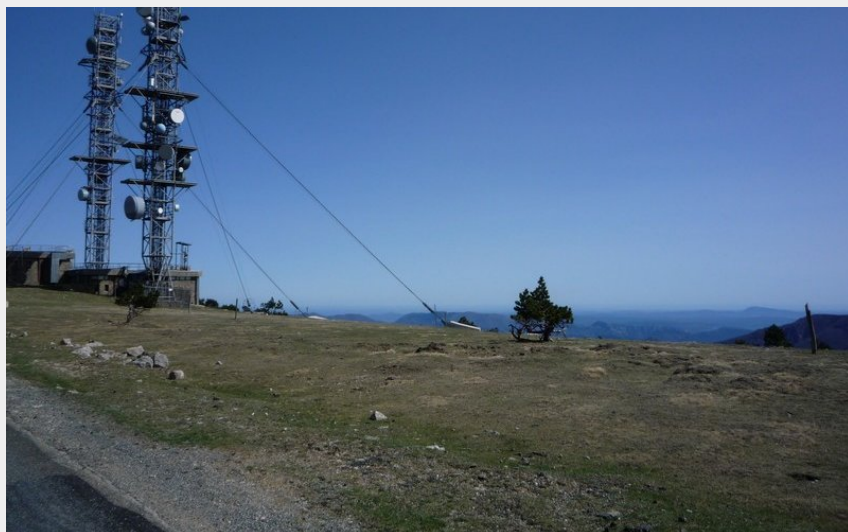
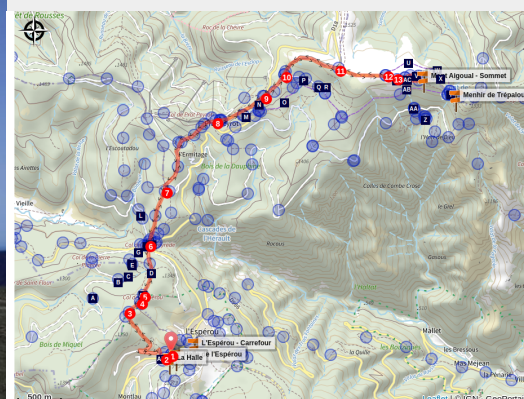


The spine of Mont Aigoual (Trail)

Gard



Les antennes de l'Aigoual (Nathalie Thomas)



This path crosses the beautiful Aigoual beech forest and its attendant flora. The view from the summit remains as breathtaking as ever !

Useful information

Practice : Trail

Duration : 2 h 15

Length : 13.7 km

Trek ascent : 480 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Aller-retour

Trek

Departure : L'Espérou (Les Halles)

Arrival : Summit of Mont Aigoual – L'Espérou

Markings :  Balisage jaune et mobilier signalétique

Cities : 1. Dourbies

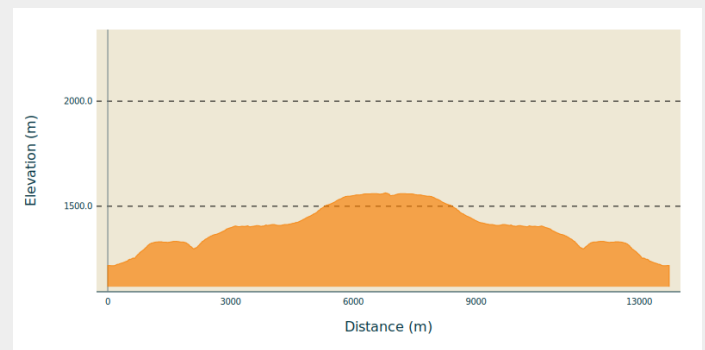
2. Saint-Sauveur-Camprieu

3. Val-d'Aigoual

4. Meyrueis

5. Bassurels

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1217 m Max elevation 1559 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 :

There-and-back trail.

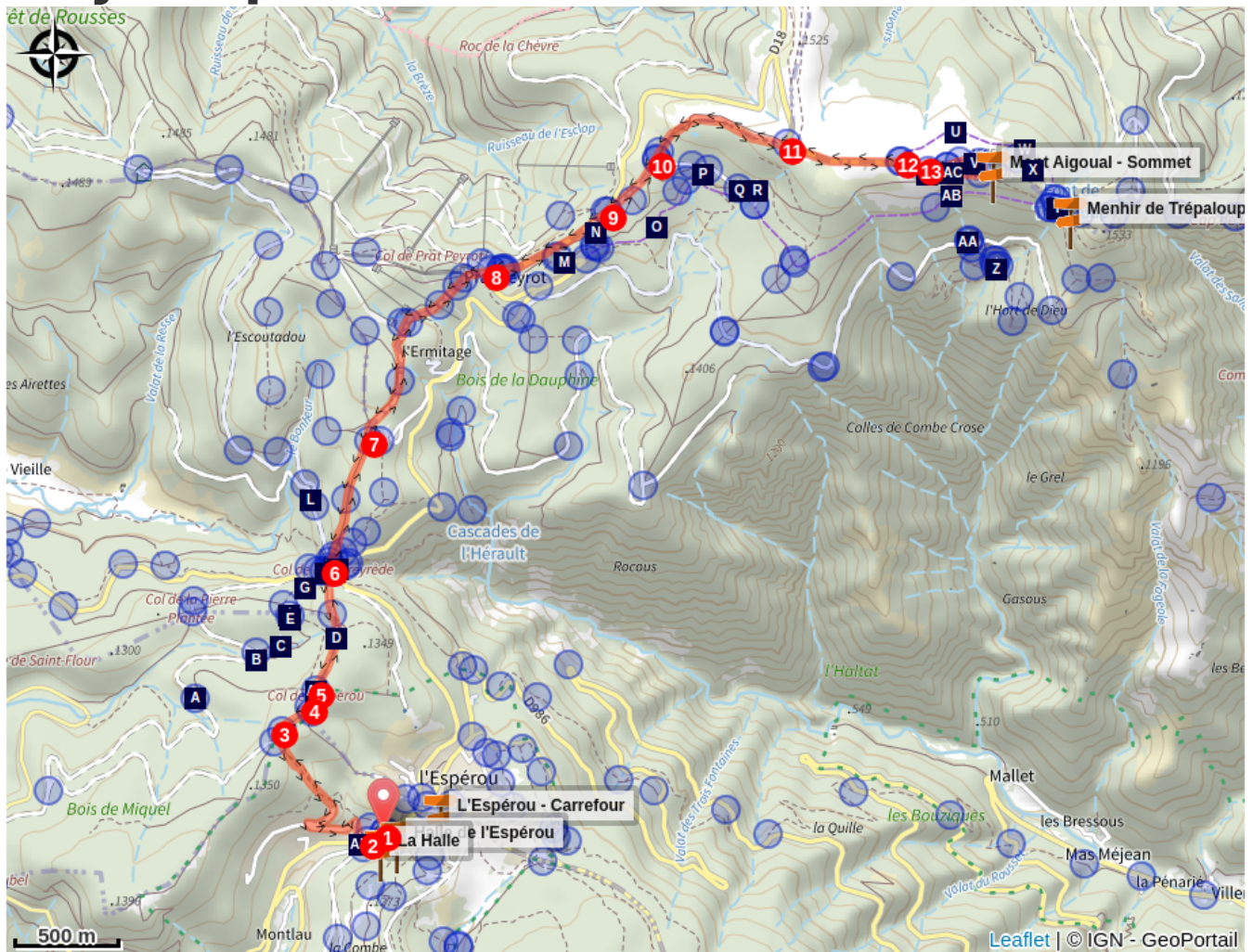
1. From "**Espérou-Halle**", run to "**Col de l'Espérou**" via:
2. "**La halle**",
3. "**Montlau**",
4. "**Col de l'Espérou**", make for "**Col de la Serreyrède**" via:
5. "**Serre de Favatel**".
6. Au "**Col de la Serreyrède**", run to "**Station de Prat Peyrot**" via:
7. "**Le Fangas**".
8. At "**Prat Peyrot**", go uphill to "**Sommet du Mont Aigoual**" via:
9. "**Draille du Calcadis**",
10. "**La drailhe**",
11. "**Les antennes**",
12. "**Carrefour**",
13. "**Sommet du mont Aigoual**".

Go around the weather station.

Return to L'Espérou by retracing your steps: "**Les Antennes**", "**La Drailhe**", "**Draille de Calcadis**", "**Station de Prat Peyrot**", "**Le Fangas**", "**Col de la Serreyrède**", "**Serre de Pavatel**", "**Montlau**", "**la Halle**", "**Espérou-Halle**".

This walk is taken from the guidebook **Massif de l'Aigoual**, published by the communauté de communes Causses Aigoual Cévennes as part of the collection Espaces naturels gardois and the label Gard Pleine.

On your path...



-  Woodpecker nesting chambers (A)
-  Le Trévezet molière (peat bog) (C)
-  Irregular forest (E)
- From beech copse to mature plantation (G)
- The association "Terres d'Aigoual" (I)
- Climate frontier (K)
- On the Verge (Yoann Crépin) (M)
- Peat bog and acclimatisation garden (B)
- Georges Fabre (D)
- Productive forest (F)
- The watershed (H)
- La Serreyrède (J)
-  Boreal owl (L)
- Guardian of the Woods (Raphaël Daynié) (N)

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

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. Please close all gates and barriers behind you.

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, go to the lio Occitanie app or visit <https://www.mestrajets.lio.laregion.fr>

Access

From Valleraugue, take the D986 to the village of L'Espérou. At the roundabout, continue straight. Car park at La Halle/Les Halles.

Advised parking

L'Espérou or summit of Mont Aigoual



Information desks

Biosphera

18, rue vincent Faita, 30480 Cendras

biosphera@shvc.fr

Tel : 04 66 07 39 25

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



Source

On your path...



Woodpecker nesting chambers (A)

Marker 5

If you look up, you will see two oval holes on the beech trunks. They are black-woodpecker nesting chambers. This jet black bird with its red “beret” is the largest of Europe's woodpeckers, and rather timid. Its diet consists of ants and insects living in wood. Its prowess at hammering and digging seems quite out of proportion to its size. The opening you see gives onto a chamber with a volume of about 30 litres, which a woodpecker has dug out of healthy wood, using only its bill as a tool, over two to three weeks. In May, there will be 3 to 5 eggs in a nesting chamber. Since the number of trees with nesting chambers is limited, they have been marked with a triangle or banded in yellow to make sure that they are preserved.



Peat bog and acclimatisation garden (B)

Marker 4

This peat bog was a site for experiments and research by Charles Flahault. Flahault, who studied the geographical distribution of species, was interested in what was then known as acclimatisation (adaptation to local environmental conditions). He attempted to introduce 200 plants from 40 non-indigenous species to Le Trévezet peat bog, echoing the way tree species were introduced into arboretums. The peat bog's history and the way it works are described in detail on the panel (in French only).

Attribution : © Jean-Pierre Malafosse



🌱 Le Trévezet molière (peat bog) (C)

Marker 3

A peat bog is a thick layer of plant cover that has decayed little or not at all because of accumulated water, acid soils and the cold climate. This wetland has hardly changed for centuries. Once called molières, soulages, sagnes or fanga, these environments were long denigrated and “cleaned up”. Today, they are known to be well worth preserving. Peat bogs are home to a great variety of more or less specific species, such as the sundew, a little carnivorous plant.

Attribution : © Bruno Descaves

Georges Fabre (D)

A graduate of the Ecole polytechnique, and top of his year at the Nancy forestry school, the forester Georges Fabre devoted 30 years of his energy to reforesting the mountains of the Lozère and Gard. His goal was to stabilise mountain soils, but also to provide work for a local population that would otherwise have been condemned, in its entirety, to leave the countryside. In 1894, he initiated the construction of the Mont Aigoual weather observatory. In association with the Club Cévenol and Club Alpin Français, he also laid the foundations of the local “heritage tourism” (creating the Grand Hotel de l'Aigoual, building a shelter and viewpoint indicator at the summit, etc.) that continues to this day.

🌱 Irregular forest (E)

This tree population consists of trees of very different diameters, ages and heights. Species are mixed: mainly pine, but also beech, rowan and whitebeam. This is an irregular mature forest, a forestry dynamic that is interesting for several reasons: it creates permanent forest cover; resistance to soil erosion; better resilience against storms or parasite attacks; regular production, etc. In the small clearing to the left of the path, the sunlight now penetrating to the forest floor has made natural regeneration of beech and fir possible, ensuring the renewal of the forest.

Productive forest (F)

Marker 2

Another method of creating a durable forest cover is to plant or sow. This work is carried out either on bare soil or among existing tree stands. The Aigoual reforestation programme was a gigantic effort, requiring 900,000 days of work, the planting of 60 million conifers and 7 million deciduous trees, and sowing of 38 tonnes of seeds. Spruces and pines, which can be planted in full sunlight and grow quite quickly, were widely used. Under the forest canopy, preference was given to firs.

From beech copse to mature plantation (G)

Marker 1

Around 1850, before reforestation began, the inhabitants of the Cevennes were using local wood resources on a massive scale for heating and in industry, especially spinning-mills. Gradually, only a few beech copses remained, which were cut every 25 to 40 years. Grazing by tens of thousands of sheep further reduced the herbaceous plant cover. Much weakened, the plant cover was then also subjected to heavy precipitation, the so-called Cevenol episodes. It is against this backdrop that the lengthy work of the foresters began. To reduce risks and establish a lasting forest cover, the first technique was to make use of what was already present by converting the disused copses into mature plantations.



The watershed (H)

The current relief creates a frontier between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean: depending on the slope, water runs towards either the Ocean or the Sea. This is due to the uplift of the Cevenol sill, brought about by geological activity along the Cévennes fault, which borders draw the northern limit of the Languedoc region. This natural sill marks the geographical border between the northwest slope – verdant, not too steep – and the southeast slope, which falls away abruptly in the Languedoc and continues to be subject to powerful erosion.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The association "Terres d'Aigoual" (I)

The Cévennes National Park rents out part of the building to the association, enabling local farmers to sell their products directly to the public. The association brings together farmers who wish to promote what they produce and share their know-how. They also enjoy sharing their vision of farming- high quality produce and products,

- human-sized farms,
- mutual aid.

Come and discover their products!

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas



La Serreyrède (J)

Before 1861, the house at the Col de la Serreyrède was inhabited by two families of farmers. They owned some livestock and had a vegetable garden, whose terraces you can still see above the La Caumette track. From 1861 on, the farm was inhabited by a forest ranger. It was only bought by the state body Eaux et Forêts in 1883, to be turned into a forester's house. It became one of Georges Fabre's headquarters during the reforestation of the Aigoual massif. The Cévennes National Park, tourism office and Terres d'Aigoual growers have now joined forces to revive La Serreyrède with the help of the Communauté de Communes Causses Aigoual Cévennes – Terres solidaires.

Attribution : © Office National de la Forêt



Climate frontier (K)

The pass is also a climate frontier. The Atlantic side is predominantly exposed to the west wind and receives rainfall that is fairly regularly spread over the year. The Mediterranean side, however, is drier and hotter and constitutes a massive barrier to the occasional southeast wind (the marin), thus forcing its humid air to rise suddenly. This makes the clouds' water content condense, which can give rise to so-called Cevenol episodes: heavy rainfall (600 mm in 24 hrs) causing catastrophic floods. The Aigoual, Mount Aigualis the rainy (A. Bernard), is well-named! After Savoie, it is the rainiest place in France.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Boreal owl (L)

Abandoned woodpecker chambers are a boon for small mammals and other birds, such as the boreal owl, which has come from Nordic countries to settle here at altitudes of 800 m. Very discreet, it confines itself to the depths of our forested mountain ranges. It can be identified in March by its sonorous and gentle call. To maintain the species, the Cévennes National Park and the French forestry office protect trees with nesting chambers and old-growth forests from being logged.

Attribution : Gaël.Karczewski



On the Verge (Yoann Crépin) (M)

A doorway to a circuit of art within the natural environment. To fuse and interact with the environment and play with the seasons, time, light and weightlessness. To let humanity express itself through nature and nature express itself through humanity – a necessary interaction, a symbiotic interaction that inspires us to discover another world.

Attribution : © Filature du Mazel



Guardian of the Woods (Raphaël Daynié) (N)

The Guardian evokes a possible connection, a dream connection, in which humans consider themselves a part of nature, developing in close union with their environment. This Guardian of the Woods overlooking the Aigoual valley was built with natural materials found on site, and gently touches a tree that is still alive.

Attribution : © Filature du Mazel