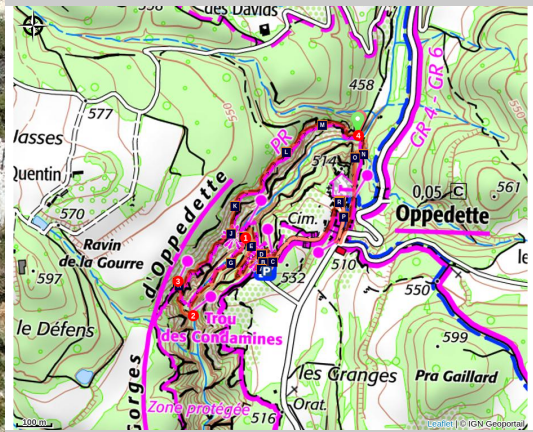


## Traverse de l'échelle

Oppedette



Sentier en corniche rive droite (©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon)

*From the Luberon to the Durance, the Calavon river passes through many rocky sites, but none has reached the size of the gorges of Oppedette. Magical!*

The rough descent complemented with handrails to move from one ledge to another, leads to 150m below the deepest gorges. Then, following a riverside, the route rises abruptly on the opposite bank and escapes in the end by the pitch through the scale best climb with caution. An active discovery that requires crossing several air and technical passages on cliff edges, sometimes exposed despite the equipment. A real treat.!

### Useful information

Practice : WALKING

Duration : 2 h

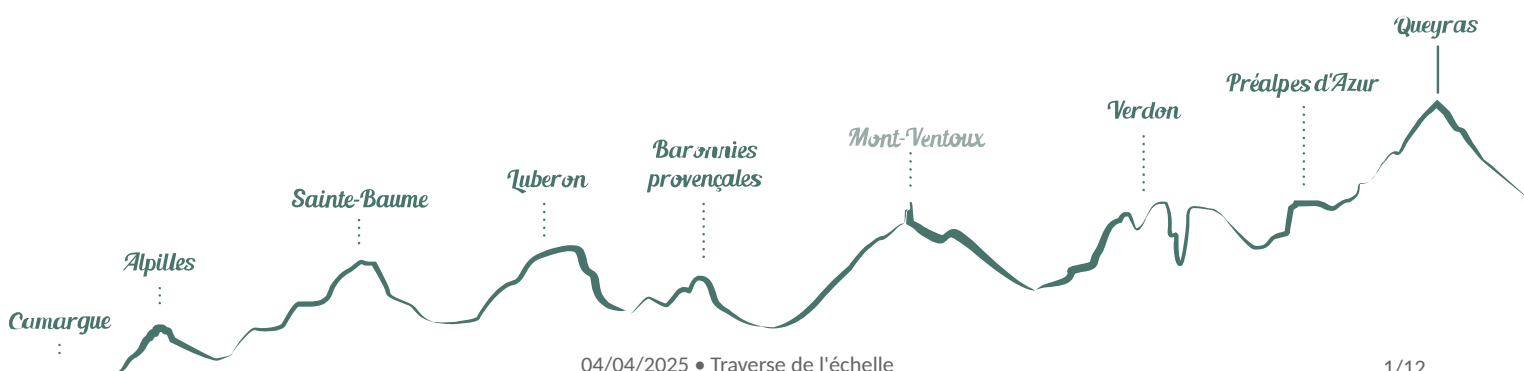
Length : 2.9 km

Trek ascent : 169 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Boucle

Themes : A lookout, a viewpoint,  
Geology, Waters and rivers



# Trek

Departure : Parking area of the Belvédères, in Oppedette

Arrival : Parking area of the Belvédères, in Oppedette

Markings :  GR®  PR

From the car park, go right of the two viewpoints (accessible to persons with disabilities), then take the small winding path that switches left in the gorges. A little further down, cross on the right a first jump using the handrail, and then continue the narrow path with caution. Pass along the last passage equipped with handrails and reach to the edge of a basin on the shores of Calavon.

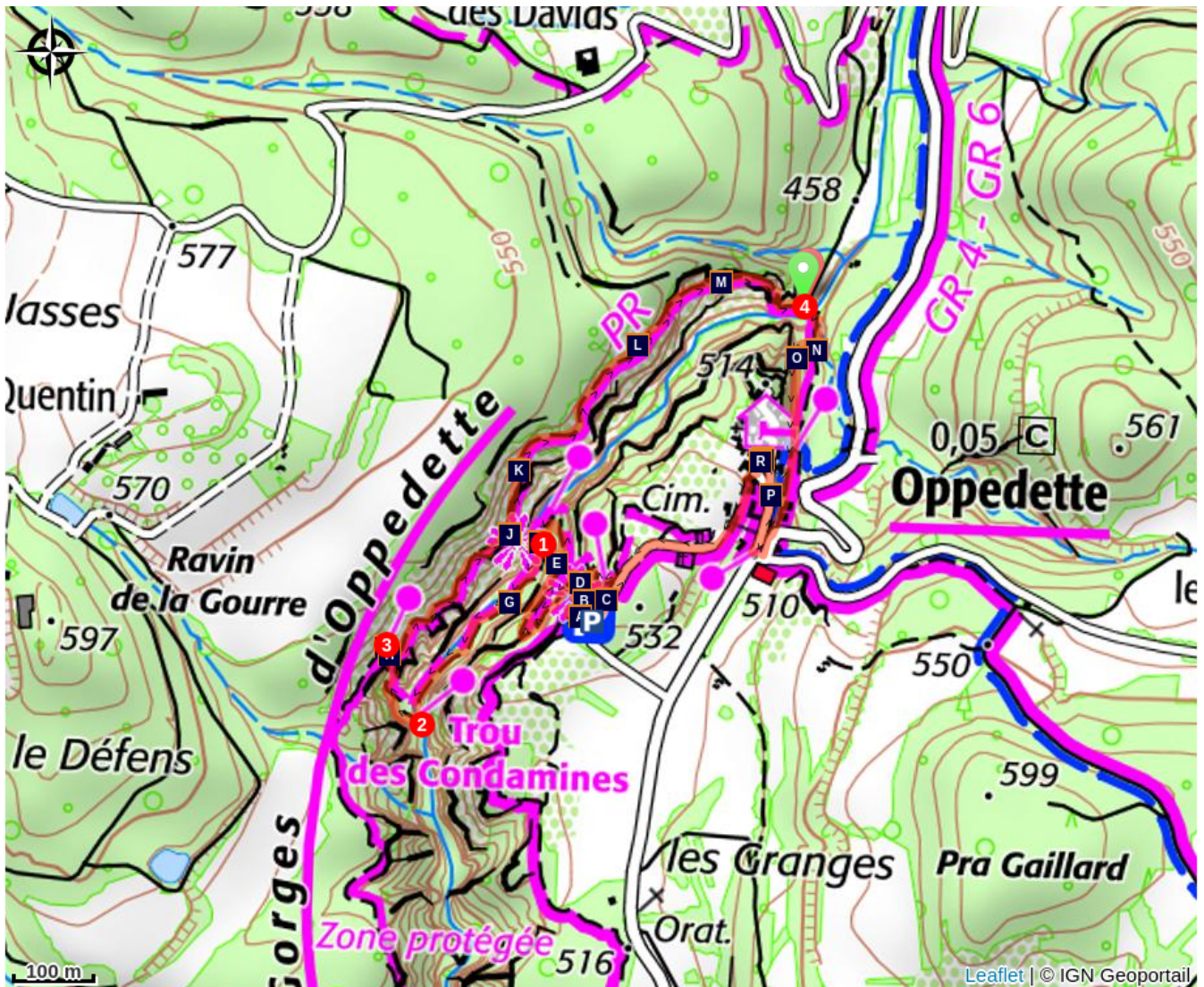
**1** - Turn left and continue advancing in the best possible way along the left bank. Cross a short rocky passage, then continue through the gorges until a more narrow passage.










**2** - Cross the river ford (caution in case of flooding!) and locate across the entrance of the trail that goes back on the right bank opposite (pole). Continue slowly on steep slope, then at the top of the valley, go into the dark and damp pitch. Climb the ladder and go onto the sunny side.










**3** - Turn left, walk past a viewpoint, and then continue on the cliff path. Go up a little, then cross a rocky path. Then go down between the cliff edge and a rock slide, to reach the upstream circus of the gorges. At the end of the beautiful cliff, hurtle down the switchbacks up to the river.

**4** - Cross the ford of the Calavon (caution in case of flooding!), head across, then follow a stony path, reach the village at the top of the rocky outcrop. In front of the town hall, turn right, enter the heart of the village and take an alley on the left to reach the plateau. Leave the obvious wide path, take a right at the cemetery and follow the trail through the grass to emerge again at the base of the gorges. Turn left at the view point and reach the car park from the starting point.

# On your path...



-  The ESA (environmentally sensitive area) of the gorges of Oppedette (A)
-  A canyon in its wooded setting (C)
-  The Baume de Font-de-Peyrou (E)
-  Calavon, the stone river (G)
-  Small but precious flying mammal (I)
-  On the way, I embrace the Luberon attitude! (K)
-  The pleasure of climbing... (M)
-  Ivy flowers, friend of the bees! (O)
-  Oppedette : Hilltop villages (Q)

-  Two prefects, two viewpoints! (B)
-  The power of water (D)
-  What is tuff? (F)
-  Remarkable ivy (H)
-  Beauties of the rocks (J)
-  A xxx of liquorice (L)
-  A world without bees? (N)
-  The wash fountain of the town (P)
-  The church Saint-Didier (R)

# All useful information

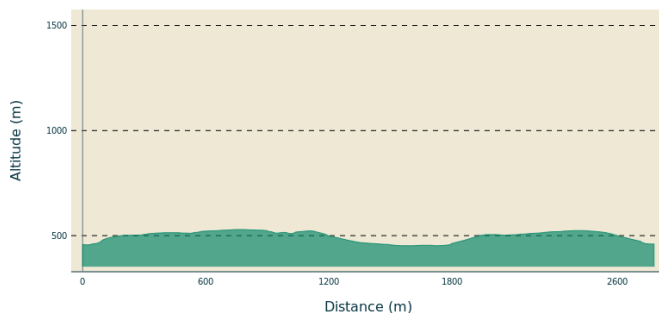
## **Advices**

This itinerary is reserved for hikers who do not fear the void! To be avoided by all means during rainy or foggy weather.

- A series of air and technical passages on cliff edges, sometimes exposed despite the existing equipment (handrails).
- 2 fording sites; turn around in case of flooding!
- Steep slope and ladder climbing (with railings).
- Many inconvenient rocky passages (limestone pavement).

Remember to bring enough water, especially in the hot sun!

## **Altimetric profile**



Min elevation 452 m  
Max elevation 529 m

## **Transports**

Limitons les déplacements en voiture, pensons aux transports en commun et au covoiturage. Tous les transports en commun sur [www.pacamobilite.fr](http://www.pacamobilite.fr)

## **Access**

From Apt, take the D900 for 15km then take the D33 and D155 towards Oppedette. From Forcalquier, take the D4100 for 25km then 3km after Céreste, take the D33 and D155 towards Oppedette.

## **Advised parking**

Parking areas of the viewpoints south of the village or parking areas at the entrance of the village just before the town hall.

## **Source**



Luberon Géoparc mondial  
UNESCO

## Information desks

House of the Luberon Regional Nature Park



60, place Jean Jaurès, 84400 Apt

[accueil@parcduluberon.fr](mailto:accueil@parcduluberon.fr)

Tel : +33 (0)4 90 04 42 00

<https://www.parcduluberon.fr/>

Luberon UNESCO Global Geopark

60, place Jean Jaurès, 84400 Apt

[stephane.legal@parcduluberon.fr](mailto:stephane.legal@parcduluberon.fr)

Tel : +33 (0)4 90 04 42 00

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# On your path...

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## The ESA (environmentally sensitive area) of the gorges of Oppedette (A)

The department of Alpes de Haute-Provence, with the help of the Region, of the Commune and the Park, got together to accomplish the rational, harmonious and sustainable development of this remarkable but fragile site. The latest landscaping and protection projects were completed in 2009. The entire project of the sensitive natural areas or ESA (study, acquisitions, works) cost €287 641. ! It is now up to all the visitors to contribute to its preservation, adopting a responsible behaviour.



## Two prefects, two viewpoints! (B)

"It is here, in the presence of two prefects, that was cut in 1951, the symbolic ribbon of the first gorge trail. Hence the name of "Belvédère des deux préfets"! From there on, the language uses have simplified the name to "Belvédère du sous-préfet", then "Belvédère des gorges"...". Mr. Fayet, a former teacher of Oppedette.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon



## A canyon in its wooded setting (C)

Barely visible in the landscape, you will need to go to the site to discover the country of Oppedette, a rugged landscape and covered with woodlands. What reward once on the spot: a "magnificent" landscape reveals the deep gorges forming a canyon that you can embrace or roam. In this wooded setting, viewpoints are occasionally open at the hilltop village of Oppedette and the Lure mountain. These areas seem to have evolved over time without any pressure related to human activity.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon



## The power of water (D)

The two arches, visible immediately under the viewpoints, coincide, like many others with an interaction of underground rivers (paleo) at the beginning of the excavation of the canyon. Across, the cliff has many niches, due to the rainwater flow and frost weathering, which shatters rocks.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon



### The Baume de Font-de-Peyrou (E)

Below, across, near the bottom of the Calavon, there's a cave. We call it "baume-porche" because it is at the mouth of a tunnel. A spring accumulates tuff there. Afterwards, the river enlarged this spring into a meandering balm.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

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### What is tuff? (F)

On the opposite bank upstream, you can observe a great balm where water seeps and benefits many mosses and ferns. You may not be able to see it from the road, but this flowing limestone water redeposits on the ground some of its elements by trapping plant and animal debris. Tuff or travertine is this fragile limestone, light and airy, always rare and located in Provence. It is essential never to trample or pick it at risk of causing irreversible damages!

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

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### Calavon, the stone river (G)

According to toponymists, these short gorges, narrow and spectacular (of 2.5km long 140m wide and 100m deep) would be the reason for naming the Calavon river which flows from Banon, on the foothills of Mount Lure to reach the Durance in Cavailon. "Cal" means stone and the Celtic word "Avon" means river.

Attribution : ©David Tatin

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### Remarkable ivy (H)

Without falling off the ladder, do not forget to admire this impressive Ivy plant, which starts at the bottom of the pothole and climbs along the rocky wall. Covered in leaves when it is exposed to light, the bare trunk is about 8m long, but the immeasurable ramifications grow well above the wall. This venerable tree is registered in the inventory of remarkable trees of the Luberon RNP.

Attribution : Laurent Michel - PNR Luberon



### Small but precious flying mammal (I)

Worthy representative of the many bat species, the Lesser Horseshoe Bat (size 4cm, 22cm wingspan, weight 6g) has established on the plateau of Vachères, one of the last bastions of Provence. In winter it occupies favourable underground cavities, such as the sinkhole of the ladder. It starts to hunt between 15 and 30 minutes after sunset. It identifies insects at short distances and captures them most often in flight.

Attribution : ©DR

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### Beauties of the rocks (J)

Viewpoints and ledges attract us for the views they offer... They are also the preferred habitat of a very specific flora which can adjust to extreme drought and lighting conditions. The Larkspur (*Delphinium fissum*) and lilacs with lacinated leaves (*Hesperis laciniata*) are two beautiful representative flowers, rare in the local area. The Larkspur is even protected in our region. It is therefore appropriate to keep them out of our quest for view points!

Attribution : ©Laurent Michel - PNR Luberon

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### On the way, I embrace the Luberon attitude! (K)

The Oppedette site is a remarkably rich and diverse area which, despite the efforts of protection and management, remains very fragile. Let us protect it, together, by following some basic rules of a responsible hiker. The sum of isolated damages is never trivial! On this balcony path, while keeping a grip on the trail, avoid the repeated trampling of plants and insects, such as the formation of gully erosion lanes in the scree.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

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### A xxxx of liquorice (L)

At either side of the banks, the bracken fern has spread its roots. It is described and called "régliasse des bois" as some have chewed its roots which gives a taste of liquorice.

Attribution : ©DR





### The pleasure of climbing... (M)

If you practice rock climbing, feel free to enjoy a few tracks equipped by the FFME on the cliff overlooking the trail. Because of issues related to the protection of birds, it is the only authorized and equipped area for rock climbing in the gorges of Oppedette. To the right, enjoy the easier lanes and, in the middle, the more difficult ones. After the effort, a splendid view of the entire circus uphill! Please note that free climbing is a sport governed by specific rules of practice; respect them.!

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

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### A world without bees? (N)

35% of what we eat depends directly on the work of bees. But nowadays, bees are experiencing alarming winter mortality: 20 to 30% of the hives do not survive the winter. Blame the pesticides used in intensive farming that are extremely dangerous to bees. Without bees, it is estimated that 80% of plants would disappear from the lack of pollination.

Attribution : ©PNR Luberon

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### Ivy flowers, friend of the bees! (O)

At the edge of the trail, large ivy flowers parade on the cliff. Their flowering lasts from September to October and fruiting occurs in late winter, early spring. The Ivy flower therefore presents a reversed phenological cycle compared to plants. Its flowers are among the last to provide pollen for bees. A bee is directly related to the ivy; Ivy bees (*Colletes hederæ*). You can see it flying until early November if the weather is mild and lenient.

Attribution : ©DR

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### The wash fountain of the town (P)

Located at the entrance of the village, the building holds a fountain, a wash-house and a drinking trough. Supplied by a spring from the hamlet of Fenouillet, the fountain was built in the mid 19th century. Octagonal in shape, it has a central shaft which is nearly 3.70m high. The wash-house, meanwhile, has two basins: the largest was used for washing; the smallest, near the fountain, used for rinsing.

Attribution : Jérémie Haye - PNR Luberon

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## Oppedette : Hilltop villages (Q)

Overlooking the entrance of the gorges, perched on its rocky spur, the village of Oppedette (whose name comes from the Celtic-Ligurian oppidum on which it was built) was frequented from the Palaeolithic (remains dated of about 40 000 years) . Oppedette is a typical Provençal village with narrow streets and facades where the coating has faded over the time and have exposed the limewashed masonry stones.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

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## The church Saint-Didier (R)

The church was built in 1834 on the spot of an ancient chapel as evidenced by the collages and the reuse of masonry on the façade. This later-built building in an already existing structure is why this church is not strictly facing east. In 2000, the town of Oppedette, supported by the technical services of the Park, restored the building to preserve this remarkable element of the rural heritage.

Attribution : Jérémie Haye - PNR Luberon



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Ce projet partenarial rassemble également le Comité Régional du Tourisme, les agences départementales de développement touristique, les offices de tourisme et les syndicats d'initiative.

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This project was developed in partnership with the Regional Tourism Committee, the departmental tourist development agencies, and tourist offices.

Avec le soutien de



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- Luberon Géoparc mondial UNESCO