VTT N°55 - The lime kilns

Des Gorges du Tarn au Causse du Larzac

Les fours à calamines dans le ravin des Valettes (Virginie Govignon - OT Larzac et Vallées)

Following tracks and old mule paths, a breathtaking loop takes you from the Dourbie valley to the plateau of the Causse Bégon, suspended between the Grands Causses and the Cévennes region.

Through a landscape of chestnut and beech trees, ascend to the Causse Bégon plateau, on the western edge of the Cévennes mountains, enjoying exceptional panoramic views of the Dourbie canyon . This challenging route, with its significant elevation gain, is punctuated by heritage sites that invite you to stop and explore: lime and calamine kilns, the Baumelle sheepfold, and the dolmen called 'le Tombeau du Géant" (Giant's Tomb)

Useful information

Practice : VTT

Duration : 1 h 30

Length : 11.5 km

Trek ascent : 411 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Loop

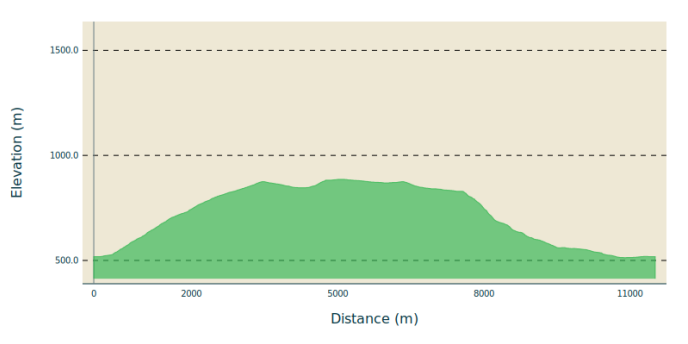
Themes : History and heritage, Panorama

Accessibility : VTTAE

Trek

Departure : St-Jean du Bruel
Arrival : St-Jean du Bruel
Markings : VTT Parc
Cities : 1. Saint-Jean-du-Bruel

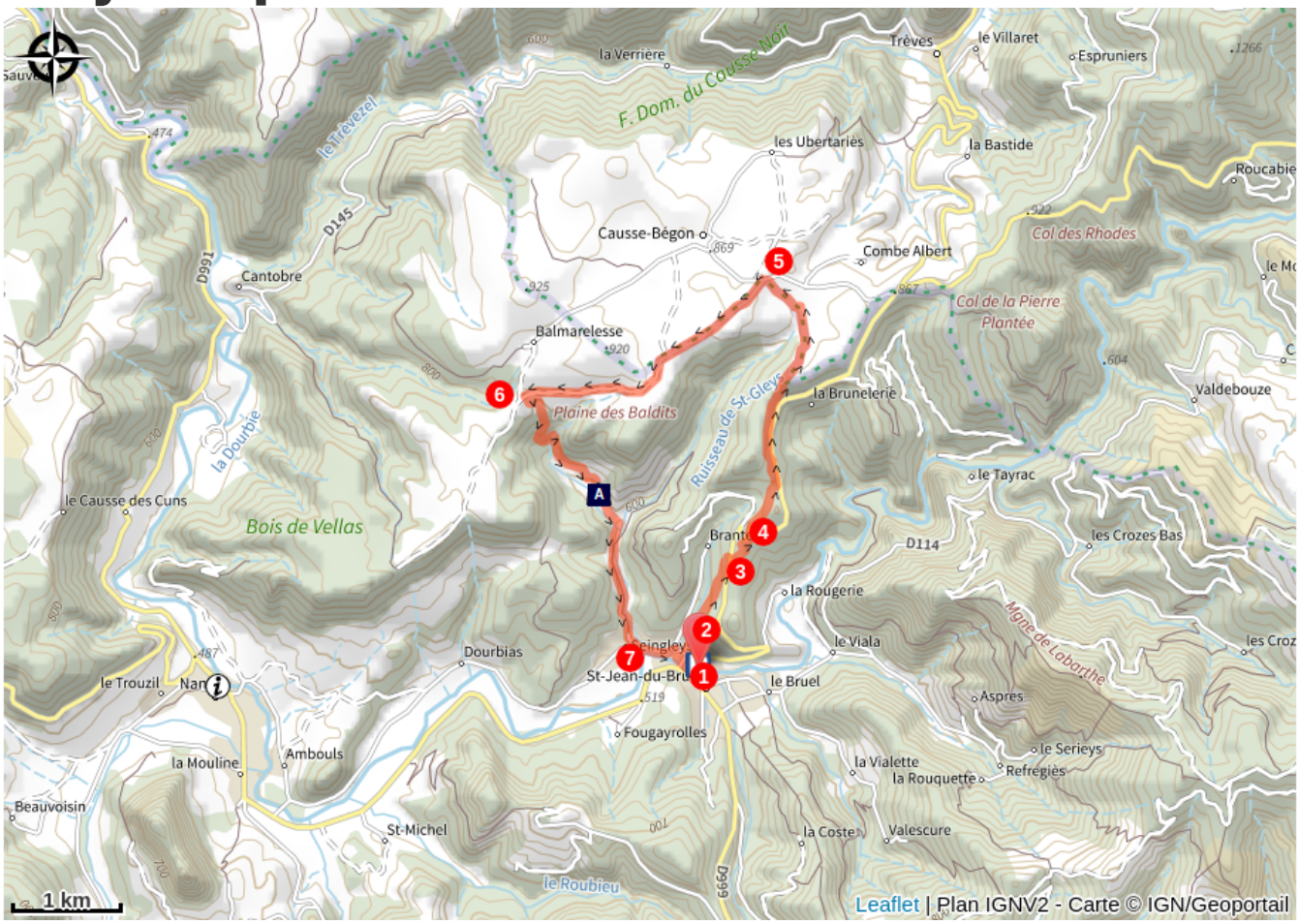
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 513 m Max elevation 886 m

1. From the parking area, take Rue du Moulin to the old bridge (Pont vieux), then turn right onto Rue de Cabrune. At the crossroads, continue straight ahead on this road until you reach the last houses.
2. Take the dirt track for 1 km (the climb is quite steep) until you reach the road that leads up to the Col de la Pierre Plantée (D341).
3. Follow it to the left, then turn right onto a very nice singletrack (the climb is just as steep as the previous one). At the next intersection with the D341, continue to your right for approximately 250 m.
4. Take the path at the hairpin bend and pass by an old lime kiln. Don't hesitate to stop and take a look. Continue the climb for another 2km to reach the intersection of the road heading towards Causse Bégon and a dirt track that branches off to the left.
5. Follow the track for 3km. Two points of interest are located near the path: the Giant's Tomb (dolmen) and a rock shelter.
6. Just before the rock shelter, turn left and descend onto a singletrack trail leading to Seingleys. Before the end of the descent, on the left, admire the four magnificent Valettes kilns (former calamine kilns).
7. In Seingleys, follow the road to the left towards St-Jean du Bruel, then at the entrance to the village, turn right onto Rue du Pont Vieux to reach the parking area.

On your path...



The kilns of Valettes (A)

All useful information

Is in the midst of the park

This itinerary is located in the World Heritage zone Causses and Cévennes, mediterranean agropastoral cultural landscape.

Advices

Very difficult route for e-MTBs (carrying required)

How to come ?

Transports

To travel by bus or train, by carpooling and hitchhiking Rezopouce.

Access

40km southeast of Millau via the D809 and D999 (Larzac Plateau) or via the D991 and D999 (Gorges of the Dourbie).

Advised parking

Place de la Borie, St-Jean du Bruel

Accessibility

VTTAE

Information desks

Tourist Office Larzac et Vallées
Place du Claux, 12230 NANT

infos@tourisme-larzac.com
Tel : +33(0)565622364
http://www.visit-larzac.com/

Source

C.C. Larzac et Vallées - Site Grands Causses VTT-FFC N°321

Site VTT cofinancé par l'Union Européenne.

Sites VTT FFC

On your path...

The kilns of Valettes (A)

The kilns of Valettes were inaugurated in 1905, the concession having been obtained the same year by the Metal Mining Company of Aveyron. Its perimeter extends between Saint-Jean du Bruel and Causse-Bégon and the works concern "La Gardiole", the Valettes (above the kilns), "Les Baldy" and "L'Yfer" above the brook called Saint-Gleys between Barjac and the confluence of Valettes. The main ore is constituted by calamine containing 35 to 40% zinc. The five furnaces are intended for enrichment by the so-called reduction method.

As the research progresses, the results soon turn out to be disappointing, because if from 1901 to 1904, 800 tons of calamine are extracted, 390 tons in 1905, 435 tons in 1906, it is treated only 160 tons in 1909. Work must stop in 1914 and will never be resumed.

After their abandonment, the five kilns will serve as a quarry. The three openings of the kilns are each coated with two rows of refractory bricks. These bricks will be used by a local artisan to make small metal ovens for baking bread, to keep cozy warmth under the feet and beds of the inhabitants of St-Jean, and finally to build the heating fireplace of the church. .

Source: written by Claude Bouteiller, revue Causses et Cévennes du Club Cévenol n°4-Août Septembre Octobre 2004

Attribution : Sandrine Perego