Raspes du Tarn & Dourdou Valley

Des falaises de Roquefort au Rougier



(Xavier Waerzeggers)



The Raspes escarpments are a balcony of rocks overlooking the Tarn. They provide you with a series of uphill and downhill sections interspersed with majestic sceneries – an atypical route dedicated to experienced riders.

From the outset, the ascent to the Causse of Saint-Affrique sets the tone for this long-enduring and exhilarating loop. Gradually, you enter deep inside the Raspes, this wild canyon surrounding the meanders of the river Tarn. Finally, after a substantial effort, the Dourdou valley, villages, and red sandstone colours hold a gentle and well-deserved finish for you!

Useful information

Practice : Cycling

Duration : 3 h 30

Length : 73.3 km

Trek ascent : 1218 m

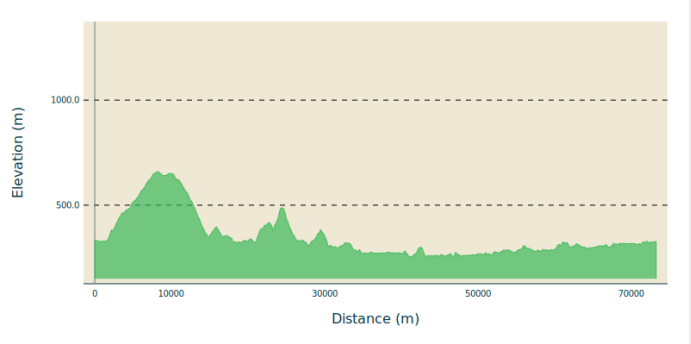
Difficulty : Hard

Type : Loop

Trek

Departure : Mountain Bike Station, Rue du 12 Étoiles, Saint-Affrique
Arrival : Mountain Bike Station, Rue du 12 Étoiles, Saint-Affrique
Cities : 1. Saint-Affrique
2. Saint-Rome-de-Tarn
3. Viala-du-Tarn
4. Saint-Victor-et-Melvieu
5. Le Truel
6. Villefranche-de-Panat
7. Broquiès
8. Saint-Izaire
9. Calmels-et-le-Viala
10. Vabres-l'Abbaye

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 250 m Max elevation 659 m

1. From the bike service station, follow the signs for “Town Centre / Albi.”
2. At the intersection with the RD993, carry straight on, then take the first road to the right in the direction of Ayssennes / Le Truel to begin the ascent toward the plateau (6km with a 5% gradient).
3. At the top of the slope, take a left towards Saint-Victor-et-Melvieu.
4. After the Dolmen de Foncouverte area, head towards Saint-Rome de Tarn. Then ride across the village in the direction of Rodez.
5. Once you’ve crossed the bridge, turn to the left to Le Viala du Tarn.
6. After that, follow the direction of Ayssennes – Broquiès. Then, cycle along the Tarn up to the village of Le Truel.
7. After the bridge, turn to the left to Broquiès, then to Saint-Izaire.
8. Go through the village of Saint-Izaire to join the greenway cycle route along the Dourdou to Le Cambon.
   Turn left, cross the Savignac footbridge, then continue to Saint-Affrique via the RD54. Follow the signs for "Millau" to return to your starting point.

On your path...



📖 Village of Saint-Izaire (A)
📖 The Saint-Izaire Mill (B)
Ardaliès Statue-Menhir 9 (C)
Ardeliès Statue-Menhir 6 (D)
Ardeliès Statue-Menhir 1 (E)
Ardaliès Statue-Menhir 2 (F)

All useful information

Gear

Bring a supply of water and suitable clothing.

How to come ?

Transports

All the information is available on the Tourist Office website.

Access

Saint-Affrique is situated 31 km southwest of Millau via the D992 and D999 roads.

Advised parking

Mountain bike station car park, rue du 12 Étoiles, Saint-Affrique

Information desks

Saint-Affrique Tourist Office
Boulevard Aristide Briand, 12400 Saint-Affrique

contact@roquefort-tourisme.fr
Tel : 0565585600
http://www.roquefort-tourisme.fr/



Source

Espace CYCLOSPORT FFC

On your path...



📖 Village of Saint-Izaire (A)

Saint-Izaire is a fortified village whose history is closely linked to its episcopal castle, the former summer residence of the bishops of Vabres. Mentioned as early as 862, the village gradually surrounded itself with ramparts during the 12th century to protect its inhabitants from feudal conflicts.

After the Wars of Religion, the fortifications lost their defensive role: openings were made in the walls, and some fortified gates were altered to allow carts to pass and houses to expand. Despite these changes, the layout of the streets, alleys, and houses has remained almost unchanged since the Middle Ages. The 15th- and 16th-century façades and windows still give the village its historic charm today.

Attribution : Virginie Govignon



📖 The Saint-Izaire Mill (B)

Mentioned as early as 1461, the Saint-Izaire mill was once used to grind wheat for the village inhabitants. A witness to the area’s rural past, it has endured through the centuries by adapting to the needs of each era.

Today, this historic mill operates as a small hydroelectric power station, continuing its energy-producing role at the heart of the village.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



Ardaliès Statue-Menhir 9 (C)

This statue-menhir stands out for the richness and precision of its carvings. It combines female attributes, such as breasts, with male elements like a shoulder strap carrying a ring-shaped object. The legs and the chevron-decorated belt were carefully carved onto a surface flattened by pecking.

On the back, engravings representing shoulder blades and a belt complete this unique figure, whose blend of female and male symbolism remains fascinating to this day.

Attribution : DelphineAtche



Ardeliès Statue-Menhir 6 (D)

Probably representing a male figure, this statue-menhir shows traces of a shoulder strap on the back as well as an elongated left arm. The buckled belt and the pecking technique used on the face and back reflect the craftsmanship of the period.

This carving method, typical of the Ardaliès statues, involved roughening the surface by pecking before bringing out the raised features.



Ardeliès Statue-Menhir 1 (E)

This male statue-menhir is distinguished by a shoulder strap passing over the right shoulder and supporting a ring-shaped object. A buckled belt and well-defined legs are also visible, while the facial features remain difficult to discern.

On the back, the arms extend into lines converging toward a mysterious central element, possibly suggesting a warrior symbol or an ornament whose meaning remains uncertain. This work reflects the rich symbolism of prehistoric male representations.

Attribution : Delphine Atché



Ardaliès Statue-Menhir 2 (F)

Transformed over time, this statue displays a striking blend of female and male attributes. One can distinguish a breast as well as a male object shaped like a dagger, decorated with a ring and chevron patterns. Its crosshatched belt, unique of its kind, along with the grid-like carvings on the hands resembling finger joints, enhance the originality of this work.

On the back, additional engravings suggesting shoulder blades, a belt, or perhaps hair add further mystery to this statue-menhir, considered one of the most unique in the region.