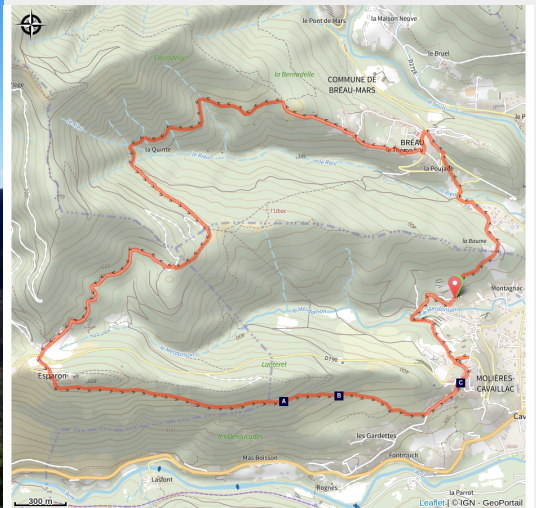


On the road to Rutènes

Aigoual



Vue depuis le rocher d'Esparon (Nathalie Thomas)



This walk offers handsome panoramic viewpoints over the Arre and Coudoulous valleys, with perched villages.

From Molière-Cavaillac, the path meanders over crop terraces and the Déroutades blockfield to reach Esparon. From the pass, you stay on a track lined with chestnut and wild cherry trees to Bréau-Salagosse with its picturesque lanes.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 4 h

Length : 10.1 km

Trek ascent : 484 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, History and culture, Water and geology

Trek

Departure : Molières - Cavaillac

Arrival : Molières - Cavaillac

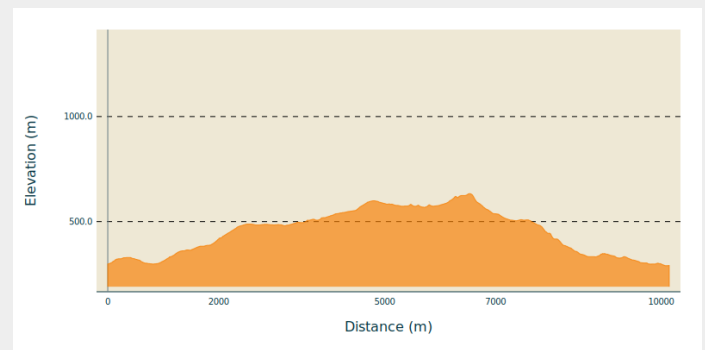
Markings :  Yellow waymarks

Cities : 1. Molières-Cavaillac

2. Bréau-Mars

3. Bez-et-Esparon

Altimetric profile



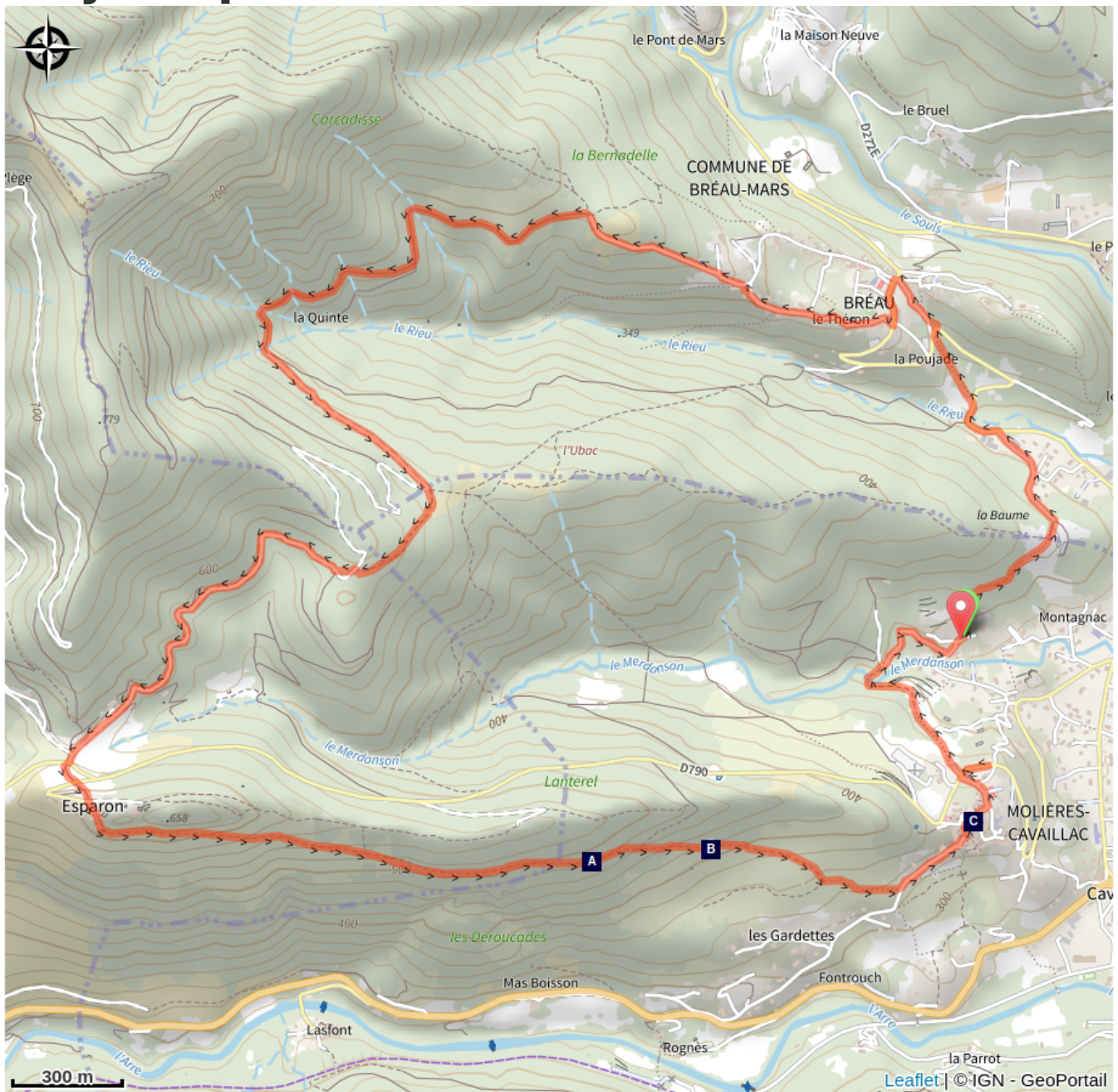
Min elevation 290 m Max elevation 633 m

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

Starting from "**MOLIÈRES-CAVAILLAC**", walk to "**ESPARON**" via "**Place Bellevue**", "**Bois et Avans**", "**La Croix d'Esparon**" and "**Chapelle d'Esparon**". From "**ESPARON**", continue to "**BRÉAU**" via "**Col d'Esparon**", "**Courbières**", "**L'Ubac**" and "**La Bernadelle**". At "**La Bernadelle**", go to "**Bréau**" on the right-hand track. On the square in front of the Protestant church in Bréau, take on your right the former Roman road to return straight to "**MOLIÈRES-CAVAILLAC**".

This walk is taken from the guidebook **Les Vallées Cévenoles - En Pays Viganais**, published by the Communauté de communes Pays Viganais-Cévennes as part of the collection Espaces Naturels Gardois and the label Gard Pleine Nature.

On your path...



Olive farming (A)

The Arre valley (B)

The origin of the villages' names

(C)

All useful information

Advices

Make sure your equipment is appropriate for the day's weather conditions. Take enough water, wear sturdy shoes and put on a hat. Please close any gates and barriers behind you.

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 the lio Occitanie app or visit : <https://www.mestrajets.lio.laregion.fr>

Access

From Le Vigan towards Bez-et-Espéron on the D999. At the roundabout in Cavaillac, turn right onto the D199 towards Aulas, then take the road uphill on the left to the village of Molières-Cavaillac

Advised parking

Near the information sign

Information desks

Tourism office Cévennes and Navacelles, Le Vigan

Maison de pays, place du Marché, BP 21,
30120 Le Vigan

contact@sudcevennes.com

Tel : 04 67 81 01 72

<https://sudcevennes.com/>



Source

On your path...

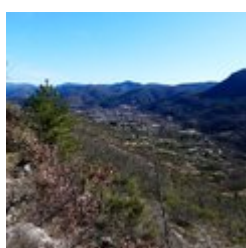


Olive farming (A)

Two oil mills used to exist halfway up the slope amidst the terraces. Most families had olive and grapevine plots of varying sizes on the south-facing side. The olives were harvested as of 25 November : “on St Catherine’s Day, pick your olives, if there’s no oil in them, don’t expect any later”.

The millstone was turned by a mule; the olives, first crushed then pressed, released the virgin oil first. “We poured boiling water on and continued to press. Three or four men braced themselves against the press to make sure that nothing but crushed stones remained in the paillassous (baskets). The stones were fed to the pigs, which loved them. Nothing was allowed to go to waste.”

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



The Arre valley (B)

The path climbs steadily over fallow crop terraces. The higher you get, the wilder and more typical of dry limestone soils is the vegetation: white oaks, box trees, thyme, etc.

Opposite, the Causse de Blandas plateau overlooks the Arre. Following a geological incident, the river was diverted and dug its bed into the limestone, thus separating Esparon from the Causse. Halfway between Molières and Esparon, the Déroucades blockfield, created by an earthquake in 580, lies on a faultline.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



The origin of the villages' names (C)

Molières comes from the Occitan molièra, meaning “bog, wetland”. The valley below the village was a swamp. Known from 1162 onwards by the name of Eclésia Santi Johannes de Molieyrus, the village received its current name in 1435.

Esparon comes from the Occitan esparron, which means “echelon, banister”. A castle built against the rock surveyed the Esparon valley and pass; it was destroyed during the crusade against the Albigensians in the 13th century.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas