

The viaducts

CC du Pays Viganais



Le village d'Alzon (Nathalie Thomas)



Explore the impressive Cévenol railway network with its tunnels and giant viaducts.

Useful information

Practice : Pédestre

Duration : 3 h

Length : 9.4 km

Trek ascent : 412 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Boucle

Themes : Histoire et culture

Trek

Departure : Alzon, information panel

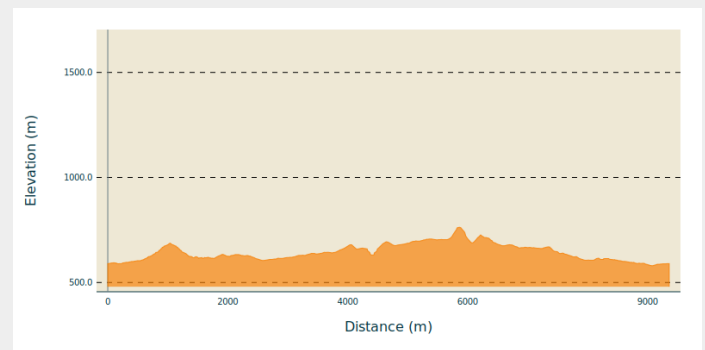
Arrival : Alzon, information panel

Markings : — Balisage jaune et mobilier signalétique

Cities : 1. Alzon

2. Campestre-et-Luc

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 581 m Max elevation 760 m

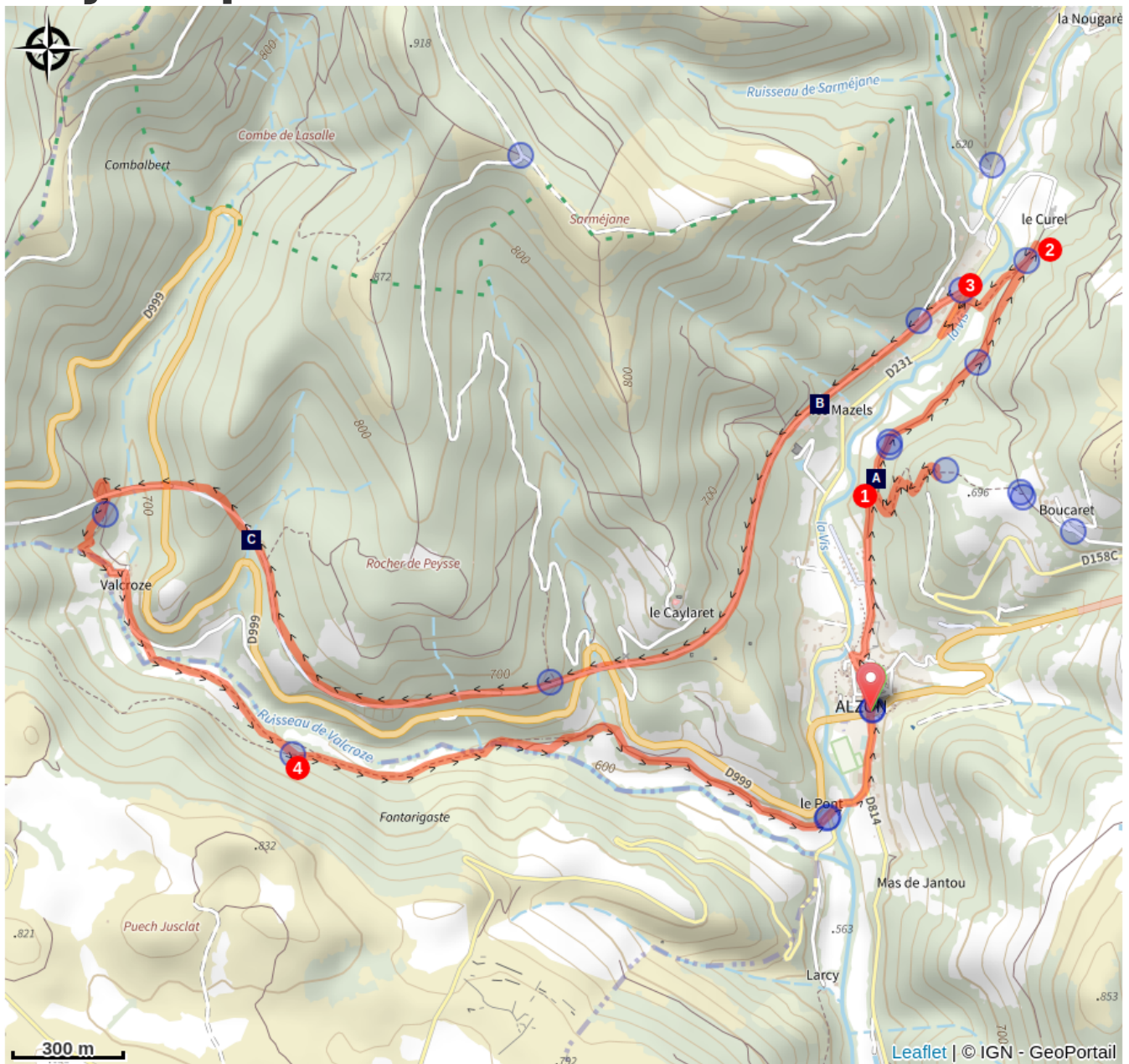
Signposts will guide you all along this route. In the description below, the signposted place names and/or directions are given in **bold italics** between quotation marks:

Starting at **"ALZON"**, follow **"Sous la Vierge"**. From here, optional there-and-back to the statue of the Virgin Mary.

1. Continue towards **"Rocamousse"**,
2. Then **"Passerelle de la Vis"** and **"Les Lauriers"**.
3. Then walk to **"Valcroze"** via **"Chemin de Gleize"**.
4. At **"Valcroze"**, return to **"ALZON"** via **"Pont de Saurel"**.

This walk is taken from the guidebook **Les Vallées Cévenoles - En Pays Viganais**, published by the Communauté de communes Pays Viganais-Cévennes as part of the collection Espaces Naturels Gardois and the label Gard Pleine Nature.

On your path...



Jean Charles Arnal de Curel (A)
The Le Vigan-Tournemire railway
(C)

The railway and its structures (B)

All useful information

Advices

You will need a torch for the first tunnel. Make sure your equipment is appropriate for the day's weather conditions. Take enough water, wear sturdy shoes and put on a hat. Please close any 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, go to the liO Occitanie app or visit <https://www.mestrajets.lio.laregion.fr>

Access

Take the D999 or D231 or D814

Advised parking

Car park in the village centre

Information desks

Tourism office Cévennes and Navacelles, Le Vigan

Maison de pays, place du Marché, BP 21, 30120 Le Vigan

contact@sudcevennes.com

Tel : 04 67 81 01 72

<https://sudcevennes.com/>



Source



CC du Pays Viganois

<http://www.cc-paysviganois.fr/>

On your path...



Jean Charles Arnal de Curel (A)

A lawyer by training, de Curel took holy orders in 1886, aged 28. Ordained in Nîmes, he was appointed canon of the cathedral there before a short stay in Algeria. In 1903, he was appointed bishop of Monaco, in which post he remained until his death in 1915. A lover of literature and the arts, he bought the Le Mazel estate in Alzon, where he had the strange château of the same name built. On his death, he left it to the bishopric of Nîmes, which turned it into a bishops' summer residence until 1982. De Curel's gifts and donations also made it possible to restore the facade of the church. As of 1914, he had the project of erecting a statue of the Virgin Mary on the Roche aux Fées rocks. (Le Vigan tourism office)

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



The railway and its structures (B)

The very undulating railway line (altitude at Le Vigan: 220 m; at Col du Vassel: 808 m; at Tournemire: 496 m) made it necessary to build a large number of structures (12 viaducts and 32 tunnels). These works employed almost 3,000 workers as well as 1,000 horses and mules for transport. The cost of the railway line was 21 million gold francs. In the early 20th century there were four trains a day, taking about two-and-a-half hours to cover the 61.8 km. In 1932, 136,000 passengers and 33,086 tonnes of goods used the line. In 1938, traffic collapsed: the number of users dropped to 25 a day and freight to 14,702 tonnes a year, leading to the closure of the line on 15 May 1939. It continued to see limited use until 1980; on the Tournemire-L'Hospilate du Larzac section, this was mostly for military purposes.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas



The Le Vigan-Tournemire railway (C)

The Le Vigan-Tournemire railway was built to complete the existing rail infrastructure between the Massif Central, the Millau, Rodez and Albi areas, the coastal plain and the major port of Marseilles. Work on the 61.8 km of the lines started in 1885 and took 11 years: the inauguration date was 25 August 1896. During construction, the inhabitants of Alzon complained about their station being far away. The authorities replied that “given the steep slopes, there was no alternative”. When the line was disused, the station buildings were bought by the National Forestry Office to turn them into a forester’s house that could replace the one at Cazebonne.

Attribution : Nathalie Thomas