

# Mauripe

Aigoual



Descente sous Mercou (© Olivier Prohin)



This walk winds through the lowest foothills of the Cevennes, where the limestone of the piedmont plain meets the granite slopes of Mont Liron.

This southern part of the Cevennes is home to the historic mas (farms) and hamlets of Soudorgues, a region of religious resistance. The summit of Mauripe, less than 20 km as the crow flies from the peak of Mont Aigoual, overlooks them all, offering the visitor plunging 360° views.

## Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 2 h 30

Length : 7.0 km

Trek ascent : 402 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, History and culture

# Trek

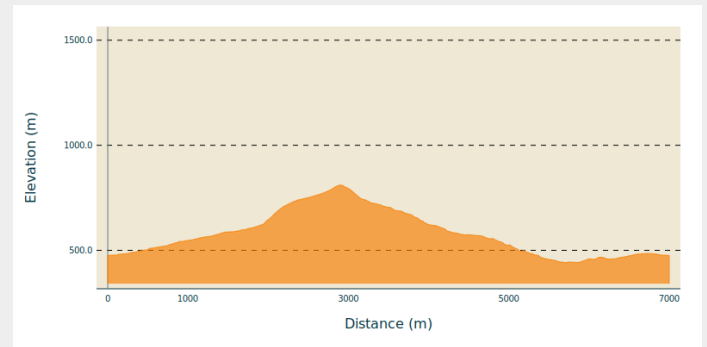
**Departure** : Soudorgues

**Arrival** : Soudorgues

**Markings** :  Yellow waymarks

**Cities** : 1. Soudorgues

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 441 m Max elevation 811 m

From the “**Soudorgues**” car park, head towards:

1. “**Mairie de Soudorgues**”,
2. “**Les Quatre Chemins**”.  
At the junction, turn left towards:
3. “**La Pierre Plantée**”. At the fork, continue towards:
4. “**Le Four à Chaux**”,
5. “**Puech Redounet**”. Turn right towards:
6. “**Sous le Mauripe**”. Follow the trail and climb up to Pic Mauripe, then continue towards:
7. “**Serre des Hubacs**”. Turn right towards “**Col de Mercou**” via the GR®61.
8. At “**Col de Mercou**”, return to “**Soudorgues**” via:
9. “**Les Quatre Chemins**” and “**Mairie de Soudorgues**” car park.

# On your path...



The stone or umbrella pine (A)  
360° views from Mauripe (C)  
The King's dragoons and the  
dragonnade (E)

Cemetery history (B)  
Draille (D)  
Les caches des prédicants (F)

# All useful information

## **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

From Anduze, take the D 907 road towards St Jean du Gard, then the D 57 to Thoiras / Lasalle. Drive through Lasalle and Les Horts on the D 39, then turn off towards Soudorgues (D 271).

### Advised parking

50 m before the mairie (town hall)

## **Information desks**

### **Tourism office Mont Aigoual Causses Cévennes, Saint-André-de-Valborgne**

les quais, 30940 Saint-André-de-Valborgne

standredevalborgne@sudcevennes.com

Tel : 04 66 60 32 11

<https://www.sudcevennes.com>



## **Source**



CC Causses Aigoual Cévennes Terres Solidaires

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



Parc national des Cévennes

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

# On your path...

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## The stone or umbrella pine (A)

In the distance in the Lasalle valley there is dense, dark green vegetation. The stone or umbrella pine has a very characteristic opened-out shape, which resembles an umbrella from a distance. This conifer is at home especially in the Mediterranean basin. It prefers dry, deep and cool soils. Its bark is reddish and cracked. Its fruit, the pine nut, is often used in pastry cooking.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin

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## Cemetery history (B)

The walk leads you past the village cemetery, which was in fact the Protestant cemetery. Soudorgues also has a Catholic cemetery, another particularity brought about by the turbulent history of the Reformation. Catholic cemeteries did not accept “non-Christians” or “heretic Christians”. There were countless exhumations of Protestant bodies in the 16th century. To put an end to this injustice, the Edict of Nantes ordered that “convenient” cemeteries be built for those who followed the so-called reformed religion. When the Edict was revoked, the order was also dropped. Huguenots had to renounce their religion to be buried in ‘family’ cemeteries in the countryside. Today, only the owners of these on-site cemeteries still have the right to be buried in them.

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas

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## 360° views from Mauripe (C)

From here, on a clear day, you can see the Alps (west) and the Mediterranean (south). Looking northwest, you can make out Mont Aigoual, the Col de l'Asclier pass, the Col de Fageas with its television mast and, if you follow the ridges eastwards with your eyes, the Rocher de l'Aigle, Piécamp and La Mortière. The lowest ridge is the famous Corniche des Cevennes. Behind it, further east, are the mountain ranges of La Vieille Morte and Le Mortissou, and, in the far distance, the ridges of Mont Lozère. Far to the south, you can make out the city of Alès and, even further away, Mont Ventoux. In front are the town of Lassalle and then La Fage mountain above Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort. On the horizon, the Mediterranean shimmers furtively.

Attribution : © Olivier Prohin



## Draille (D)

The rocky path becomes wider and has stone reinforcements on the downhill side, which shows that it was once used by large herds. This draille led from Saint-Jean-du-Gard to the summer pastures on Mont Aigoual. At the Col de Mercou pass (570 m), there are panoramic views northwards over the Corniche des Cevennes. The pass was once a site for trade and commerce, with its own market. Its name is derived from Mercury, the god of travellers and commerce. There are also references to Melkart, a Phoenician deity: Semitic traders left traces of their passage here in the architecture of the old proto-historic bridges. Melkart or Melqart was the tutelary god of the city of Tyre - whose name means "strong king" in Phoenician - and was the god of riches, industry and navigation. He was worshipped in the tenth century BC.

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## The King's dragoons and the dragonnade (E)

Three-quarters of local Huguenots (Protestants) renounced their faith due to the "missionaries in boots", meaning the dragoons. The dragonnade was the name given to Huguenots being forced to house these soldiers of the King, who then pillaged and mistreated them into renouncing their faith. The dragoons met with a unique resistance in the Camisard War (1702 to 1705), during which 3,000 Protestants in white shirts defied 30,000 red dragoons. The dragoons were on horseback, booted and armed with sabres a metre-and-a-half long, which was not very practical on small paths, during this guerilla war.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



## Les caches des prédicants (F)

From 1685, the so-called “wilderness period” began for Protestants, who were forced to follow their faith with clandestine preaching in isolated spots. In the Soudorgues area, these included Villeméjeanne (called Campan), Les Bousquets, Espaze, La Faux and Grevault du Bedos (a mas or farm near the pass of the same name). They took refuge in caves or with locals. The Mas du Moina had several hiding-places. One, in the stables of the residential building, had an arrowslit to be able to see the Dragoons arrive. Near Soudorgues, hiding-places have been identified at Mas Novis, Euzière and Viala (in the hamlet of Horts). Their good-hearted inhabitants risked having their farms destroyed and being sent to the galleys for life. A little further, beyond Mas Guiraud, there is still a flat-topped rock known as Le Templas, which has a very narrow entrance. About 20 people could fit into it for religious gatherings.

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