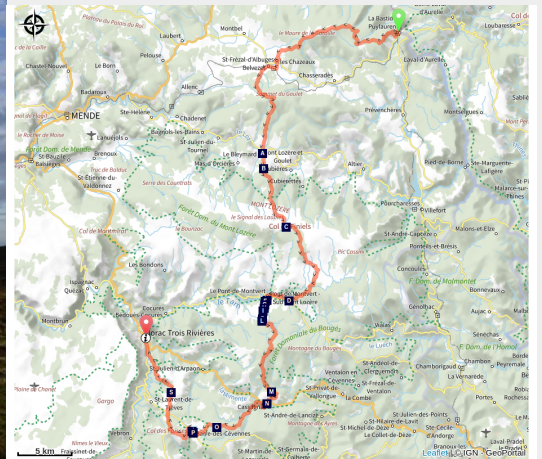


The panoramic Cévennes via Mont Lozère

Mont Lozère



(Hugues Dijols - Montagne et ascensions)



In four stages, this magnificent itinerary lets you explore a concentrated version of the Cévennes National Park's scenery. The diverse route alternates singletracks and easier paths and is aimed at trail runners used to mountain terrain. Some climbs and descents will severely test your legs and enchant those who love technical terrain.

Take the main draille (drovers' road) from the Languedoc to the Gévaudan, which was once used to take livestock herds to their summer pastures. On ridges and passes, discover the granite landscape of Mont Lozère and the heath and chestnut groves of the Bougès massif

Useful information

Practice : Foot race

Duration : 4 days

Length : 96.5 km

Trek ascent : 2975 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Roaming


Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, Fauna and flora, International Dark Sky Place

before finishing on the prairies of the Can de Ferrières plateau.

Trek

Departure : La Bastide-Puylaurent

Arrival : Florac

Markings :  GR (long-distance hiking path)

Cities : 1. La Bastide-Puylaurent

2. Mont Lozère et Goulet

3. Luc

4. Cheylard-l'Évêque

5. Saint-Frézal-d'Albuges

6. Cubières

7. Pont de Montvert - Sud Mont Lozère

8. Cassagnas

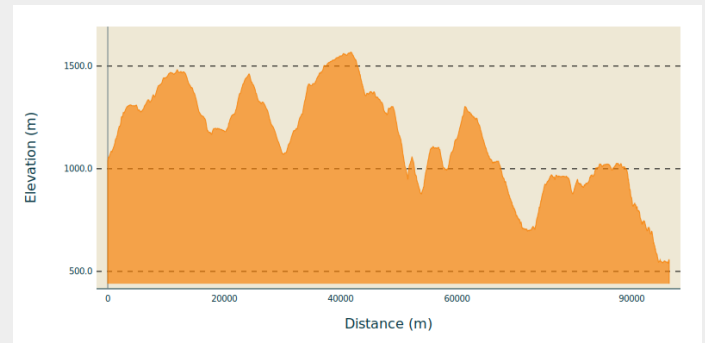
9. Barre-des-Cévennes

10. Cans et Cévennes

11. Vebron

12. Florac Trois Rivières

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 540 m Max elevation 1568 m

Day 1 : La Bastide-Puylaurent--Le Bleymard (between 5 and 6 ½ hrs), 850 m of climbs, 800 m of descents. GR® 7.

Climb onto the ridges and Le Moure de la Gardille, where the Allier has its spring. Then go downhill to Belvezet and to the crossroads of the Pierre Plantée (standing stone). Go up to Le Plot de l'Aygue and then back down to Le Bleymard, which includes some short steep sections.

Day 2 : Le Bleymard--Pont-de-Montvert- Sud-Mont-Lozère (between 4 and 5 ½ hrs), 650 m of climbs, 850 m of descents. GR® 7 puis GR® 72.

From Le Bleymard, head uphill to the ski station of Le Bleymard-Mont-Lozère and then to the Col de Finiels pass. At the pass, go down to Salarial, L'Hôpital and Le Pont du Tarn. At Le Pont du Tarn, fork onto the GR® 72 long-distance path to reach first Le Merlet and then Le Pont-de-Montvert-Sud-Mont-Lozère.

Day 3 : Pont-de-Montvert-Sud-Mont-Lozère--Barre-des-Cévennes, (4 ½ to 6 hrs), 900 m of climbs, 850 m of descents, GR® 72

Head for the Col de la Planette pass via Champlong de Bougès. At the pass, go to Barre-des-Cévennes via Cassagnas, Relais de Stevenson, Le Crémadet, Les Quatre chemins, Barre-des-Cévennes.

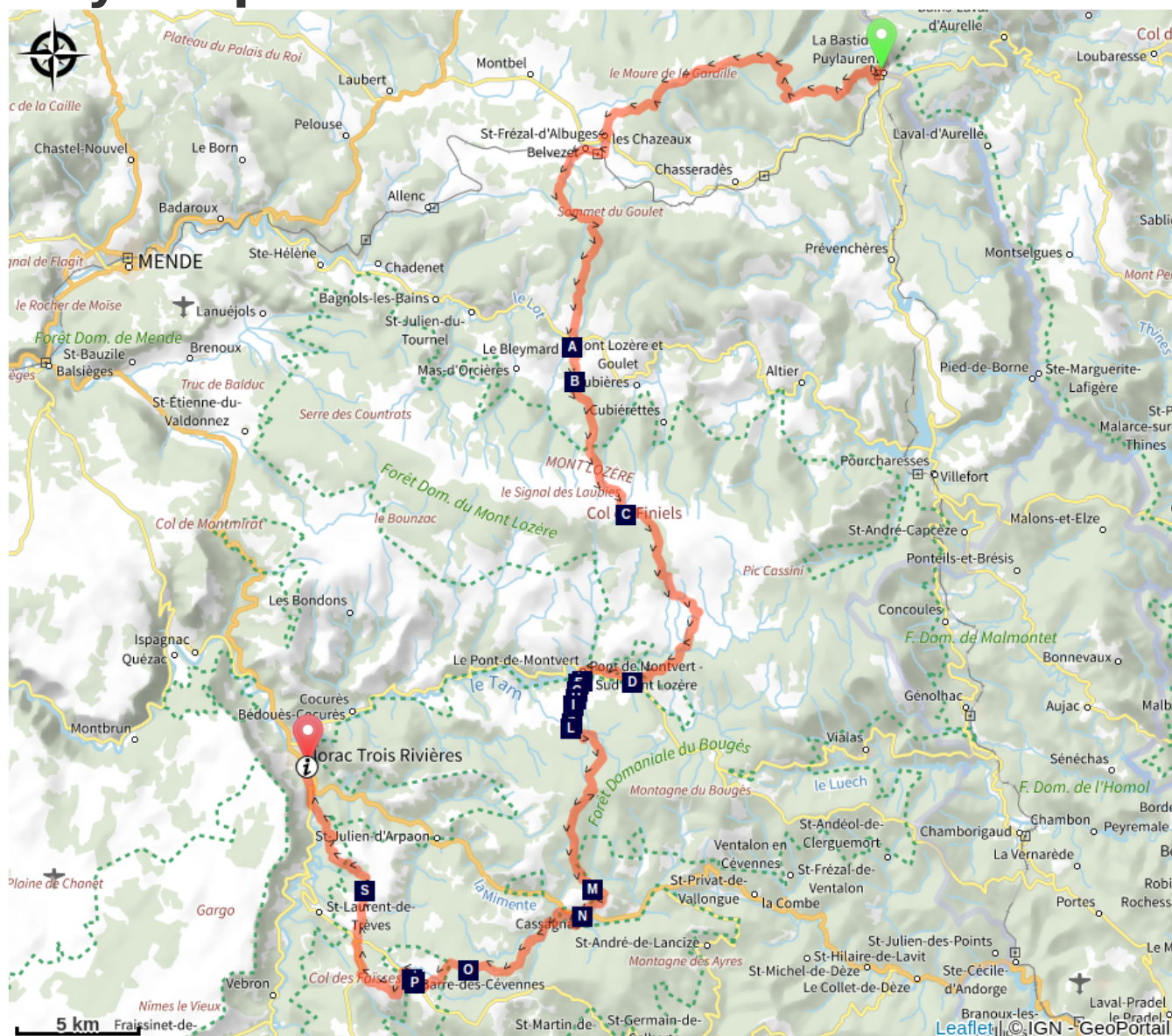
Day 4 : Barre-des-Cévennes--Florac-Trois-Rivières (2 to 3 hrs), 220 m of climbs, 600 m of descents, GR® 7 then GR® 43

From Barre-des-Cévennes, take the GR® 7 to the Col des Faïsses pass via the Can Noire plateau. At Col des Faïsses leave the GR® 7 for the GR® 43 towards Florac via Col du Rey, Tardonèche, La Rouvière, Pont de Barre.

Stages :

1. Déviation temporaire du GR® 7
7.3 km / 76 m D+ /

On your path...



The “mission” cross (A)

Subalpine short-grass prairie (C)

Pont-de-Montvert (E)

A rolling stone... (G)

Panorama (I)

Heath alternating with hay meadows (K)

Rowan or mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) (M)

Short-toed snake eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) (O)

The Château (Q)

The Can de Ferrières (S)

Passerine birds (B)

Frutgères (D)

The Camisards' path (F)

Sheepfold with lauze-covered roof (H)

A sheepfold in ruins (J)

Pine-forest fauna (L)

Protestant cemeteries (N)

Place de la Madeleine (P)

Place de la loue (Hiring Square) (R)

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. Remember that the weather changes quickly in the mountains. Take enough water.

How to come ?

Transports

From Florac, return by bus to Mende (line 251) or Alès (line 252) :

<https://www.lio-occitanie.fr/>

From Mende or Alès, return to La Bastide-Puylaurent on the TER train /

www.ter.sncf.com/occitanie

Passenger and luggage transport : www.lamallepostale.com/fr

Access

From Mende, take the N88 towards Laubert, then the D6 via Les Chazeaux to La Bastide-Puylaurent. From Alès take the D906 via Villefort.

Advised parking

La Bastide-Puylaurent

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



Comité départemental de la randonnée pédestre 48

<http://lozere.ffrandonnee.fr/>



Comité départemental de la randonnée pédestre
Gard

<http://gard.ffrandonnee.fr/>



Fédération française de la randonnée pédestre

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



Parc national des Cévennes

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

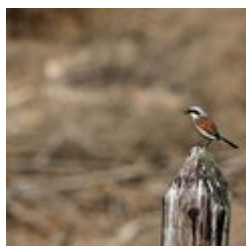
On your path...



The “mission” cross (A)

In the municipality of Le Bleymard, there is a large number of crosses and other small religious heritage elements, which bear witness to inhabitants’ fervour in the old days. You will see them as you enter villages, on main squares and at crossroads, to protect the walker and ploughman. Offerings sometimes took the form of crosses, which were then called “mission” crosses.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



Passerine birds (B)

Open spaces with a few trees and bushes favour passerine birds. Passerines are the largest and most varied order of birds, containing over half of all bird species. The red-backed shrike in particular likes this environment, which abounds in the large insects that constitute its main food source. The shrike is strictly migratory and hibernates in eastern Africa.

Attribution : Régis Descamps



Subalpine short-grass prairie (C)

Marker 1

Like garden or sports pitches, short-grass prairies are shaped by mankind. Grazing and controlled burns are the tools for their maintenance here. The main plants are nard and fescue, perennial grasses related to wheat. If you cut (graze) one of their stalks, five more will soon form; if you trample them, they multiply and become very dense. This kind of “torture” creates a thick plant cover that stabilises the sparse dark soil, which is derived from erosion of the ever-present granite. Here, then, are some clues for the appropriate management of this environment, which becomes weakened if neglected.

Attribution : © Brigitte Mathieu



Frutgères (D)

This village used to be the parish seat and developed long before Le-Pont-de-Montvert, a mere hamlet, turned into a small village of about 60 souls by 1631. In the 12th century, the important Commandery of the Knights of St-John of Jerusalem settled in the parish of Frutgères. This religious and military order later took the name of the Order of the Knights of Malta. The parish church was burned down by the Camisards (Protestant rebels), who were responsible for the assassination of the Frutgères parish priest, Reversat, in 1702, one day after the murder of the Abbot du Chaila in Le-Pont-de-Montvert. The church had been built after the unification of the parishes of Frutgères and Grizac. In the early 19th century, the municipality was densely populated (25 inhabitants/sq km). The large estates needed numerous labourers to harvest their hay, rye and buckwheat.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Pont-de-Montvert (E)

Marker 12

Le Pont-de-Montvert is at the confluence of the Tarn and two of its tributaries: the Rieumalet and the Martinet. The draille (drovers' road) has today almost disappeared, but it was once used by flocks from the south of France to reach the summer pastures on the Mont Lozère. The first neighbourhoods were established along this axis. In 1630 the village was almost as extensive as in the early 19th century. Three stone bridges were built over the rivers, but the great floods of 1827 and 1900 seriously damaged or destroyed them. The grand Tarn Bridge is the only stone bridge still standing. New neighbourhoods developed on the village's periphery, preserving the historic centre.

Attribution : © Guy Grégoire



The Camisards' path (F)

Marker 11

This path used to be an important communication route linking Le Pont-de-Montvert with Barre-des-Cévennes. On 24 July 1702, it was used by a gathering of Huguenots coming from the Col des Trois Fayards, who intended to liberate their fellow Protestants being held by Abbot du Chayla in Le Pont-de-Montvert. These men thus used the path on which you stand. The tragic events that followed (including the Abbot's violent death) triggered the Camisard War. The landscape surrounding the village is the result of intense agricultural activity. All neighbouring slopes were cultivated, especially with rye, on man-made terraces called bancelles.

Attribution : © Brigitte Mathieu

A rolling stone... (G)

Marker 10

On the plateau, the path has not always made a very distinct mark on the ground, evidence of little erosion. By contrast, the entire descent towards Le Pont-de-Montvert shows signs of more intense erosion, especially near the top where a large block has rolled into the middle of the path. It is the repeated passage of humans and animals that, combined with natural factors, eventually destabilised the rock. After the rock moved, the path was re-routed.

Sheepfold with lauze-covered roof (H)

Marker 9

Unlike the previous sheepfold, this one was built out of heavy, compact and solid materials. A granite vault instead of a timber roof suggests the rarity of wood. The roof was made watertight by schist lauzes (tilestones) on a bed of clay or coarse granite sand. This place is called La Jasse de Chanteloup (jasse/jas: resting place for animals; canteloube in popular etymology = place where the wolves howl, or, according to scholarly sources, luppe = stone, height, rounded mountain).

Panorama (I)

Marker 8

Views of the southern slope of Mont Lozère

A sheepfold in ruins (J)

Marker 7

You need to leave the path on the left and walk for about 200 metres to see this former shelter for farm animals (ovines and bovines). The materials for its construction were found locally: granite for the walls, Scots pine or oak for the timber part of the roof, rye thatch for the roof. The variety of rye grown locally had fine long straw. It was cut by scythe at the end of July and put into swathes, then stored in stacks and threshed on threshing-floors. Finally it was made into small sheaves, which were soaked before use to make the last seeds germinate and make the straw less breakable during thatching.



Heath alternating with hay meadows (K)

Marker 6

Callune has established itself on the knolls, meaning the convex areas which have poor and dry soils, whereas the meadows occupy the concave areas with their deeper and damper soils. All of these territories offer food sources for specific fauna. You may see hares, but also birds of prey (buzzards, hen and Montagu's harriers, short-toed snake eagles, common kestrels) and red-legged partridges.

Attribution : © Guy Grégoire



Pine-forest fauna (L)

Pine forests associated with blueberry zones are interesting environments for fauna: stags and roe deer come to browse the blueberry plants. Wild boar, foxes, martens and all birds eat their berries, including the Western capercaillie, which was reintroduced here by the National Park. You can also find coal tits, European crested tits, wrens, robins, mistle thrushes and black woodpeckers. Some birds of prey, such as the short-toed snake eagle, may come and build their nests at the highest point of a topped Scots pine.



🌿 Rowan or mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) (M)

Sorbus allegedly derives from *sorbitio* (beverage, herbal tea) and *aucuparia* from *auceps*, bird-catcher. In the autumn, bird-catchers used rowan berries as bait in their tendelles or thrush traps. Some are said to have coated the branches of rowans with glue to capture birds. More simply, hunters lay in wait near rowans to catch blackbirds and thrushes. (P. Grime)

Attribution : © com com Florac Sud Lozère



Protestant cemeteries (N)

“Strange Cévennes, all paved with graves! You can see them right by each mas (farm).... Usually there is only a tilestone planted in the ground, with neither cross nor ornament, to indicate a grave,... If the family is well-off, the tombs are enhanced by a zinc container that keeps the wreaths dry... There are countless properties where the population laid in the ground is ten times greater than the population still standing!” (Roussel Romain, *Almanach Cévenol*, 1968).

Attribution : © com com Florac Sud Lozère



🦅 Short-toed snake eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*) (O)

This bird of prey nests in the surrounding woodland. The best times of year for spotting it are March/April and July to September. It spends winters in sub-Saharan Africa, returning to France in early March. Along with its mate, it will spend five months incubating a single egg and bringing up the chick.

Attribution : © Régis Descamps

Place de la Madeleine (P)

Marker 5

The fountain dates from the 18th century. At the end of the 19th century, the bust of Marianne – the personification of the French Republic – was added. At the same time, a poplar was planted by republican youth as a symbol of freedom. From here, you can see several bourgeois houses, which mostly date from the 17th and 18th centuries. They bear witness to the village's thriving past, when it had some 20 voituriers (merchant-carters), who would drive their carts down to the plains laden with wool and chestnuts and return with salt, wine and oil. Under the houses' large porches, harnesses and carts were kept. During fairs, the seed market took place in these vaults and those of the town hall.

The Château (Q)

Marker 6

Constructed in the 12th and 13th centuries, the Château was entirely rebuilt in the early 16th century. From 1710 to 1715, it was modified by the Lord of Barre, who had his coat of arms carved above the entrance. Two towers were also added at this time. During the 1789 Revolution, the coat of arms disappeared under vigorous hammer strokes. In the early 19th century, during an expansion, the main tower was removed.

Place de la loue (Hiring Square) (R)

Marker 1

This little square, located at the north-eastern entrance to the village, was where the “loue” (hiring) used to be held during the great spring and autumn fairs: shepherds, domestics and chestnut gatherers would sit on the parapet and hope for an employer to take them on. The village hosted 12 to 15 fairs every year. The spring and autumn ones could attract up to ten thousand people from neighbouring departments, but also from the Var, Vaucluse and Bouches-du-Rhône. This village-rue (one-road village) was protected at each end by a fortified gate. One of them, called the Florac Gate, stood near the Place de la Loue. It was destroyed in the early 19th century.



The Can de Ferrières (S)

This limestone plateau continues to be grazed by flocks of sheep. Note the piles of stones, called clapas. They are not there by chance! They are the result of locals clearing their fields and pastureland of stones. These piles shelter many species.

Attribution : © Guy Grégoire