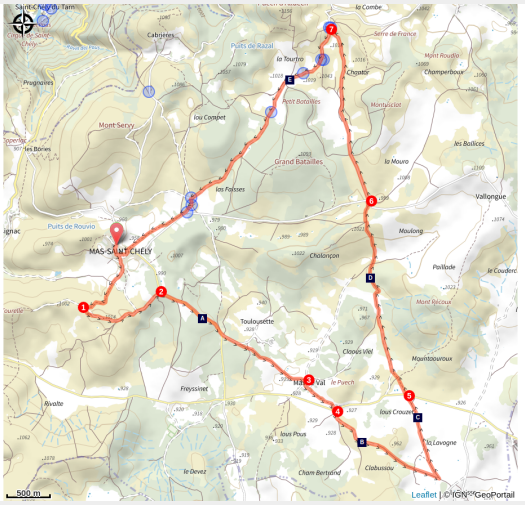
Mas Saint-Chély, MTB circuit #5 (graded blue)

Causses Gorges



Chemin de Mas de val (© Nathalie Thomas)



This circuit takes you through the large areas impacted by the forest fire of August 2003. On a detour, you can visit Saint Cosmas' Chapel [chapelle de Saint-Côme], spared by the fire and recently restored.

This bare landscape, shaped by generations of farmers and sheep-breeders, is closely linked to human history.

Useful information

Practice : Bike

Duration : 2 h 30

Length : 16.6 km

Trek ascent : 285 m

Difficulty : Easy

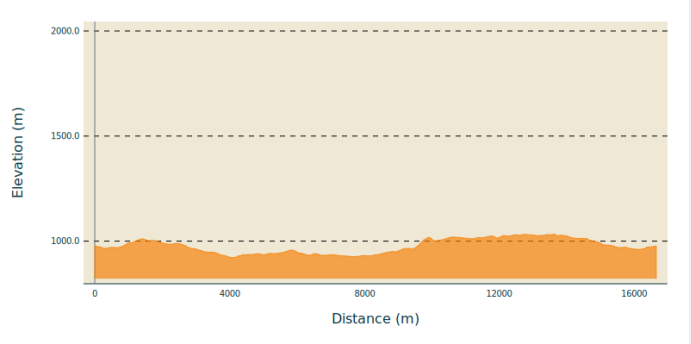
Type : Loop

Themes : Agriculture and livestock farming, Forest

Trek

Departure : Mas Saint-Chély
Arrival : Mas Saint-Chély
Markings : mountain-bike
Cities : 1. Mas-Saint-Chély

Altimetric profile

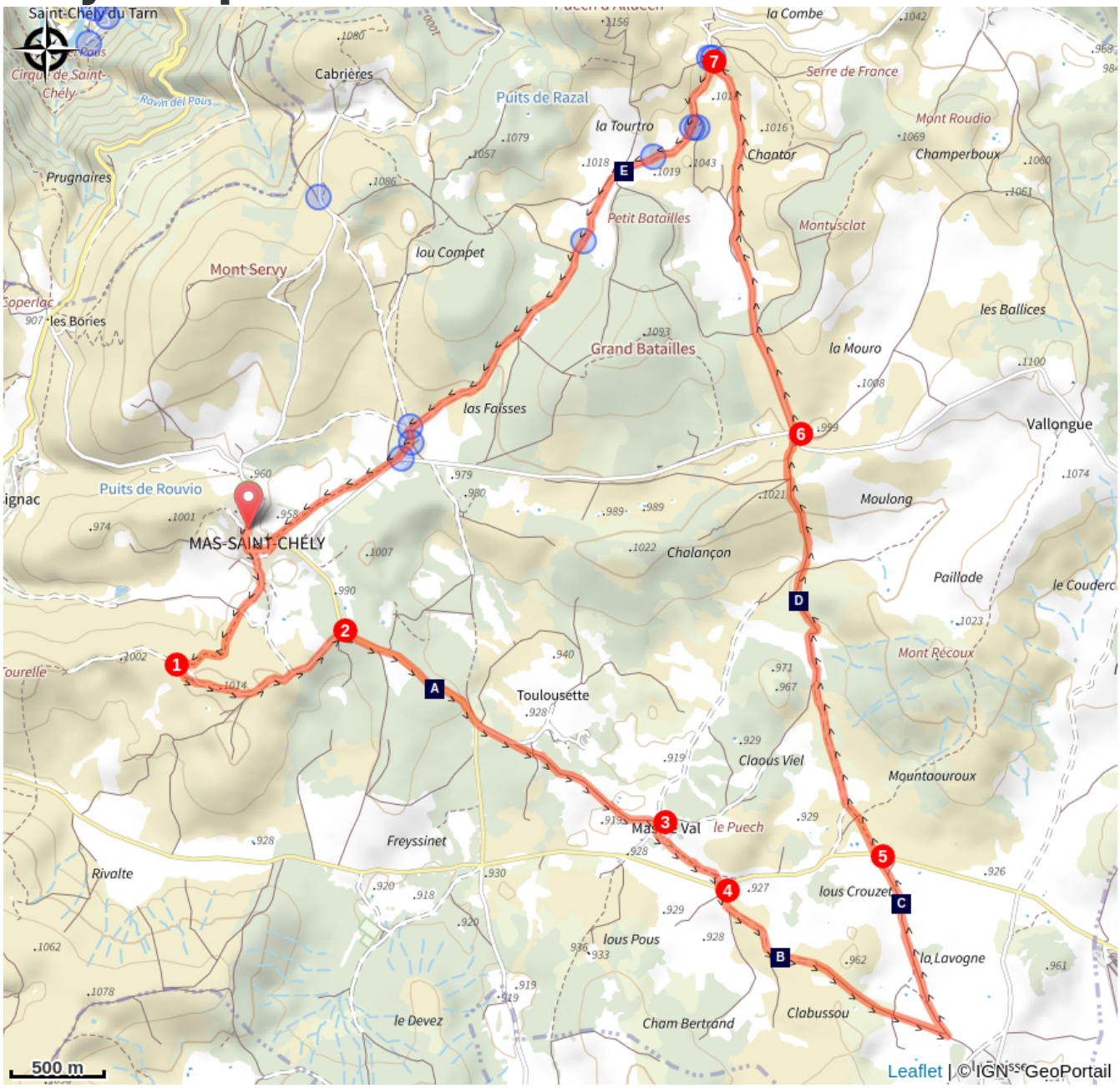


Min elevation 921 m Max elevation 1032 m

From the car park by the church, take the road that goes downhill to the war memorial. Continue straight ahead between the houses. Continue on a track suitable for motor vehicles that turns into a path and climbs to a wide track.

1. Take the track on the left (detour: you can reach Saint-Cosmas' Chapel by taking the track on the right for 700m). Stay on the main track.
2. Go right then left on the tarred road towards Toulousette. Leave it behind to take a track near a container shelter, then continue to Mas de Val.
3. Cross the hamlet. Continue on a path bordered by low walls until you reach the D 16.
4. Cross the road and take the track opposite. Go through two gates (close them properly). At the second gate, take the track on the left to the D 16.
5. Continue straight ahead. Climb up a slope and go back down towards a road (NB: technical section).
6. Continue opposite towards Prunet until you reach a small pass.
7. Go through the fence to take the track on the left. Follow the main path, through a second fence. When you see the village, go left then right to reach the road. By the houses, turn right twice to return to the starting-point.

On your path...



The Scots pine (A)

Adonis vernalis (spring pheasant's eye) (C)

Woods and deforestation (E)

The Causse sheep (B)

Boxwood (D)

All useful information

Advices

No off-roading. You are strongly encouraged to wear a helmet. Do not forget your repair kit and a small tool kit. Close barriers and gates behind you. Slow down in farms and hamlets.

How to come ?

Access

From Ste-Enimie or Meyrueis, take the D 986. At the Col de Coperlac pass, head to Mas St-Chély.

Advised parking

Car park by the church in Mas Saint-Chély

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



Tourism office Cévennes Gorges du Tarn, Sainte-Enimie
village, 48210 Sainte-Enimie

info@attractivite-tourisme-gcc.com
Tel : 04 66 45 01 14
https://www.cevennes-gorges-du-tarn.com/



Source

Agence d'Attractivité Touristique Gorges Causses Cévennes

http://www.cevennes-gorges-du-tarn.com

Parc national des Cévennes

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

On your path...



The Scots pine (A)

The Scots pine is the main natural tree variety of the Grands Causses plateaux, as it is well-adapted to poor soils. You can recognise it by it its bark, which is a reddish brown to salmon-ochre colour on the upper part of the trunk; its needles are short and paired. Being hardy, it does not fear climate change. As a pioneer species, it settles on abandoned land.

Attribution : OT Gorges du Tarn Causses & Cévennes nc



The Causse sheep (B)

The Blanche du Massif Central (BMC) is a sheep variety that originated on the Margeride plateau. Its hardiness means that it is well-adapted the mountain climate. Its quality meat and its capacity to produce lambs at all times of the year are appreciated by the meat industry and have made it increasingly popular.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



Adonis vernalis (spring pheasant's eye) (C)

Whilst this member of the buttercup family might seem plentiful, it has become rare and is limited to a few places in France (Causses, Alsace) and south-eastern Europe. It can be seen in April-May in the steppe flora. This plant is protected – you may take photos but under no circumstances take the plant! It secretes a substance through its roots that tends to limit the growth of plants around it, especially legumes.

Attribution : © Bruno Descaves



Boxwood (D)

The scientific name of boxwood, Buxus semperviens, means “always green”. It is the best-known shrub on the Causses but also the most invasive. Its small shiny leaves limit water loss in the heat. Box is low-maintenance and tolerates poor and dry soils as well as wide temperature variations. It invades pastures; sheep do not like its leaves at all. It is hard to get rid of, and only the regular trampling of the flocks stops its progress. In the old days, it was sometimes used as manure on fields.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



Woods and deforestation (E)

Afforestation and deforestation seem to be the fate of the Causse landscape. In the Neolithic, the first farmer-shepherds settled on the fertile areas of the plateaux, which were covered by beech and oak forest at the time. This lead to the forest being cleared for sheep pasture and for farmland. With demographic expansion, deforestation accelerated and the cultivated areas expanded. Subsequently, the local potteries, lime kilns and, later, mines brought about a new wave of deforestation to satisfy their need for wood.

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