

Six days hiking in the Morvan, France



The Morvan is a low mountain range in the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region with the status of a Parc naturel Régional: an area with the necessary protection and improvement of the natural and cultural heritage considered rich and vulnerable. This sparsely populated hilly massif is very popular with hiking and nature lovers. The hiker has more than 1500 kilometers of hiking trails here. With an average of 20 kilometers per day, it would take you 75 days to walk them all. That does indicate that with the help of a good map you have a lot of possibilities to map out your own route. Or to opt for existing routes.

For example, along (part of) *the GR de Pays, Grand Tour du Morvan par les lacs*, a 220 kilometer long marked hiking trail, to be divided into stages of about twenty kilometers per day. It is a route that "visits" many highlights of the area, like almost all the larger lakes of the Morvan, including the Lac des Settons. The route also runs along Mont Beuvray, a hill of about 800 meters high on which in former times stood a Gallic settlement called Bibracte. Here, in the spring of 52 BC. Vercingetorix appointed warlord and leader of the united Gallic tribes fighting against Roman rule.



Vercingetorix



How that battle ended in Alesia and what the consequences were for Gaul - "*all of Gaul?*" - you can read in Asterix and Obelix and the iron shield. Or Chateau Chinon, the capital of the Morvan, where former President of France François Mitterrand was mayor from 20 March 1959 to 15 May 1981. He ensured that the Morvan became a Parc naturel Régional. With old fortifications and beautiful views of the surroundings. And not to forget the all-encompassing highlight of the Morvan: the tranquility and the snugness. The latter deserves some explanation.

The Morvan is a region where you will not find many things that appeal to hikers. The area has no high mountains, no breathtaking views, no villages or cities with large historic buildings. And often no blue skies. What remains is a sparsely populated area, farmland with many hedgerows, lovely villages, forests, walkable hills in a clear landscape. That's what I call snarky (cozy?). A snugness that, incidentally, was beautifully portrayed by Uderzo and Goscinny when they described the Gallic village above.



Atmosphere

In these atmospheres you walk on hedge-lined farm paths, on cart tracks, old connecting roads between the villages, on forest paths, along splashing streams and sometimes on a clinker road or a piece of asphalt near the villages. The routes are not flat for a moment, but it rarely gets really high. With an average of 200 meters of ascent per day, you have had it. Nevertheless, a good condition with all that ascent and descent is desirable. In this region there is no agro-industry, no factory farming, no subsidised field edges with wild flowers for the benefit of bees or frog pools with the support of Europe. Since the creation of the Parc naturel Régional, the natural park has contributed to the design of the landscape, but also to economic, social and cultural development, according to a number of strict rules.

The park is responsible for preserving: -landscapes: with projects to protect biodiversity and promote activities with respect for nature-a feasible agricultural activity and balanced growth of the forest-traditional expertise (such as dry stone walls).



Village



Unsubsidised

Our trail

- Day 1:** Marigny l'église - Ouroux (via Brassy) ...23,0 km
- Day 2:** Ouroux - Chaumard - Planchez.....18,0 km
- Day 3:** Planchez - Anost - Arleuf.....21,0 km
- Day 4:** Arleuf - St.Prix.....22,0 km (Yonne rivier)
- Day 5:** St.Prix - (near) Anost.....20,5 km
- Day 6:** Anost - Moux.....14,0 km

The GR 13

Another possibility of an existing route is the GR13, which crosses the Morvan from north to south, starting at the Forest of Fontainebleau (just south of Paris) and ending in Bourbon-Lancy. A walk of a total of 255 kilometers. Whatever you choose: the Morvan gives enough reason to fall in love with it. Given the many *gîtes d'étapes* and campsites with Dutch staffing, you will certainly not be the first. The great attraction that this region has for many people consists of the combination of silence, varied and beautiful scenery, tangible folk history and small scale.



For the wanderer interested in culture, the Morvan offers, among other things, a number of chateaus, the abbey church of Vézelay, the Roman theater of Autun and the remains of the temple of Janus. And with a bit of luck, on the way, in one of those small villages where you pass through, you suddenly fall into an annual market, a festival, a flea market or folkloric dance event. And, we are in Burgundy where it is good food and drink. Among other things, a multitude of delicious dishes with products from their own region. Ask the people on the spot for advice and don't just rely on decoration on the outside.

General route tips

1. The distance between Utrecht in the Netherlands) and the Morvan is about 750 kilometers.
2. Take: *Tour et traversée du Morvan* by Federation Francaise De La Pdestre, a good hiking guide for the Grande Randonnée pays, *Topo Guides.De hiking maps from IGN, scale 1:25000*.
3. [When packing your backpack, be aware of rain](#). The Morvan is not known as the most sun-drenched region of France
4. The Morvan is Burgundy. Burgundy is delicious food. Epoisses? Escargots ? Chicken from Bresse? Charolais beef? Négus from Nevers? Enjoy your meal.

