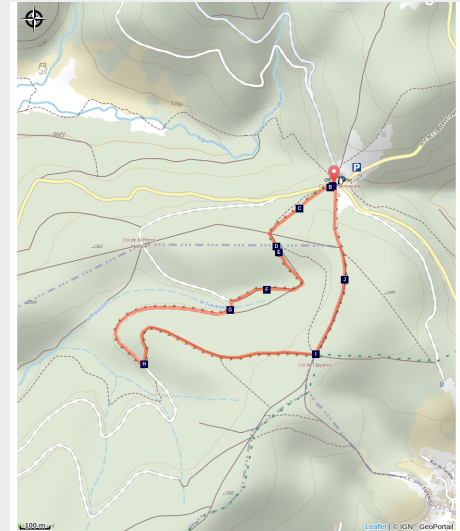


Trévezel: the botanists' and foresters' path

Aigoual - Val-d'Aigoual



Hêtraie (© Valère Marsaudon)



The forests on Mont Aigoual, which had become very damaged by the early 19th century, were tirelessly reconstructed.

An extensive programme to reforest this mountain range began in 1859. It grew in scope from 1875 to 1890, under the leadership of Georges Fabre of Eaux et Forêts (Forestry Office). In parallel with this work, Charles Flahault, the director of the Montpellier Botanical Institute, carried out experiments and research on the adaption of species to local environmental conditions. This reforestation – which was to change the landscape dramatically – relied on new knowledge and was realised by foresters as well as botanists. This trail guides you in their footsteps.

Useful information

Practice : Discovery trails

Duration : 1 h 30

Length : 2.8 km

Trek ascent : 86 m

Difficulty : Very easy

Type : Loop

Themes : Fauna and flora, Forest, Transports en commun

Trek

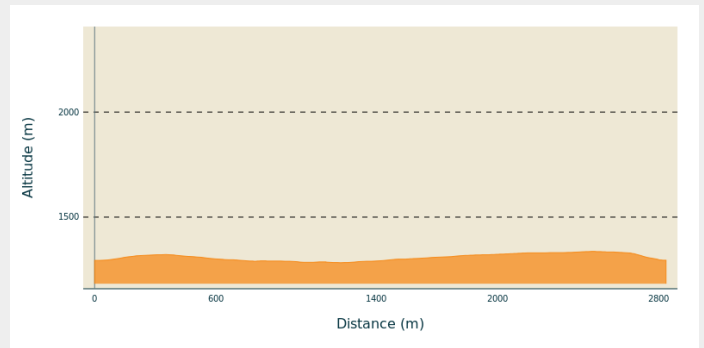
Departure : Maison de l'Aigoual

Arrival : Maison de l'Aigoual

Markings :  Discovery

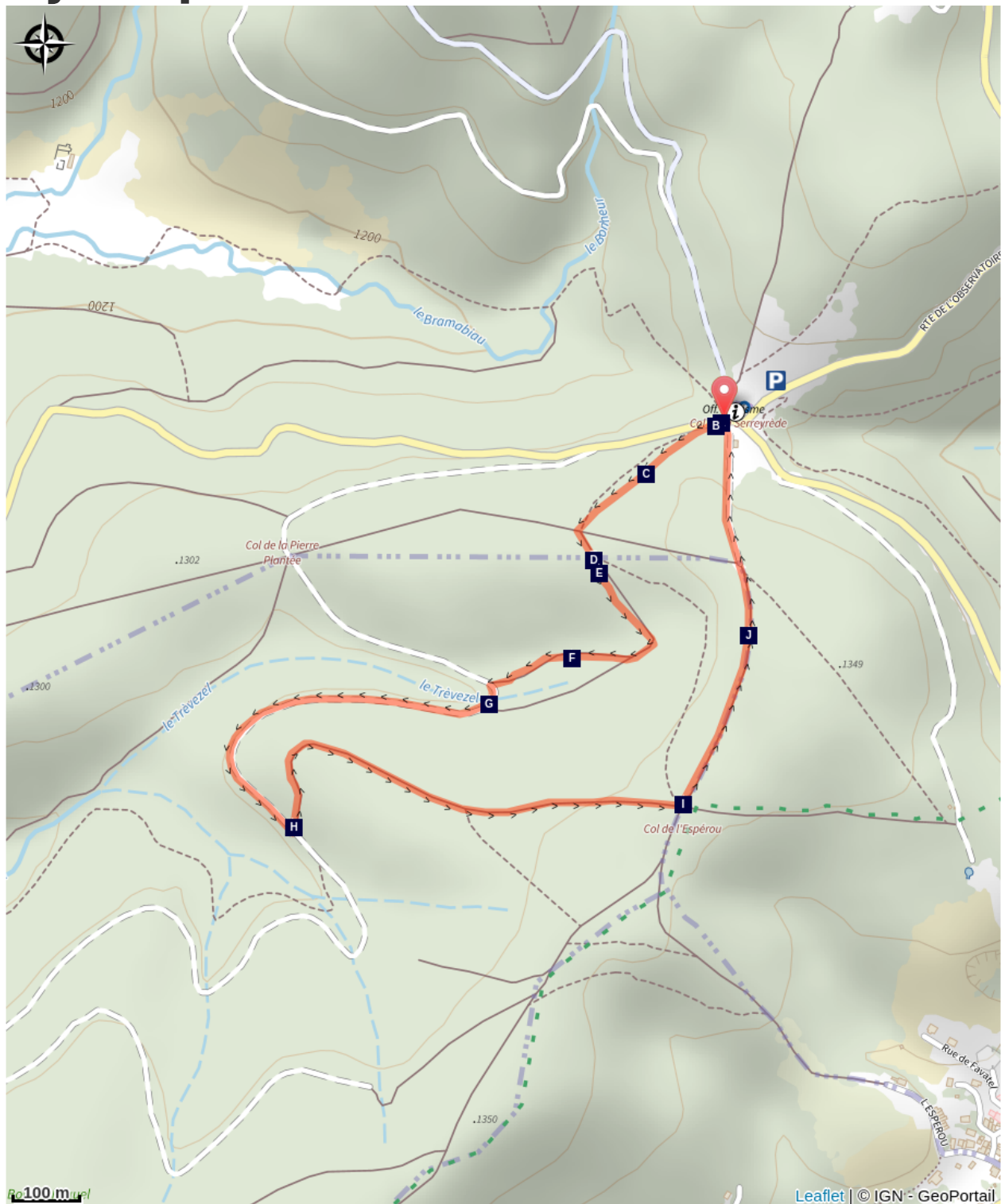
Cities : 1. Val-d'Aigoual
2. Saint-Sauveur-Camprieu

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1283 m Max elevation 1337 m

On your path...



La Serreyrède (A)

From beech copse to mature plantation (C)

Irregular forest (E)

Peat bog and acclimatisation garden (G)

Multi-purpose forest (I)

The association "Terres d'Aigoual"

(B)

Productive forest (D)

Le Trévezel molière (peat bog) (F)

Woodpecker nesting chambers (H)

Georges Fabre (J)

All useful information

Is in the midst of the park

The national park is an unrestricted natural area but subjected to regulations which must be known by all visitors.

How to come ?

Transports

liO est le Service Public Occitanie Transports de la Région Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée. Il permet à chacun de se déplacer facilement en privilégiant les transports en commun.

<https://lio.laregion.fr/>

Access

Col de la Serreyrède pass, on the D 986 Camprieu - Valleraugue or on the D 48 from Le Vigan

Advised parking

Col de la Serreyrède

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

maisonde-laigoual@sudcevennes.com

Tel : 04 67 82 64 67

<https://www.sudcevennes.com>

Accessibility : Accessible aux personnes à mobilité réduite sur les trois niveaux du bâtiment (ascenseur)



Source



CC Causse Aigoual Cévennes Terres Solidaires

<http://www.causseaignoualcevennes.fr/>



Parc national des Cévennes

<http://www.cevennes-parcnational.fr/>

On your path...



La Serreyrède (A)

Before 1861, the house at the Col de la Serreyrède was inhabited by two families of farmers. They owned some livestock and had a vegetable garden, whose terraces you can still see above the La Caumette track. From 1861 on, the farm was inhabited by a forest ranger. It was only bought by the state body Eaux et Forêts in 1883, to be turned into a forester's house. It became one of Georges Fabre's headquarters during the reforestation of the Aigoual massif. The Cévennes National Park, tourism office and Terres d'Aigoual growers have now joined forces to revive La Serreyrède with the help of the Communauté de Communes Causse Aigoual Cévennes - Terres solidaires.

Attribution : © Jacques de Joly



The association "Terres d'Aigoual" (B)

The Cévennes National Park rents out part of the building to the association, enabling local farmers to sell their products directly to the public. The association brings together farmers who wish to promote what they produce and share their know-how. They also enjoy sharing their vision of farming- high quality produce and products,

- human-sized farms,
- mutual aid.

Come and discover their products!

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas

From beech copse to mature plantation (C)

Marker 1

Around 1850, before reforestation began, the inhabitants of the Cevennes were using local wood resources on a massive scale for heating and in industry, especially spinning-mills. Gradually, only a few beech copses remained, which were cut every 25 to 40 years. Grazing by tens of thousands of sheep further reduced the herbaceous plant cover. Much weakened, the plant cover was then also subjected to heavy precipitation, the so-called Cevenol episodes. It is against this backdrop that the lengthy work of the foresters began. To reduce risks and establish a lasting forest cover, the first technique was to make use of what was already present by converting the disused copses into mature plantations.

Productive forest (D)

Marker 2

Another method of creating a durable forest cover is to plant or sow. This work is carried out either on bare soil or among existing tree stands. The Aigoual reforestation programme was a gigantic effort, requiring 900,000 days of work, the planting of 60 million conifers and 7 million deciduous trees, and sowing of 38 tonnes of seeds. Spruces and pines, which can be planted in full sunlight and grow quite quickly, were widely used. Under the forest canopy, preference was given to firs.

Irregular forest (E)

This tree population consists of trees of very different diameters, ages and heights. Species are mixed: mainly pine, but also beech, rowan and whitebeam. This is an irregular mature forest, a forestry dynamic that is interesting for several reasons: it creates permanent forest cover; resistance to soil erosion; better resilience against storms or parasite attacks; regular production, etc. In the small clearing to the left of the path, the sunlight now penetrating to the forest floor has made natural regeneration of beech and fir possible, ensuring the renewal of the forest.



🌿 Le Trévezel molière (peat bog) (F)

Marker 3

A peat bog is a thick layer of plant cover that has decayed little or not at all because of accumulated water, acid soils and the cold climate. This wetland has hardly changed for centuries. Once called molières, soulages, sagnes or fanga, these environments were long denigrated and “cleaned up”. Today, they are known to be well worth preserving. Peat bogs are home to a great variety of more or less specific species, such as the sundew, a little carnivorous plant.

Attribution : © Bruno Descaves



🌿 Peat bog and acclimatisation garden (G)

Marker 4

This peat bog was a site for experiments and research by Charles Flahault. Flahault, who studied the geographical distribution of species, was interested in what was then known as acclimatisation (adaptation to local environmental conditions). He attempted to introduce 200 plants from 40 non-indigenous species to Le Trévezel peat bog, echoing the way tree species were introduced into arboretums. The peat bog's history and the way it works are described in detail on the panel (in French only).

Attribution : © Jean-Pierre Malafosse

🌿 Woodpecker nesting chambers (H)

Marker 5

If you look up, you will see two oval holes on the beech trunks. They are black-woodpecker nesting chambers. This jet black bird with its red “beret” is the largest of Europe's woodpeckers, and rather timid. Its diet consists of ants and insects living in wood. Its prowess at hammering and digging seems quite out of proportion to its size. The opening you see gives onto a chamber with a volume of about 30 litres, which a woodpecker has dug out of healthy wood, using only its bill as a tool, over two to three weeks. In May, there will be 3 to 5 eggs in a nesting chamber. Since the number of trees with nesting chambers is limited, they have been marked with a triangle or banded in yellow to make sure that they are preserved.

Multi-purpose forest (I)

Marker 6

A draille is a path between winter and summer pastures, used by shepherds and their sheep. In the mid-19th century, this draille was the eastern border of the Miquel woods. At the time, forest covered 20 to 25% of the surface of Mont Aigoual. Following reforestation, that figure has risen to 80%. Foresters ascribe three purposes to forest: being a space the public can enjoy, providing protection and being productive. These objectives were already part of Georges Fabre's vision.

Georges Fabre (J)

A graduate of the Ecole polytechnique, and top of his year at the Nancy forestry school, the forester Georges Fabre devoted 30 years of his energy to reforesting the mountains of the Lozère and Gard. His goal was to stabilise mountain soils, but also to provide work for a local population that would otherwise have been condemned, in its entirety, to leave the countryside. In 1894, he initiated the construction of the Mont Aigoual weather observatory. In association with the Club Cévenol and Club Alpin Français, he also laid the foundations of the local “heritage tourism” (creating the Grand Hotel de l'Aigoual, building a shelter and viewpoint indicator at the summit, etc.) that continues to this day.