

# Le Mas Breton

Vallées cévenoles - Le Pompidou



Descente sur La Coste (nathalie.thomas)



*From mills to béals, from chestnut trees to holm-oaks, this valley has the authentic, Mediterranean and slate atmosphere of the southern Cévennes.*

This path reveals several aspects of life in the Cévenol valleys in the old days. The traces of humans adapting to this terrain can be seen in mills, terraced cropland (bancels) and irrigation channels (béals). The path goes through chestnut groves and holm-oak forests, which are the emblematic vegetation of this part of the Cévennes.

## Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 3 h

Length : 7.6 km

Trek ascent : 431 m

Difficulty : Easy


Type : Loop

Themes : Architecture and village, Forest, History and culture

# Trek

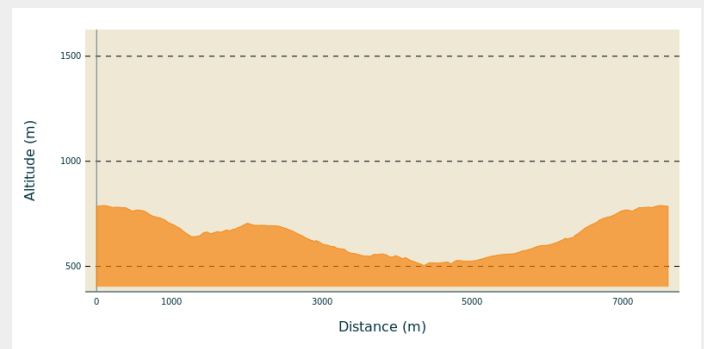
**Departure** : D 62, between Le Pompidou and Barre-des-Cévennes, 2.5km from Le Pompidou

**Arrival** : D 62, between Le Pompidou and Barre-des-Cévennes, 2.5km from Le Pompidou

**Markings** :  Yellow waymarks

**Cities** : 1. Le Pompidou  
2. Molezon

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 503 m    Max elevation 789 m

Follow the D 62 towards Le Pompidou for about 750 m, and, just before La Roquette, take the first path on the left, which goes downhill to La Coste. Then follow the road that goes downhill on the right. After the bridge, take a path on the left and follow the brook to the bridge below Le Masaout. From a waterfall, follow another béal, which goes through zones of sparser vegetation where you may spot a few abandoned vines, to reach the edge of the pond and mill at Le Masaout. Do not cross the bridge, but take the path that goes uphill continuing your current path. At the crossroads, continue straight ahead (ignoring a track on the right that goes to Molezon Romanesque church, 500 m away) to reach Le Mas Breton. Pass below the hamlet and continue onto the track, which has a hairpin bend. Shortly after this bend, take a path going uphill on the left to La Coste, where you will join up with the road leading to your parking spot.

## On your path...



### Terraced cropland (A)

The mills (C)

## The forests (B)

 La Coste (D)

# 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

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

D 62, on the ridge between Le Pompidou and Barre-des-Cévennes, 2.5 km from Le Pompidou (point 784)

### Advised parking

Parking possible on the verge of the D 62



## Information desks

### Information center Le Pompidou

La poste, 48400 Le Pompidou

[cipnc@orange.fr](mailto:cipnc@orange.fr)

Tel : 04 66 60 31 26





## Source



CC de la Cévenne des Hauts gardons



Parc national des Cévennes

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

## On your path...

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### Terraced cropland (A)

Above the road, you can see ten or so crop terraces (bancels), built in a small valley between two rocky spurs. Until 1962, these sheltered terraces were still planted with potatoes and vegetables. In this area, it took human ingenuity to build small walls in the tiniest hollow so as to accumulate and retain soil in which to grow food to live on. Often, soil was brought up from the valley bottom in baskets to improve these terraces. In the valleys, it was retained by purpose-built dams, so-called tancats. (P. Grime)

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### The forests (B)

It is worth noting the difference in exposure, and therefore in vegetation, of the two slopes. The side of Le Masaout faces north, is less steep and has been planted with sweet chestnuts, which prefer deep, well-drained soil. The slope climbed by the path is steep and south-facing, and up to a certain altitude is thus better suited to holm oak, a variety that likes dry environments and contents itself with poor soils. The oaks can be found growing quite high up this slope, while the chestnuts grow in the small valleys, where a less shallow layer of soil has accumulated. (P. Grime)

Attribution : © Yves Maccagno



## The mills (C)

In 1809, there were 1,268 mills in Lozère, about one for every 100 inhabitants. These mills stopped work in the late 19th or early 20th century. There were wheat mills, but also oil mills. Nowadays, the ruined mills are very often partially hidden by lush vegetation, which includes alders (easy to identify by their red roots, which like to soak in the river). (P. Grime)

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas

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## La Coste (D)

The architecture in La Coste is neat, with beautiful stone door frames and window frames and rounded corner stones. Renowned stone carvers and masons came from this Cévenol hamlet.

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