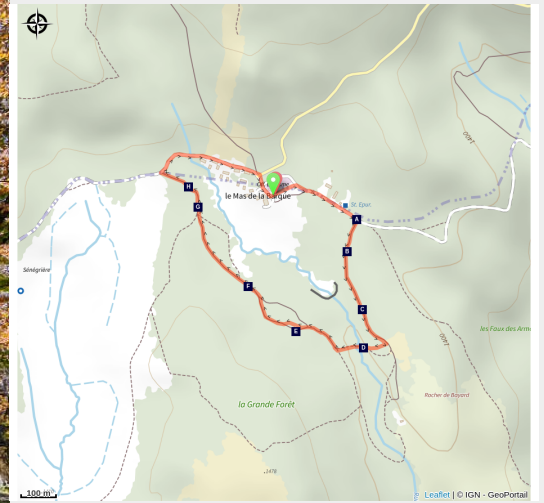


Exploring the magical forest

Mont Lozère - Vialas



Hêtraie du Mas de la Barque (© Olivier Prohin)



Follow Barque Page, a mysterious person, as he sets out to explore the secrets of a very old forest.

In the old days, when the forest was magical, it whispered its secrets to the first forester at Mas de la Barque. Every day he noted down its revelations and his own observations in the pages of his ledger. But the howling wind that came over the mountain was so jealous of this friendship that it tore out the pages and dispersed them along with the dead leaves at the very heart of the mysterious forest. The forest's secrets were lost forever.

Useful information

Practice : Discovery trails

Duration : 1 h

Length : 2.1 km

Trek ascent : 38 m

Difficulty : Very easy

Type : Loop

Themes : Fauna and flora, Forest

Trek

Departure : Mas de la Barque activity centre

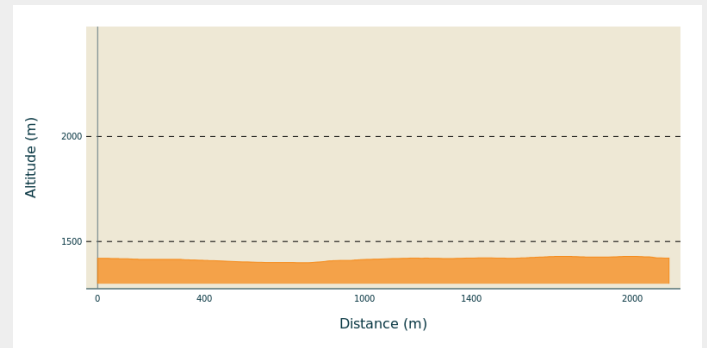
Arrival : Mas de la Barque activity centre

Markings : 🚣 Barque page

Cities : 1. Vialas

2. Pont de Montvert - Sud Mont Lozère

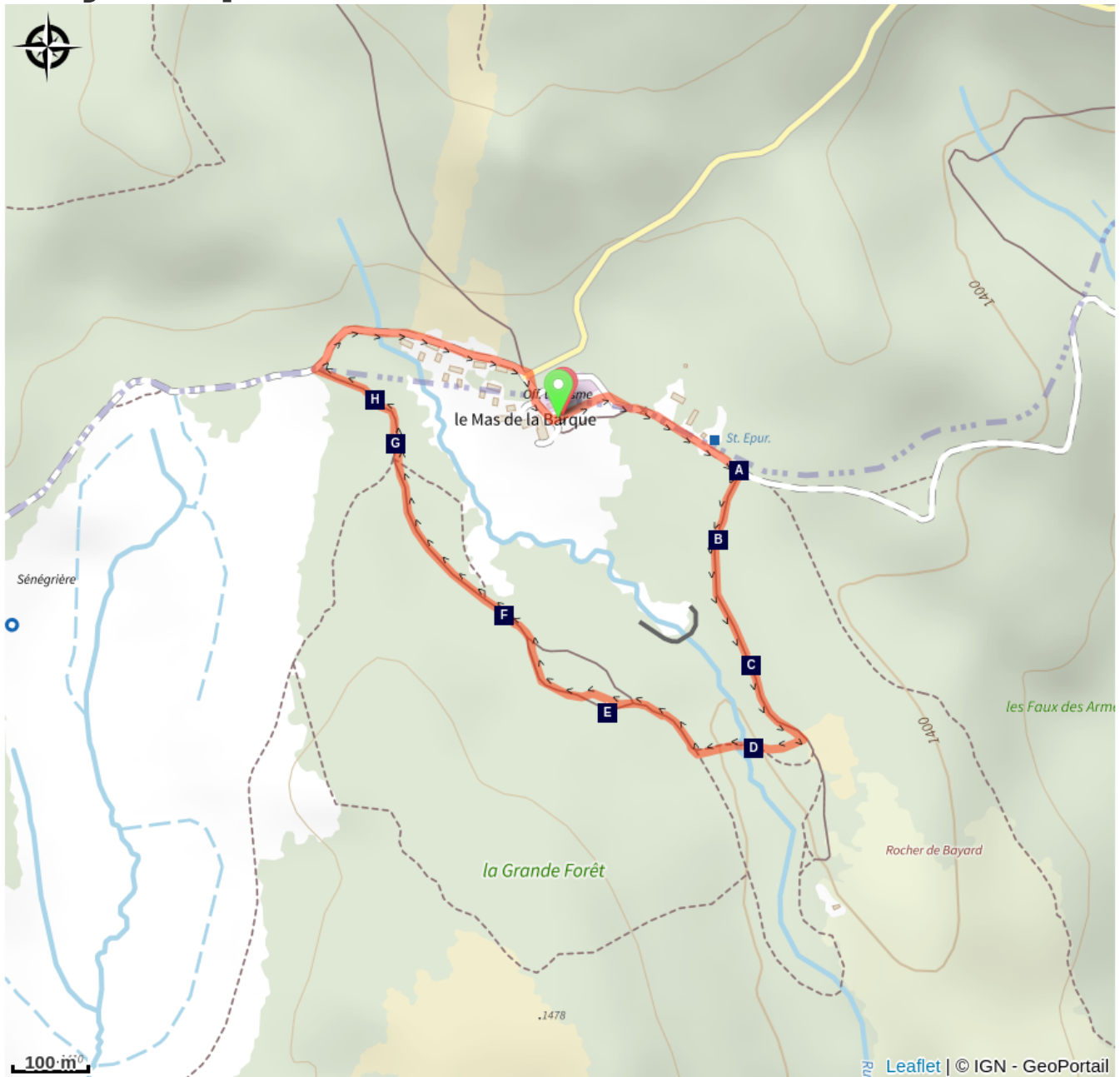
Altimetric profile




Min elevation 1399 m Max elevation 1429 m

Near Reception, take a wide track that slowly enters the depths of the forest of Mas de la Barque. Running alongside crooked old beeches, the path then crosses a brook before climbing slightly towards a recently logged forest. Near an area of wetlands, it recovers some of the tranquillity of the old forest, then comes out on a track. You quickly return to the centre via the holiday cottages.

On your path...



-  The mysterious boat (A)
-  The secret life of the subsoil (C)
-  Humans and the forest (E)
-  The death of a tree (G)
-  A real village (B)
-  Meet a tinder fungus (D)
-  The peat bog: a world apart (F)
-  Tree kisses (H)

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.

How to come ?

Access

Access from Villefort on the D 66 or Génolhac on the D 362.

Advised parking

Car park at Mas de la Barque

Accessibility

La plateforme de découverte de la biodiversité au départ du sentier est accessible à tous les publics

Information desks

Tourism'house and national parc, Génolhac

Place du Colombier, 30450 Génolhac

contact@cevennes-tourisme.fr

Tel : 04 66 61 09 48

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



Tourism office Mont-Lozère, Villefort

43, Place du Bosquet, 48800 Villefort

contact@destination-montlozere.fr

Tel : 04 66 46 87 30

<https://www.destination-montlozere.fr/>



Source



Parc national des Cévennes

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

On your path...



The mysterious boat (A)

Have you noticed the strange rock shaped like a boat (barque)? Is that what gave the hamlet its name? Alternatively, in the local patois, a berque is a gap in the mountain. So: Mas de la Barque or Mas de la Berque?

Mas de la Barque is part of the municipality of Vialas and borders the forest of Gourdouze. The estate of the Priory of Gourdouze, to which the forest once belonged, was declared government property during the French Revolution in 1789, before being sold to pay the state's debts.

Attribution : © Biotope



A real village (B)

During their lifespan, these trees grow crooked, swell, become wrinkled. A ripped-off branch leaves a scar open to bird beaks. Towards the end of its life, the old tree is full of cavities – comfortable nests for small animals. Can you hear a soft whoo hoo hoo in the forest? That is a boreal owl. The black woodpecker carves its nest out of dead wood using its powerful beak. The European edible dormouse, a rather pretty rodent, hides its food stores in holes in old beeches.

Attribution : © J.-P. Malafosse



The secret life of the subsoil (C)

Did you know that, as you walk through the forest, you are trampling a little-known world? Under your feet a multitude of tiny creatures are tirelessly active: by decomposing organic matter, such as dead leaves, they enable tree roots to absorb nutrients. Without them, there would be no forest. Below the roots, this tree gives you a glimpse of the subsoil. Let us see what it hides.

Attribution : © PNC



🍄 Meet a tinder fungus (D)

The fat mushroom stuck to the trunk of an old beech is a tinder fungus, a tree parasite. From above, it looks like a cep cap. Below, fine tubes are full of spores, the little cells that allow the fungus to reproduce. Tinder fungus is totally inedible. So what might it be used for? Once dried, it catches fire at the first spark. Prehistoric humans used it to light their fires.

Attribution : © KARCZEWSKI Gaël



🌲 Humans and the forest (E)

In some places, you can see that trees have been felled. Why? The paint marks differentiate trees to be felled from those that will be preserved according to economic and ecological criteria. In the forest at Mas de la Barque, we have to ensure that the forest ecosystem works well. It is a resource to be preserved for the future. Let us watch the forest technician at work.

Attribution : © A. Bouissou/TERRA



🌿 The peat bog: a world apart (F)

This natural environment is a strange world where only very particular plants survive. Sundew (drosera) is the star of the peat bog. The soil is so poor here that the plant catches insects to feed on; it is carnivorous. The water is very acidic and contains very little oxygen here. When plants die, they do not decompose as well as in the forest. Instead they accumulate to form a thick layer of peat.

Attribution : © Yannick Manche



🌳 The death of a tree (G)

A dying or dead tree makes us a little sad. And yet it regenerates the forest. Once the tree is dead, it still provides refuge for fauna over many years. Its rotting wood feeds legions of small animals, which turn an old forest into a living treasure. The larvae of the bronze carabid devour slugs and snails while the larvae of the longhorn beetle burrow into dead wood.

Attribution : © Mathieu Baconnet



🌳 Tree kisses (H)

Among trees, there is strength in unity. Trees like to merge with others via the roots - it makes them stronger. But here, there are beeches that have grown together at the branch level or even at the trunk. Strange bonds! Try to spot them but do not disturb them.

Attribution : © E. Balaye