

Mourre de Cairas

Oppède



A l'amorce de la descente sur le versant nord (©Léa Samson - PNR Luberon)

After Mourre Nègre on the Grand Luberon, here is Mourre of Cairas, at the peak of the Petit Luberon. Not less spectacular, on the contrary!

When leaving Oppède-le-Vieux, an authentic village, the route runs along the shady side of the massif and sandstone outcrops, then gradually rises until the Hautes Plaines and Mourre de Cairas, the highest point of the Petit Luberon (733m). The forest atmosphere gives way to open areas dotted with boxwood, serviceberries and oaks, and finally herbaceous vegetation, place of ancestral grazing. On the way back, the steep and rocky descent delivers spectacular views.

Useful information

Practice : WALKING

Duration : 4 h

Length : 11.3 km

Trek ascent : 658 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Boucle

Themes : Fauna, Geology, Heritage and history, Peak



Trek

Departure : Place de la Croix, centre of Oppède-le-Vieux

Arrival : Place de la Croix, centre of Oppède-le-Vieux

Markings :  GR®  PR

From the Place de la Croix, go along the halls, keep walking and turn left on Rue de l'Ecole". Turn right and reach below the Chemin de la Fontaine (GR).). Take the road on the right.

1- At the crossroads'Poudarrigue'', leave the GR and continue left on Chemin de la Perrière. 800m further, when at the second house, take a right (RP). Reach a flat area, join the valley and continue to the left. Cross the collar of Ribas de Pire and down the slope,take a left.

2- At the track crossroads , turn right (RP), pass more then three homes and cross the collar of Grimouret. Down the steep path, continue right and quietly up the floor of the valley.

3- At the crossroads'Poudarique' ', turn right and climb the trail to Mourre de Flamarin (RP). After a curve to the left, go forward on the flat area and reach the paved forest path.

4- Turn right and proceed 400m, pass the hilltop of the Mourre de Cairas (733m) on the right and continue on the track for 1.5km.

5- At the crossroads'Bastidon Pradon' turn to the left in the undergrowth and reach the small refuge that is 150m away. Retrace your steps to point 5, cross the forest track and go straight to "l'épaule de la Jassine" (GR). Then switch to the slope, cross several curves and reach a little collar lower down. Continue on the left, pass below the Ribas de Brécugne (climbing school site) and reach the chemin de la Fontaine.

1- Go back Place de la Croix through the path used at the start (GR).

On your path...



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|--|---|--|--|
| | The village of Oppède (A) | | The landscaped garden of Sainte-Cécile (B) |
| | The covered market (C) | | Afar, Ménerbes (D) |
| | The Cuestas Oppède (E) | | The forest, the source of life! (F) |
| | The Common wall lizard or the Spanish psammodromus? (G) | | Massif of the Petit Luberon (H) |



Steppe grasslands (I)



The Spiked Magician (K)



Old forests and tree sheds (M)



The cedars in the Petit Luberon (J)



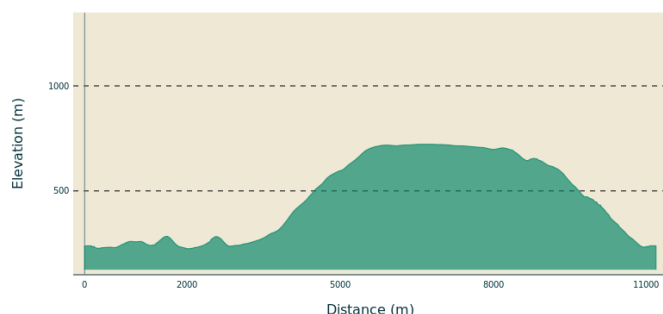
Here, it's all about climbing! (L)

All useful information

Advices

- Après le point 5 : balisage peu évident sur les parties dénudée du plateau des Hautes Plaines ; s'aider des cairns disposés le long du sentier. Et attention aux chevilles dans les zones calcaires érodées (lapiaz).
- Sur les crêtes, entre les points 4 et 5, et alentours : ATTENTION ZONE PASTORALE. En présence de chiens de protection venus à ma rencontre, je ne les caresse pas ni ne les menace. Je m'arrête, puis j'attends patiemment la fin du "contrôle" avant de reprendre calmement mon chemin en contournant le plus possible le troupeau. De préférence, ne pas emmener son chien et, sinon, bien le tenir en laisse.

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 225 m

Max elevation 722 m

Access

A 11 km à l'est de Cavaillon, par les D973, D2 et D29.

Advised parking

Parking de Sainte Cécile, sous Oppède-le-Vieux

Source



Luberon Géoparc mondial
UNESCO

Information desks

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On your path...



The village of Oppède (A)

The old village was built on a rocky outcrop at the foot of a castle from the Middle Ages now in ruins. Its Renaissance houses, some also ruined and its cobbled streets give it a timeless bucolic atmosphere. In the 19th century, seeking more land suitable for cultivation, the inhabitants settled in the plain little by little, where the district of Poulivets was developed, nowadays the new village centre.

Attribution : ©Daniel Grenouilleau



The landscaped garden of Sainte-Cécile (B)

Take the time to visit to the north side of the village, the landscaped garden of Saint-Cécile's terraces.! These fifteen dry stone terraces gather more than forty species of trees and shrubs, typical of the country. Shaped like an amphitheatre, it is a real collection of the Luberon jewels over 1.6ha.

Attribution : ©Destination Luberon



The covered market (C)

As evidenced by the inscription in one of the stone pillars, this covered market was built in 1772. Located at Place de la Croix and against the rampart, it hosted the meetings of the villagers including fairs. Simple, with an elongated lean-to roof, the care and precision brought to moulded capitals of the pillars is quite noticeable. It was restored in 1991 while missing three spans.

Attribution : ©PNR Luberon



Afar, Ménerbes (D)

Ménerbes, the hillside village you can see in the distance, is worth seeing. On its terraces, the warm atmosphere and the Maison de la Truffe et du Vin (truffles and wine restaurant) is open to experienced gastronomes as those looking to experience some local specialities. You can also see in its plain the vineyards and holm or white oaks that hide the famous black diamond (truffle) at their feet.

Attribution : ©Stéphane Legal - PNR Luberon



The Cuestas Oppède (E)

The north side of the Petit Luberon is formed of white limestone called Urgonian. It faces, to the north, a calcareous molasse bar gently sloping, overlooking a steep slope bank. This morphology is called "cuesta" by geologists. Exploited since antiquity, the molasse is always extracted in Oppède and Ménerbes, in open quarries.

Attribution : ©DR-Valentin Pacault



The forest, the source of life! (F)

On the park's territory, the forest occupies 90% of the surface of natural areas. To preserve the balance of nature, biodiversity, cultural heritage and landscape in these forest ecosystems, it is necessary to apply a management that promotes several strata of vegetation, favourable to bats and birds. This forest management must focus on diversification of age classes of trees and species diversity (holm and pubescent oak, pine).

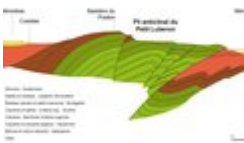
Attribution : ©Aline Salvaudon - PNR Luberon



The Common wall lizard or the Spanish psammodromus? (G)

Strolling through these paths, you can come across a look-alike of the common wall Lizard, tumbling down a bush.. Also brown, the Spanish psammodromus strangely resembles its cousin but when you look closer, it has four dark streaks with black spots on its back. Extremely fast, it likes to hide under dead leaves or sand and screeches when its caught.

Attribution : ©DR



Massif of the Petit Luberon (H)

You are here on the massif of the Petit Luberon which forms an anticline (arch-shaped fold) oriented east-west, between the plain of Cavaillon and the Lourmarin valley. The north side overlooking the Coulon-Calavon Valley and its southern side, the Durance valley, the mythical river of Provence. To the west, on the hills of Bonnieux, the Cedar forest covers the mountains.

Attribution : ©DR-D'après M. Liouville



Steppe grasslands (I)

The lawns of the peaks of the Petit Luberon are open areas rich in biodiversity. The large herbaceous vegetation gives this space an ancestral pastoral calling. The combined action of man and nature provides exceptional biological diversity where there are endemic plant species, reptiles of all kinds or mammals like the Mediterranean pine vole. These grasslands are also hunting areas for large raptors.

Attribution : ©DR-Eberhard Scherzler



The cedars in the Petit Luberon (J)

The first cedars were implanted in 1862 with seeds from the Algerian Atlas. Planted by some committed foresters, they were intended to reforest the summit of the Petit Luberon. The cedars of 1st generation found on the Massif des Cèdres near Bonnieux are now 150 years old. The majestic cedars that you can admire in the area are descendants from natural colonization and form the forest today.

Attribution : ©Léa Samson - PNR Luberon



The Spiked Magician (K)

The Spiked magician (*Saga pedo*) is the largest bush cricket in France and among the largest insects. It may indeed measure up to 11cm. Very discreet, it enjoys the dry grassland and scrubland of southern France that we see here. Rather a rare fact, there is no male of this species. The females reproduce with parthenogenesis (asexual reproduction) and the offsprings of each female are therefore clones.

Attribution : ©Laurent Michel - PNR Luberon



Here, it's all about climbing! (L)

To the right, above the path, lies a small rock climbing school popular with climbers from all around the country. It contains about forty routes with difficulty levels ranging from 3a to 7b, fitted on limestone slabs over 16m. Located at the limit of the biotope protection, it is the only site open to climbers on the Petit Luberon. All the other cliffs are closed to climbing practices in order to preserve the tranquillity of raptors.

Attribution : ©Pierre Duret



Old forests and tree sheds (M)

Here the atmosphere is special, and the ecological wealth is striking. A true social housing moss and fungi, older trees host a multitude of inhabitants; birds, insects, or bats ... In the cracks of branches, holes drilled by woodpeckers or under the ivy, they nest or flush out wood-eating insects (xylophagous). The flora of the understory is also original. These old forests are precious.

Attribution : Claude Tardieu



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L'outil Geotrek a été financé par l'Union européenne, le Parc national des Ecrins et le Parc national du Mercantour.

Le projet Chemins des Parcs est financé par la Région Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur et les Parcs naturels régionaux des Alpilles, de Camargue, du Luberon, du Queyras et du Verdon.

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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The Geotrek tool was funded by the European Union, the Ecrins National Park and the Mercantour National Park.

The Chemins des Parcs project is funded by the Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur Region and the regional nature parks of Alpilles, Camargue, Luberon, Queyras and the Verdon.

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

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