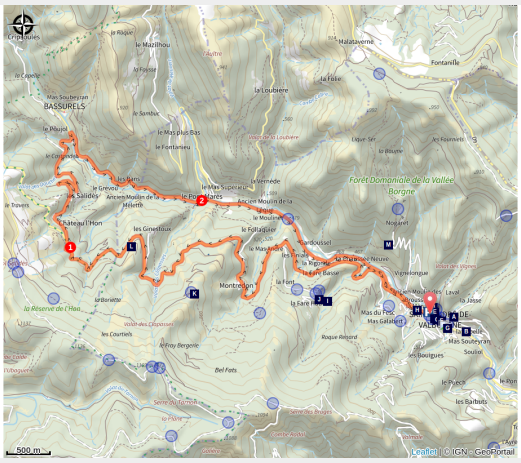
La haute vallée Borgne - Escapades à vélo

Cévennes

Le château du Poujol (Béatrice Galzin)



The D907 remains a picturesque and very shady road, pleasant for biking. The climb is gentle and regular, and the return is downhill all the way to the village.

This ride through the upper Borgne valley showcases its mediaeval châteaux and their mysteries. You can admire the Château du Folhaquier and the Château de La Fare on the ridges, the Château de l'Hom blending into the chestnut and beech trees, and the Château du Poujol reaching for the sky…

Useful information

Practice : Cycling

Duration : 1 h

Length : 16.1 km

Trek ascent : 572 m

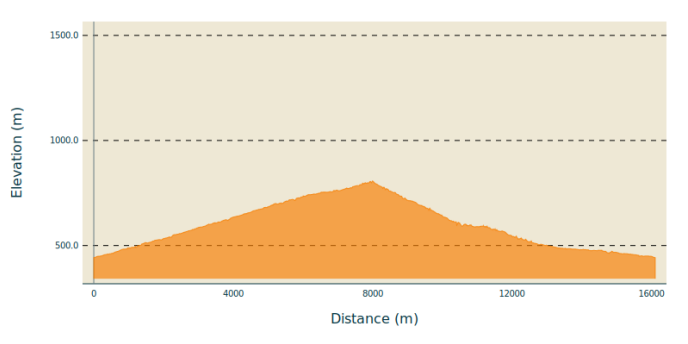
Difficulty : Easy

Type : Boucle

Trek

Departure : St-André de Valborgne
Arrival : St-André de Valborgne
Cities : 1. Saint-André-de-Valborgne
2. Bassurels

Altimetric profile

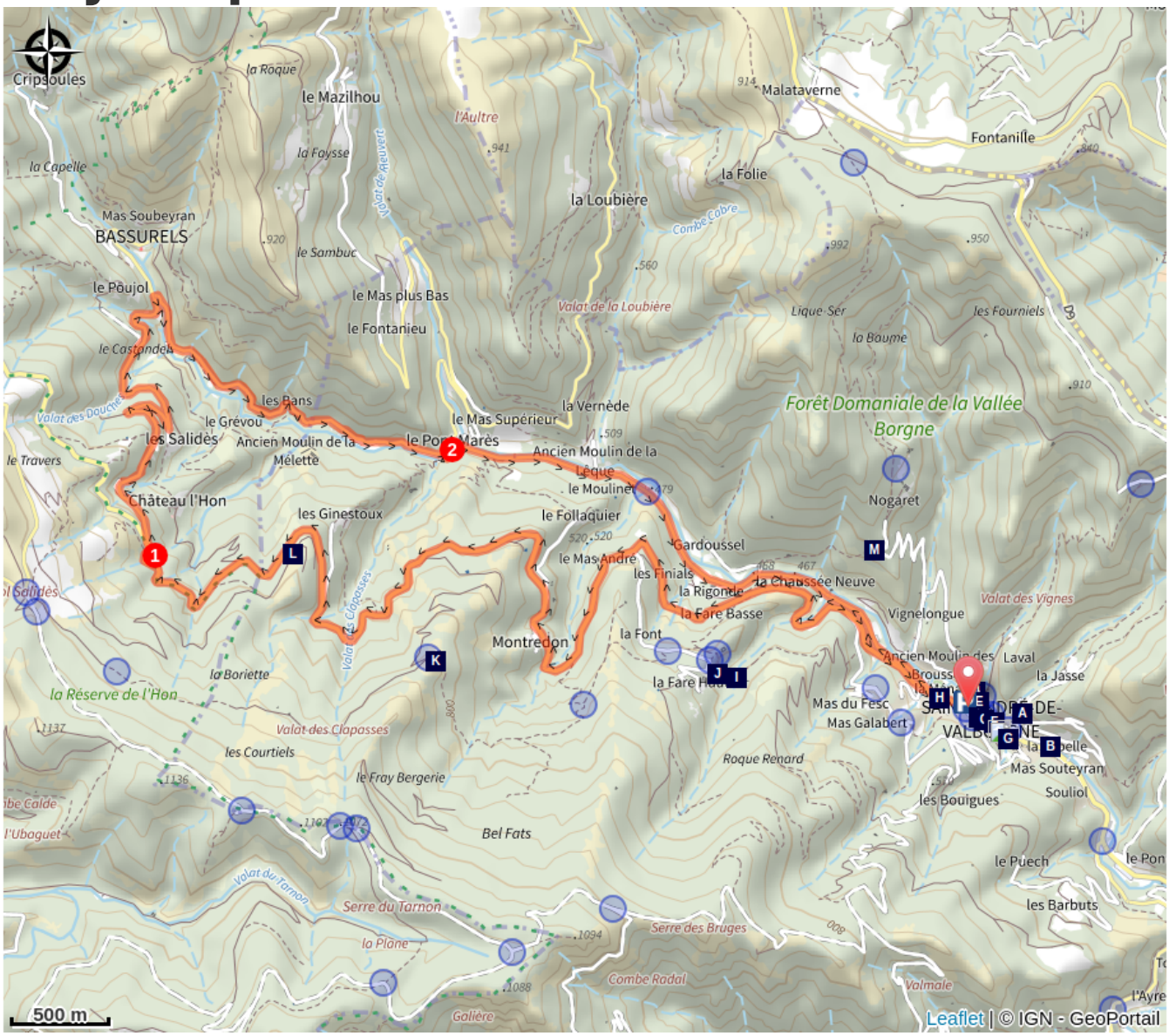


Min elevation 439 m Max elevation 799 m

From St-André de Valborgne, take the D907 towards Florac,

1. Go downhill to Bassurels on the D10A, via Les Salides.
2. Turn right to Le Pont Mares / St-André on the D10a.
3. Return to the village of St-André de Valborgne on the D10.

On your path...



Well-supplied (A)

Two in one (B)

The village of St André de Valborgne (C)

One spring, five fountains (D)

The age of silk (E)

The gardonnades (F)

Water! (G)

Traces of giants? (H)

Château de la Fare (I)

The mediaeval castles (J)

Château du Folhaquier (K)

The castles of the upper Vallée Borgne (L)

The Château de Nogaret (M)

The tanners’ district (N)

All useful information

⚠ Advices

Before committing yourself to a circuit, ensure that it is suitable for your activity level and ability. Respect traffic laws and other road users; stay in control of your speed and trajectory. Make sure to be seen and travel in single file when in a group. Remember that the weather changes quickly in the mountains. Take enough water. Safe trip !

How to come ?

Access

From St-Jean du Gard, take the D907 to St-André de Valborgne, via L'Estréchure and Saumane.

From Florac, take the D907 towards St-Jean du Gard via Vébron, Les Vanels and Rousses to reach St-André de Valborgne.

Advised parking

As you enter or leave the village.

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, Saint-André-de-Valborgne
les quais, 30940 Saint-André-de-Valborgne

standredevalborgne@sudcevennes.com
Tel : 04 66 60 32 11
https://www.sudcevennes.com

Source

CC Causses Aigoual Cévennes Terres Solidaires

http://www.caussesaigoualcevennes.fr/

Pôle Nature Aigoual

On your path...

Well-supplied (A)

Cévenol gardens are supplied by béals (little canals), which bring water from rivers or springs to cultivated land. The latter is usually laid out in bancels (terraces). By retaining the soil, the low walls make it possible to have level plots and deeper soils. Water can seep into the ground slowly and remain there for longer.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

Two in one (B)

This cobbled path going uphill is a calade. It is not only a path but also a brook, allowing rainwater to be evacuated. Caution: slippery when wet!

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

The village of St André de Valborgne (C)

As you stroll along the quay above the river, you can still see the handsome bourgeois houses dating from the silk boom. If you look around, former spinning mills and industrial buildings dedicated to silk farming can still be seen in the landscape. A little lower down, opposite the 16th century château, you can listen to
Bernadette Lafont on the Camisard saga in and after 1702. As you reach the square again, quench your thirst at the fountain and have a look inside the Romanesque church (12th century).

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

One spring, five fountains (D)

This fountain is one of Saint-André’s five public fountains, all of which are supplied by the same spring (its water is thus the same as in the Fontaine du Griffon). Before houses were connected to mains water, there were many more fountains on this side of the quay.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

The age of silk (E)

From the 19th century onwards, the silk industry developed in the Cévennes: tanneries gave way to spinning mills. The mills used water not only to treat the silkworm cocoons (which were boiled to prepare the silk) but also for the steam-driven spinning machines. In the second half of the 19th century, diseases strongly reduced silk production, which was also subject to competition from foreign silks and then from artificial silk. The silk industry went under in 1965.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

The gardonnades (F)

The village benefits from the water that the Gardon brings – but it also has to put up with the river’s sporadic bad moods. Abundant rain can rapidly raise river levels. It is often in autumn that the torrent overflows its banks. The worst floods can have dramatic consequences in both material and human terms. Many can still remember the floods of September 1958 and 2002, which caused much damage.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

Water! (G)

The Griffon fountain is known for its pure water, which will quench any walker’s thirst. In the old days, the whole neighbourhood used it not only for drinking but also for cooking, washing, washing clothes, watering plants, etc. The fountain was not only a supply point but also an important meeting-point in village life.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

Traces of giants? (H)

“Giant’s cauldrons” have formed in the rock at the base of the waterfall. These regular, rounded cavities are only created in rapidly flowing waters. They are caused by the repeated friction of stones caught in a depression and moved by swirling currents.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin

Château de la Fare (I)

Following on from many battles against the Château du Folhaquier, today all that is left of the large mediaeval castle of the Lord de la Fare is this expanse of wall. Built at the summit of a schist hill, the castle is surrounded by sheer drops on all sides. The former village was fortified and located just below the expanse of wall. Sources indicate that the castle had a drawbridge and a chapel.

Attribution : capri'ces des Cévennes

The mediaeval castles (J)

Very close to the village of St-André de Valborgne, on the edge of a cliff, stand the remains of the castrum of La Fare, a defensive castle believed to date from the 12th century. Only a wall face of the tower survives. The ruins above bear witness to the site's importance. The archives mention a well, cistern and drawbridge – but on site nothing remains. On the next spur is the majestic and dominating castle of Le Folhaquier. Transformations throughout the centuries by various owners have shaped the hamlet as we see it today. The era of silk farming strongly influenced the landscape by welcoming the "tree of gold", the mulberry tree.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas

Château du Folhaquier (K)

The Château du Folhaquier is outlined on this small ridge, which was a strategic site in the Middle Ages, overlooking the Gardon de Saint-Jean river and the Château de La Fare opposite.
It is separated from the hamlet by a ditch cut into the schist bedrock, and a square tower can still be seen that was built in the 16th century on 12th century ramparts, as well as the vestiges of a round tower at the other end. The foundations of the castle chapel are easy to distinguish, and the Romanesque church of Notre-Dame du Folhaquier, which remains in an excellent state, has withstood the elements for almost a millennium.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin

The castles of the upper Vallée Borgne (L)

The Château du Poujol is the last castle of the Vallée Borgne. It is located under the rocky ridge of the Can de l'Hospitalet to the north and the Col Salidès to the south. It was built in the 13th century on a rocky spur to watch over the valley. Locals laid out many terraces around the site, which gives you an idea of agricultural life in the Cévennes.

The Château de l'Hom sits in lush greenery. It is first mentioned in 1401. Many lords have left their trace in the architecture, but not only there. In 1826, an assassination took place on this spot, in connection to a goat's ear cut off in punishment for eating the lady's flowers...

Attribution : nathalie.thomas

The Château de Nogaret (M)

Built in the 11th century, the Château de Nogaret stood on the only road linking Saint-André de Valborgne with Le Pompidou. It is believed to have been constructed to serve as a stronghold and to defend the Vallée Borgne. It was set alight in 1628 during the war between the Duke of Rohan and Louis XIII, and again in 1704 by the Camisards, before being rebuilt in the 18th century. This private property still belongs to the Manoel de Nogaret family.
"This small château is one of the finest examples of the fortified manor houses built towards the end of the Middle Ages by minor local lords wanting to free themselves, at least symbolically, from domination by their feudal overlords." (Isabelle Darnas - Les châteaux médiévaux en Cévennes).

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas

The tanners' district (N)

La Calquière district gets its name from that of the ditches in which the tanners soaked their animal skins with limestone, which is called cauç or calç in Occitan. All along the Gardon there were tanneries because its acidic water was good for rinsing the skins, which was indispensable for obtaining high quality products.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin