

# 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 : 3 h

Length : 7.8 km

Trek ascent : 531 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Agropastoralism, Geology, Panorama, Top 3 Aveyron

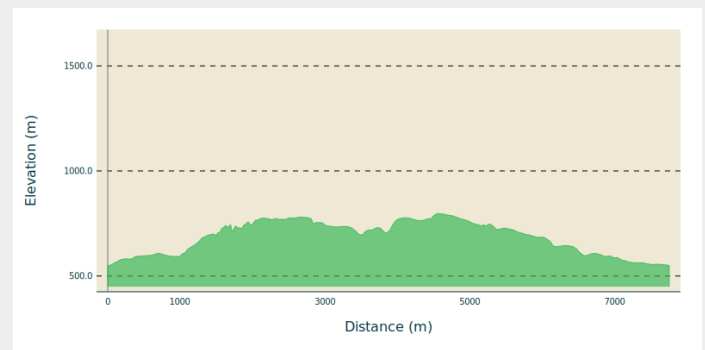
**Departure :** Tourist Office

**Arrival :** Tourist Office

**Markings :** — PR

**Cities :** 1. Roquefort-sur-Soulzon

## Altimetric profile





Min elevation 549 m    Max elevation 798 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...



-  The Combalou scree slope (A)
-  Sotch de Balhol (C)

-  The Combalou Jasse (B)
-  La chapelle Saint-Pierre du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle coiffe le rocher en éperon du même nom. C'était la chapelle du château qui ne fût jamais (D)



# 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](mailto: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...

---



## The Combalou scree slope (A)

The imposing rocky chaos that surrounds us comes from the numerous and profound movements that the plateau of Combalou has undergone: landslides, rockslides, erosion... The diagram highlights the primitive and current structures of the whole Combalou plateau.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme

---



## The Combalou Jasse (B)

Once the milking season was over, shepherds and their flocks would reach the Combalou pastoral routes via the slopes to the rear of the Combalou plateau rather than climbing up the cliff using the ladders. Shepherds used these ladders to scale down directly to Roquefort and climb up the same pathways when the ewes needed to be sheltered in the jasse. The flocks would be kept on the plateau until the first cold of autumn.

The jasse was a two storey building: the ground-floor consisted of two sheepfolds, one of which had a vaulted ceiling, the first floor was a huge barn used to store the hay.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme

---




## Sotch de Balhol (C)

The cliff towering over our heads is really impressive with its steepness, the smooth appearance of the rock and the feeling of solidity it conveys. Actually, the huge screes we are walking on have been created by a rockslide. The bottom of this valley is called “sotch”, which is the local name for sinkholes

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



 La chapelle Saint-Pierre du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle coiffe le rocher en éperon du même nom. C'était la chapelle du château qui ne fût jamais (D)

The Saint-Pierre chapel dates back to the 11th century and is located on top of a rocky spur of the same name. It was the chapel of the castle and was never a parish church. The castle, which dates from the same period, was attached to the rocky vertical face (remains of a tower). The structure of the chapel is made with a fine stone-setting and is proof of the quality of the construction of this small religious building. The squat and vaulted semi-dome choir was restricted by a semicircular arch with an enlarged triumphal arch that stood in front of it and led to the short nave.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme