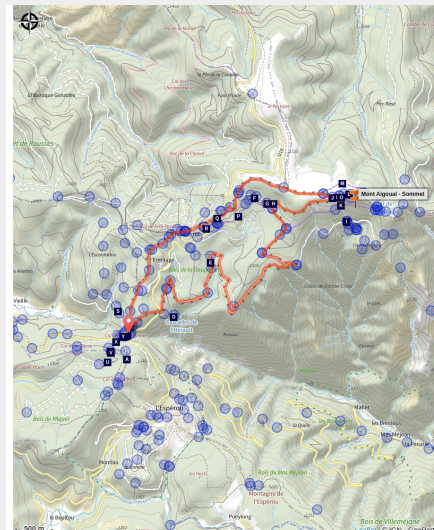


La Dauphine

Cévennes



La vallée de l'Hérault (Nathalie Thomas)



This walk goes through a diverse state-owned forest: beech stands and natural fir stands. There are magnificent views onto the summit of Mont Aigoual. One section of this walk is shared with the discovery trail “The cliffs of Mont Aigoual”.

Useful information

Practice : Pédestre

Duration : 4 h

Length : 12.5 km

Trek ascent : 434 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Boucle

Themes : Eau et géologie,
Transports en commun

Trek

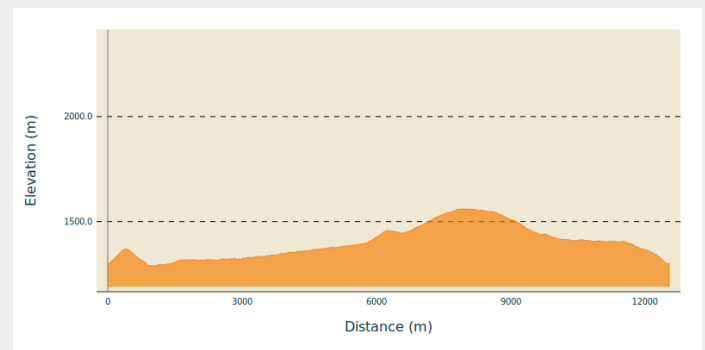
Departure : Col de La Serreyrède pass
(Valleraugue)

Arrival : Col de La Serreyrède pass
(Valleraugue)

Markings : — Balisage jaune et mobilier
signalétique

Cities : 1. Val-d'Aigoual
2. Bassurels
3. Meyrueis

Altimetric profile



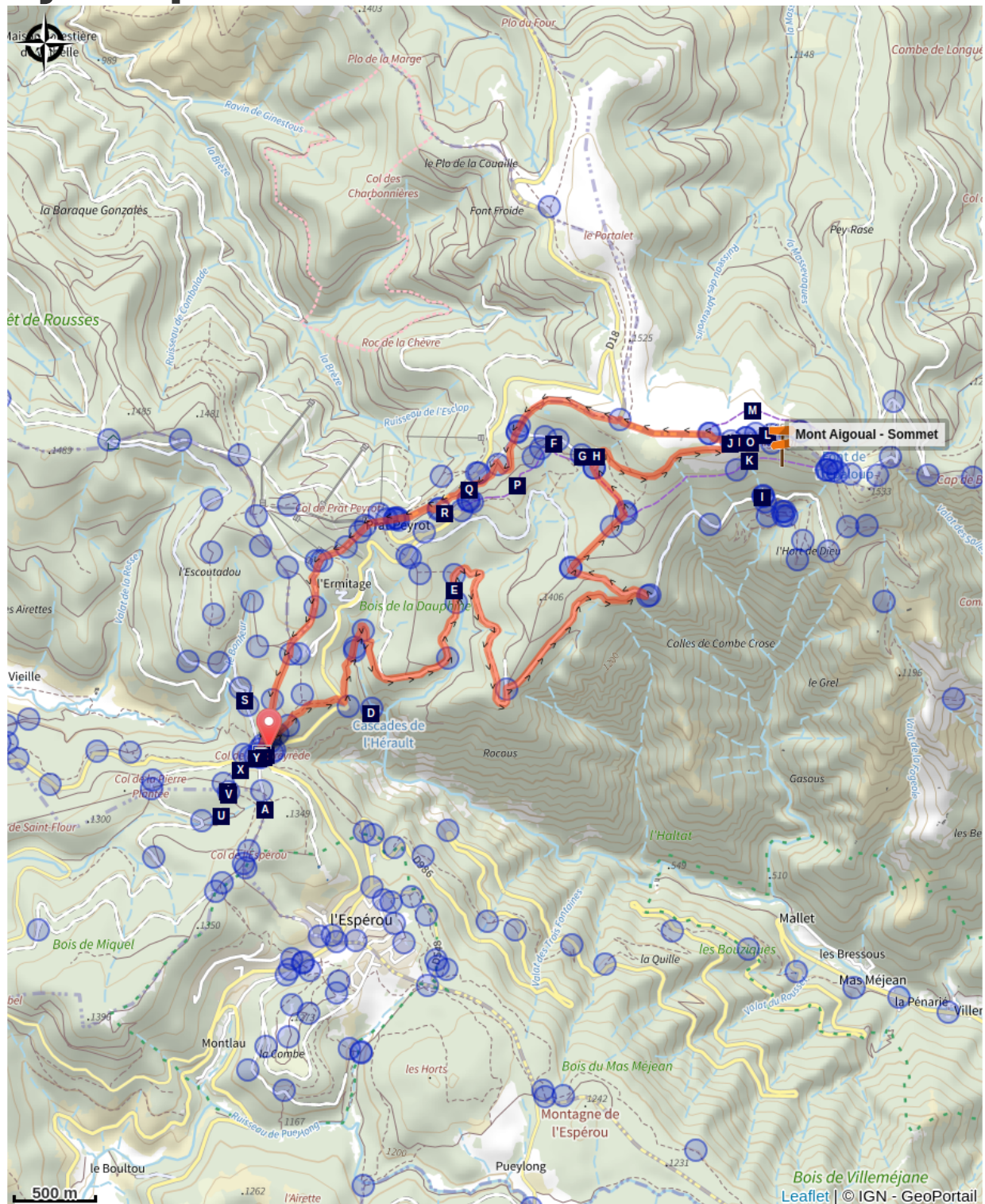
Min elevation 1294 m Max elevation 1552 m

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:

Sarting at "**Col de La Serreyrède**", head towards "**Point Sublime**" via "**Virage de Barrot**", "**Valat de la Dauphine**", "**Muraille de Volpellièrre**". At "**Point Sublime**" take the track on the left towards "**Coupe feu Sud**", "**Coupe feu**", "**Les plaques**", "**La Source**". At "**La Source**" climb to "**Sommet du Mont Aigoual**" in the direction of "**Le Bélvédère**". Go downhill to "**Prat Peyrot**" via "**Les Antennes**", "**La Drailhe**". Return to "**Col de La Serreyrède**" via "**Le Fangas**".

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 Nature.

On your path...



Georges Fabre (A)
The watershed (C)

River capture (E)
The Nests (Céline Pialot) (G)
A site for botanical experiments (I)

Climate frontier (B)
Two waterfalls... Find the Hérault!
(D)

Leaf-Tree (Alain Bernegger) (F)
Pôle Nature 4 Saisons (H)
Archeosmart (Marc Limousin) (J)

Seated (Marie-Hélène Richard) (K)
Tempus Fugit (Fiona Paterson,
Donald Buglass) (M)

The meteorological observatory (L)
Summit of Mont Aigoual (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

Make sure your equipment is appropriate for 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.

How to come ?

Transports

liO is the regional public transport service of the region Occitanie/ Pyrénées - Méditerranée. 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 L'Espérou or Camprieux on the RD 986

Advised parking

Col de La Serreyrède pass

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

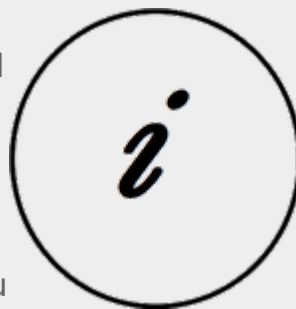
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

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...

Georges Fabre (A)

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.



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 Cévenol 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 Cévenol 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.

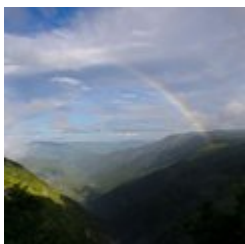
Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Two waterfalls... Find the Hérault! (D)

Faced with these two threads of rivers, geographers hesitated between flow rate and length, and finally designated the waterway below you the Hérault while the waterfall opposite you was named the Dauphine. Two remarkable plants can be seen here: orpine (*Hylotelephium telephium*) with its succulent leaves, a food source for the larvae of a butterfly that is in strong decline all over the Massif central: the Apollo (which may be seen from mid-July to mid-August); and Prost saxifrage, which forms regular cushions that are easy to recognise. They enable it better to store what little water is available. It is a plant endemic to the Cévennes.

Attribution : Mario Kleszczewski



River capture (E)

Violent precipitation and the steep gradient of Mediterranean torrents cause regressive (i.e. upstream) erosion of the valleys through which they flow. This erosion can invert the sense of flow and thus “capture” for the Mediterranean a waterway that had, until then, flowed into the Atlantic. One example is the Hérault with its waterfalls, the capture being located at the falls. The Hérault and the Dauphine brook used to flow via L'Espérou into the Dourbie... River pebbles found around the village by geologists attest to the existence of a waterway in the past.

Attribution : Arnaud.Bouissou



Leaf-Tree (Alain Bernegger) (F)

Leaf-Trees use a veined structure to create a visual resonance between the tree and the leaf. The change of scale works like an inverted echo of this fractal structure. And as winter comes, the eternal summer of the Leaf-Trees confronts the winter of the bare branches.

Attribution : © Filature du Mazel



The Nests (Céline Pialot) (G)

Little by little, the bird makes its nest, its cosy nest, baby cocoon, wasps' nest... Like a bird, the artist has gathered materials offered by nature and has arranged them to build three nests, three refuges, three circles that reference perfection and invite meditation.

Attribution : © E. Fréget



Pôle Nature 4 Saisons (H)

The Pôle Nature 4 Saisons of the Aigoual massif offers outdoor activities in all seasons in the central zone of the Cévennes National Park, overlooked by the legendary summit of Mont Aigoual (1,570 m). Discover our network of trails on foot, on horseback, by bike, or else by mountain-bike or with a donkey, as the fancy takes you!

Children can explore the orienteering circuit or geocaching. For the sportier among you we have laid out trail running circuits!

Prefer road biking? We have created circuits of varying difficulty levels so you can discover our villages and valleys.

Try not to make any noise! Wildlife enthusiasts can spot mouflons and other animals.

And if you would just like a gentle walk on the massif, the discovery trail “The cliffs of Mont Aigoual” is for you. There are various rest stops over its 4.5 km, with only 150 m in height difference.

We look forward to seeing you on our paths.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



A site for botanical experiments (I)

Marker 1

L'Hort de Dieu is located at an altitude of 1,300 m and shaped by an extreme climate. This site with its exceptional assets is a favoured study and experimentation zone for botanists. The tree collection is just over 100 years old, and some of the specimens are declining because of old age or else because they are not well-adapted to this mountain range. Today, there are 75 species left of the 140 that have been tested over the past century. To safeguard the interest of this heritage site, the Office National des Forêts and the Cévennes National Park are currently reflecting on renewing the collection.

Attribution : © Gaël Karczewski



Archeosmart (Marc Limousin) (J)

Smartphone imprints appear on the rocks: fossils of the present that will become mysterious in the future. This carved stone, like the cup-shaped marks and other rock art of the region, discloses history revealed in matter and resonates with Malraux's phrase: “The future is a present given to us by the past”.

Attribution : © Filature du Mazel



Seated (Marie-Hélène Richard) (K)

Far from town, paths open the door to new rhythms. Another vision of life and time lets us breathe in the ever-present contemplation, stones, trees and skies. A physical experience of coming face-to-face with nature. A bench made of wood and branches, whose back becomes thinner as it rises towards the sky, as if to turn back into a tree.

Attribution : © Filature du Mazel



The meteorological observatory (L)

Inaugurated in 1824, the meteorological observatory was built on the initiative of Georges Fabre, one of the pioneers of the reforestation of Mont Aigoual. His work with the botanist Charles Flahault enabled the creation of the arboretum of L'Hort de Dieu. The first meteorological data were gathered by agents from the French National Water and Forestry Commission. Since 1943, the observatory has been managed by the National Meteorological Office. It is France's last mountain weather station that is inhabited year-round.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Tempus Fugit (Fiona Paterson, Donald Buglass) (M)

Time flies, conscience cries, death threatens, heaven invites, hell scolds, and man sleeps. Here, the effects of time and natural elements transform the wood used in the artwork; everything is an endless renewal at the same rate as the passing hours. How much time have we got left before everything is lost and it is too late to repair the damage? Nature will continue on its trajectory and efface the traces of Humanity on Earth.

Attribution : © Natacha Maltaverne



Summit of Mont Aigoual (N)

At an altitude of 1,565 m, the climate is harsh: weather conditions are the same as they would be at 2,000 m elsewhere, with only four "frost-free" months a year. Winds of above 60 kph blow on 265 days a year, and the average annual temperature is 4.8°C. Trees do not have enough time to complete their life cycle. Local plant formations are those of the montane zone: subalpine short-grass prairies.

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas