

# The stagecoach

Aigoual - Peyrolles



Vue sur le Liron (Nathalie Thomas)



*This walk takes you to the historical heart of the Cévennes: a rural life as harsh as it was intense, which forged a powerful spirit of resistance. Here, place names, castle, manor house, schist buildings all tell of the men and women who valiantly defended their freedom of worship.*

## Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 4 h 30

Length : 14.3 km

Trek ascent : 727 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Architecture and village, History and culture, Water and geology, Transports en commun

# Trek

**Departure** : La Planque bend in the road – Peyrolles

**Arrival** : La Planque bend in the road – Peyrolles

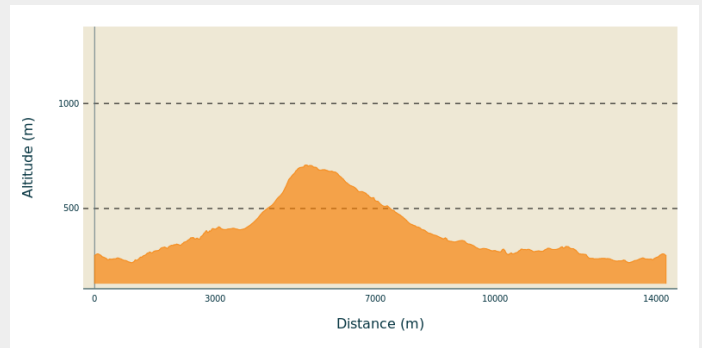
**Markings** :  Yellow waymarks

**Cities** : 1. Peyrolles

2. Soudorgues

3. L'Estréchure

## Altimetric profile



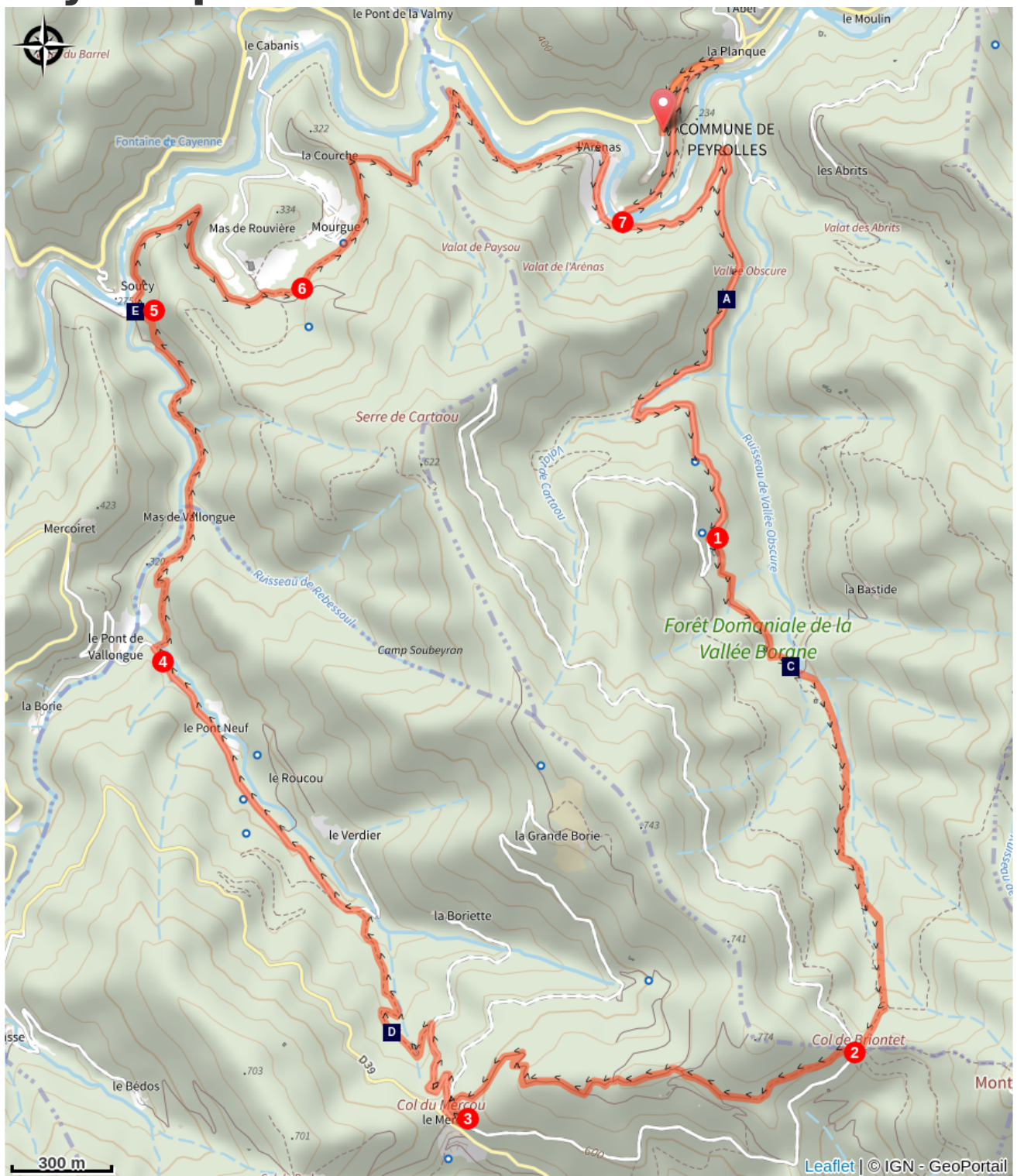
Min elevation 242 m Max elevation 707 m

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

Starting from the car park, turn right onto the D road and, 200m later, go downhill on the left on the small road towards "***Col du Briontet***" via "***Pont de L'Arénas***", "***Vallée Obscure***" and "***Château de vallée obscure***".

1. At "***Château de vallée obscure***" take the path on the right and, in the first hairpin bend, take the path that climbs straight ahead to "***col du Briontet***".
2. At "***col du Briontet***", go towards "***Col du Mercou***" on a wooded path on your right, which goes uphill between two forestry tracks.
3. At "***col du Mercou***", take the path on your right towards "***Soucy***". The path first follows a track/road for 200m, then forks left onto a path to join a road that goes downhill to "***Pont Neuf***" and "***Pont de Vallongue***".
4. Before the first house in Pont de Vallongue, take the path on your right which makes for the brook; cross the brook.
5. After two fords, you arrive in "***Soucy***". NB. Stay on the path!
6. At the waterway, turn right, go past the front of the "***Château de Bussas***", and continue to "***L'Arénas***" and then "***Pont de l'Arénas***".
7. At "***Pont de l'Arénas***", turn left to "***La Planque***" to return to the D road and your car park.

# On your path...



-  Hydraulic heritage (A)
-  Vital arteries (C)
-  Soucy bridge and the D20 road (E)
-  Precious reserves (B)
-  Cobbled paths and retaining walls (D)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

**Caution! Heavy rainfall will make crossing the ford at Pont de Vallongue impossible.**

Before committing yourself to a circuit, ensure that it is suitable for your activity level and ability. Remember that the weather changes quickly in the mountains. Take enough water.

## **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, go to <https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/> (not during school holidays)

### Access

From St-Jean du Gard, towards St-André de Valborgne on the D 907, car park "La Planque" after 800m, after the bus shelter on your left.

### Advised parking

La Planque bend in the road

## 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 Causse 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 Causse Aigoual Cévennes Terres Solidaires

<http://www.causse-aigoual-cevennes.fr/>



Parc national des Cévennes

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

# On your path...

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## ① Hydraulic heritage (A)

In the valley of Valescure, an integration project for the unemployed and socially disadvantaged restored over 450 hydraulic engineering structures, supervised by various institutional and scientific partners. This project helps you understand the importance of hydraulic dams in the Cévennes: tancats (small thresholds or dams built across the waterway to recover any sediment carried by rainwater runoff), paissières (thresholds, little dams), béals (irrigation channels), trancats (rainwater drains carved into the rock or constructed uphill of buildings to channel rainwater and protect the buildings).

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin

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## ② Precious reserves (B)

To store water, especially during dry periods, locals have dug and built a great number of gorgas. These reservoirs supplied gardens, fields and mills. They were fed by springs or streams, whose water was diverted by a paissière and then transported by a besal (béal).

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## ③ Vital arteries (C)

Besals or béals are channels that have been built to carry and distribute water where it is needed: plots of cultivated land, gardens, mills, etc. They were usually created and maintained collectively. The distribution of water to the various users was controlled by small sluice gates (esclafidors). These were opened and closed at precise times of day, which were decided according to customary law - and could be subject to disputes and legal proceedings.



## 🏰 Cobbled paths and retaining walls (D)

Under your feet, you will see traces of all this old built road heritage on the paths. Cobblestones make roads more comfortable and suitable for vehicles.

The retaining walls are regular and, in places, built on very steep areas or carved into the rock. The traces left by humanity are impressive.

After the Château de Bussas, you will see piled-up tyres by the side of the path. There is also a thick cable. The taut-cable system made it possible to transport materials and wood all the way to the road. When the load arrived, it had sometimes picked up too much speed because of its weight. The pile of tyres was there to stop it.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin

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## 🏰 Soucy bridge and the D20 road (E)

The magnificent stone bridge that straddles the Gardon river was built in July 1872.

On 14 June 1872, François Pujol requested permission to build a submersible bridge over the Gardon de St- André, between the D 20 and the new RN 107, in Les Soucis in the municipality of St-Martin de Corconac.

The road that we take today between Soucy bridge and L'Arénas was the only road on the valley floor. It was disused in 1873 when the new RN 107 (now the RN 907) was built on the slope opposite. Try to find the distance marker, which is on the edge of the path.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas