

N°7 The relays

Des falaises de Roquefort au Rougier - Saint-Affrique



Panorama depuis Peyralbe (Virginie Govignon)



This biking tour leads you from the Sorgues and Dourdou valleys to the avant-causses landscapes situated west of Saint-Affrique and enables you to discover the agricultural wealth of this region.

A long and challenging circuit with steep slopes to cycle up and down and some more technical parts providing a great variety of terrains: paths through the undergrowth, on the red soils or along the former railway line

Useful information

Practice : VTT

Duration : 3 h 45

Length : 42.9 km

Trek ascent : 1062 m

Difficulty : Very hard

Type : Loop

Themes : Panorama

Trek

Departure : Saint -Affrique

Arrival : Saint -Affrique

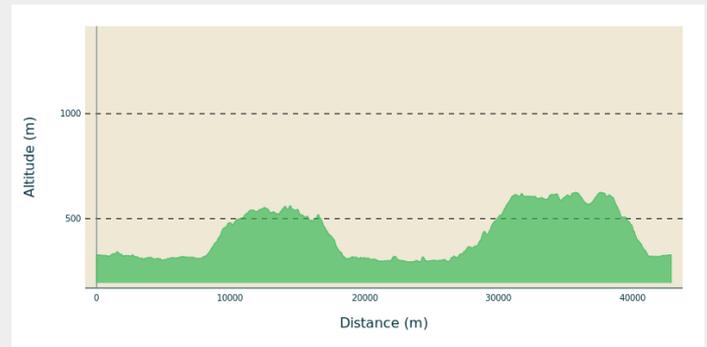
Markings : ► VTT Parc

Cities : 1. Saint-Affrique

2. Vabres-l'Abbaye

3. Calmels-et-le-Viala

Altimetric profile

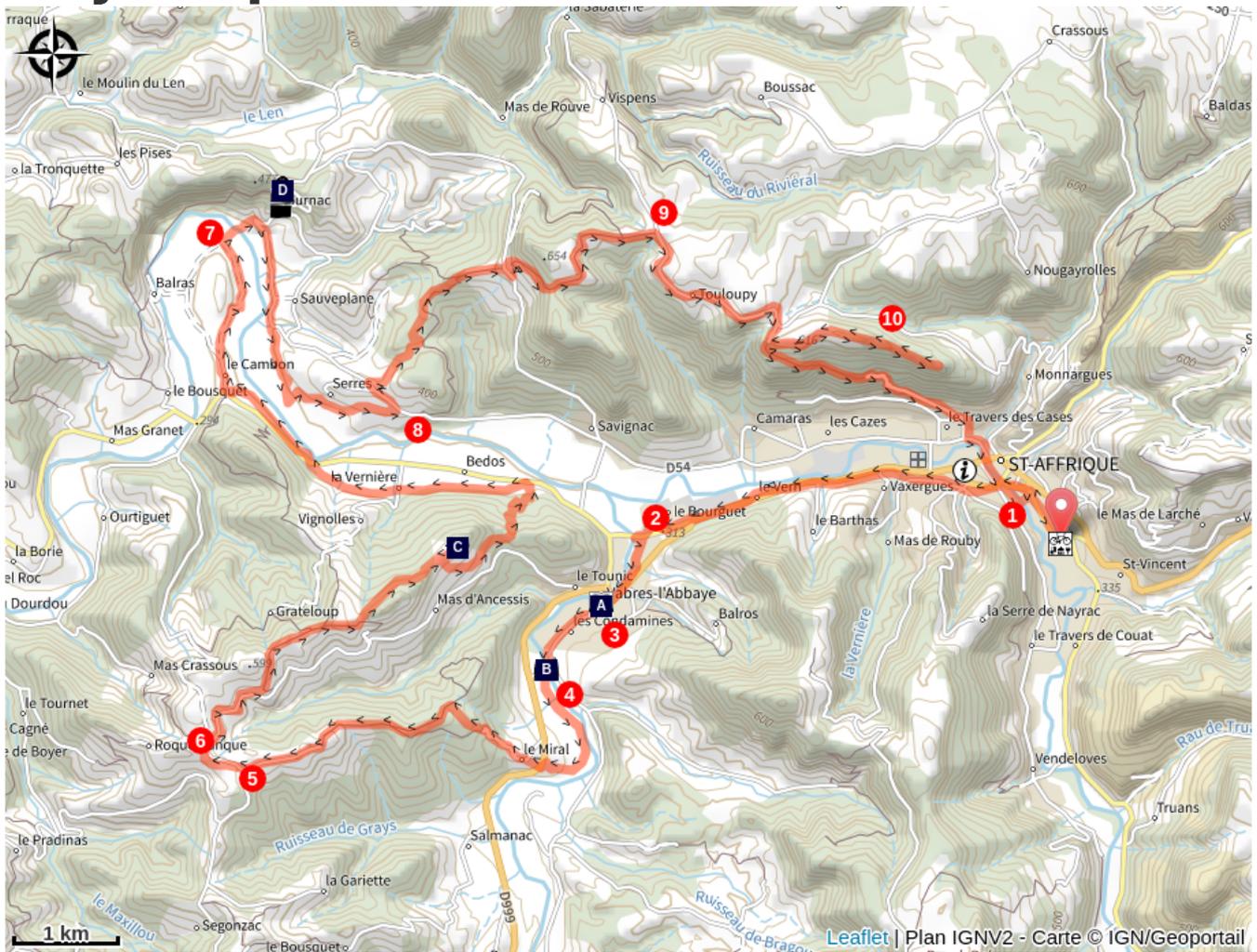


Min elevation 293 m Max elevation 625 m

As you cycle along the boulevard A. Briand, go past the EDF building, then turn to your right and follow the road towards Vabres l'Abbaye. This road is a former railway line and leads you to a tunnel. After you have passed through the tunnel, take a left turn on to the D999 and follow it for 200 m.

1. Then turn right towards the shopping area and cycle through the hamlet of le Bourguet.
2. Cycle under the bridge and join Vabres l'Abbaye. Head towards the Pont Vieux and cross the river.
3. Immediately after the bridge, take a path to your left situated between the river and the greenhouses. Pass under the D999, and eventually you will reach the Miral farm. Cycle up the slope for 4 km until you reach Canteloup. Here you can enjoy the beautiful view over the Rougiers de Camarès and the Monts de Lacaune.
4. At the intersection, carry straight on along a red soil path running north.
5. When you reach the next intersection, take a right, then the first left on to the D117 up to the Mas de Nicouleau. A path takes you above the building to join the crest line up to Peyralbe. You will see the relay and a natural heritage indicator board located at the 524 m vertical benchmark. Retrace your way back down the way you came and then cycle towards Boussy, le Poujol and then follow the former railway line up to the village of le Cambon. Cycle through le Cambon towards Bournac. This village is built out of red stone and clings to the steep hill side.
6. Cross the Dourdou river and take the road to the right that leads to Solages.
7. (7) Follow the D54 to the left, cycling down the slope and then take the path to your right through an oak wood up the la Pale pass (608 m).
8. (8) Retrace your way back by taking the road to your right that leads to Touloupi. 1.5 km further on you will see a path which will bring you back to Saint-Affrique.
9. Panoramic view from the TV relay (4km cycling there and back)

On your path...



-  Village of Vabres l'Abbaye (A)
-  Peyralbe interpretative board (C)

-  Pont Vieux in Vabres l'Abbaye (B)
-  Bournac carved standing stone (D)

All useful information

Advices

A few road crossings require you to be careful because of the heavy traffic such as the one situated right at the start of the circuit across the D999.

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 is situated 31 km South West from Millau via the D992 and D999 roads.

When driving from Clermont-Ferrand or Montpellier via the A75, take exit n°46, then follow the road D999 up to Saint-Affrique.

From Toulouse/Albi follow the road D999 up to Saint-Affrique.

Advised parking

Recommended car parks: on Maréchal Foch square or on Général de Gaulle square

***i* Information desks**

Saint-Affrique Tourist Office

Boulevard Aristide Briand, 12400 Saint-Affrique

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On your path...



Village of Vabres l'Abbaye (A)

Vabres has kept many testimonies of its eventful history: in 863, a Benedictine monastery was founded in Vabres by the Count of Toulouse. Vabres abbey soon became the great abbey of the southern Rouergue amassing a wealth of lands and churches. In 1317 Pope John XXII, second French Pope in Avignon selected Vabres abbey as the seat of a new diocese comprising all the parishes situated south of the Tarn river. Vabres was thus under the Bishop's and the Count's authorities for almost five centuries up to 1790. Throughout its history, Vabres has undergone some tumultuous periods: the One Hundred Years War and the violent religious wars, yet the Gothic cathedral with its exceptional organ, the Episcopalian palace and some old aristocratic mansions have been preserved.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



Pont Vieux in Vabres l'Abbaye (B)

This bridge is also called the Bethléem Pont Vieux, the chapel that carries the same name is located on the right bank of the Dourdou river downstream from the bridge and is listed as a historic monument.

The bridge was built in 1278 and was probably the place where the turnpike called Peyralbe collected tolls. This arched bridge is composed of 4 semi-circular arches with triangular front and rear beaks.

Cars still drive over the bridge.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



Peyralbe interpretative board (C)

Here you will enjoy an outstanding all-round 360° view with two fully documented viewpoint indicators. These boards provide information about the local geology, the various types of rocks to be found, the reason why this area is called the Rougier de Camarès, as well as how a meander is formed, a phenomenon which can be observed further down with "le fer à cheval" (the horseshoe) a meander created by the Dourdou river. The second board provides information about the village of Vabres l'Abbaye and on the creation of the bishopric in 1135.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



Bournac carved standing stone (D)

This engraved statue is made of Permian sandstone and was discovered in 1980. A chevron decorated belt and the round shape of the knees are visible.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme