

*reform is very present, the departures are numerous towards Geneva, then towards Germany where they are welcomed and can found colonies. The trail starts at Poet Laval at the Musée du protestantisme Dauphinois in the Drôme.*

<http://www.surlespasdeshuguenots.eu/itineraire-chemin-des-protestants-huguenots-et-vaudois.htm>

*Testimonials from François Xavier de Villemagne, author and traveller: "Seven years ago, I completed my first circumnavigation of the globe. Going east in this way and advancing, always advancing to the end of the world to find myself far ahead of the port of he tie that we left behind was Vasco de Gama's dream, it is the intoxicating illusion, tracing the tiny thread of his journey around the globe, of possessing the entire Earth at the inside of his palm..."*

<http://www.villemagne.net/>

*Compostela and other pilgrimages: links*

[http://www.villemagne.net/site\\_fr/liens-rom-compostelle.php](http://www.villemagne.net/site_fr/liens-rom-compostelle.php)

*On the hiking trails in Europe, in the World: Chamina-Voyages.com*

*The ten pilgrimages of a pilgrim. I did not meet God, I met Love which is surely a manifestation of the Divine. Details, photos, poems, lots of poetry.*

<http://roch.compostelle.free.fr/index.htm>

<http://impzone.free.fr/mag/Jacques%20Bonvin%20-%20Paul%20Trilloux%20-%20Eglise%20romane%20Lieu%20d%20energie.pdf>

Visit the deserted streets of Le Puy en Velay in the rain. The reputation of the Blessed Virgin has brought crowds of kings, princes, lords and pilgrims there. Ascent of a vertiginous peak to reach the chapel of Saint-Michel d'Aiguilhe (10th and 12th century) which follows the shape of the rock. Desire of men to want, no doubt, to get closer to their gods by erecting places of worship on top of the rocks. At the foot of the rock, exhibition "The black virgin in all its states" "I am black, but I am beautiful" by the artist Marie-France Barrès "I make unusual Virgins by diverting materials (paper, flower, tin and others) of their usual use. As a result, I ennoble the materials and I cheer up the Virgin »

.. yes everything is to be taken literally. Putting things into perspective, letting go, as we do all along the Way.  
<http://www.rochersaintmichel.fr/la-vierge-noire-dans-tous-ses-etats-ag205-agenda-du-rocher-saint-michel-d-aiguilhe.html>

Lunch near the station where pilgrims still arrive. Last exchanges with two Dutch. Lous (Louise) 72 years old and Jan 75 years old who are on their tenth Way.

In the evening, the first itching on my arms: bed bugs must have appreciated my blood last night. This is the harsh reality of our life. Eat or be eaten... to decline in many ways.

Back in Geneva by carpooling, the driver, a young man from another world, is incredulous at the fact that we can walk like this for nothing, or almost.

The wipers still give rhythm to time and have a hypnotic effect on me. Eyes closed visions cross my mind. I try to find an image capable of translating the fleeting relationships experienced between walkers on the Way. An analogy would be the chance encounters of bumper cars. The shocks, the rustling, depend on the temperaments of the drivers, their state of mind at the time, the density of cars, the exchange of smiles captured...

Or another analogy: small pebbles thrown on the surface of the water - like so many bottles in the sea - which create energy, a vibration, a multitude of ripples, concentric waves which propagate, meet and the other waves overlap, interfere then disappear with the return of the fluid to its initial state. But for that the surface is very flat, calm ... a serene body of water likely to reflect our self, our soul.  
I will have to refine these rantings on my return!

Nostalgia is already winning over me, a certain melancholy is setting in, this adventure is ending... until the next call of the Path.

Roland

Restaurant €13, coffee €2, cake €3, blablacar return to Geneva €26:  
total 44€

Overall budget: €294 for 14 days

i.e. around 21€/day on average... bet won!-----

**Quelques photos de ce périple ici :**

Genève-Le Puy en Velay du 16 au 29 mai 2016

<https://plus.google.com/photos/112180586606094646403/albums/6298560868720445713>

**Mes autres chemins et informations sur Compostelle**

[http://habiter-autrement.org/25\\_Tourisme/01\\_tour.htm](http://habiter-autrement.org/25_Tourisme/01_tour.htm)

