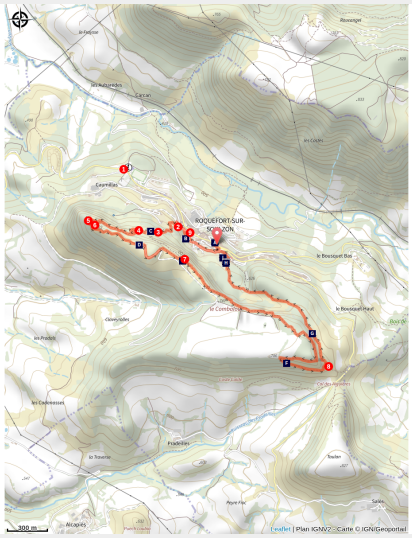
The ladder path

Des falaises de Roquefort au Rougier



Les éboulis du Combalou (Virginie Govignon)



This path offers stunning panoramic views over the Larzac, then on the Tournemire amphitheatre and over the village of Roquefort which are the highlights of this hike that provides a glimpse of pastoral life in the past.

A long time ago, an employee of the Mas de Roquefort farm used to bring a meal to the shepherd who was grazing his sheep on the Combalou plateau. He had to take a short-cut escalating two ladders to reach the top of the cliff, hence the name of this path which offers a wealth of discoveries such as the Balhol sinkhole, the Combalou jasse and the 11th century chapel Saint-Pierre built on a rocky spur.

Useful information

Practice : Trekking

Duration : 2 h 45

Length : 6.3 km

Trek ascent : 387 m

Difficulty : Medium

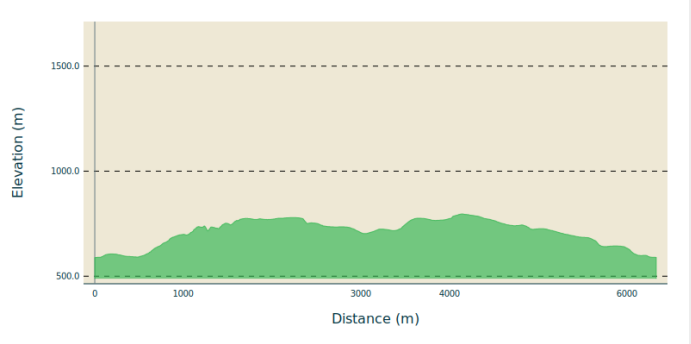
Type : Loop

Themes : Agropastoralism, Geology, Panorama, Top 3 Aveyron

Trek

Departure : Tourist Office
Arrival : Tourist Office
Markings : PR
Cities : 1. Roquefort-sur-Soulzon

Altimetric profile

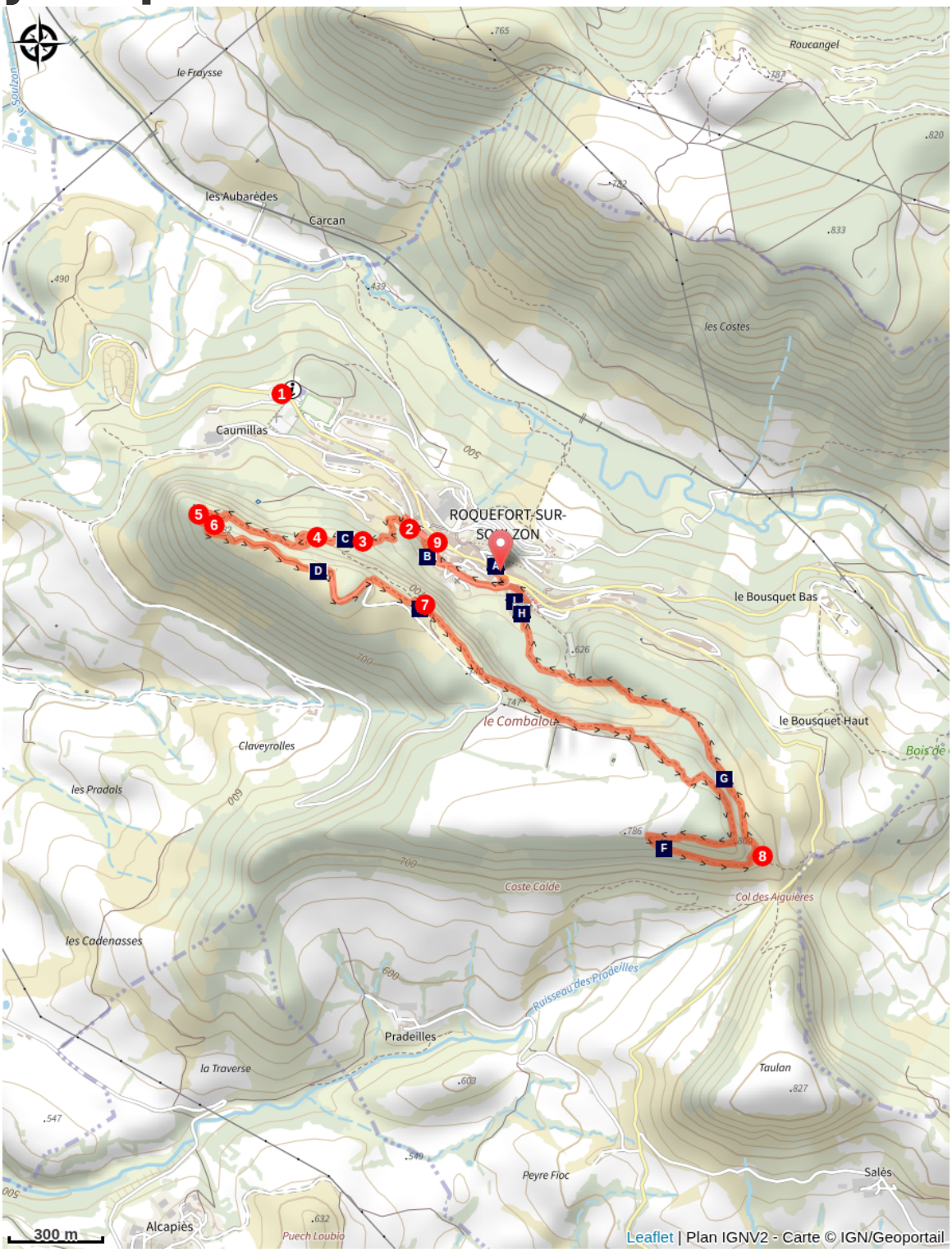


Min elevation 588 m Max elevation 796 m

This is where the name of the path “the ladder path” originates from. Due to a number of landslides, the path has been diverted towards the far end of the Combalou plateau and now follows a staircase

1. From the Tourist Office carpark, walk across the road near the bus stop and walk up the rising path running alongside the graveyard. When the path meets the tarmacked road, turn right then first left following the hairpin bend. 300 m further on, take the fork to the left up to a drinking water fountain.
2. Take the small path that slopes up to the right towards the Combalou plateau.
3. At the base of the scree, first walk uphill to your right, then scale across it.
4. Once you get across the scree, carry on along a marked path that joins a track through box trees following the contour line.
5. When you arrive at the far end of the Combalou, walk uphill until you reach the pierced rock and take the metal staircase.
6. When you get to the plateau, head East in the direction of the relay masts, once you have reached them, carry on to your right for 200 m and at the hairpin bend fork to the left on the path that leads to the jasse (sheepfold).
7. Walk between the Jasse and the edge of the plateau, keep on walking along the plateau and take a trail through the pinewood. Start walking downhill until you reach the Aiguières pass.
   Head towards Roquefort and carry straight on past the “Sotch de Balhols” (large geological fault) and walk down to the Saint-Pierre chapel (a flight of steps to the left gives access to a viewpoint indicator). Once you’ve enjoyed the view, descend the steps, and then go to your left down the Créance street and then up the Baragnaudes street which rises up onto the opposite side towards the Quille des Baragnaudes which are impressive vertical monoliths. Walk past the Quilles, then along the cliff and climb down the steps.
8. At the bottom of the steps, take the right and immediately after turn to the left to pass under a porch to get back to the avenue de Lauras that will lead you to the Tourist Office from where you started your hike.

On your path...



- Saint Pierre Parish Church (A)
- Quilles des Baragnaudes (B)
- The Combalou scree (C)
- The Combalou Plateau (D)
- Jasse du Combalou (E)
- The Montpellier Aphyllanthes (F)
- Saut de Bailhol (G)
- Saint-Pierre Rock and Chapel (H)
- The Orientation Table (I)

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

Box tree moths are active from May to October. During the caterpillar phase, they feed on the leaves of box trees. They crawl down trees and move on long silken threads, although these threads are annoying when hiking they do not pose any health risk

Gear

Prévoir une réserve d'eau et une tenue adaptée.

How to come ?

Transports

Travel by bus or train: https://lio.laregion.fr/

Carpooling : BlaBlaCar, Rézo Pouce, Mobicoop, Idvroom, LaRoueVerte, Roulez malin

Access

Situated 25 km southwest of Millau via the D 992, D 999 and D 23 roads towards Albi, and 14 km from St-Affrique via the D999 road towards Millau.

Advised parking

Tourist Office

Information desks

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

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



Source

Communauté de communes du St-Affricain

http://www.roquefort-tourisme.fr/

On your path...



📖 Saint Pierre Parish Church (A)

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



🏔 Quilles des Baragnaudes (B)

The Quilles des Baragnaudes are striking vertical monoliths, formed by natural fissuring and collapses during the Jurassic period. Their silhouettes dominate the edge of the Combalou Plateau, the result of intense geological activity combined with cycles of glaciation and warming. This site, also named after the historic district of Roquefort, is a geological marvel – perfect for marveling at the forces of nature and time.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



🏔 The Combalou scree (C)

The Combalou scree is an impressive rock formation, created by the many tectonic movements that shaped the limestone plateau. These piles of stones are the result of successive collapses and landslides that have shaped the landscape over the centuries. The rocks in this area reflect the region’s geological activity, where erosion has sculpted unique landscapes.

Attribution : Xavier Waerzeggers



The Combalou Plateau (D)

The Combalou Plateau is a spectacular geological site located in the heart of the Roquefort region. Formed around 150 million years ago, when a shallow sea covered the area, this vast limestone landscape was shaped over time by layers of sediment.

Today, the Combalou is best known for its natural caves, which are essential to the production of Roquefort cheese. Crossed by natural fissures called “fleurines,” the plateau benefits from constant natural ventilation that maintains stable temperature and humidity levels. These unique conditions create the perfect environment for the aging of the famous Roquefort cheese.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



Jasse du Combalou (E)

Jasses were buildings designed to shelter sheep during the summer season. Fairly well preserved, the Jasse du Combalou is organized over two levels. On the ground floor, two sheep pens, one of which is vaulted, housed the animals. Upstairs, a large barn was used to store hay for feeding the flocks during the winter months. Perfectly adapted to life in the highlands and the needs of pastoralism, this type of building provides an important testimony to rural life on the Causses.

Attribution : Xavier Waerzeggers



The Montpellier Aphyllanthes (F)

The Montpellier Aphyllanthes, also known as the “blue carnation of Montpellier,” is an emblematic plant of the Mediterranean garrigue. Perfectly adapted to dry soils, it blooms from April to June, brightening the landscape with its delicate light-blue flowers, which are highly appreciated by bees. Without leaves to limit water loss, it stands out with its long green stems, well suited to arid climates. In the past, its roots were used to make brushes, highlighting its place in local heritage.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



Saut de Bailhol (G)

Le Saut de Bailhol, often – though incorrectly – referred to as a sotch* because of its hollowed shape, is in fact the rockfall detachment niche of the scree slopes visible further down. But, as is often the case in oral tradition, spectacle takes precedence over geology: legend has it that a man named Bailhol performed a true "swan dive" here, throwing himself from the 80-metre-high cliff. In any case, it is important not to confuse this site with a genuine caussenard sotch.

*Sotch : a closed depression of karstic origin, characteristic of the limestone plateaus (causses). Filled with runoff sediments or terra rossa, it is particularly fertile and hosts most cereal crops. When its outline is rounded, it is known as a doline.

Attribution : Xavier Waerzeggers



Saint-Pierre Rock and Chapel (H)

Saint-Pierre Chapel, dating from the 11th century, crowns the rock of the same name and was once the chapel of the now-vanished medieval castle. With its semi-dome choir, rounded arch, and narrow nave, this modest yet elegant building stands as a tribute to the craftsmanship of past builders. Steeped in history, the site invites contemplation and bears witness to the long-standing human presence in the area.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



The Orientation Table (I)

Located on the Saint-Pierre Rock, this orientation table offers a breathtaking panoramic view over Roquefort-sur-Soulzon, the Lévézou Mountains, the Larzac Plateau, and the Soulzon Valley. This viewpoint allows visitors to better understand the landscape and geography of the region while enjoying its natural beauty. An ideal spot to capture memories and soak in the grandeur of the area.

Attribution : Virginie Govignon