

# Grisou the Mule

Vallées cévenoles - Saint-André-de-Lancize



Architecture Cévenole (nathalie.thomas)



*Follow in the steps of Grisou, a sure-footed, one-eyed mule which criss-crossed the paths of this valley for 20 years!*

*You will walk on old paths and explore the landscape cleverly fashioned by humans.*

Emboîtez le pas de Grisou, mulet borgne aux sabots sûrs qui sillonna pendant 20 ans les sentiers de cette vallée !

Parcourez d'anciens chemins et découvrez des paysages façonnés par l'homme par le biais, notamment, d'aménagements bien étudiés.

## Useful information

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Practice : Hiking on foot

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Duration : 4 h

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Length : 10.4 km

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Trek ascent : 594 m

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Difficulty : Medium

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Type : Loop

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Themes : History and culture

# Trek

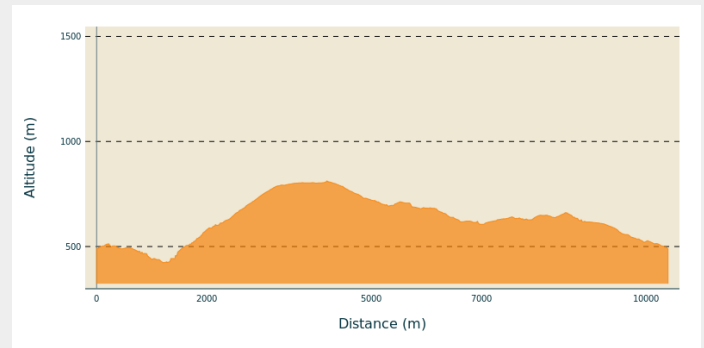
**Departure** : D 984 between Saint-André de Lancize and Saint-Germain de Calberte

**Arrival** : D 984 between Saint-André de Lancize and Saint-Germain de Calberte

**Markings** :  Yellow waymarks

**Cities** : 1. Saint-André-de-Lancize  
2. Saint-Hilaire-de-Lavit

## Altimetric profile

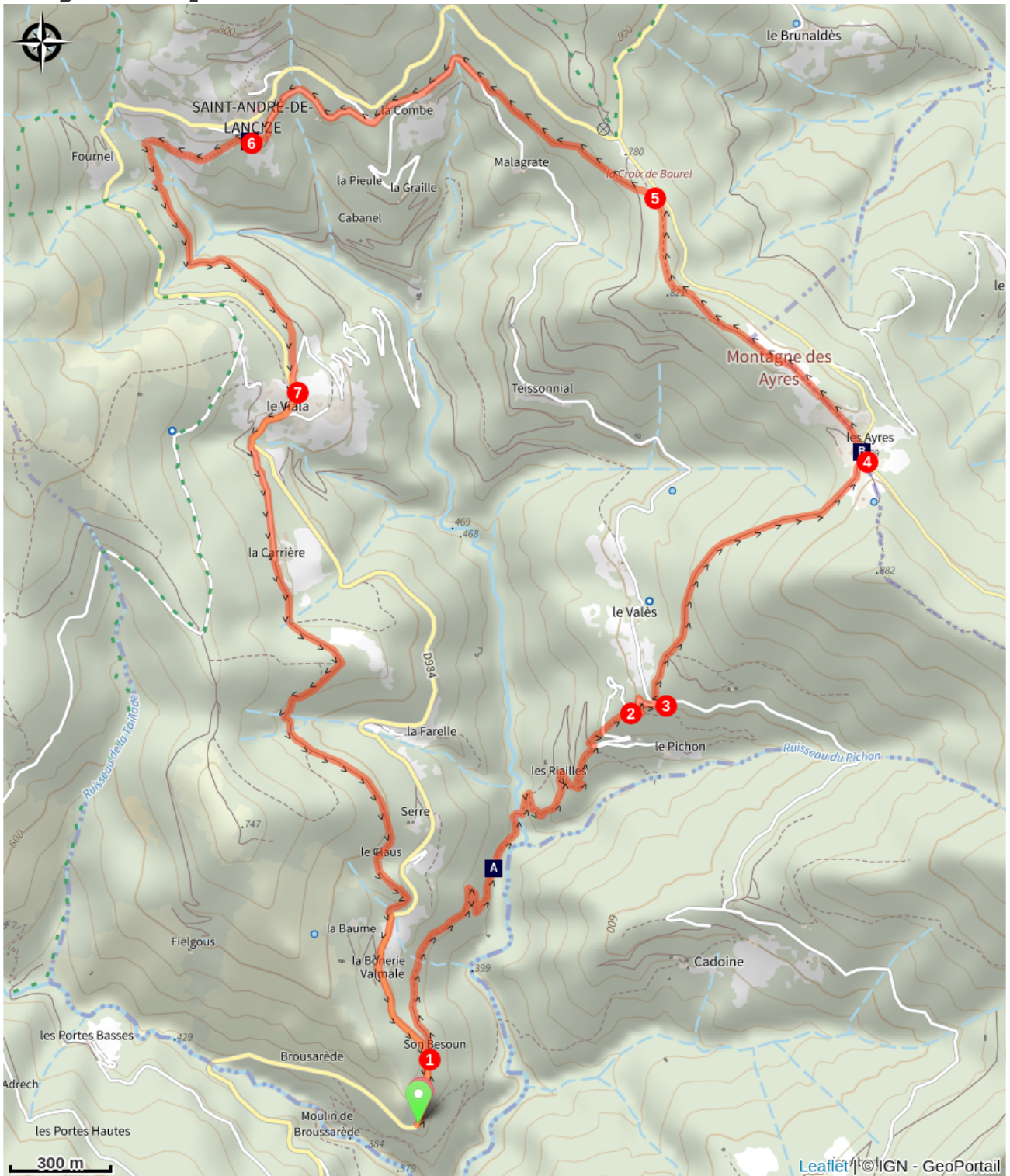


Min elevation 423 m Max elevation 812 m

Walk uphill alongside the road for 260 m.

- 1) Take the path on the right downhill to the river. Cross the bridge and go back up on a path with hairpin bends, which crosses a track three times.
- 2) After the chestnut orchard, take the track on the right to the road.
- 3) Cross the road and take the path which climbs above Le Valès to Les Ayres.
- 4) Turn left onto the D 54 to go through the village and, by the big chestnut trees, take the track on the left (the former draille or drovers' road) to the Croix de Bourrel.
- 5) Shortly before the Croix de Bourrel, take the path on the left to join the road. Turn right onto the road. At the first intersection, turn right; at the second, turn left to walk through the hamlet of Saint-André de Lancize.
- 6) In the lower hamlet, take the grassy path through the gardens and meadows, then cross a ford, "le Gourg de la Vache". Continue on this path, cross a second ford, and walk uphill to join the road.
- 7) Turn left onto the road and, as you leave Le Viala, take on your right the small road that goes uphill to the hamlet of La Carrière. Go past the houses, stay on the track, join up again with the D 984 to reach Valmale. Go downhill on the road and take the track below the road, on the left, to return to your car.

# On your path...



🌲 Nature tamed (A)

🏰 Les Ayres (B)

🏰 Saint-André in the old days (C)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

**NB. This walk is not recommended in wet weather** (slippery rock and fords). 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

From the Col de Jalcreste pass on the N 106, towards St-André de Lancize on the D 984, then towards St-Germain de Calberte. From when you leave Valmale, drive another 500 m lower down to a bend where you park and start (or else drive 3 km and park by the side of the road, above Saint-Germain de Calberte).

### Advised parking

On the side of the D 984, 500 m from the hamlet of Valmale, direction St-Germain

## Information desks

### Office de tourisme Des Cévennes au mont Lozère

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

[info@cevennes-montlozere.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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...

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## 🌲 Nature tamed (A)

On this path, you see the determination of the inhabitants of the Cévennes to tame the rebellious environment: here, an arch bridge crosses a river whose water has carved a steep-sided valley, creating “cauldrons”; there, one whole side of the path has been dug out of the rock to cross from one slope to the other; further on, bancelles (low walls) have been built to hold back the soil in which the chestnut trees were planted. Locals even rerouted the water to irrigate their crops and protect themselves from the run-off of powerful rains. This is a well organised environment: the water collected at the spring is stored in basins before being redistributed via a network of béals (irrigation channels). The vegetable plots are on terraces closest to the house. A little further away are the irrigated fields, fruit trees, mulberry trees and beehives. The chestnut orchard surrounds the crop land. On the terraces, gutters known as trincats allow water to run off. Stone thresholds have been built across the rivers to regulate the flow and to regulate any soil washed away by the water.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas

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## 🌲 Les Ayres (B)

Through the ages, the location of Les Ayres on the draille (drovers' road) brought merchants, mule drivers and shepherds and made the hamlet a well-known spot for loues (hiring fairs), where day labourers – shepherds, horsemen, threshers – came to find work.

"There were three loues, the first on the Sunday after 29 September, on Saint-Michael's, the big fair a week later and the third the following week (...)"

Labourers hired themselves out for various jobs: silkworm or chestnut harvesting, threshing wheat or picking grapes, guarding and accompanying sheep flocks on the summer pastures... There was no work contract when employer and employee reached agreement. The day labourer left a personal belonging with his employee as a security.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



## 🏠 Saint-André in the old days (C)

"In Saint-André, we had sheep, goats, a horse and pigs, but the farm did not bring in enough money. In the summer I went up to Le Pont de Montvert to make hay, and in the autumn I worked on the grape harvest. Locals also went down the mountains to do the strawberry season, the asparagus season and the melon season. There was a man from St-Germain, who took his scythe and worked cutting grass, moving higher and higher into the mountains: to above Jalcreste and then all the way to Le Pont-de-Montvert. Here, the hay was ready for cutting in May, in Le Pont at the end of June".

Between Saint-André and Le Viala, you cross the Gourg de la Vache, so called ever since a cow fell in and drowned.

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