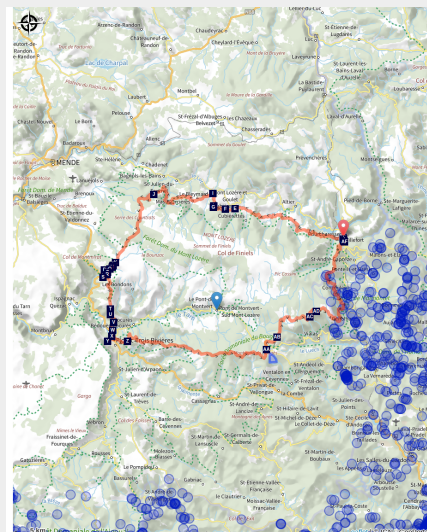


GR® 68, the Mont Lozère circuit

Cévennes



Calade à Auriac (Guy.Grégoire)



115 km and 6 days of hiking to discover the granite block fields, inhabitants and shepherds of Mont Lozère.

Whether with family or friends or on your own, discover the scenery of Mont Lozère. Amidst contrasting landscapes, this path reveals many elements of agropastoralism: drovers' roads, terraced cropland, farms, open areas, itinerant shepherds, sheep... You will be hiking on old mule tracks, now disused in favour of more comfortable routes, passing belltowers, which bear witness to a time when the rude winters cut off villages from all outside contact. This is a solitary country of heath and granite, but also an authentic one, where a welcome always awaits you.

Useful information

Practice : Pédestre

Duration : 6 days

Length : 117.1 km

Trek ascent : 4672 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Itinérance

Themes : Faune et flore, Histoire et culture, Agriculture et élevage, Causses et Cévennes / UNESCO, Transports en commun

Trek

Departure : Villefort

Arrival : Villefort

Markings :  GR®

Cities : 1. Villefort

2. Pourcharesses

3. Altier

4. Cubières

5. Cubièrettes

6. Mont Lozère et Goulet

7. Saint-Étienne-du-Valdonnez

8. Les Bondons

9. Bédouès-Cocurès

10. Florac Trois Rivières

11. Pont de Montvert - Sud Mont Lozère

12. Cans et Cévennes

13. Cassagnas

14. Saint-André-de-Lancize

15. Saint-Privat-de-Vallongue

16. Vialas

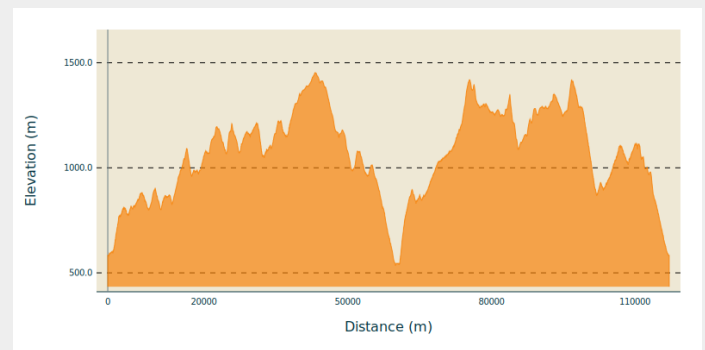
17. Génolhac

18. Concoules

19. Pontails-et-Brésis

20. Saint-André-Capcèze

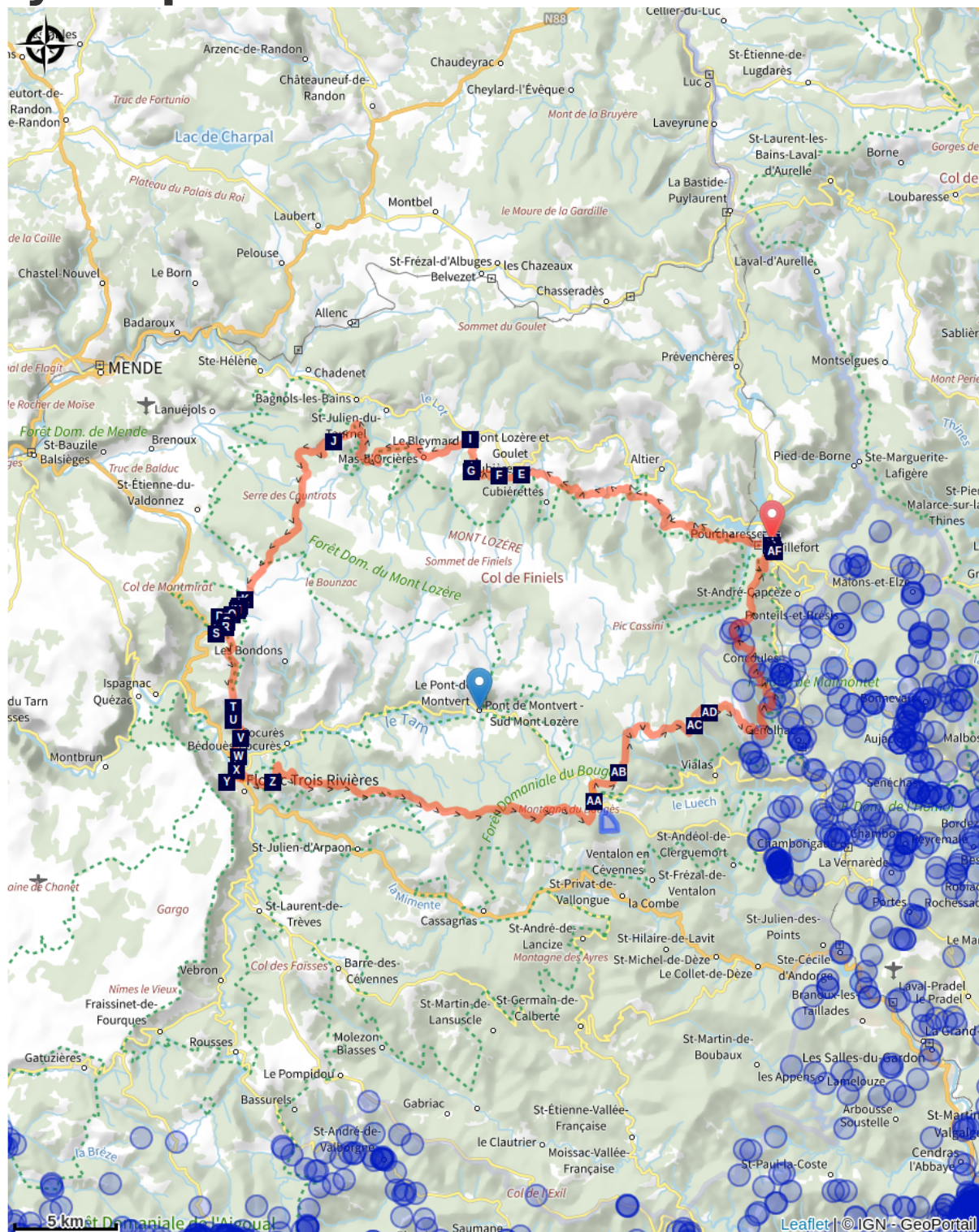
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 532 m Max elevation 1449 m

All information on the whole route can be found on the site monGR.fr of the French hikers' federation, the Fédération française de la randonnée pédestre. Map ref. IGN 2739 OT.

On your path...



The fairs at Villefort (A)

River network (C)

Cubières (E)

Mule trains (G)

The “mission” cross (I)



Religious buildings and pilgrimages

(B)

Lavoir (D)

The Rieutord (F)



Passerine birds (H)

Blizzard belltowers (J)

Three-Parish Stone (K)

Dolmen at Les Combes (M)

Puech d'Allègre and Puech de
Mariette (L)

Panoramic viewpoint (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

NB: For various reasons, the waymarked path may differ from that shown in the topographic guidebook: please follow the waymarks on the trail. Make sure your equipment is appropriate for several days of hiking as well as 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 all gates and barriers behind you. As you approach any flock of sheep, be aware that they have guard dogs (patous): get information from a tourist office or National Park information centre on how to behave around these dogs. Bivouacking alongside GR trails in the National Park's central zone is regulated and, on some stretches, prohibited.

How to come ?

Transports

Bus

- Line 251 Florac - Mende
- Line 253 Mende - Mont Lozère
- Line 261 Mont Lozère - Pont de Montvert - Florac

<https://lio.laregion.fr/>

- Train line: Clermont-Ferrand - Nîmes (Villefort - Génolhac)

Access

Villefort on the D 906 from Génolhac or the D 901 from Le Bleymard.

Advised parking

Villefort

Information desks

Office de tourisme Des Cévennes au mont Lozère

le Quai, 48220 Le Pont de Montvert sud
mont-Lozère

info@cevennes-montlozere.com

Tel : 04 66 45 81 94

<https://www.cevennes-montlozere.com/>



Tourism office Mont-Lozère, Villefort

43, Place du Bosquet, 48800 Villefort

contact@destination-montlozere.fr

Tel : 04 66 46 87 30

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



Source



Comité départemental de la randonnée pédestre 48

<http://lozere.ffrandonnee.fr/>



Fédération Française de Randonnée Pédestre

<https://www.ffrandonnee.fr/>

On your path...

The fairs at Villefort (A)

Since 1511, Villefort market has been held on Thursday mornings. In the early 19th century, there were up to 14 fairs a year. Children had to attend mass at Saint-Loup-et-Saint-Roch Chapel to be allowed to go to the fairs. Large crowds were attracted to the fairs by their good reputation. The fair held on 14 September was one of the most impressive, with countless cattle blocking the village's squares and lanes. Today, Villefort is a lively place with bric-a-brac shops and artisan fairs.

Religious buildings and pilgrimages (B)

Rue de Rome leads to Saint-Jean Chapel, also called gleisetto (little church). In the Middle Ages, sick pilgrims or pilgrims looking for a roof for the night were welcomed in this former Romanesque chapel-turned-residence. A leper colony was attached to it. Further north, Saint-Loup-et-Saint-Roch Chapel overlooks the Lake. It was built to look exactly like a Romanesque edifice of the 12th or 13th century, on the precise site where a hermit, who had followed the example set by St-Loup, had his shelter. It has been restored several times. St-Loup is the region's patron saint; St-Roch has been associated with him since the 1720 plague. Two pilgrimages persist to this day: on 29 July for St-Loup and on 16 August for St-Roch.

River network (C)

The river Palhères flows through Villefort on its way down from Mont Lozère. It goes through one of the two mismatched Gothic arches of Saint Jean bridge. This humpback bridge dates from the 14th century. Two rivers flow through the centre of the village, under Place du Bosquet. Having become unsanitary after being used as drains and latrines, they were vaulted over for reasons of hygiene in 1934. This created both the square and Rue des Jardins.



Lavoir (D)

This 19th-century granite washing place has two basins. Laundry was beaten in the large basin using a washing bat, then rinsed in the clear water of the smaller basin which was fed by the river. You can still see the traces of soot from the stoves used to boil water. This lively site, where the grievances and joys of the washerwomen resounded, was in use until the 1950s.

Attribution : OT Mont Lozère



Cubières (E)

This village, which was founded long ago, owes its name (cubereis) to the copper that the Gallo-Romans mined here. In the Middle Ages, under the protection of the local lord, villagers had to mill flour and then bake their bread in the shared bread oven, which was the property of the Seigneur du Tournel. Whenever they did so, he received a tax called the ban. This feudal right was abolished during the French Revolution, and the oven simply became the village oven.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



The Rieutord (F)

This brook is the Rieutord, which flows into the Altier, a tributary of the Chassezac. Amateur geologists will notice that you are here on the boundary between a limestone pocket on the right, schist (slate) on the right and granite at the summit. The three bedrocks determine the landscape and its vegetation. The limestone is a maritime memento from the Jurassic. The schist was formed in the heat of considerable depths and pushed to the surface by earthquakes during the Quaternary Period. The granite is former magma that made its way through the schist from deeper still to become the surface of Mont Lozère.

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas



Mule trains (G)

You are at a crossroads; one of the tracks is the former road from Mende to Villefort, which veers off the Route des Arvènes (the Régordane) at La Maloutière (as you leave Villefort). How many mule trains – convoys of at least six laden mules – passed here over the centuries, their bells ringing! The mule drivers passing in their caravans brought life to the village and gave Cubières a look of prosperity. The village road was very commercial, aligning inns and shops.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Passerine birds (H)

Open spaces with a few trees and bushes favour passerine birds. Passerines are the largest and most varied order of birds, containing over half of all bird species. The red-backed shrike in particular likes this environment, which abounds in the large insects that constitute its main food source. The shrike is strictly migratory and hibernates in eastern Africa.

Attribution : Régis Descamps



The “mission” cross (I)

In the municipality of Le Bleymard, there is a large number of crosses and other small religious heritage elements, which bear witness to inhabitants’ fervour in the old days. You will see them as you enter villages, on main squares and at crossroads, to protect the walker and ploughman. Offerings sometimes took the form of crosses, which were then called “mission” crosses.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



Blizzard belltowers (J)

Caught in a violent storm, peddlers, farmers or the local abbot might hesitate over which track to take in the fog. Perhaps they missed a turning. Then they would hear the tolling of the invisible but reassuring bell, signalling the right way. The Serviès belltower is unique in having a shelter, which kept the bell ringer dry and comforted the passer-by. These small belltowers were also used to ring the Angelus bell in the morning and evening. It was also said that, as well as saving lost travellers, their sound waves kept hail away. The bishop of Mende prohibited this practice which, he declared, had more to do with superstition than observation. (B. Mathieu)

Attribution : © Guy Grégoire



Three-Parish Stone (K)

Marker 1

The most majestic menhir in this sector is known as the Three-Parish Stone because of its location at the point where the municipalities of Les Bondons, Ispagnac and Saint-Etienne-du-Valdonnez meet. There are many hypotheses as to the origins of the menhirs, ranging from the very rational to the very esoteric, but the stones retain a large share of mystery. Often weighing several tonnes, they were extracted, shaped and moved – in some cases over distances of several kilometres – before being erected. For what purpose? Archaeology allows us to find clues to the daily life of prehistoric humans; their world view and spirituality, however, remain largely unknown.

Attribution : © Eddie Balaye



Puech d'Allègre and Puech de Mariette (L)

Marker 2

These natural eccentricities with their generous proportions have reminded some of female forms. Were they at the origin of a fertility cult connected also with the menhirs and their phallic silhouettes? According to one legend, it was Gargantua who created the puechs by scraping dirt off his clogs.

Geologically, the Cham des Bondons is part of the Causse de Sauveterre, to which it is connected by the Col de Montmirat pass. The limestone cham sits atop the granite bedrock of the Mont Lozère and offers remarkable landscapes, notably the Eschino d'Aze with its donkey's-back appearance, and the puechs, buttes of fossil-rich black marl.

Attribution : © Jean-Pierre Malafosse



Dolmen at Les Combes (M)

Marker 3

Of the megalithic monuments, dolmens (megalithic portal tombs) tend to be better-known than menhirs. They were linked to funeral practices from 3500 BC (end of the Neolithic) to 200 BC. The dead were deposited in these collective tombs alongside personal objects. Funeral practices offer precious clues for understanding the beliefs and organisation of ancient societies. These monuments are often located in spots that dominate the surroundings, and would certainly have reminded the living of the dead.

Attribution : © Eddie Balaye



Panoramic viewpoint (N)

Marker 4

Attribution : © Olivier Prohin