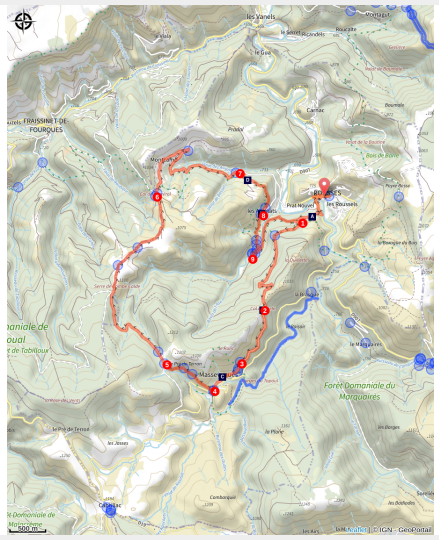
# Massevaques

Aigoual

La vallée du Tapoul (© Nathalie Thomas - Parc National des Cévennes)



## A forest and ridge walk offering beautiful views over the Tapoul gorges, the Causse Méjean, Mont Lozère and Cévennes.

This is an incredibly varied trail – through beech forests, along a ridge with views onto the cliffs of the Causse Méjean, through a hundred-year-old chestnut grove and past unexpectedly handsome isolated hamlets – which ends in riverside meadows.

### Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 5 h

Length : 15.8 km

Trek ascent : 698 m

Difficulty : Medium

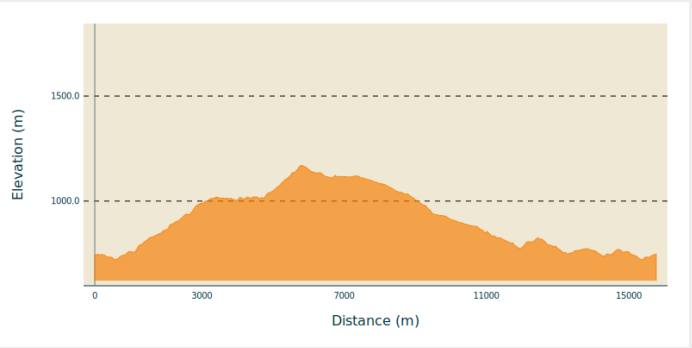
Type : Loop

Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, Architecture and village, History and culture

# Trek

**Departure** : Rousses
**Arrival** : Rousses
**Markings** : Yellow waymarks
**Cities** : 1. Rousses
2. Fraissinet-de-Fourques

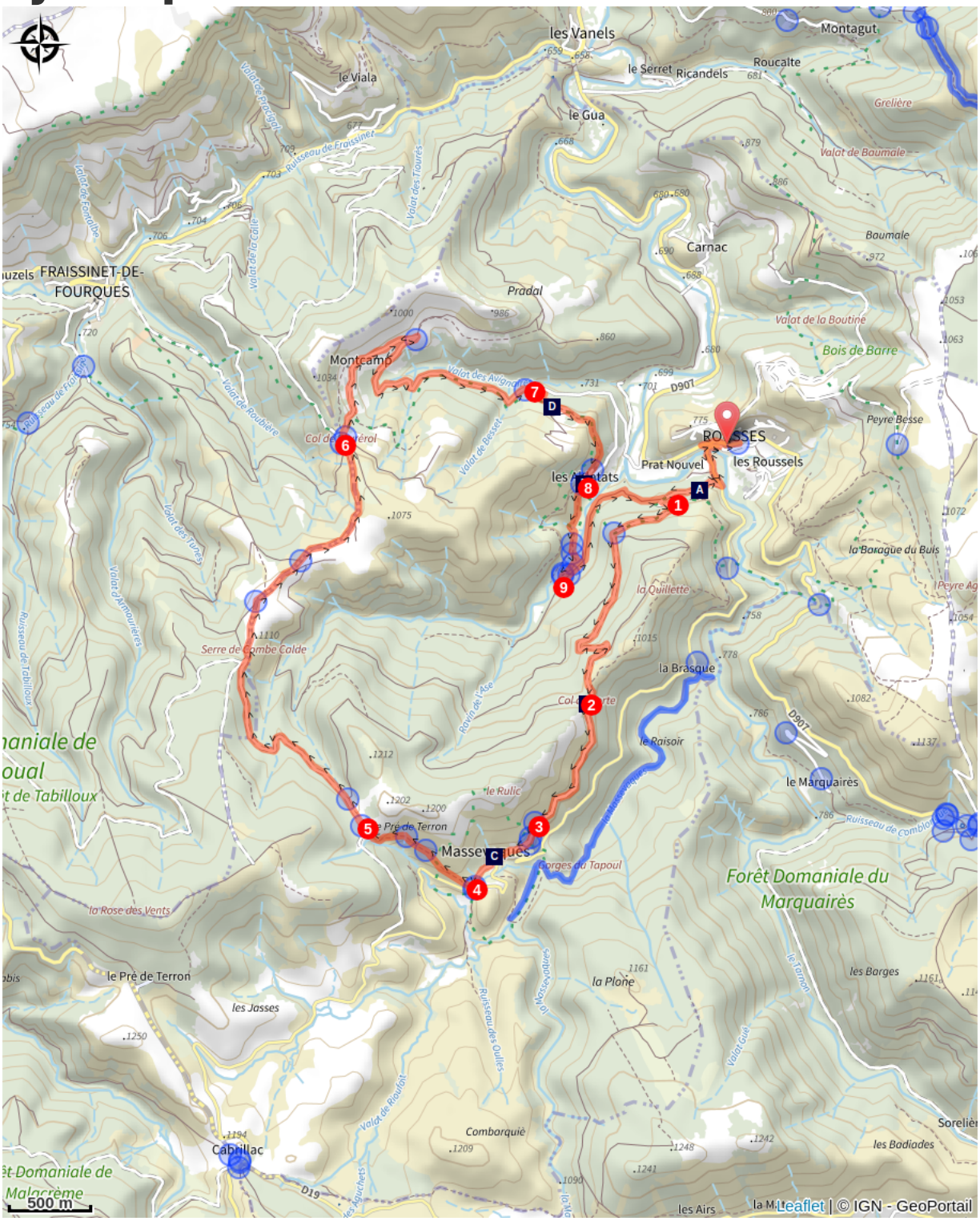
## Altimetric profile




Min elevation 721 m  Max elevation 1170 m

From the carpark, head towards Massevaques/Mont Aigoual. After the campsite, take the second track on the right (paved with concrete at first). This is the trail starting-point.
1) At the first intersection, continue straight. Follow signs for the Col des Portes.
2) At the Col (pass), take the left-hand track.
3) At the next crossroads, turn right and immediately left and continue to Massevaques. Turn right onto the road, then turn onto the small concrete lane which goes up into the hamlet and joins the D 11.
4) Take the road for a few metres, then fork right onto a footpath towards Le Pré de Thérond.
5) The path comes out into a field. Continue straight ahead to join the track and turn right onto it (further on, ignore the track on the right). As you leave the forest, continue straight ahead along the ridge of the Serre de Combe- Calde. Follow the main track, which goes downhill.
6) At the Col de Peyrerol, go downhill on the right towards Montcamp. Follow the road for 2 km.
7) then take the first path on the right which leads uphill into the chestnut grove to reach Les Ablatats.
8) In the hamlet, coninue on the small lane, which joins up with the road. Take a path on the left that goes downhill to the river.
9) After the river, follow the meadow to end up on a forestry track, onto which you turn left. At the first intersection, continue straight alongside the river. At the second, go uphill on the right to get back onto your originl outbound track.

# On your path...




Small walls and terraces (A)

Col des Portes (B)

Massevaques (C)

The sweet chestnut: the tree of life (D)

Les Ablatats : village of refuge (E)

# 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

The Col des Portes can be very windy. Make sure your equipment is appropriate for the day's weather conditions. Remember that the weather changes quickly in the mountains. Take enough water, wear good shoes and put on a hat. Please close all gates and barriers after yourself.

## How to come ?

Access

From Florac, take the D 907 and in Les Vanels follow signposts for Rousses

Advised parking

Above the inn (Auberge)

## Information desks

**Tourism'house and national Parc at Florac**
Place de l'ancienne gare, N106, 48400 Florac-trois-rivières

info@cevennes-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 66 45 01 14
https://www.cevennes-gorges-du-tarn.com

## 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...

## Small walls and terraces (A)

"The path, lined in places by a wall, used to lead from Rousses to  Massevaques. Some locals still remember having used it to get back up to Massevaques after a wake in Rousse. At the start of the path, you can see on your left the small walls of two bancels (crop terraces), where rye was grown. Then you enter the beech forest. This slope is exposed to the north and west winds, which suits beech, but it is only in the more protected vales that you will find a few sweet chestnuts interspersed with conifers. This forest is still exploited by the inhabitants of the district, who cut their firewood here.” (P. Grime)

Attribution : N Thomas

## Col des Portes (B)

This col (pass)] used to be pastureland, but has now been abandoned by the local flocks. Oral tradition states that a battle between Camisards and Catholics took place at this pass. The inhabitants of Rousses and Fraissinet-de-Fourque were in fact in conflict over grazing rights. The former were overwhelmingly Protestants, while the latter were Catholics. It is said that the graves are at the col and that a bird, incarnating the soul of the dead, comes to sing there when anyone passes by.

Attribution : PnC-N Thomas

## Massevaques (C)

Massevaques has had up to 80 inhabitants. It was after the First World War that desertification intensified. Those who returned from the fighting chose to work in administration: the railways, the police... There are currently two year-round households left in Massevaques.

Attribution : PnC - N Thomas

## The sweet chestnut: the tree of life (D)

This tree used to be a presence throughout the lives of the Cévenols, and was considered the tree of life. Its wood was used for building cradles, one's furniture and roof structures. It was also used for firewood. The fruit was eaten in bajanat, a soup made from dried chestnuts (bajanes), or ground into flour. Chestnuts were dried in clèdes, small schist buildings located in the orchards. The fruit also fed the farm's animals.

Attribution : © Bruno Daversin

## Les Ablatats : village of refuge (E)

With their rugged terrain, the Cévennes became a refuge during the Second World War. About 60 Jews were hidden in Vébron and Rousses, a dozen of them in the hamlet of Les Ablats. Whilst they certainly benefited from the locals' silence, they were able to seek refuge here thanks to the mayors of the two villages, the pastors and an assistant to the prefect. Reportedly some of them were even sent directly here by the prefecture.

Attribution : PnC-N Thomas