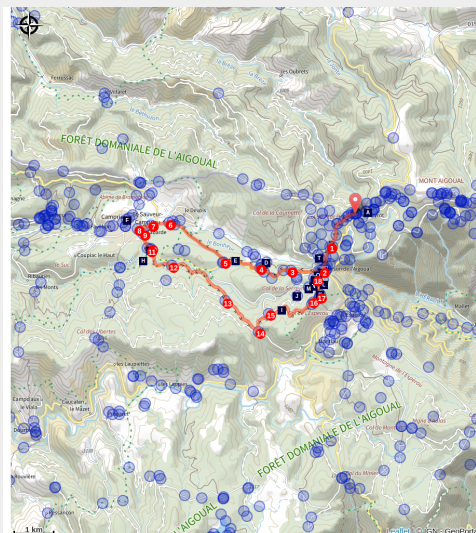


MTB 15 - The Aigoual forest-graded red

Cévennes



Chemin du Trévezel (Véronique Grignola)



A handsome mix of descents, single-track trails and forest tracks: a comprehensive programme in the beautiful forest atmosphere of the Aigoual massif, around the watershed and the Maison de l'Aigoual.

Useful information

Practice : Mountain Bike

Duration : 2 h 20

Length : 18.0 km

Trek ascent : 462 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Boucle

Themes : Architecture et village, Milieu naturel, Eau et géologie, Agriculture et élevage

Trek

Departure : Prat Peyrot

Arrival : Prat Peyrot

Markings : ➡ VTT

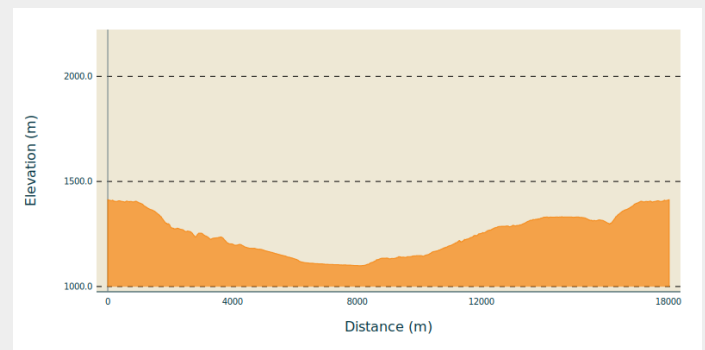
Cities : 1. Meyrueis

2. Val-d'Aigoual

3. Saint-Sauveur-Camprieux

4. Dourbies

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1100 m Max elevation 1413 m

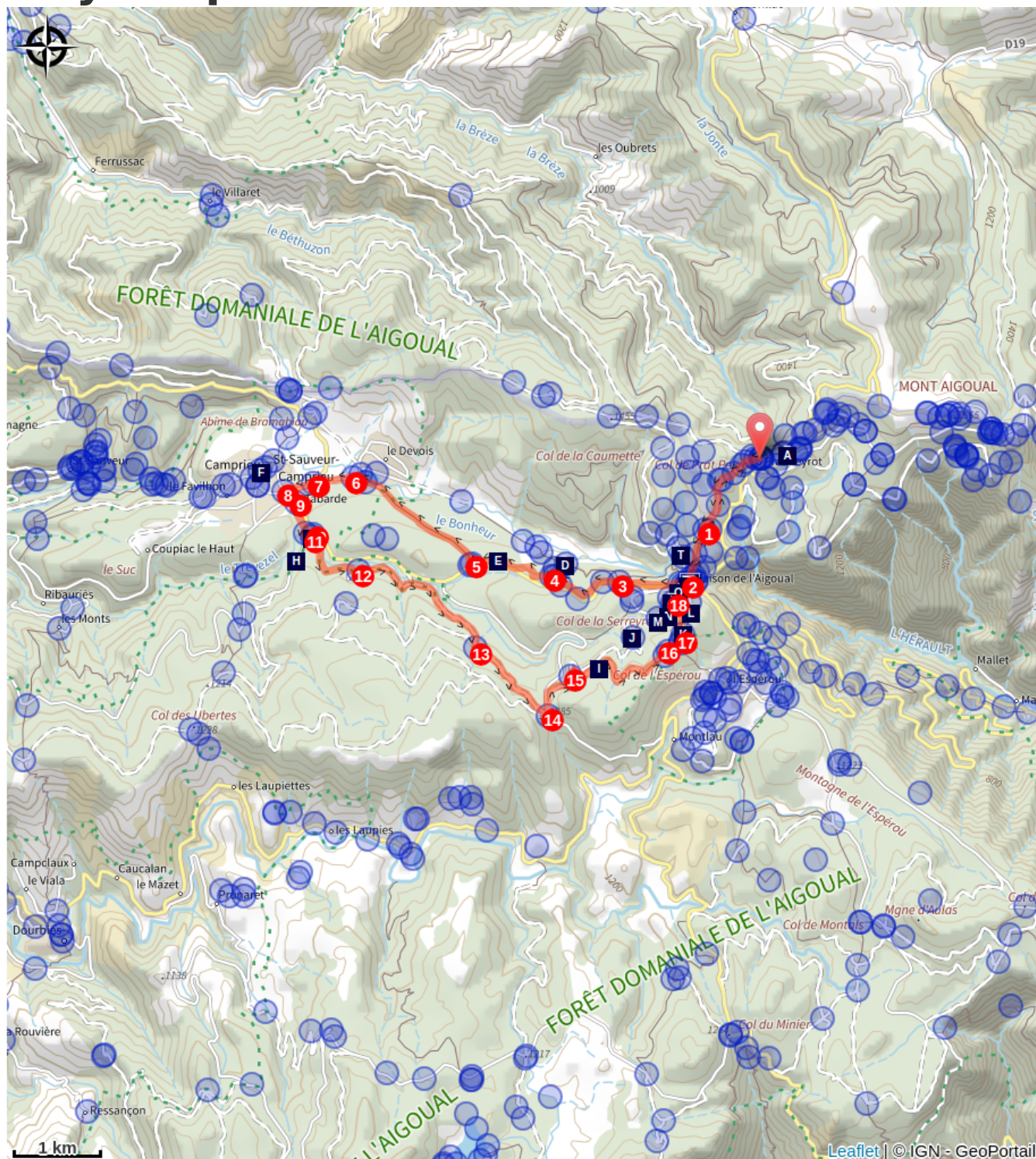
Signposts will guide you all along this route. In the description below, the signposted place names and/or directions are given in **bold italics** between quotation marks:

Starting from "**Station de Prat Peyrot**", head to "**Col de la Serreyrède**" via

1. "**Le Fangas**".
2. At "**Col de la Serreyrède**", go downhill on the right on a road after the Maison de l'Aigoual for several metres and then turn right, towards "**Plan du Châtaignier**" via
3. "**Du Bonheur**",
4. "**Sous St Flour**".
5. At "**Plan du Châtaignier**" turn right after the car park towards
6. "**Le plan d'eau**", and continue on the road towards
7. "**Route du Devois**",
8. "**Le Cros**".
- Head towards "**Maison du bois**" via
9. "**Tabarde**",
10. At "**Maison du bois**" follow
11. "**Tailladette**",
12. "**Taillade**",
13. "**Bois de l'Agre**" to reach "**Le Col de Faubel**".
14. At "**Le Col de Faubel**", cross the road, take the track towards
15. "**La Pépinière**" and turn right towards "**Col de l'Espérou**" via
16. "**Montlau**".
17. At "**Col de l'Espérou**", head towards "**Col de la Serreyrède**" via
18. "**Le Trevezel**".
19. At "**Col de la Serreyrède**", go back up to "**Station de Prat Peyrot**" via
20. "**Le Fangas**" on the old drovers' road.

This circuit 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 Nature.

On your path...



- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| On the Verge (Yoann Crépin) (A) | Climate frontier (B) |
| The watershed (C) | Notre-Dame-du Bonheur (D) |
| The goldcrest (E) | Camprieu (F) |
| The Mont Aigoual forest (G) | The hidden life of the forest (H) |
| The Aigoual forest (I) | Woodpecker nesting chambers (J) |
| Multi-purpose forest (K) | Georges Fabre (L) |
| Peat bog and acclimatisation garden (M) | Le Trévezet molière (peat bog) (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. You must wear a helmet. Protective equipment is recommended. Respect other road users and stay in control of your speed and trajectory. NB: This circuit is also used by horse riders. Make sure your equipment is appropriate for the day's weather conditions. Remember that the weather changes quickly in the mountains. Take enough water. Please close all gates and barriers behind you. No off-roading.

Caution: patous (livestock guard dogs) on the summit of mont Aigoual! Seek advice on how to behave near these dogs from tourist offices and National Park information centres.

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

Access

From Meyrueis or L'Espérou, take the D986 towards St-Sauveur-Camprieu, then to the col de la Serreyrède. At the col de la Serreyrède pass, turn left towards mont Aigoual on the D 269. Park at the car park in Prat-Peyrot.

Advised parking

Prat Peyrot

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

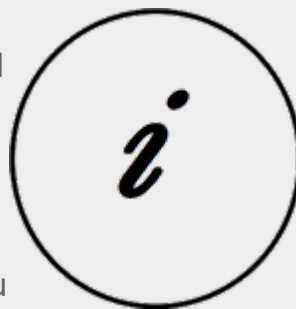
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

maisonde-laigoual@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



CC Causses Aigoual Cévennes Terres Solidaires

<http://www.causses-aigoual-cevennes.fr/>



Parc national des Cévennes

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



Pôle Nature Aigoual

On your path...



On the Verge (Yoann Crépin) (A)

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



Climate frontier (B)

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 Aigoualis the rainy (A. Bernard), is well-named! After Savoie, it is the rainiest place in France.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The watershed (C)

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



Notre-Dame-du Bonheur (D)

This Romanesque monastery was built in the 11th and 12th centuries by the rich Lord of Roquefeuil and Mandagout, with the noble intention of turning it into a “hospital for the poor”. He allowed the monks to reap the fruits and revenue of the land. In return, the villagers paid him sheep, pigs, poultry, wine and cheese. He also charged the transhumant herds on his vast estate pasture fees. The path that passed through this peatbog linked Languedoc to the Gévaudan. A snowstorm bell weighing 200 kg would ring in fog or blizzards to help merchants, peddlers, itinerant workers, farmers etc. find their way to safety. The monastery had six canons, the last of whom was forced to leave during the French Revolution. An association dedicated to preserving the Abbey of Notre-Dame du Bonheur is working to restore it.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The goldcrest (E)

As you walk through the woods, you may hear the shy zee zee of the goldcrest, which depends on conifers. But do you know where its name comes from?

Its Latin name is *Regulus regulus*, the little king. In Celtic tradition, the smallest bird is the druid of the avian world. In first-century local Celtic languages, the same word was used for ‘druid’ and ‘goldcrest’.

Another reason for this royal title is that the goldcrest, when in love, raises the black-rimmed golden feathers on his head, like a little crown.

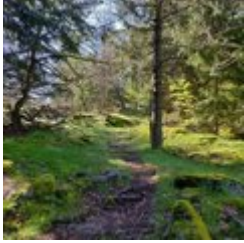
Attribution : Bruno.Descaves



Camprieu (F)

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 Mont Aigoual forest (G)

“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



🌿 The hidden life of the forest (H)

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 Aigoual forest (I)

In the 19th century, Mont Aigoual was almost totally bare of trees. Intensive use of the forest and the pressure of transhumant grazing together with the harsh local climate caused devastating floods. The rich vegetation of the grazing grounds was replaced by heather pastures and many gullies. In the valleys huddling at the foot of Mont Aigoual, terrible floods pushing tons of stones downstream carried off roads and pastureland. In response, a reforestation programme was launched in the second half of the 19th century, which created the forest you see today. Nowadays, the forested Aigoual massif protects the valleys while at the same time providing a space for economic production, biodiversity and leisure.

Attribution : © Olivier Prohin

Woodpecker nesting chambers (J)

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.

Multi-purpose forest (K)

Marker 6

A draille is a path between winter and summer pastures, used by shepherds and their sheep. In the mid-19th century, this draille was the eastern border of the Miquel woods. At the time, forest covered 20 to 25% of the surface of Mont Aigoual. Following reforestation, that figure has risen to 80%. Foresters ascribe three purposes to forest: being a space the public can enjoy, providing protection and being productive. These objectives were already part of Georges Fabre's vision.

Georges Fabre (L)

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.



Peat bog and acclimatisation garden (M)

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) (N)

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