

Champdomergue

Vallées cévenoles - Saint-Privat-de-Vallongue



La voie ferrée (nathalie.thomas)



Champdomergue: a site of remembrance of the wars of religion and World War II.

Here everything is a reminder of subsistence farming, where people grew their own vegetables and maintained the chestnut orchards: walled terraces that have now been colonised by holm oak; a former béal (irrigation channel) carved into the rock; a wall built from upright stones.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 4 h

Length : 8.9 km

Trek ascent : 482 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, History and culture

Trek

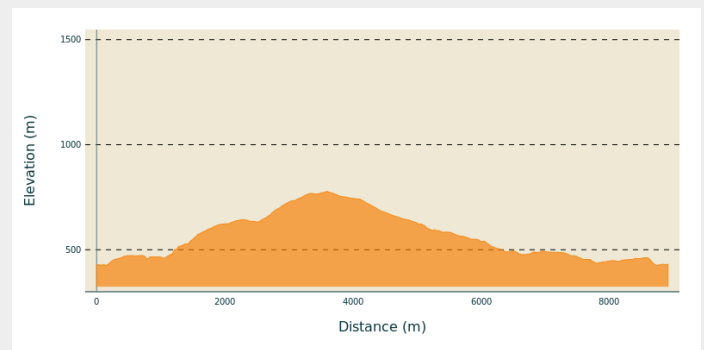
Departure : N106: hairpin bend below La Blacherette (at Champernal bridge)

Arrival : N106: hairpin bend below La Blacherette (at Champernal bridge)

Markings :  Yellow waymarks

Cities : 1. Saint-Privat-de-Vallongue
2. Ventalon en Cévennes

Altimetric profile








Min elevation 424 m Max elevation 778 m

At Champernal bridge, take the path on the right bank of the brook to join up with a disused railway.

- 1) Turn right onto the disused railway.
- 2) Immediately after the railway bridge, take the little path on the left that goes uphill via Rome to join up with a track on the ridge.
- 3) Turn right onto this track until you reach the road, which you take downhill through Leyris Bas. Past this hamlet and a spring, take the path that goes uphill on the left. You climb through a reforested area of pine, Douglas fir and spruce, crossing a forestry track several times.
- 4) When you reach the ridge track, take a track on the left to Champdomergue. Walk around the meadow on the left. At the road, turn right and go downhill to the pass.
- 5) Below the pass, take the track on the right.
- 6) At the first intersection, go downhill on the left and continue on the main track. Then take the road downhill to Altavias, La Borie and Soulatges.
- 7) Take the path downhill to Burjas, which runs above the disused railway.
- 8) Take the disused railway for 750 m.
- 9) Fork left onto a path that comes out on the N 106. Turn right onto the road to get back to your car.

On your path...



-  Brook fauna (A)
-  A welcoming place to stay (C)
-  Cultivated chestnut trees (E)
-  Champdomergue (G)
-  The hidden side of the ravine (I)

- The béal (irrigation channel) (B)
- Bancels (crop terraces) (D)
- The departmental railway (CFD) (F)
- The railroad (H)

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 sturdy shoes and put on a hat. Please close all gates and barriers behind you.

How to come ?

Access

On the RN 106, from Florac-Trois-Rivières or Alès, to the municipality of Saint-Privat-de-Vallongue.

Advised parking

At Champernal bridge (RN 106)

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>



Tourism office Des Cévennes au mont-Lozère, Saint-Germain-de-Calberte

Village, 48370 Saint-Germain-de-Calberte

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...



Brook fauna (A)

The otter was once much coveted and hunted for its pelt. Over 30 years passed before it settled in the waterways of the Cévennes again. Since then, its presence in the National Park has been well-known through monitoring of its tracks and other indicators. The population of white-clawed crayfish, on the other hand, is shrinking; it is very sensitive to environmental variations. To preserve it, habitat diversity and especially water quality are key.

Attribution : © Régis Descamps



The béal (irrigation channel) (B)

On large slabs of stone, the path straddles the béal which irrigates the crop terraces, and whose starting-point is 1.5km upstream.

"I know that several people had a right to the béal, and they each had their day to use the water. Where I lived there were at least 3 kilometres of béal, and to maintain them, we'd work in March and autumn. Nowadays you can water the parcels with a hose but it doesn't distribute the water like a béal. When there were channels everywhere, everything was green, now it's all dry".

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



A welcoming place to stay (C)

This chestnut tree and the ruined clède (chestnut-drying building) are the relics of a chestnut grove that was abandoned long ago.

The tree is dead... but full of life. National Park rangers take part in the national inventory of saproxylic beetles (which eat dead wood). Trapping, observing and identifying the species are the key stages of this work. The known reproductive and over-wintering sites of bats, which are victims to habitat loss and light pollution in particular, are also counted.

Attribution : Olivier Prohin



Bancels (crop terraces) (D)

"They used to have their gardens over there, in Cessenade, they planted tomatoes, beans... because the village wasn't hooked up to the water mains yet. The bancels were walled in to keep back the soil, with an opening just large enough for one man and his load of manure, they carried everything on their backs, even a mule couldn't get there... Back then, there was so much to do that on evenings when the moon was full, they would repair the low walls, and there were people, this is really long ago, who took on a labourer to help them and they paid him with two or three basketfuls of soil that he would take back to his own bancels."

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Cultivated chestnut trees (E)

These can be spotted by their bulge, which is the scar left by grafting. Here, you can see the chestnut tree in various forms: as a stand that is wasting away, in a maintained orchard (in front of you) or mixed with pine or holm oak (behind you). The *comballe* variety predominates in this area but many other varieties are grown in the Cévennes, thus guaranteeing a long harvest period and better resistance to diseases, insects and climate whims.

Attribution : Olivier Prohin



The departmental railway (CFD) (F)

Inaugurated in 1909, the departmental railway (CFD) linking Florac with Sainte-Cécile d'Andorge required 15 tunnels and 53 road and rail bridges. It was closed down in 1968 for lack of profitability. The line is being progressively turned into a walking and cycling path, which offers picturesque views over the meanders of the rivers Mimente and Gardon d'Alès (Vallée Longue).

Attribution : Olivier Prohin



Champdomergue (G)

In the field are the ruins of Champdomergue where, in 1702, the first confrontation of the Camisard War took place between those fighting for freedom of conscience and Louis XIV's soldiers. Champdomergue was a commemorative site until 1937.

In 1943 and 1944, Champdomergue sheltered a Resistance unit of German and Spanish antifascists, Armenians and Russians (deserters and escaped prisoners) and French men. They actively participated in the Vallée Longue Resistance through various acts against the Gestapo and the French Milice.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The railroad (H)

The railway was primarily used to transport goods and passengers. In 1943-44, more than 120,000 people travelled on this line every year. Chestnut and maritime-pine wood were taken down to the plains and coal, materials and goods for shopkeepers were brought up. "People took the train to sell their products and produce at the market in La Grand-Combe. That market financially supported the whole area. There were big crowds there, and miners earned a good living in those days, so they didn't pinch pennies at the market."

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The hidden side of the ravine (I)

Alongside the former railroad, the forest is spontaneously evolving towards more diversity and maturity. After broom and heather come pine and birch. These stands enrich the soil with organic matter and prepare the arrival of true forest: holm oak, chestnut and then downy oak, all species that grow slowly and are ecologically demanding.

Attribution : Olivier Prohin