

La Chadenède, The Monks

Causses Gorges - Gorges du Tarn Causses



Les monolithes des Moines. (© OTGCC nc)



The path climbs steeply inside a mini cirque to the feet of the monoliths known as The Monks. These three rocks bear witness to the sinking of the Tarn river millions of years ago. There are superb views onto the valley and the villages that stretch along the Tarn or above it, like Montbrun.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 3 h

Length : 6.2 km

Trek ascent : 492 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Loop

Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, Architecture and village, History and culture

Trek

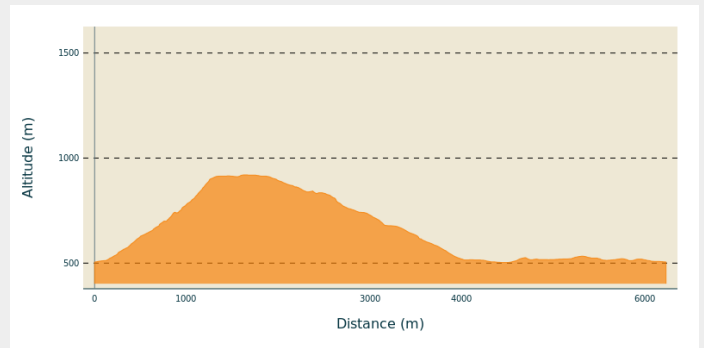
Departure : La Chadenède car park

Arrival : La Chadenède car park

Markings :  Yellow waymarks

Cities : 1. Gorges du Tarn Causses

Altimetric profile





Min elevation 502 m Max elevation 920 m



From the small car park, take the lane that goes uphill between the houses. The path starts up the slope, passes in front of a cistern and continues to a junction.

1. Take, on the left, the steep climb until it cuts across a small ravine. Continue up the rather vertiginous steps until you reach a flat area at the foot of the monoliths. The path continues uphill in hairpin bends through the beech forest, until it comes out on the Causse plateau.
2. As you arrive on the plateau, turn left and follow the faint track that runs along the edge of the Causse. Go slightly downhill to a basin to reach an intersection with a more marked path.
3. Turn left onto this built track (low walls and, in places, stone slabs) and follow it downhill onto the Montbrun road.
4. Turn left onto the road and walk to the intersection before Montbrun bridge.
5. At the bridge, continue straight ahead towards the hamlet of La Chadenède and your departure point.

On your path...



-  Montbrun: a perched village (A)
-  The Château de Charbonnières (C)

-  A recovery farm (B)
-  Not always a docile river! (D)

All useful information

Advices

!/\ Some uphill sections are tricky: vertiginous and very steep. 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

On the D 907 bis, between Ispagnac and Blajoux, turn off towards La Chadenède.

Advised parking

Car park as you enter the hamlet of La Chadenède (coming from Montbrun bridge).

Information desks

Tourism'house and national Parc at Florac

Place de l'ancienne gare, N106, 48400
Florac-trois-rivières

info@cevennes-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 66 45 01 14

<https://www.cevennes-gorges-du-tarn.com>



Source



CC Gorges Causses Cévennes

<https://www.gorgescaussescevennes.fr/>



Parc national des Cévennes

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

On your path...



🌲 Montbrun: a perched village (A)

Many villages showcase the conditions that led to their establishment. For Montbrun, it was the defensive value of the site. But was that really the only reason? In a gorge, where cultivatable land is often in short supply, building the village on a rock allowed villagers to save on precious farmland. While the slopes of the Causses are green today, in the 18th and 19th centuries they were stripped relatively bare. The small villages were true oases. Human hands have shaped, laid out and designed this landscape. They have optimised the space, cultivating the tiniest patch of land right up to the feet of the Cause cliffs.

Attribution : © OTGCC nc



A recovery farm (B)

Unlike the Causses plateaux, the Tarn valley experienced strong agricultural decline. To revitalise the area, the municipality of Montbrun launched a recovery farm in 2008. The most time-consuming aspect was bringing together the different owners' parcels by creating a pastureland association. In 2010 a couple arrived to run the organic market garden and livestock farm... It's almost a return to the days when the flood plain was cultivated by the inhabitants of Montbrun. Don't miss the small farmers' market every Sunday morning in July and August.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



The Château de Charbonnières (C)

In a bend of the Tarn downstream from the village of Montbrun stands the Château de Charbonnières. While the former castle has lost some of its defensive elements, it has nevertheless preserved a knightly character and traces of many historical episodes of the Tarn valley. It is first recorded in the 13th century. Its defensive role was tightly linked to a whole “fortified system” downstream of Ispagnac, which consisted of Quézac, Javillet, La Roche, Rocheblave, Montbrun, Castelbouc, Prades and Sainte-Enimie.

The château has three rectangular buildings arranged in a horseshoe shape around an internal courtyard. The facade overlooking the Tarn has a square tower that dominates the river. Access to the internal courtyard is via gates under a semi-circular arch. From the courtyard, a stone staircase leads up to the chapel, whose doorways are decorated with fleur-de-lis. The modest interior has a ribbed vault framing a keystone engraved with the arms of the Montesquiou family, lords of Charbonnières from the 13th century onwards. The other parts of the residential building have handsome fireplaces, a monumental staircase and fine vaulted halls. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the château became the property of the Volonzac Malespina family and, in the 19th century, of the Boutin family. It is not open to the public.

Attribution : © OTGCC nc



Not always a docile river! (D)

For 52 km, from the point it enters the canyon at Quézac to Le Rozier, the Tarn has no overground tributary. However, it is fed by about 170 karst springs stemming from subterranean aquifer networks. These springs release the rainwater absorbed by the avens, dolines and fissures of the Causses plateaux. When reserves are high, the water gushes with great force from the karst environment. Locals say that “the corks are popping”. In the event that the tributaries of the Tarn (the Mimente and Tarnon) rise and add to the springs, the time will have come to move the furniture upstairs.

Attribution : BOUISSOU Arnaud / TERRA Ministère de l'Environnement