulative ascent and descent, so the choice is not about avoiding climbing altogether. The practical difference is where the harder terrain falls.

North to south puts the upland sections early, while legs are fresh. From there, the route trends downwards from the Massif Central towards near sea level at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard.

South to north gives a gentler start, but it saves the higher, colder and more exposed country for the end. In poor weather, that is a real disadvantage.

Wind is not the main planning factor on the GR700, but it can matter on the southern stages. The Mistral is a cold north-westerly wind across the lower Rhône and Gard plains; when it blows, south-to-north

walkers are more likely to face it as a headwind, while north-to-south walkers may have it behind them or across them.

Transport and accommodation flow

Transport is also cleaner north to south. Le Puy-en-Velay has an SNCF station, with TER connections from Clermont-Ferrand and Saint-Étienne, making it a straightforward place to reach before starting.

Saint-Gilles-du-Gard has no railway station, so the finish normally involves a bus or taxi connection to Nîmes or Alès. Bus n°42 on the Gard network links Saint-Gilles with Nîmes, but services can be limited, especially on Sundays; timetables should be checked before travelling.

For onward travel, Nîmes is the stronger hub, with TGV and TER services towards major cities including Paris, Lyon, Marseille and Montpellier. It is usually more relaxed to finish in Saint-Gilles, stay overnight, and travel onward the next morning rather than depend on a same-evening connection.

Accommodation planning also favours the standard direction. The published 13-stage itinerary and the common shorter 10-day approach are laid out north to south, and gîtes d'étape and chambres d'hôtes along the route are used to walkers arriving in that pattern. Reverse walkers may need more careful stage planning, especially where lodging choices are limited.

Section hiking and the Cévenol line

The Cévenol railway line is one of the route's best logistical advantages. It shadows much of the Lozère and Cévennes part of the GR700, with useful stations at Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud and Alès.

This works in either direction, but it is simpler when following the published north-to-south stages. Section hikers can start or leave the trail at several points without redesigning the whole itinerary.

For a shorter trip focused on the scenic core, starting at Langogne or La Bastide-Puylaurent and walking south towards the Cévennes and Alès is usually the most coherent option. This keeps the best-known Régordane landscapes in the natural direction of travel.

Direction	Advantages	Drawbacks
North to south: Le Puy-en-Velay → Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	Traditional pilgrim direction; published stage plans match this flow; easier start by train; uplands tackled early; strong finish at the Abbey of Saint-Gilles; natural descent towards the Mediterranean	Finish requires bus or taxi connection from Saint-Gilles to a rail hub
South to north: Saint-Gilles-du-Gard → Le Puy-en-Velay	Easier rail logistics at the end; lower southern terrain provides a gentler opening	Harder start logistics; stages and accommodation less optimised; high uplands come late; less satisfying historical and scenic progression

Recommendation

Walk the GR700 **north to south, from Le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard**. It is the traditional direction, the easiest to plan, the best aligned with accommodation and guidebook stages, and the most

rewarding way to experience the route's shift from volcanic uplands and Cévennes country to the Mediterranean lowlands.

Reverse the route only with a specific reason to do so, such as linking it with another walk or needing to finish in Le Puy-en-Velay for transport. For most hikers, north to south is clearly the stronger choice.

Accommodation Along the Route

The GR700 works well as an inn-to-inn walk, but it is not as forgiving as the busier Le Puy Camino / GR65. The accommodation network is mixed — gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes, small hotels, pilgrim houses and campsites — but several stages have only one or two realistic places to sleep.

Book before setting off, especially for June, July and August. The route is quieter than the major pilgrimage trails, but that is precisely why beds can be scarce: a small gîte in a hamlet such as Portes or La Garde-Guérin may be the whole plan for that stage.

The official Voie Régordane association publishes accommodation lists by territory, and the Rando Haute-Loire accommodation guide is also useful for current contacts. Opening dates, meal availability and prices change, so confirm every booking directly before relying on it.

Best overnight bases

For an end-to-end walk, the strongest accommodation anchors are **Le Puy-en-Velay, Langogne, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Alès, Nîmes and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard**. These are the places where there is either a wider choice, a railway station, or enough services to reset after a thin section.

The weakest points are the northern uplands and the small Cévennes hamlets: **Luc, La Bastide-Puylaurent, La Garde-Guérin, Portes, Ners, Saint-Chartes and Générac / Garons**. These are the places to secure first when building an itinerary.

Many remote gîtes offer **demi-pension** — bed, dinner and breakfast — which is often the most practical option where there is no separate restaurant. Always ask about dinner, breakfast and a packed lunch when booking, especially on Sundays and in very small villages.

Accommodation table

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Le Puy-en-Velay	Good	Start night, extra night before walking	Wide choice of hostels, gîtes, pilgrim accommodation, hotels and B&Bs. Budget beds are available at places such as the youth hostel, Les Capucins and Accueil Saint-François, with many city hotels as alternatives.
Vals-près-le-Puy / early route	Limited	Short first day only	Not usually needed if walking the common Le Puy-en-Velay to Costaros stage.
Solignac-sur-Loire / Le Brignon	Limited	Breaking the first stage	Useful if shortening day 1. Known small-scale options include Chambre d'hôtes de la Régordane and Régord'ânes near Le Brignon.
Costaros	Limited	Standard first-stage stop	A practical stop, but not a large accommodation centre. Book ahead rather than assuming same-day availability.

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Landos	Limited	Alternative to Costaros or Pradelles	Gîte options exist, including Les Fonds and La Regordane at La Sauvetat, but choice is still narrow.
Pradelles	Limited to moderate	Attractive Velay overnight stop	Seasonal hotels and gîtes make this a useful stop, especially for walkers splitting the early route. Options are generally open in the main walking season rather than all year.
Langogne	Good	Major resupply and overnight base	One of the best lodging towns before the Cévennes. Hotels, chambres d'hôtes, gîtes and camping are available, with several year-round options.
Luc	Very limited	Scenic overnight near the Allier	Thin accommodation. Book early if using Luc as a stage end, as the next practical options are not close.
La Bastide-Puylaurent	Limited	Rail access, stage break, bail-out point	Accommodation exists, including L'Étoile, Gîte Maison Calme and Camping de l'Allier, but capacity is limited. The Cévenol railway station makes it a useful join or exit point.
Prévençères	Very limited	Breaking the La Bastide-Puylaurent to Villefort section	Café-Gîte d'étape Chez Chiff's is a useful known stop. Availability should be checked before travelling.
La Garde-Guérin	Limited	Historic hamlet, memorable overnight	Beautiful but tiny. Auberge La Régordane and Gîte La Bergerie are key options, both requiring early booking; some arrangements can be seasonal or weekly-rental based in summer.
Villefort	Moderate	Practical Cévennes base	A useful stop with gîte, chambres d'hôtes and station access on the Cévenol line. Good place to reset after the sparse La Bastide-Puylaurent / La Garde-Guérin section.
Saint-André-de-Capcèze / Concoules	Very limited	Shortening Villefort to Génolhac	Only small-scale accommodation is known. Do not plan this section without a firm booking.
Génolhac	Moderate	Key anchor, resupply, rail access	The municipal gîte is an important reliable option, with additional guesthouse, hotel and camping choices. Génolhac has a Cévenol railway station.
Chamborigaud	Moderate	Alternative Cévennes stage end	Accommodation includes Centre de Vacances de Chausse and chambres d'hôtes options. Also has a Cévenol railway station.
La Vernarède	Limited	More comfortable private-room stop	Château Lou Cante Perdrix is a higher-end option with rooms, dinner and packed-lunch availability in season.

Place	Accommodation level	Best for	Notes
Portes	Very limited	Château de Portes stage	The hamlet is tiny. Gîte des Mènes / des Meynes is a key known option, but seasonal opening means it should be checked before travelling.
Saint-Martin-de-Valgalgues	Limited	Last stop before Alès	A small accommodation option exists at Mas de La Filoselle, but most walkers will continue to Alès if distance and timing allow.
Alès	Good	Full services, restock, transport	The largest town on the route, with hotels, chambres d'hôtes and a railway station. A strong place for a rest night or itinerary adjustment.
Vézénobres	Limited	Attractive hilltop village	La Chêneraie is a known chambres d'hôtes option with half-board and picnic possibilities. Capacity is small, so book ahead.
Ners	Very limited	Short southern stage	Only thin accommodation is known. Avoid arriving without a booking.
Cruviers-Lascours / Moussac	Limited to moderate	Alternative to Ners or Saint-Chaptes	Useful southern-stage alternatives, with chambres d'hôtes options. Check meal arrangements before committing.
Saint-Chaptes	Very limited	Official-style stage stop	Very limited known accommodation. Secure this early or adjust the stage to a nearby village with available beds.
Saint-Anastasie / Russan / Dions	Limited to moderate	Breaking the approach to La Calmette	Several small options exist, including gîte and chambres d'hôtes accommodation. This area can help solve awkward southern-stage spacing.
La Calmette	Limited	Stage stop before Nîmes	Accommodation is not extensive. Book before leaving Alès or the previous southern stop.
Nîmes	Good	City night, transport, restock	Many city hotels plus pilgrim-style accommodation. The Maison Diocésaine can fill quickly in season, so do not leave Nîmes beds until the day itself.
Générac / Garons	Very limited	Last short stage before Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	Thin accommodation. Get a firm booking and arrival instructions; do not rely on informal or unconfirmed space.
Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	Moderate	Finish night, pilgrim stop	La Maison des pèlerins has 13 beds, is inexpensive and requires the Carnet du randonneur / crédencial. Book ahead, especially in the main season. Hotels and other pilgrim-oriented options are also available.

Booking strategy

For a 10–12 day itinerary, book the scarce places first, then adjust the stronger towns around them. The priority calls are usually **La Bastide-Puylaurent, La Garde-Guérin, Portes, Ners, Saint-Chaptes, Générac / Garons and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard.**

For the official 13-stage style itinerary, the spacing is gentler, but it can force nights in smaller villages with less choice. A faster 10-day itinerary may use stronger towns more often, but the walking days become longer and leave less margin if accommodation is full.

In high season, booking every night before departure is the safest approach. In April, May, September and October, there may be more flexibility, but seasonal closures become more important, especially in village gîtes, campsites and small auberges.

Typical accommodation costs

Budget walkers using gîtes d'étape and pilgrim houses should expect many dormitory beds in the **€12-25 per person** range, where available. Municipal gîtes can be excellent value, but may have limited capacity and simple facilities.

Chambres d'hôtes are typically more private and more expensive, often around **€40-90 per room**, with dinner charged separately where offered. Half-board is common in the remote stages and often falls around **€45-80 per person** including bed, dinner and breakfast.

Hotels in towns are generally the easiest option in **Langogne, Alès, Nîmes and Le Puy-en-Velay**. Expect broad variation by season and comfort level; confirm current prices before booking.

Carnet du randonneur and pilgrim accommodation

The **Carnet du randonneur / crédencial** is available from the Voie Régordane association, the Le Puy-en-Velay tourist office and La Croisée des Chemins bookshop in Le Puy-en-Velay. It costs **€5**, with shipping extra when ordered by post.

It is useful for stamping at affiliated accommodation along the route and is required for **La Maison des pèlerins in Saint-Gilles-du-Gard**. Carry it from the start if planning to use pilgrim accommodation at the finish.

Camping and carrying a tent

Camping can help with flexibility, but it does not remove the need to plan. Campsites are listed in places such as Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Génolhac and around some later stages, but many are seasonal.

A tent is most useful as a backup for walkers comfortable with a heavier pack and more self-sufficiency. Do not assume that every small stage village has a campsite or suitable legal camping arrangement; this should be checked before travelling.

Luggage transfer and awkward gaps

Transbagages covers the Voie Régordane and can help inn-to-inn walkers keep pack weight down. It is especially useful where the day's walking is long, accommodation is sparse, or a stage has to be extended to reach a confirmed bed.

Shuttle arrangements can also help solve awkward gaps, but they should be booked rather than improvised. On the thinnest sections, the practical solution is often to sleep where a bed exists and use luggage transfer or a pre-arranged lift to make the stage workable.

Does the GR700 suit inn-to-inn walkers?

Yes — provided accommodation is treated as the framework of the itinerary, not an afterthought. The route has enough lodging to be walked without camping, but the margins are much smaller than on France's busiest pilgrimage routes.

Walkers wanting private rooms every night should plan early and may need to shorten or lengthen days to match availability. Walkers happy with dormitory gîtes, demi-pension and simple village accommodation will have more flexibility, but still need firm bookings through the thin northern and southern sections.

Camping and Wild Camping

The GR700 is better suited to gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes and hotels than to a fully camping-based traverse. Formal campsites are sparse, unevenly spaced and mainly concentrated between Langogne and the Cévennes section around Génolhac and Chamborigaud.

A lightweight camping strategy can work for experienced walkers, especially in the middle third of the route, but it is not the easiest way to walk the Régordane. North of Langogne and south of Alès, built accommodation is usually the more reliable plan.

Campsites on or near the GR700

Always check opening dates, current prices and whether small backpacking pitches are available before setting out. Many French campsites are seasonal, and some sites focus more on holidaymakers than walkers.

Route section	Camping options and practical notes
Le Puy-en-Velay to Pradelles / Langogne	This is a weak section for tent walkers. Le Puy-en-Velay has municipal camping, but it is the start town rather than a useful mid-route stop. Between Le Puy, Costaros and Pradelles, plan on gîtes, chambres d'hôtes or hotels rather than relying on formal campsites.
Langogne area	Langogne is the first practical camping hub. Camping Les Terrasses du Lac sits by Lac de Naussac and is used to welcoming walkers and other outdoor travellers. Camping La Cigale de l'Allier is on the Allier on the edge of Langogne and also accepts walkers with donkeys or horses.
La Bastide-Puylaurent	Camping de l'Allier is a simple riverside site about 1.8 km from the village, with the GR700 about 1 km away on foot. Tel: +33 4 66 46 04 06. La Bastide-Puylaurent also has pilgrim-style lodging nearby at Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Abbey, so it is a useful flexible overnight stop.
Villefort / Lac de Villefort	Camping Lac de Villefort, at Pourcharesses, is the best-positioned campsite on the route: the GR700 passes right by the entrance. It is a larger 4-star lakeside site with facilities including pool, snack bar, grocery, laundry and camping-car services. It usually operates for camping from 1 April to 31 October, with some rental accommodation available over a longer season.
Génolhac	Camping Le Pont du Mas is in Génolhac by the Homol river and usually opens from April to 30 September. It offers camping and glamping-style options. The area is also associated with Camping Les Esparnettes at 2 route de Sénéchas; the relationship between Camping Les Esparnettes and Camping Le Pont du Mas should be checked before travelling.
Pont de Rastel / between Génolhac and Chamborigaud	Camping Le Martinet is a small site between Génolhac and Chamborigaud, on the route. Tel: 06 82 96 50 14. This is part of the most camping-friendly belt of the GR700.
Chamborigaud	Camping La Châtaigneraie is at the exit of Chamborigaud village with direct access to the river and a heavily treed setting. It usually opens from 1 April to 15 October. Chamborigaud also has a station on the Cévenol railway line, useful for section hikers.
Alès / Cendras	La Croix Clémentine at Cendras is a large 4-star campsite around 5 km north-west of Alès and about 2 km from the GR. It is the closest practical camping option near Alès, but it is not directly on the trail.

Route section	Camping options and practical notes
Alès to Nîmes	Formal camping is very limited through the Gard garrigue and vineyard country. Domaine de La Bastide, now operated as Capfun – Domaine de la Bastide, is a large site in Nîmes on Route de Générac and is the main campsite option in this southern section.
Nîmes to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	Do not plan on a campsite at the finish unless current local information says otherwise. Saint-Gilles-du-Gard is better treated as a hotel or chambre d'hôtes stop.

The strongest camping stretch is therefore **Langogne to Chamborigaud**, especially around Villefort, Génolhac and Pont de Rastel. This section also fits the landscape better: rivers, wooded valleys and established campsites make camping far more practical than in the exposed southern plains.

Wild camping and bivouac rules

France distinguishes between larger, longer-stay wild camping and a small overnight bivouac. On private land, camping requires the landowner's permission. Much of the GR700 crosses farmland, vineyards, managed woodland and village edges, so permission and discretion matter.

A one-night lightweight bivouac is often tolerated in rural mountain areas when walkers arrive late, leave early and leave no trace. That tolerance is not a right, and it does not override local bans, protected-area rules, fire restrictions or private-property restrictions.

Cévennes National Park rules

The GR700 enters the Cévennes National Park sector in the middle part of the route, broadly around the Luc, Villefort, Génolhac and Alès side of the walk. Inside the park's core zone, bivouac is allowed only under strict conditions.

Key rules for the Cévennes National Park core zone are:

- Bivouac only within **50 metres** of a marked GR or GRP trail.
- Use only a lightweight tent or shelter; it must not be possible to stand inside it.
- Stay **one night only** in any one location.
- Pitch only between **19:00 and 09:00**.
- Campfires are prohibited.
- Motorised camping vehicles are prohibited.
- Portable stoves are only tolerated when placed more than **200 metres from forests or wooded areas**, and only where current prefectural fire orders allow them.

Some GR sections in the national park are completely closed to bivouac. The GR700 is not one of the specifically listed banned GR sections in the supplied park rules, but the permitted and restricted zones must still be checked on the Cévennes National Park map before using a tent. This should be checked before travelling.

Outside the national park

Outside the park, the main practical restrictions are private land, protected sites, historic monuments, drinking-water sources and fire risk. In general, do not camp within 200 metres of a drinking-water

source, within 500 metres of a classified historic monument, in protected natural sites, or anywhere local signs prohibit camping or access.

The southern Gard stages need particular care. South of Alès the route enters hotter, drier garrigue, vineyards and agricultural land, much of it private and with limited natural shelter. Summer wildfire risk is high, and prefectural fire orders can close forests and garrigue from June or July into September.

During high fire-risk periods, a stove may be illegal or irresponsible even where bivouac would otherwise be tolerated. Check local prefectural orders before planning any summer tent traverse south of Alès.

Water and camping practicality

Water is more reliable in the northern and Cévennes parts of the route, where the trail is close to rivers such as the Allier, Homol and Luech. That does not remove the need to carry enough between villages, and any untreated natural water should be filtered or purified.

South of Alès, the garrigue and Gard plain can be dry for long stretches. Carry at least 2 litres when leaving villages in this section, and more in hot weather. Do not assume there will be accessible streams, taps or shade between settlements.

Camping also adds weight on a 240 km route with around 4,000 m of ascent. A light shelter is important; a sub-1 kg shelter makes more sense here than a heavy tent. Cold spring nights on the Velay and Lozère uplands can still require a proper 3-season sleeping bag, even when daytime conditions feel mild.

Leave No Trace on the GR700

Keep camps small, late and invisible. Pack out all waste, avoid washing directly in rivers, minimise noise and light at night, and never light a fire. The Cévennes is a UNESCO-listed cultural landscape and a Dark Sky Reserve, so night-time behaviour matters as much as daytime trail etiquette.

For most walkers, the most efficient plan is a mixed approach: book gîtes or chambres d'hôtes for the weaker camping sections, then use campsites where they sit naturally on the route around Langogne, Villefort, Génolhac and Chamborigaud.

Food, Water and Resupply

Food and water are manageable on the GR700, but the route is not a walk where every village can be treated as a guaranteed resupply stop. The safest pattern is to use **demi-pension** in gîtes d'étape where available, order a **panier pique-nique** the evening before, and carry a small emergency food reserve for closures or late arrivals.

The best resupply towns are **Le Puy-en-Velay, Langogne, Villefort, Génolhac, Alès, Nîmes** and, at the finish, **Saint-Gilles-du-Gard**. Smaller places often have a bakery, café or épicerie, but hours can be short, seasonal and affected by Sunday or Monday closures.

Food strategy

Most hikers should plan around evening meals at accommodation rather than assuming there will be a restaurant open in every village. A gîte packed lunch is usually the most reliable midday food on quieter stages; a typical **panier pique-nique costs around €8**, but current prices should be checked when booking.

Expect café meals or a plat du jour to sit roughly around **€12–€18**, and a simple breakfast at a gîte or café around **€5–€8**. These are planning figures only; confirm current prices before booking or ordering.

Carry at least one spare lunch or substantial snack at all times. This matters most on the remote Cévennes sections, the stages south of Alès, and any day that falls on a Sunday, Monday or public holiday.

Water strategy

A **2-litre carrying capacity** is the practical minimum for most of the GR700. In hot weather, and especially south of Alès, increase this to **3 litres**.

Village fountains are common through the Cévennes, and mains-fed village water is generally the most dependable source. Do not drink from any fountain or tap marked **eau non potable**. If a fountain is unlabelled, ask locally before relying on it.

Natural water from rivers and streams, including the **Allier, Chassezac and Gardon**, should be treated or filtered before drinking. In July to September, smaller Cévennes streams can diminish, so do not plan a day around natural sources alone.

The most water-critical section is the southern Gard plain. The **Nîmes–Générac–Saint-Gilles** part is flatter but exposed, with vineyards, little shade and few reliable public refill points. Leave Nîmes with at least **2–3 litres**, more in midsummer.

Resupply and water by section

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Le Puy-en-Velay to Costaros	Full services in Le Puy-en-Velay. Vals-près-le-Puy has basic shops. Costaros has an 8à8 convenience store, bakeries and a pharmacy.	Few documented water points before Costaros; fill before leaving Le Puy.	Start with lunch and enough water for the full stage.
Costaros to Langogne	Landos is the first resupply opportunity after Costaros. Pradelles has small shops, but the supermarket opens only at 15:30 and is closed Mondays. Langogne has major resupply: Intermarché, Carrefour Contact, Netto, 8-à-Huit, bakeries and charcuteries.	Langogne has a fountain at the market hall and several other town fountains.	Do not rely on Pradelles for morning provisions. Langogne is one of the best places on the route to restock properly.
Langogne to La Bastide-Puylaurent	About 15 km after Langogne without resupply before Luc. Luc has a small grocery near the campsite. La Bastide-Puylaurent has a grocery/bread depot/tearoom, butcher-deli and several restaurants.	Water is available in Luc and nearby villages. Notre-Dame-des-Neiges has water and WC. La Bastide-Puylaurent has potable water at village fountains.	Order or buy lunch before leaving Langogne if starting early. La Bastide-Puylaurent shop and butcher hours vary by season; this should be checked before travelling.
La Bastide-Puylaurent to Villefort	La Garde-Guérin has a restaurant near the tower and is a good lunch stop. Villefort has Vival, 8-à-Huit, butchers and restaurants.	La Garde-Guérin has water and WC near the tower. Villefort has water at Place de l'Ormeau.	Villefort is a strong resupply stop. Local trout products are available near the station.
Villefort to Génolhac	Limited services between villages. Concoules has a small épicerie, closed Sundays and Mondays. Génolhac has bakeries, Épicerie Régordane, butcher-charcuterie, cafés and a Saturday morning market.	Génolhac has fountains, including at Place du Colombier.	This is a shorter stage, but closures at Concoules make a packed lunch sensible. Génolhac is a useful food stop for the next day.
Génolhac to Portes	Chamborigaud has a bakery, but the supermarket can be unreliable. Portes has a basic bakery and one café, closed Tuesdays.	Water availability is better in villages than between them.	Do not count on Chamborigaud supermarket or Portes café without checking. Carry lunch if the stage falls early week.
Portes to Alès	Le Pradel has Boulangerie-pâtisserie La Régordane in the morning and Bar Restaurant La Terrasse chez Riflette. Saint-Martin-de-Valgalgues has basic services. Alès has full city resupply.	Water and WC are available at the mairie at Pradel.	Alès is the next major reset point: restock here for the drier southern half.

Section	Food availability	Water availability	Notes
Alès to Ners / Vézénobres	Vézénobres has a small bar-restaurant and is the best lunch stop. Cruviers-Lascours has a small épicerie, but it opens only from 16:30. Ners has limited documented services; Brignon has a café mainly open mornings.	Saint-Hilaire-de-Brethmas has water and WC at the church. Vézénobres has two water points on the GR700. Cruviers-Lascours has a fountain by the town hall.	Timing matters: a late-opening épicerie is not useful for lunch. Carry food from Alès unless accommodation is providing a packed lunch.
Ners to Saint-Chaptes	Minimal services. Saint-Chaptes has limited village services.	Do not assume frequent refill points.	Rely on a packed lunch from the previous night and leave with enough water for the stage.
Saint-Chaptes to La Calmette	Sparse food options. Aubarne offers shade at the church steps but no documented food. Russan/Sainte-Anastasia has a café and a boulangerie on the descent.	Russan/Sainte-Anastasia café refills bottles. Other reliable public water is limited.	This is one of the least shaded stages. Carry more water than usual, especially in summer.
La Calmette to Nîmes	Limited until Nîmes, then full city services.	A water fountain is available in a park just before entering Nîmes.	Use Nîmes for a full restock before the final exposed plains.
Nîmes to Générac	Very limited public services once out of Nîmes. Générac is a small village; current openings should be checked before arrival.	Very limited water on the flat Gard plain.	Leave Nîmes with at least 2–3 litres. In high summer, water planning is more important than distance.
Générac to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	Limited services en route. Saint-Gilles-du-Gard has town-level services, with restaurants, cafés and shops near the abbey.	Limited reliable refill options before Saint-Gilles-du-Gard.	Carry water from Générac unless a definite refill has been arranged.

Closures, opening hours and seasonal traps

Rural opening hours on the GR700 can be awkward: many shops close for a long lunch break, some open only in the morning, and Sunday or Monday closures are common. This affects practical food planning more than the map suggests.

Particular pinch points include **Pradelles**, where the supermarket opens only in the afternoon and is closed Mondays; **Concoules**, where the épicerie is closed Sundays and Mondays; **Portes**, where the café is closed Tuesdays; and **Cruviers-Lascours**, where the épicerie opens only from 16:30.

In winter and outside the main walking season, some cafés and smaller épiceries may close entirely or keep reduced hours. This should be checked before travelling, especially if walking outside spring to autumn.

What to carry

For a normal spring or autumn day, a practical baseline is:

- **2 litres of water capacity**, filled at the start of the stage.

- **One packed lunch**, either bought in town or ordered from the gîte the night before.
- **One emergency meal or high-calorie snack reserve**, kept separate from the day's lunch.
- **Water treatment or a filter** if relying on streams, rivers or uncertain fountains.

For the exposed southern stages, especially **Saint-Chaptes–La Calmette** and **Nîmes–Générac–Saint-Gilles-du-Gard**, increase water capacity to **3 litres** and start early in hot weather. South of Alès, shade and refill points become less dependable, and dehydration becomes a more serious planning risk than food scarcity.

Navigation and Waymarking

The GR700 is a fully waymarked French Grande Randonnée, using the standard red-and-white GR balises throughout. It is generally straightforward for walkers used to French GR routes, but it is not a trail to follow passively: the line changes between lanes, old mule tracks, forest roads, stony paths, village streets and garrigue tracks, and waymarks can be spaced out in quieter sections.

Carry a current topoguide and a downloaded GPX. The safest approach is to treat the ground balises as the primary route, with the guidebook and GPS used to check direction at junctions, forest tracks and urban edges.

Waymarking on the ground

Look for the usual GR red-and-white horizontal stripes. The Voie Régordane association also uses its own Régordane / Saint-Gilles branding, so some places have additional route identity beyond the standard GR marks.

Waymarking is best in towns, villages and more regularly walked sections. It can be sparser in the Lozère conifer forests, in the Cévennes National Park sections, and on quiet rural lanes in the Gard, where several similar tracks or roads may leave a junction.

Do not assume that every digital trace matches the current waymarked line. Older app data has caused problems around the Mouteyre–Pradelles stretch and around Pagnol–Concoules, where older traces diverged from the blazed route. If the GPS line and the red-and-white balises disagree, follow the ground balises unless there is an obvious closure or diversion.

Best navigation set-up

The most reliable set-up is:

- **FFRandonnée Topoguide FFR 7000, 2025 edition** — the key paper reference for the GR700, with IGN 1:25,000 mapping, stage descriptions, water points and accommodation information.
- **A downloaded GPX** — use a current file from the Le Puy-en-Velay Tourisme GR700 page or from gr-infos.com before starting.
- **Offline mapping on a phone** — download the relevant map tiles before each day, especially north of Villefort and through the Cévennes.
- **A backup app or paper map** — useful if the phone battery fails, the weather closes in, or the balises become hard to spot in forest.

MonGR, the FFRandonnée digital platform, is a good companion because it uses FFRandonnée route data and includes points of interest such as accommodation, water and services. GR-Infos also provides GR route data and a companion app. A dedicated Régordane – GR®700 app is referenced by Le Puy-en-Velay Tourisme; availability should be checked before travelling.

OsmAnd can be used, but update the offline maps immediately before the trip and do not rely on an old cached route. Komoot and Wikiloc contain community GR700 traces, but these should be cross-checked against the topoguide, current GPX and ground balises.

Paper maps

For most walkers, the FFRandonnée topoguide is the most practical paper navigation tool because it contains route mapping for the full trail. If carrying separate IGN sheets, use the 1:25,000 Série Bleue / TOP 25 maps rather than broad road maps.

Section	Useful IGN 1:25,000 sheets
Le Puy-en-Velay to Langogne	2735E, 2736E, 2737E
Langogne to La Bastide-Puylaurent	2737E, 2738E
La Bastide-Puylaurent, La Garde-Guérin and Villefort	2739OT Mont Lozère / Florac
Génolhac, Chamborigaud and the Cévennes corridor	2839OT
Alès area	2840OT
Vézénobres and the Gard approach	2841O, with 2841E if needed
Nîmes and the final approach to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	2942O, 2943O

Sheet **2739OT Mont Lozère / Florac** is particularly useful for the La Garde-Guérin and Villefort corridor, and has the GR700 trace printed on the current edition.

Sections needing the most attention

The Velay plateau stages from Le Puy-en-Velay towards Costaros, Landos, Pradelles and Langogne are generally on clearer tracks and lanes. The route shares terrain with the GR70 Stevenson Trail as far as Langogne, but walkers should not expect GR65 Camino-level signing once fully on the Régordane corridor.

The first major navigation watchpoint is the **Langogne to La Garde-Guérin** area, including the Lozère uplands and conifer forest sections. Tracks can look similar, and junctions may not always have an obvious signpost. Keep the GPX active here and check each forestry-road junction carefully.

The **La Bastide-Puylaurent to Villefort** and **La Garde-Guérin / Chassezac gorge area** also deserve attention. Mobile signal can be weak, and the terrain is more enclosed than on the open Velay plateau.

Through the Cévennes National Park, especially around **Génolhac to Chamborigaud**, the GR700 passes through forested country where waymarks may be more widely spaced. Do not continue far after an unmarked junction without checking the map.

The approach through **Portes, Saint-Martin-de-Valgalgues and into Alès** mixes forest tracks, lanes and peri-urban walking. Navigation becomes less about mountain route-finding and more about choosing the correct minor road, track or street at frequent junctions.

South of **Alès**, the walking is flatter through vineyards, garrigue, quiet roads and villages towards Vézénobres, Ners, La Calmette, Nîmes, Générac and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. The landscape is easier, but concentration can drop; keep checking waymarks where tracks cross fields, lanes and scrubby paths.

Mobile signal and offline use

Do not rely on live mobile data for navigation in the northern half of the route. Lozère has low population density and coverage can be weak in deep valleys, forested areas and around the Chassezac gorge near La Garde-Guérin.

Larger places such as Langogne, Génolhac, Alès and Nîmes have normal urban coverage, but gaps remain between settlements. The Cévennes National Park section from around Villefort to Chamborigaud includes extensive empty forest, so offline maps and a pre-loaded GPX are essential.

Coverage improves from Alès southwards as the route enters the more open Gard landscape. Even there, offline mapping is still sensible because a missed turn on a lane or vineyard track can add unnecessary road walking.

Suitability for less-experienced navigators

The GR700 is suitable for walkers comfortable with GR-style waymarking, basic map reading and checking a GPX at junctions. It is not technically difficult, and there is no specialist mountain navigation requirement in normal conditions.

It is less suitable for an absolute beginner walking alone with only the painted marks. The waymarking is not as dense as on the busier Le Puy Camino / GR65, and several forest and rural sections require active attention.

A sensible minimum for this route is the current FFRandonnée topoguide, a downloaded GPX, offline phone maps and enough battery capacity for a full day. In the historic Régordane corridor, the Cévenol railway line also provides a useful bailout spine through places such as La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud and Alès, but this should not replace proper navigation preparation.

Terrain, Conditions and Difficulty in Practice

The GR700 is best understood as a moderate walking route with a few hard-working days, rather than a technical mountain trek. The challenge comes from repeated 20 km days, stony surfaces, long descents and changing conditions between the high Velay plateau, the Cévennes and the hot Gard plains.

There is no scrambling, no via ferrata-style ground and no specialist mountain equipment required in normal three-season conditions. However, the route is not a soft valley walk: the northern half includes upland weather, rocky old mule tracks, forested climbs and descents, while the southern half can feel exposed, hot and surprisingly tiring despite being flatter.

Path surfaces by section

Section	Typical ground	What it means in practice
Le Puy-en-Velay to Langogne	Volcanic plateau paths, dirt field tracks, quiet lanes, some early paved walking	Open, broad walking, but the surface can be uneven with pouzzolane volcanic cinder underfoot. Boggy narces and wet patches can slow progress after rain.
Langogne to La Bastide-Puylaurent	Forest tracks, valley paths, granite and gneiss terrain, rolling detours away from roads and railway lines	More enclosed and undulating. Expect repeated small climbs and descents rather than a simple southward drop.
La Bastide-Puylaurent to La Garde-Guérin and Villefort	Woodland climbs, high plateau tracks, old tarmac, rocky paths and gorge-side viewpoints	One of the most varied parts of the walk. The Chassezac gorge viewpoints are dramatic but can feel exposed to walkers uneasy with height.
Villefort to Génolhac, Portes and Alès	Schist paths, chestnut groves, forest roads, old stone slabs and Régordane road remnants	More rugged underfoot, especially when wet. Smooth schist and worn slabs can be slippery, and the descents into Cévennes valleys test knees and poles.
Alès to Nîmes	Farm tracks, lanes, vineyards, orchards, limestone and garrigue paths	Flatter but less shaded. Navigation and road-walking become more important than ascent.
Nîmes to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	Open tracks through the Gard plains, vines and orchard country	Little elevation change, but heat, sun exposure and long straight sections can make the final days feel harder than the profile suggests.

Climbs, descents and daily effort

The route trends downhill overall, from the uplands near Le Puy-en-Velay towards near sea level at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. That does not mean it feels like a descent for most of the walk. The highest ground, around 1,235 m, is reached in the northern Velay/Lozère uplands, and the first half of the GR700 contains the bulk of the climbing.

Several northern sections involve sustained ascent and descent on forest tracks and old stone ways. Sections such as La Bastide-Puylaurent to La Garde-Guérin and La Garde-Guérin towards Génolhac include meaningful height gain, with daily ascents in the region of several hundred metres.

The harder walking is often on the way down. Long descents from the Lozère highlands into Cévennes valleys are not technically difficult, but they are rough enough to punish tired legs, especially with a full pack.

Rocky, cobbled and historic surfaces

The Régordane is distinctive for its old road surfaces. Around the La Garde-Guérin, Prévencières and Saint-André-Capcèze area, walkers encounter worn stone slabs, historic mule-track sections and wheel ruts cut into the rock.

These sections are part of the appeal of the route, but they are not always comfortable underfoot. In dry weather they are simply uneven; in rain, smooth stone and schist can become slick. Supportive trail shoes or lightweight boots with reliable grip are a better choice than soft road-running shoes.

The Velay plateau has its own roughness. Volcanic cinder and stony field tracks can feel loose and abrasive, and the openness of the plateau means wind and rain are felt more directly than in the forested Cévennes.

Mud, boggy ground and wet conditions

The main boggy ground is on the Velay plateau, particularly where the route crosses narces and damp plateau areas between Le Puy-en-Velay and Costaros. After rain, these sections can be soft, muddy and slower than the map distance suggests.

Forest tracks in Lozère and the Cévennes can also hold water after heavy rain, though the issue is usually surface slipperiness rather than deep mud. Schist, roots and old stone paving deserve care in wet conditions.

Waterproof footwear is useful in spring and after unsettled weather, but the southern Gard sections are usually a bigger issue for heat and dryness than for mud.

Road walking and awkward edges

Some road and lane walking is unavoidable. The first stretch out of Le Puy-en-Velay includes paved walking before the route settles into more rural ground, and quiet lanes recur through the agricultural plateau and Gard.

Villefort is a particular place to stay alert. The entries and exits around the town, including road sections near the roundabout and towards the lake, are awkward for walkers and require care with traffic.

The approach to Nîmes is another weaker part of the route. The line is constrained by marshy ground, urban edges and major roads, and some versions of the route have included unpleasant busy-road walking. Use up-to-date GR waymarking and a current GPX [here](#); this should be checked before travelling.

Exposure, gorges and vertigo

The GR700 is not an exposed alpine route. There are no sustained narrow ridges or technical cliff paths.

The main place where height may be felt is above the Chassezac, around the La Garde-Guérin section, where paths and viewpoints overlook steep gorges. These are scenic rather than technical, but anyone

uncomfortable with vertiginous views should take extra care, especially in wet or windy weather.

The more practical exposure issue is sun and wind. The Devès/Velay plateau is open, while the Gard garrigue and plains south of Alès offer long stretches with limited shade.

The Cévennes core: harder than the map can suggest

The historic Régordane core, roughly from Luc and La Garde-Guérin towards Alès, is the most atmospheric and physically engaging part of the route. The walking is frequently enclosed by forest, chestnut groves and schist hamlets, with a rougher feel than the plateau or the Gard plains.

Paths here can be narrower, rootier and stonier. The surface changes quickly between forest road, old paved way, rocky track and lane, so pace is less consistent than on the flatter southern days.

This is also where trekking poles are most useful. They help on long descents, slippery schist and rough old mule-track sections.

The Gard: flatter, hotter, less shaded

After Alès the route becomes much flatter, but it is not automatically easier. Vineyards, orchards, farm tracks and garrigue replace the mountain terrain, and the walking can feel exposed and repetitive in hot weather.

Garrigue paths are dry, stony and bordered by low, prickly Mediterranean scrub. Distances can feel longer here because there is less shade and fewer natural landmarks than in the Cévennes.

In summer, start early, carry more water than on the forested stages and avoid relying on midday shade. In the Gard, paths can be closed during canicule and high fire-danger periods; check the daily fire-risk information before setting out.

Livestock, fields and rural boundaries

The northern plateau crosses agricultural country with fields and pasture, and the southern route passes through vineyards, orchards and farmed plains. Treat gates, field edges and tracks as working rural infrastructure, not recreational space.

No special livestock obstacle defines the GR700, and there is no need to plan for major fence systems or technical stiles from the supplied route information. Normal care is still needed around animals, farm vehicles and private tracks: stay on the GR line, close gates where required and avoid entering cultivated land unnecessarily.

Seasonal conditions

Spring and early summer are generally the most balanced seasons. The Velay and Lozère uplands are greener and cooler, streams and wet areas may be active, and the Gard is usually more manageable than in high summer.

July and August bring longer daylight but also the route's biggest heat problem. The southern Gard, especially the garrigue and open plains towards Nîmes and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, can be very hot, while the northern highlands can still see afternoon storms.

Autumn is often well suited to the full route, with cooler walking in the south and good conditions through the Cévennes. Shorter days need to be considered, especially if following longer 10-day stages rather than the official shorter stage pattern.

Winter is not recommended for most independent walkers. Snow, ice and cold are possible on the Velay and Lozère uplands, and some gîtes d'étape or seasonal services may close.

How difficult is it really?

For a fit walker used to consecutive days of 15–25 km, the GR700 is a realistic moderate thru-hike. The waymarking, village-based accommodation pattern and non-technical terrain all make it more approachable than a high alpine route.

The main reasons walkers struggle are cumulative fatigue, poor footwear on rocky surfaces, heat in the Gard, wet stone in the Cévennes and underestimating the road and navigation awkwardness near towns. A lighter pack, trekking poles, good sun protection and current mapping make a noticeable difference.

The 13-stage schedule keeps daily distances more comfortable. A 10-day crossing is feasible for strong walkers, but it leaves less margin for heat, storms, slippery descents and the slower rocky sections in the northern half.

Weather and Best Time to Walk

The best overall windows for the GR700 are **May to June** and **September**. These months give the best balance between snow-free uplands, manageable heat in the Gard, open accommodation and long enough walking days.

The route has a strong north-south weather split. The first half crosses the Velay and Lozère uplands, with long sections above 800 m and a high point around 1,235 m; the final days drop into the Mediterranean garrigue and flat Gard plains, where heat and fire risk become the main issues.

Best months at a glance

Period	Suitability	What to expect
April	Possible only with care	Southern sections can be pleasant, but the Lozère uplands may still have snow patches. Some accommodation may not yet be open.
May–June	Best	Comfortable walking temperatures, green uplands, flowers in the Velay and Cévennes, and the Gard not yet at full summer heat. Check snow conditions before an early May start.
July–August	Mixed	Good conditions on the northern uplands, but the Gard stages can be brutally hot and exposed. Afternoon thunderstorms and fire closures are realistic planning issues.
September	Best	Warm, quieter, generally more comfortable than high summer, with good conditions from the Cévennes to the Gard.
October	Possible but less reliable	Cooler and attractive in the Cévennes, but rain increases and Cévennes storm risk is at its highest. Accommodation begins to close.
November–March	Not recommended	Snow, ice and cold on the Velay and Lozère uplands; many gîtes d'étape and chambres d'hôtes close for winter.

Spring: April to June

May and June are the most reliable spring months for an end-to-end walk. On the Velay and Lozère uplands, daytime conditions are often comfortable for walking, but nights can still be cold and a May cold snap is possible.

Before mid-May, treat the upland stages seriously. Snow patches can remain on the Lozère side, and places such as La Garde-Guérin and the Chassezac gorges can feel cold and windy even when the lower Gard is mild.

Rain is still part of the plan. Around Le Puy-en-Velay, May is one of the wetter months, and on the uplands roughly three days in ten can bring rain; waterproofs and a warm layer should be packed even for a fine forecast.

Accommodation also needs checking in spring. Some gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes and tourist services open from 1 May or mid-May rather than at Easter, so do not assume full availability for an April or very early May itinerary.

Summer: July and August

Summer is not automatically the easiest season on the GR700. The northern section from Le Puy-en-Velay towards Villefort is often pleasant, with upland highs around 20–25°C, long daylight and cool nights.

The problem comes farther south. From Alès towards Nîmes, Générac and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, the route enters a hot Mediterranean climate; around Nîmes, July and August highs average about 32°C and can exceed 35°C. The final Gard and Costières stages are exposed, with limited shade and warm nights.

In high summer, start the southern stages very early, preferably by 07:00, and avoid committing to long exposed sections in the middle of the day. Carry 2–3 litres of water, wear a sun hat and use proper sun protection.

Summer also brings fire restrictions. In July and August, the Gard fire-risk system can close paths through garrigue, pine and chestnut woodland to all walkers, including pedestrians. Check the Gard Préfecture Forêts & Incendies fire-risk map before each day's walk in the department; closed areas should be treated as a hard stop, not a suggestion.

Afternoon thunderstorms can build quickly in the Cévennes. On hot days, plan to be off the most exposed or remote sections by early afternoon where possible.

Autumn: September and October

September is one of the strongest months for the whole route. The southern heat is usually less severe, the Cévennes are quieter, and the Gard remains warm enough for comfortable walking, often around 18–25°C.

Late September and October bring good colour in the chestnut forests, particularly around the Génolhac and Chamborigaud area. The trade-off is a rising risk of heavy rain and storms.

The Cévennes are known for violent late-summer and autumn storms, locally known as **épisodes cévenols**. These Mediterranean systems can drop more than 100 mm of rain in a few hours, causing flash flooding and making riverside paths or bridges unsafe.

In October, check the Météo-France forecast before committing to each stage, especially between Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Portes and Alès. If a serious storm is forecast, delay the stage rather than trying to outrun it.

By late October and November the Lozère uplands become cold and wet quickly, and some accommodation starts closing. A late-season itinerary needs more flexibility and every night's lodging should be checked before travelling.

Winter: November to March

The GR700 is largely impractical as a winter walking route. Much of the Haute-Loire and Lozère section sits above 800 m, with snow and ice possible from November through March and sometimes into April.

Winter temperatures on the Lozère uplands can sit close to or below freezing, and historical extremes are far lower. Snow-covered old cobbled tracks, forest roads and rocky paths can become slow, slippery and hazardous.

Many gîtes d'étape and chambres d'hôtes close during the winter period. A winter attempt would require full winter mountain equipment, up-to-date local conditions and realistic escape options; for most walkers, it is not the right season for this route.

Storms, surface conditions and daily decisions

The most serious weather hazard on the GR700 is not normal rain but sudden Cévennes storms. Monitor Météo-France closely, using meteo.fr or the 3250 phone forecast service, and seek local advice from Cévennes National Park information points or accommodation hosts when storm risk is raised.

After heavy rain, the route's stony paths, schist sections and old cobbled mule tracks can be slippery. Build in extra time on the mountain and Cévennes stages rather than relying on dry-weather pacing.

In dry summer weather, the southern garrigue can feel far hotter than the map suggests because of reflected heat, exposed tracks and limited shade. The same stage length that feels moderate in May can become demanding in August.

Daylight and start times

Daylight is generous from May to September. In May, expect roughly 15 hours of daylight, with sunrise around 06:15 and sunset around 21:00; in June, days are longer still, with sunset close to 22:00.

September still gives practical full-day walking, with sunrise around 07:15 and sunset around 20:00. October is noticeably tighter, with darkness around 19:00, so late starts leave less margin for navigation errors, storms or slow ground.

In summer, early starts are mainly about heat management. In autumn, they are about finishing with spare daylight if weather deteriorates.

Ticks and seasonal pests

Ticks are present in the Lozère uplands and Cévennes, especially from March to November, with peaks in spring and early autumn. Long grass, woodland edges and undergrowth are the main risk areas.

Use repellent, wear long socks or gaiters where vegetation is high, and check skin and clothing each evening. Lyme disease is a known risk, and tick-borne encephalitis risk is low but present.

Safety Notes

The GR700 is a moderate, non-technical long-distance route, but it crosses quiet uplands, forested Cévennes valleys and exposed Mediterranean lowlands. The main risks are weather, heat, navigation changes, road sections and being a long way from help on quieter stages.

Emergency numbers in France

For any serious incident, call **112**. It is the universal emergency number in France and should be used for mountain, medical, police or fire emergencies if there is any doubt about which service is needed.

Useful emergency numbers:

Service	Number
Universal emergency	112
SAMU medical emergency / ambulance	15
Police / Gendarmerie	17
Fire service / sapeurs-pompiers	18
Emergency SMS if calling is not possible	114

When calling, give your name, phone number, exact location, nature of the incident and the number of people involved. GPS coordinates from a mapping app are often the quickest way to describe your position. Keep the phone line free afterwards in case the emergency services call back.

Trail hazards can be reported through [sentinelles.sportsdenature.fr](https://www.sentinelles.sportsdenature.fr). For local advice in the Cévennes section, the Cévennes National Park main office, Villefort tourist office and Génolhac tourist office are useful contacts, but emergency services should always be contacted first in an accident.

Mobile signal and remote sections

Mobile coverage is generally better in larger towns such as **Le Puy-en-Velay, Langogne, Villefort, Alès and Nîmes**. It becomes patchier in the Cévennes uplands, especially between **Luc and Alès**, in deep valleys and around forested ridges above **Génolhac** and **Chamborigaud**.

Do not rely on being able to call, book accommodation or load maps online during the more remote Lozère and Cévennes stages. Download the day's GPX and offline mapping before leaving each morning. The official GR700 app and apps such as AllTrails can work offline once the maps are downloaded.

Orange and SFR generally have stronger rural coverage in Lozère and Gard than Free or Bouygues, but no network should be treated as guaranteed. Solo hikers should leave a daily route plan with someone and check in with the next accommodation where possible.

Navigation and diversions

The GR700 uses standard red-and-white GR balises, but waymarking can be inconsistent in places and route changes may not match older GPX files. At junctions or diversions, current field balises and official updates should take priority over an old downloaded track.

Two diversions need particular attention:

- **Chamborigaud / Pont-de-Rastel:** the riverside path near Château de Montjoie has suffered serious bank erosion. A diversion uses the D278/D906, including a short section of road walking. Check gard.ffrandonnee.fr before relying on this section.
- **Vézénobres:** the “Vacaresse” section has a marked diversion following a collapse. Use the latest GPX from chemin-regordane.fr or mongr.fr.

Carry a backup offline map as well as a phone. IGN 1:25,000 mapping or the IGN app is the safest option if waymarks are missing, weather closes in or a diversion is encountered.

Road walking

Most of the GR700 is on paths, forest roads, old mule tracks and quiet lanes, but there are road sections where care is needed. The approaches and exits around **Villefort** are a known concern: the road between the town centre and **Lac de Villefort** carries traffic and has no dedicated pedestrian path.

There is also road walking around **Alès**, in parts of the southern Gard, and on the current Chamborigaud diversion. Walk facing oncoming traffic where safe, use verges when available, avoid headphones and be especially cautious on bends and in poor visibility.

Terrain hazards

There is no scrambling and no exposed ridge walking, but the route is still physically sustained. Around **4,041 m of ascent** is spread across the full 240 km, and many days involve steady climbing or descending on stony ground.

The Cévennes sections include schist, rocky tracks and old cobbled mule paths that can be slippery when wet. Descents around the **Chassezac gorges**, **La Garde-Guérin** and the **Luech valley** can involve loose or stepped stone, so ankle support and trekking poles are useful.

There are no normal river crossings requiring wading. The water hazard on this route is not crossing streams in ordinary conditions, but sudden flooding during heavy rain, especially in gorge and river-valley sections.

Heat, sun and water

The southern stages from **Alès** through the Gard garrigue towards **Nîmes** and **Saint-Gilles-du-Gard** can be very hot in July and August. Summer afternoon highs in the Gard lowlands are commonly around **30°C** and can exceed **35°C** in a heatwave, and the stony paths and open scrubland retain heat.

In summer, start early, cover up, wear a hat and use sun protection. Carry at least **2 litres of water** on the exposed southern stages; more may be needed in a heatwave. In the uplands, **1.5 litres** is a sensible minimum unless reliable resupply has been planned.

Heat exhaustion is a real risk on the open Gardonnenque and Costières sections. If walking in peak summer, consider shortening stages, starting before sunrise where practical, or avoiding the southern section during the hottest part of the year.

Cold, snow and upland weather

The northern half of the route crosses the Haute-Loire and Lozère uplands, with a high point around **1,235 m**. Altitude sickness is not an issue, but cold, wind, frost and snow can be.

Above **800 m**, the trail can be impractical in winter. Snow and frost are possible from **October to April**, and the **Langogne to La Bastide-Puylaurent** section crosses exposed plateau around 1,000–1,200 m where conditions can feel severe even outside midwinter.

Spring and autumn walkers should carry a warm layer and waterproof shell, even if the forecast is mild lower down. Check the day's weather for the uplands, not just for the nearest town.

Heavy rain and flash flooding

The Cévennes are prone to **épisodes cévenols**, intense Mediterranean rain events most common from September to November. These storms can bring very heavy rainfall in a short time and cause rivers and dry channels to rise suddenly.

Take Météo-France warnings seriously, especially **orange or red vigilance** for Gard, Lozère or Ardèche. If such a warning is active, do not set off into river valleys, gorge sections or low-lying paths. Check **vigicrues.gouv.fr** for live river levels when heavy rain is forecast.

Sections near the **Luech**, the **Chassezac gorges**, the **Gardon valley** and the damaged path near **Chamborigaud** are particularly sensitive to heavy rain. Waiting a day is safer than being trapped between flooded sections or unstable riverbanks.

Wildfire risk in the Gard

South of **Alès**, the garrigue and scrubland can be subject to high wildfire risk in summer. In periods of extreme heat or fire danger, paths in the Gard may be closed to foot traffic.

Check the Gard daily forest fire risk information before walking southern stages in July and August. Do not light fires, do not smoke on the trail and do not ignore closure notices.

Ticks and vipers

Ticks are present in woodland, undergrowth and tall grass along the route, particularly from spring to autumn. The forested and chestnut-grove sections between **Luc and Alès** are typical tick habitat.

Wear long trousers through vegetation, use repellent and check carefully every evening. Remove ticks promptly with a tick remover, not oil or heat. Seek medical advice if a bull's-eye rash or flu-like symptoms develop in the following weeks.

The aspic viper is present in the Cévennes and Mont Lozère area. It is not aggressive and will usually move away if left alone. Watch where hands and feet are placed on warm rocks, path edges and in long grass; do not try to move or handle snakes.

If bitten by a snake, immobilise the limb and call **15** or **112** immediately. Do not cut, suck or apply a tourniquet to the wound.

Solo hiking

The GR700 is much quieter than the GR65 Camino, and solo hikers can go for long periods without meeting other walkers, especially in Lozère and the Cévennes. This is not a reason to avoid the route, but it does change the safety margin.

Leave a daily plan with someone, including the intended destination and accommodation. Let gîte d'étape hosts know where you are heading next, keep the phone charged and carry offline navigation. A small power bank is strongly recommended.

Daily safety checklist

Before setting off each morning:

- Check **Météo-France** for weather and storm alerts.
- Check **Vigicruves** if heavy rain is forecast or if walking near rivers and gorges.
- Check the Gard fire risk map in summer before southern stages.
- Download the latest GPX and offline maps.
- Confirm the day's accommodation and expected arrival plan.
- Tell someone the intended stage and destination.
- Carry enough water: at least **1.5 litres** in the uplands and **2 litres** on hot southern stages.
- Keep waterproofs, warm layer, sun protection and a basic first-aid kit accessible.

Gear Recommendations

The GR700 is not a technical mountain route, but it is hard on kit: 10–13 consecutive days, stony Cévennes paths, old cobbled mule tracks, forest roads, quiet lanes and a marked change from cool uplands to exposed Gard lowlands. Pack for a loaded multi-day walk rather than a lightweight day hike.

Footwear

High-cut waterproof hiking boots are the safest default choice for the Régordane Way. The route includes loose stones, granite and schist, old cobbled surfaces and rocky descents where ankle support and a rigid, grippy sole matter more than speed.

Trail runners can work for experienced fast hikers in dry conditions, but they are a compromise on the stony and cobbled sections. For most walkers carrying a multi-day pack, waterproof/breathable boots are the better option.

Break boots in well before Le Puy-en-Velay. Pack enough hiking socks to rotate dry pairs; six or seven pairs is a sensible allowance for a full 10–13 day itinerary, especially if staying in gîtes where drying space may vary.

Pack size and weight

For an inn-to-inn walk with luggage transfer, a 35–40 litre day pack is normally enough for waterproofs, warm layers, water, lunch, first aid, navigation and valuables. If using Transbagages or a similar luggage service, check the current bag-weight limit before booking.

Without luggage transfer, a 40–50 litre ventilated backpack with a proper hip belt is a practical size for village lodging. Avoid oversized expedition-style packs; 70-litre bags are excessive for this route unless carrying full camping equipment.

Keep carried weight under control. The individual stages are not extreme, but repeated 14–25 km days and around 4,041 m of cumulative ascent will punish an overloaded pack.

Waterproofs and warm layers

Use a simple layering system: breathable base layer, fleece or warm mid-layer, and a waterproof jacket with a breathable membrane. A rain cape or pack-cover system is useful because prolonged rain can soak both clothing and pack contents.

Do not underestimate cold on the northern half of the route. The Velay plateau, Lozère uplands and Cévennes sections sit high enough for sharp temperature drops, with cold mornings and near-freezing nights possible outside high summer.

Pack a warm hat and light gloves even in summer. They weigh little and are useful on exposed upland mornings, in bad weather, and during cool evenings in gîtes or campsites.

Water capacity

Carry at least 1 litre at all times, and increase this significantly in hot weather. In summer, two bottles or bladders totalling 2–3 litres are sensible for the southern stages.

The water strategy changes after Alès. The final approach through garrigue, vineyards and the Gard lowlands is hotter, drier and more exposed, with less reliable shade than the forested uplands.

In the Cévennes sections there are rivers, streams and village fountains, but natural water should be treated or filtered. Always check the next day's water options locally before setting out.

Sun and heat protection

South of Alès, sun protection becomes essential rather than optional. Much of the garrigue and vineyard walking has limited tree cover, and the Gard lowlands can be very hot in midsummer.

Pack sunglasses with strong UV protection, a wide-brimmed hat or cap with neck protection, and high-SPF sunscreen from late April onwards. In July and August, start early and aim to complete the hottest exposed kilometres before late morning.

Summer fire-risk closures can affect walking in the Gard. This should be checked before travelling and again locally during hot, dry spells.

Navigation and electronics

The GR700 is waymarked with standard red-and-white GR balises, but a paper or offline navigation backup is still recommended. The FFRandonnée GR700 topoguide is the main paper reference, with IGN 1:25,000 mapping useful for detailed route-finding and alternatives.

GPX files are available from gr-infos.com and the Le Puy-en-Velay Tourisme website. Where a digital track and the ground waymarks disagree, follow the current balises unless there is a clear closure or local instruction.

Carry a power bank if navigating by phone. Mobile signal can be limited in the more remote Cévennes sections, including around La Garde-Guérin, Villefort and forested stretches.

The optional Carnet du randonneur from the Voie Régordane association is worth carrying if you want stamps from gîtes, abbeys and tourist offices, but it is not a navigation tool.

Trekking poles

Trekking poles are strongly recommended for this route. They help on rocky descents, reduce impact over repeated long days, and add stability on old cobbled mule tracks and stony Cévennes paths.

They are less critical on the flatter southern stages, but still useful on hard ground and in hot weather when fatigue builds. Collapsible poles are easiest to stow on lane sections and in towns.

Food carry

This is a village-to-village route, so full expedition food loads are unnecessary for most walkers. Still, carry lunch and emergency snacks each day rather than relying on finding an open café or shop exactly when needed.

Plan food more carefully on quieter stages and outside peak season. Opening days, meal times and small village services can vary; this should be checked before travelling.

Campers need a larger food margin, especially if self-catering and linking campsites or basic overnight stops. Carrying extra food also increases water demand, particularly south of Alès.

First aid and insect protection

A blister kit is essential. The combination of cobbles, rocky paths, long road/lane sections and repeated daily mileage makes foot care one of the most important parts of the kit list.

Carry basic pain relief, personal medication, sunscreen, blister dressings and a small tick-removal tool. The wooded, grassy and shrubby sections of the Cévennes and garrigue are tick habitat, especially in spring and early summer.

Long trousers tucked into socks help in grassy or wooded sections. Check for ticks each evening, and avoid touching processionary caterpillars or their hair-like threads in pine areas.

Inn-to-inn hikers

Most GR700 walkers stay in hotels, chambres d'hôtes, gîtes d'étape, hostels or campsites rather than carrying a full wild-camping load. For this style, no tent or sleeping mat is needed.

A sleeping bag liner is useful in gîtes d'étape, particularly where blankets are provided. Choose silk or light synthetic for summer, and a warmer liner if walking in spring or autumn.

With luggage transfer, keep the day pack focused on what is needed before the next lodging: waterproofs, insulation, water, food, first aid, navigation, phone, power bank and valuables.

Campers

Campers need a tent, sleeping mat and a sleeping bag warm enough for cold upland nights. Even in summer, the northern uplands can be much cooler than the Gard finish.

A stove and cooking kit may be useful if self-catering, but check current local rules before relying on outdoor cooking, especially in dry southern areas. Fire risk can change walking and camping plans in the Gard.

Wild camping is restricted in the Cévennes National Park core zone. Current park rules and local restrictions should be checked before the trip.

Fast and section hikers

Fast hikers and section walkers can go lighter, particularly when joining or leaving via the Cévenol line at places such as Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud or Alès. A smaller pack is the main advantage.

Even for short sections, do not strip out waterproofs, warm layers or water capacity on the upland stages. In the south, prioritise heat management: early starts, sun cover and enough water matter more than shaving a few grams.

Trail runners are most viable for experienced hikers on dry, shorter sections. On the rocky historic core between Luc and Alès, ankle support remains a real advantage.

Seasonal extras

Season	Gear emphasis
Spring	Warm base layer, fleece, waterproof jacket, light gloves and tick protection. Cold upland mornings and wet spells are realistic.
Summer	Sun hat, SPF50 sunscreen, sunglasses, 2–3 litres of water south of Alès, and early starts. Still carry one warm layer for the Cévennes.
Autumn	Waterproofs and warm layers for Cévennes storms, plus grippy footwear for leaves on rocky paths. Tick risk is lower but still present.

Budget and Costs

The GR700 is relatively affordable by French long-distance walking standards, especially if using gîtes d'étape, municipal accommodation and the Cévenol railway for access or section hiking. Costs rise quickly if private rooms are needed every night, particularly around Alès and Nîmes.

All figures below are in euros and should be treated as planning ranges. Accommodation, luggage-transfer and rail prices change by season and year, so confirm current prices before booking.

Typical total budget

The estimates below assume roughly 10–13 walking days and around 12 nights on or near the route. A faster 10-day itinerary may reduce accommodation costs but can increase pressure on availability; the official shorter-stage approach usually means more nights.

Style	Typical spend per person	What this usually means
Budget	€600–€850	Dormitory gîtes, simple breakfasts, picnic lunches, occasional table d'hôte, early-booked trains
Mid-range	€910–€1,250	Private rooms in gîtes or chambres d'hôtes, half-board most nights, some luggage transfer
Comfortable	€1,370–€2,130	Chambres d'hôtes and hotels, restaurant meals, luggage transfer, more flexible transport
Self-guided package	From about €1,420 plus extras	Accommodation, half-board, baggage transfer and support, depending on operator and itinerary

Accommodation costs

Gîtes d'étape are the key to keeping costs down. A dormitory bed is typically around €14–€22 per night, with some examples on the route from about €12 to just under €30 depending on place and season. Breakfast in a gîte commonly adds about €7–€8.50, while an evening meal or table d'hôte is often around €16–€18.

Half-board is the simplest option in the quieter upland and Cévennes sections, where evening food may not be available elsewhere. Expect many demi-pension rates to sit around €35–€55 per person, although some places are higher.

Private rooms cost more but can still be reasonable outside the larger towns. Chambres d'hôtes are commonly around €36–€58 per person for a single with breakfast, or roughly €50–€70 for a double room for two, with higher rates possible around Alès and other busier areas.

Hotels are most relevant in Alès, Nîmes and other larger service towns. Budget hotel rooms are often around €45–€60, while mid-range hotels are more commonly €70–€100 or more.

Examples of lower-cost accommodation seen along the route include gîte options in Le Puy-en-Velay, Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, the Villefort–Chamborigaud corridor, Vézénobres and Nîmes.

Use the Voie Régordane association accommodation lists and confirm current-year rates directly with each lodging.

Food and drink

Food costs depend heavily on whether evening meals are taken at accommodation or in restaurants. In rural villages, a plat du jour may be around €8–€14 and a simple formule or menu du jour around €11–€15. A bar breakfast is often about €4–€5, and a sandwich may be around €2.50–€4.

For self-catering, allow around €5–€10 per day for picnic supplies from boulangeries and small shops. Useful resupply points include Pradelles, Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Alès and Nîmes. Shops are much sparser through the more remote Cévennes section, especially around the Luc-Villefort–Génolhac stretch, so carry lunch and snacks when accommodation or shops are uncertain.

Food style	Daily food budget
Budget: picnic lunches, simple breakfasts, occasional gîte dinner	€20–€30
Mid-range: table d'hôte or restaurant dinner, bought lunches	€30–€50
Comfortable: café lunches, restaurant dinners, extra drinks	€50–€70

Transport to and from the trail

Le Puy-en-Velay has an SNCF station. From Paris, rail travel to Le Puy-en-Velay usually requires a change via Lyon or Clermont-Ferrand; advance fares can be much cheaper than flexible tickets. As a broad planning figure, allow around €60–€120 total for travel to the start and home from the finish if booking early, and more for last-minute or high-demand dates.

From Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, local bus travel to Nîmes is inexpensive. TANGO line 42 Saint-Gilles–Nîmes is around €2 and takes roughly 31–50 minutes, with services running Monday–Saturday. This should be checked before travelling, especially for Sundays, public holidays and seasonal timetable changes.

Nîmes has onward TGV connections, including trains towards Paris. Advance Nîmes–Paris fares may be around €30–€80, with flexible fares higher.

The Cévenol railway line is useful for section hiking, shortening the route or leaving the trail if needed. It serves Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Alès and Nîmes. Short TER hops are typically around €5–€15, but current SNCF prices and timetables should be checked before travelling.

Taxis and local transfers

Rural taxis are available from places such as Villefort, Génolhac and Alès, but availability is limited and they should be booked ahead where possible. As a rough guide, short transfers may cost around €15–€30, but there is no fixed route-wide fare.

Taxis are best treated as a fallback for missed connections, accommodation gaps or injury rather than as a day-to-day transport plan. In the quieter mountain sections, arrange any transfer before setting out for the day.

Luggage transfer

Transbagages operates on the Régordane route and is the main dedicated baggage-transfer option. The listed rate is around €7 per stage per bag, with a maximum bag weight of 15 kg. For about 10 stages, one bag is therefore roughly €70.

Coverage is listed from Le Puy-en-Velay to Vézénobres, so confirm the current service area if planning to continue with luggage transfer through Nîmes and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Booking in advance is essential.

Camping and campsites

Campsites are part of the wider accommodation mix on the GR700, but they need careful stage-by-stage planning. Do not assume there is a campsite at every official stop or that late arrival will be possible in small villages.

Camping can reduce nightly costs, but it may not save much if it forces taxi transfers, longer food carries or awkward detours. Check opening dates, hiker rates and whether booking is required before building an itinerary around campsites.

Guided and self-guided packages

Self-guided packages are available for walkers who want accommodation, luggage transfer and route support arranged in advance. L'Autre Chemin offers a Le Puy-en-Velay to Alès package of around 165 km over 12 days / 13 stages from about €1,420 per person, including private-room accommodation, half-board on most nights, baggage transport, walking notes and support. Transport to the start, insurance and personal expenses are extra.

Shorter packaged walking holidays also focus on selected sections of the GR700, with prices varying by operator, length and accommodation standard. These can be good value for walkers who want the strongest Cévennes sections without arranging every overnight stop independently.

Extra costs to allow for

Budget a small reserve for the FFRandonnée topoguide, drinks, laundry, entry fees, replacement snacks and emergency transport. The topoguide is typically around €16–€20, while a sensible miscellaneous allowance is about €30–€50 for a budget walker and €60–€100 for a more comfortable trip.

Carry some cash for small rural stops, even if cards are widely accepted in larger towns. The cheapest trip is usually the one with accommodation and trains booked early, lunches planned before remote sections, and enough flexibility in the budget for one taxi or unplanned hotel night if the itinerary changes.

Luggage Transfer, Guided Tours and Support Services

The GR700 is one of the quieter French GR routes, but it is not unsupported. Luggage transfer, self-guided walking holidays, taxi transfers and donkey trekking are all available, with the most comprehensive services on the Le Puy-en-Velay–Alès core and more independent planning needed on the southern Gard stages.

For many walkers, the key decision is whether to carry a full pack for 10–13 days or pay for daily bag transport. The route is not technically difficult, but repeated 20–25 km days on stony tracks, forest roads and lanes are noticeably easier with a daypack.

Luggage transfer on the GR700

Luggage transfer is available along the route, but it is usually handled by regional operators rather than a single universal courier for every stage. Walkers may need to switch provider around the Haute-Loire/Lozère boundary and again towards the Gard, especially when walking the full Le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard route.

Book baggage transport ahead, not on the morning of departure. Operators generally require bags to be labelled with the booking name, left ready by the agreed morning time, and kept within a weight limit of around 13–15 kg.

Operator	Useful section	Practical details
La Malle Postale	Le Puy-en-Velay to La Bastide-Puylaurent	Around €11.50 per bag per stage; closed November–February; tel. 04 71 04 21 79 / 06 67 79 38 16
Organisation Stevenson bagages	Lozère stages, around La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort and Génolhac	Tel. 04 66 47 04 66 / 06 07 29 01 23
Transbagages	Broad GR700 coverage from the Lozère/Mende area	Around €7.50 per bag per stage, or €7.00 per bag for groups of 5+ bags; maximum 15 kg; bags available from 8am; reserve by the evening before; info@transbagages.com ; tel. 04 66 65 27 75 / 06 80 06 32 19
Axel Vidal / Axel Transport	Gard section, Génolhac to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	Baggage and person transfers; available 7 days a week, 24h/24; baggage transport from La Bastide to Saint-Gilles from €45 per stage; contact@axel-transport.fr ; tel. 06 98 79 95 15 / 04 30 96 95 30

Prices, baggage limits and seasonal operation can change, so confirm current details before booking. The Voie Régordane association also maintains a transport page that is useful for checking the current division of operators by region.

Who should use luggage transfer?

Luggage transfer is most useful for walkers staying in hotels, chambres d'hôtes and gîtes d'étape who want to keep daily pack weight low. It is also a good option in warm weather on the southern stages, where carrying a heavy load through the Gard can make otherwise moderate days feel harder.

It is unnecessary for experienced long-distance hikers who are comfortable carrying their own kit and have booked accommodation with light sleeping arrangements. The GR700 passes through enough settlements for an independent walker to manage without a support company, provided accommodation and transport are planned in advance.

If using bag transfer, build the itinerary around accommodation that accepts luggage deliveries. Do not assume every small gîte or chambre d'hôtes can handle courier drop-offs without prior arrangement.

Self-guided walking-holiday packages

Most commercial GR700 holidays are self-guided rather than accompanied. These packages typically combine accommodation booking, luggage transfer, route notes or a digital guide, some meals and telephone assistance, while you walk independently each day.

Company	Route covered	Typical inclusions	Best suited to
L'Autre Chemin	Le Puy-en-Velay to Alès, 165 km, 9 days total / 7 walking days	From €1,035 per person; half-board except the final night in Alès; luggage transfer up to 13 kg; return minibus to Le Puy; digital guidebook and navigation app; accommodation taxes; telephone support	Walkers focused on the historic northern and Cévennes core who do not need the Alès-Saint-Gilles-du-Gard extension
La Pèlerine	Langogne to Alès, 7 days, or Le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, 15 days	From €870 for Langogne-Alès and from €1,880 for the full route; room reservations; luggage transfer; half-board; route booklet; telephone assistance	Walkers wanting either a shorter central section or a fully arranged end-to-end trip
Chamina Voyages	Langogne to Saint-Martin-de-Valgalgues, 97 km, 7 days / 6 nights	From €680 per person; half-board; route guidebook with IGN maps; luggage transfer between stages; tourist taxes; season 1 May-12 October	Walkers wanting the central Cévennes section, with access by Langogne station and return from Alès

Accommodation in these packages is generally a mix of gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes, hotels and guesthouses. Check current prices, departure windows and single-room supplements when booking, as these can change annually.

The Gard section south of Alès is less commonly packaged as a short commercial walking holiday. Walkers continuing to Nîmes, Générac and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard should be ready to arrange accommodation and transfers independently unless booking a full-route package.

Guided walking options

Fixed guided departures are not the main format for the GR700. The standard commercial model is self-guided walking with support in the background, rather than a guide accompanying the group on the trail.

For a group that wants more structure, La Pèlerine caters for group travel and can tailor itineraries to budget, fitness and pace. If an accompanied guide is required, this should be checked before travelling.

Taxi and shuttle transfers

End-to-end transport matters because the GR700 is a linear route. The Cévenol railway line is useful for joining or leaving the route at Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Alès and Nîmes, while Saint-Gilles-du-Gard is reached by bus or shuttle from Nîmes or Alès.

Transbagages provides shuttle support as well as baggage transfer on the route. Axel Vidal / Axel Transport also handles person transfers on the Gard section between Génolhac and Saint-Gilles-du-Gard, which is useful for walkers filling gaps between accommodation, railheads and the final trailhead logistics.

Taxis and shuttles should be booked ahead, especially for small villages, Sundays, public holidays and early starts. This should be checked before travelling.

Donkey trekking

The Régordane Way has a natural fit with donkey trekking, as it follows an old mule road through the southern Massif Central. A donkey can carry luggage and adds a traditional, slower style of journey, but it requires more planning than ordinary luggage transfer.

Bamboul'Âne is listed for this route, with contact details at 06 61 00 49 71 and bamboulane.05@gmail.com. The Voie Régordane accommodation lists indicate which gîtes and chambres d'hôtes accept donkeys, which is essential information before committing to an itinerary.

Season, pricing, daily stages and animal-handling arrangements should be confirmed directly with the provider. Do not assume that every accommodation or village stop on the GR700 can take a donkey.

Carnet du randonneur

The Voie Régordane association offers a Carnet du randonneur, a hiker's notebook or credential that can be stamped at accommodation and key points along the route. It is similar in concept to a Camino credential and is a worthwhile addition for walkers treating the GR700 as a pilgrimage or who want a record of each stage.

Details on obtaining the carnet are handled by the association. Arrange it before departure if stamps and a continuous record of the route matter to the trip.

Shorter Hikes and Best Sections

The GR700 is unusually easy to divide into shorter trips because the Cévenol railway line shadows much of the middle route. Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Alès and Nîmes all sit on useful rail access points, making the Lozère–Cévennes section the easiest part to walk without a car.

The southern approach from Alès to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard is more awkward to split by rail, especially beyond Nîmes. For short itineraries, the most practical choices are usually between Langogne and Alès, or a gentler lowland section starting from Alès.

Natural Short-Trip Building Blocks

Section	Approx. distance	Character	Best for
Le Puy-en-Velay to Langogne	~45 km / 2 days	Velay plateau, volcanic uplands, Pradelles	A northern taster with historic villages
Langogne to Villefort	~46 km / 2–3 days	Upland forest, Luc, La Bastide-Puylaurent, La Garde-Guérin	Villages, accommodation, rail access
Villefort to Alès	~66 km / 3–4 days	Cévennes core, gorges, chestnut country, Château de Portes	The classic scenic section
Alès to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard	~75 km / 3–4 days	Garrigue, vineyards, Gard plains, Nîmes	A warmer lowland finish, but more transport planning

Best Day Walk: La Garde-Guérin to Génolhac

Start / finish: La Garde-Guérin to Génolhac

Distance / time: about 19–20 km, typically 5–6 hours

Difficulty: medium; not technical, but a full walking day with descent and climb

This is the strongest one-day sample of the GR700. It starts from the fortified medieval village of La Garde-Guérin above the Chassezac gorges, descends towards Villefort and the Lac de Villefort, then continues through forested Cévennes country towards Concoules and Génolhac.

The appeal is the concentration of classic Régordane scenery: old mule-road traces, the hamlet of Vielvic, the Col de l'Ancise, Cévennes woodland and the transition from high plateau to schist-and-chestnut country. For walkers choosing only one day on the route, this gives the clearest sense of the historic road.

Transport notes: Génolhac has a station on the Cévenol line. La Garde-Guérin has no railway station; the nearest practical rail access is Villefort, about 4 km away by road. Walkers commonly use Villefort as the rail base and add the climb to La Garde-Guérin, or arrange a local shuttle or baggage-transfer operator such as Transbagages. Train times and any shuttle arrangements should be checked before travelling.

Best Weekend Section: La Bastide-Puylaurent to Génolhac

Start / finish: La Bastide-Puylaurent to Génolhac, via Villefort

Distance: about 36 km over 2 days, or 2–3 shorter days

Typical stages: La Bastide-Puylaurent to Villefort (~22 km), then Villefort to Génolhac (~14 km)

This is the most efficient weekend version of the GR700: compact, scenic and easy to access by train at both ends. It includes La Garde-Guérin and the Chassezac gorge country on the first day, then a shorter second day through forest paths and Concoules to Génolhac.

La Bastide-Puylaurent is a strong starting point because several GR routes meet there, including the GR700, GR70 Stevenson Trail, GR7, GR72 and GR470. It is set up for walkers, with lodging and trail services aimed at multi-day hikers.

Transport notes: La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort and Génolhac are all on the Cévenol line. This makes a no-car weekend realistic, provided train times work with the walking stages. Not every rural service stops at every station, so current SNCF / TER Occitanie timetables should be checked before booking accommodation.

Three-day variant: start one stage earlier at Langogne and walk Langogne to La Bastide-Puylaurent (~24 km), La Bastide-Puylaurent to Villefort (~22 km), then Villefort to Génolhac (~14 km). This gives a fuller upland-to-Cévennes transition while still using rail at both ends.

Best 3–5 Day Section: Langogne to Alès

Start / finish: Langogne to Alès

Distance: about 90 km

Time needed: 4–5 days for most walkers

This is the best choice for hikers who want the essence of the GR700 without committing to the full 240 km. It covers the historic Régordane core through Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, La Garde-Guérin, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Portes and Alès.

The section includes the route's most celebrated features: the Cévennes National Park landscape, La Garde-Guérin, the Chassezac gorges, forested descents, schist hamlets and Château de Portes. It also has a sensible spread of gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes and small-town services compared with some quieter parts of the full route.

Transport notes: Langogne and Alès are both on the Cévenol line, and intermediate stations at La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac and Chamborigaud allow flexible starts, exits or rest-day adjustments. This is the easiest long section to walk independently by public transport.

Best Section for Scenery: Villefort to Génolhac, or La Bastide-Puylaurent to Chamborigaud

Short version: Villefort to Génolhac, about 14 km

Fuller scenic version: La Bastide-Puylaurent to Chamborigaud, using the Villefort and Génolhac stages as the core

For maximum scenery in limited time, prioritise the La Garde-Guérin, Villefort and Génolhac area. This is where the route feels most dramatic, with gorge views, medieval stonework, dense Cévennes forest,

chestnut groves and old Régordane trackways.

The broader stretch from La Bastide-Puylaurent to Chamborigaud gives more variety. It begins in the upland Lozère country, passes La Garde-Guérin and Villefort, then works south through the Cévennes towards Génolhac and Chamborigaud.

Transport notes: La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac and Chamborigaud are all served by the Cévenol line. This makes it possible to shorten the section if weather, accommodation or legs dictate.

Best Section for Beginners: Alès to Ners, or Génolhac to Alès

Easier lowland option: Alès to Ners via Vézénobres, about 17.5 km as a single GR stage

Two-day extension: continue from Ners to Saint-Chartes for about 32.5 km total

More scenic rail-to-rail option: Génolhac to Alès, about 38 km over 2 days

Alès to Ners is the gentlest introduction to the southern GR700. The walking is flatter to gently rolling, the waymarking remains standard GR red-and-white, and the surroundings shift towards Gard villages, vineyards and garrigue rather than mountain terrain.

It is less dramatic than the Cévennes section, but it is more forgiving for walkers testing multi-day hiking in France. Vézénobres adds a strong village highlight on this lower section.

Génolhac to Alès is a better choice for beginners who still want a clear Cévennes flavour. It has more interest than the lowland option, passes the Château de Portes area, and has railway access at both ends.

Transport notes: Alès is a major practical access point on the Cévenol line. Transport away from Ners or Saint-Chartes should be checked before travelling. Génolhac to Alès is simpler by rail because both ends are on the Cévenol line.

Best Section for Public Transport: Any Cévenol Line Section

The easiest public-transport itineraries are those that start and finish on the Cévenol railway line. Good examples include:

Section	Approx. distance	Why it works
Langogne to La Bastide-Puylaurent	~24 km	One solid upland day, rail at both ends
La Bastide-Puylaurent to Villefort	~22 km	Strong scenery, La Garde-Guérin, rail at both ends
Villefort to Génolhac	~14 km	Shorter Cévennes stage, manageable in a day
Génolhac to Alès	~38 km / 2 days	Good beginner-friendly rail-to-rail option
Langogne to Alès	~90 km / 4–5 days	Best longer section without a car

The Cévenol line links Clermont-Ferrand and Nîmes via Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud and Alès. Nîmes has fast onward connections, including TGV services to major French cities. Le Puy-en-Velay also has its own SNCF station for access to the northern trailhead.

Rural train frequency can be limited, and not every train stops at every station. Current SNCF / TER Occitanie timetables should be checked before fixing walking days, especially for Sunday travel or late-afternoon finishes.

Best Section for Villages and Accommodation: Langogne to Villefort

Start / finish: Langogne to Villefort

Distance: about 46 km

Time needed: 2–3 days

This section has one of the best combinations of village interest, walker services and accommodation spacing. It links Langogne, Luc, La Bastide-Puylaurent, La Garde-Guérin and Villefort, with a mix of small towns, hamlets, gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes and hotels.

Langogne offers the fullest services at the start, while La Bastide-Puylaurent is a known GR crossroads with hiker accommodation. Luc adds the ruined castle above the Allier, and La Garde-Guérin is one of the route's standout medieval villages before the descent to Villefort.

Transport notes: Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent and Villefort are all on the Cévenol line. Accommodation should still be booked ahead, particularly where the day's endpoint is a small village rather than a larger town.

Best Section for Camping

The most practical camping-focused section is between Langogne and Alès, where the route passes through the Lozère and Cévennes country and where formal campsites exist in or around places such as Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort and Alès. This is also the section where train access gives useful flexibility if a campsite is closed or weather turns poor.

Wild camping and bivouac rules require care in and around the Cévennes National Park. Restrictions can apply by location, season and protected area status, so local rules should be checked before travelling and before pitching. For most walkers, using formal campsites or booking gîtes d'étape is the lower-risk approach.

Highlights and Points of Interest

The GR700 is as much a historic route as a mountain walk. Its strongest highlights come from the visible remains of the old Régordane road — cobbled mule tracks, cart ruts, castles and fortified villages — combined with the sharp landscape change from the volcanic Velay to the Cévennes and finally the Gard lowlands.

The places below are ordered north to south, so they can be used when deciding where to allow extra time on the route.

Le Puy-en-Velay: volcanic city and pilgrimage trailhead

Le Puy-en-Velay gives the GR700 one of the most dramatic starts of any French Grande Randonnée. The route begins close to the cathedral quarter, where steep medieval streets, basalt paving and volcanic plugs set the tone before the first day on the Velay plateau.

The key monument is the Cathedral of Notre-Dame du Puy, a major Romanesque pilgrimage church and UNESCO-listed site on the Routes of Santiago de Compostela. It is also the starting point of the GR65 Le Puy Camino, so the city has a strong long-distance walking culture before the Régordane Way even begins.

Allow time for the Chapelle Saint-Michel-d'Aiguilhe, reached by 268 steps to the top of an 82 m volcanic basalt plug. The red-painted Notre-Dame de France statue on the Corneille rock is another prominent landmark, visible across the city.

Beyond Le Puy, the route moves quickly onto the volcanic Velay plateau. Look for red basalt soils, open agricultural land, étangs and volcanic wetlands known locally as narces, including the La Sauvetat area.

Pradelles: hilltop Velay village and Stevenson overlap

Pradelles is one of the most attractive early stops, officially classed among Les Plus Beaux Villages de France. It is a stone-built hilltop village facing the Haut-Allier valley, with arcaded squares and a market-town feel that reflects its long role as a stopping place for travellers and pilgrims.

This is also the shared country of the GR700 and the GR70 Chemin de Stevenson. The overlap continues through the Velay as far as Langogne, making this northern section busier and better known than the quieter Régordane core farther south.

Langogne and Lac de Naussac: plateau town and open water

Langogne is a useful larger stop on the Lozère plateau, with services and a station on the Cévenol railway line. It is a natural place to pause or adjust plans before the route leaves the Stevenson overlap and heads into quieter Margeride and Lozère country.

Nearby Lac de Naussac adds an unusual open-water landscape to the route. The reservoir gives this section a broader, brighter feel before the GR700 turns towards the more enclosed forests, valleys and historic road sections to the south.

Luc: castle above the upper Allier country

Luc marks the move into a more overtly medieval landscape. The Château de Luc, a former stronghold above the village, stands over the upper Allier valley country and reflects the defensive importance of this old north–south route.

The surrounding terrain has a broad upland character: granite, open skies and plateau country rather than the steeper Cévenol valleys still to come. It is a good section for noticing how the Régordane Way worked as a practical passage between regions, not just as a scenic footpath.

La Bastide-Puylaurent: watershed country

La Bastide-Puylaurent is a quiet Lozère village and an important practical point, with a station on the Cévenol railway. Its setting is notable because the nearby uplands form genuine watershed country: the Allier, Lot and Chassezac rivers all have their source in this area.

For walkers, this is also the threshold before one of the finest parts of the whole GR700: the descent towards La Garde-Guérin, the Chassezac gorges and the Cévennes National Park landscape.

La Garde-Guérin and the Chassezac gorges: the route's centrepiece

La Garde-Guérin is often the standout single highlight of the GR700. This fortified medieval village sits at about 858 m in Lozère, within the Cévennes National Park, and is also classed among Les Plus Beaux Villages de France.

The village was established in the 12th century as a garrison post linked to the protection of merchants and pilgrims using the Régordane road. Its square 12th-century keep rises 21.5 m and gives a wide view over the Chassezac gorges and the high plateau.

This is one of the best places to look for the physical archaeology of the old route. Sections of stone-paved Régordane mule track survive nearby, including deep ruts cut into the bedrock by heavily loaded carts.

The Chassezac gorges viewpoint, about 1 km north of the village, is a short detour worth making in clear weather. It looks over a steep canyon carved by the Chassezac torrent and is one of the most dramatic natural viewpoints on the route.

Guided village visits are available through the local G.A.R.D.E. association, from about €5 per person. Current times, prices and availability should be checked locally.

Villefort and Lac de Villefort

Villefort sits on the Lozère–Gard border and has a distinctly more southern feel than the high plateau villages to the north. It is also a practical halt, with a station on the Cévenol line.

Lac de Villefort, an artificial reservoir on the Altier, is the main natural feature here. In summer it brings a strong contrast to the surrounding Cévennes hills, with blue water set against wooded slopes and stony uplands.

Cévennes National Park: chestnut groves, schist hamlets and dark skies

The historic heart of the Régordane Way runs broadly from Luc to Alès, with the Villefort–Alès section giving the strongest Cévennes character. This is part of the UNESCO-listed Causses and Cévennes cultural landscape and also lies within a recognised dark-sky area, so overnight stops here can be especially rewarding on clear nights.

The scenery changes quickly: high conifer forest gives way to chestnut groves, steep wooded valleys and hamlets built in dark schist. Around Génolhac and Chamborigaud, old chestnut terraces and Cévenol stone architecture are among the defining features of the walk.

This is also one of the better wildlife sections. Griffon vultures may be seen soaring above gorges and open slopes, while mouflon, short-toed snake eagle and seasonal flora such as wild orchids and spring heather add interest for observant walkers.

Culturally, the area has strong Protestant and Camisard associations. The route does not need to detour into specialist heritage sites to feel this history: the settlement pattern, stone hamlets and isolated valleys all speak to the Cévennes' distinct identity.

Génolhac and Chamborigaud: Cévenol railway villages

Génolhac and Chamborigaud are useful as well as atmospheric. Both sit on the Cévenol railway line, making them practical access or exit points on a linear route.

Génolhac is set in a wooded valley after the descent from the La Garde-Guérin area via Concoules. Chamborigaud continues the Cévenol pattern of stone village, forested slopes and railway access before the route pushes on towards Portes.

Château de Portes: the Vaisseau des Cévennes

Château de Portes is one of the great man-made landmarks of the GR700. Perched on a rocky spur above the village of Portes, it guarded the Régordane road at the exit from the Cévennes.

The castle developed from the 11th century and is famous for its Renaissance stone prow, designed to resist artillery. This ship-like profile gives it the nickname Vaisseau des Cévennes — the Vessel of the Cévennes.

The panorama is one of the best on the route, taking in Cévennes valleys, Mont Lozère and the beginning of the Alès plain. Visits are by guided tour reservation, with current opening arrangements best checked locally before planning a stop around the castle.

Alès: gateway from the Cévennes to the southern plain

Alès is the main urban break between the mountain section and the Gard lowlands. It has full services and a Cévenol railway station, so it works well for resupply, rest, section starts or section finishes.

The surrounding landscape carries the industrial history of the Gard Cévenol, especially around Saint-Martin-de-Valgalgues and Alès, where former coal-mining areas still shape the terrain. Some old mine zones have been transformed into natural areas with striking emerald-coloured pools.

South of Alès, the route changes character decisively. Forested Cévennes valleys give way to garrigue, vineyards, orchards and longer tracks across lower, hotter country.

Vézénobres: perched medieval village above the Gardon country

Vézénobres is one of the most photogenic southern stops on the GR700. It is a perched medieval village on a small hill above the Gardon valley, with a strong silhouette and well-preserved old streets.

It also marks the psychological exit from the Cévennes. From here, the walking feels increasingly Mediterranean, with fields, vines, olive-growing country and limestone scrub replacing the schist and chestnut of the mountains.

Garrigue, vineyards and the Gard lowlands

The Alès to Nîmes section is memorable less for single monuments than for the complete change in climate and vegetation. The path enters limestone garrigue, with holm oak, thyme, rosemary, lavender and other aromatic scrubland plants.

Vineyards of the Costières de Nîmes, orchards and long carrossable tracks through the plain become part of the daily rhythm. In warm weather this is also where heat management becomes part of the walking experience, particularly after the cooler uplands.

Nîmes: Roman city on the pilgrim routes

Nîmes is worth building into the itinerary if time allows. Most thru-hikers pass through or stage here, and it is the major cultural stop before the final approach to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard.

The Arènes de Nîmes, a 1st-century Roman amphitheatre, is one of the best-preserved in the world and remains in use for events. The Maison Carrée, a near-perfect Roman temple in the city centre, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Carré d'Art, a contemporary art museum by Norman Foster opposite the Maison Carrée, gives the city a strong contrast between Roman and modern architecture. Nîmes also sits on the Routes of Santiago de Compostela via the Tolosana, linking the GR700's finale back to its pilgrim context.

Saint-Gilles-du-Gard: abbey finale near the Petite Camargue

The Abbey of Saint-Gilles is the formal southern climax of the GR700. The abbey church is UNESCO-listed as part of the Pilgrimage Routes to Santiago de Compostela in France.

Its Romanesque west façade, built between 1120 and 1160, has three portals, Corinthian columns and an exceptional sculptural programme with scenes from the Old and New Testaments. The lower church or crypt is also remarkable, measuring about 50 m by 25 m and containing the tomb of Saint Gilles.

Saint-Gilles was historically a major pilgrimage destination and, before silting changed its role, an important port on the edge of the Petite Camargue. The final approach brings the route fully into the flat Gard plain, with the wetlands, Camargue bulls, white horses and flamingos of the Petite Camargue nearby for walkers extending beyond the GR700 line.

Common Mistakes and Planning Tips

Mistake: leaving accommodation until the day before

The GR700 is quieter than the best-known French pilgrimage routes, but that does not mean beds are easy to find. Many stops rely on small gîtes d'étape, chambres d'hôtes and rural hotels, with limited capacity in villages such as Luc, Concoules and the upper Cévennes.

Fix: book the full route before setting out, especially in July and August. In high season, allow at least 4–6 weeks where possible, and call ahead rather than relying only on an accommodation list or guidebook entry.

The official Voie Régordane association publishes accommodation lists by region, and the Miam Miam Dodo guide is a useful services reference. The pilgrim Carnet du randonneur is a record document, not a bed guarantee.

Mistake: choosing a 10-day itinerary without understanding the workload

A 10-day crossing means averaging roughly 24 km per day over stony paths, old cobbled mule tracks, forest roads and quiet lanes, with around 4,041 m of cumulative ascent. That is realistic for fit, efficient walkers, but it leaves little margin for heat, poor weather, navigation delays or long resupply stops.

Fix: compare the 10-day plan with the official 13-stage version before booking. The 13-stage plan uses shorter days, including several around 12–19 km, but it ties accommodation to specific stops and can still be awkward where beds are limited.

Do not judge the route by distance alone. A practical pace on rougher Cévennes ground may be closer to 2–3 km/hour than the 4 km/hour often used in guide planning.

Mistake: assuming every stage stop has a full hiker infrastructure

Some places on the GR700 are historic or scenic stops rather than service hubs. La Garde-Guérin, for example, is a superb fortified village above the Chassezac gorges, but it does not have a general food shop.

Fix: identify food, dinner and breakfast options before each stage, not just accommodation. If staying at La Garde-Guérin, book meals in advance or carry enough food to continue; Villefort is the next reliable food stop, around 5 km further on.

Concoules has limited services, but full supermarket options are better planned around larger stops such as Villefort, Génolhac, Alès or Nîmes. This should be checked before travelling, especially outside summer.

Mistake: forgetting Sunday and Monday closures

Rural France can be awkward for walkers who depend on daily resupply. Small boulangeries, épiceries and village shops in Haute-Loire, Lozère and Gard may close on Sunday afternoon and all day Monday, with hours changing by season.

Fix: plan weekend food before reaching small villages. If a Sunday or Monday falls in a thin-services section, carry extra from the previous larger town or arrange dinner and breakfast with accommodation.

Langogne, Villefort, Alès and Nîmes are better resupply points than small intermediate villages. Use them deliberately rather than assuming the next village will have an open shop.

Mistake: underestimating the Saint-Gilles finish logistics

Saint-Gilles-du-Gard does not have its own train station. Finishing the walk is not the same as finishing at a railhead, and onward travel needs planning.

Fix: arrange the final transfer before reaching Saint-Gilles. Tangobus Line 42 links Saint-Gilles with Nîmes from Monday to Saturday, but there is no Sunday service; current timetables should be checked before travelling.

From Nîmes, there are onward TGV connections and access back to the Cévenol line. If finishing on a Sunday, plan for a taxi, an overnight stay in Saint-Gilles, or a pre-booked shuttle where available; Transbagages can assist with bags and walker transfers, but requires advance booking and does not run on Sunday.

Mistake: relying on the Cévenol railway without checking the timetable

The Cévenol line is one of the route's main practical advantages, serving places such as Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Alès and Nîmes. It is useful for section hiking, escape plans and returning north after the walk.

Fix: treat it as a planned logistics tool, not a turn-up-and-go metro. Services are limited and can involve TER trains, Intercités services, seasonal changes or replacement buses.

Check current SNCF Connect schedules before fixing section starts, rest days or emergency exit points. This matters particularly if walking only the Cévennes core or needing to leave the trail because of injury, heat or weather.

Mistake: ignoring Gard fire-risk closures in summer

From roughly Alès southwards, the GR700 enters hotter garrigue, green-oak country, vineyards, the Costières de Nîmes and the approach to the Petite Camargue. In the Gard, paths may be legally closed during high forest-fire risk periods.

Fix: in July and August, check the Gard prefecture wildfire-risk map the evening before each southern stage. When risk levels are high, access may be restricted for part of the morning or all day.

Start early in hot weather, preferably before 9am, and avoid planning tight transport connections after long exposed stages. This issue applies mainly to the Gard section, not the Haute-Loire and Lozère uplands.

Mistake: planning only for the Cévennes and neglecting the southern stages

The historic Régordane core between Luc and Alès attracts most of the attention, but the route continues well beyond the mountains. South of Alès, the walking becomes flatter, hotter and more exposed, with more road walking, farm tracks and garrigue.

Fix: increase water-carrying capacity for the southern half and check services carefully around La Calmette, Générac, Garons and the final approach to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard. Do not assume streams, shade or frequent shops will replace mountain-section planning.

Nîmes is a major resupply point, but it is not the finish. Use it to reset food, water and heat-management plans before the final stages.

Mistake: trusting waymarks alone

The GR700 uses standard red-and-white GR balises, but waymarking is not a substitute for navigation. Forest junctions, old tracks and village exits can still cause mistakes, and the section east of Luc through the Gardille forest needs particular care at changes of direction.

Fix: carry the FFRandonnée topoguide for GR700, plus an offline GPX track. GPX files are available from Le Puy-en-Velay Tourisme and gr-infos.com, and the Régordane GR700 smartphone app is a useful backup.

If a guidebook line and ground markings differ, the on-the-ground balises should normally be followed. Still, do not depend on mobile signal for navigation; download maps before leaving each town.

Mistake: booking popular nights at the weekend too late

The GR700 also attracts French weekend walkers, especially on the most scenic Cévennes and village sections. Friday and Saturday nights can be tight at places such as Pradelles, La Garde-Guérin, Génolhac and Vézénobres.

Fix: start mid-week if possible, so the most popular stops do not fall on a Saturday night. Where the itinerary cannot avoid a weekend, book those nights first and build the rest of the schedule around them.

Mistake: assuming seasonal services operate year-round

Some rural accommodation and services operate only for part of the walking season. Les Sédariès at Villefort, for example, operates from April to September, and many smaller gîtes, shops and restaurants adjust opening days outside July and August.

Fix: confirm opening dates, meal availability and arrival times directly before booking transport. This is especially important in spring and autumn, when the weather can be good for walking but the service network is thinner than in peak summer.

Final Advice

Who the GR700 suits best

The Régordane Way is best suited to intermediate walkers who are comfortable with 10–12 consecutive days on trail, regular stages of around 20 km and repeated days on stony tracks, old mule paths, forest roads and lanes. It is not a technical mountain route, but it still needs steady fitness, organised logistics and a willingness to walk through quieter country where services may be limited.

It particularly rewards hikers interested in history, pilgrimage routes and old trade roads. This is a culturally immersive walk rather than a wilderness challenge: fortified villages, abbeys, chapels, chestnut hamlets and sections of old cobbled Régordane track are a major part of the appeal.

The main thing to plan carefully

Accommodation is the key planning issue. Book ahead, especially in July and August, and pay close attention to the thinner service stretches in the early Velay, parts of Lozère and the southern Gard stages.

The stages south of Alès need especially careful organisation. The route crosses flatter, more exposed garrigue and agricultural country, accommodation is more dispersed, and some itineraries may need a taxi detour or a longer walking day. Do not assume every mapped stage has the same level of lodging, food or transport backup.

Also be clear which staging convention is being used. The route is often described as a 10-day walk, while the official association's plan divides it into 13 shorter stages; accommodation bookings, baggage transfer and onward transport should all match the same plan.

The most rewarding section

For many walkers, the strongest part of the route is the Cévennes core between La Bastide-Puylaurent and Alès. La Garde-Guérin above the Chassezac gorges, the descent towards Villefort, the chestnut and schist country of the Cévennes, and the Château de Portes give this section the clearest sense of the old Régordane road.

The opening out of Le Puy-en-Velay also gives the walk a strong start, while the Abbey of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard provides a satisfying historical finish. The route's real strength is the gradual transition from volcanic upland to Mediterranean plain, so avoid rushing it if time allows.

Thru-hike or section hike?

The full Le Puy-en-Velay to Saint-Gilles-du-Gard walk is the most coherent way to experience the GR700. The changing landscape is part of the route's identity, and the arrival at Saint-Gilles-du-Gard makes more sense after the long southward progression from the Velay.

That said, the GR700 is unusually practical as a section hike because the Cévenol railway line shadows much of the route. Langogne, La Bastide-Puylaurent, Villefort, Génolhac, Chamborigaud, Alès and Nîmes all give useful access points, making 3–4 day sections realistic. Walkers with limited time should prioritise the La Bastide-Puylaurent to Alès section.

Final warnings and recommendations

Carry an offline GPX and a proper paper or digital map resource. GR red-and-white balises are the standard waymarking, but mobile signal can be limited across the Lozère and Cévennes uplands, and tired navigation errors are easier on long, quiet stages.

If walking in July or August, take the Gard heat seriously. Start early, carry enough water for exposed garrigue and plain sections, and check current forest fire closure notices before setting out each day; Gard red-alert days can affect access to GR sections.

End transport also needs planning. Saint-Gilles-du-Gard has no railway station, so onward travel normally means bus or taxi connection to Nîmes or another railhead; this should be checked before travelling. For walkers ending in the mountains, Alès is a simpler finish because it sits on the Cévenol line.

The best overall months are May–June and September–October, when temperatures, daylight and accommodation availability are usually better balanced. Mid-summer is possible, but the southern heat and busier lodging season make it less forgiving.

For an easier trip, arrange accommodation first, then build stages, baggage transfer and rail travel around those bookings. A carnet du randonneur from the Voie Régordane association costs about €5 and can be useful at pilgrim-friendly gîtes; current availability and prices should be checked before ordering.