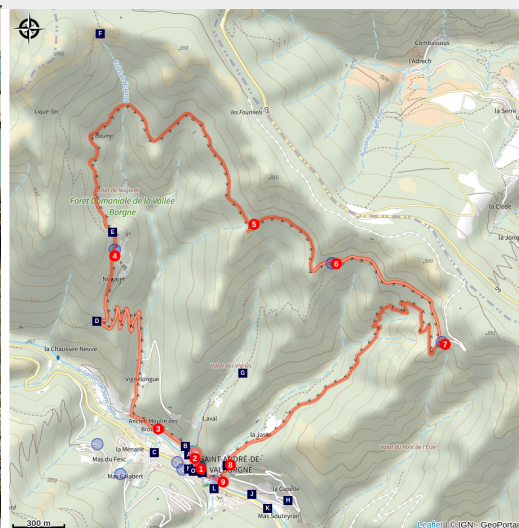


A steep climb

Gard



le Village (Nathalie Thomas)



A family walk exploring Cévenol heritage, with handsome views onto the Vallée Borgne.

Explore the village of St-André de Valborgne with its 5 large silk spinning-mills, the dignified and understated Château de Nogaret (12th c.) overlooking the valley, and the ruins of the former foresters' house of Rougeiresque. The downhill section is on the old track that used to connect the village with the King's road (now the Corniche road).

Useful information

Practice : Pédestre

Duration : 3 h 30

Length : 9.6 km

Trek ascent : 504 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Boucle

Themes : Architecture et village, Histoire et culture, Agriculture et élevage

Trek

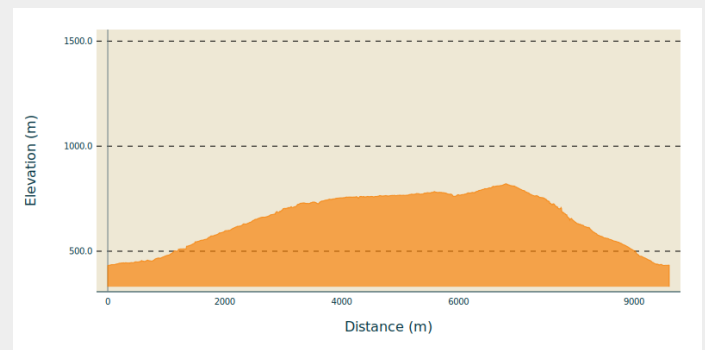
Departure : Saint-André-de-Valborgne

Arrival : Saint-André-de-Valborgne

Markings : — Balisage jaune et mobilier signalétique

Cities : 1. Saint-André-de-Valborgne

Altimetric profile



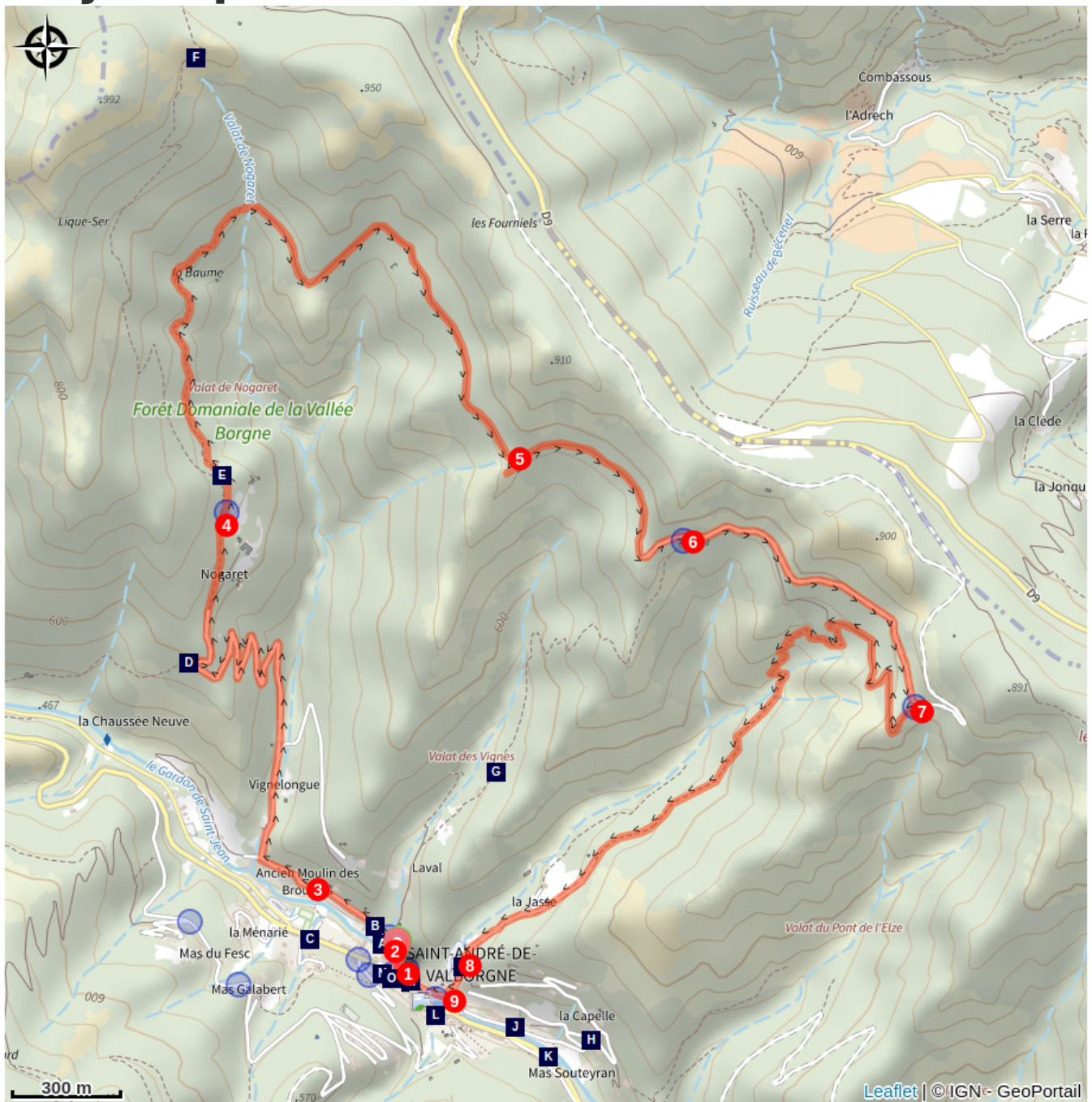
Min elevation 438 m Max elevation 818 m

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

Starting at **"Au vieux pont"**, cross the stream and turn left towards **"Réservoir du Serre"** via **"Les vignes"** and **"Vignelongue"**, first on the small tarred road to its very end and then on the small track on the left.

1. At **"Réservoir du Serre"**, go right to walk along the basin, follow the path into the chestnut grove and to the footbridge over the stream, and then go uphill to the track above.
2. Follow the track to **"Chemin de Castanet"** passing in front of the signpost to **"Rougeiresque"**.
3. At **"Chemin de Castanet"** head to "Saint-André-de-Valborgne" via **"Le valat de la Jasse"**. Go downhill to the village via **"Le Temple"**.

On your path...



- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| The age of silk (A) | The tanners' district (B) |
| Traces of giants? (C) | The Château de Nogaret (D) |
| The sweet chestnut : a food tree (E) | Lique Ser (F) |
| A grapevine ravine in schist country (G) | Electrified... (H) |
| Well-supplied (I) | Two in one (J) |
|  Fish and other animals... (K) | Water! (L) |
| The gardonnades (M) | One spring, five fountains (N) |

All useful information

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, call 08 10 33 42 73 or go to www.laregion.fr (in term time).

Access

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

Advised parking

In the village of St-André de Valborgne

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

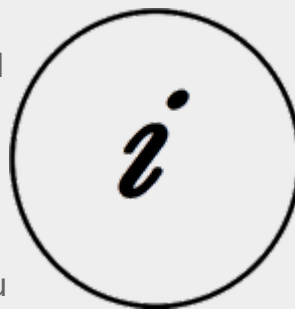
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

maisondeilaigoual@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/>



Parc national des Cévennes

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

On your path...



The age of silk (A)

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 tanners' district (B)

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



Traces of giants? (C)

“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



The Château de Nogaret (D)

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



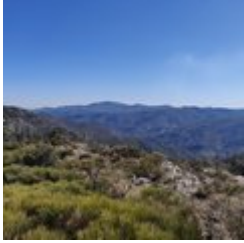
The sweet chestnut : a food tree (E)

You are in a grafted chestnut orchard, which means that the trees were maintained and their nuts harvested by locals to be eaten in the family. The enormous trees around you are about 300 years old.

The chestnuts were dried in a clède, a small building on two levels that was located either close to the dwellings or right inside the forest. The clède would have been in use for an entire month in autumn to ensure that the whole, wood-dried chestnuts could be preserved for a year.

The chestnut tree was so vital in local subsistence farming that it was also called l'arbre à pain (the bread tree); it was also used to make beams, barrels, baskets, trunk-beehives and more, feed livestock and provide their bedding.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



Lique Ser (F)

Lique Ser path goes up to the famous Corniche des Cévennes, a ridge between the two departments of Gard and Lozère. This road, which is busy these days in summer because of its superb views, has not always been a holiday address.

In the days of Louis XIII and XIV, this was the route of the dragonnades and the repression of Protestantism by the King's army after the Revocation of the Edict (the billeting of deliberately ill-disciplined soldiers in Protestant households) of Nantes. This ridge gave the soldiers, known as the King's dragoons, strategic viewpoints. The road was abandoned from the 19th century onwards. In 1930, after lengthy renovations, it was opened to traffic again, becoming a major tourist route

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



A grapevine ravine in schist country (G)

Schist (slate) is omnipresent all around you. Dark, with silvery reflections and a reddish oxidation due to naturally occurring iron, schist is the local building material par excellence. It is the perfect material for covering roofs. It can be turned into solid cobblestoned tracks called calades, where the stones are arranged tightly against each other on-edge. The dry-stone walls that you can see almost everywhere are also built from schist. These walls have largely withstood the test of time, though less so over the past decades because of a lack of maintenance. In the old days, they were regularly repaired, since they retained the terraced cropland for subsistence crops, including the indispensable sweet chestnut trees and, here, grapevines.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



Electrified... (H)

The village's inhabitants had access to electricity as early as 1919. The inconspicuous little hut on the opposite bank sheltered a little turbine supplied with water by a béal (irrigation channel). It was built by a villager, Mr Teston, and produced enough electricity for one lightbulb per household.

Attribution : © Béatrice Galzin



Well-supplied (I)

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 (J)

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



Fish and other animals... (K)

On the river banks, a pretty white, grey and black bird paces up and down looking for insects, bopping its long tail up and down: the white wagtail. The more colourful grey wagtail is often seen alongside it. The white-throated dipper resembles a blackbird with a big white stain on its breast. It often disappears underwater to hunt insect larvae. Trout, which like the same prey, also live in the Gardon, where they keep anglers happy.

Attribution : © Régis Descamps



Water! (L)

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



The gardonnades (M)

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



One spring, five fountains (N)

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