

# Be Amazed by Ardèche

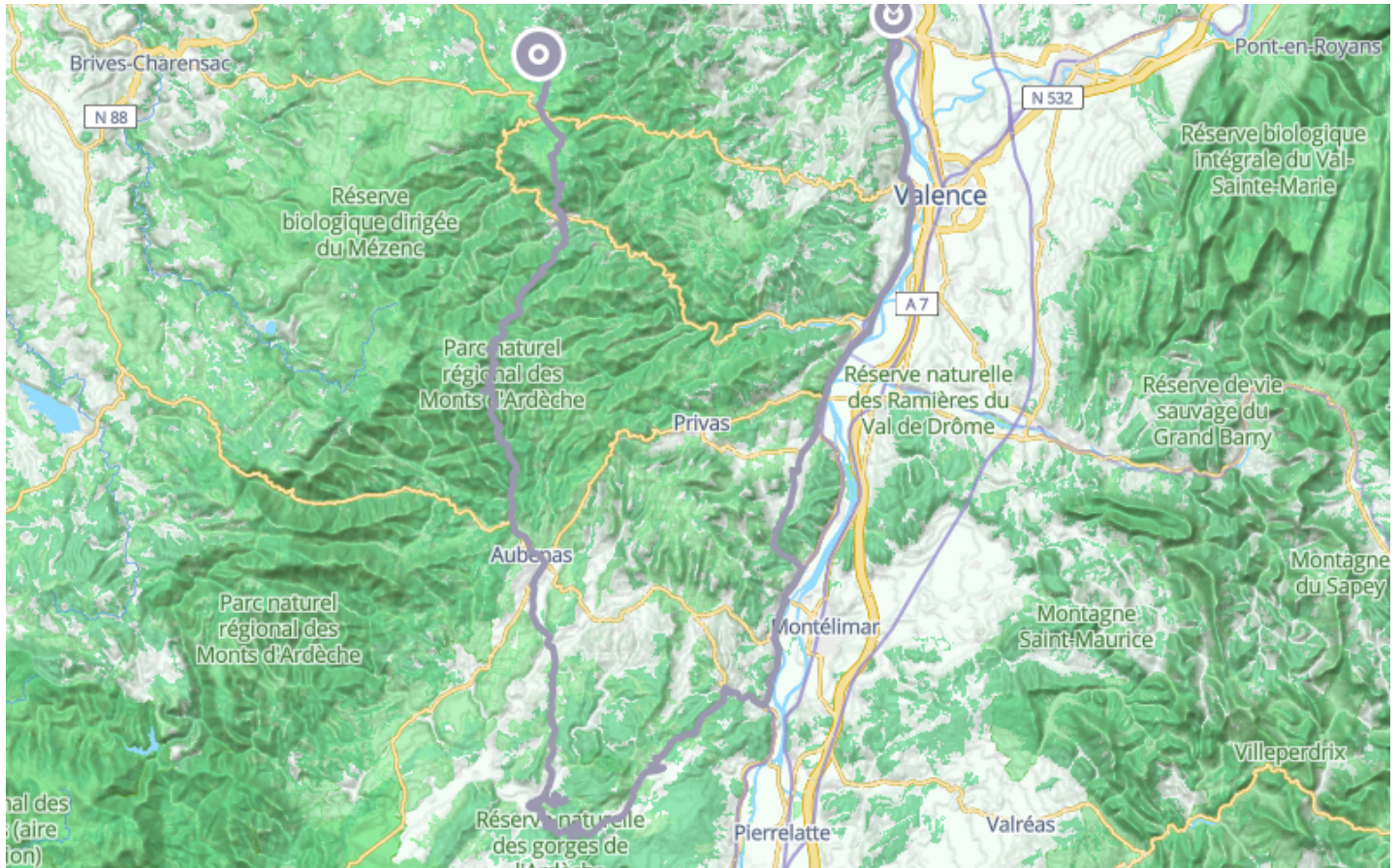
🚗 By car

🕒 0 min

↔️ 237 km

📍 **Départ** 1 Le Radix  
07320, Devesset

📍 **Arrivée** 14 Quai Marc Seguin  
07300, Tournon-sur-Rhône



## Descriptif

Ardèche is an area with many different aspects – mountainous with extinct volcanoes and flower-covered meadows; prehistoric with the oldest art gallery in the world; and southern with colourful markets where you can snack on goats' cheese or a few grilled chestnuts.

In four days, you can enjoy a wide range of landscapes and some iconic stopovers:

### DAY 1

Leave Devesset lake in the direction of Saint-Agrève and Le Cheylard to pass through the Boutières region and the Eyrieux Valley. Winemakers once took their wines by this route to the Forez, returning with wood to make barrels; hence the origin of the appellation Boutières, 'boute' meaning 'wineskin'. Along the way, you will see lots of references to jewels, a traditional activity around Le Cheylard since the 19th century. Workshops, factories and a museum celebrate exceptional local craftsmanship. You will then head towards Mezilhac – but if you want to see the source of the Loire at Mont Gerbier-de-Jonc, take a detour 15 km to the east – and Antraïgues. Take time out to explore this village with character to admire the young Ardèche volcanoes and the ancient chestnut trees. 'Live better, live high up!' This popular local saying was well understood by Jean Ferrat, a famous French singer, the day he chose to settle in Antraïgues.

### DAY 2

Leaving Vals-les-Bains, you will rejoin the Ardèche river which gives its name to the department, rising in

the Mazan forest near the Col de la Chavade before flowing south for 120 km to join the Rhône. The Ardèche passes through 37 communes and is responsible for 69 streams and 17 tributaries including the Fontaulière, the Volane, the Luol, the Sandron, the Ibie, the Lignon, the Ligne, the Beaume, the Chassezac, and the Vendoule. Along its banks are three of the 21 Villages with character dotted throughout Ardèche: Vogüé, Balazuc and Labeaume. Each one is geared up to welcoming visitors, inviting them to share in its history and traditions. Most of them also offer discovery trails. The river becomes progressively wider and more winding, bordered by tall limestone cliffs, and, beyond Vogüé, you'll spot the first canoes following the meanders.

#### DAY 3

Arrive in Vallon-Pont-d'Arc and spend a whole day discovering its many attractions. Number One must-do is Chauvet 2-Ardèche, a replica of the famous Grotte Chauvet, covered in prehistoric paintings dating back 36 000 years, and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage Site list. Best to book your visit in advance to avoid disappointment. Then head for the Pont d'Arc, a natural stone arch, unique throughout the world, which sits astride the Ardèche river. A great opportunity to go swimming, or hire a canoe or small boat. Leaving Vallon-Pont-d'Arc behind, drive along the panoramic corniche that hugs the cliff top above the Ardèche Gorges, a deep canyon carved out by raging water ... an irresistible combination of spectacular natural environment and rich history. Stop off at the various viewpoints along the 30-km route.

#### DAY 4

A beautiful scenic road begins at Serre de Tourre in the Ardèche Gorges. You'll head up towards St-Remèze through oak forests and fields of lavender until you reach the Gras plateau, a limestone area dominated by green oaks, box, juniper and broom. Drive on to the Village with character of Saint-Montan. The road is narrow but the view of the village as you approach is well worth the detour. You're now in the valley of the Rhône, a major river with some fabulous stories to tell – an important waterway to the sea; an unexpected, protected natural space; and a 715-km cycle route, the Viarhône, that you will glimpse from time to time at places such as Rochemaure. Stop a few minutes on the Himalayan walkway for a unique view. And a bit further north, don't miss the climb to the Château de Crussol, which offers the most amazing view over the Rhône Valley. If you're lucky, you might even see Mont Blanc. Now you're near Tournon-sur-Rhône again and you'll soon realise that you are back in wine country.



### Agence Développement Touristique de l'Ardèche

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