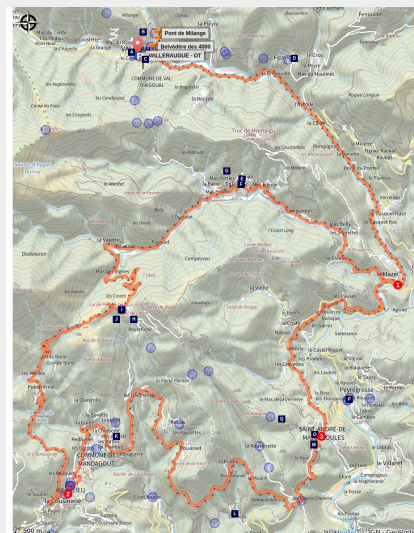


Les terrasses de l'oignon doux - Escapades à vélo

CC Causses Aigoual Cévennes - Terres solidaires



Vallée de Taleyrac (OT Mont Aigoual)



On small roads ideal for cycling, this circuit leads through a typically Cévenol and wild landscape, which continues to be maintained and shaped by humans.

Taleyrac and the surrounding hamlets are the birthplace of the mild onion of the Cévennes. Throughout your climb, you will be able to admire this special type of farming on terraces.

Useful information

Practice : Cycling

Duration : 3 h

Length : 42.8 km

Trek ascent : 1145 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Boucle

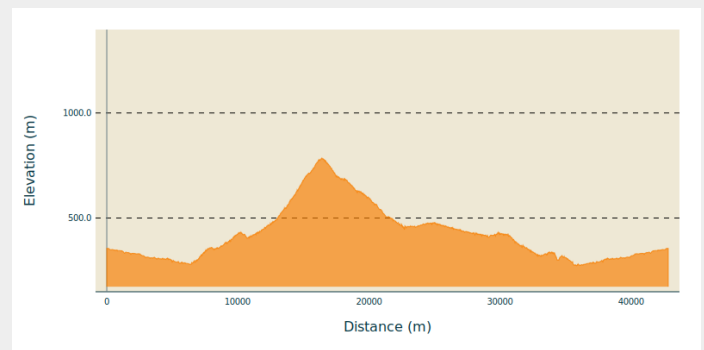
Trek

Departure : Valleraugue

Arrival : Valleraugue

Cities : 1. Val-d'Aigoual
2. Notre-Dame-de-la-Rouvière
3. Mandagout
4. Saint-André-de-Majencoules

Altimetric profile



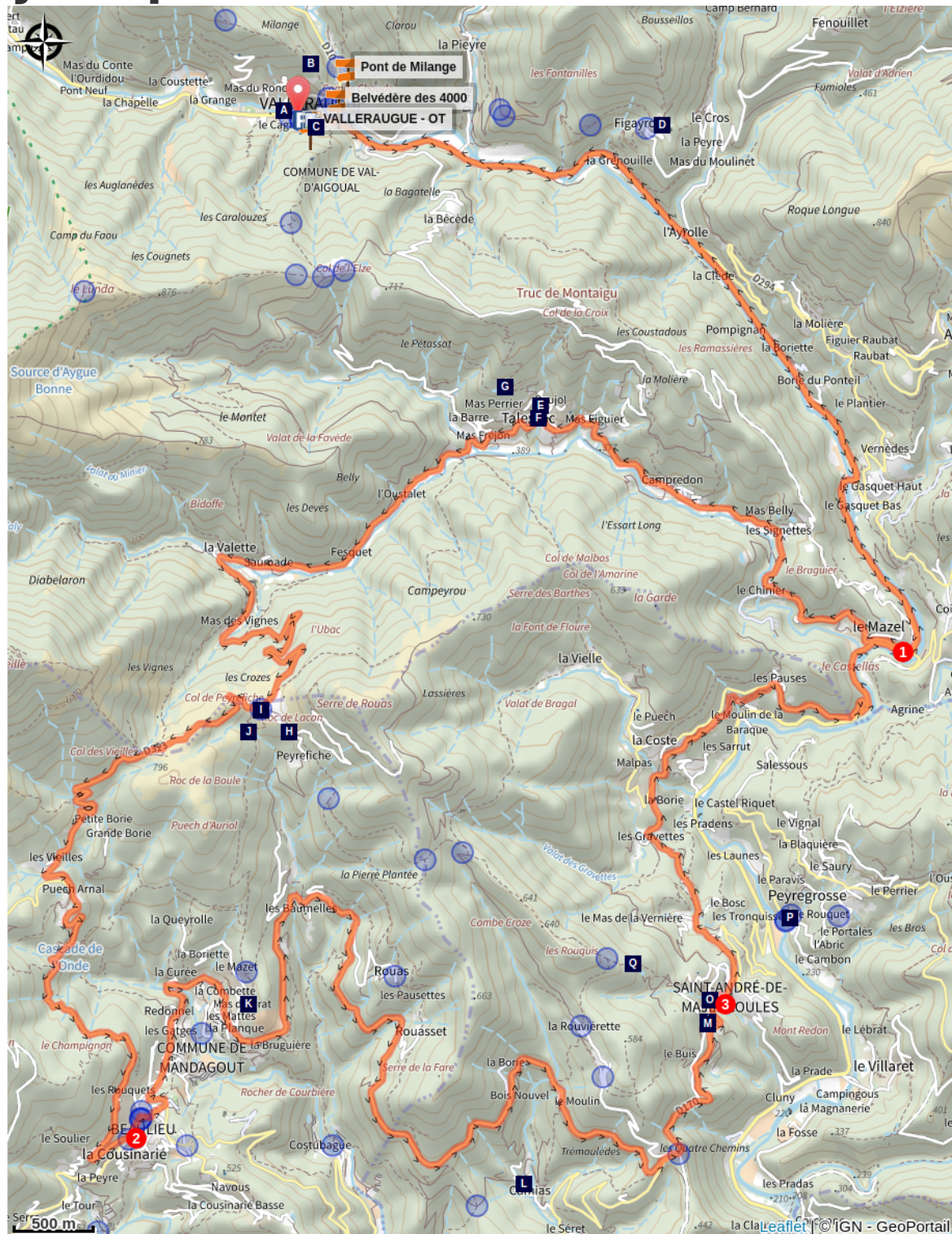
Min elevation 278 m Max elevation 779 m

From Valleraugue, bike towards Le Vigan on the D986 to Le Mazel.

1. At Le Mazel, take the D323 via Campredon, Taleyrac, La Valette and the Col de Peyrefiche and Col des Vieilles passes to Mandagout.
2. At Mandagout, take the D170 to St-André de Majencoules.
3. Go back downhill to Le Mazel, still on the D710 [D170?] via Les Pauses. Then return to Valleraugue on the D986.

Possibility of start from Saint-André de Majencoules.

On your path...



Valleriaugue (A)

1703 (C)

Mild onions (E)

Cobblestoned track (G)

The draille (drovers' road) (I)

Camin Ferrat (K)

The spinning-mill (M)

Mediterranean level (B)

Figayrole (D)

The Taleyrac valley (F)

Peyrefiche (H)

Transhumance (J)

Camias and its agriculture (L)

Water and the spinning-mill (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 Meyrueis, take the D986 to Valleraugue via Camprieu, the Col de La Serreyrède pass and L'Espérrou.

Advised parking

Car park at the tourism office

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

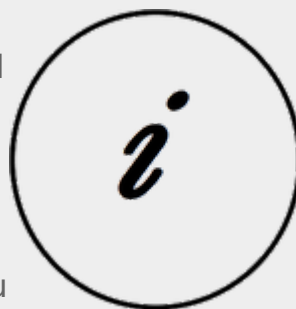
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

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, Valleraugue

7 quartier des Horts, 30570 Valleraugue

valleraugue@sudcevennes.com

Tel : 04 67 64 82 15

<https://www.sudcevennes.com>



Source

On your path...



Valleraugue (A)

Valleraugue is believed to derive from "vallis eraugia", the Hérault valley. With its 7,834 hectares, the town extends from the Hérault valley to the summit of Mont Aigoual. Valleraugue is located on an important transportation route between the garrigues and the uplands, and once had up to 4,192 inhabitants (1851). Just over a century ago, in 1907, Abbot Fesquet wrote in his monograph on the village: "The population has been reduced to 2,500 souls. There was a time when it was difficult to find lodgings, says a 1773 town council deliberation. Nowadays, accommodation is plentiful...". In the 2007 census, the population was 1,081.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Mediterranean level (B)

To begin with, the path is in the holm-oak altitudinal zone. Holm oaks tend to grow on the Mediterranean side of the watershed, where they are plentiful up to an altitude of about 500 m. Here, they have been eradicated to create crop terraces. On the either side of the path, which runs between high walls and has steps that give access to gardens, you can still see these terraces, now invaded by or planted with conifers. Like the holm oak, the tree heath and strawberry trees that are also present are typically Mediterranean species. Plants in this zone are xerophile, meaning that they thrive in dry environments. They are well-adapted because their small and glazed leaves limit water evaporation.

Attribution : © Yves Maccagno



1703 (C)

In Valleraugue, exporting chestnuts in times of famine or trouble was forbidden by law. In 1703, however, during the Camisard War, an official decree ordered the inhabitants to transport their chestnuts and cereals to other villages. This was to deprive the insurgents, who were supported by the locals, of provisions. The goods were guarded, and the inhabitants only kept two weeks' worth in reserve.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas



Figayrole (D)

In 1692 a clandestine gathering of Protestants – who were meeting to practice their religion, banned in 1685 by Louis XIV – was surprised here. Dozens or even hundreds of people might attend such gatherings. When they were caught in the act, the community was severely punished. Families that were directly involved ran the risk of being sent to the galleys, having their property confiscated and having their children taken away from them.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



Mild onions (E)

Cévennes mild onions (a Protected Designation of Origin since 2008) are transplanted in May and harvested 90 days later. During these 3 months, the onions have to be watered every other day. In old times, watering had to be by hand using an azagadouïro (a sort of wooden shovel). Since the arrival of hoses and especially of pumps, watering has been carried out using sprinklers and ramps for more regular spraying. This is mostly done in the morning, a good occasion to admire the cascading jets of water.

Attribution : Michel Monnot



The Taleyrac valley (F)

This valley consists of several hamlets that are part of the municipality of Val d'Aigoual. On the valley floor, springs are abundant; the cultivated crop terraces face south. This is good luck for diversified farming: fruit trees, grapes, mulberry trees and mild onions. Everything grows – but the onion is king!

Built on the rocks, the hamlets overlook the river with their enormous and very tall houses: any soil had to be reserved for crops!

Some flocks of sheep maintain the land behind the hamlets but most of it is done by humans, even today. The crop terraces, built out of granite, are remarkably beautiful. All of them are maintained!

Attribution : Michel Monnot



Cobblestoned track (G)

From the Col de la Croix pass in Taleyrac, you take a cobblestoned track that is of exceptionally high quality. The track used to link Valleraugue with St-André de Majencoules where it is said to date from well before the Protestant revolts (1702).

It is also said that the postman used it to reach Taleyrac and its neighbouring hamlets from Valleraugue and that he left the traces of his hobnailed boots in the granite!

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



Peyrefiche (H)

Peyrefiche means standing stone; further on is the Col de la Pierre Plantée pass. In Occitan, peyra plantada designate either menhirs or else the stones marking out Celtic or Roman tracks. The latter used and improved the drovers' roads, which became efficient traffic arteries. Some stones quite simply delineate territories.

Attribution : N Thomas



The draille (drovers' road) (I)

At the pass, you join the draille (drovers' road). These ancient pathways are believed to have been used since prehistoric times by herds of wild animals for their seasonal migrations. The drailles are sometimes lined by low dry-stone walls and marked out by standing stones, allowing shepherds to stay on the path even in bad weather. To this day, herds take a break at the Col de Peyrefiche pass and sometimes spend the night there, sheltered by the Pyrenean broom.

Attribution : N Thomas



Transhumance (J)

For their transhumance (seasonal migration), sheep wear bells, also known as drailhes. In decreasing order of size, the bells are called the sonals, clapas and piques. Each has its own sound: sonals ring out "we'll be climbing, we'll be climbing", clapas sing "we're going down" and piques "we're coming back". After shearing, the sheep are marked so that their owners can tell them apart when they are jumbled together with other flocks. In the old days, tar or pitch were used; nowadays, it is paint. Examples of bells are on show at the Musée Cévenol in Le Vigan.

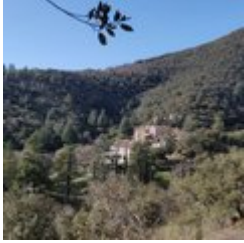
Attribution : Parc national des Cévennes



Camin Ferrat (K)

The name camin ferrat, literally "iron road", is obscure in origin. For some, it was a transit route for iron bars; for others, a route used by itinerant blacksmiths. The most likely explanation seems to be that it was used by shod beasts of burden. A local woman claims that the path was damaged by ox carts laden with wood.

Attribution : N Thomas



Camias and its agriculture (L)

In the 20th century, the hamlet of Camias still had 80 inhabitants. They grew grapes for wine. Some olive trees can also still be seen on the sunny sheltered slopes and some magnificent chestnut orchards on the shaded slopes (ubac). It is not difficult to imagine sheep and goats keeping these spaces open.

This is where Albertine Sarrazin lived, the author of the two novels *Astragal* and *La Traversière*, while her husband raised hell in Montpellier or elsewhere.

Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



The spinning-mill (M)

The spinning-mill was built out of shaped blocks of granite in 1825, under the supervision of the architect Victor Chapot of Le Vigan and its owner M. Durand.

On the ground floor were the (GENSOUL type) furnace, the ovens [for asphyxiating the silkworms using hot air], the vast wood stores and the stables and yards for the horses.

On the first floor was the spinners' workshop with its 54 circular terra cotta bassins (still visible) and rows of swifts (reels) that have since disappeared.

The top floor was home to the nursery, the storage area for the silk cocoons.

The silkworm disease pébrine (1856), the opening of the Suez Canal (1869), artificial silk (1884) and the owner's death put an end to this beautiful adventure.

Attribution : Beatrice Galzin



Water and the spinning-mill (N)

How strange to have a spinning-mill at the top of the village!

Usually, this kind of building is erected alongside a waterway. But here, a powerful spring is tapped using a béal (irrigation channel), which takes the water to the mill. The precious water is stored in gourgues (basins or pools) above the building, making it possible to regulate the quantity of water used to drive the spinning-mill.

Attribution : Michel Monnot