

Château du Tournel, #10

Mont Lozère - Mont Lozère et Goulet



Jeunes traileurs (© Mathilde Sagnes - Département Lozère)



Combine culture, nature and sport !

Explore Lozerette, Mas d'Orcières and the Château du Tournel as your legs see fit. The uphill sections will hone your calf muscles and the magnificent panoramic views will fill your eyes. A large-scale adventure!

Useful information

Practice : Foot race

Duration : 2 h 30

Length : 20.3 km

Trek ascent : 891 m


Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Loop

Trek

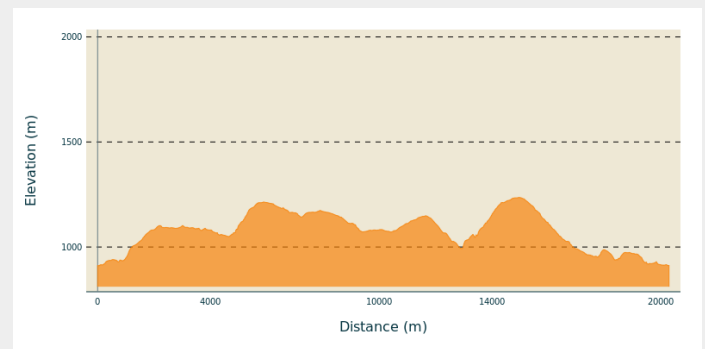
Departure : Bagnols-les-Bains

Arrival : Bagnols-les-Bains

Markings :  Trail PPN Mt Lozère

Cities : 1. Mont Lozère et Goulet

Altimetric profile

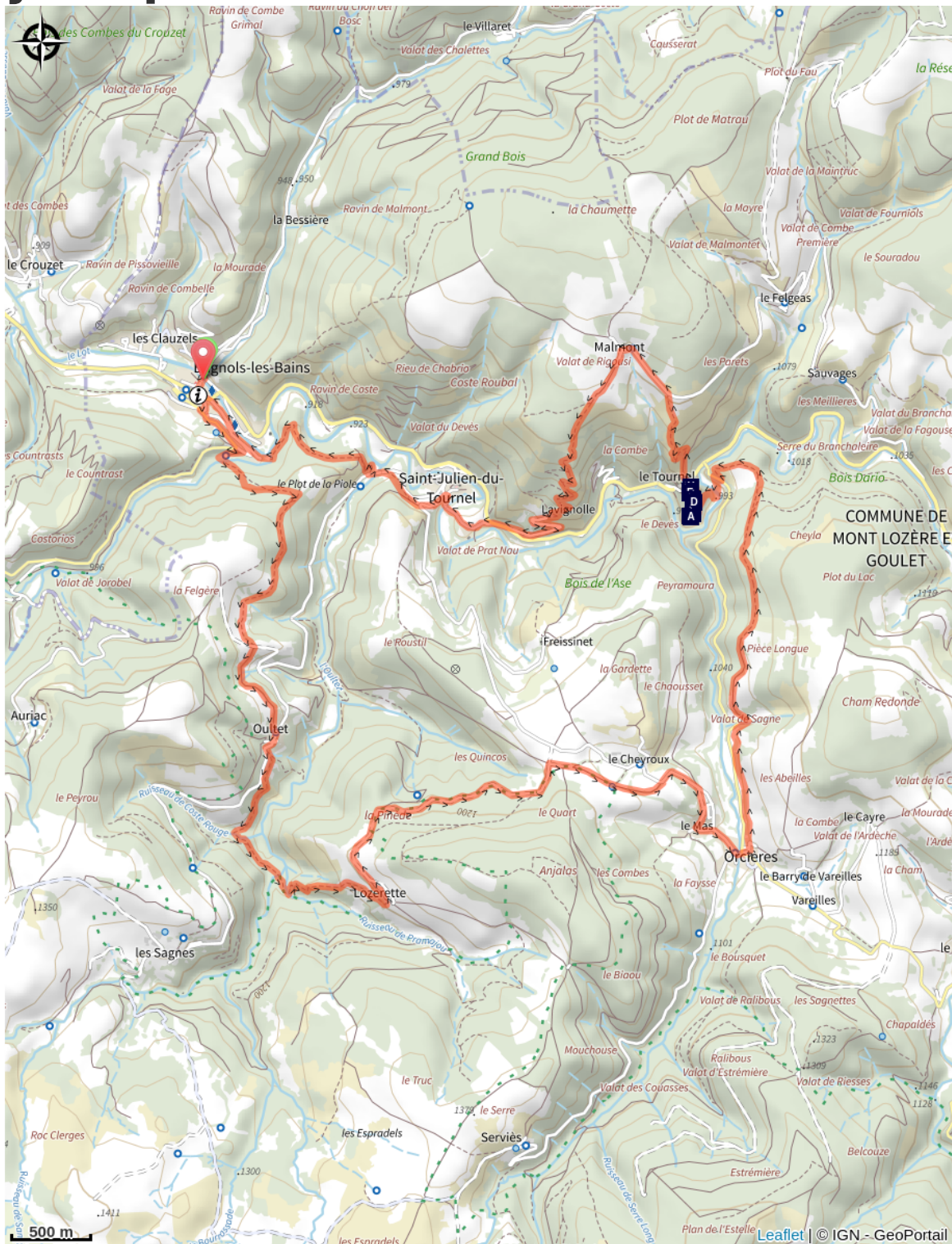






Min elevation 911 m Max elevation 1236 m





Signposts will guide you all along this route: **follow the waymarks for trail #10**

The circuit starts with a fairly steep but pleasant uphill section, on a pretty path in the forest, leading to the typical Mont Lozère village of Oultet, with its blizzard bell-tower, stone houses and old bread oven. Once you have crossed the village, you start again on a magnificent path, initially between meadows and forest, with the river nearby (the ground is often slippery). Then you start a beautiful climb with superb views throughout. This takes you to Lozerette, a village that rarely leave visitors indifferent. Here you take a track that descends gently to the hamlets of Cheyroux and Le Mas. A few steps on tar to reach Orcières, then a great, almost flat section on a path between forest and pastureland. A slightly steep descent takes you to the Lot river, which you cross to begin the climb to the Château du Tournel. Take the time to