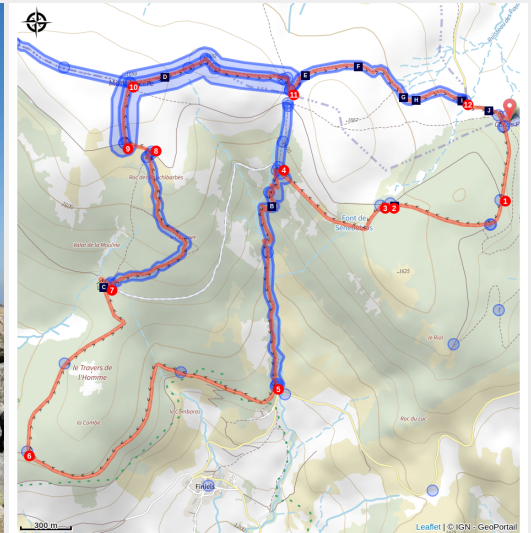


Mallevrière

Mont Lozère



Finiels (© Bruno Daversin)



Set out to conquer the highest point in Lozère, the Pic de Finiels. Three viewpoint panels explain the panorama.

This circular trail follows in the footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson and his donkey, Modestine, through the granite block fields of Finiels to the summit of the same name.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 4 h 30

Length : 12.2 km

Trek ascent : 464 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Fauna and flora, Forest, History and culture, Transports en commun

Trek

Departure : Col de Finiels

Arrival : Col de Finiels

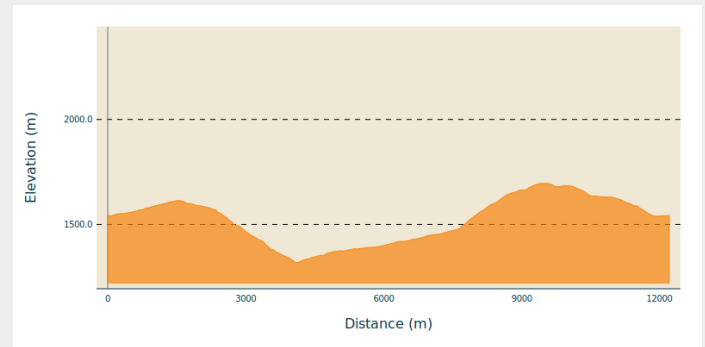
Markings :  Yellow waymarks

Cities : 1. Pont de Montvert - Sud Mont Lozère

2. Cubières

3. Mont Lozère et Goulet

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1318 m Max elevation 1696 m

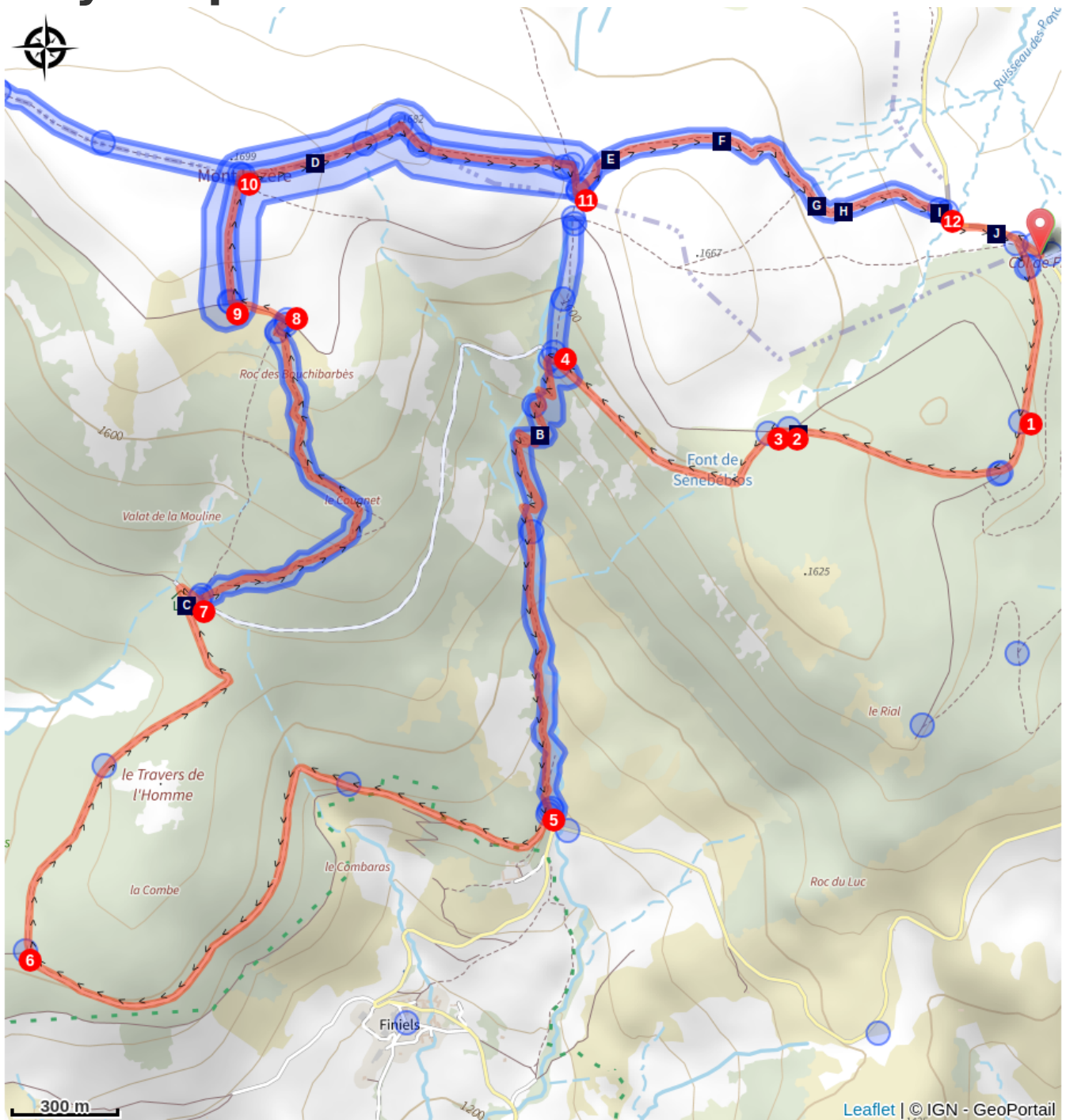
Signposts will guide you all along this route. In the description below, the signposted place names and/or directions are given in **bold italics** between quotation marks:

Starting at **“Col de Finiels”** make fo:

1. **“Bas du Col Plat”**, then
2. **“Col Plat”**,
3. **“Font de Sènebébios”**,
4. **“Le Cougnet”**. Walk downhill to
5. **“Pont de la Colinie”**. Then walk to **“Sommet de Finiels”** via:
6. **“Travers de l’Homme”**,
7. **“Abri forestier de Malleivière”**,
8. **“Valat de la Mouline”**,
9. **“Route forestière des Crêtes”**,
10. **“Sommet de Finiels”**. Return to **“Col de Finiels”** via :
11. **“Col de la Draille”** x2, then
12. **“Sous le Col de Finiels”**, and **“Finiels”**.

This hike is taken from the guidebook **Mont Lozère - Pays des sources, Sommet des Cévennes**

On your path...



Other short-grass prairies? (A)

The forest (C)

The prairie's botanical rivals (E)

 Birds (G)

 Small grassland creatures (I)

Edible plants (B)

Finiels summit (D)

An endangered landscape (F)

Low-growing plants and shrubs (H)

Subalpine short-grass prairie (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.

Advices

Stony paths. Avoid the summit of Finiels in fog. 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 sturdy shoes and put on a hat. Please close all gates and barriers behind you. Parts of this path are prohibited for mountain-bikes.

How to come ?

Transports

Bus Stop: Col de Finiels.

- Bus line 261 "Florac - Le Pont de Montvert - Mont Lozère", every day in July and August

<https://lio.laregion.fr/>

Access

From Le Pont-de-Montvert, take the D20 towards Le Bleynard to the Finiels pass.

Advised parking

Col de Finiels pass

Information desks

Office de tourisme Des Cévennes au mont Lozère

le Quai, 48220 Le Pont de Montvert sud mont-Lozère

info@cevennes-montlozere.com

Tel : 04 66 45 81 94

<https://www.cevennes-montlozere.com/>



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



CC des Cévennes au Mont Lozère

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



Parc national des Cévennes

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



Pôle pleine nature Mont Lozère

On your path...

Other short-grass prairies? (A)

Marker 7

After the forest, which is a farmed and worked space, foresters clear areas such as here, where other plant communities establish themselves: peat bogs, meadows, track verges. On the return leg, two large grasses will attract your attention: great yellow gentian with its yellow flowers and a more recent arrival, rosebay willowherb (fireweed), whose fruit “explode” into cottony masses at the end of the summer, when ripe.



Edible plants (B)

Some mountain plants have been and still are harvested with authorisation. The mountain everlasting or catsfoot (*Antennaria dioica*) is thus called because its tight little flowers look like the pads of a cat’s paw. This medicinal plant soothes coughs. Great yellow gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) acts as a tonic on the digestive system. Its root can be used in human and veterinary medicine and to make alcoholic drinks. The European blueberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) used to be a significant source of income for farmers. The berries have many qualities (as an astringent, tonic, anti-diarrhetic and antiseptic).

Attribution : nathalie.thomas

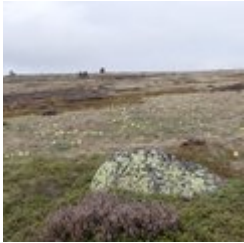


The forest (C)

In the late 19th century, Mont Lozère was almost entirely deforested, largely due to the thousands of sheep that summered here (transhumance). In the early 20th century, reforestation was carried out by locals, who were sowing seeds and planting at the request of the French State, to prevent erosion. This allows us – and deer – to enjoy this “naturally disordered” forest today.

From 1964 onwards, large reforestation programmes were undertaken by companies using machines. The linear and regular layout of these plantations makes them easy to distinguish from older ones.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Finiels summit (D)

The short-grass prairie consisting of a coarse grass species called matgrass adapts to harsh weather conditions at altitude. In the spring, wavy snow dunes form in some hollows; small heaps seek shelter behind shrubs. The Eurasian skylark, meadow pipit and common linnets already try to cross the summit by fluttering close to the ground. On the summit itself, some islands of callune (heather, which has the particularity of flowering first at altitude) and some blueberry plants manage, with great difficulty, to establish themselves. Boundary stones have Maltese crosses carved into them. In the 12th century, Baron de Tournel gifted land located on the southern slopes of Mont Lozère to the Knights of Saint-John of Jerusalem. In the 16th century, this order became the Order of the Knights of Malta. The commandery was set up at L'Hôpital and its land delimited by these boundary markers.

Attribution : N.Thomas_pnc

The prairie's botanical rivals (E)

Marker 4.

Below you, vast areas have been planted with pines and other conifers. The interest and regional and European rarity of short-grass prairies mean that they must be clearly demarcated from the forest. In fact, natural seeding of pines, carried onto the prairie by the south wind, has created a new forest. This plant dynamic, which is entirely logical at the altitude, gives the forest the upper hand over the prairie. The European Union is currently helping local participants to fell these new trees so as to protect the prairie. On your return leg, you will see other indigenous tree species which could encroach on the prairie in the same way (beech, birch).



An endangered landscape (F)

Marker 3

This vast expanse of short-grass prairie, an area of historical and natural heritage, is endangered today. The surface area of this relic has been much reduced over the past few decades. While the summits are made stable by the prairie, the mountain side presents evidence of erosion (denuded rocks) that is the result of foresters' attempts at reforestation. On the ledge, pines are starting to establish themselves at the expense of the prairie. These zones have become fragile and need better management of all the territory's elements. Shepherds will have to guide their flocks carefully here, so as to avoid making erosion worse but also to eliminate pine seedlings.

Attribution : © Parc national des Cévennes



Birds (G)

Vertebrates benefit from the plants or from small prey, especially hares or the common lizards with its thick tail, which is coveted by the reptile-eating short-toed snake eagle. Among the birds of prey, you may spot the characteristic silhouette of a Montagu's harrier or hen harrier, with their low contour-hugging flight. Among the many passerines, you may spot the Northern wheatear, a summer guest, sitting on a stone, or more rarely a grey partridge. If you listen, you may well hear larks singing.

Attribution : © Jean-Pierre Malafosse

Low-growing plants and shrubs (H)

A large amount of sunshine encourages many low-growing grasses from other botanical families to appear among the fescue and nard. They are almost all perennial. They form a veritable tangle of plants. Among the pretty alpine flowers are the spring pasque flower and the blue dwarf spring gentian in summer. Other, smaller plants are perfectly capable of "making holes" in a short-grass prairie that is less intensely grazed than before. Grass networks that lose in density develop weak points that shrubs exploit to grow at the very heart of the prairie: blueberries, which are here associated with lingonberries (cowberries) and calluna, a type of heather.



👉 Small grassland creatures (I)

Marker 2

Each spring, a demographic explosion of fauna prepares itself to burst forth in the summer. Earlier in the year, the thousands of small creatures to be seen here have not yet finished their metamorphoses, and the various species are difficult to recognise as larvae. Subalpine short-grass prairies attract a specific mountain fauna that is getting rarer everywhere else in Europe, such as the *Stauroderus scalaris* cricket, which tirelessly enlivens the pastures with its summer concerts. Crickets only eat plant matter whereas grasshoppers, such as the wart-biter, tend to be carnivorous. Many butterflies visit the flowers.

Attribution : © Bruno Descaves



Subalpine short-grass prairie (J)

Marker 1

Like garden or sports pitches, short-grass prairies are shaped by mankind. Grazing and controlled burns are the tools for their maintenance here. The main plants are nard and fescue, perennial grasses related to wheat. If you cut (graze) one of their stalks, five more will soon form; if you trample them, they multiply and become very dense. This kind of “torture” creates a thick plant cover that stabilises the sparse dark soil, which is derived from erosion of the ever-present granite. Here, then, are some clues for the appropriate management of this environment, which becomes weakened if neglected.

Attribution : © Brigitte Mathieu