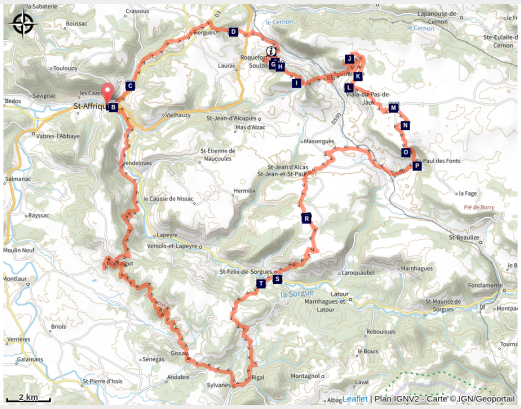
A path that runs throughout the pays du Roquefort

Des falaises de Roquefort au Rougier



Roquefort depuis le combalou (Xavier Waerzeggers)



Open the doors to the Roquefort country and get your thrills! Over five days spent walking between causse and rougiers, enjoy beautiful green areas, unexpected tracks and a magnificent medieval heritage that open up to you.

Along the Combalou cliffs and the rocky spur of the Montaigut castle, throughout the causse du Larzac and the impregnable Saint-Paul-des-Fonts amphitheatre, by the Viala medieval tower and the Sylvanès abbey, via the Sorgues and the Dourdou valleys, upon trails and into buissières explore a land of character which is the breeding ground for a typical cheese with lots of character to!

Useful information

Practice : Trekking

Duration : 5 days

Length : 87.3 km

Trek ascent : 2669 m

Difficulty : Medium

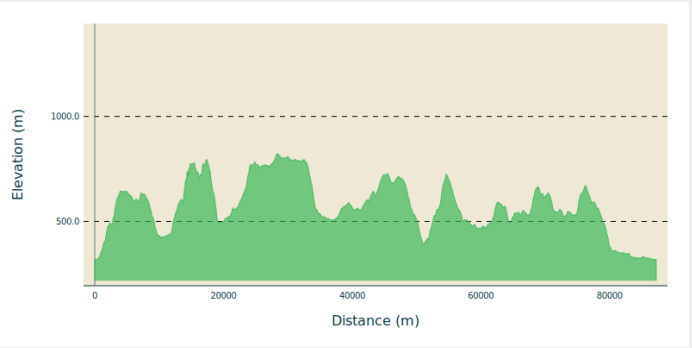
Type : Itinerant stay

Themes : Agropastoralism, Geology, History and heritage

Trek

Departure : Place Leclerc, Saint-Affrique
Arrival : Place Leclerc, Saint-Affrique
Cities : 1. Saint-Affrique
2. Saint-Rome-de-Cernon
3. Roquefort-sur-Soulzon
4. Tournemire
5. Viala-du-Pas-de-Jaux
6. Saint-Jean-et-Saint-Paul
7. Saint-Félix-de-Sorgues
8. Sylvanès
9. Gissac
10. Versols-et-Lapeyre

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 318 m Max elevation 822 m

This hike which is full of character starts from St Affrique and offers a discovery tour from the sometime harsh landscape of the Causse, up to the lands of the Rougier bursting with colours and promises.

Time and people have left their marks along the route: rocky paths, long buissières (narrow passages between two rows of box trees), and sunken paths lined with dry stone walls.

You'll walk along the great geological fracture and the cliffs of the Combalou mount which gave Roquefort its reputation. You will explore the Tournemire and St Paul des Fonts amphitheatres, the Viala du Pas de Jaux Tower, the Cistercian fort of Saint-Jean d'Alcas, the pleasant village of St Félix overlooking the Sorgues valley, the Sylvanès Abbey which is one of the jewels of Cistercian art and the Montaigut castle standing proudly on a rocky spur and towering over the Rougier de Camarès.

Stages :

1. From St Affrique to Tournemire (maison de la vigne) (vine house)
   21.7 km / 1010 m D+ / 5 h
2. From the maison de la vigne in Tournemire to St Jean d'Alcas
   20.7 km / 497 m D+ / 5 h
3. De St-Jean-d'Alcas à Sylvanès
   17.6 km / 548 m D+ / 5 h
4. To get to Saint-Jean d'Alcas via A75 (coming from Montpellier or Clermont-Ferrand), take exit 48 towards Cornus and when reachin
   14.2 km / 431 m D+ / 4 h
5. From Montaigut to St Affrique
   12.6 km / 178 m D+ / 3 h 30

On your path...



- Town of Saint-Affrique (A)
- The Old Bridge of Saint-Affrique (B)
- The Rock of Caylus (C)
- Laumière Castle (D)
- Conteynes Wood and Fitness Trail (E)
- The Combalou scree (F)
- The Combalou Plateau (G)
- Jasse du Combalou (H)
- The Montpellier Aphyllanthes (I)
- Tournemire Cirque (J)
- The Tournemire cirque (K)
- Croix de Gréponac (L)
- Tower of Viala du Pas de Jaux (M)
- The lavogne (cobbled watering place)of Font Rome (N)

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.

Gear

Prévoir une réserve d’eau et une tenue adaptée

How to come ?

Transports

Toutes les informations sur le site de l'office de tourisme

Access

Pour accéder à saint-Affrique, par la A75 , 46 ou 47 puis suivre la D999 en direction de Saint-Affrique / Albi.
Arrivée à Saint-Affrique par la D999, depuis Millau, traverser la ville, la place Foch est juste après avoir traversé la Sorgues ; depuis Albi, se diriger vers le centre ville, la place Foch et après le jardin public.

Advised parking

Place Leclerc ou place Foch à 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/



On your path...



📖 Town of Saint-Affrique (A)

The name Saint-Affrique, with its two “F’s,” often raises curiosity. Its origin dates back to the 5th century, when Arian Visigoths were persecuting Catholic Christians. Africanus, a bishop exiled from Comminges, is said to have taken refuge near the Sorgues River, where he preached to the local population and performed various miracles – a story depicted in the stained-glass windows of the Church of Our Lady of Mercy. The name Saint-Affrique, attested as early as 942 in the archives of Vabres l’Abbaye, may come from the Visigothic term “Affric” or “Effric,” meaning “powerful and fearsome.”

Anecdote : during the French Revolution, the town was briefly renamed “Montagne sur Sorgues” to remove any religious reference, as was common practice at the time.

Attribution : Virginie Govignon



📖 The Old Bridge of Saint-Affrique (B)

Listed as a historic monument, the Old Bridge is one of the most beautiful medieval bridges in France, documented as early as 1408. With its bold yet elegant design, it spans the river with a central arch measuring 21.4 meters, flanked by two smaller arches. Built with a humpback profile and supported by slender triangular piers, it perfectly illustrates the skill of medieval builders. A true landmark of Saint-Affrique, this architectural gem offers a journey back in time through the city’s history.

Attribution : Virginie Govignon



📖 The Rock of Caylus (C)

Perched at an altitude of 519 meters, the Rock of Caylus once supported the castle of the Counts of Caylus, built in the 11th century. Destroyed in 1238, the castle was the heart of a fortified complex that protected the local population. In 1808, the last remaining sections of the fortifications were dismantled to make way for the road to Tiergues. This site reveals a lesser-known chapter of Aveyron’s feudal history and power struggles.

Attribution : Virginie Govignon



📖 Laumière Castle (D)

Built in the 14th century and rebuilt after the French Revolution, Laumière Castle still overlooks the countryside near Saint-Rome-de-Cernon, just 3 km from the village. Over the centuries, it belonged to several prominent noble families, including the House of Armagnac and later the Vernhet de Laumière family. Among its notable figures was General Vernhet de Laumière, commander of the Imperial Guard's artillery during the Second French Empire. A witness to centuries of history, the castle is now available to rent for stays in an exceptional setting.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



✳ Conteynes Wood and Fitness Trail (E)

Conteynes Wood is a dense forest where oaks stand proudly. Nature thrives here, hosting a variety of plants and animals. This area also helps protect the soil and regulate water. To enjoy it fully, a 600-meter fitness trail, which takes about an hour to complete, allows visitors to stroll, relax, and discover the wildlife and plants that make this forest so vibrant.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



🏔 The Combalou scree (F)

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 (G)

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 (H)

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 (I)

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



Tournemire Cirque (J)

Designated as a Natura 2000 site, the Tournemire Cirque is one of the most remarkable geological landmarks on the western edge of the Larzac plateau. Its dark marl slopes contrast strikingly with the towering limestone and dolomitic cliffs above. Shaped by erosion over thousands of years, this spectacular landscape features dramatic rock formations that attract both geology enthusiasts and hikers seeking breathtaking scenery.

Attribution : Xavier Waerzeggers



The Tournemire cirque (K)

Situated in the southwest of the Larzac Causse, the Tournemire Cirque is a remarkable geological area marking the bondary beetwen the fore-causses and the great causses. It presents limestone ledges and rocky escarpments with caves and cavities where raptors such as the eagle owl and the golden eagle nest.

Attribution : Claude Chambaud



Croix de Gréponac (L)

Perched above the Cirque of Tournemire, the stone Croix de Gréponac is a landmark of the landscape. It offers outstanding panoramic views over the village of Tournemire, the dramatic contours of the cirque, and the surrounding foothills of the Causses, making it an ideal spot to pause and take in the scenery.

Attribution : Xavier Waerzeggers



📖 Tower of Viala du Pas de Jaux (M)

The Lord of Tournemire gave to the Templars knights the lands of Viala du Pas de Jaux in 1150. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the Viala consisted of a few farms.
After 1312, when the Hospitallers took possession of the Templars' property, they decided to create in this place a village and for that they built farm buildings, managed by the brothers of the order. They constructed for them a dwelling and a church dedicated to St-Jean-Baptiste, the patron of the Hospitallers.
Until 1430, the inhabitants of Viala du Pas de Jaux and the surroundings took refuge in Ste-Eulalie de Cernon during the periods of insecurity which occurred on the Larzac. Because of the high distance between the two village, the inhabitants asked the authorization to the Grand Prior of Saint Gilles, to build a fortified tower to be able to take refuge inside with their possessions. This is the first fortification built on the plateau.
Today the 30 meters high tower has been restored. The vaulted ground floor, the five floors, its terrace and the dwelling dating from the 14th century are now accessible.

Attribution : Association La Tour du Viala



🐄 The lavogne (cobbled watering place)of Font Rome (N)

This lavogne (cobbled watering place) of Font Rome, built in 1910 near tank wells is was first situated on a waterproof clay background. Then, it was built of stones all around and cemented. So this type offers the advantage of forming a passage that resists the trampling of sheep, and the gentle slope of the surrounding area limits the risk of slipping and falling of the animals. It is supplied by rainwater.

Attribution : Association La Tour du Viala du Pas de Jaux