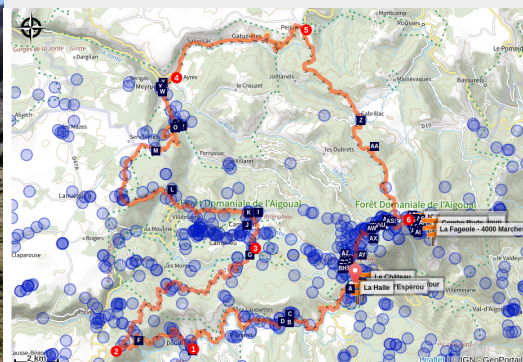


Oceanic slope of Aigoual

CC Causses Aigoual Cévennes - Terres solidaires



Montée de l'Aigoual (Béatrice Galzin)



Get on your bike for a long adventure west of the Aigoual massif. Soak up the memories as you meander between the departments of Gard and Lozère !

A ride through the Cévennes, exploring an area that is still wild and unspoiled. Small roads, pretty villages and hamlets, profound gorges, arid plateaux: a multitude of landscapes in just one day.

Useful information

Practice : Cycling

Duration : 5 h

Length : 88.2 km

Trek ascent : 2113 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Boucle

Trek

Departure : L'Espérou

Arrival : L'Espérou

Cities : 1. Dourbies

2. Trèves

3. Lanuéjols

4. Saint-Sauveur-Camprieu

5. Meyrueis

6. Gatuzières

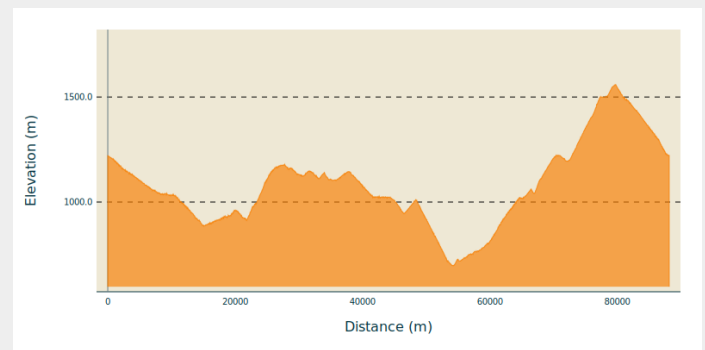
7. Fraissinet-de-Fourques

8. Rousses

9. Bassurels

10. Val-d'Aigoual

Altimetric profile

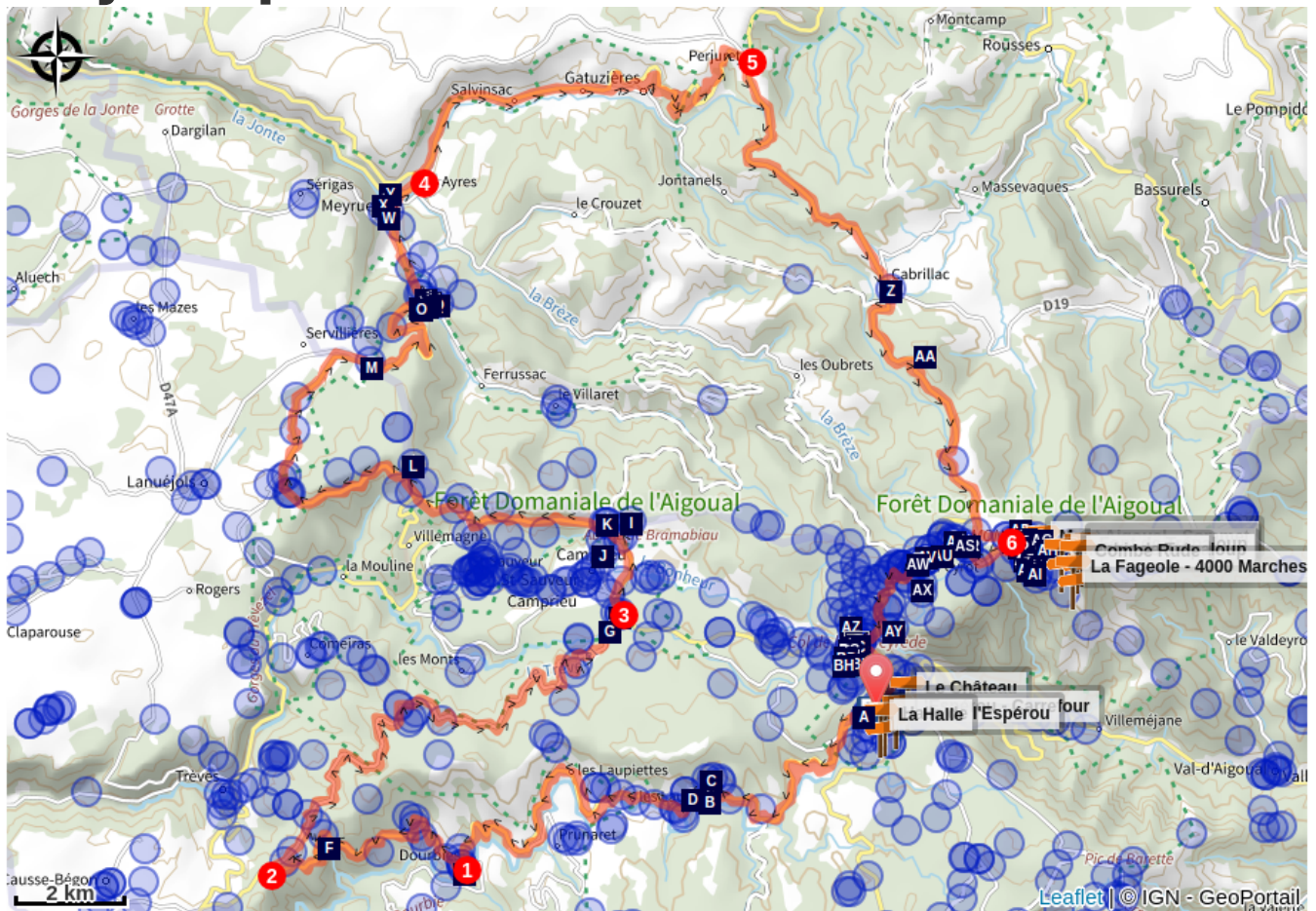


Min elevation 716 m Max elevation 1550 m

At the L'Espérou roundabout, bike to Dourbies on the D151.

1. After the village of Dourbies, continue on the D151 to the Col des Rhodes pass.
2. At the Col des Rhodes pass, take the D170 towards St-Sauveur-Camprieu via the Col des Ubertes pass to reach the D986.3)
3. Turn towards Lanuéjols on the D986 and then the D263. Cross Lanuéjols and at the roundabout, turn right towards Meyrueis on the D47 and then the D986.
4. As you leave Meyrueis, climb to the Col de Perjuret pass going towards Florac-Trois-Rivières on the D996.
5. At the Col de Perjuret pass, go uphill to the summit of Mont Aigoual on the D18 via Cabrillac.
6. At the summit, take the track closed to motorised vehicles that takes you below Mont Aigoual via Font de Trépaloup. Then join the D269 to go downhill to the Col de La Serreyrède pass. Return to L'Espérou on the D986.

On your path...



- | | |
|--|---|
| The village of L'Espérou (A) |  The Dourbie (B) |
| Malpertus (C) | The common alder (D) |
| Dourbies (E) | The Dourbies gorge (F) |
|  The hidden life of the forest (G) |  The Mont Aigoual forest (H) |
| Wetlands (I) | The Bonheur river (J) |
| Col de la Croix de Fer pass (K) | Pierre plantée (Pierre plantée) (L) |
| Forest management (M) | Between labour and idleness (N) |

All useful information

Advices

Before committing yourself to a circuit, ensure that it is suitable for your activity level and ability. Respect traffic laws and other road users; stay in control of your speed and trajectory. Make sure to be seen and travel in single file when in a group. Remember that the weather changes quickly in the mountains. Take enough water. Safe trip !

How to come ?

Access

From Meyrueis or Valleraugue, take the D986 to L'Espérou.

Advised parking

L'Espérou

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

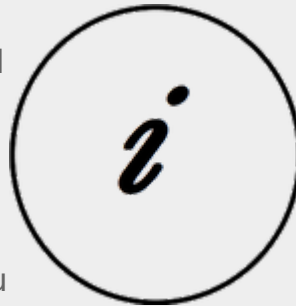
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

maisondeilaigoual@sudcevennes.com

Tel : 04 67 82 64 67

<https://www.sudcevennes.com>

Accessibility : Accessible aux personnes à mobilité réduite sur les trois niveaux du bâtiment (ascenseur)



Source



Pôle Nature Aigoual

On your path...



The village of L'Espérou (A)

The village of L'Espérou lies on the border of Dourbies and Valleraugue local councils. A draille (track for livestock to migrate to summer pastures with their shepherds) crosses the village. As in many villages in the Gard, the two places of worship – one Catholic, the other Protestant – are opposite each other. The village is located in a varied environment that is suitable for outdoor activities and sports.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



The Dourbie (B)

In the upper reaches of the river, a diverse and fascinating wildlife has developed despite the strong current. The clear running waters condition the presence and future of the brown trout. It cohabits with minnows, otters... You may see a white-throated dipper on a rock, or else a grey heron or wagtail on the bank. But it is in the clear waters and under rocks that a whole little aquatic world exists: molluscs, crustaceans, insect larvae, etc. They pile up quite harmoniously, dozens per square metre. Some stick to the rocks; others drift, lurk or float. It all depends on the equipment nature has provided them with: bristles, suckers, hooks, sheaths weighted with gravel...

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Malpertus (C)

The ruined hamlet of Malpertus is a splendid and moving site, with its feel of a paradise lost which one would like to restore to its former glory. The views onto the Dourbie valley are stunning. The short grass makes it easy to see far, and spot friends or enemies early. Weapons were hidden here in World War Two, stored in a rock shelter at the Roc du Salidou, just behind the buildings. The hamlet's last inhabitant left this site, inaccessible except on muleback, in the 1960s. Today it is home to diverse small fauna: birds, insects, lizards, common frogs, etc.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The common alder (D)

A wise tree lives in the sunshine with its feet in the waters of the Dourbie: the common alder. You can identify it even in winter by looking for its strobili on the ground or on its branches - female inflorescences shaped like small pinecones. The alder's tangled roots are solidly anchored in low riverbanks, thus ensuring their protection. By symbiosis between alders and a bacteria called frankia living in their root, nitrogen is fixed in the ground at about 60 to 200 kg per hectare per year! This is a bonanza for poor soils, which are quickly enriched.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Dourbies (E)

The village of Dourbies was built on a ridge to maximise the flatter soils for cultivation. Farming having declined in the valley, fields that were once cultivated have now been urbanised, and broom heath is invading more and more land.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The Dourbies gorge (F)

The path comes out on the Dourbie gorge. Opposite you, the western part of the high granite plateau of the Lingas joins up on its right with the limestone plateau called Causse de Larzac. On your right, you can see the granite dome of Saint-Guiral. Closer to you, in the vales that converge on the Dourbie, are the former crop terraces, pastureland, the village built on the riverbank at the valley's widest point and finally the chestnut orchard. You are seeing the upper limit of its range, which corresponds to its maximum altitude in this zone (800 m).

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



🌿 The hidden life of the forest (G)

Trees grow upwards towards the light while mosses benefit from their shade on the ground and spread out. Like soft cushions or carpets, they hug everything that sticks out of the ground, such as old tree stumps. This soft felted surface is pleasing to see, and an undergrowth without mosses would not be worthy of the name. Legend has it that mosses show which way is north.

Wrong!

