

The countryside

'Parc Naturel Régional des Causses du Quercy': a landscape of stone and water.

The landscape of the regional park is a typical one for the Lot department: the gentle relief of the 'Causses', the limestone plateaus of Rocamadour, Saint-Chels and Limogne-en-Quercy which are intersected by the valleys of the rivers Lot and the Célé, and the steep valleys of the Ouyse and Alzou.

Trees which incline above the roads, and as such create shady tunnels. They lead you through the fertile river valleys, expansive meadows full of sheep, over hills and through winding valleys created as a result of erosion throughout thousands and thousands of years. Regularly you'll meet deer and other wildlife.

Very characteristic for this region are the stones that you encounter everywhere. The old stone walls of the Causses, give one the impression of a small Chinese wall. Lakes are eroded in the rocks (lakes of Saint-Namphaise), everywhere you'll find the stone shepherds' huts and hamlets with old washing places, Cistercian barns and historic farms.

As well to be marked is the particular way the water finds its way through the regional park of the 'Causses du Quercy'. The water disappears into the cracks of the limestone, creating caves and chasms, the reason a stream suddenly disappears from sight. The landscape is exceptionally well protected, and hosts a such entire ecosystems.

The park houses many special places such as the medieval town of Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, the pilgrimage site of Rocamadour and the prehistoric caves of Padirac.