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*On foot and with a light heart, I go on the open road,  
Healthy, free, the world before me,  
The long track leading where I desire.  
Now I no longer rely on luck,  
I am my own luck,  
Now I no longer whine, I no longer differ,  
I do not need anything,  
I'm done with sick confinement, criticism,  
Vigorous and happy, I walk on the open road.  
Earth is enough for me  
I'm not asking for the constellations to be closer.  
I know they are fine where they are.  
I know that they are enough for those who live in them...  
...Lets go ! Unknown traveler, come with me!  
Never again will you tire of your journey.  
Walt Whitman, American poet and humanist who died in  
1892*

*The journey on foot, a philosophical way of being, thinking  
and traveling  
<http://www.croiseedesroutes.com/texte-marche-philosophie>  
"Travelling on foot means surrendering to space and time"  
Emeric Fisset in *The Drunkenness of Walking**

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*About other possible paths... tomorrow maybe?  
Echoes of walkers:*

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*The Chemin d'Assise (well signposted with accommodation,  
it seems) in the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, the emblem  
of nature lovers. Welcoming the unexpected, even  
discomfort, the search for simplicity, even sobriety, are the  
most common conditions for those who set out on their way  
to Assisi. 1500km  
<http://chemindassie.org/fr/>*

*The Chemin Saint Martin relates the life of Saint Martin: it  
connects Szombathely in Hungary to Candes-Saint-Martin,  
the city of his death, in France, via Tours, the city of his  
tomb. Echoing Santiago de Compostela, this path connects  
Eastern Europe to Western Europe, from the birthplace of  
Saint Martin to Tours, through Hungary (100km), Slovenia  
(550km), Italy (820km) and France (1000km) from the Col  
du Petit-Saint-Bernard to Candes-Saint-Martin). Saint  
Martin, born in Hungary seventeen centuries ago, raised in  
Italy, having shone in many countries, and died in Touraine  
at Candes Saint Martin in 397, left his mark throughout  
Europe. The Saint Martin paths are innovative because they  
can be used in both directions. Allow 40 days of walking  
<http://www.saintmartindetours.eu/>  
[http://www.tourmagazine.fr/Randonnee-ouverture-du-grand-chemin-Saint-Martin-de-Tours-en-France\\_a10025.html](http://www.tourmagazine.fr/Randonnee-ouverture-du-grand-chemin-Saint-Martin-de-Tours-en-France_a10025.html)*

*The Chemin des Huguenots de la Drôme (exile of  
Protestants) In 1685, King Louis XIV revoked the Edict of  
Nantes and a climate of persecution settled in France.  
200,000 "Huguenots" then sought refuge in Protestant lands  
in Europe and around the world. From Dauphiné, where the*

colossal work carried out by a multitude of workers in difficult conditions. More signs of the dismantling of ephemeral achievements by human beings, like all of us, only passing through this earth.

A coffee with a croissant is welcome at the refreshment bar for bowlers à la lyonnaise (not to be confused with pétanque). This is an important competition given the number of participants. I am told that it is a team sport in doublet or quadrette, which consists of placing the maximum number of balls as close as possible to a small wooden sphere serving as a goal. Each ball still weighs 1 kilogram. The player is shooter or scorer. In general, he has a good belly, proof that he could well be fueled by beer.

First attempt at Land Art... learning to stop, to create.

A little further, I meet a Belgian who comes from Santiago and who plans to walk to Jerusalem via Rome while supporting disabled children! A charity walk - 7,250 km on foot in seven and a half months from Muxia in Spain (Camino de Santiago) to Jordan, arriving in October 2016 - From Italy Michel Gobbers will walk with Maxime Hordies, a young quadriplegic. Itinerary, material, on his blog: <http://mg.tree2share.org/presse-events/>

The Col du Tracol is finally reached at just over 1200 meters above sea level. The path goes up and down through the woods. The sunken paths are heavily gullied, sticks are essential to keep your balance. My feet are on fire, my knees seem ready to break

Late arrival at the municipal lodge. At the table a Quebecker who discovers France by taking the GR and two teachers who make the way upside down. They offer me to share their meals. Thanks to them.

At this time the chapel is closed and I therefore missed the contemplation of the 12 Flemish paintings by Abel Grimmer (1592). It will be for next time.

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Coffee-croissant €2 – Gîte not paid for (arrived late, left early the next day, it's not good, I know...even I have the good conscience of someone who is broke: total €2  
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**12th day Friday, May 27**  
**Montfaucon en Velay – Araules 30 km**  
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Café crème at the only bistro open so early in the morning. Discussion with the boss about the country, life. Two regulars are already leaning on the bar behind their first little whites.

Easier stage, dirt paths, beautiful stone houses, first volcanoes in Auvergne without craters with the shape of plump nipples.

Jacquaire was very warmly welcomed by Ninou and Gilbert. The latter showed me his collection of Neolithic stones and his Méhari, a mythical vintage Citroën car.

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Jacquaire welcome €25 – 2 mint diabolo €4: total €29  
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**Day 13 Saturday 28 May Araules - Le Puy 31 km**  
**Including 14 km by car ... knee pain**  
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Beautiful encounters in Queyrières, nestled around a basalt peak, an old volcano chimney. In a small house, coffee is offered to me by a sympathetic artist with a white beard who shapes scrap metal parts found on the farms (he complains that there is no longer a bistro in the village, the fault to the cops!). His adorable companion, takes me to the village

where a meeting is held and introduces me to an amazing character, Annette Duchanois, known as Castafiore, with red hair, flashy look, radiant, former candidate for the election in Auvergne of Super granny, but who above all, without ever forgetting to smile (she sang before), has been fighting for a few years against successive cancers. Selfie, memory, memory, that's all that will remain of us, photos swallowed by the hard drive of our computers which one day, once peeled, will go to die somewhere in Africa  
<https://www.facebook.com/annette.duchanois>

I attend the meeting during which Alain, a jovial astronomer, presents a prize to the town as part of the Starred Villages. All street lights are off at night: Life needs the night, it's about giving time back to the night. The sleep of the inhabitants, like that of batrachians, butterflies (responsible for 40% of pollination) is now less disturbed. The hedgehogs return, we rediscover the Milky Way. How inspiring it is to meet so many passionate people. We leave each other with a lot of kisses ... back and forth with the head, at least three times, sucking noises to be sure.

Discussion with a Pole nostalgic for his country working to clear the underside of the road, then with two Germans who left Würzburg with already 1000km in their legs.

We discover many crosses that watch over the squares, fields, crossroads and paths. In ancient beliefs it was thought that devils and witches were at crossroads to celebrate their sabbaths. To ward off evil effects, crosses, obelisks or statues were then erected.

Passage next to the Papeterie, a vast, austere two-storey building, today a luxury lodging, but an internment camp in 1939 for the Republicans who fled Francoist Spain, and in 1940 for 132 German Jews then deported to Auschwitz... the devil is never far away.

Abandonment after about fifteen kilometers, crossing again by chance the wife of the artist with the white beard, I take advantage of the journey with his car to chat to Le Puy. Pot offered to the presbytery where we meet paunchy religious personalities. Return to the gîte, shared soup, in a good mood, with Mireille and Odile from Saint Jéoire Prieuré in Savoie. Christine, the hospital worker, for her part, enthusiastically recounts her journey in 2015, part of Lingolsheim in Alsace to walk to Santiago, i.e. 2480km in 92 days! We laugh, the eyes shine. We feel alive  
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Newspaper, Strada + coke €13 – Gîte donativo €10: total €23 - STRADA magazine La vie d'ici - Humanists and resolutely positive, it still exists, hope, local strength  
<http://www.strada-dici.com/>  
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**14th day Sunday May 29 return to Geneva by carpool-----**  
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Before dawn, I attend, at the cathedral, the blessing given, before their departure, to a hundred pilgrims already draped in their large ponchos, ready to face a hard and cold rain. I am not a believer - I value my freedom of thought too much and I would rather side with humanists and philosophers - but I appreciate these places of energy that evoke the sacred and the mysteries of life.

The church is, par excellence, the link between the visible world and the invisible world. The Romanesque church, in particular, is more than a work of art, it is a machine for regenerating, for healing.

For a geobiology of the sacred

especially without bars, even the Swiss complain about it. Desertification of the villages, no more places of conviviality, the countryside is dying. There is, however, the network of Bistrot de pays, a salutary humanist burst one could say, there are more than a hundred in France. Intermittent rain, crossings of villages in deep France, far from the effervescence of the cities. Edouard and Agnès have reserved their room, I continue alone to an old castle-like residence, surrounded by farm buildings. A somewhat outdated holiday centre, an ideal setting for a film set in the 60s. Vast empty canteen, the manager opens the storeroom for me where I find enough to make myself a king's meal which of course contributes to limit my expenses. A challenge that is part of my goals: to prove to my children that we can travel, "take vacations", with less than 25 Euros a day.

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Coffee €1, fruit €2.50, overnight stay €10: total €14.50  
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**8th day Monday, May 23 Gillonnay – Revel 28 km  
Café-restaurant-half-board**

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Stage partly with Mattias, Edouard and Agnès. Reflection on the Way: why not create a startup, on our return, around the services likely to be rendered by pilgrims to those who cannot travel, for a few fees, which could thus help finance their journeys. So on behalf of donors unable to make the Way (too old, too sick, too stressed by their work, too busy with their families), these pilgrims could for example: light candles, slip donations into the trunks churches, leave messages in holy places or not (with prayers, wishes, wishes of your choice), make their cuddly toys travel and send photos with the churches in the background, create hypnotic hooks of the BS+GI type +EC (which means: Specific Benefit + Immediate Gratification + Curious Element ... inspired by the Net), send postcards of the villages crossed (a way of traveling by proxy), or even send "alibi" postcards (the package cards to be sent beforehand to the sponsor so that he can write them... complicity with unfaithful men and women) or sell each kilometer to sponsors (1€ per km), finally why not carry around an advertisement, flyers, stickers ollants, pines (too mercantile perhaps, but a priori effective) .. copyright for the idea, hahaha. (©)

A young teenager, sensitive to our distress in the rain, offers us a coffee just in front of the church. We feel, therefore, a little less chilled.

Overnight stay in an old-fashioned bar-resto-gîte. I treat myself to half-board to regain my strength and dry the clothes hanging all over the room, the shoes are filled with newspaper... Mixed salad, salmon as a starter, fish aioli, assortment of cheeses. It's better.

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Pharmacy €2, gîte half board 40th: total €42  
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**9th day Tuesday, May 24 Revel – Chavanay 37 km  
Stopover gîte, with Mattias, kitchen**

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A very long stage despite a few shortcuts imagined here and there, a few small climbs, long crossings of fields as you approach the Rhône bordered on one bank by two nuclear power plants with its velvety steam and lots of houses around... nothing to say, this type of installation is surely job provider, the rest is not seen.

Arrival at the communal lodging of Chavanay managed by a dynamic animator who introduces young people to cycling. I am exhausted.

Mattias decides to stop there and return to Switzerland the next day. I hesitate at first, am tempted to make the same decision. The night brings advice, I pull myself together and I decide to continue to Le Puy.

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Grocery €11, gîte €10: total €21  
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**10th day Wednesday May 25 Chavanay – Mounes 29 km  
After Bourg Argental - Small private gîte, alone, 4 beds,  
kitchen**

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Beautiful stage all uphill, the path winds through the vineyards then in the meadows. The weather's nice.

Beautiful Calvary chapel renovated thanks to many donors. I find by chance a nice Nike cap forgotten on a bench, it will be for my son. It will make up for, so to speak, the lost items on my side for years

Bar restaurant at Carsi, in Bessey in the heart of the Regional Natural Park of Pilat at the crossroads of Ardèche, Isère and Haute Loire: The owner spoils the walker that I am: an excellent coffee, 6 sandwiches with a large piece of butter, all for only 2 Euros. With her husband, she manages a private campsite, the Git'an Roulottes, which also includes trailers, caravans and very nice cabins. People obviously live there all year round for around 250€/month. One of the inhabitants appreciates the place, but, without work, he dreams of immigrating to South America.

<http://gitanroulotte.monsite-orange.fr/>

Crossing Saint-Julien-Molin-Molette whose name is much prettier than the rather dilapidated post-industrial building. A former Roman village, the recent history of this town is closely linked to the development of natural silk weaving which marked the second half of the 19th century. This industry has developed throughout the Pilat region, in conjunction with the Lyonnais canuts. About fifteen factories have thus been erected on the banks of the Ternay. Since then, several factories have been restored into homes, workshops for artists and craftsmen from France and abroad, perhaps the seeds of a renaissance.

Further on, at a café terrace in Borg Argental, we meet Patrick who coincidentally also knows Mattias: he left Zürich and expects to arrive in Santiago in August. Why how ? There is the question. I didn't remember everything, but it was urgent to leave. He left his job as a social worker, for him too, a page has turned.

Simple but cozy cottage in Mounes. Interesting discussion with Agnès, the owner of the place, about eco-hamlets and guided tour of the amazing metallurgy workshop of her husband Bernard ... located apparently in the middle of nowhere. It smells strong and good of scraped metal and oil. Imposing and complex machines shape unique pieces, shiny as silver, which Bernard, with reason and modesty, does me the honor of discovering.

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Pot €3, bakery €2, grocery store €7, gîte €10: total €22  
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**Day 11 Thursday May 26 Mounes - Montfaucon en Velay  
35 km - Stopover gîte, kitchen**

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Long, long climb, partly going up an old railroad track. Imposing works of art, viaducts, tunnels, bear witness to the

long climb I have to resign myself to turn around. That's life, two steps forward, one step back.

The sky clears, I enjoy wonderful views of this mountain range that extends the Jura, we are 25 kilometers from Chambéry. No bistro in sight – the comfort of the walker – the few groups of houses crossed seem deserted. It's that all these beautiful people are at work to finance my retirement.

I overlook a bird farm that looks like falling in love with a concentration camp: about fifteen barracks (quasi-military) covered with sheet metal, without openings, a feeder silo in front of each of them. I imagine these thousands of caged hens and chickens swarming on the ground, dazed, the smells, the horror. But no one will be moved by it, it can't be visited like a zoo, not yet.

After vast and soothing forests of conifers, arrival in Crésin, a very small village. Its church, its town hall, the school face each other, a bench, a water point, a public toilet, a triangle of grass pocket, enough to let me try to install my tent there with the consent of the Town Clerk. A neighbour, very nice, brings me a duvet - it's because the wind is blowing hard - some bread and a yoghurt. François, born in 1945, former truck builder, returned to the country to live his retirement there, in the open air, swimming pool, conviviality and support for passing pilgrims...

On the menu, Chinese pasta to be poured into boiling water, 2€20, you can survive on little.

The bells above my head strike the hours and half-hours, ticking off time in the night when a hellish wind is blowing.

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Survival on reserves (sachet of soup, leftover bread, can of tuna): total €0  
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**Day 6 Saturday May 21 Crésin – Valencogne 28 km**  
**Night under the tent in the garden of Marie-Helene**-----  
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Get up at 5:30 a.m. The moon, full, slightly pink, sets due south and shows me the direction to take.

I recognize the place where I stopped eight years earlier: an adorable couple had offered me room and board. In front of their house, on a table under a shelter, they offer free access to coffee, water, biscuits for passing pilgrims. But there it is too early, everyone is asleep, I continue on my way.

Serious climbs this morning, exhausting even, my body leans forward to counterbalance the backpack, as always too heavy. Edy Kuonen alias Edouard and his wife Agnès - the retired Swiss couple from Visp in the Valais, who we met two days ago - are waiting for me at the top of a hill. I arrive panting like a beginner mountaineer during a race in the Himalayas at more than 8000 meters. With kindness, they adapt their steps to the slow rhythm of mine. Edouard, who is my age, is a great sportsman! He claims to have climbed 40 of the 44 peaks over 4000m in Switzerland, which is certainly not nothing. As he was a doctor, he boasts to me of Symbiolact, a pro-biotic in sachets, which would be a sovereign food supplement capable of treating all ailments, or almost. When I get back, I'm going to buy some right away. Although I discover, later, that kefir would also not be bad too and above all it is free. Agnès humorously recounts having raised their four children while taking care of the daily life of the medical office adjoining their house. At this point we feel a hint of bitterness. She notes, with a smile, that her work has not really been recognized. This is also the case, as we know, of most of these women living in the shadow of these men intensely committed to their

professions, who are socially recognized and who even sometimes become famous.

Agnès explains to me how to make fir sprout jam. Delicious it seems:

pick young fir shoots (light green), put them in a saucepan, add a little water (you should see it by pressing on the shoots), boil for 1/2 hour...not too strong, let cool, place the everything in a tea towel and we press. We only keep the juice, the rest is thrown away. Add 1kg of sugar for 800ml of juice. Add gelling sugar. Cook 7 minutes. It should no longer flow. 3 jam jars with lids, warmed with hot water. Fill and invert to avoid the presence of an air pocket.

Arrival in the evening in Valencogne, the country of the Cold Lands at an altitude of 600 meters. A main street, a church with massive walls in exposed round pebbles. Opposite, a village house with, at the back, a large lawned plot open to the adjacent streets. This must necessarily belong to people open to the world. I approach a woman with pleasant features, beautiful salt-pepper hair, wielding both a scythe and a lawn mower to ask her permission to pitch my tent in her garden. She nods with a bit of hesitation. Visit the church and just next to it meet Bernard Berlioz and his wife Danielle, two pillars of the Way, wonderful people who still provide "Saint James information" today after welcoming pilgrims. After a restorative shower, very hot, discussion about the Way, the markup which is the work of Bernard, the Church in which he brought two statuettes.

Between two fascinating stories, he presents me with a remarkable book by Yves Alain Répond who stayed with them, "Landart - Creation with Nature" - The author unfortunately died in 2013 of a heart attack. This man in love with symbols, in particular those offered by nature, died at the end of a bend, on his bicycle, accomplishing two "suns" before falling for eternity among the spring grasses. Yves-Alain Repond was an art therapist. It was with these residents that he walked several times on sections of the Camino de Santiago. A path that he also followed, alone, from Bulle in Switzerland, creating an ephemeral work in land art every day. "... feel, feel nature and, with the materials it offers, create a trace, a decor, a symbol, a presence in a playful and spontaneous spirit. More and more intimate moment with the brothers and sisters of rocks, roots, stones, leaves, earth, light, sand, wind, clay, water, flowers..." Along the way, the feet create an imaginary path conducive to meditation, a silence settles in the center even when the noises throb around you, the joyful cries of children, words that fly away like the songs of birds. Yves-Alain Responds - Creating with nature on the path to Compostelle: 100 days, 100 works / Creating with nature on the path to Compostelle: 100 days, 100 works - Special edition with DVD directed by Benjamin Troll - Publisher Massy: Artmazia, 2004

Return to Marie-Hélène  
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**7th day Sunday 22 May Valencogne – Gillonnay**  
**Montgautier 32 km - Stopover gîte Holiday centre,**  
**pilgrims welcome, alone, kitchen**  
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Wake up at 5:30, folding the tent, and here we go again. Nice windy stage through fields and woods. Steep trails with lots of pebbles. I imagine the beach of a sea that disappeared a long time ago. Crossing soulless villages and

brassent la spiruline dans des bassins fleuves sous une atmosphère tropicale.

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Café/croissant 3€, 100gr de spiruline 15€ : total 18€  
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**33rd day Wednesday May 18 Mathy-Motz-Chamaz 16 km**  
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The team starts work early in the morning with the harvest of medicinal herbs and seasonal wild plants. They offer me a coffee in a good-natured atmosphere. I buy a pot of spirulina flakes with the intention of starting a cure, convinced that it can only do me good. Too bad for the tempting syrups, herbal teas and pestos...

Journey, under the heat and an azure sky, along the dykes of the Rhône whose waters have shaped multiple islets offering shelter to large white birds with which I have the impression of sharing a share of freedom. It's love time for natterjack toads who have a great time unless I confuse them with laughing frogs as the songs are so varied.

The songs of the amphibians can be listened to here: [https://rhone-alpes.lpo.fr/IMG/article\\_PDF/article\\_914.pdf](https://rhone-alpes.lpo.fr/IMG/article_PDF/article_914.pdf).

I leave the wetlands for huge plantations of lime trees (the largest in Europe specifies an educational panel) on old meadows used for livestock which also produced fertilizer at that time. Then appear the first vineyards and again the river which seems to be more shaped by man, more domesticated, order reigns until Chamaz. The village is accessed by an arched bridge over the Canal de Savière which connects the Rhône to Lac du Bourget without locks. "Here, we do not live only on love and fresh water" specifies the advertisement for this tourist place, even if on this May day, the town seems only to be emerging from a long winter. Love and fresh water, a whole program, policies should be inspired by it.

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Gîte El Camino with breakfast €23, groceries, dinner €11: total €34  
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**4th day Thursday, May 19 Chamaz – Yenne 19 km**  
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Departure in the rain with Mattias, the Swiss, and Osanna, a young Frenchwoman, a small piece of woman who barely emerges from her huge backpack which weighs, she says, nearly 13kg. Poncho and rain pants allow us to slice through the drenched landscape with almost a certain enjoyment. In the shelter of the porch of a small church, a woman, who takes care of the arrangement of the flowers in the choir, and invites us for a coffee at her place. In fact at "Chez Jo", her husband, very happy to have an audience come to share some snippets of his life. We meet again the big white bus from Würzburg, that of the group of Germans accompanied by a priest in an old-fashioned cassock. They stop at each church to ignite the nave with their songs. To each his own path.

There are still few people on this stretch of the Way, but what will it be in a hundred years?

While walking with Mattias, I have fun imagining what the Paths could become in the future. A time without oil, without cars, in which we can assume that people will take care to preserve the few remaining natural spaces, hence the establishment of strict regulations for the use of the Camino de Santiago. Only a few hundred walkers, drawn by lot each year or via a special lottery ticket, can actually take the Paths classified as World Heritage. For all the others, the

unsuccessful candidates, the frustrated, we will provide them with a virtual device a bit like a flight simulator. Perhaps it will appear as a kind of capsule or a conveyor belt on a ring course with the shape of an infinite Möbius strip. Depending on the options taken (everything has a cost!), or otherwise randomly, we will find there all the ingredients that make the Path the Path: heat, cold, drizzle, heavy downpour, the gusty wind, sunrise and sunset, not to mention the bites of insects, the chirping of birds, the barking of dogs, the brushing of grass, the rustle of leaves in the trees, but also Romanesque chapels reconstituted Calvaries and old-style bistros, vintage style with zinc and cigarette butts on the ground mixed with sawdust, places in any case suitable for meetings. There will of course also be gites, some even with bed bugs just to make it look more real than life... etc! A bit like the facsimile of the Lascaux cave in short, but more sophisticated and much larger of course, or like the huge amusement parks. See you at the end of the century!

Welcome Jacquaire in Yenne, the only pilgrim in the small dormitory with 7 places in the attic of the house. Dinner alone with the friendly hostess, Marie Noël, mother of four children – her husband, Alain, is on the Way from Le Puy en Velay, with a bit of luck I should meet him, he has a beard. They both return from Saint Jean Pied de Port where they welcomed pilgrims from all over the world for fifteen days as volunteers or hospitallers in the centuries-old tradition of the Way. We evoke, while laughing, our families, the patches, the little children, the boys without descendants, the more stable, more determined and hard-working girls, we begin to wonder about the meaning of life in the light of our personal journeys, highlights, changes of course, dead ends... It's a bit like therapy where everyone helps the other to put some order in their journey, without judgment, just with a benevolent listening .

The Path is also that, sometimes opportunities to empty your bag, not all at once, but as through a sieve with more or less large holes, adapted to the interlocutor. This sprinkling of events, of feelings, fills the path with a thousand stories to the rhythm of our steps which ultimately mark the passage of time. We are like tightrope walkers on a ball, which is the Earth, and in addition we have the impression that it is us, with our steps, who make it turn.----

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Carrefour supermarket, lost charger and creams €15, food €12, Saint James welcome €20: total €47  
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**5th day Friday May 20 Yenne – Crésin 18 km**  
**Night under the tent plot next to the church**  
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In the early morning, I leave Marie-Noël, a bit like leaving a friend. The hills are under the mist, but climbing them I witness the dissipation of the morning humidity, a strange phenomenon that I observe for the first time in my life. Volutés of water in the form of white filaments, shiny and twisted columns, rise towards the sky, from the ground where a few rays of sun, piercing the cloud mass, were able to warm it. Sublime show!

Rough and long climb by waterlogged paths, transformed in some places into real streams. The grass is high and despite my equipment I find myself soaked. A moment of inattention while crossing a small clearing and I miss the junction indicated by a sign placed at ground level. After a

## Story of my Way from May 16 to 29, 2016 Geneva to Puy-en-Velay 342 km in 13 days -

**GR65** Roland Mayerl ..... [lreyam@gmail.com](mailto:lreyam@gmail.com)

Geneva Switzerland - [www.habiter-autrement.org](http://www.habiter-autrement.org)

On the Camino - The Way

[https://www.habiter-](https://www.habiter-autrement.org/25_Tourisme/01_tour.htm)

[autrement.org/25\\_Tourisme/01\\_tour.htm](https://www.habiter-autrement.org/25_Tourisme/01_tour.htm)

Also here:

<https://www.habiter-autrement.org/mestextes.htm>

Fotos:

