

The Garde-Canal trail

Quinson



Automne dans les basses gorges (©Stefano Blanc - PNR Verdon)

On the old path of the Garde-Canal, you will enjoy the privilege of entering the lower gorges to reach the Sainte Maxime chapel.

« I like to wander the old path of the Garde-Canal in the lower Verdon gorges, a trail imprinted of the history of the men who built the canal between 1865 and 1875 and which was operated until the mid-twentieth century to supply the basin of Aix en Provence with water. This route is remarkable for its landscapes and biodiversity and in the quiet of a summer morning, it is not unusual to see in the blue sky, the golden eagle. Stefano Blanc, Hiking technician at the RNP of Verdon.

Useful information

Practice : WALKING

Duration : 4 h

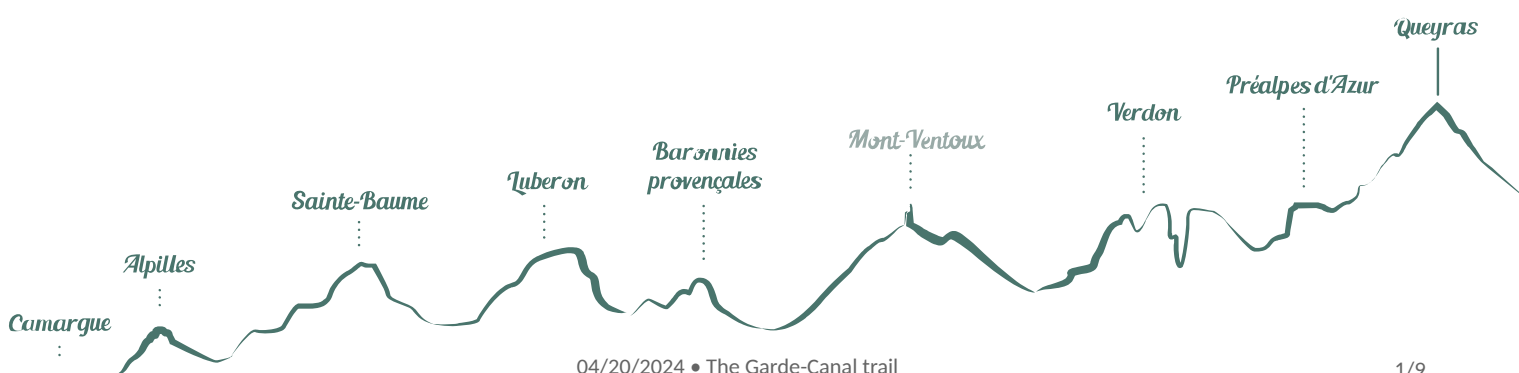
Length : 10.5 km

Trek ascent : 307 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Boucle

Themes : Fauna, Heritage and history



Trek

Departure : Car park of the museum, in Quinson

Arrival : Car park of the museum, in Quinson

Markings :  GR®  PR

From the parking lot, head across to the nautical base and the banks of the Verdon. Turn right at the water's edge and onto the bridge. Go over the bridge and in 50m, you will reach the starting point of the trail of the lower gorges.

1 - Take a right. Reach a first viewpoint and go down to the waterfront. Continue on the historic trail between the Verdon and the canal for 1.5km.

2 - at the gateway of the intersection called {Draille des vaches}, continue straight. Take on this route the two metal stairs, walk along the canal wall (be careful!) before using its entrance and reaching the shelter of the canal's guardsman (interpretation panels).

3 - Go through a long tunnel of 120metres and exit the canal by a metal staircase. Walk at the bottom of the Sainte-Maxime valley for about 1km, then take a left to reach the plateau.

4 - Go left towards the Sainte-Maxime chapel.

5 - From the chapel, coming back using the same route.

4 - Go straight, continue the path under the oaks and reach an ancient oratory. Take the path to the right, pass a ruin and continue on the left until the crossroads "Draille des vaches".

6 - Follow on the right, for 1km, the path passing through the plateau Mallasoque (unwooded route to be avoid during days of high heat!). Note: the route on the left {la Draille des vaches} descends directly to the gateway at the crossroads of the same name, this route of 300 steps which allows you to reach the trail along the Verdon again. After the plateau, turn left by the track and follow the trail cutting it. Lower down, regain the main track and then the road.

7 - Go left along the canal to reach further along the main road. Follow it, cross the bridge and come back to the starting point of the route taken to go.

On your path...



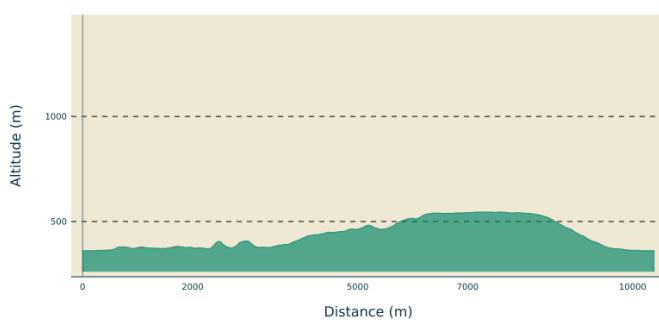
-  Be careful! (A)
-  Viewpoint of the lower gorges (C)
-  Sainte-Maxime Chapel (E)
-  An American in the lower gorges (B)
-  The first canal of Aix en Provence (D)
-  The King of Heaven (F)

All useful information

Advices

We recommend having 2L of water per person, a hat, walking shoes, a flash light. The presence of young children is not advised without a strong support (passing on the edge of the old canal and path overlooking the Verdon). Dogs are prohibited, even on a leash. It is formally prohibited to descend into the tunnels (The site is classified under Natura 2000 and as the Sensitive Natural Area of the Alpes de Haute Provence department for the protection of bats).

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 361 m
Max elevation 545 m

Transports

Limitons les déplacements en voiture, pensons aux transports en commun et au covoiturage.
Tous les transports en commun sur www.pacamobilite.fr

Access

From the main road No.11, go to the parking lot of the prehistory museum.

Advised parking

Car park of the museum

Information desks

House of the Verdon Regional Nature Park



Domaine de Valx, 04360 Moustiers-Sainte-Marie

info@parcduverdon.fr

Tel : +33 (0)4 92 74 68 00

<http://www.parcduverdon.fr/>

OT Quinson

Chapelle Saint-Esprit, 04500 Quinson

quinson@tourisme-dlva.fr

Tel : +33 (0)4 92 74 01 12

<https://www.quinson.fr/office-de-tourisme.html>

On your path...



Be careful! (A)

Bats take advantage of the natural and artificial cavities of the low Verdon gorges to hibernate. When they fall asleep, their temperature and heart rate drop and their breathing seems to stop (breathing stops can last from 60 to 90 minutes!). An impromptu awakening would condemn them. The flagship Mediterranean species here is Capaccini's Murin, whose large feet allow it to collect insects (and sometimes fry) on the surface of the water.

Attribution : Stefano Blanc - PNR Verdon



An American in the lower gorges (B)

The Coypu also known as the "river rat" (*Myocastor coypus*) is a species of mammal in the Myocastoridae family, the only surviving species of the genus *Myocastor*. This large rodent, native of South America, was introduced in Europe in the 19th century for the exploitation of its fur. All coypus present in Europe have either escaped or were released voluntarily in the open. The coypus has no natural predators except for its young which are sometimes the prey of birds like buzzards and barn owls.

Attribution : Stefano Blanc - PNR Verdon



Viewpoint of the lower gorges (C)

A viewpoint which gives you a view of the Sainte Maxime caves.

Attribution : Stefano Blanc - PNR Verdon



The first canal of Aix en Provence (D)

The first canal with water intake on the Verdon was built from 1864, it follows the left bank of the lower gorges. The path going along it allowed men assigned to this work to perform maintenance. Its development constituted a hard 10 years of labour, 20km of tunnels were dug for this occasion, with the means of the time, that is to say, the pick, the pickaxe and gunpowder.

Attribution : Stefano Blanc - PNR Verdon



Sainte-Maxime Chapel (E)

A small chapel of the 19th century, perched on the left bank of the mountainous area located at the exit of the Verdon gorges, dedicated to Saint Maxime (not to be confused with Saint Maximus who is called St. Maime in Provence). The saint and its chapel take up a large place in the minds of the residents of Quinson who have kept its memory as its traditional pilgrimage. This is the perfect stop for a picnic during the trek, often accompanied by goats.

Attribution : Stefano Blanc - PNR Verdon



The King of Heaven (F)

Emblem of Zeus to Napoleon, he held a prominent place in the myths of many parts of the world. The Golden Eagle is one of the largest eagles whose shapely figure is easily distinguishable in the sky describing dizzying figures or extended hovering wings . It frequents open and semi-open habitats in mountainous areas where small rodents are present. The Golden Eagle, like all raptor species is protected in France.

Attribution : DR



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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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www.cheminsdesparcs.fr

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