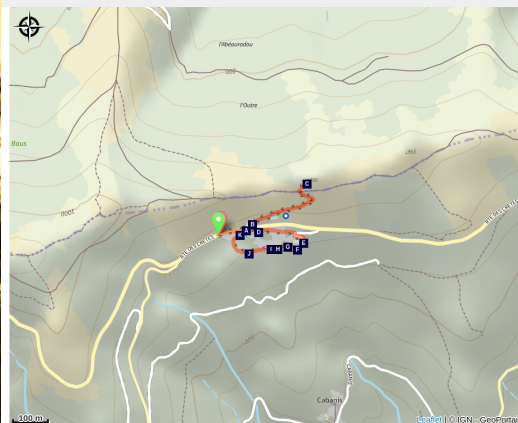


The dry-stone trail

Mont Lozère - Ventalon en Cévennes



Taille de pierre (© Yannick Manche)



A short walk perched between the scenery of Mont Lozère and uninterrupted views onto the Cévenol valleys. A living site dedicated to teaching dry-stone construction methods.

Using dry-stoning techniques, the inhabitants of the Cévennes over time built a landscape that is now on the UNESCO World Heritage List as an example of Mediterranean agro-pastoralism. This short walk takes you past characteristic Cévenol works (terraces, water management systems, etc.), rubbing shoulders with the more contemporary productions by the dry-stoning vocational college.

Useful information

Practice : Discovery trails

Duration : 1 h

Length : 1.3 km

Trek ascent : 83 m

Difficulty : Very easy

Type : Loop

Themes : Architecture and village

Trek

Departure : Relais de l'Espinas

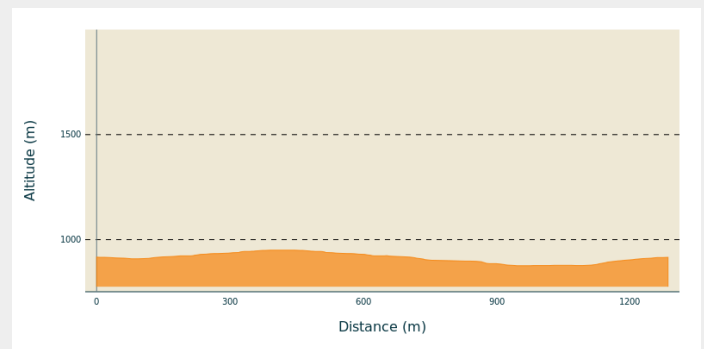
Arrival : Relais de l'Espinas

Markings : 🌀 découverte PNC

Cities : 1. Ventalon en Cévennes

2. Vialas

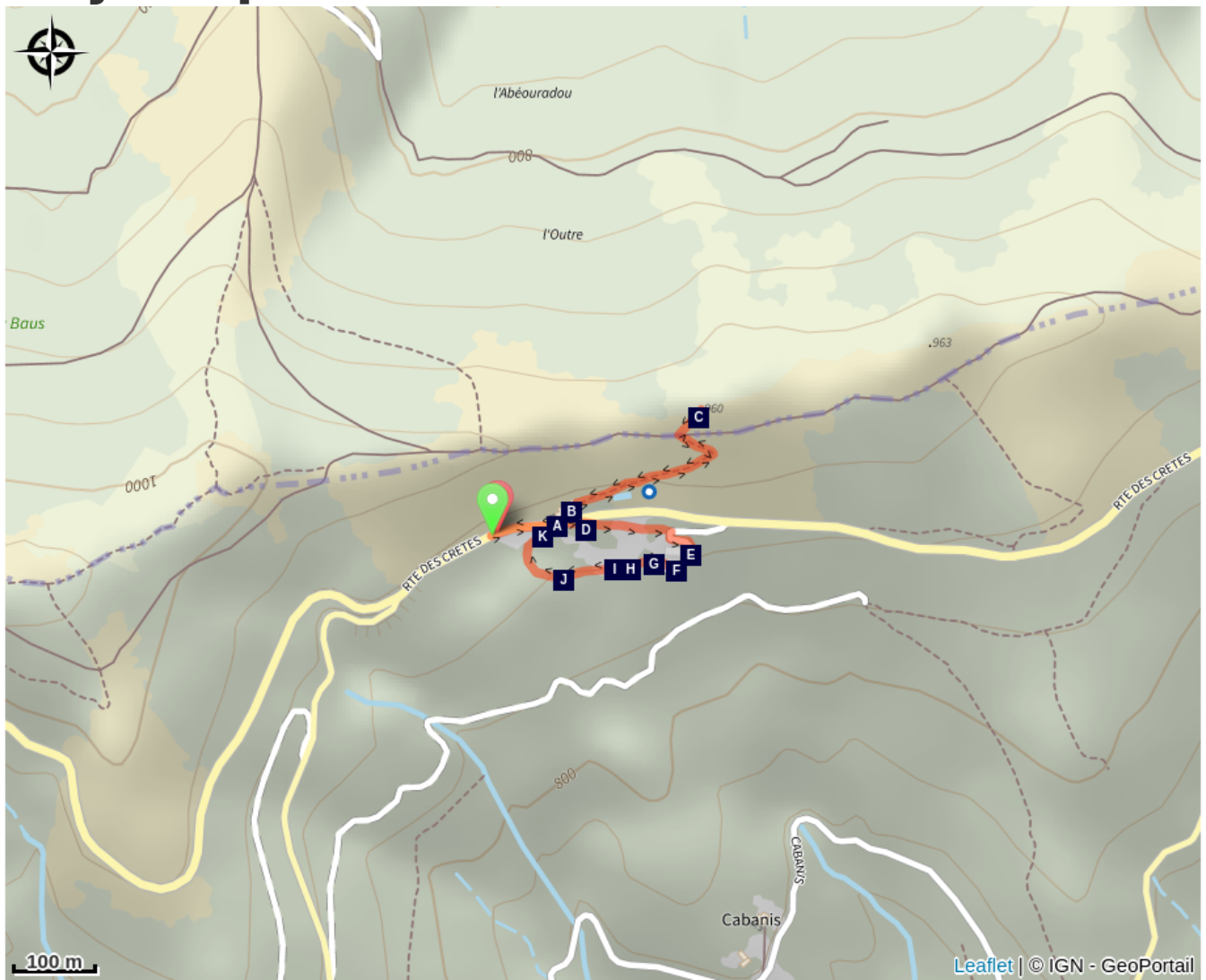
Altimetric profile














Min elevation 876 m Max elevation 950 m

The path enters the chestnut grove below the Relais de l'Espinas. It crosses the traditional terraces before coming back to the teaching site of the dry-stoning college. As it returns uphill towards the Relais de l'Espinas, the path is an invitation to continue across the road and walk to the belvedere on the crest, and back.

On your path...



-  The hamlet of L'Espinas (A)
-  Landscapes of Mont Lozère and the Cévennes (C)
-  The chestnut in the Cévennes (E)
-  CQP? (G)
-  Building a wall (I)
-  Channelled water (K)
-  In the days of the Camisards (B)
-  A technique for the future (D)
-  The ABPS association (F)
-  Sculpted landscape (H)
-  A landscaped mountain (J)

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.

How to come ?

Access

D998 from Florac via Le Pont-de-Montvert.
RD 35 between la Croix de Bertel (Saint-Maurice-de-Ventalon) and le col de Banette (Vialas).

Advised parking

Car park of the Relais de l'Espinass (100m on foot).

Information desks

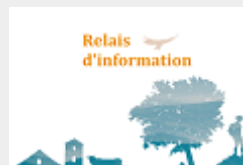
Tourism'house and national parc, Génolhac

Place du Colombier, 30450 Génolhac
contact@cevennes-tourisme.fr
Tel : 04 66 61 09 48
<http://www.cevennes-tourisme.fr/>



Tourism office Des Cévennes au mont-Lozère, Vialas

info@cevennes-montlozere.com
Tel : 04 66 45 81 94
<https://www.cevennes-montlozere.com/>



Source



CC des Cévennes au Mont Lozère

<http://www.cevennes-mont-lozere.fr/>



Parc national des Cévennes

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

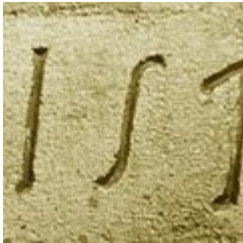
On your path...



The hamlet of L'Espinassac (A)

Built on a transport route used throughout the centuries, the hamlet of L'Espinassac was a stopover for travellers and itinerant shepherds and their livestock moving between the plains and highland pastures. It lies on one of the branches of the Jalcreste draille, the ancestral drovers' road that follows the ridge.

Attribution : ABPS



In the days of the Camisards (B)

The cemetery contains the graves of Protestants, whose religion was banned by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes until the French Revolution and who therefore had to bury their dead on private land. The hamlet of L'Espinassac is among the places of remembrance of the Camisard War (1702-1704): the revolt by the Protestants of the Cévennes against Royal Catholic rule.



Landscapes of Mont Lozère and the Cévennes (C)

To the north, the Luech valley and the eastern extremity of Mont Lozère is a landscape of schist and granite. To the south, the Cévennes stretch from the Alès plain in the east to the Aigoual massif in the west. A succession of ridges and valleys, they are dominated by Mont Aigoual (1,565 m). Seen from the Mediterranean, the Cévennes are the first relief.

Attribution : Eddie BALAYE



A technique for the future (D)

Today, dry-stoning is in the spotlight again due to its qualities of suppleness and drainage and its role in preventing soil erosion and floods. Dry-stoning is a technique that respects the environment, is energy-efficient and based on the valuable heritage bequeathed by our ancestors. It is destined for a bright future.

Attribution : ABPS



The chestnut in the Cévennes (E)

Like most chestnut orchards in the Cévennes, the one at L'Espinas was abandoned after the rural exodus of the 20th century. For the past twenty years or so, chestnut farming has been revitalised. Here, you will not see a fully productive orchard but a chestnut grove that is progressively being restored.

Attribution : © A. Bouissou/TERRA



The ABPS association (F)

Created in 2002 on the initiative of construction professionals and the National Park, the Artisans Bâisseurs en Pierres Sèches (the dry-stone master builders' association, ABPS) is now known across France. It has a tripartite approach to transmit dry-stone construction techniques and develop the sector.

Attribution : PNC



CQP? (G)

The walls under construction have been built by volunteer builders to try out different structures for the vocational qualification exams (CQP). For these exams, each candidate must build a structure before a jury in three or four days, depending on the level.

Attribution : ABPS



Sculpted landscape (H)

The chestnut tree is naturally content with poor soils, its taproot plunging deep into the ground to bring up nutrients. Of course it grows better and bears more nuts on deep and rich soils! This is why locals carried up the alluvial soil from brooks, often on their own backs, to create cultivatable plots: meadows, fields, gardens and orchards.

Attribution : © A. Waterschoot



Building a wall (I)

The art of dry-stoning was passed on by example through the ages. Today it remains the technique for building a retaining wall. Dry-stoning specialists have recently established professional rules, which are now the benchmark.

Attribution : ABPS



A landscaped mountain (J)

The terraces, locally called *bancels* or *faïsses*, were built over the centuries. By retaining and deepening the soil, they make it possible to cultivate steep slopes. The walls have been constructed “farmer” fashion: after extraction on site, the stone has not (or hardly) been shaped.

Attribution : PNC



Channelled water (K)

Many water-management works make it possible to channel rain run-off and thus protect retaining walls during heavy rainfall. These works require particular dry-stoning techniques, which allow the water to seep in while also withstanding its passage.

Attribution : PNC