

# Trail running No. 26 Roquefort - Combalou



Des falaises de Roquefort au Rougier - Roquefort-sur-Soulzon



Cirque de Tournemire (G. BERTRAND)



*This loop gravitates around Combalou, which is the heartland of the Roquefort maturation process. It follows the route of the Rock'Shot, a major race that takes place during the Hivernale des Templiers. This race features a short distance and a high level of technicality !*

The Sentier des Échelles (The ladder path), the ultimate trail running spot, the ascent to the Fournials farm to reach the Larzac plateau, and the descent into the majestic Tournemire amphitheatre are three beautiful sections that require a high level of technical command! This route which is not to be taken lightly takes place in the heart of wild landscapes to enjoy with the eyes, as others enjoy the pleasures of Roquefort cheese.

### Useful information

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Practice : Trail

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Duration : 2 h 30

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Length : 18.5 km

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Trek ascent : 992 m

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Difficulty : Hard

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Type : Loop


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Themes : Agropastoralism,  
Geology, Panorama

# Trek

**Departure** : Tourist Office

**Arrival** : Tourist Office

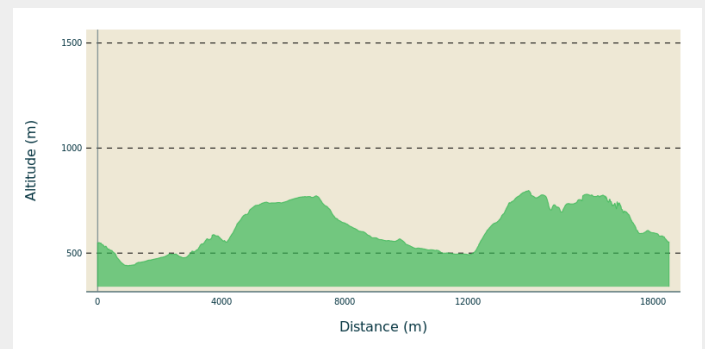
**Markings** :  Grands Causses Espace Trail

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

2. Saint-Rome-de-Cernon

3. Tournemire

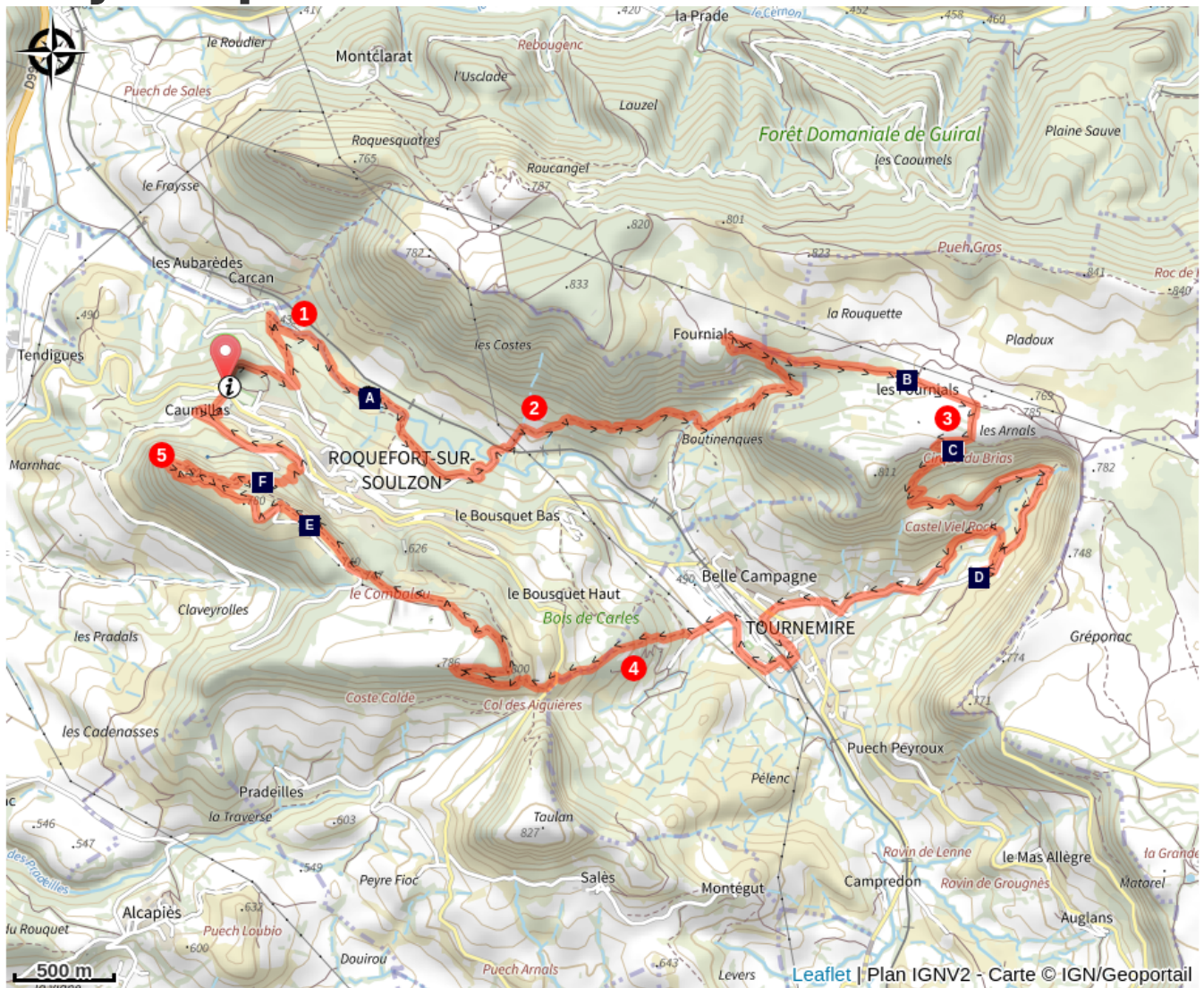
## Altimetric profile









Min elevation 440 m Max elevation 798 m

1. This pleasant downhill that runs to the bottom of the Soulzon valley, which is a small stream to follow for 1 km, provides you with an efficient warm-up before starting the ascent to the Larzac.
2. Things become more challenging once you've passed the old level crossing, with the ascent across this small forest that displays a Mediterranean appearance and fragrance sometimes in summer. The 4 to 5 km forces you to walk due to the steep gradient of the slope coming close to 30%.
3. Once you've reached the plateau, not far from the lovely Fournials farm, you can catch your breath again before toppling downhill to the Tournemire amphitheatre beautifully crowned with cliffs.
4. After you've crossed the village of Tournemire, you tackle the second half of this circuit with the Combalou as a backdrop. You first go through the Bois de Carles, then reach the Aiguières pass to get to Combalou finally.
5. You have now rapidly completed your running along the Combalou plateau, here comes the descent of the ladders, one of the most technical routes that can be found in Southern Aveyron with a great passage through this wild jumble of rocks. This section gives to this loop all its character!

# On your path...



-  Soulzon Menhir (A)
-  Tournemire amphitheatre (C)
-  The Combalou Jasse (E)

-  Dry Grasslands (B)
-  Birds (D)
-  The Combalou scree slope (F)



# All useful information

## **Advices**

Water supply – energy food supply – appropriate shoes - rain jacket

## **Gear**

Prévoir une réserve d'eau et une tenue adaptée

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

Getting around 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 towards Albi.  
Situated 14 km of St-Affrique via the D 999 towards Millau.

### Advised parking

Parking area is next to the Tourist Office in Roquefort

## **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/>



# On your path...

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## 🌀 Soulzon Menhir (A)

This large stone with rounded shapes is over three metres high and is often referred to as a “menhir”, although no features corresponding to an authentic menhir has been identified (a menhir is a large upright standing stone erected by man between 3500 and 2000 BC). Different interpretations have been given about its origins: is it a mere remnant of one of the Combalou's many fallen rocks, upon which a cross was carved in medieval times to turn it into a territorial marker, a boundary stone for instance, between the Montclarat and the Tournemire communities? Or is it an ancient menhir that was Christianised (2 crosses deeply engraved next to each other) as so many other megaliths were?

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme

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## 🐮 Dry Grasslands (B)

Dry Grasslands which are iconic features of the caussenard landscape originate from pristine forests that have been transformed by human actions (land clearing, stubble-burning, farming and pasture). This ecosystem is a semi-natural environment with outstanding biological particularities: it provides a critical habitat for rare animal and plant species and is a perfect hunting ground for birds nesting in surrounding cliffs and gorges. Moreover, these traditional pastoral lands have been used for centuries. At the end of the spring season, the causses scenery is decked out with tall grass (feather grass) that forms the shape of a thick silver hair. (source PNR Grands Causses).

Attribution : (c) Delphine Atché

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## 🏞️ Tournemire amphitheatre (C)

The great Tournemire amphitheatre is one of the most outstanding escarpments of the western edge of the Larzac and as such is classified "Zone Natura 2000". The lower slopes are the only part where Toarcian marls are visible in the SW erosion gullies, everywhere else these marls are hidden under rocky slopes and big rock slides. At the top of the slopes, the dolomitic limestone ruin-shaped cliffs frame the outline of this amphitheatre.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme



## Birds (D)

The cliffs of the Tournemire amphitheatre are an important playground and nesting area for numerous birds. These cliffs are home to great variety of bird life, from the most expressive to the most secretive such as: the Rock Swallow; the Alpine Swift; the Red-billed Chough; the Wall creeper; Bats (Greater Horseshoe) and birds of prey nesting on cliffs among which is the Eurasian Eagle-Owl.

Attribution : Roquefort Tourisme

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## The Combalou Jasse (E)

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

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## The Combalou scree slope (F)

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