

# Croix de Gratassac

Mont Lozère



Chemin de la croix de Gratassac (Office de tourisme Mont Lozère)



A hike with some tricky steep bits but with rewards at the top: striking panoramic views over Mont Lozère, the lake and the town of Villefort.

Gratassac is the only point overlooking Villefort with a 360° view. It has an exceptional panorama of the lake, Castanet, La Garde Guérin, La Chapelle Saint Loup and the Mont Lozère massif.

## Useful information

Practice : Hiking on foot

Duration : 2 h 30

Length : 8.3 km

Trek ascent : 442 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Loop

Themes : Architecture and village, Fauna and flora, History and culture, Transports en commun

# Trek

**Departure** : Villefort – Place du Bosquet

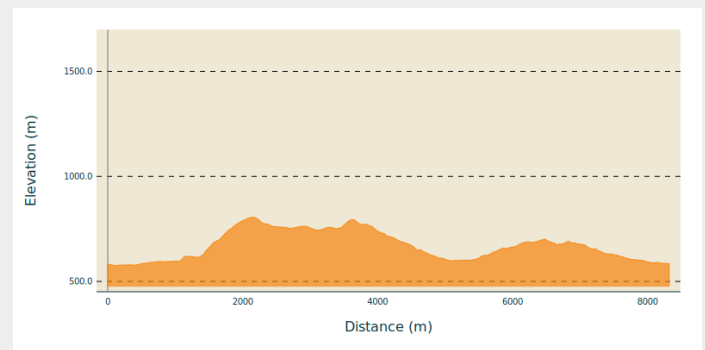
**Arrival** : Villefort – Place du Bosquet

**Markings** :  Yellow waymarks

**Cities** : 1. Villefort

2. Pourcharesses

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 575 m    Max elevation 806 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 :

From “**Villefort**” walk to :

1. “**Av. de la Gare**”,
2. “**Rond Point du Lac**”,
3. “**Pisciculture**”, and then uphill to :
4. “**CROIX DE GRATASSAC**”, continue to :
5. “**Col de l'Arjala**”,
6. “**L'Adrec**”,
7. “**L'Affenadou**”,
8. “**Gare de Villefort**”,
9. “**Les Hauts des Sédaries**”.
10. Take the “**Chemin des Fangouses**”, then go back down again to “**Pl. de l'Ormeau**”.

This hike is taken from the guidebook **Mont Lozère - Pays des sources de la Margeride au lac de Villefort en Cévennes** published by the Pôle de pleine nature du Mont Lozère.

# On your path...



Place de l'Ormeau (A)  
Rue de l'Église (C)  
The Regordane Way (E)

The sweet chestnut (B)  
Stone architecture (D)  
The origins of Villefort (F)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

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

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

This hike is accessible by public transport.

To consult the updated schedules and plan your trip, use the route calculator below by entering **the arrival stop : VILLEFORT - Centre or Villefort (Station)**

### Access

From Génolhac on the D906 (20 minutes)  
From Prévencières on the D906 (15 minutes)  
From Les Vans on the D901 (35 minutes)  
From Mende on the D901 (60 minutes)

### Advised parking

Place du Bosquet square

## **Information desks**

### **Tourism office Mont-Lozère, Villefort**

43, Place du Bosquet, 48800 Villefort

[contact@destination-montlozere.fr](mailto:contact@destination-montlozere.fr)

Tel : 04 66 46 87 30

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



## **Source**



## On your path...

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### Place de l'Ormeau (A)

Villefort's former market square, Place de l'Ormeau hosted Clédou market on Thursday mornings until the 1980s. The square teemed with smells and colours. Livestock, meat, vegetables, grains and chestnuts were sold here, especially in the 19th century. The lime tree on the square was planted on 11 November 1920 as a “victory tree” so that future generations might remember their ancestors' fight for freedom during the First World War. The Maison Chambon, with its double-archway entrance, has an inscribed lintel: Metre lehan Martin 1595, flanked by a diamond shape and a heart.

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### The sweet chestnut (B)

In 1900, sweet chestnuts were the main farm produce. The nuts of this so-called “bread tree” fed many families as well as their farm animals. Chestnut-growing is a year-round activity, but is especially busy at harvest time. Harvesters would meet in the evening for a brousillade (chestnuts roasted on a wood fire). When parts of the rural population left, many chestnut orchards were abandoned while others were cut down for their tannin to be extracted. Chestnut bleeding canker and chestnut blight, diseases caused by mushrooms, also killed off a great number of trees. Today, chestnut farming in the Cévennes is being revived with a focus on quality.

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## Rue de l'Église (C)

The town hall is a former private mansion of the 15th century, with a spiral staircase and ground-floor rooms with vaulted ceilings. The lintel behind the gate comes from a fortified house in the village of Bayard, which is now under the waters of the Lake. On the facade of the 16th century house opposite is a finely crafted mullion window.

- The oldest house in the village is a listed monument and dates from the 14th century. It has Gothic windows and a pulley system once used to bring forage into the loft.
- An archway giving onto an internal courtyard shows you mediaeval walls made from large regular blocks.
- Two lintels bear Christ's monogramme: IHS, Iesus Hominum Salvator (Jesus saviour of mankind). One instance is followed by the inscription Ave Maria.

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## Stone architecture (D)

The architecture of Villefort's old buildings is typical for one-street villages:

- the houses with the two vaulted porches were once inns, tradesmen's or artisans' shops: one of the porches was used to store merchandise, the other to display it;
- the sculpted lintels above the entrances to some houses on Rue de l'Eglise and Rue de la Bourgade bear witness to the activities of former occupants;
- several facades have handsome mullioned windows from the Renaissance.

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## The Regordane Way (E)

The Regordane Way linking Alès (Gard) and Luc (Lozère) is a section of the important route that connected Lower Languedoc and the Auvergne in the Middle Ages. It facilitated trade between the Mediterranean basin and parts of the Kingdom of France. The mule-drivers that used it – known locally as Régordans or Rigourdiens – transported oil, wine and salt. It was also a religious path, taking pilgrims called Romieux to Saint Gilles. It was progressively abandoned in the 14th century, when the port at Marseille and the fairs in Lyon grew in importance. Ruts left by cartwheels can still be seen north of Prévencières (between Le Thort and La Molette) and near Saint-André-Capcèze.

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## The origins of Villefort (F)

In the Middle Ages, Villefort was known as Villa Montisfortis, a name that might stem from a former Roman agricultural estate. At the time, a castle overlooked the village, of which nothing remains today. This castrum was strategically located on the heights of Le Collet (at the southern exit of Villefort) to protect the Regordane Way – and to collect tolls.