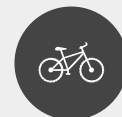


## N°4 Causses and Valleys

Des falaises de Roquefort au Rougier - Saint-Affrique



VTT sur piste des Avant Causses (Virginie Govignon)



*This very pleasant circuit is the ideal way to explore the avants-causses and the agropastoral heritage: fortified caussenard farms, buissières, lavognes.*

This ride offers a variety of terrain types and sceneries: trails and singletrack paths, breathtaking views over the town of Saint-Affrique and the Larzac foothills. The route can be taken whatever the weather conditions may be, even during rainfalls.

### Useful information

Practice : VTT

Duration : 3 h 30

Length : 40.9 km

Trek ascent : 929 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Loop

Themes : Agropastoralism, History and heritage, Panorama

# Trek

**Departure** : From the tourist office join the place François Fabié

**Arrival** : At the tourist office

**Markings** : ➡ VTT Parc

**Cities** : 1. Saint-Affrique

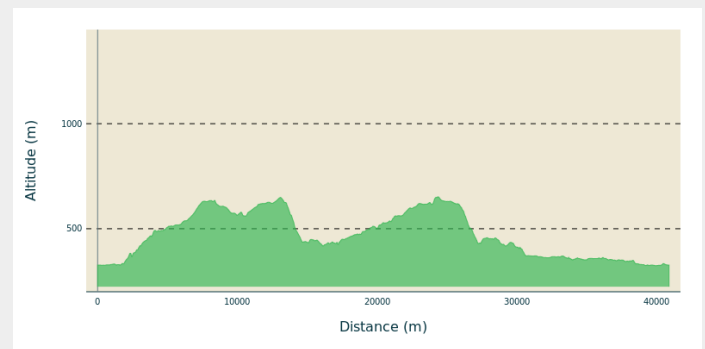
2. Roquefort-sur-Soulzon

3. Saint-Jean-d'Alcapiès

4. Saint-Jean-et-Saint-Paul

5. Versols-et-Lapeyre

## Altimetric profile



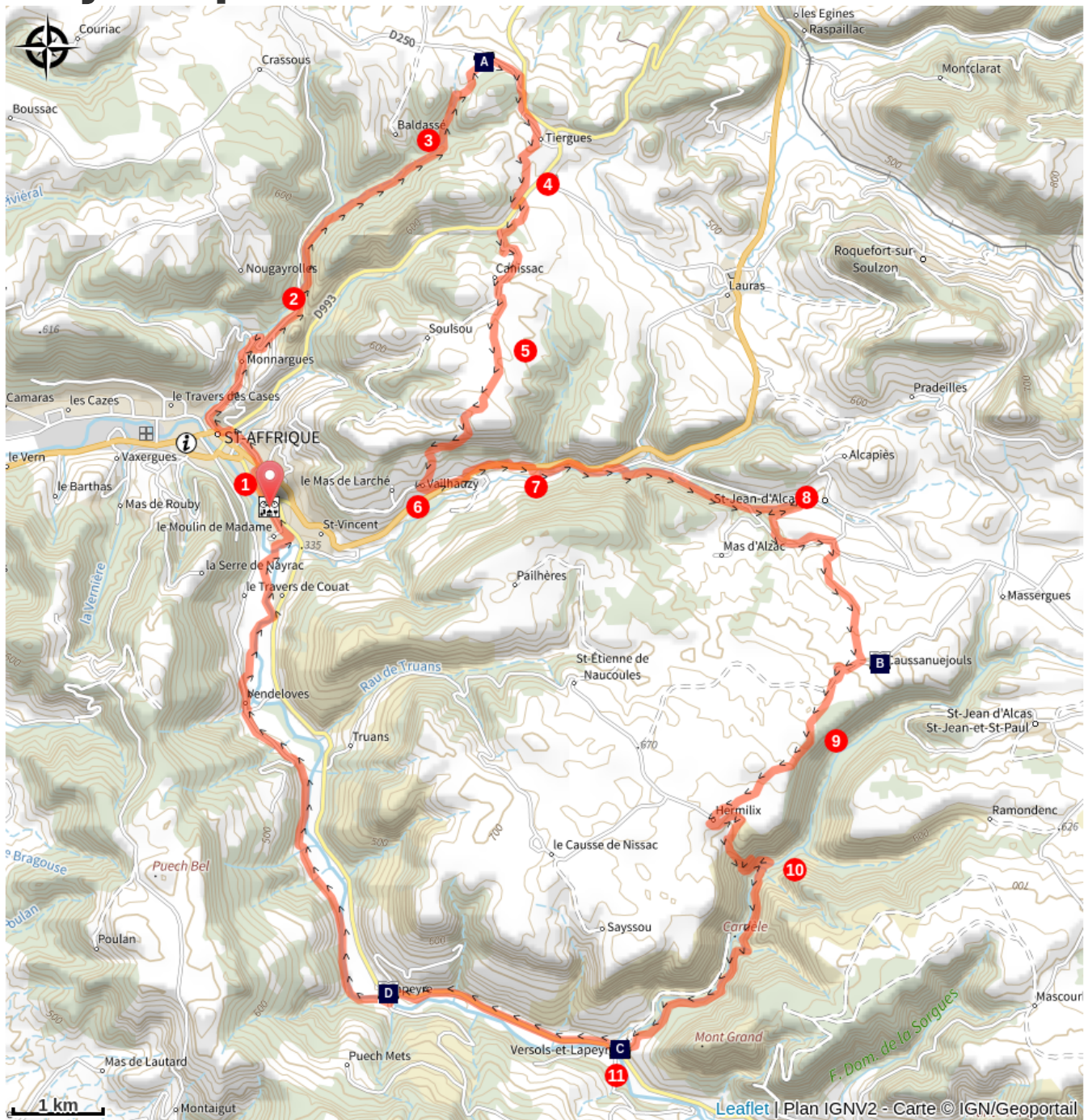
Min elevation 324 m Max elevation 652 m



From the F. Fabié square, take the D50 (usually called the graveyard road) for 2.5 km up to the Moulin du Juge.



1. Before crossing the small bridge, take the path on the right hand side (2nd signpost). Cycle up the vale to the road intersection close to the famous **dolmen de Tiergues**. Then follow a wide path that leads to the hamlet of Tiergues. When you leave the hamlet, cycle up to the crest by the path leading West.
2. Carry on 100 m until you reach an intersection where you will a cross. Take the left hand path which runs alongside a road. Cross the road and cycle to the Canissac farm.
3. Cycle around the left side of the farm following a wide trail. Enjoy the views over the avant-Causse among which is Mont Combalou that shelters the village of Roquefort made world famous by its cheese.
4. A path lined with box trees (bouissière) leads you up to the edge of the plateau towards the village of Vailhauzy. In the village, 50 m after the church take the small road to your left. After a rather steep ramp, carry on along a single track path and cycle down towards the disco carpark.
5. Cross the road and cycle uphill for 50 m then take a path to your right and follow a track to your left below the retaining wall carrying the road. Cross the brook and ride up to the bridge of the old railway line.
6. Reach the old railway track-bed and cycle up along it for 2 km
7. Just before a little bridge, take a path to the right side which joins the road that leads to Castel Cremat and Bages. Head towards the Caussanuéjous farm (you will see a nice **lavogne** (a man made pond where sheep drink - it is a 400 m ride there and back to have a look at it), leave the farm on your left.
8. Now take the path which runs along the edge of the plateau and take time to enjoy the views over the **Verzolet valley** that you will reach after you have passed through the hamlet of Hermélix.
9. When you reach the bottom of the slope, take the turning to your right, then cross the bridge to the left and cycle across the dry brook. Keep riding on the left bank path up to Versols (**medieval castle**).
10. From the left bank of the river Sorgues you will reach Lapeyre and eventually Saint-Affrique.



# On your path...



-  Tiergues dolmen (A)
-  Castle and remains of fortification walls (C)

-  Caussaunejols Lavogne (B)
-  Village of Lapeyre (D)

# All useful information

## **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: <http://www.mobimipy.fr/>

Carpooling : [BlaBlaCar](#), [Rézo Pouce](#), [Covoiturage-libre](#), [Idvroom](#), [LaRoueVerte](#), [Roulez malin](#)

### Access

Saint-Affrique, 31 km south-west of Millau by the D 992 and D 999

### Advised parking

Place of Marshal Foch

## **Information desks**

### **Saint-Affrique Tourist Office**

Boulevard Aristide Briand, 12400 Saint-Affrique

[contact@roquefort-tourisme.fr](mailto:contact@roquefort-tourisme.fr)

Tel : 0565585600

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



# On your path...

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## Tiergues dolmen (A)

Listed as a historical monument, the Tiergues dolmen is part of the 20 or so dolmens which have been recorded in the area, some of them being poorly-preserved. The excavations of these megaliths were carried out by Emile Cartailhac during the 20th century and today their artefacts are scattered throughout Midi-Pyrénées (Rodez, Toulouse...)

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme

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## Caussaunejous Lavogne (B)

How a lavogne works is very easy to understand; imagine a gigantic upturned umbrella that collects rainwater!

In the beginning, there was a natural pond with impervious clay soil. This small pond was a real boon for people who quickly set these watering sources up as they were so critical on the causses where water seeps into the cracked limestone. First, they tiled the inside of the pond and finished off the work by laying paving stones around the edge of the pond to preserve the water quality and prevent gullying due to the large flocks trampling the soil when the sheep come to drink.

The pond tiling was made either with lauzes, flat stones or with paving stones laid one after the other.

Once completed, this gigantic upturned umbrella would provide a great variety of animals with a welcoming habitat, just look down over a lavogne and see how it swarms and buzzes with life; what a frenzy of activity!

From this lavogne, you will enjoy a stunning view to the north over the Combalou, a residual mound that shelters the Roquefort maturing caves.

Attribution : (c) DelphineAtche



## Castle and remains of fortification walls (C)

The Roquefeuil family lived here over a period of eight centuries, from 1250 to 1810, the date on which the owning family had to sell the castle. The building was then sold to different owners and part of it was converted into a farmhouse. Then in 1962, a couple from the Roquefeuil family bought back the stronghold.

The castle and the whole of the old village were included in a walled area called a castrum which spread out between the Sorgues and the Verzolet rivers. The castrum was originally composed (11th century) of only a small castle that was later extended during the 13th or 14th century to protect people from the clashes during the One Hundred Years War.

Attribution : ©PNR Grands Causses

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## Village of Lapeyre (D)

This village was controlled by the Templars Commandery during the 12th century and has kept much of its medieval architecture with its old houses clustered around the Tower. There is also the tombstone of Médora Leig, a daughter of the English poet Lord Byron which you can visit in the graveyard.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme