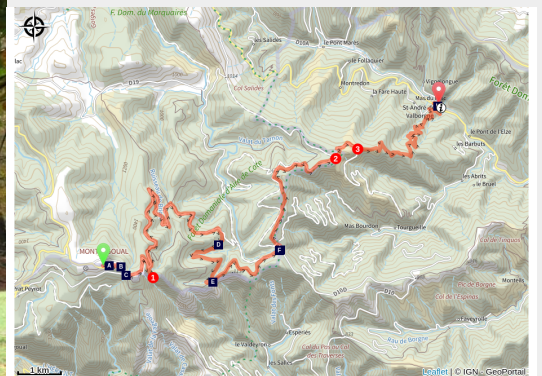


# MTB 12 - The ridges of the Vallée Borgne - graded red

Aigoual - Val-d'Aigoual



Forêt de hêtres de l'Aigoual (Béatrice Galzin)



## Useful information

Practice : Bike

Duration : 2 h 45

Length : 24.3 km

Trek ascent : 334 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Roaming

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

*“De serres en valats”, or from ridge to valley, such is the leitmotiv of this superb endurance circuit, which takes you from the summit of mont Aigoual to the floor of the vallée Borgne to discover the Cévennes! Please take into account the technicality and duration of this circuit.*

# Trek

**Departure** : Summit of mont Aigoual

**Arrival** : St-André de Valborgne

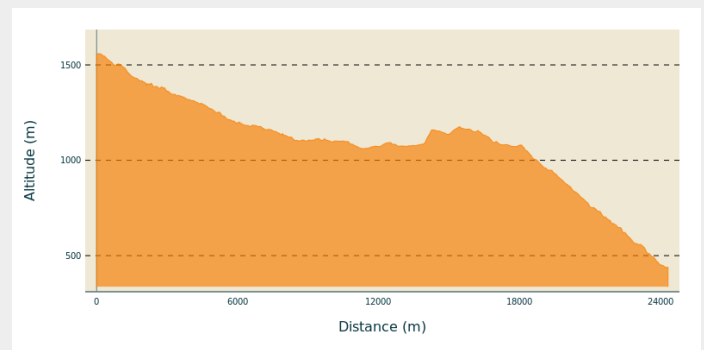
**Markings** : 🚵 Red mountain-bike

**Cities** : 1. Val-d'Aigoual

2. Bassurels

3. Saint-André-de-Valborgne

## Altimetric profile



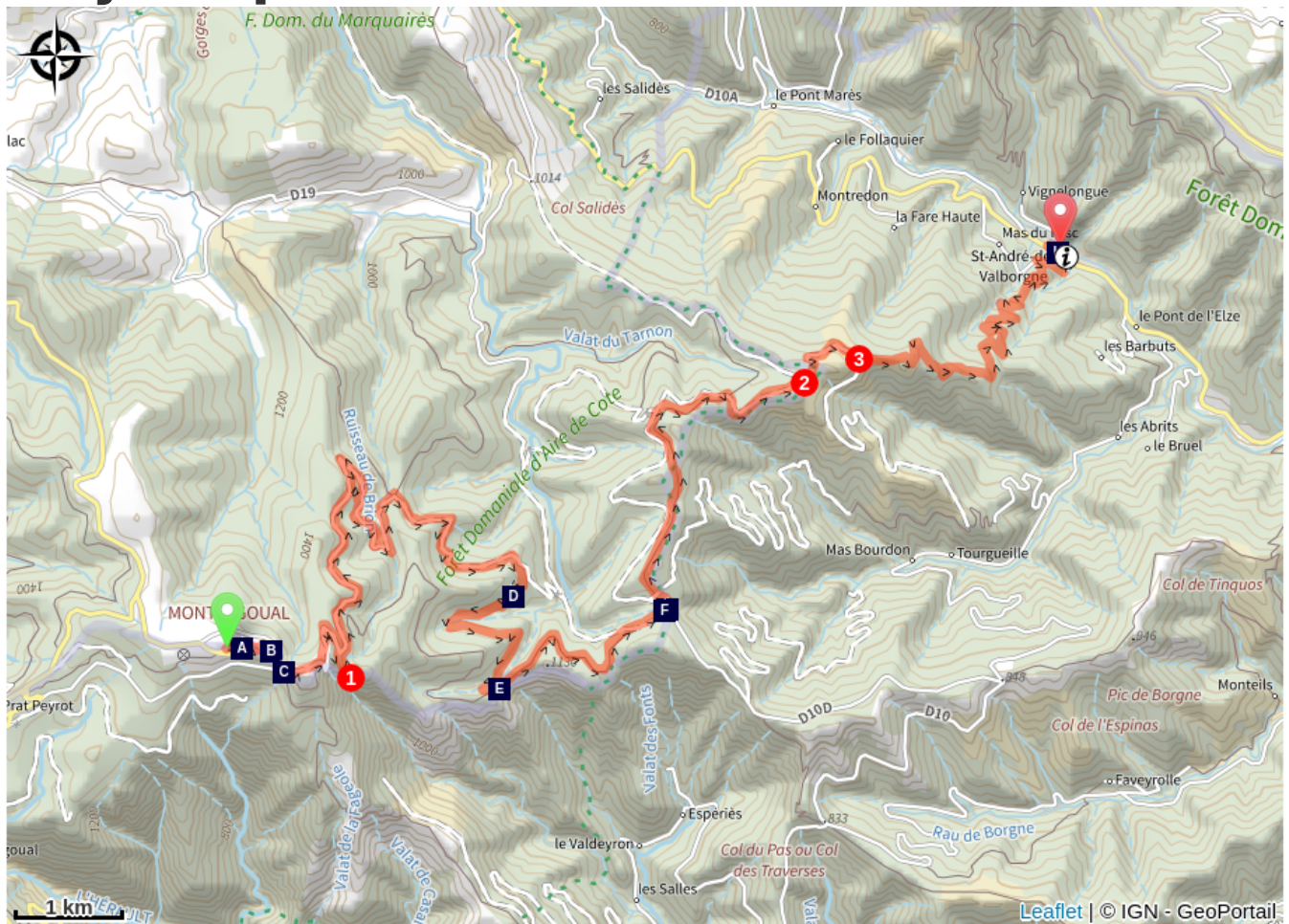
Min elevation 437 m Max elevation 1559 m

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 observatory, head due east, then towards ***“Combe de Lambert”*** (1) follow ***“Col de l'Estrade”***, ***“Côte 1100”*** and ***“Coulet”***. Continue on level ground to ***“Aire de Côte”***. Take the left just before the gîte (2) towards ***“Sestrière”***, then follow the ridge to ***“Col Salidès”*** (3). Descend immediately on the right on a wide track which becomes a stony path. At ***“La Fare”***, technical descent (4) on the left before you cross the stream, then a technical climb to the other side. Further on along the track, do not miss the fork to the left (5) through the woods to join up with the road and then continue on the right to ***“St-André de Valborgne”***.

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...



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| The meteorological observatory (A)       | Short-grass prairies and heath on the summit of Mont Aigoual (B) |
| The evolution of plant life (C)          | Reforestation (D)  |
| Le Coulet (E)                            | A Resistance refuge (F)  |
| Aire de Côte (G)                         | One spring, five fountains (H)                                   |
| The village of St André de Valborgne (I) |  |



# 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

NB: The start and finish are not in the same place. Make sure you organise return transport for yourself.

Before committing yourself to a circuit, ensure that it is suitable for your activity level and ability. You must wear a helmet. Protective equipment is recommended. Respect other road users and stay in control of your speed and trajectory.

NB: This trail is also used by horse riders. Make sure your equipment is appropriate for the day's weather conditions. Remember that the weather changes quickly in the mountains. Take enough water. Please close all gates and barriers behind you. No off-roading.

Caution: patous (livestock guard dogs) at the summit and at Col Salidès pass! Seek advice on how to behave near these dogs from tourist offices and National Park information centres.

## How to come ?

### Transports

liO is the regional public transport service of the Occitanie/ Pyrénées – Méditerranée region. It facilitates everyone's movements by prioritising public transport. For more information, call 08 10 33 42 73 or go to [www.laregion.fr](http://www.laregion.fr)

### Access

From St-André de Valborgne, take the D907 towards Florac for 8km, then the D19 to Cabrillac. In Cabrillac, take the D18 on the left to mont Aigoual summit - Parking.

### Advised parking

Summit of mont Aigoual.

## **Information desks**

### **Tourism & national parc'house**

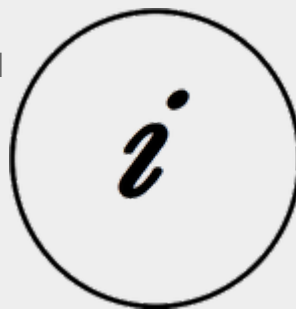
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

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)



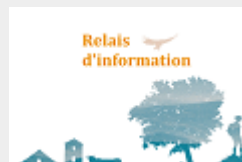
### **Tourism office Mont Aigoual Causses Cévennes, Saint-André-de-Valborgne**

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.causses-aigoual-cevennes.fr/>



Parc national des Cévennes

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



Pôle Nature Aigoual

# On your path...

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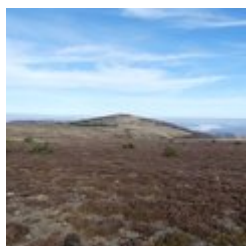


## The meteorological observatory (A)

Inaugurated in 1824, the meteorological observatory was built on the initiative of Georges Fabre, one of the pioneers of the reforestation of Mont Aigoual. His work with the botanist Charles Flahault enabled the creation of the arboretum of L'Hort de Dieu. The first meteorological data were gathered by agents from the French National Water and Forestry Commission. Since 1943, the observatory has been managed by the National Meteorological Office. It is France's last mountain weather station that is inhabited year-round.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas

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## Short-grass prairies and heath on the summit of Mont Aigoual (B)

Here, only species with a short reproductive cycle can settle due to the frequently glacial climate. The heath has been invaded by heather and mountain pine. This zone is barely wooded due to the violent winds and is comparable to subalpine vegetation, consisting of short-grass prairies and heather and blueberry moor. It is sometimes called pseudo-alpine.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas

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## The evolution of plant life (C)

At the pass stands a schist menhir (standing stone). To the north, in Trépaloup ravine, hewn flint implements bear witness to a human presence in the region since prehistoric times. Palynological analyses (studies of pollen fossilised in peatbogs) have allowed scientists to piece together the plant life on Mont Aigoual from 8,000 to 5,000 BC. Pine predominated, accompanied by birch and hazelnut. Then pine populations gradually diminished. The damp climate warmed up, favouring the spread of oak and hazelnut. Finally, the increased damp and cloud cover at altitude allowed fir and beech to develop. From the end of the first century BC, the substantial percentage of grasses shows that forest had receded in favour of pasture and prairies. This was the start of the great deforestation.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



## Reforestation (D)

In 1875, the French State initiated a reforestation policy. It bought up existing beech forests and bare parcels. This was the case of Aire-de-Côte and the land belonging to it. To settle poor soils, foresters planted a pioneering species: the dwarf mountain or bog pine. On more fertile soils, nobler species were planted: fir, spruce and larch. Commercial exploitation began in 1938, when the local mines bought the first harvests to shore up mine tunnels. The original reforested areas were thinned out and firs planted beneath the pines. It is said that in a bedroom at Aire-de-Côte, there was a heap of coniferous tree seeds at least one metre high. They were sown onto the snow, which dragged them into the soil as it melted.

Attribution : Arnaud.Bouissou



## Le Coulet (E)

At Le Coulet (meaning little pass), views open up onto the Mediterranean side, towards Valleraugue. The viewpoint lies on the watershed. Up to this point, the route followed the valley of the Bédil, a brook with a gentle, non-torrential gradient, whose waters flow into the Atlantic. Here, you discover the valley of the Clarou (a tributary of the Hérault), with its typically Mediterranean, i.e. more abrupt, profile. To the south, schist outcrops break through the slopes; to the north, the slopes are entirely wooded.

Attribution : Olivier.Prohin



## A Resistance refuge (F)

In early 1943, the first Resistance group of the Cévennes was formed. The refuge of the Aire-de-côte group was one of the wooden shacks used for forestry works, whose roof was camouflaged using branches. On 10 July 1943, a message warned the post office in Rousses that a German attack was imminent. The Resistance was informed – but a storm delayed the group's departure. The Germans arrived... The forester was arrested as an accomplice, accused of being in radio contact with London. Indeed, the Aire-de-côte Resistance listened to a crystal radio set built by the two Jews who were hiding there.

Attribution : Guy.Grégoire

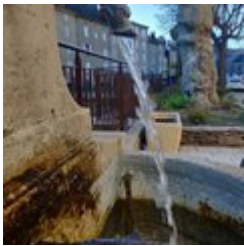


## Aire de Côte (G)

Aire-de-Côte farm was purchased by the French State in 1862, during the period of reforestation. Before the farm became a stopover gîte, it was for a long time the residence of the local forester and his family. In the first half of the 20th century, Aire-de-Côte was very different. To the north, behind the house, was the draille (drovers' road), lined by upright stones and 40 to 50 metres wide. Thousands of transhumant animals passed every year on their way to or from summer pastures. The transhumant animals stopped there at lunchtime, then continued on towards Mont Aigoual.

Attribution : Stephan.Corporan

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## One spring, five fountains (H)

This fountain is one of Saint-André's five public fountains, all of which are supplied by the same spring (its water is thus the same as in the Fontaine du Griffon). Before houses were connected to mains water, there were many more fountains on this side of the quay.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

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## The village of St André de Valborgne (I)

As you stroll along the quay above the river, you can still see the handsome bourgeois houses dating from the silk boom. If you look around, former spinning mills and industrial buildings dedicated to silk farming can still be seen in the landscape. A little lower down, opposite the 16th century château, you can listen to

Bernadette Lafont on the Camisard saga in and after 1702. As you reach the square again, quench your thirst at the fountain and have a look inside the Romanesque church (12th century).

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin