

## Le Mourre Nègre, southern side

Cabrières-d'Aigues



Le Mourre Nègre et le Petit Luberon au fond (©Stéphane Legal - PNR Luberon)

*Ascension is athletic but quite rewarding once on the ridges.! From up there, you will see why the Luberon is 'Big'...*

« At the bend of the path, after a sharp turn, short of breath, I found myself face to face with a herd of ewes.! I let them quietly go their way towards their sheep pen and I resumed the ascension of a Mourre Nègre playing hard to get... Once at the top, what a reward.! The Alps, the Mont Ventoux, the perched villages and in the distance, even the Mediterranean Sea.! On these ridges, you may no longer know which way to look ! » Marie Grenouilleau, trainee, a master 2 student at the Luberon RNP.

### Useful information

Practice : WALKING

Duration : 5 h 45

Length : 16.2 km

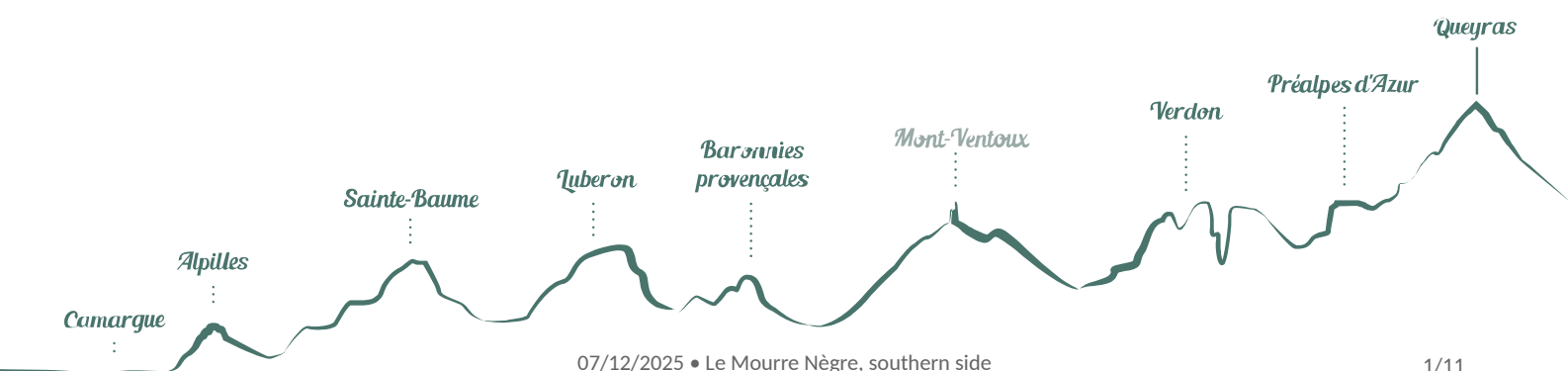
Trek ascent : 893 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Boucle

Themes : Fauna, Geology, Peak

Accessibility : Donkey hiking



# Trek

Departure : Facing the town hall of Cabrières d'Aigues

Arrival : Town hall of Cabrières d'Aigues

Markings :  GR®  PR

From the town hall, go up the street on the right, then take a left at the fountain. Turn right until the crossroads "Cime de Vière". Take the track to the massif along the farmlands. 350m after a left turn, reach a collar and continue straight onto the track.

**1** - At the crossroads "The Couleron" (point 586), leave the geological trail on the right and climb the left track (GR.). After a series of winding paths, you finally reach the highest ridges.

**2** - At the crossroads "La Basse de Cabrières", take a left and reach the antenna, the highest point of the Grand Luberon. At the top of the Mourre Nègre (1 125m), turn around and return to point 2. From here, continue straight on the ridges and cross five hills.

**3** - At the crossroads "Gros Collet", leave the GR and switch right on the trail (RP). 450m down, continue straight and hurtle down the slope under the forest cover until the Draille de Roche (point 609).

**4** - Turn right, move forward 10m and turn left just after the tank. Down the trail, go back on the track and continue down to reach an asphalt road. Continue straight for 1.5km leaving the geological trail half-way, on the right.

**5** - 20m before the crossroads "Les Vaucèdes", turn right and go down the trail to the creek. Follow the riverbed to the right for 100m and climb the steep path on the left. Go around the field and continue right up the track. Get to the road and continue straight, then head right back down to the left, at the starting point.



## On your path...



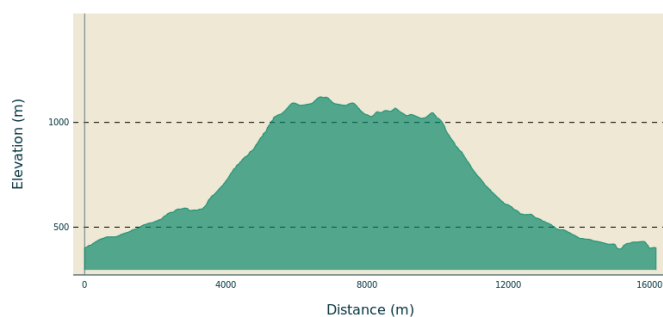
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|---|---|
|  The little fountain (A)                         |  Tropical sea in Cabrières-d'Aigues (B)                    |
|  The Durance river (C)                           |  Heating limestone to make whitewash. (D)                  |
|  The Luberon: a mountain with a tender heart (E) |  The Patou (Pyrenean Mountain Dog), a faithful keeper! (F) |
|  Sheeps and shepherds, keepers of the peaks! (G) |  Valleys and open spaces (H)                               |
|  I am several million years old! (I)             |  From the summit of the Grand Luberon (J)                  |
|  The grass at the summit (K)                     |  Reptile eaters (L)  |
|  Wood eating bugs (M)                            |  Wildlife of the villages (N)                              |

# All useful information

## **AdVICES**

- After point 1: steep climb to the ridges.
- Between points 3 and 4: Caution with your ankles in the descent.
- After point 5: tricky passage of the ravine after a violent storm.

## **Altimetric profile**



Min elevation 396 m  
Max elevation 1122 m

## **Access**

At 11km from Pertuis (A51), on the D9.

## **Advised parking**

8 mai 1945 parking lot, below the town hall.

## **Source**



Luberon Géoparc mondial  
UNESCO

## Information desks

House of the Luberon Regional Nature Park



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# On your path...

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## The little fountain (A)

Down the street, lies a fountain directly carved in the rock. The stone wall located above the basin closes the entrance of an horizontal tunnel, a water pit, which was dug several metres. This drains the seepage water until the pipe. The excavated rock is a limestone, relatively hard, made up of many fragments of organisms (shells, corals ...). This rock, called molasse, allows the seepage water to flow: it is permeable (spongelike).

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## Tropical sea in Cabrières-d'Aigues (B)

The cliff that dominates the Règue valley is made of limestone. It outcrops westward almost continuously, on nearly 15km until Vaugines, through Cucuron. Geologists have called this geological formation the Molasse de Cucuron. This rock is very rich in sand grains, gravel and fossil remains (scallops, oysters, corals ...). Fossils evidence the presence of a warm sea right here, about 10 million years ago.

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## The Durance river (C)

Many pebbles cover the ground. Some are black, green, red. They share the same composition with some rocks in the Alps. They were transported to Cabrières by powerful streams: the ancestor of the Durance, 10 million years ago!

Some pebbles have small holes. This is the result from the activity of marine molluscs, the Angelwings (Piddocks), which dig a hole in the rock to live in it. These bivalves live today in coastal areas.

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## Heating limestone to make whitewash. (D)

On the roadside, the bank is hollowed out by a hole with reddened walls at the top and varnished in the lower part. This is a lime kiln which has no doubt been used for local purposes. We don't know how old it is. Several days were needed to dig this type of kiln, build a corbel arch just like the bories, and place the limestone blocks. Cooking it, around 1000 °C, required constant monitoring for about 4 days.

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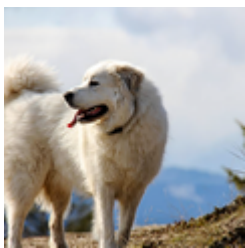




## The Luberon: a mountain with a tender heart (E)

On the right, a track lets you follow a little escarpment which highlights the rift in the passage and marks the northern border of a line of hills. The limestone that make up these hills is as old as those of the Luberon ridges. In between, the marly rocks are more recent. These information help in the outlining of the geometry of the Luberon: an asymmetrical arch-shaped bend (anticlinal). The heart of the massive, much more gentle, has been hollowed out by erosion and forms a valley.

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## The Patou (Pyrenean Mountain Dog), a faithful keeper! (F)

In these grazing areas, you can come across a patou between January and April. This big white dog is an impressive keeper. His task is not the easiest: he has to protect his flock against wolves. The patou takes his role very seriously, so no threats or shouts, keep your dogs on a leash and do not dare cross his flock! Go around it and walk quietly, the patou will sniff you and go back quietly to his task.

Attribution : ©DR-Animalaxy



## Sheeps and shepherds, keepers of the peaks! (G)

In May and June, you will encounter sheep grazing. Thanks to them, the exceptional biodiversity of the peaks is maintained. Without grazing, you wouldn't be able to see as many insects, birds and spring flowers. Sheeps prefer, because they choose them, rare plants and limit the closing of the lawns by the forest. Farmers are supported in their work by the Park, the ONF (National Forest Offices) and pastoralists.

Attribution : ©Hervé Vincent



## Valleys and open spaces (H)

The Luberon is visible from everywhere and very present in the landscape. From the peaks, wide panoramas are also available to us: Our eyes travel across the southern massifs (Alpilles, Sainte-Baume...) and northern massif (Mont Ventoux). But this landscape is also characterized by the very intimate micro atmospheres like the wooded valleys below and the surrounding rocky valleys. At our feet, the mark of man is discreet and increasingly present beyond the Durance.

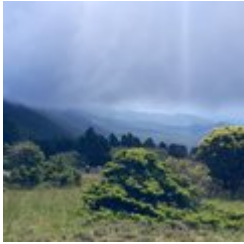
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## I am several million years old! (I)

The Luberon was not built in a day, far from it! Its birth is connected to the birth of the Pyrénées, about 40 million years ago. This is also the case of Provençal Alpilles, Ste-Victoire, Ste-Baume massifs, etc. all oriented east-west. With the formation of the Alps, it has lived for 20 million years, several episodes of deformation leading to its current structure: a wide asymmetrical arch-shaped bend (anticlinal) overlapping the south.

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## From the summit of the Grand Luberon (J)

Mourre Negro, black muzzle in Provence, culminates at 1,125m and overlooks the mountains of the Grand and Petit Luberon. The summit reveals a splendid panorama at 360°. On the north side, behind the basin of Apt and plateaus of the mountains of Vaucluse, Mont Ventoux, the Lure mountain and, in the background, the snowy peaks of the Ecrins massif can be seen. On the south side, beyond the plain of the Durance, we can observe Ste-Baume, the Sainte-Victoire, Etang de Berre, Camargue, Alpilles,...

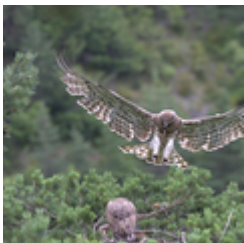
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## The grass at the summit (K)

These grasslands of great biological wealth are the result of the combined effects of the altitude, wind exposure and a traditional use by shepherds. Apart from common species, the lawns are home to rare plant species (more than fifty). This plant life diversity provides shelter and abundant food for many herbivorous insects (over 265 species). So, many birds mainly appreciate these apical lawns.

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## Reptile eaters (L)

The Short-toed Snake Eagle is a migratory raptor that lives in the region from March to October. Brown but with a white plumage, it is recognizable by its yellow eyes and its big round head. Its speciality? Its diet is mainly composed of reptiles: snakes, lizards or vipers (which it is not immune against the poison). It can hunt for more than 10km from its zone and prefers open and sunny areas like the apical lawns or scrublands.

Attribution : Jean-Pierre Malafosse - PN Cévennes





### Wood eating bugs (M)

In the oak grove, many wood-boring insects (that feed on wood) thrive. Essentially beetles of the Cerambycidae or longhorn family are found. It is the larvae of these insects that eat wood and can stay up to 3 years in the warmth of the wood before metamorphosing to reach adulthood.

Attribution : ©Laurent Michel - PNR Luberon

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### Wildlife of the villages (N)

Even in Cabrières, one can observe nature, so stay tuned! In the Luberon, the villages are home to nesting birds. In summer, you can watch the Common Swifts or the Common House Martin on the roof linings. The black redstart is present throughout the year on the walls of the pretty villages of the Luberon.

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- Luberon Géoparc mondial UNESCO