

# The rock of the Lion

Des Gorges du Tarn au Causse du Larzac



La Bastide-Pradines vue depuis la gare (Elodie Calazel)



Beautiful panoramas on the village of La Bastide-Pradines, built on its rocky spur, mark this circuit of the Larzac by the Lion's Rock, an easily recognizable ruiniform.

La Bastide-Pradines, an eagle's nest overlooking the Cernon Valley, welcomes you for an escape on the Larzac trails. Orchids and asphodels in spring, angel hair (*stipa pennata*) in June, glowing hues in autumn, will embellish this hike which the pinnacle is the imposing ruiniform called the Lion's Rock, well camped on its front legs.

## Useful information

Practice : Trekking

Duration : 3 h

Length : 5.9 km

Trek ascent : 349 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Flora, History and heritage, Panorama

# Trek

**Departure** : La Bastide-Pradines

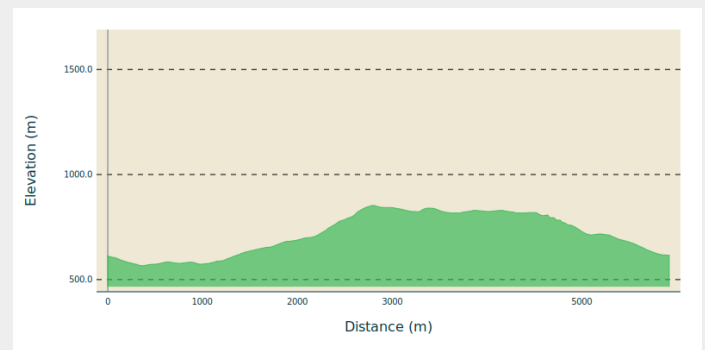
**Arrival** : La Bastide-Pradines

**Markings** : — PR

**Cities** : 1. La Bastide-Pradines

2. Tournemire

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 566 m    Max elevation 853 m

1. From the car park (400 meters after the tunnel, coming from La Bastide-Pradines), return to it on 300 meters, then turn right on 150 meters until the old railway station.
2. Turn right the disused railway on 600 meters (on each side, look at the arches of retaining walls).

**Be careful at the traffic of the tourist train “Sur les Rails du Larzac” from Easter to All Saints’ Day.**

3. Take the trail on the right which rises gently through the woods along the valley before crossing to stay on the right bank.
4. Cross the gate and ascend the valley by a pretty path lined with boxwood, called “bouissière”. The path turns left, crosses a first ravine, then rises steeply along a second ravine. Take the track on the right to the cave of the Resistance (rock shelter).
5. Continue climbing in the same direction. The track becomes a steep gravel path climbing towards the plateau (follow the signs).
6. Walk along the edge of the plateau to the right to the rocks (panorama on the Cernon Valley and the ruiniform rocks of the Larzac Causse; pulsatile anemones, asphodels, orchids depending on the season) and arrive on a track (roman road) climbing from the valley.

**Possibility to reach the “Le Rocher du Lion”(The rock of the Lion) in 20 minutes go-and-back.**


7. Go down the right track.
8. At the junction, veer left taking the path lined with boxwoods on the hillside, cross the short-grass prairies and continue on a path in the pinewood. Turn right to find the car park.

# On your path...



 This old railway line (A)

 The asphodel (C)

 "La Baoumasse" or the Resistants' Cave (B)

 The rock of the Lion (D)

# All useful information

## How to come ?

### Transports

Think about carpooling and hitchhiking: [Rezopouce](#) ; [Aires de covoiturage](#)

### Access

La Bastide-Pradines is located 25 km south of Millau by the D992 and D77.

Parking : take at the south of the village the small road that spans the Cernon and goes to the old railway station (narrow road). Park 400 meters after the tunnel.

### Advised parking

400m après le tunnel sur la route de l'ancienne gare (route étroite).

## Information desks

### Tourist Office Larzac et Vallées

Place du Claux, 12230 NANT

[infos@tourisme-larzac.com](mailto:infos@tourisme-larzac.com)

Tel : +33(0)565622364

<http://www.visit-larzac.com/>



## Source



C.C. Larzac et Vallées



Comité randonnée pédestre Aveyron

<http://aveyron.ffrandonnee.fr/>

# On your path...

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## This old railway line (A)

This old railway line connected Le Vigan to Tournemire climbing the foothills of the Larzac. It was granted to the Compagnie du Midi in 1883, works began in 1881 and lasted 11 years. Over 60 kilometers, this line has 32 tunnels, 12 viaducts and several kilometers of retaining walls.

In 1896, the traffic of the travelers is put in place: 3 trains a day circulate in 2 directions. It takes 2:15 to make Le Vigan - Tournemire and only 2:00 in the opposite direction.

The First World War caused the first threats on this line. Since 1917, there was talk of dismantling the rails between Le Vigan and Nant-Comberedonde. Traffic resumed gradually to reach its highest point in 1922, with 372 travelers per day and 33,000 tons for the year.

Freight traffic remained alone on the entire line until June 1951. Closed to all traffic in 1952, the railway between Avèze and L'Hospitalet was removed in 1955. In 1960, the rails were removed between L'Hospitalet and Tournemire, then it was decided to hand them over in 1977 as part of the extension project of the military camp of La Cavalerie. The project was abandoned in 1981, no convoy took this section. It is used today by the Vélorail du Larzac in Ste-Eulalie de Cernon.

Attribution : SandrinePerego





## "La Baoumasse" or the Resistant's Cave (B)

The Resistant's cave (or Maquisards' cave) is a natural cavity located on the edge of the plateau. Also called "La Baoumasse" or "Jas méjié" in the 17th century, it was used as summer sheepfold for the herds of La Bastide...

Here, there is a story that is passed on from generation to generation :

"Once upon a time, a mouse asked a swallow for hospitality. The swallow had built its nest in the cave of La Bastide and was sitting on its eggs.

The swallow agreed on condition that the mouse hatched in its place for 3 days. The mouse did the job, and then it left.

These were the little hatches, but they were covered with hairs instead of feathers and they had the head and the body of a mouse, with ears and crooked wings like the devil.

The swallow died of grief. After her funeral, the queen of the swallows had the orphans locked in the cavity and forbade them to go out in the sunlight on pain of death.

That's why bats should not be disturbed during the day."

Attribution : PNR des Grands Causses



## The asphodel (C)

The asphodel is a large perennial that often exceeds 1 meter and grows in rocky lawns, dry hillsides and rocks... In springtime, we can see it on the plateau towards the rock of the lion.

Attribution : SandrinePerego



## The rock of the Lion (D)

The Hospitallers traced a mule track linking La Bastide-Prandines to the commandery of Saint-Félix de Sorgues and passed through Viala-du-Pas de Jaux.

This medieval way, whose real name is "carrière cave" (path cashed) accesses the plateau near a large roc having the shape of a crouching lion playing with a rat (the rock of the lion ...)

Attribution : Joël ATCHE