

In 25 Km

8th STOP-OFF : COURGOUL



Courgoul is located in a valley hollow by the Couze of Valbeleix. This Couze has its origins near the Chaumoune pass at 1300m high, and it is the principal tributary of the Couze Pavin. This village is known for its plots of culture fitted out with little walls in rocks, called "pailhat" in Auvergne.

In 3 Km

9th STOP-OFF : SAURIER



The village of Saurier is located along the Couze Pavin. Its mineral springs are accessible along this Couze, by a delineated path fitted out by the Protective association of the Areas of Auvergne. They are full of iron and limestone. When coming up, white and red sediments are created, and create themselves travertines, surrounded by protected halophile plants. Officially, these springs have never been used, what did not avoid a small underground production on the surroundings markets. The cavities have been used as cellar. Today, they are used as refuge for bats.

In 6 Km

10th STOP-OFF : SAINT-FLORET AND ITS SPRINGS



This village is classified "Most Beautiful Village of France" for its rich architectural heritage (feudal donjon of the 13th century, archaeological site of Chastel). The springs are located along the rifts of the earth's crust that extend from Besse to Saint-Floret. The most important is the spring of "La Ribeyre", nicknamed the "lion's head spring" because of its form and its colour, caused by salt and limestone sediments. You can take the path fitted out by the Protective association of Areas and Landscapes of Auvergne to discover it. Then, there is the spring of "la Font du bon Saint-Flour" that spring in a fountain in the village of Saint-Floret. It was also nicknamed the "Stomach fountain" because it had the property to cure children's gastric diseases. Today, it's no more accessible. Finally, situated between Saint-Floret and Saint-Vincent, the spring of "Font Salade" is visible from a long way thanks to its coloured limestone sediments. its weak flow caused the end of this utilization.

In 13 Km

11th STOP-OFF : COUDES, THE COUZE CHAMBON, THE ALLIER RIVER AND ITS SPRINGS



In the confluence between the Couze Chambon and the Allier River, the village developed itself along old boarding ramps. The Couze River is 40 km long, and has its origins in Chambon-sur-Lac. Coudes counts with 2 mineral springs, one located in the confluence between the Couze Chambon and the Allier River, with a weak and variable flow. The other one is more important. It's known under the name of "the Saulée spring". Its flow is weaker than in the early 20th century, and its water is really mineralized and gaseous. It was famous for its properties, curing arthritis, diabetes, obesity, nervous troubles, and stomach and skin diseases. The company of mineral waters of Coudes wanted to fit out a spa resort, but the project was rejected. The utilization of the spring stopped officially in 1940 because of the WWII and because of the lack of interest of the population.

Return to Issoire - 11.5 km

Map : Open street map - INPS (Printed with care) - PLEASE DO NOT LITTER

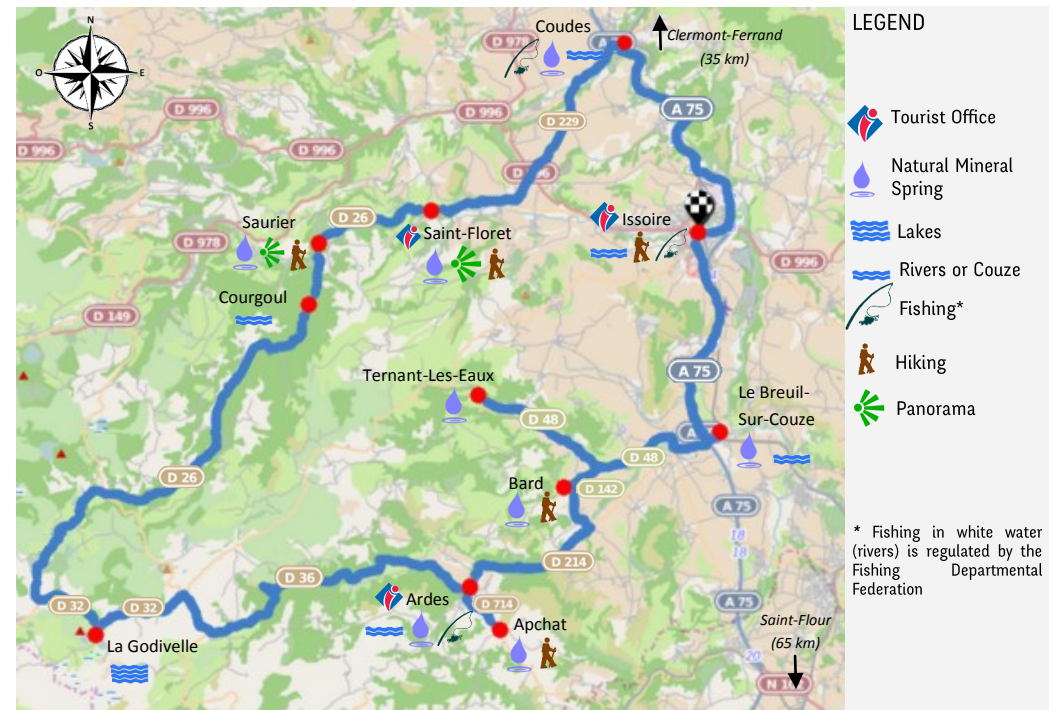


Water in all its States: from Mistery to Reality



The Allier River is the backbone of Auvergne. Its origin is in Lozère, and the river ends up in the Loire River, near the city of Nevers. This river drains the area of Issoire and the Allier valley, where it can spread widely, before reaching Saint-Yvoine (at the North of Issoire), where the relief changes to give way to gorges. Allier is not all milk and honey. It blew its top in the 19th century, causing incredible spates. With its tributaries (Couzes of Ardes, Chambon and Pavin), it forms a thick and varied water system, near which we can find natural mineral water springs.

These springs, more or less salted, come from the heart of Earth. At the end of an underground journey of around ten years, infiltrated rainwater and carbon dioxide merge, and climbing back up to the surface, it snatches mineral components to rocks. In some cases, the mineral water charges up with chlorine and sodium which changes into salt. You will discover in the course of this tour the water in all its states, and the natural mineral springs will have no more secrets for you!



Tourist Office of Issoire area
04.73.89.15.90
info@issoire-tourisme.com
www.issoire-tourisme.com



Tour downloadable on
www.cirkwi.com et
www.issoire-tourisme.com
Find the Cirkwi application
for tablets and smartphones.



1st STOP-OFF : ISSOIRE - BETWEEN COUZE* PAVIN AND ALLIER



Meeting point at René Cassin's square, near the footbridge A.Picard.

Thanks to the presence of numerous reaches that supply the city in water and that serve supplying fountains and gardens Issoire has a thick water system. A "Green Slide" has been fitted out along the Couze Pavin in order to protect the fauna and flora in that green area. Easy to reach for pedestrians and cyclists, it links up the historical heart of Issoire to the sports and play activities area of the Mas. The Couze, long of 46.7 km, takes its source in the Sancy mounts and ends up with the Allier River at the level of Issoire. It is well-known for trout fishing.

**The word Couze refers to all the smalls rivers going down from volcanic mountains and ending up in the Allier river.*



2nd STOP-OFF : LE BREUIL-SUR-COUZE AND ITS MINERAL SPRING



The Hydroxydase Company is located 11, Allée de la Source.

This village became an operation centre of mineral water by chance. In 1908, the Brassac Coal Board was looking for new deposits. One of its soundings, at 200m, made water spring. Some inhabitants used it to cure little injuries and noticed that the healing was speeding up. To run this spring, a firm saw the day in 1912: the Hydroxydase Company thus called for the oxydo-reductive power of the water.

For a long time, it has been home-made, but now, the operation of the spring is industrial, with a production sold only at the chemist's for its therapy powers. A bypass of the Couze, called Béal, cross the village and made work a mill which is still visible near the castle. Until the middle of the 20th century, it supplied also fountains and wash-houses and irrigated numerous orchards.



3rd STOP-OFF : TERNANT-LES-EAUX AND ITS SPRINGS



To discover the springs, take the path behind the town hall, it will lead you to the stream.

This village is thus called because of the presence of 3 natural mineral springs on its territory, along the geological rift. The springs of the "Path", the "Old Monk" and the "Salvation" were long-standing known. The "Salvation" spring offered the best flow and was used. In 1888, it got the official authorization of operation. A building (on ruin nowadays) was used for bottling. In 1900, it was the turn of the "Old Monk" spring to be used and commercialized. But, these 2 companies didn't survive to the First World War, and the springs were abandoned.



4th STOP-OFF : BARD AND ITS SPRINGS

This wine-growing village is known for "the Saints valley", at 30 min walking of the centre. This place, vestige of the tropical climate of the tertiary era and classified "Natural and Sensitive Area" is to discover with a 5km marked out hike. Walking from the Saints Valley to Bard, you will discover its salted natural and mineral springs. A halophil fauna and flora grow near these springs. At the end of the pond of the "cauldron" gaseous spring, we discovered at the end of the 19th century a treasure of 67 bronze Romanesque coins.



5th STOP-OFF : APCHAT AND THE GOUR D'APPÂT



Take the road D23 in direction of Anzat-le-Luguet, and then follow the direction of the hamlets of Chastrix and Chassolle. Then, go walking until the Chassolle spring, 200m below.

The place has been fitted out at the suggestion of the Protective association of the Areas and Landscapes of Auvergne. This small spring has a weak flow and is not a lot mineralized. In the past, it was called "Eyes spring" because it was visited by the local population who suffered eye disease. For several years, it was the headquarters of a small commercial company, but it was soon abandoned because of its weak flow and its isolation.



6th STOP-OFF : ARDES-SUR-COUZE, ITS COUZE AND ITS SPRING



The Couze of Ardes has its origins in the Cezallier mounts, and ends up in the Allier River, near the Breuil-sur-Couze municipality. It is long of 39, 5 km and well-known for trout fishing, that is regulated. Enjoy a walk along the Couze Pavin, near the "Robert Dupré's stadium". The Chabetout spring is collected in Ardes-sur-Couze. This natural mineral gaseous water is bottled and commercialized by the Waters of the Cezallier Company. Discovered in the Gallo-Roman period, it was first known under the name of Chabetout in the 19th century, and then under Arvie from 1995 to 2008, to end under the name of Ardésy since 2012. In 1858, a channelling and bottling building was established, and a thermal centre with 2 pools and 15 baths were constructed. Further to the lack of interest of the visitors taking the waters there, and to the First World War, the establishments closed. One needed to wait until 1988 to see other drillings, and the 1990's to observe the new commercialization of this water under the name of Arvie. Nowadays, the production, known as Ardésy, is mainly designed to the exportation towards Asian countries, but you can find it in supermarkets in Auvergne.

The "hill" and "cherry tree" springs, located in Augnat near Ardes-sur-Couze, belong to the same category of springs that the Chabetout one. They are known for their richness in lithium, and are used since 1995. The deepest spring is used to supply the bottling factory, and the other one is kept in reserve. A discovery path of the springs has been developed by the Arvie Company and by the Protective association of the Areas and Landscapes of Auvergne.



7th STOP-OFF : LA GODIVELLE AND ITS LAKES



This municipality offers two very different lakes. The lake situated in bottom of the village has a glacier origin, and dates back to 10 000 years. Before wide of 50 ha, it's only 15 today. The vegetation colonized the lake, forming a peat land after several thousand years. In 1975, this pond and its sides were classified Natural Reserve under the name of Sagnes, to protect the exceptional biodiversity of the peat land. The lake situated in the upper village is a volcanic lake. This lake has a crater old of 113 000 years, and it is 4,4m deep. It covers a circular area of 14 ha, whose sides in gravels are void of vegetation. Its cold and transparent waters are poor in nutritive elements: it's one of the most oligotrophic lakes in Europe. It's also the water reserve of the village.