



Sacred Herbs & Healing Waters of Southwest France

Tour Dates: Wednesday, July 18 to Wednesday, July 25, 2018

Come join us on our annual magical tour to Occitania in southwest France where we combine the magic of local herbs and sacred waters with the divine feminine teachings that are so present in this cherished corner of France.

Here we will be well off the beaten tourist-path, tucked away in the foothills of the Pyrenees, where the local esoteric history reaches back thousands of years. It is the land of Mary Magdalene, Isis, White Ladies, the Cathars, Knights Templar, Celts and Black Madonnas which all have their part in the great Holy Grail mystery. It's a part of our world that until recently, has seemingly been left untouched. But don't let that fool you. Traveling the small, winding roads of the Languedoc, you will marvel at the beauty and mystery of this sacred land.

Our home base will be in Rennes les Bains which is a famous spa village that dates back over 2000 years to when Roman nobility would "summer" here to take the waters. It is a village of less than 200 inhabitants, located on the Salz River with its own natural thermal baths. Every day you will have the opportunity to bathe in the thermal waters that so many have come to for healing for thousands of years. Local lore says that Mary Magdalene baptised and performed healings in this river.

Surrounded by nature in this powerful energetic landscape, we will create ceremony, follow with the eyes of history and take part in daily herbal and energetic healing classes. Community Herbalist and Flower Essence Practitioner Lupo Passero will lead the group on plant walks, talks and botanical lessons throughout the region. Under her guidance we will make herbal remedies, flower essences and water remedies. She will lead us in powerful and loving ceremonies of plant spirit healing. It is against this backdrop where we will meet, interact and study many of Europe's native plants and trusted herbal allies and where we will immerse ourselves in the local healing waters which are found in the rivers, streams, lakes and springs and create beautiful water essences. You will soon come to understand why the waters here have been revered for thousands of years.

This trip is perfect for all levels of herbal experience; whether you are a beginner, the "budding" herbalist or if you're an experienced herbalist and would like a deeper understanding of sacred plant medicine. Each day will include time with our herbal allies, interaction with the local waters and time for exploring the rich history of this sacred land. At the end of this tour, each participant will be awarded a Certificate of Completion to commemorate what we have discovered and learned on this trip.

Twin Star specializes in empowering the Divine Feminine in all of us by leading people to sacred, off-the-beaten path sites, rich in botanical lore. Our trips encourage individuals to deepen their plant-soul connection. By gently walking the Earth in these special places, our alliance to Spirit is strengthened. Through this unification, we come back to our lives and shine the light that we are.

PRICE (does not include airfare): \$2950

- Deposit: \$800 due immediately to reserve your spot. Space is very limited as we keep the group size very small. This is a non-refundable deposit, but is negotiable if we can sell your spot.
- April 21, 2017: Payment of \$1,075
- June 21, 2017: Balance due \$1,075

**Please mail your check to: Twin Star Herbal Apothecary
57 Bank Street
New Milford, CT 06776**

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Transfer to/from Toulouse (TLS) airport at designated time/s
- Single room accommodations - we will do our best to facilitate single rooms for all travelers. In the event that rooms need to be shared, a discount of US \$125 will be applied to your final payment.
- All breakfasts, most lunches and all dinners as specified in the itinerary
- All entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary
- Airport pickup/drop off and all ground transportation as per the itinerary
- Herb classes taught by Lupo Passero (Community Herbalist, Flower Essence Practitioner)
- Local Guides
- Supplies for medicine making

NOT INCLUDED:

- Airfare; please do not finalize/purchase any airfare until we have confirmed that this departure will go. If it does not go due to lack of participants, all funds will be refunded. We are keeping watch on airfare trends and are happy to help coordinate air travel if so desired.
- travel insurance (we very strongly recommend this, see registration form for more info)
- Lunches
- personal expenses/spending
- alcohol/drinks not mentioned in the itinerary
- any transfers not mentioned in the itinerary
- paper/notebooks and whatever you like to have for note-taking

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Intimate group size, not to exceed 9 people
- Daily herb and essence classes, workshops & ceremonies
- Thermal baths (in the river)
- Local Guide/s
- Certificate of Completion
- Completely escorted

PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

- **Travel documents** - A valid passport is needed.
- **Weather** - It is much like the weather in the Northeast. For a better feel, you can check the weather online for Couiza, France to get an idea of what to expect.
- **Money (Euros)** - Our personal experience has been to use the local ATMs to get Euros. There is, of course, a fee. Check with your bank. Consider the convenience, security and ease of

having access to your money most anywhere you go and the fee suddenly seems reasonable. Do NOT use Traveler's Checks - there will be no place to cash them in. Please also keep in mind that credit cards are not as widely accepted as in the US, especially in this corner of France.

- **Baggage** - we ask that you pack as lightly as possible. Our transportation has limited baggage stowage. If it helps, think of it on an energetic level: "Pack Light, Travel Light, BE Light".
- **Backpacks, water bottles** - are recommended and are very useful for our daily outings. We will stop through Alet-les-Bains whenever convenient so we can refill our water bottles with the local healing waters.
- **Notebooks** - consider what kind of notebook is most comfortable for you as we will not always be in a "classroom" setting.
- **Comfortable shoes and layered clothing** - highly recommended for our daily outings. Evenings are cool. Meal times will be casual. There will be no "formal" occasions where you would need to "dress". Please remember, pack simply and lightly!
- **Hiking** - there will be a lot of walking and hiking. Most of it is considered easy, but there are a few places where the hike is more strenuous. There will always be a place where you can sit out if so desired.
- **Swimwear** - if you plan to "take the waters" (enjoy the thermal baths) swimwear is recommended, especially if you plan to use the public bath house, they will only allow swimsuits, no street clothing (spandex shorts, etc).

Every effort will be made to follow the itinerary as noted. We reserve the right to make adjustments as necessitated by weather, safety and unforeseen variables.

A note from Tina: Having been to this corner of France 9 times in the last four years, the biggest lesson I have learned is that despite thorough planning and forethought, the spiritual legacy of the land often has its own agenda. We will make every effort to follow this itinerary but, from experience, I know that as our group bonds and connects with each other, the Land will present its own agenda for us. We encourage you to be flexible and embrace this; the magic that unfolds will amaze you!

A LITTLE ABOUT US:

(include picture) **Lupo Passero** is a Community Herbalist and Flower Essence Practitioner from the hills of Northwest Connecticut. She is the founder and director of Twin Star School of Herbal & Energetic Studies located in New Milford, CT. Lupo has been studying plant medicine her entire adult life and has been teaching herbalism extensively for over 15 years. She joyfully offers a myriad of classes, workshops, herbal intensives and international travels, covering a variety of topics including traditional and modern herbalism, flower essence therapy, energy healing, women's moon circles and herb justice programs.

(include picture) **Tina Hartzell** took her first trip to southern France in 2013 and was immediately smitten. She has since become devoted to bringing people to these sacred lands to experience the Magdalene energy. In addition to arranging and leading tours to France, Tina co-owns and co-manages Twin Star Community Apothecary in New Milford, CT, is a certified reflexologist, and considers herself a "budding" herbalist. She lives with her husband and three children in the magical northwest corner of Connecticut.

ITINERARY

The group will be meeting at the Toulouse ("TLS") airport. You will be picked up at 1:00 pm on Wednesday, July 18th. If your landing options are later, consider flying in the night before and staying at one of the nearby airport hotels. We suggest the Holiday Inn Express at the airport because they provide a free airport shuttle, breakfast is included, rooms are nice & clean and the price is very competitive.

All breakfasts and evening meals will be at our B&B and are included in the cost of the tour. Lunches are NOT included in the cost ~ a budget of \$20 per day will get you a very big lunch, but most people find that between the continental breakfasts and hearty suppers that are served at the B&B, a light lunch is more than enough.

Classes/workshops/ceremonies we will be offering:

- *Sacred Water Ritual in the local healing waters*
- *Spiritual Bathing with Healing Plants & Water*
- *Daily Herbal Walks & Talks*
- *Daily interaction with the local waters*
- *Botanical Signs & Signatures*
- *Sacred/Divine Femininity with Anaiya Sophia*
- *The Sacred Herbs of France.*
- *Connecting to Your Plant Spirits with Guided Journey.*
- *Making Flower Essences in the Field*
- *Despacho ceremony*

Day 1: Wednesday, July 18

~Airport Pick Up~Check in to B&B~Welcome Dinner and Opening Ceremony~

We will hit the ground running today! Toulouse is located in the region called "Mid-Pyrenees" - your first sight of the Pyrenees will leave you breathless! Group pick up at Toulouse (TLS) airport is at 1:00pm (this could be flexible). From here we'll make our way to our B&B in Rennes-les-Bains. En route we'll stop off for a visit to the local springs. With our feet in the local healing spring, we'll hold our opening ceremony. We'll check in at our B&B where we will also have our dinner. After dinner, for whoever is up for it, we will find our way to the thermal baths in the river! Breakfast & Lunch on your own. Dinner is included today.

Day 2: Thursday, July 19

~Botanical Signs & Signatures with Lupo at Montsegur~Fairy Forest with Anaiya

After breakfast we'll set out on a breathtaking drive through the countryside to make our way to Montsegur castle. This fortress is known as the last stand of the Cathars before they disappeared from history. With Lupo, we'll take a plant walk you will never forget as we make the hike together to the top you will be immediately drawn to the plants along the way. Think about meeting Yarrow in a place where it was truly used by villagers and soldiers alike to save lives. This can be a rigorous hike, but we'll be stopping often along the way to greet the local herbs. On our drive back we'll stop off at the Fontaine de Fontestorbes, one of just a few intermittent springs found in the world. This natural water monument is just one of many sacred water sites in the area.

Day 3: Friday, July 20

~Connecting to Your Plant Spirits including a Plant-Spirit Journey~Guided tour to local villages~

After our morning workshop with Lupo, we will meet our local guide and we will spend the rest of the day with her. We will learn some of the legends and stories that surround these local mountain villages; we'll learn just why people are drawn to this corner of the world. We will visit Alet-les-Bains where we'll walk among beautiful abbey ruins and explore the town square where it is said that Nostradamus spent summers at a family home and then we'll make our way up to the enigmatic village of Rennes le Chateau where so much of the local stories and legends originated. Our water interaction today will be where the famous Aude and Salz rivers come together and we'll visit an inconspicuous roadside chapel marking this sacred site.

Day 4: Saturday, July 21

~Sacred Herbs of France with Lupo~Beach Day & L'Hermitage in the Gorges de Galamus~

After breakfast we will make our way through the beautiful countryside and over the Corbieres Mountains to find our way to the Mediterranean Sea! We'll drive through the infamous Gorges de Galamus and stop off at L'ermitage, a monastery built in the 14th century into the side of of the gorge. This site was chosen because of its natural cave and water source. As we drive on to the coast, we'll see several castles that used to guard the frontier between what was Catalan country and Cathar country, which we would today simply refer to as France and Spain. The afternoon will be at your leisure on the beach, we'll make our way back to our B&B for Dinner this evening.

Day 5: Sunday, July 22

~Local Market with Lupo & Tina~Sacred Femininity Workshop~Fairy Forest~

We will spend the morning at the local Sunday market in Esperaza. You will find everything from herbs to crystals to local vegetables to everyday clothing. It's is a great place to find gifts and you'll get a first hand taste of how the locals shop! You will have time to find a local tidbit for your lunch and after lunch we will take a magnificent drive through the countryside and make our way to Puivert where we'll spend the afternoon with local goddess Anaiya Sophia in the mystical fairy forest of Nebias. Here, Anaiya will introduce the Feminine expression of Christ Consciousness as it comes through to us from the spiritual tradition of Mary Magdalene. Today's water interaction will be on our way back to our B&B where we'll stop off at a local magical fountain that truly embodies the Sacred Feminine.

Day 6: Monday, July 23

~Fire of the Earth Goddess Ceremony in the Cathar Initiation Caves~

After breakfast and our morning workshop, we'll travel to the Ariège region, known for its many cave complexes. We'll have a picnic lunch in a magical meadow below what is known as the Cathar Initiation Caves. These caves have beckoned spiritual travelers for centuries and are thought to be the caves where the Cathars would hold initiations into their faith. This three-part cave complex offered the Cathars a safe and peaceful dwelling place a thousand years ago. We know where to park and the trails to follow to find these hidden caves. It is here where we will hold our own Fire of the Earth Goddess ceremony. As we make our way back to our B&B we'll stop off at the Pont du Diable where we'll have a chance to put our feet in the soothing waters of the Ariège River.

Day 7: Tuesday, July 24

~Making Flower Essences with Lupo~Carcassonne~Closing Despacho Ceremony~

This morning we'll drive up to Carcassonne; no visit to the Languedoc is complete without visiting La Cite Carcassonne, a Unesco World Heritage sight. You'll be transported back to medieval France, but don't worry, the shops take modern currency! This is a fantastic place for shopping and eating! In the afternoon, Lupo will teach us about the power of flower essences and you will have the opportunity to make your own from the flowers you are called to. To close our circle we'll hold a Despacho ceremony which is an intention or prayer bundle that is created to hold both the intentions of the ceremony participants and offerings of gratitude to the land.

Day 8: Wednesday, July 25

Late morning departure. You will be dropped off at TLS airport no later than 11:00am. Depending on how this tour shapes up, we can move that time up/back. Again, please make no airline reservations until we confirm this departure will "go".