visit the castle before getting started on the climb to Malmont, which is very pretty but steep. Once you have arrived at the road and the hamlet, you'll have finished climbing! A great zigzagging path with handsome views of the castle takes you down to Saint-Julien-du-Tournel. Go through the village to reach a path that goes back downhill to the starting-point (there is one last hump – prepare yourself mentally!).

On your path...



-  The site is abandoned (A)
-  Rock with cup marks (C)
-  Traffic axes (E)
-  Keep (G)

-  Mill (B)
-  Watchtower (D)
-  Redoubt (F)
-  A few plants (H)

All useful information

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. Please close all gates and barriers behind you. Stay on the marked path.

How to come ?

Transports

Ligne 253

LIO est le Service Public Occitanie Transports de la Région Occitanie / Pyrénées - Méditerranée. Il permet à chacun de se déplacer facilement en privilégiant les transports en commun. Pour tout savoir, se rendre sur l'application lio Occitanie ou bien sur <https://ww.mestrajets.lio.laregion.fr>

Access

From Le Bleymard, on the D901.

From Mende, towards Badaroux on the N88, then to Ste-Hélène / Bagnols-les-Bains on the D901.

Advised parking

parking des Thermes

Information desks

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 office Mont-Lozère, Bagnols-les-Bains

avenue de la gare, 48190 Bagnols-les-Bains
Mont-Lozère et Goulet

contact@destination-montlozere.fr

Tel : 04 66 47 61 13

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



Source



CC Mont Lozère

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



Parc national des Cévennes

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



Pôle pleine nature Mont Lozère

On your path...



The site is abandoned (A)

From the 13th century on, the local lords preferred the more comfortable Château du Boy while some inhabitants chose the security of the city of Mende over the protection afforded by castles. The steep location of the village, the demographic crises of the 14th and 15th centuries, the plague, and the end to territorial conquest may also explain the gradual abandonment of the site. In the 19th century, only a few houses were still inhabited, and the land was barely used. The one-road village was definitively abandoned in 1930, when today's hamlet of Le Tournel was built along the western slope of the spur.

Attribution : @ Yannick Manche



Mill (B)

In feudal times, villagers using mills had to pay a fee to their lord. From the French Revolution onwards, mills became the joint property of locals, who were responsible for their upkeep. Le Tournel mill with its schist walls and roof was built below the village, a few steps from the Lot, in 1820. Powered by water flowing through a béal (open channel), the mill produced rye and wheat flour before each bread-baking, bread being the basis of the local diet. In about the mid-20th century, these mills stopped being used. Le Tournel mill, which was well-preserved, has recently been restored.

Attribution : @ Guy Grégoire

Rock with cup marks (C)

Marker 4

Below this barite boulder, which blocks access to the spur and thus protected the castle and original village, there is a rock with nine circular holes of varying sizes: cup marks. They are not placed in any particular pattern and do not seem to have been used as anchorage points. Could erosion have hollowed out the rock in this way? This phenomenon exists in many places in the Cévennes, always in schist. When nature reclaims rock faces, it first establishes lichen there. These crust-like organisms with their various colours cause the rock to crumble, which is necessary for other plants to be able to establish themselves.

Watchtower (D)

Marker 5

The similarities in construction between the watchtower and the keep date both buildings to the 13th century. The tower, part of the first settlement of the site, served as the advance defences of the original village. Later it found itself at the centre of the site, and from there protected and controlled the one-road village. Its walls are 1.2 m thick and the closing system of the door – with a sliding bar – can still be seen. Probably damaged during a fire, it was transformed into a dwelling with two storeys, separated by a wooden floor that replaced the destroyed vaulted ceiling. The anchorage points for its joists can still be seen in the masonry.

Traffic axes (E)

Marker 6

Le Tournel is situated in a landscape that is covered by a network of traffic axes: two drailles (drovers' roads) and the Via Soteirana linking Villefort with Mende. Because of its geographical position, the Château du Tournel was a dominant feature and played a prominent role in monitoring the territory, its people and their movements. The Via Soteirana, a former Royal road, seems to have been crucial for mining operations in the surrounding area. It was also a non-negligible source of income for the castles built at intervals along it, because of the tolls imposed on every user.

Redoubt (F)

This tower was probably necessary to fortify the castle during the Hundred Years' War. Its extremely thick walls (1.7 m as compared to 80 cm for the residence) reinforce a corner of the castle wall and served as the last line of defence. They follow the contours of the vertical cliffs. The tower still shows the vestiges of three corbels just above the access door, which must once have supported a bretèche (small defensive balcony). Inside, the floors separated by vaulted ceilings are accessible through manholes.



Keep (G)

Marker 8

The keep and redoubt are defensive elements. Through their massive appearance and their position, they asserted the lords' prestige and power. In the 13th century, the keep was redesigned to have a narrow winding entrance passage and a curtain wall on its west side. The first two floors were each occupied by a rectangular room with a vaulted ceiling and arrow-slit openings. Access from one level to the next was through a manhole. On the second floor, a wall still carries the imprint of the fireplace that once took up the whole back wall. A turret built onto the keep contained a spiral staircase that gave access to the third floor.

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas



A few plants (H)

Marker 9

A few plant species are well-represented near the ruins, such as hoary plantain and mugwort. Among the plants that colonise the almost soil-less stone walls or rock faces are stonecrops (several species, notable for their succulent leaves); saxifrages (three species), which brighten up the rocky outcrops in spring with their white flowers; and navelwort. Trailing snapdragon with its yellow flowers streaked in pink exists almost exclusively in the Cévennes. On top of the tower wall, you will notice two rows of schist stones with rounded lower edges, an exceptional architectural detail. They probably date from the 12th century.

Attribution : @ Yves Maccagno