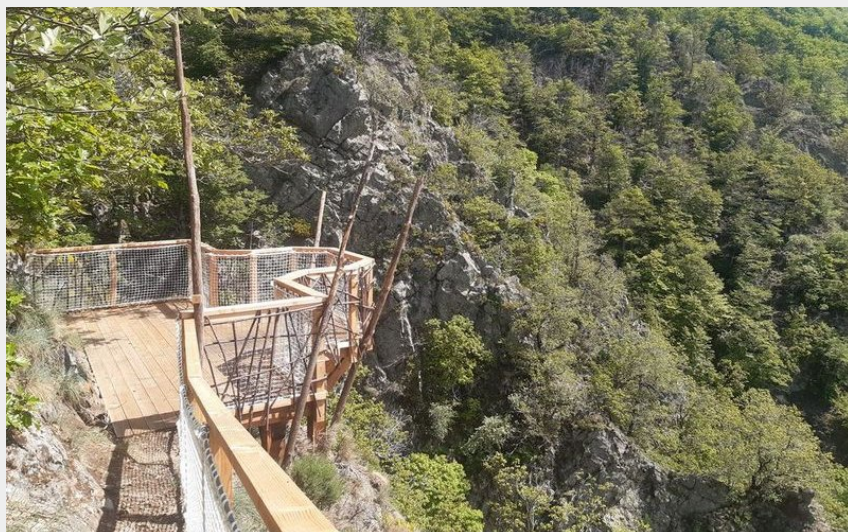
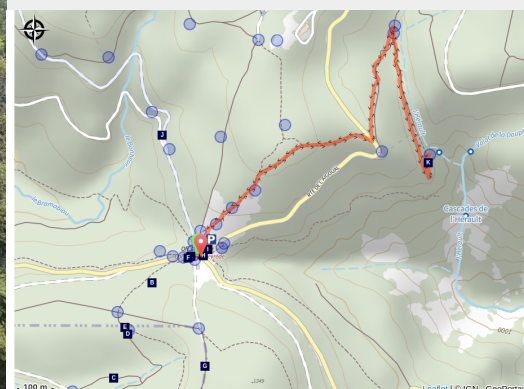


The Hérault waterfalls - short

CEVENNES



Bélvédère des cascades de l'Hérault (© R. Descamps)



A path exploring the first kilometres of the River Hérault, before its waters rush down the steep slopes to the Mediterranean.

From the dividing line between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean (Serreyrède pass), this path winds through the forest on the steep southern slopes of Mont Aigoual. Dotted with varied texts on fauna, flora and forest management, referred to in the leaflet, it makes its way to a spectacular viewpoint over the Hérault waterfalls.

Useful information

Practice : Sentiers de découverte

Duration : 2 h

Length : 3.3 km

Trek ascent : 202 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Aller-retour

Themes : Faune et flore, Eau et géologie, Transports en commun

Trek

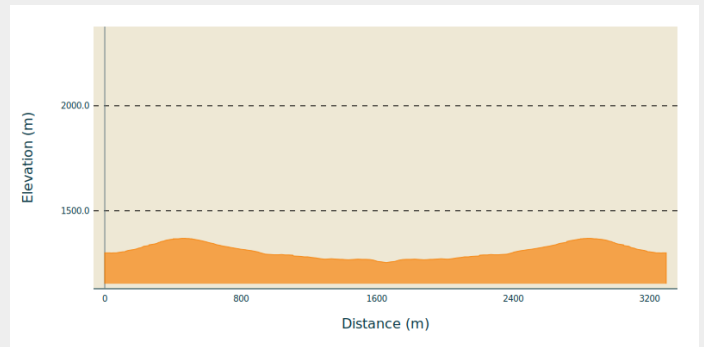
Departure : Maison de l'Aigoual

Arrival : Maison de l'Aigoual

Markings : 🗺️ Interprétation

Cities : 1. Val-d'Aigoual

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1237 m Max elevation 1366 m

Une variante, plus longue, est possible depuis la station de Prat Peyrot.

On your path...



La Serreyrède (A)

Le Trévezet molière (peat bog) (C)
Productive forest (E)

Georges Fabre (G)

Climate frontier (I)

Two waterfalls... Find the Héroult!
(K)

From beech copse to mature
plantation (B)

Irregular forest (D)

The association "Terres
d'Aigoual" (F)

The watershed (H)

Boreal owl (J)

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

Narrow and craggy path – firm shoes are essential.
Do not leave the path as this environment is unstable and very delicate. Horse-riding or mountain-biking are not allowed on or adapted to discovery trails.

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, go to www.lio.laregion.fr

Access

Col de la Serreyrède, on the D 986 Camprieu - Valleraugue or on the D 48 from Le Vigan.

Advised parking

Col de la Serreyrède pass

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

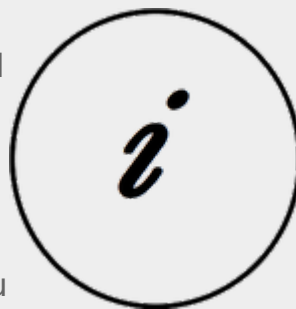
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

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/>

On your path...



La Serreyrède (A)

Before 1861, the house at the Col de la Serreyrède was inhabited by two families of farmers. They owned some livestock and had a vegetable garden, whose terraces you can still see above the La Caumette track. From 1861 on, the farm was inhabited by a forest ranger. It was only bought by the state body Eaux et Forêts in 1883, to be turned into a forester's house. It became one of Georges Fabre's headquarters during the reforestation of the Aigoual massif. The Cévennes National Park, tourism office and Terres d'Aigoual growers have now joined forces to revive La Serreyrède with the help of the Communauté de Communes Causses Aigoual Cévennes – Terres solidaires.

Attribution : © Office National de la Forêt

From beech copse to mature plantation (B)

Marker 1

Around 1850, before reforestation began, the inhabitants of the Cévennes were using local wood resources on a massive scale for heating and in industry, especially spinning-mills. Gradually, only a few beech copses remained, which were cut every 25 to 40 years. Grazing by tens of thousands of sheep further reduced the herbaceous plant cover. Much weakened, the plant cover was then also subjected to heavy precipitation, the so-called Cevenol episodes. It is against this backdrop that the lengthy work of the foresters began. To reduce risks and establish a lasting forest cover, the first technique was to make use of what was already present by converting the disused copses into mature plantations.



Le Trévezel molière (peat bog) (C)

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

Irregular forest (D)

This tree population consists of trees of very different diameters, ages and heights. Species are mixed: mainly pine, but also beech, rowan and whitebeam. This is an irregular mature forest, a forestry dynamic that is interesting for several reasons: it creates permanent forest cover; resistance to soil erosion; better resilience against storms or parasite attacks; regular production, etc. In the small clearing to the left of the path, the sunlight now penetrating to the forest floor has made natural regeneration of beech and fir possible, ensuring the renewal of the forest.

Productive forest (E)

Marker 2

Another method of creating a durable forest cover is to plant or sow. This work is carried out either on bare soil or among existing tree stands. The Aigoual reforestation programme was a gigantic effort, requiring 900,000 days of work, the planting of 60 million conifers and 7 million deciduous trees, and sowing of 38 tonnes of seeds. Spruces and pines, which can be planted in full sunlight and grow quite quickly, were widely used. Under the forest canopy, preference was given to firs.



The association "Terres d'Aigoual" (F)

The Cévennes National Park rents out part of the building to the association, enabling local farmers to sell their products directly to the public. The association brings together farmers who wish to promote what they produce and share their know-how. They also enjoy sharing their vision of farming- high quality produce and products,

- human-sized farms,
- mutual aid.

Come and discover their products!

Attribution : © Nathalie Thomas

Georges Fabre (G)

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.



The watershed (H)

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



Climate frontier (I)

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

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Boreal owl (J)

Abandoned woodpecker chambers are a boon for small mammals and other birds, such as the boreal owl, which has come from Nordic countries to settle here at altitudes of 800 m. Very discreet, it confines itself to the depths of our forested mountain ranges. It can be identified in March by its sonorous and gentle call. To maintain the species, the Cévennes National Park and the French forestry office protect trees with nesting chambers and old-growth forests from being logged.

Attribution : Gaël.Karczewski



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

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
