

The Raspes du Tarn and the 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 Cause 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

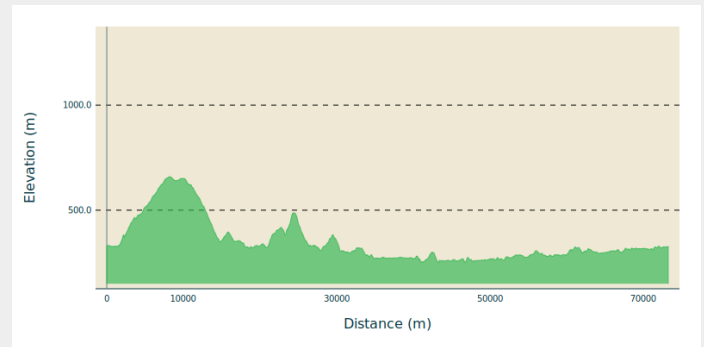
Trek

Departure : Tourist Office in Saint-Affrique

Arrival : Tourist Office in 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 Tourist Office situated on Boulevard Aristide Briand in Saint-Affrique, follow the direction of Rodez.
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. Ride across the village of Saint-Izaire to reach the cycling route - a green lane that runs along the Dourdou river up to the Cambon.
9. Turn to the left, go across the walkway of Savignac, then ride back to Saint-Affrique via the RD54.


On your path...




 Village of Saint-Izaire (A)

 Ardeliès 6 Carved Standing Stone (C)

 Ardeliès 2 Carved Standing Stone (E)

 Ardeliès 9 Carved Standing Stone (B)

 Ardeliès 1 Carved Standing Stone (D)

All useful information

Gear

Prévoir une réserve d'eau et une tenue adaptée

How to come ?

Transports

Se déplacer en bus ou en train : <https://lio.laregion.fr/>

Covoiturage : [BlaBlaCar](#), [Rézo Pouce](#), [Mobicoop](#), [Idvroom](#), [LaRoueVerte](#), [Roulez malin](#)

Access

Saint-Affrique is situated 31 km southwest of Millau via the D 992 and D 999 roads.

Advised parking

Bus station car park, boulevard Aristide Briand in 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/>



On your path...



Village of Saint-Izaire (A)

The history of this village is intertwined with that of the old Episcopalian castle, which was formerly the Bishop of Vabres summer palace. The name of the village was first made mention of in an official document dating back to 862 AD.

During the 12th century, continual invasions, acts of banditry and battles between feudal lords created a tremendous insecurity. This led to the building of battlements to improve the defensive system and provide a safe haven to the neighbouring people during periods of turmoil. The castle and the fortified village date back to the time of the Vabres bishops who made the village their summer residence and a safe refuge.

When the religious wars were over and peace restored, the protective wall lost its primary function and so today the façade of the castle has windows inserted along its length. The fortified gates were also demolished to allow the passage of carts or to expand the neighbouring houses. The village street, footpath and house pattern has remained unchanged since the Middle Ages, and the beautiful 15th century facades and windows can still be seen in some streets today. The old church part of the battlements had its vault lowered in 1635 to provide housing to the schoolmaster and guards. In 1650 repair works were started by the Consuls.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



Ardéliès 9 Carved Standing Stone (B)

This statue has undergone some changes, it displays breasts as feminine attributes together with a harness holding the "object" which are masculine features. Moreover, the ring of the "object" and one breast become confused. The belt chevron ornaments are meticulously crafted, and legs appear in relief on an evenly pitted surface. The back, shoulder blades and belt are depicted along with a central item. This could be an harness with a ring like those on the Ardéliès 1 statue, the Bancanel statue (Saint-Affrique) or the one of Saint-Jean-de-l'Hôpital (Montclar), all of these statues are not far away from one another.

Attribution : DelphineAtche



© Ardeliès 6 Carved Standing Stone (C)

This statue must have represented a masculine figure as the trace of a harness is noticeable on the left side on the back. Arms and buckled belt are also still visible. The features of the face and back were achieved by picketing the rock. This technique was frequently used on the statues of the Ardaliès either for the engraving of figurative elements (Ardeliès 6) or to smooth the surface on which embossed elements emerged in relief (Ardeliès 9).



© Ardeliès 1 Carved Standing Stone (D)

This statue displays several masculine features: the harness passing over the right shoulder and holding an “object” with a ring. The belt ornamented with a buckle, and the legs are clearly visible. The facial features are difficult to identify. On the back, the lines that extend arms or harness come to a stop on a central element with an unknown meaning. By analogy to the masculine objects, some suggest it may be a harness, but is it a warrior attribute, a body ornament or part of a garment? The issue remains unresolved.



© Ardeliès 2 Carved Standing Stone (E)

This statue was subjected to several changes during prehistoric times as it displays both feminine and masculine attributes: one breast is visible and so is the masculine “object” which is a sort of dagger. This object is particularly detailed: ring and decorations with chevron ornaments that could represent the dagger sheath. The belt is represented by criss-crossed patterns and constitutes the only decoration of this kind, along with the grid pattern, which suggests the formation of the fingers of the hands. On the back, shoulder blades, belt and perhaps hair, represent the outline of a female figure.