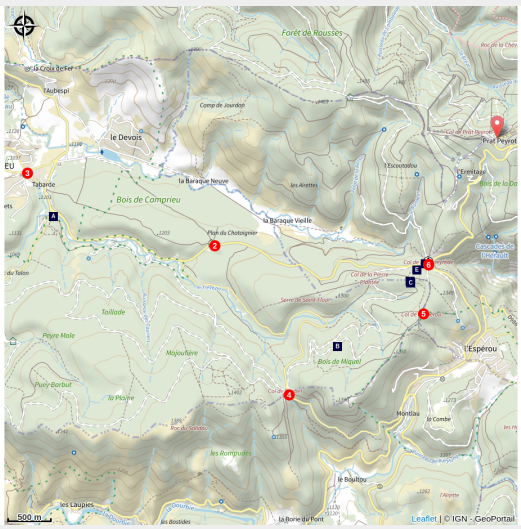
MTB 15 - The Aigoual forest– graded red

Causses Gorges - Meyrueis

Le Trévezel (Béatrice Galzin)



A handsome mix of descents, single-track trails and forest tracks: a comprehensive programme in the beautiful forest atmosphere of the Aigoual massif, around the watershed and the Maison de l'Aigoual.

Useful information

Practice : Bike

Duration : 2 h 20

Length : 17.7 km

Trek ascent : 456 m

Difficulty : Difficult

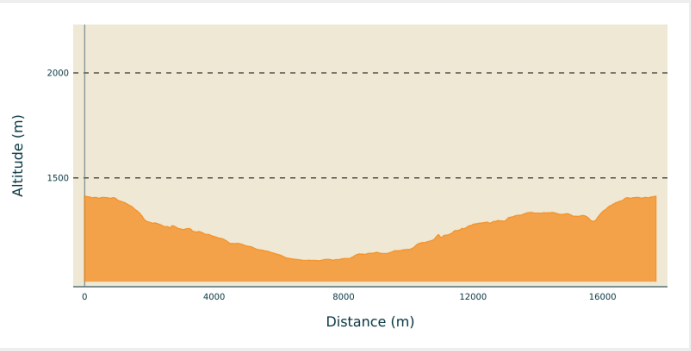
Type : Loop

Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, Architecture and village, Forest, Water and geology

Trek

Departure : Prat Peyrot
Arrival : Prat Peyrot
Markings : mountain-bike
Cities : 1. Meyrueis
2. Val-d'Aigoual
3. Saint-Sauveur-Camprieu
4. Dourbies

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1106 m Max elevation 1413 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 from "***Station de Prat Peyrot***", head to "***Col de la Serreyrède***" via "***Le Fangas***".
1) At the pass (col), go downhill on the right on a road after the Maison de l'Aigoual for several metres and then turn right, towards "***Plan du Châtaignier***" via "***Sous St Flour***".
2) At ***“Plan du Châtaignier”*** turn right after the car park towards "***Le plan d'eau***", and continue on the road towards "***Route du Devois***", "***Le Cros***".
3) Head towards ***“Maison du bois”*** via "***Tabarde***", then follow ***“Tailladette”***, "***Taillade***", "***Bois de l'Agre***" to reach "***Le Col de Faubel***".
4) At ***“Le Col de Faubel”***, cross the road, take the track towards "***La Pépinière***" and turn right towards "***Col de l'Espérou***" via "***Montlau***".
5) At "***Col de l’Espérou***", head towards "***Col de la Serreyrède***" via "***Le Trevezel***".
6) At ***“Col de la Serreyrède”***, go back up to ***“Station de Prat Peyrot”*** via ***“Le Fangas”*** on the old drovers’ road.

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.
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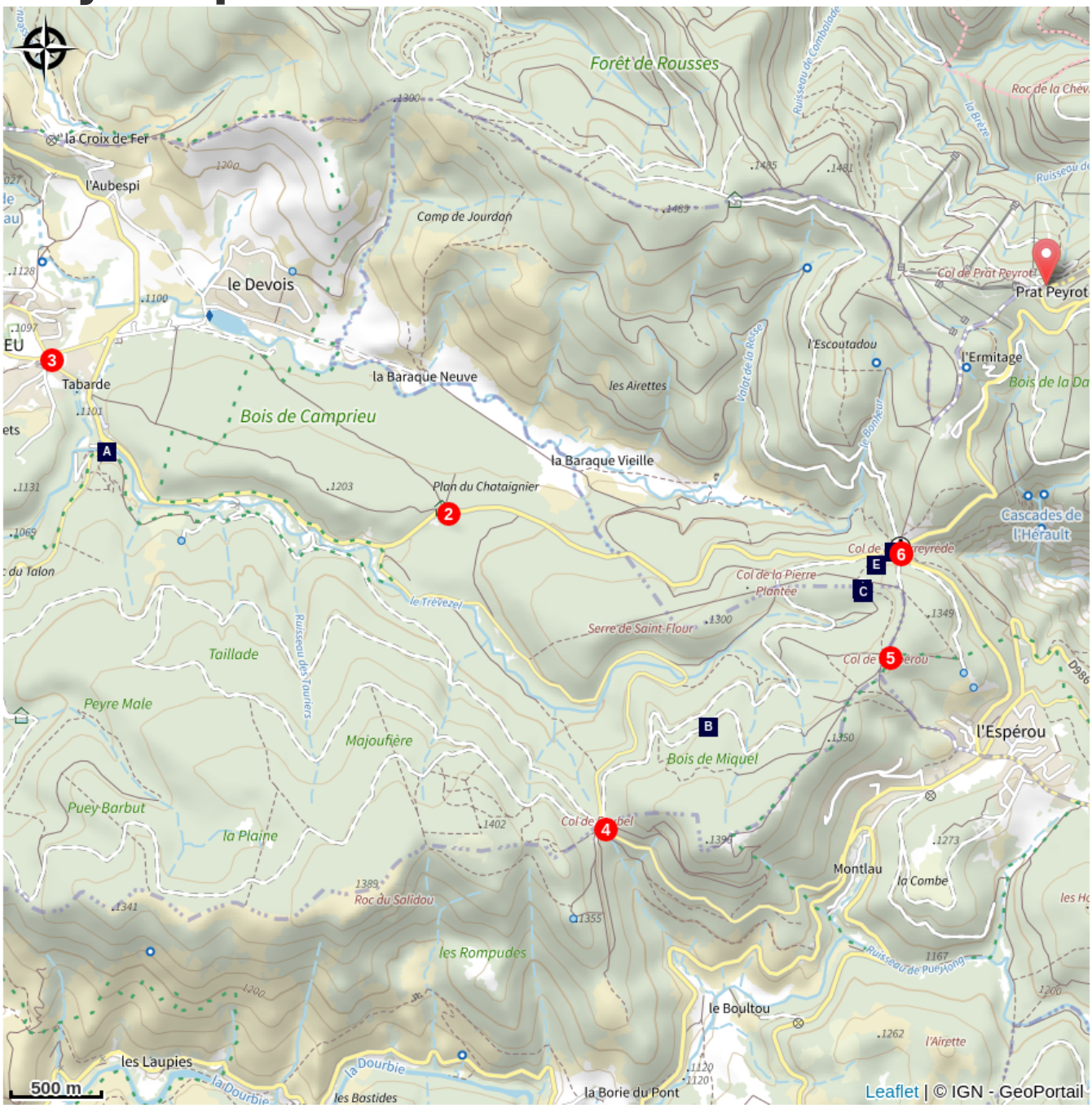
On your path...



The Mont Aigoual forest (A)
Irregular forest (C)
From beech copse to mature plantation (E)
La Serreyrède (G)
The Aigoual forest (B)
Productive forest (D)
The association "Terres d'Aigoual" (F)

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 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 circuit 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) on the summit of mont Aigoual! 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

Access

From Meyrueis or L'Espérou, take the D986 towards St-Sauveur-Camprieu, then to the col de la Serreyrède. At the col de la Serreyrède pass, turn left towards mont Aigoual on the D 269. Park at the car park in Prat-Peyrot.

Advised parking

Prat Peyrot

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

office-du-tourisme-causse@wanadoo.fr
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 Causses Aigoual Cévennes Terres Solidaires

http://www.caussesaigoualcevennes.fr/

Parc national des Cévennes

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

Pôle Nature Aigoual

On your path...

The Mont Aigoual forest (A)

“Aigoual, Forêt d’Exception”
The French Forestry Office, which manages state forests, launched a programme in 2013 called “Aigoual, Forêt d’Exception” (Aigoual: An Exceptional Forest) with the aim of highlighting the massif’s natural and cultural heritage. The Forestry Office thus tries to foreground the different aspects of its multi-facetted management: production, protection and receiving visitors. One key aspect of this approach, which complements other initiatives by local actors, is to improve visitors’ experience in the forest.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin

The Aigoual forest (B)

In the 19th century, Mont Aigoual was almost totally bare of trees. Intensive use of the forest and the pressure of transhumant grazing together with the harsh local climate caused devastating floods. The rich vegetation of the grazing grounds was replaced by heather pastures and many gullies. In the valleys huddling at the foot of Mont Aigoual, terrible floods pushing tons of stones downstream carried off roads and pastureland. In response, a reforestation programme was launched in the second half of the 19th century, which created the forest you see today. Nowadays, the forested Aigoual massif protects the valleys while at the same time providing a space for economic production, biodiversity and leisure.

Attribution : © Olivier Prohin

Irregular forest (C)

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.

Productive forest (D)

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.

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.

The association "Terres d'Aigoual" (F)

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

La Serreyrède (G)

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