

Ardeche Adventure

A thrilling journey by kayak down the Ardeche Gorge, with plenty of white water and plenty of spills!



Introduction

This short-haul adventure takes place in the Ardeche Gorge, Southern France, and combines kayaking, canyoning and camping in one 7-day itinerary, perfect for summer or school half-term breaks.

Students begin their journey in Vallon Pont d'Arc, a small town in the Ardeche department of the Rhone-Alpes, at the western end of the Gorges de l'Ardeche. Vallon Pont d'Arc is the starting point for our descent into the gorge.

The first night of the tour will see students camp outside town, overlooking the river and gorge, where they'll help with the setting up of camp. Throughout the expedition, students will be encouraged to "muck in", which may mean helping with the pitching of tents or the supper preparations.

Subsequent days will see the students follow the route from above the river to get a scale of the gorge and to look at where they will be kayaking (1 Day) and kayak (2 days) a significant stretch of the Ardeche Gorge, covering up to 20km each day and setting up camp in the evening on the banks of the river. The section of the Ardeche River which we will be covering over the course of the expedition is very safe for beginners with only a minimal amount of canoe training, but offers beautiful scenery and a real sense of wilderness.

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

Itinerary

Day 1: Depart UK; Arrive Ardeche Gorge

Depart Heathrow Terminal Three this morning on the British Airways flight to Marseille Terminal One (13:05-16:00). The group will be collected on arrival in Marseille and travel to Ardeche Gorge via the town of Vallon Pont du Arc (2.5 hours transfer by minibus).

We set up camp at Camping des Tunnels, Vallon Pont d'Arc and this evening supper is include at the camp's own restaurant.

Vallon Pont d'Arc is a small town in the Ardeche department of the Rhone-Alpes, at the western end of the Gorges de l'Ardeche. A quiet tranquil place in winter, the village leaps to life in summer when numerous visitors, wishing to explore the Gorges de l'Ardeche, descend on the town.

NB On day 6 we shall spend time in Vallon.

Day 2: Trek to Pont du Arc; driven tour of Ardeche Gorge

We start the day with a walk to the Pont du Arc (a famous limestone arch). From here, we drive down the D290 road for a view of the entire gorge, stopping at various viewpoints – this is a great photo picture day! Care will need to be taken at the viewpoints when the group leave the vehicles.

In the evening, students will help pack the equipment and food for the following days. The students will eat in camp and will be encouraged to help prepare food for the group.

Day 3: Kayaking on the Ardeche River – first leg

Today we'll kayak the first leg of the Ardeche River, between the Pont du Arc and Gaud (or Gournier) bivouac site, where we'll set up camp for the evening. The rangers of the Ardeche Gorge will offer an evening's video showing how the Gorge was formed. It's an 18km ride along a gentle stretch of the river. There will be time for regular stops along the way, with a picnic lunch provided on the river bank.

The section of the Ardeche River which we will be covering over the course of these two days is safe for beginners with minimum amount of canoe training, but offers beautiful scenery and a real sense of wilderness.

On arrival at the campsite, the students will help prepare dinner in small groups.



Day 4: Kayaking on the Ardeche River – Gaud to Sauze

After an early breakfast, depart our bivouac and kayak the second leg of the river to Sauze, a distance of 20km. From Sauze, the group will be driven to back to Camping Les Tunnels for dinner and overnight.



Day 5: Canyoning

The group will depart the campsite this morning for a full day of canyoning and gorge walking in the Ardeche Gorge. We'll follow the course of the meandering riverbed, swimming, walking, and sliding through natural water chutes along the way. Return to the campsite in the evening for a BBQ dinner.

Day 6: Day trip to Vallon

After breakfast the group will have the chance to join the ropes course and learn rope techniques and attempt an abseil, accompanied by trained guides. Later the group will drive into Vallon to enjoy exploring this old French town. Vallon is a commune typical of this region of France, with a 17th century town hall and a lively old quarter. The student will have a chance to explore in small groups.

Later in the afternoon time will be spent packing away the equipment. In the evening, book into a local restaurant for a celebratory meal.

Day 7: Departure

We pack up camp early this morning and leave by minibus for Marseille airport and your flight home, departing Marseille Terminal One at 16:50 and arriving Heathrow Terminal Three at 17:50.

Key Points

Location

The Ardeche Challenge takes place in south central France, in a region that has been inhabited since pre-history. It is part of the southern Massif Central. Access to the area is by a short flight from the UK and a three hour driven transfer. The nearest town is Vallon Pont D'Arc; we set up camp just outside the town.

Geography and Climate

Our challenge will enable you to explore the Ardeche Gorges, and the mountainous Regional Natural Park of the Monts d'Ardeche. The department of Ardeche takes its name from the River Ardeche. The regions' rivers have created limestone gorges, caves and "bridges" which offer magnificent scenery and venues for activities such as kayaking and canyoning. The climate is Mediterranean and in late June tends to be hot (20 to 30c) and dry with comfortable humidity levels.



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Educational Opportunities

There is great potential for geology and geography. Students will visit Vallon Pont D'Arc and learn about the French culture. Contact us for further details.

Kit List

Please be aware that we are only away for a week; you needn't over-pack!

Key kit

- Travel or inflatable pillow
- Sleeping bag and roll mat or light weight camping bed of the self-inflating variety
- Light weight micro fibre towels x 2 (sports direct)
- Shower gel, deodorant, tooth paste tooth brush
- 5 x pair of shorts nylon type material light weight easy to dry
- 2 x pair of tracksuit bottoms nylon type (not thick towel type)
- 1 Pair swim shorts for river
- Socks and underwear for the week
- Hoody and tracksuit top
- Light weight fleece
- 3pairs of foot wear 1 old pair for river 1 for campsite and 1 to travel
- Spoon, fork, knife and bowl
- Tent – sourcing tents is to be discussed

Safety equipment

- Small first aid kit
- Sun cream factor 50 and water proof and Lip balm factor 50
- After sun and moisturiser
- Sun glasses and a retaining cord for the river
- Medication in original box with name and address on it for the entire trip
- Travel sickness medication
- Wide brim sun hat
- Baseball cap

Extras

- Mobile device (we advise that you turn off mobile data while abroad and you are responsible for all charges)
- Charger
- Camera
- Ear phones
- Pocket Money (70 euros)
- Dry bags (eg Karrimore from Sports Direct for keeping essentials dry)
- Bin bags for laundry

Contact

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