<https://plus.google.com/photos/11218058660609464630/albums/6298560868720445713>



### **1st day Monday, May 16 Geneva – Chaumont lodge 36 km + 8 km by Tram line 15 from the Nations (UN) stop**

Leave the city as quickly as possible, find the first shell. It is the beginning of the path, like looking for the end of a ball of yarn. Six o'clock in the morning, not a cat, normal, it's a public holiday, the shutters are closed, the bourgeois sleep in horizontally. At the tram terminus, in the direction of Mont Salève, the urban fabric becomes clearer. Just opposite, a young girl, backpack, is waiting for the bus. First encounter with a pilgrim, with a recognizable look. Big backpack, smile. Aurore, an appropriate first name at this early hour, is studying criminology and taking a year off. By bus, she plans to pick up the path a few kilometers away, a little further, where she had stopped the day before. I continue on foot now, here we go, half an hour until I reach this box perched on a wooden stake which marks the start of the trail and which contains this sacred stamp with the shell, in self-service. This authorizes me to ceremoniously place on my credential, the pilgrim's passport, a first mark of my membership in the brotherhood of walkers. The crossing of the border towards France is done by this steep path, a passage of brigands surely known to all traffickers, which weaves between brambles and wetlands. In any case, this is how, in a way, we change status. From a respectable citizen subject to the rules of the city, with an address, and all the attributes of a good bourgeois or a bobo, one metamorphoses, as if by magic, into a citizen of the world, into a homeless person, sucked in by the path. This is the beginning of the adventure, a return to childhood, to the discovery of the world, we become a little ethnographer, adventurer, too.

From time to time in the gaps of a dense forest, along the Salève, appears the famous jet of water of Geneva. It shines in the distance as if to taunt the walker and minimize his efforts to want to break the moorings. The fields, the hamlets follow one another with, with each change of direction, new perspectives. An unknown world is offered to

those who choose to relearn how to open their eyes, to marvel. The song of the birds seems to support the walker on his journey and his rediscovered solitude.

Late in the evening and after a last serious hike, I finally arrive at the municipal refuge of Chaumont. It's 8:30 p.m. Sitting at the table, I find Aurore, Hanna - a Swiss woman I met in the morning who told me about finding herself between two jobs in the hotel industry - a bearded and hairy Austrian with the attributes of a long way covered - it should be noted that he left Bregenz some time ago and that every morning at 4:30 sharp he sets off, well before sunrise - there is also Jean-Pierre who worked in transport - he needs now of a mask to breathe at night because of his apneas... We thus cross paths with a small, heterogeneous world that treads the same path, offers fleeting exchanges even if everyone in the end engages in it at their own pace and takes with him his little burdens, his beliefs and his dreams.

Quickly take a shower, quickly curl up in the sleeping bag. The tiny dormitory is made up of rows of mattresses touching on two levels. But since there are not very many of us, everyone manages to find their little corner and, with what they can, will mark their territory.

Budget for the day: Saucisson €2, biscuits €1, bananas €1, Geneva tram €3, coffee €1, Chaumont gîte €0 (passage incognito!); total €8 - At the bottom of the bag: two sachets of soup, a tray with rice and tuna, some bread

### **2nd day Tuesday May 17 Chaumont – Mathy-Motz 23 km Night in a tent at the Spirulina Farm of the Star of Savoy-**

Belle étape le long du Rhône qui commence à prendre ses aises. Le sentier serpente le long des berges, il faut parfois repousser les branches pour avancer ce qui donne à l'aventure un petit air de safari. Rencontre impromptue d'un groupe d'allemands partis de Würzburg en bus, ils font quelques kilomètres à pied chaque jour, on papote un moment et on se perd de vue à nouveau. Rencontre de Mattias, un jeune suisse, bibliothécaire à Saint-Galles. On échange quelques tranches de vie. Il se situe, dit-il, au centre gauche mais ses amis sont plus de gauche encore, sa famille par contre est vraiment de droite. On en rit ! Ce petit jeu s'apparente aux discussions d'un café de commerce ambulante où les conversations tournent autour des anecdotes du Chemin mais aussi de quelques paroles personnelles, parfois des révélations jetées sur le Chemin comme les cailloux du petit poucet afin de s'assurer de retrouver sa maison. On apprend à écouter les autres, à raconter sa vie en petites touches impressionnistes. On améliore, on affine, on épure le récit de sa vie. C'est toujours cela de pris sur l'éternité.

J'aime m'arrêter de temps en temps, invité par un rocher qui m'accorde la contemplation d'une belle vue, ou je m'allonge dans un près pour interpréter les nuages dans le ciel, ou encore je m'assieds sur une berge pour rêver au fil de l'eau, caressé par la chaleur du soleil et emporté dans mes rêves par la quiétude du lieu.

En fin d'après-midi, je découvre une ferme de spiruline composée de grandes serres. J'aperçois un groupe de personnes qui se rassemblent à la fin de leur journée de travail. Ils m'accordent un petit coin de gazon pour y planter ma tente ainsi que l'accès à l'eau dans une des serres et à une toilette sèche. Nuit étoilée, au rythme des pales qui