



GR213 A: A LINK BETWEEN FONTENAY AND VÉZELAY



Touring

Get your legs and your mind moving. This is the mantra of a recently-created walking trail that links two of the gems of Burgundy-Franche-Comté that are classified by UNESCO as World Heritage: Fontenay Abbey and the basilica of Vézelay. In total, 84km of sign-posted trails run through the remarkable landscapes and heritage that stretch from the Auxois to the Avallonnais.

In Burgundy-Franche-Comté, history and nature make their mark everywhere in perfect harmony, always your loyal travelling companions. For proof of this, it is enough to strike out along the GR213 A. This is an undeniable advantage for this ancient Way of St James that skirts rivers and canals, visits countless historic sites, traversing picturesque villages, vineyards and bucolic scenes. This itinerary can be followed on foot and (why not?) accompanied by a donkey that will be yet another of your travelling companions, for four or five days of itinerant touring that leads you through nature and culture.

From **Fontenay**...

The departure point and an essential stop-off along this walking itinerary, the famous Fontenay Abbey, the best-preserved Cistercian abbey in the world, celebrates its 900th birthday in 2018. In the heart of a leafy backdrop, visitors can discover the gardens, the abbey church, the dormitory, the forge and even the magnificent Roman cloister that has served as the movie set for countless films.

The trail leads very quickly to Montbard, home town of the famous naturalist Buffon, and then along the Canal de Bourgogne and the River Armançon. Up until Epoisses, a village reputed for its famous cheese and its château, the landscapes of the Auxois present their succession of wash-houses, fountains, bridges and other heritage gems, which includes the abbey of Moutiers-Saint-Jean.

...to **Vézelay**, the jewel of the Avallonnais

It is the River Serein that marks the start of the Yonne. Walkers will find the flood plain and its vast fields stretching before them right up to the threshold of the Morvan. Perched atop one of its soaring peaks and overlooking the Cousin Valley, the fortified town of Avallon is surrounded by gardens built on steps, medieval ramparts and towers that look down on pretty and winding cobbled streets.

Leaving this historic town, the trail enters its home straight and leads to Vézelay, one of the « Most Beautiful Villages of France » and an important departure point along the Way of St. James. Step by step, you can explore the Eternal Hill. This is the start of an initiatory climb to the courtyard of the Romanesque basilica of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine, whose luminosity and timeless beauty attracts crowds throughout the year...The full stop at the end of a leafy trail that carries all the weight of a storied history that stretches back for many centuries.

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