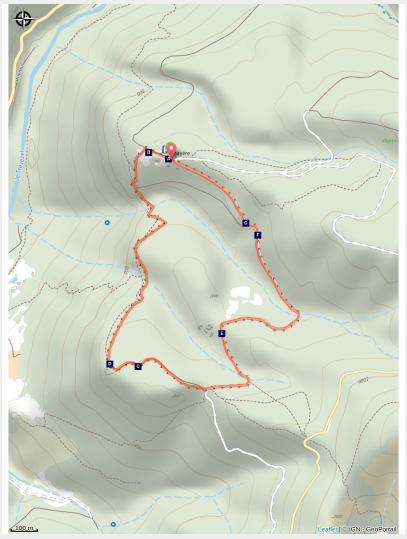
The Causse de Canayère plateau

Aigoual

Trèves (© M. Fournier)



The small plateau known as the Causse de Canayère offers you a fabulous journey through time: both through geological time and, much closer to us, from the time of the first humans to today.

This path between limestone and schist bedrock helps you to imagine the folds, collapses and faults that have affected this region in geological time. You walk past fault lines, along which the land has sunk by several hundred metres, and overlook a river that has been carving out its gorge for almost three million years. The path's various stopping places also showcase humanity's influence on the environment and landscape since prehistoric times.

Useful information

Practice : Discovery trails

Duration : 2 h

Length : 3.3 km

Trek ascent : 148 m

Difficulty : Very easy

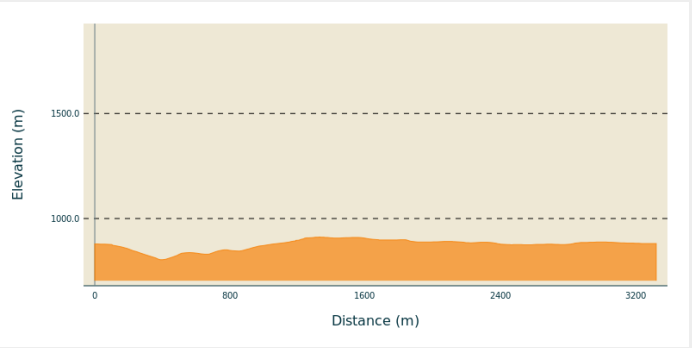
Type : Loop

Themes : Water and geology

Trek

Departure : Foresters’ house at Canayère
Arrival : Foresters’ house at Canayère
Markings : Yellow waymarks
Cities : 1. Trèves

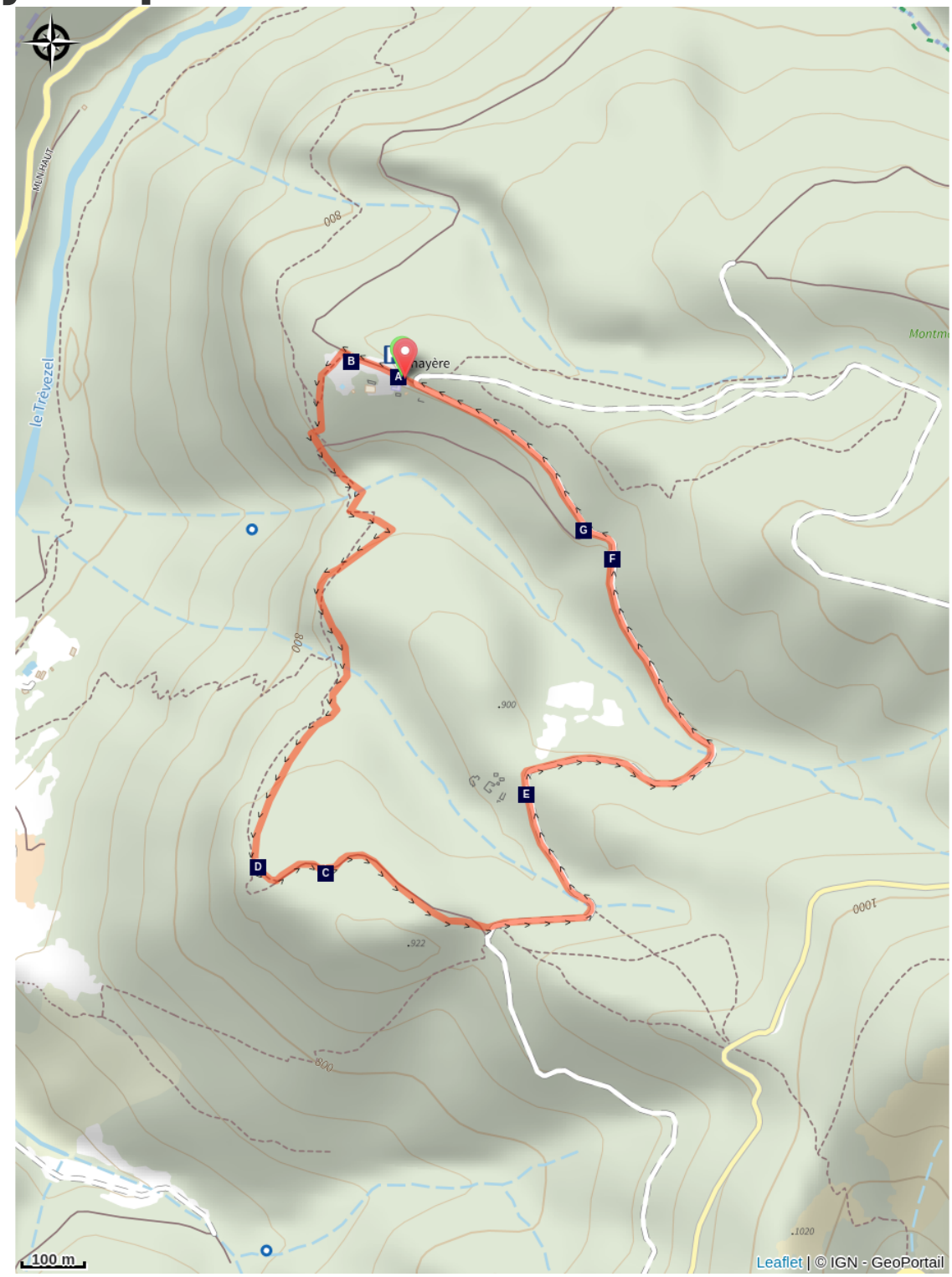
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 804 m Max elevation 912 m

Accessible on foot directly from the village of Trèves via Le Villaret hamlet (there and back 4km, elevation gain 330m).

On your path...



Canayère (A)

A recent forest (B)

Typical grasslands on limestone soil (C)

Open-sky geology (D)

The hamlet of Espruniers (E)

The schist/limestone contact zone (F)

Calcifugous vegetation (G)

All useful information

Advices

This path has rocky and vertiginous sections. For your own safety, you must stay on the waymarked path.

How to come ?

Transports

Arrêt: "Trèves"
Lio ligne 108 Trèves Aigoual Le Vigan.

www.lio.laregion.fr

Access

From Trèves, D 47 and D 151 to the Col de la Pierre Plantée pass, then D 710 at the Col des Rhodes pass.

Advised parking

Car park at the maison forestière (foresters' house).

Information desks

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

maisondelaigoual@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)

Source

Office national des Forêts

http://www.onf.fr/

On your path...

Canayère (A)

A former farm turned forester's house in 1880. In the early days of the Mont Aiguoal reforestation, forestry officers lived here year-round during their missions. Forestry workers working on the replanting were allowed to use the outbuildings. Later, only one official resided here. Since 1967, no official has permanently lived here. (B. Mathieu)

Attribution : nathalie.thomas

A recent forest (B)

The stands that were planted during the large reforestation programmes of the late 19th century onwards consist of black pines, a rustic species that is well-adapted to dry limestone soils. Underground, the Causses plateaux are characterised by networks of tunnels and cavities that have been created by water movement over millions of years. Subterranean rivers are blocked by the impermeable layers of the valley floor and flow into the Trévezel instead.

Attribution : © Sud Cévennes

Typical grasslands on limestone soil (C)

This small area of grassland is one of the rare open spaces on the Causse de Canayère. It is of interest for the preservation of certain flower species, especially the pasqueflower and several varieties of orchid. To counteract the natural progression towards more closed environments, this site is maintained by regular mowing.

Attribution : © Olivier Prohin

Open-sky geology (D)

The granite and schist (slate) that constitute the bedrock of the Cévennes and Causses were created in the Paleozoic. The bedrock was then flattened by erosion and covered by the sea, leading to limestone deposits. On the reliefs, erosion has eliminated the sedimentary top layer while in zones of subsidence, such as the Causses, the limestone deposits remained in place. Since then, waterways have cut ever deeper into the limestone, and continue to do so today.

Attribution : © Valère Marsaudon

The hamlet of Espruniers (E)

This hamlet, which consisted of a sizeable grouping of houses, was inhabited until about 1930. You have stopped on what was probably the threshing floor for grains.

Attribution : © Fonds Flahault

The schist/limestone contact zone (F)

Here, the layers of the schist outcrops are almost vertical in places. This contact between Causses and Cévennes, between the primary bedrock and the limestone layers, is due to a geological fault created by the various movements and constraints that have affected the Earth’s crust. In this zone, the schist bedrock has been pushed upwards by several hundred metres along the fault line compared to the limestone plateau, although the latter is less old.

Attribution : © Yves Maccagno

Calcifugous vegetation (G)

This section of the path in the schist zone showcases calcifugous (“limestone-avoiding”) vegetation, which only grows on acid soils (schist or granite): especially chestnut trees, ferns, heather and broom.

Attribution : © Valère Marsaudon