Mosses indicate a degree of moisture; they protect the soil from drying out by retaining every last drop of dew. They prepare pockets of humus for the future occupants: grasses and herbaceous plants. They also love the damp of tree trunks and can grow there, on the side that is most exposed to the prevailing rains.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



🌿 The Mont Aigoual forest (H)

“Aigoual, Forêt d’Exception”

The French Forestry Office, which manages state forests, launched a programme in 2013 called “Aigoual, Forêt d’Exception” (Aigoual: An Exceptional Forest) with the aim of highlighting the massif’s natural and cultural heritage. The Forestry Office thus tries to foreground the different aspects of its multi-faceted management: production, protection and receiving visitors. One key aspect of this approach, which complements other initiatives by local actors, is to improve visitors’ experience in the forest.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



Wetlands (I)

Above the path, the soft sound of trickling water... These are wetlands, a fragile zone that must be protected. The peatbog is made up of rushes, sedge and many types of moss, such as sphagnum. Numerous insects live here, such as the large marsh grasshopper and dragonflies, as well as the common frog. If you make little noise, you may see deer here, or other animals that have come to cool down.

Attribution : MALAFOSSE Jean-Pierre



The Bonheur river (J)

The Bramabiau site is an example of a karst spring. Here, slightly east of Camprieu, the Bonheur River has dug into the Causse (limestone plateau) and disappears in a natural tunnel. It re-emerges into the open at the bottom of the Aven de Balset, but it twists to the south to disappear again below ground. The river meanders through more than 10 km of tunnels. Then, 700 horizontal meters from its sinkhole, it reappears as a spring! The rock walls of the narrow canyon magnify the sound of its waters and add to its rumbling some acoustic vibrations that are close to a gigantic roaring. This is no longer the tranquil Bonheur, it is the tumultuous Bramabiau.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Col de la Croix de Fer pass (K)

At the col de la Croix de Fer pass, which is a strategic crossroads of several tracks, there used to be an inn for travellers. The magnificent ruin with its two impressive vaults was also a sizeable farm, owned by the Baron de Roquedols. It was located at the limit of the municipalities of Meyrueis and St-Sauveur-Camprieu on the route of the Camin Ferrat and the King's Road. In the days of religious persecution, the preacher François Vivens* organised secret Protestant gatherings in the small valley just below the buildings. (*Vivens was killed in 1692, 10 years before the Camisard War)

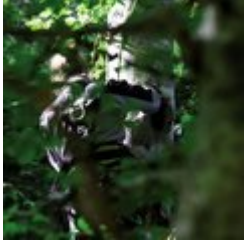
Attribution : nelly Carel



Pierre plantée (Pierre plantée) (L)

Since ancient times, stones have stood along the Camin Ferrat: directional markers indicating a crossroads. Above all, they marked the boundaries of two parishes. Since the creation of Departments in 1790, they have outlined the border between Gard and Lozère.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



Forest management (M)

The Mont Aigoual forest.

The wood harvested here comes from a forest that was reforested from the late 19th century onwards, after a period of overgrazing. This forest begins, grows and dies like all living beings. The job of foresters is to manage and support its development while respecting the laws of nature. They harvest trees before they die to make room for young trees. These tree trunks supply an entire economic sector, from the lumberjack to the skidder operator, the saw operator and the carpenter or cabinetmaker. Wood also accompanies you throughout your lives, from your cradle, furniture, woodwork and the wooden frame of your house to your coffin.

Attribution : Gaël Karczewski



Between labour and idleness (N)

Marker 3

Men and women have fashioned the Estate according to their needs and wishes. At Roquedols, crops used to be irrigated with water from the Pauchètes stream. In fact, the path you have just been walking on may have struck you as narrow and stony. It follows a former béal, or small irrigation channel. Much later, ornamental landscaping was laid out, including this beautiful archway – which is built on the vestiges of the wall of the former Protestant cemetery!

Attribution : © A. BOUISSOU / TERRA Ministère de l'Environnement