

Camprieu trail

Gard



Descente vers Bramabiau (Nathalie Thomas)



A hike through a very varied landscape but focused on the forest that was created by the large reforestation programme begun in the late 19th century.

Today, the big trees that cover the slopes seem to always have been there. And yet in 1864, when the French state forestry service began reforesting the mountain, which looked like a giant landslide, the inhabitants of Camprieu disagreed. Slowly, they were persuaded that the work was urgent.

Useful information

Practice : Pédestre

Duration : 6 h

Length : 16.7 km

Trek ascent : 574 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Boucle

Themes : Milieu naturel, Histoire et culture, Agriculture et élevage

Trek

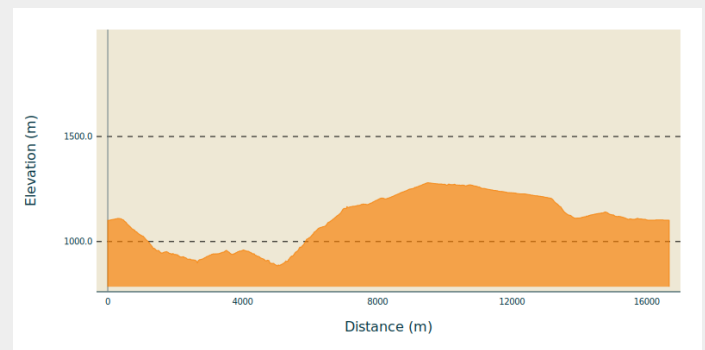
Departure : Gymnasium in Camprieu

Arrival : Gymnasium in Camprieu

Markings : — Balisage jaune et mobilier signalétique

Cities : 1. Saint-Sauveur-Camprieu
2. Dourbies

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 886 m Max elevation 1276 m

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:

Start in Camprieu, from the car park at the gymnasium. Walk to **“Camprieu - La croix Basse”**, then **“La Croix Haute”**, **“La Clédette”**, **“La passerelle de Bramabiau”**.

1. At **“La passerelle de Bramabiau”**, take the track on the left to **“Conduite Forcées”**.
2. At **“Conduite Forcées”**, head for **“Les Monts”** via **“La Matte”** and **“La Combelle”**.
3. Walk through the village of **“Les Monts”** and, as you leave, take the path opposite that goes uphill towards **“Col du Suquet”**, via **“Valat de Malbosc”** and then the road to **“La Roque”**.
4. At **“La Roque”**, take the path on the left that joins a track, to **“Col du Suquet”** via **“Le Vieux Hêtre”**.
5. At **“Col du Suquet”**, take the track on the left towards **“Camprieu”** via **“Col des Ubertes”**, **“Tédounès”**, **“Terondel”**.
6. At the signpost for **“Terondel”**, continue on the road to **“Camprieu”** via **“Tailladette”**, **“Maison du Bois”**, **“Tabarde”**, **“Le Cros”**.

On your path...



Camprieu (A)

La Boissière farm (C)

Castle or farm estate? (E)

A church at the heart of it all (G)

Les Monts wash house (I)

The forestry labourers' shelter (K)

 The Mont Aigoual forest (M)

The Path of the Dead (B)

Arboretum (D)

A cemetery that reveals histories

(F)

 Un domaine agricole reboisé (H)

Col du Suquet pass (J)

 The hidden life of the forest (L)

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. Take enough water.

How to come ?

Transports

liO is the regional public transport service of the Occitanie/ Pyrénées – Méditerranée region. It facilitates everyone's movements by prioritising public transport. For more information, call 08 10 33 42 73 or go to www.laregion.fr (in term time).

Access

From Meyrueis or Valleraugue, take the D 986 towards St-Sauveur-Camprieu.

Advised parking

At the gymnasium in Camprieu

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

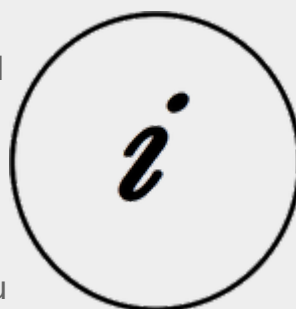
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

maisondelaigoual@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)



Tourism office Mont Aigoual Causses Cévennes, Valleraugue

7 quartier des Horts, 30570 Valleraugue

valleraugue@sudcevennes.com

Tel : 04 67 64 82 15

<https://www.sudcevennes.com>



Source



CC Causses Aigoual Cévennes Terres Solidaires

<http://www.caussesaigoualcevennes.fr/>



Parc national des Cévennes

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



Pôle Nature Aigoual

On your path...



Camprieu (A)

In the 19th century, the village streets were bustling year-round with a throng of artisans, labourers and shopkeepers, who lived in these modest mountain houses that were also suitable for livestock rearing. Camprieu had: two cobblers, six clog makers, two basket makers, one carpenter, two wheelwrights, two farriers, one miller, two stonemasons, one glassworks, one sawmill, one dairy, two grocer's shops, a haberdashery and ironmonger's and one shop for ladies' "fashion and dresses". There was also a cheese cellar that produced Roquefort until 1932, a hotel and an inn.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The Path of the Dead (B)

In the Middle Ages and until 1870, the Catholic village of Camprieu had neither church nor cemetery. "Its inhabitants therefore went to the hamlet of Saint-Sauveur de Pourcils. To transport their dead to the remote cemetery, they had to take the 'Path of the Dead'. They carried the coffins on their backs and, at every rest stop, recited the prayer De Profundis. Funeral processions stopped using the path in summer 1872. That year, the village of Camprieu finally obtained its own cemetery. But the name has stuck: "the Path of the Dead".

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



La Boissière farm (C)

La Boissière farm was abandoned by its inhabitants when Mont Aigoual was reforested. A salary from the French National Water and Forestry Commission was so much more secure than the meagre revenues from a farmer's endless work. You pass through the farm's porch and walk on its threshing floor – but there are no chickens or cereals on the threshing floor, and no herds ambling to the meadow. Today the forest has won.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Arboretum (D)

To begin with, arboretums were experiments to study the behaviour of tree species introduced to the massif as part of the reforestation programme from the late 19th century on. Over time, their scientific character gave way to a more educational and ornamental outlook. On the Aigoual, the French Forestry Office maintains a network of arboretums that are representative of the forest's diversity and of the work carried out by foresters on the massif since the early 20th century. The waymarked circuit only covers a part of the vast arboretum.

Attribution : © Elodie Mazel



Castle or farm estate? (E)

In the 12th century, minor vassal lords of the Roquefeuil family ruled from a castle at Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils. They lived in autarky with their livestock, large pastures and a share of the farmers' harvests. No remains from that period survive. The main building looks more like a farmhouse. Over the centuries, the castle has become a large farm estate with outbuildings.

Attribution : © Coll. G. Mathon



A cemetery that reveals histories (F)

The small cemetery of Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils, so peaceful today, reveals a rich and eventful history. The gravestones bear the names of Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim families. This religious plurality is partly due to the arrival in the 20th century of foreign workers to mine argentiferous lead and copper in the neighbouring hamlet of Villemagne. During the murky period of World War II, the wife of a resistance fighter and her six children took refuge in the surrounding area. The Muslim graves bear witness to the period following the Algerian War when a camp for harkis was set up in the region. These Algerian Muslims, who had served in the French army, were employed by the French Forestry Office for the reforestation of the Aigoual massif.

Attribution : © Coll. G. Mathon



A church at the heart of it all (G)

Why was such an imposing church built in a small hamlet? The profound attachment of the parishioners to their place of worship was key. The church was destroyed three times, by Protestants (1562 and 1703) and by the ravages of time (1848). But each time the parishioners who lived in neighbouring hamlets decided to rebuild it. Despite this determination, the church and cemetery were eventually transferred to Camprieu (1871). The episcopal authorities cited difficulties in accessing the place of worship and disagreements between the mayor and parish priest. The local faithful, who were opposed to the transfer, managed to keep masses for the yearly pilgrimage, baptisms, funerals and weddings in St-Sauveur.

Attribution : © Coll. G. Mathon



🌿 Un domaine agricole reboisé (H)

Today, the hamlet of Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils is surrounded by trees but in the 19th century the Aigoual massif was bare! Its reforestation began as a state programme managed by foresters. The French Forestry Office bought many farm estates to turn them into foresters' houses. Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils had all the required characteristics: buildings for housing foresters; varied soils; good sun exposure; and water nearby (the river below). The foresters set up a tree nursery to grow young trees and an arboretum to test how well-adapted different species were.

Attribution : © Coll. G. Mathon



Les Monts wash house (I)

The wash house in Les Monts still has running water but the washerwomen have disappeared for good. The site is magical. The water is clear enough for dragonflies to lay their eggs in and for birds to drink

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



Col du Suquet pass (J)

You are at the highest point of the hike. On the right bank of the Dourbie, the path crosses a sheer slope that is alternatively made up of zones of solid granite and other zones where it has decomposed due to weathering into coarse granitic sand. To the south, the views encompass the entire Lingas massif, a high wooded plateau overlooking, further south, the region around Le Vigan and the Languedocian plain.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The forestry labourers' shelter (K)

Deep inside the forest, you will soon see a little house. From the 19th to the early 20th century, it gave shelter to the forestry labourers in charge of reforesting the mountain. The work site was too far from a proper foresters' house to get back there every evening, especially since the working day was long. There was no question then of working only 35 or even 40 hours a week! The trees were planted one by one using a pickaxe; the daily minimum agreed on was 100 trees per man per day. A total of 68 million were planted...

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



🌿 The hidden life of the forest (L)

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 (M)

“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