

MTB 3 - Descent on the drovers' road

Aigoual - Val-d'Aigoual



Vue de l'observatoire du Mont Aigoual (© Olivier Prohin)



This circuit leading downhill (370 m) from the summit of Mont Aigoual to the village of L'Espérou offers a variety of environments on tracks and paths in the vast state-owned Aigoual forest.

Useful information

Practice : Bike

Duration : 1 h

Length : 6.8 km

Trek ascent : 70 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Roaming

Themes : Causses and Cévennes / UNESCO, Forest, History and culture

Trek

Departure : Summit of Mont Aigoual

Arrival : Summit of Mont Aigoual

Markings : 🏠 mountain-bike

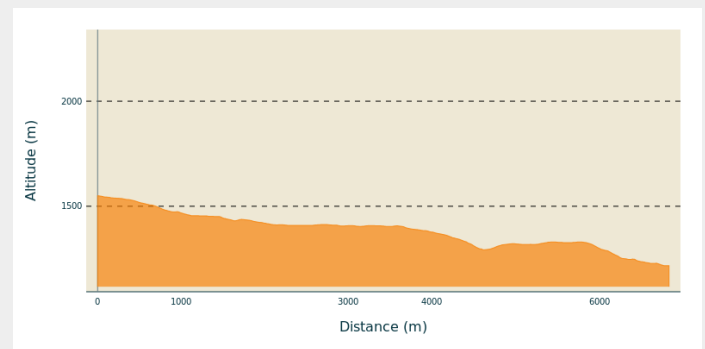
Cities : 1. Val-d'Aigoual

2. Meyrueis

3. Saint-Sauveur-Camprieu

4. Dourbies

Altimetric profile



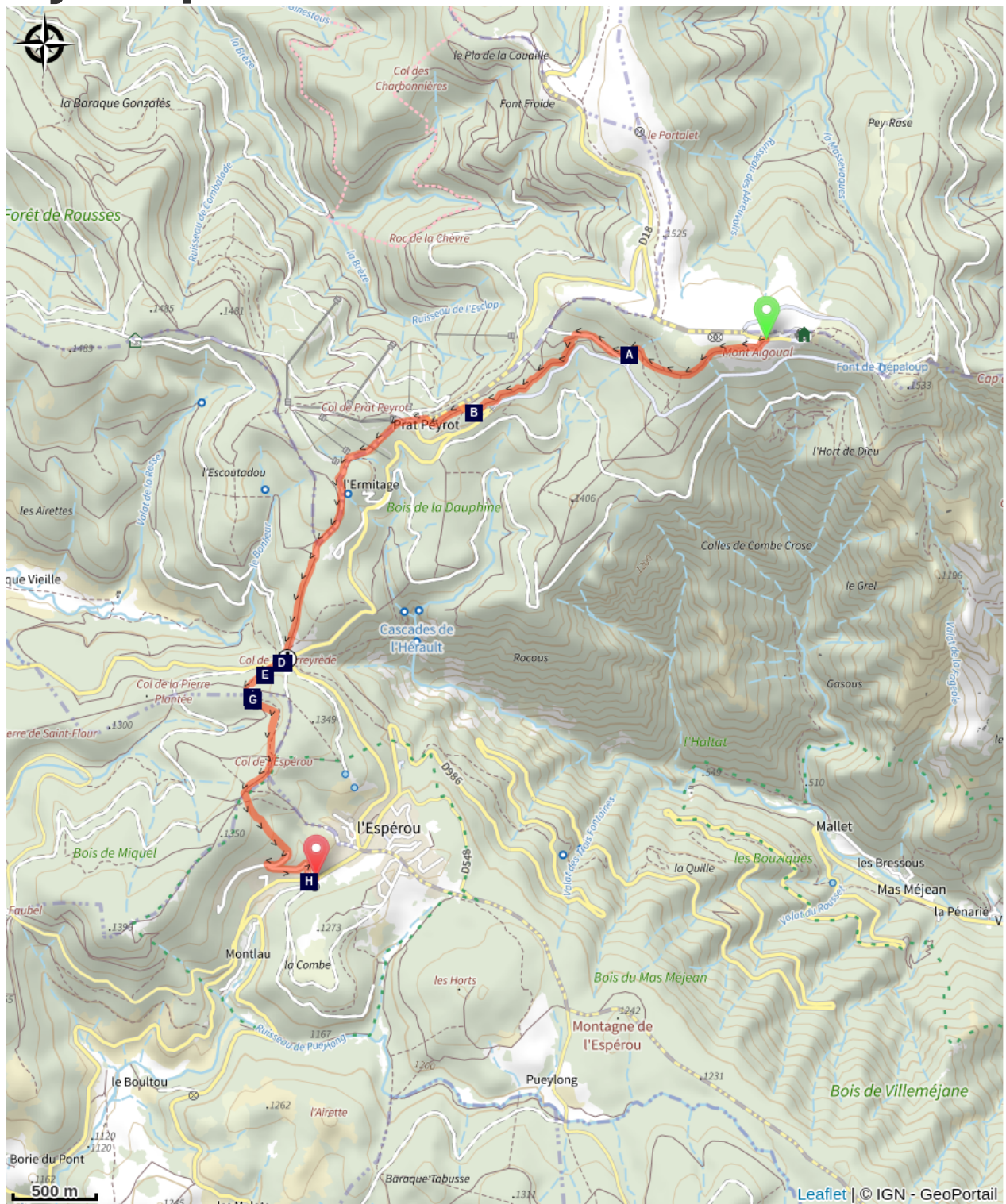
Min elevation 1217 m Max elevation 1550 m

Signposts will guide you all along this route. In the description below, the signposted place names and/or directions are given in ***bold italics*** between quotation marks:

From the car parks at Mont Aigoual, make for L'Espérou, via the crossroad ***"La Source", "Le Pontet", "La Baraquette", "La Sapinière", "Balcons de l'Aigoual-Parking", "Prat Peyrot-Station", "Le Fangas", "Col de La Serreyrède", "Le Trévezet", "Serre de Favatel", "Col de l'Espérou", "Montlau "***, then ***"Halle de l'Espérou"***.

This circuit is taken from the guidebook **Massif de l'Aigoual**, published by the Communauté de communes Causses Aigoual Cévennes as part of the collection Espaces naturels gardois and the label Gard Pleine Nature.

On your path...



Pôle Nature 4 Saisons (A)
La Serreyrède (C)



From beech copse to mature
plantation (E)



Irregular forest (G)



On the Verge (Yoann Crépin) (B)
The association "Terres d'Aigoual"
(D)



Productive forest (F)



The village of L'Espérrou (H)

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

Before setting off on a trail, check that it is suitable for your activity and level of ability. Mountain-bikers must wear helmets; protective gear is recommended. Respect other trail users and stay in control of your speed and trajectory. Be careful in winter: strong winds can cause snowdrifts. Keep an eye on the forecast: violent storms and sudden floods can be dangerous. For your safety, do not venture into hunting areas – hunts in progress are indicated by signs (“Chasse en cours” or “Battue en cours”). Respect property, livestock and other users of the area. Biking off-road is prohibited.

How to come ?

Transports

D40 or D42 to Le Vigan, then CCC8 to L'Espérou

Access

Head towards Mont Aigoual on the D 896 from L'Espérou. At the Col de La Serreyrède pass, take the D 269 then the D 18, Prat Peyrot; then the D 118 to Mont Aigoual

Advised parking

Car park at summit of Mont Aigoual

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.causse-aigoual-cevennes.fr/>



Parc national des Cévennes

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



Pôle Nature Aigoual

On your path...



Pôle Nature 4 Saisons (A)

The Pôle Nature 4 Saisons of the Aigoual massif offers outdoor activities in all seasons in the central zone of the Cévennes National Park, overlooked by the legendary summit of Mont Aigoual (1,570 m). Discover our network of trails on foot, on horseback, by bike, or else by mountain-bike or with a donkey, as the fancy takes you!

Children can explore the orienteering circuit or geocaching. For the sportier among you we have laid out trail running circuits!

Prefer road biking? We have created circuits of varying difficulty levels so you can discover our villages and valleys.

Try not to make any noise! Wildlife enthusiasts can spot mouflons and other animals.

And if you would just like a gentle walk on the massif, the discovery trail “The cliffs of Mont Aigoual” is for you. There are various rest stops over its 4.5 km, with only 150 m in height difference.

We look forward to seeing you on our paths.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



On the Verge (Yoann Crépin) (B)

A doorway to a circuit of art within the natural environment. To fuse and interact with the environment and play with the seasons, time, light and weightlessness. To let humanity express itself through nature and nature express itself through humanity – a necessary interaction, a symbiotic interaction that inspires us to discover another world.

Attribution : © Filature du Mazel



La Serreyrède (C)

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 Causses Aigoual Cévennes – Terres solidaires.

Attribution : © Jacques de Joly



The association "Terres d'Aigoual" (D)

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 (E)

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 (F)

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 (G)

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.



⚠ The village of L'Espérou (H)

The village of L'Espérou lies on the border of Dourbies and Valleraugue local councils. A draille (track for livestock to migrate to summer pastures with their shepherds) crosses the village. As in many villages in the Gard, the two places of worship – one Catholic, the other Protestant – are opposite each other. The village is located in a varied environment that is suitable for outdoor activities and sports.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin