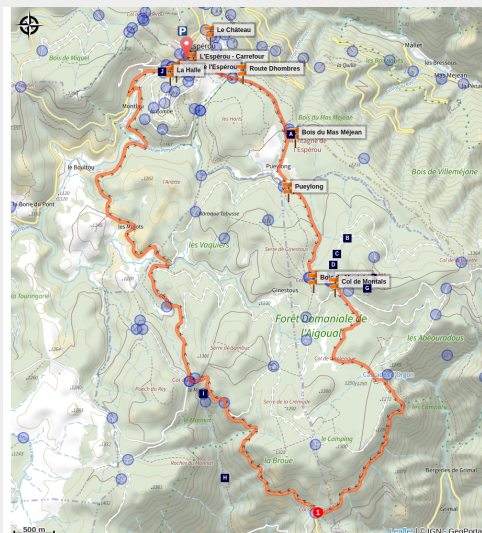


Les cascades d'Orgon - Escapades à vélo

Gard



La vue des Cascade d'Orgon (Béatrice Galzin)



Shady and picturesque lanes explore the southern slopes of the Aigoual massif. Three passes mark a change in exposure, vegetation and landscape.

Useful information

Practice : Cycling

Duration : 1 h 45

Length : 19.2 km

Trek ascent : 481 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Boucle

Trek

Departure : L'Espérou

Arrival : L'Espérou

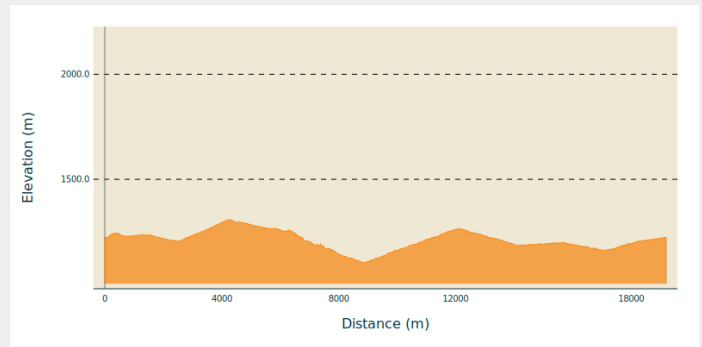
Cities : 1. Dourbies

2. Val-d'Aigoual

3. Arphy

4. Bréau-Mars

Altimetric profile



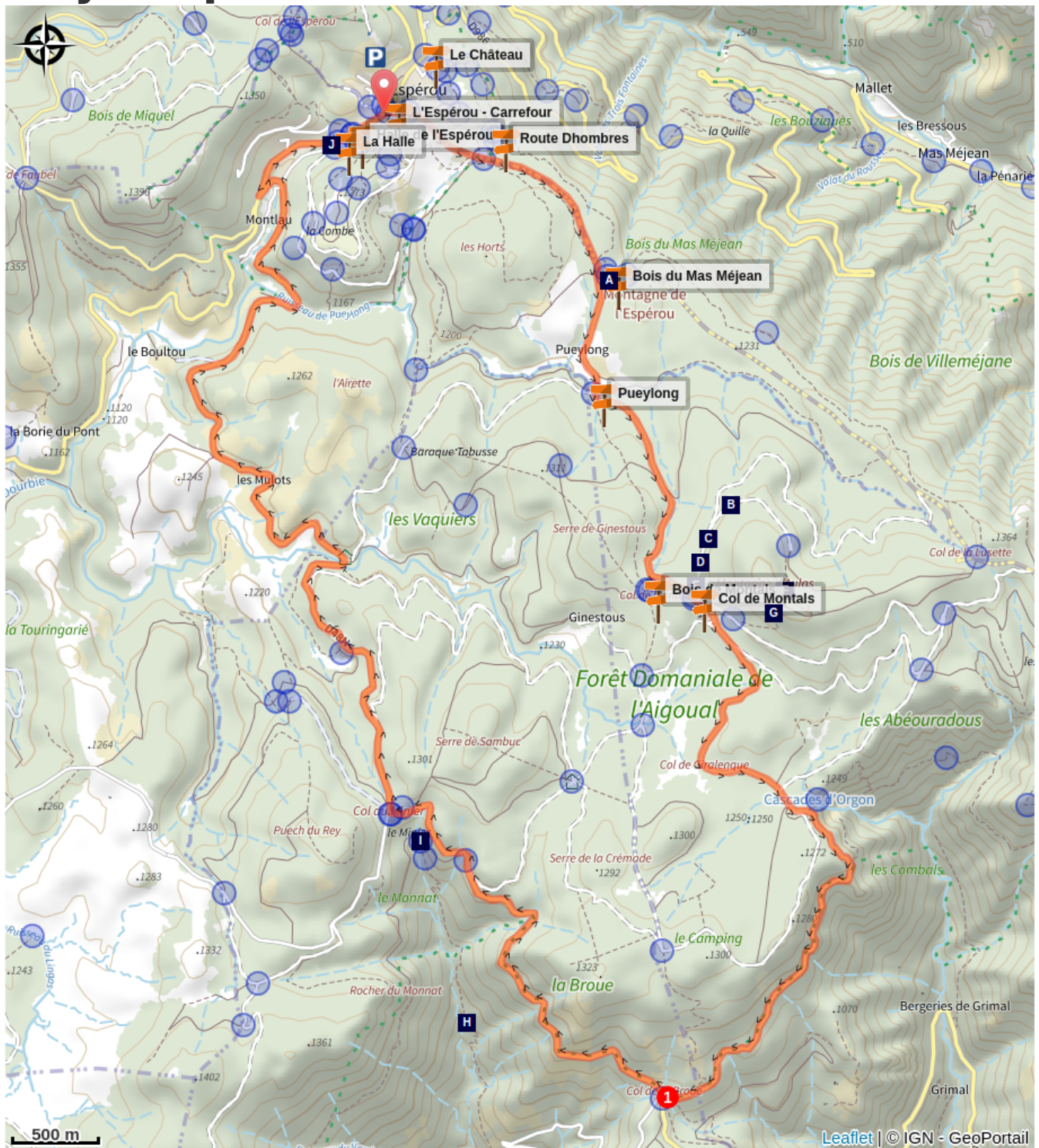
Min elevation 1101 m Max elevation 1308 m

From L'Espérou, head for the Col de Montals pass, first on the D548a, then on the D548.

Continue on the D548 to the Col de la Broue pass (optional side trip on foot to see the Orgon waterfalls, 5 minutes away).

1. At the Col de la Broue, return to L'Espérou on the D48n via the Col du Minier, then on the D986a.

On your path...



- The watershed (A)
- Timber from stumps (C)
- From flower to fruit ... (E)
- The south-facing slope (G)
- Foresters' houses (I)
- The profession of forester (B)
- From the seed to the tree (D)
- An ancient forest (F)
- Altitudinal vegetation zones (H)
- The village of L'Espérou (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

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 Valleraugue, take the D986 to L'Espérou – park in the village.

Advised parking

As you enter or leave the village

Source



CC Causses Aigoual Cévennes Terres Solidaires

<http://www.caussesaignoualcevennes.fr/>

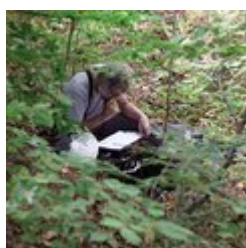


Pôle Nature Aigoual

On your path...

The watershed (A)

The watershed goes through the village of L'Espérou. This natural limit is also the border between the two municipalities of Val d'Aigoual and Dourbies. The rain that falls on and runs off the Valleraugue side continues to the Mediterranean. The water that flows towards Dourbies does not follow the same route and ends up in the Atlantic...



The profession of forester (B)

The forester is a silviculturist, meaning that s/he cultivates the forest to ensure that it is vigorous and healthy. The forester intervenes at all stages in the trees' life cycle to encourage or oppose natural evolution, depending on the objectives. Sometimes that means momentarily protecting a species dominated by rival plants, for instance by clearing beech seedlings threatened by brambles or young firs. When a plantation reaches maturity – at about 70 years – the forester supervises fructification to make sure there are abundant flowers receiving sufficient light...

Attribution : © Gaël Karczewski



Timber from stumps (C)

Beech trees regenerate very easily; their regrowth is a number of shoots grouped together on the same stump. In the old days, this method (coppicing) was much used to obtain firewood. On the northern slope of Aulas mountain, foresters turned the former coppices into timber plantations on stumps: the new trees with their straight boles were a steady supply of wood for packaging (crates). Since the closure of these companies, the beeches have only been commercialised as firewood.

Attribution : © Mathieu Baconnet



From the seed to the tree (D)

Because most seeds are rich in oils, they are devoured by famished animals in the winter: squirrels, field mice, wild boar, jays, chaffinches... Any seeds still on the ground the following spring can start germinating.

Attribution : © Philippe Raichaud



From flower to fruit ... (E)

The beech is a monoecious tree, meaning that female and male flowers are distinct but occur on the same tree. They flower in April and May; insects carry the male reproductive cells (the pollen) to the female cells.

After pollination, the flower produces seeds enclosed in soft-spined husks: beechnuts. Every three to five years, in autumn, an adult beech disperses thousands of seeds.

Attribution : © Emilien Herault



An ancient forest (F)

Some species, such as the *Lobaria pulmonaria* lichen, which grows very slowly, are good indicators of a forest's age. Likewise, some species of herbaceous flora, for instance woodrush, are noticeably more abundant in old forests than in recent forests.

Attribution : © Bruno Descaves



The south-facing slope (G)

Over the centuries, the south-facing slope of Aulas mountain was cleared for pasture, leaving the bedrock bare in places. In the late 19th century, foresters replanted the slope with spruce. These pioneer trees slowly re-established a forest floor and, in their shade, beechnuts germinated. Foresters are now guiding this stand towards a mixed plantation of beech and fir.

Attribution : © M Nègre (1923)



Altitudinal vegetation zones (H)

The path ranges from 700 to 1,250m in altitude and clearly shows the changes in vegetation as you climb. Vegetation zones have been defined based on altitude; they are given the name of the predominant plant species.

The first, the holm oak zone, stops at around 500m. It occurs mainly on schist or limestone. From 500 to 900m is the zone of deciduous oaks and sweet chestnut. From 1000m to 1500m is the beech zone; here you are in the Aigoual state forest. The final vegetation zone, above 1500m, is treeless and only concerns a small circle around the Aigoual summit.

Attribution : N Thomas



Foresters' houses (I)

When you arrive at the forest road, you turn left onto it. On the right used to be Le Minier forester's house. Many foresters' houses were scattered throughout the mountains where the forest rangers lived with their families. But living in such isolation was difficult, and school age children had to board. Gradually, these isolated houses were abandoned; the rangers now live in the villages.

Attribution : N Thomas



The village of L'Espérou (J)

The village of L'Espérou lies on the border of Dourbies and Valleraugue local councils. A draille (track for livestock to migrate to summer pastures with their shepherds) crosses the village. As in many villages in the Gard, the two places of worship – one Catholic, the other Protestant – are opposite each other. The village is located in a varied environment that is suitable for outdoor activities and sports.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin