An Epic Journey in Pays du Roquefort

Des falaises de Roquefort au Rougier

(Virginie Govignon)

Explore Pays du Roquefort over four days of road touring, and journey through a stunning variety of landscapes, from arid plateaus and wooded valleys to lush green valleys and red-earth hills.

From the Templar Larzac to the Rance Valley, from the Raspes du Tarn to the Lacaune Mountains, via the iconic Combalou Rock in Roquefort, the production area of the king of cheeses will hold few secrets for you after these four cycling stages. Organise your journey (stages and accommodation) according to our recommendations, or simply follow the inspiring landscapes that await you!

Useful information

Practice : Cycling

Duration : 4 days

Length : 363.4 km

Trek ascent : 6712 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Itinerant stay

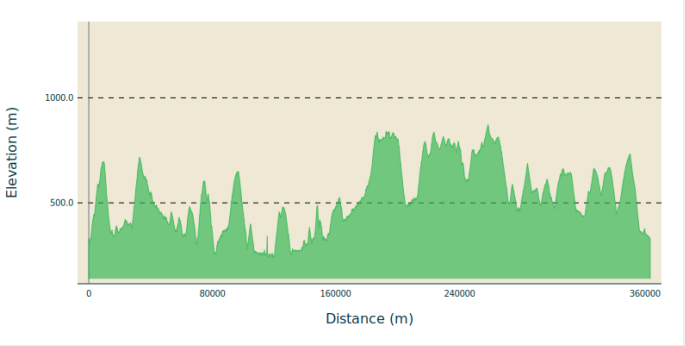
Themes : Savoir-faire, Agropastoralism, Flora, Geology, History and heritage, Panorama, Water

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. Vabres-l'Abbaye
3. Gissac
4. Montlaur
5. Camarès
6. Mounes-Prohencoux
7. Belmont-sur-Rance
8. Combret
9. Laval-Roquecezière
10. Pousthomy
11. Saint-Sernin-sur-Rance
12. Coupiac
13. Balaguier-sur-Rance
14. Plaisance
15. Montclar
16. Saint-Izaire
17. Broquiès
18. Brousse-le-Château
19. Villefranche-de-Panat
20. Le Truel
21. Saint-Victor-et-Melvieu
22. Viala-du-Tarn
23. Saint-Rome-de-Tarn
24. Saint-Rome-de-Cernon
25. La Bastide-Pradines
26. Lapanouse-de-Cernon
27. Sainte-Eulalie-de-Cernon
28. La Cavalerie
29. Nant
30. Saint-Jean-du-Bruel
31. Sauclières
32. La Couvertoirade
33. Les Rives
34. Cornus
35. Viala-du-Pas-de-Jaux
36. Tournemire
37. Roquefort-sur-Soulzon
38. Saint-Jean-et-Saint-Paul
39. Saint-Beaulize
40. Fondamente
41. Le Clapier
42. Montagnol
43. Fayet
44. Sylvanès

45. Versols-et-Lapeyre

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 239 m Max elevation 872 m

A cycling journey through the heart of Pays du Roquefort, to be tailored as you wish !

4 recommended stages with accommodation bearing the "Bonnes adresses FFVélo" quality label :

Stage 1 : Saint-Affrique – Plaisance : 82km – 1558+ :

Possible detours along the route :

- Montaigut castle
- Hilltop village of Combret
- Notre-Dame d’Orient Monastery

Stage 2 : Plaisance – Saint-Rome de Tarn : 75km 1322+ :

Possible detours along the route :

- Coupiac castle
- Montclar viewpoint
- Saint-Izaire castle
- Brousse castle
- Hilltop village of Ayssènes (accommodation and dining)

Stage 3 : Saint-Rome de Tarn – Roquefort : 121km 1950+ :

Possible detours along the route :

- Hilltop village of La Bastide-Pradines
- Gaillac domain (restaurant, accommodation and museum)
- La Couvertoirade
- Croix de Gréponac viewpoint (300 m of accessible track, round trip)

Stage 4 : Roquefort – Saint-Affrique : 87.5km 1300+ :

Possible detours along the route:

- Fort of Saint-Jean-d’Alcas
- Saint-Beaulize – Mas Andral farm (La Caussenarde Brewery)
- Saint-Xist Chapel (Romanesque chapel and botanical garden) between Fondamente and Le Clapier

Stages :

1. Etape 1 : Echappée dans le Rougier
   83.3 km / 1749 m D+ / 4 h 30
2. Etape 2 : Zigzag dans les Raspes du Tarn
   79.4 km / 1816 m D+ / 4 h
3. Etape 3 : Grimpette sur le Larzac
   124.8 km / 2059 m D+ / 6 h 30
4. Etape 4 : Traversée des Avant-Causses
   89.3 km / 1411 m D+ / 4 h 30

On your path...

📖 The Romanesque Church of Saint Martin (A)
📖 The Saint-Izaire Mill (B)
📖 Village of Saint-Izaire (C)
📖 The ramparts of La Cavalerie (D)
📖 Ambouls (E)
The old Bridge (F)
📖 Saint Pierre Parish Church (G)
📖 Village of Lapeyre (H)

All useful information

Advices

Part of the route includes a series of 3 short tunnels. For greater safety, make sure you have suitable lighting.

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

OT Pays du Roquefort
Avenue de Lauras, 12250 Roquefort/ Soulzon

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

Source

On your path...

The Romanesque Church of Saint Martin (A)

Listed as a Historic Monument, the Romanesque Church of Saint Martin is a true gem of medieval architecture. Built in the 12th century, it stands out for the harmonious blend of styles it displays: the choir and transept reflect southern Romanesque features, while the nave, enlarged in the 15th century, adopts Gothic lines. Perched on a rocky promontory overlooking three meanders of the Rance River, this modest building offers a remarkable panorama and is instantly recognizable by its slender octagonal bell tower. Visible from afar – especially when illuminated at night – it seems to watch over the Rance Valley. Inside, a 15th-century cross, a relic of the Knights Hospitaller of Jerusalem, bears witness to the site’s rich religious history.

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

📖 Village of Saint-Izaire (C)

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 ramparts of La Cavalerie (D)

The fortifications of La Cavalerie, a centuries-old work against the test of time…
Situated at the north of the Larzac plateau, La Cavalerie was created in the 12th century by the Templars of Sainte-Eulalie commandery, settled on the Larzac Causse since 1152.

The Sainte-Marie church (1180) was included in the Knights Templars dwelling and included several buildings around a small courtyard. The village developed around this building, where the inhabitants found refuge in case of danger.

However, this protection as well as that of the Commandery of Sainte-Eulalie was considered insufficient during the Hundred Years War, where the Larzac, a wide open plateau, badly defended but provided with cattle, attracted the people of war. The commander of Sainte-Eulalie, Bertrand d’Arpajon, fortified the important places of his commandery: Le Viala du Pas de Jaux in 1430, then La Cavalerie, La Couvertoirade in 1439 and finally Sainte-Eulalie in 1442.

Source : Point accueil La Cavalerie.

Attribution : Point Accueil La Cavalerie

Ambouls (E)

The village of Ambouls, municipality of Nant, built on the right bank of the Dourbie River, would date from the installation of the Romans in the area of Nant.
The hillock of Ambouls peak (641 m high) was fortified in the Iron Age from 700 or 600 BC., a clear sign of an older occupation.
On the peak or “gallo-Roman oppidum”, pieces of pottery were discovered 40 years ago and are preserved at the Museum of Montrozier.
On the east side we can still see todays the entrance of the “grotte des fées” (cave of the fairies), where Ernest André discovered in 1913 human bones dating from around 4500 BC.
Ambouls is one of those agricultural hamlets, emptied by the rural exodus, but which recovers now a new soul, thanks to the city dwellers who come back and restore the houses.
Some houses are typical with the external stone staircase, the porch and under the stable which opens on a wide arched porch.
You can also discover an original fireplace above an old bread oven and a stone cross from 1710.

Attribution : Alain Bonnemayre

The old Bridge (F)

Located in the oldest area of the village, this roman bridge with a single arch spans the Dourbie River.

Dating from the 13th century, it was the main bridge of the village until the 18th century. In the neighborhood of the old bridge, manholes still exist, hiding places dating from religion wars.

Attribution : Studio Martin

Saint Pierre Parish Church (G)

Built in 1853, the neo-Gothic Saint-Pierre Church stands out for its colourful stained glass windows, sculptures and bell tower that proudly overlooks the village. Dedicated to the apostle Saint Pierre, it invites you to discover its ornate interior, revealing 19th-century religious art.

Attribution : Xavier Waerzeggers

📖 Village of Lapeyre (H)

The name Lapeyre means “the stone” in Occitan, a reference to the rocky outcrop on which the village was built. Once part of the Knights Templar commandery in the 12th century, Lapeyre has preserved its medieval character, with narrow streets and old houses clustered around its tower.

Several historic features can still be seen in the village square, including mullioned windows, a medieval tower, and remains of a former convent. The current church, built in 1844, houses a remarkable Virgin and Child statue carved in Rome in 1860 from a single block of Carrara marble.

Lapeyre’s heritage is also closely linked to its textile industry. Established in the 17th century to process wool from the Causses, the former textile mill—still visible from the new bridge—stands as a reminder of an activity that shaped village life for centuries.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme