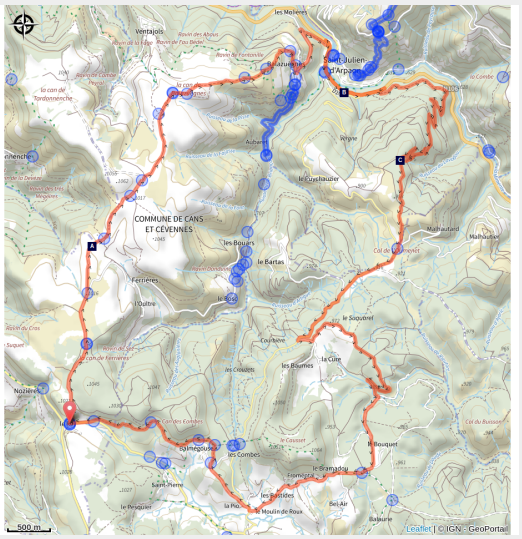
The Tour du Briançon # 7 (by mountain-bike)

Vallées cévenoles





Barre des Cévennes (© Nathalie Thomas)

This circuit goes on grassy tracks and paths over the barren landscapes of the Can de Ferrières and Can de Balazuègnes plateaux, and offers panoramic views onto the Bougès massif and the Mimente valley.

Depuis les paysages dénudés des cans de Ferrières et de Balazuègnes, ce parcours entre pistes herbeuses et sentiers, offre une vue panoramique sur le massif du Bougès et la vallée de la Mimente.

Useful information

Practice : Bike

Duration : 3 h

Length : 23.7 km

Trek ascent : 771 m

Difficulty : Difficult

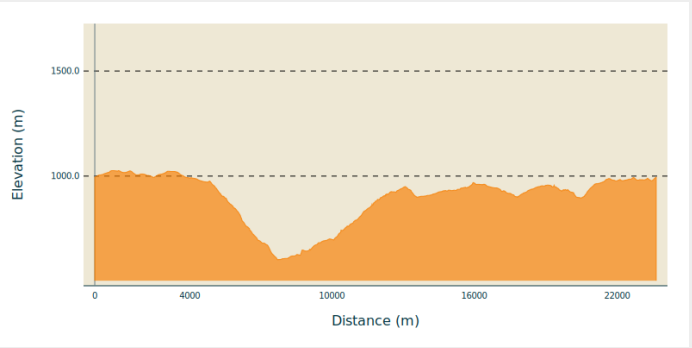
Type : Loop

Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, Architecture and village, Forest

Trek

Departure : Col du Rey
Arrival : Col du Rey
Markings : Red mountain-bike
Cities : 1. Cans et Cévennes
2. Florac Trois Rivières
3. Barre-des-Cévennes

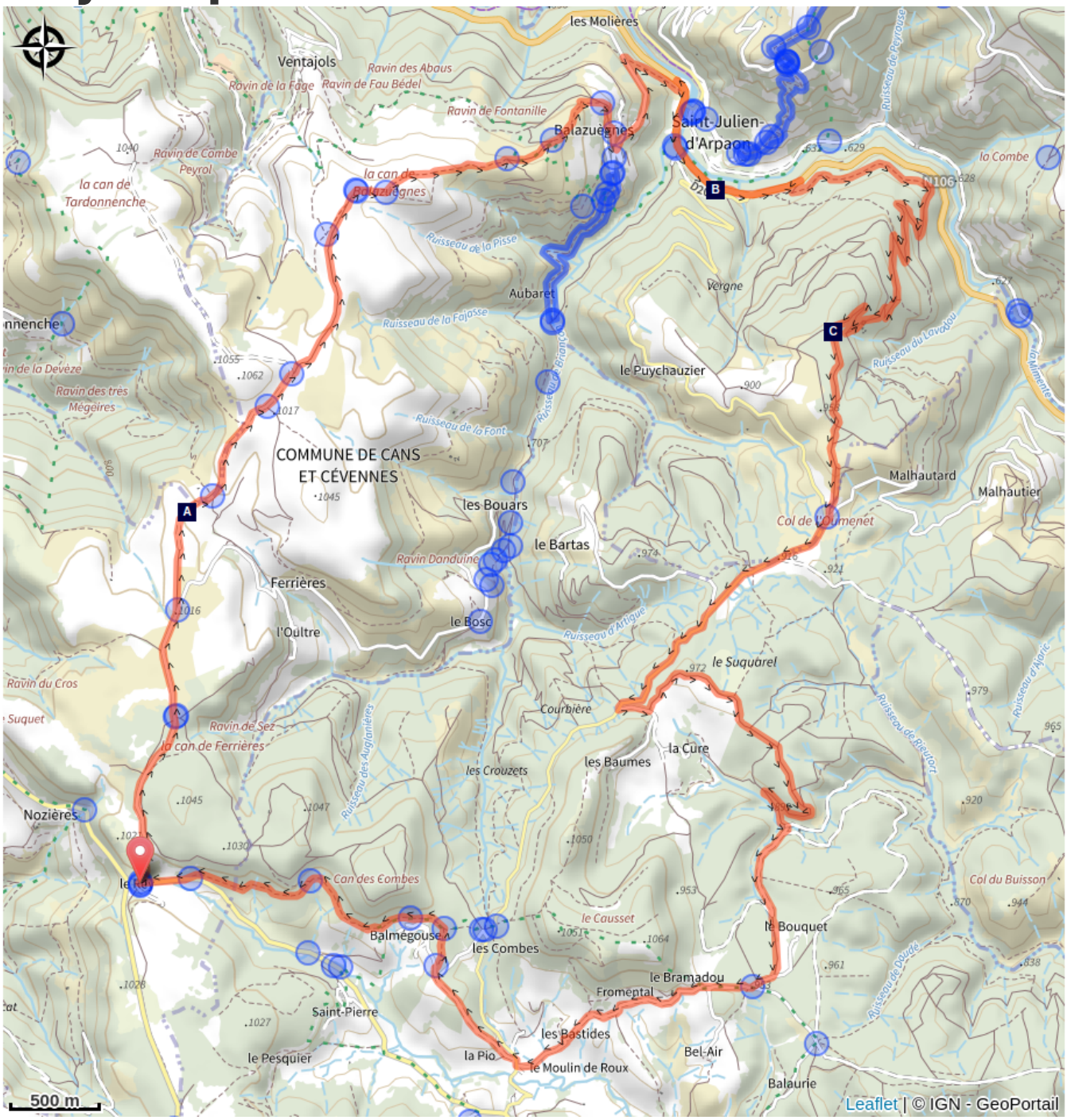
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 602 m Max elevation 1026 m

From the Col du Rey, head towards Ferrières. Before arriving in the hamlet, take the track on the left leading to the Can de Balazuègnes and the hamlet of the same name. Go through the hamlet and downhill to St-Julien-d'Arpaon. Turn right onto the N 106 for about 1 km, then fork right to start the climb to the Col de l'Oumenet. The track is steep at first, but then becomes smoother. At the pass, take the D 20 towards Barre des Cévennes. Turn left towards La Cure. Skirt La Cure on the left, then pass in front of Le Bouquet, Le Bramadou and Les Bastides. Cross the D 20 and, on the other side, go up a short but steep ascent (400 m). You return to the Col du Rey by skirting Balmegouse farm on the right.

On your path...



The Can de Ferrières (A)

The Château de Saint-Julien-d'Arpaon (B)

The Cévenol chestnut grove (C)

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.

Advices

No cycling off-track. You are strongly advised to wear a helmet. Do not forget your repair kit and a small set of tools. Shut all gates and barriers after yourself. Slow down in farms and hamlets.

How to come ?

Access

From Florac, drive in the direction of the Corniche des Cévennes to the Col du Rey.

Advised parking

Car park at the Col du Rey, at the crossroads of the D 9 and D 983 (Barre des Cévennes)

Source

Agence d'Attractivité Touristique Gorges Causses Cévennes

http://www.cevennes-gorges-du-tarn.com

Parc national des Cévennes

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

On your path...



The Can de Ferrières (A)

This limestone plateau continues to be grazed by flocks of sheep. Note the piles of stones, called clapas. They are not there by chance! They are the result of locals clearing their fields and pastureland of stones. These piles shelter many species.

Attribution : © Guy Grégoire



The Château de Saint-Julien-d'Arpaon (B)

This 13th century castle was the property of the Lords of Anduze, who owned the barony of Florac in what was then the Gévaudan. In 1618, when the Gabriac family owned it, the castle was demolished. In the 18th century, it was inherited by the Montcalm family from Rouergue province, which owned several properties in the Gévaudan. The family restored the building, but it has suffered from the effects of time and is currently in ruins – though in a better state of preservation than other castles in the Gévaudan.

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The Cévenol chestnut grove (C)

The vast expanses of sweet chestnut groves that still occupy a part of the Cévennes are all man-made. From the Middle Ages onwards, and especially in the 16th century, locals replaced oak and beech with chestnut, essentially for its nuts. In the mid-19th century, a new population boom pushed the Cévenol chestnut grove to its maximum extent.

The tree supplies regular, balanced and abundant food, with chestnuts largely replacing grains. The locals' diet (about 2 kg per person per day) was complemented by some rye, pork products, vegetables and pulses. The Cévennes did not experience the great famines that struck other regions, and witness accounts describe the vigour and good health of the inhabitants of the Cévenol valleys.

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