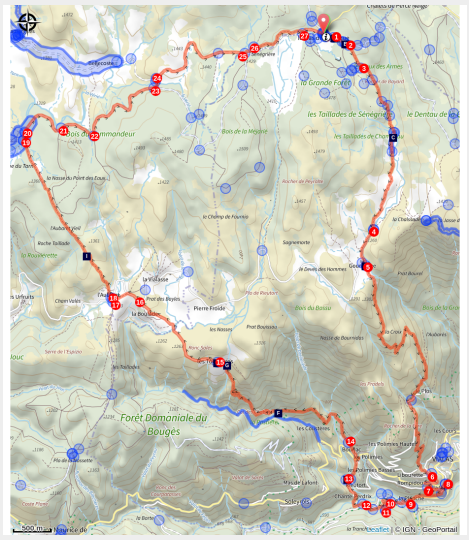
Gourdouze valley, Trail #21

Mont Lozère



Sentier vers Aubaret (© OT des Cévennes au Mont Lozère)



Une aventure au coeur du Parc National des Cévennes

When only the technical difficulty of the circuit can compare with the beauty of the scenery… This expedition between the Cévennes and Mont Lozère is sheer happiness !

Useful information

Practice : Foot race

Duration : 3 h

Length : 26.5 km

Trek ascent : 1206 m

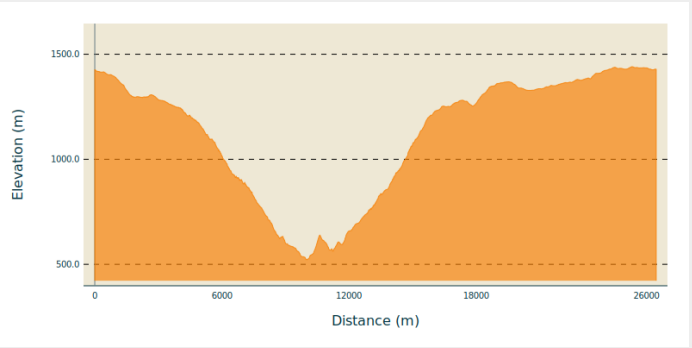
Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Loop

Trek

Departure : Mas de la Barque
Arrival : Mas de la Barque
Markings : Trail PPN Mt Lozère Yellow waymarks
Cities : 1. Pont de Montvert - Sud Mont Lozère
2. Vialas

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 522 m Max elevation 1441 m

The first part is downhill on a pleasant path between undergrowth and wild pastures. On arrival in the magnificent hamlet of Gourdouze, you continue downhill to Vialas on a path that is open and rocky at first, then runs through the forest.A long ascent on a path with some fairly steep sections brings you to Les Tourrières. At Les Tourrières, you take the road for 1 km before climbing on a pretty path through rocky blockfields and grassy plains to the glorious Tarn bridge. You return to the departure point on a runnable track.

Follow the waymarks for trail #21.
Signposts will guide you all along this route, as well as yellow painted waymarks. In the description below, the signposted place names and/or directions are given in **bold italics** between quotation marks:

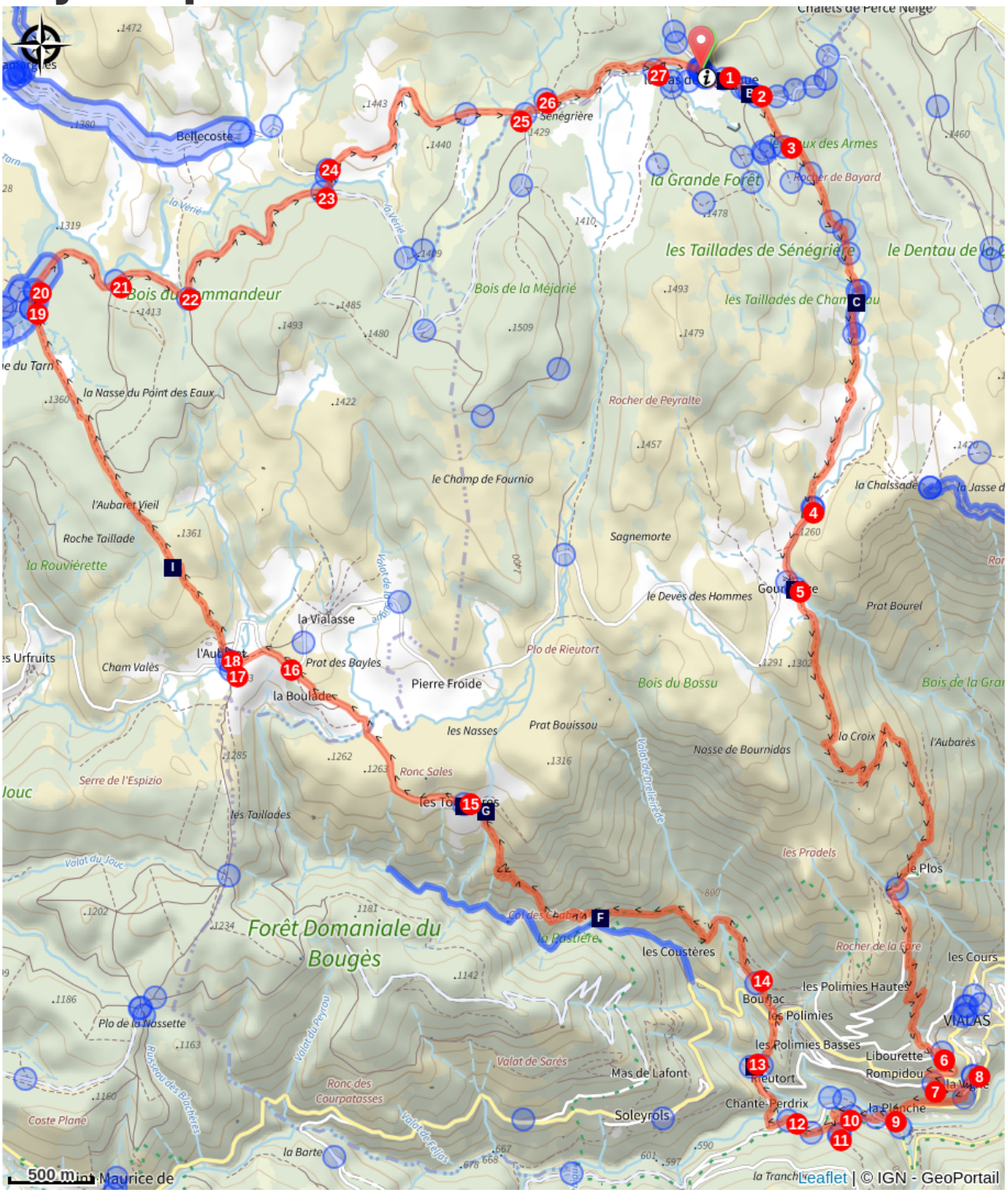
Starting at "**Mas de La Barque**", head for "**Gourdouze**" via :

1. "**Les écuries de Mas de La Barque**",
2. "**Rochers de la barque**" (2x),
3. "**Les faux des Armes**" and
4. "**La Chassalde**".
5. At "**Gourdouze**", go downhill to Vialas and go to:
6. « **Rompidou** »,
7. "**Maison de retraite**",
8. then « **La Vigne** ». Go to:
9. “**Plagette**”,
10. “**Lou devez**”,
11. “**La tranchée**”,
12. “**Légaou**”,
13. "**Rieutord**" (2x). Head for "**Les Tourrières**" via :
14. "**Les Polimies Hautes**".
15. At "**Les Tourrières**", go to "**L'Aubaret**" via :
16. "**La Boulade**" and
17. "**Pont de l'Aubaret**".
18. At "**L'Aubaret**", head for
19. " **Gap Francès**" and "**Pont du Tarn**".
20. At "**Pont du Tarn**", return to "**Mas de La Barque**" via

21. "**Les Nasses du Pont des eaux**",
22. "**Bois du Commandeur**",
23. "**Bouos de l'Oultre**",
24. "**La Planette**",
25. "**Sénégrières**",
26. “**Gardièze**”,
27. "**Martelet**" and "**Mas de La Barque**".

This trail is taken from the guidebook **Mont Lozère - Pays des sources**, published by the Pôle de pleine nature du mont Lozère.

On your path...



Le Mas de La Barque (A)
Sphagnum moss (C)
The geological fault of Vialas (E)
Tourrières (G)
The draille du Languedoc (I)

The mysterious boat (B)
Gourdouze (D)
The Rieutort (F)
The hamlet of Les Tourrières (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.

⚠ Advices

Caution: patous (livestock guard dogs) in the sectors of Les Tourrières and L'Aubaret !
Seek advice on how to behave near these dogs from tourist offices and National Park information centres.
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. Please close all gates and barriers behind you. Stay on the marked path.

How to come ?

Access

From Villefort, on the D 66.
From Génolhac, on the D 362 then the D66.

Advised parking

Mas de la Barque

Information desks

Le Mas de la Barque outdoor centre

lemasdelabarque@france48.com
Tel : 04 66 46 92 72
https://www.lemasdelabarque.com/



Office de tourisme Des Cévennes au mont Lozère

le Quai, 48220 Le Pont de Montvert sud mont-Lozère

info@cevennes-montlozere.com
Tel : 04 66 45 81 94
https://www.cevennes-montlozere.com/



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

CC des Cévennes au Mont Lozère

http://www.cevennes-mont-lozere.fr/

Parc national des Cévennes

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

Pôle pleine nature Mont Lozère

On your path...



Le Mas de La Barque (A)

Le Mas de La Barque was only a forester’s house at the end of the 20th century. From the 1960s onwards, it was frequented by children’s ski clubs and then by families from the Gard on the weekend. During the week, the association “Union pour l'Animation de la Grange” organised field trips, heritage classes and theme days open to all. A costly infrastructure was gradually built (buildings, ski lifts, snow canons), then partly demolished again. Today, as part of an overall programme of reclassifying the site, it has been developed for tourism (cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, dog-sledding, etc.) and is run by a semi-public company. The resort offers outdoor activities in summer as well as in winter.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The mysterious boat (B)

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



Sphagnum moss (C)

You will be crossing wetlands where sphagnum moss lives, whose colour ranges from yellowish green to blood-red. Without them, the role of peatbogs would be seriously compromised. Once dead, they constitute the mainstay of peat and limit the establishment of competitors. They function like sponges, retaining a great deal of water and asphyxiating the roots of other plants. Their presence is a sign that the peatland is in good health; it facilitates the growth of species of great heritage interest, such as the sundew, cranberry, bog-rosemary, etc. Unfortunately, these are fragile and sensitive to crushing, so please stay on the path and get off your bike.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Gourdouze (D)

In the 14th century, this village was a priory of Castagnols parish. In 1906 all its thatched roofs burned down. Parts of the village were bought by a private individual in the 1960s who greatly modified them. It subsequently became the property of the Cévennes National Park, which sold 250 hectares back to a Mont Lozère livestock cooperative: their herds maintain the space. The cooperative manages 1,200 hectares at Mas Camargues and Gourdouze. These uplands receive sheep and cattle herds from 15 May to 15 November.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The geological fault of Vialas (E)

A bridge crosses the Rieutort. This river, which is called Pudissine upstream from here, has its spring at an altitude of 1,425 m on Mont Lozère, near Mas de la Barque. In this valley, rounded masses of granite contrast with rectangular and fractured blocks of schist. In the Rieutort, you may see schist stuck to granite, as if they two rocks had been cut with a knife and then glued together. This is due to the fact that, in the Carboniferous (285 million years ago), the granite massif of Mont Lozère was pushed up through the schist layers, fracturing them. This path runs alongside the mining sites linked to the Vialas fault, which is perpendicular to the large Villefort fault.

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas



The Rieutort (F)

This twisted brook deserves its name! Once it has left the plateau, the Rieutort becomes a torrent and gives rise to many superb basins and waterfalls. Its water is indispensable for arable and livestock farming. In the old days, locals spared no effort to build numerous béals (irrigation channels) to bring water all the way to fields at altitude, to crops and sheepfolds. Some still exist and can be spotted with a bit of attention along the contour lines on the right bank, like fish bones sticking out of a spinal column (the brook).

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Tourrières (G)

The brooks that you come across on the path all flow towards Vialas and the Mediterranean.

Yet it is not far to the watershed. A little further on is the spring of the Tarn, which has a long way to go to the Garonne river and then the Atlantic.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The hamlet of Les Tourrières (H)

At Les Tourrières, the shepherd has about 1,000 sheep in the summer. In addition to his own flock of 300, he looks after those of a few other owners. The flocks, having come up from the neighbouring Gard department partly by lorry and partly on foot, roam over hundreds of hectares until the end of the autumn, thus maintaining a landscape shaped by humans and livestock.

Attribution : © Emilie Reydon



The draille du Languedoc (I)

This draille (path for seaonal livestock migration) was frequented by flocks of sheep during the transhumance and by farmers going to buy or sell animals at Bellecoste Fair, which was held every 16 July and 25 September. The path linked the inhabitants of the plateau to the village of Saint-Maurice-de-Ventalon. (Julie Hugon)

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