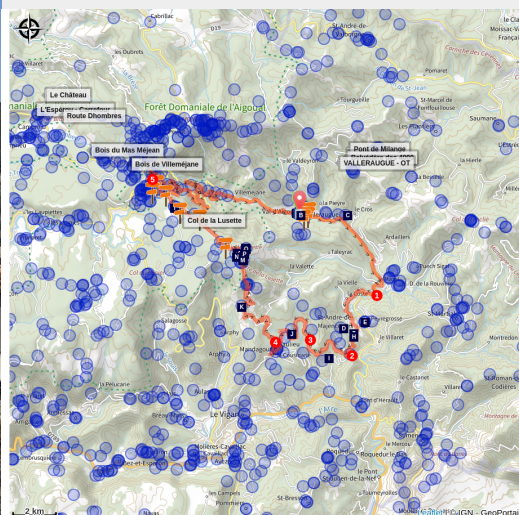


Valleraugue - Road bike circuit #7

CEVENNES



Le village de St André de Majencoules (Béatrice Galzin)



The road gently follows the river Hérault and meanders around hamlets. The climb is steep and long but the view is surprising and breathtaking !

The first kilometres to Le Mazel are a pleasant warm-up, followed by a beautiful road to Saint-André-de-Majencoules and Mandagout. Then things spice up, with the passes of Col des Vieilles pass and the famous Col de La Luzette (altitude 1,351 m), where even five-times Tour de France winner Bernard Hinault had to dismount !

Another small effort to L'Espérou before the downhill section to Valleraugue.

Useful information

Practice : Cycling

Duration : 4 h

Length : 56.2 km

Trek ascent : 1673 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Boucle

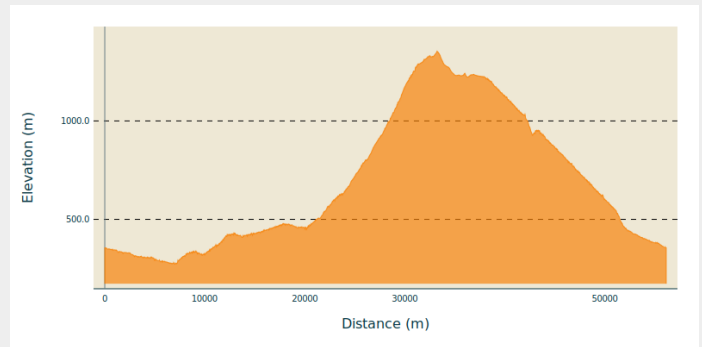
Trek

Departure : Valleraugue

Arrival : Valleraugue

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

Altimetric profile

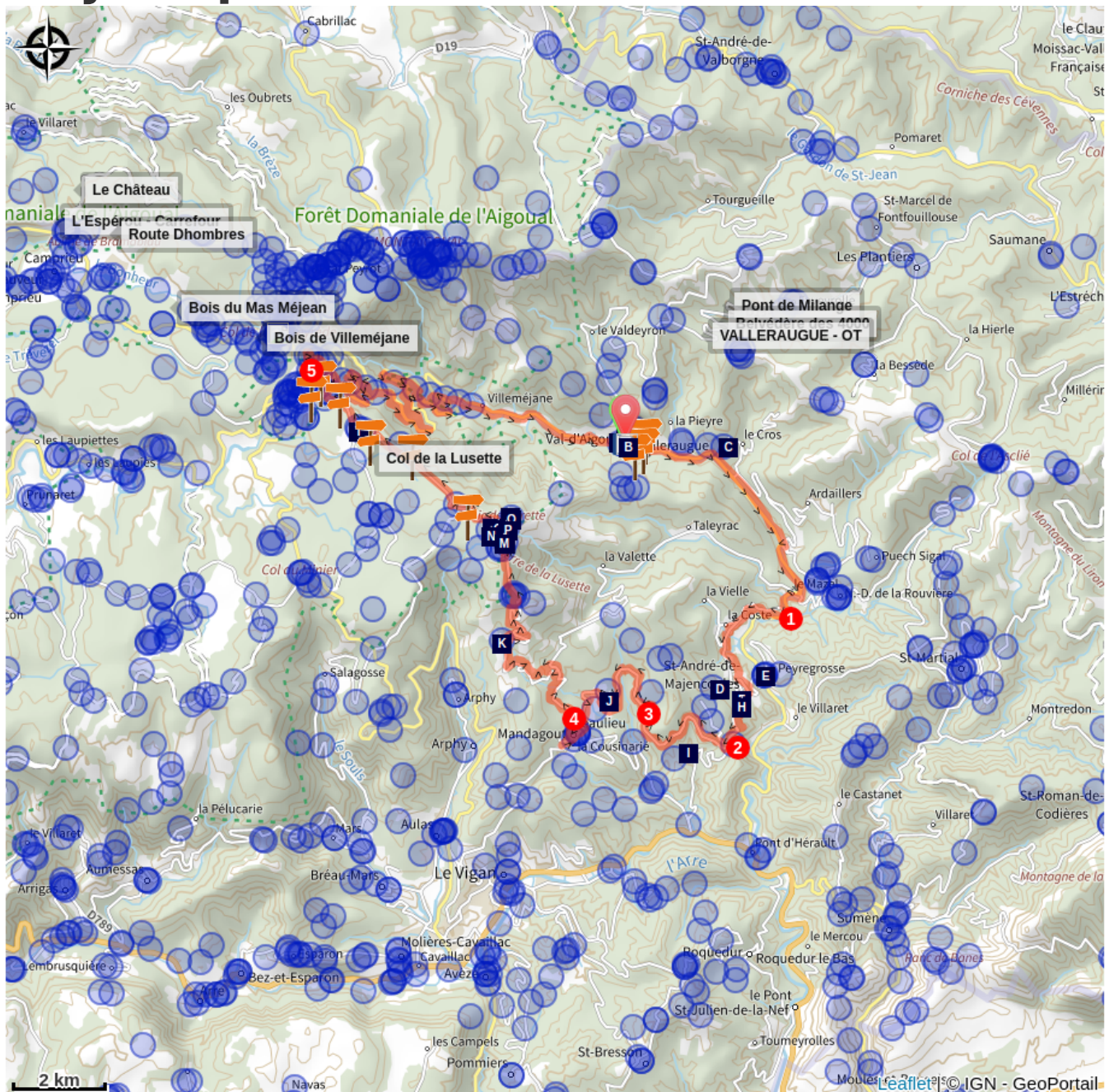


Min elevation 278 m Max elevation 1350 m

From Valleraugue, bike towards Le Vigan on the D986.

1. At Le Mazel, take the D170 to Saint-André-de-Majencoules.
2. After St-André-de-Majencoules, at Les Quatre Chemins, take the D354.
3. Then take the D329 to Mandagout.
4. At Mandagout, continue on the D329 to L'Espérou via Cap-de-Côte and the Col de La Luzette.
5. Continue to L'Espérou on the D548 and go downhill to Valleraugue on the D986.

On your path...



Mediterranean level (A)

Figayrole (C)

The spinning-mill (E)

Water and the spinning-mill (G)

Camias and its agriculture (I)

 The peregrine falcon (K)

André Chamson (1900-1983) (M)

1703 (B)

Bracken (D)

St-André de Majencoules (F)

The spinning-mill (H)

Camin Ferrat (J)

 What is a mouflon? (L)

The origins of the mouflon (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 Camprieu or Le Pont d'Hérault, take the D986 to Valleraugue.

Advised parking

Car park at the tourism office

Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

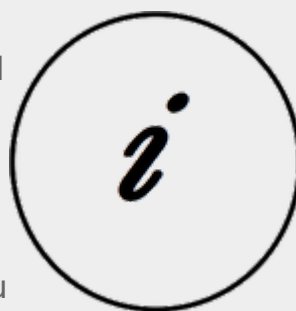
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

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...



Mediterranean level (A)

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 (B)

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 (C)

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



Bracken (D)

Since the abandonment of the chestnut orchard, the bracken, which was once cut and used as litter and fodder for animals, has spread. Some locals still remember that bracken fronds were given to pigs to eat with water and flour.

Attribution : PNC



The spinning-mill (E)

From the car park, you can see the imposing buildings of the former spinning-mill by the river. Flowing water was indispensable for spinning-mills to work: its energy was used to turn the spools (guindres), around which the silk thread was wound, and for the throwing, which consisted of twisting and spinning the silk.

We do not know who built the first building but a forge was set up in 1806, and in 1943 the building was home to both a throwing mill and a spinning-mill. The second building was added in 1856, and in 1900 they both had electric lighting installed. In 1936, the whole complex was managed by the Société des Filatures de Soie des Hautes Cévennes [Upper Cévennes silk spinning-mills company]". In 1984, Bresson-Rande still had a hosiery workshop here. In 1995, all activity on the site ceased.

Attribution : Michel Monnot



St-André de Majencoules (F)

With agricultural decline, the village's population has dropped sharply: 561 inhabitants in 2000 compared to 1,506 in 1913. In those days, the village had about 40 artisans and shopkeepers, including two blacksmiths, six shoemakers, four tailors, three hairdressers and eight grocers.

You will notice that the village is built on a rocky spur above the river, a strategic position which makes it possible to survey the valley but also to use water for crops. Near the village are terraces planted with mild onions.

Attribution : Michel Monnot



Water and the spinning-mill (G)

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



The spinning-mill (H)

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.

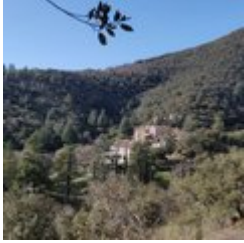
On the ground floor were the (GENSOUL type) furnace, the ovens [for asphyxiating the silkworms using hot air], the vast wood stores and the stables and yards for the horses.

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



Camias and its agriculture (I)

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.

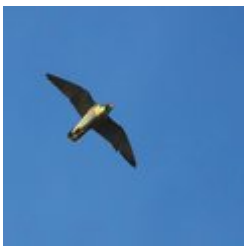
Attribution : Béatrice Galzin



Camin Ferrat (J)

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 oxcarts laden with wood.

Attribution : N Thomas



The peregrine falcon (K)

Given that it nests nearby, you might be lucky enough to observe a peregrine falcon. This is the most powerful and, above all, the fastest of the falcons in the Cévennes National Park. Grey in colour, the adult has a wingspan of about one metre for females, more than that for males. Its wings are angular, wide and pointed, and a black mask covers its cheeks.

Attribution : Descamps Régis



What is a mouflon? (L)

Marker 1

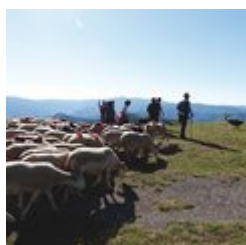
The mouflon is a ruminant mammal related to the domestic sheep. Its staple diet is herbaceous plants, which it finds in open spaces such as heaths. It also feeds on about a hundred other plants (ferns, mosses, mushrooms, etc.). The horns of the male (ram) are spiral-shaped and grow continuously, which makes it possible to estimate its age. The female (ewe) rarely has horns. The mouflon's life expectancy is around 14 years. Being an excellent climber, it can easily escape to steep areas in case of danger. These rocky zones also help limit the growth of its hooves through wear.

Attribution : © Chantal Daquo



André Chamson (1900-1983) (M)

In his works, André Chamson constructed an imaginary Cévennes park. His writings bear witness to his love for the area and his attachment to his Huguenot ancestors. A nationally renowned writer, he was elected to the Académie française in 1956. His final works see time and death become more powerful than work or human faith.



The origins of the mouflon (N)

Marker 6

L'Abeuradou is located on a draille, a drovers' road for shepherds and their flocks to move between the plains of Languedoc and summer pastures on the southern Massif Central. The name L'Abeuradou indicates that it is a spot where the flocks drink and rest before continuing their long hike. Today's domestic sheep is descended from the mouflon. Since being introduced to the slopes of Mont Aigoual, the mouflon has thus been rubbing shoulders with its cousin, which grazes here in summer. Their cohabitation does not seem to be a problem for the livestock farmers.

Attribution : © Olivier Prohin