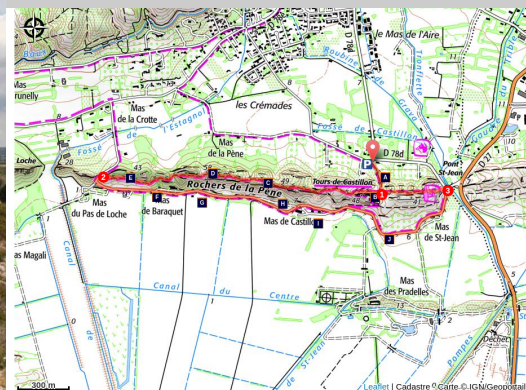


LE PARADOU - The Castillon Towers

Paradou



La tour ouest depuis le chemin des Rochers de la Pène (©Orlane Fougeroux - PNR Alpilles)

Come roam this playful path, where you will have the leisure to discover the Castillon towers and the surrounding landscapes.

The Castillon Towers enables you to travel between eras. From the creation of the Alpilles massive 125 million years ago to its appropriation by man today, this walk is a real travel through time. In the small mountain range of Pène, men have found it to be a refuge since the Iron Age to the point to stay there over the centuries. Now owner of fauna and flora, it is possible to know from the top of this small hilly area, the evolution of this site and its surroundings.

Useful information

Practice : WALKING

Duration : 2 h

Length : 5.1 km

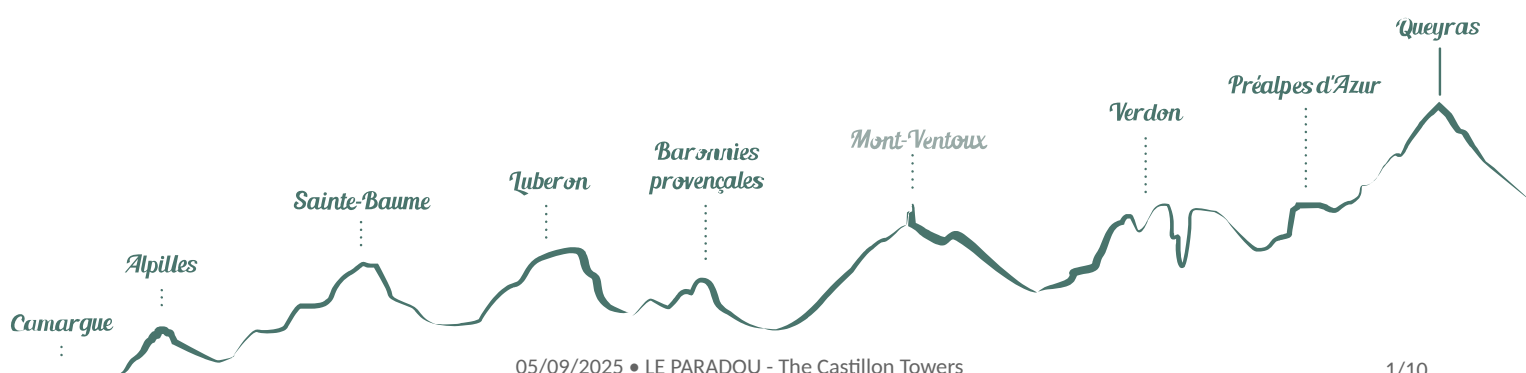
Trek ascent : 94 m

Difficulty : Very easy

Type : Boucle

Themes : Heritage and history, Know-how, Local products

Accessibility : Donkey hiking



Trek

Departure : Car park of the "Tours de Castillon", in Paradou

Arrival : Car park of the "Tours de Castillon", in Paradou

Markings : ■ PR local

At the car park, take the rocky path marked in blue which goes up a gentle slope, going along an organic olive grove on the left.

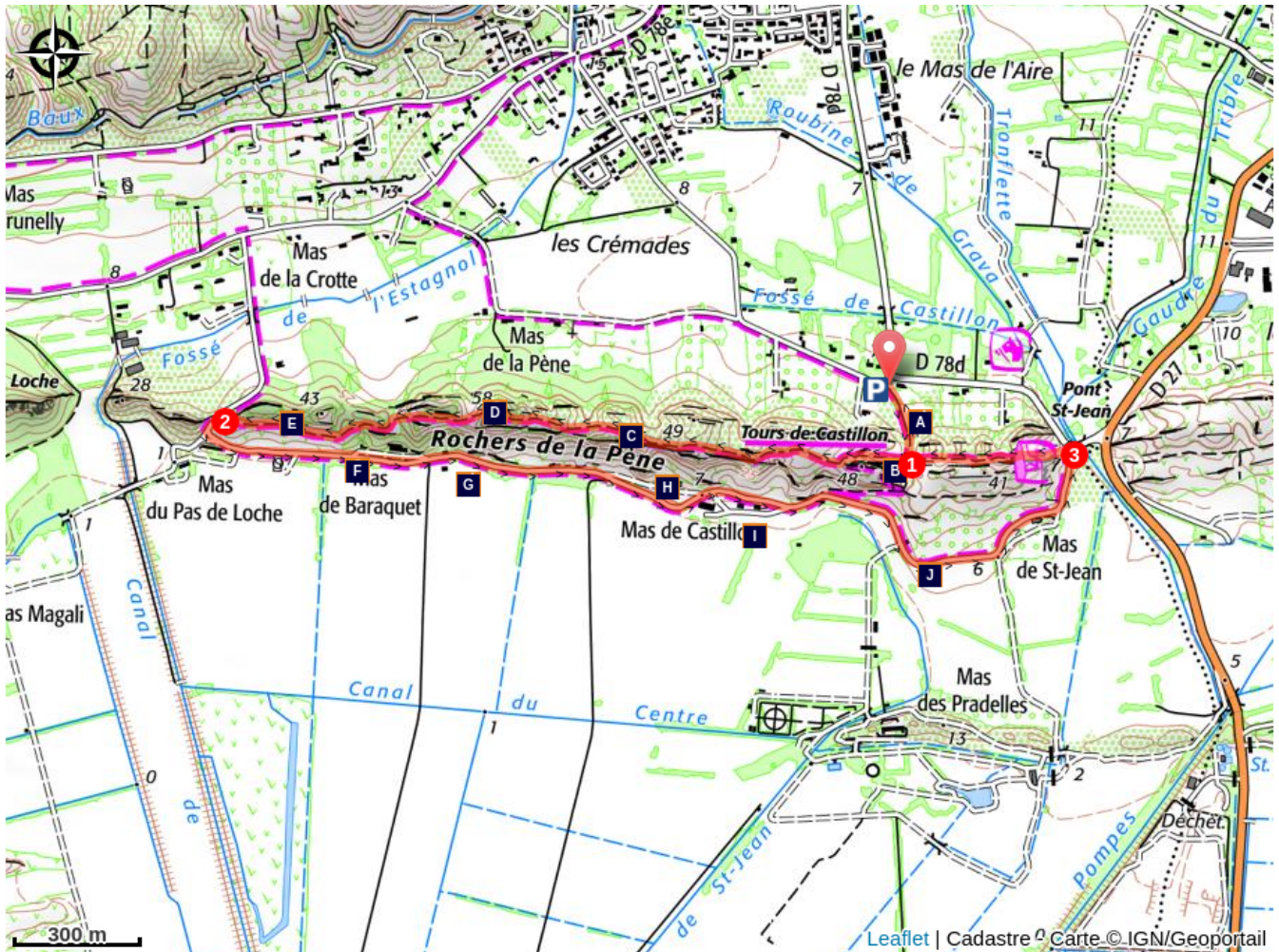
1 - Once the towers in sight, take the track which rises on the right, leaving the first turn on the left behind. When reaching the third tower, which was hidden until now, turn right then continue following the blue marked trail by going along the rocks of Pène.

2 - At the road, turn immediately left and follow it along the path of Castillon towards different Mas (Provençal farmhouses). Possible presence of cars. Continue on the road until the junction at the Saint-Jean bridge.

3 - Arriving at the "RIS" sign, turn left to take back the path that sinks again into the little massive.

1 - Back to the Castillon towers, turn right and follow the first path taken to complete the tour of the towers.

On your path...



The territory's symbol (A)



An island in the middle of the plains (C)



The spotted dragon of the Alpilles (E)



An exceptional hay (G)



The role of hedges (I)



The Castillon Towers (B)



Rocks of Pène (D)



The draining of the swamps (F)



The Provençal farmhouse, called Mas (H)



The pastoralism remains (J)

All useful information

Advices

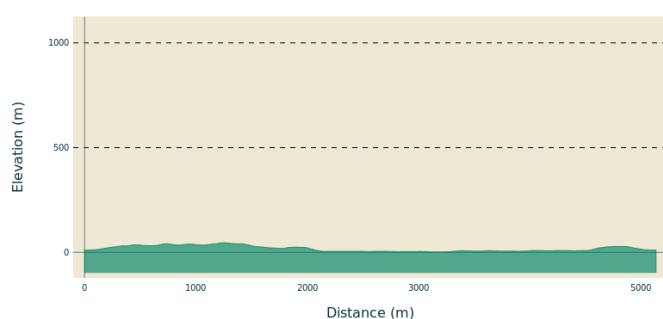
Do not go into the towers, risk of collapse.

Caution with your ankles on the trails of the rocks of Pènes (between point 1 & 2 and between points 3 & 1).

Respect the tranquillity of the place: The Mas (Provençal farmhouses) are private property.

Watch out for cars on the roadside.

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 2 m
Max elevation 46 m

Access

In Paradou, follow the D78d towards Saint-Martin-de-Crau to exit the village. Turn right before the Saint-Jean bridge when heading to the car park.

Advised parking

Car park of the "Tours de Castillon", in Paradou

i Information desks

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<http://www.alpillesenprovence.com>

On your path...



The territory's symbol (A)

The olive tree is an iconic culture of the territory and is the symbol of the dry Mediterranean climate. Its multiple trunks are the result of a grafting near the stump following a long lasting frost in 1956. Today, olives and oils produced in the Alpilles are products recognized nationally and internationally, benefiting from the Appellation d'Origine Protégée - AOP (European quality logo attesting regional origin), which marks its uniqueness.

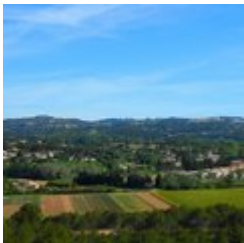
Attribution : ©Jason Gaydier - PNR Alpilles



The Castillon Towers (B)

Occupied for the first time since the Iron Age, the Castillon site grew considerably in the 11th century, when the Lords of Baux made it a strategic location for the defence of their territory and a surveillance station of the communication routes. The castle, now gone, had four towers at the time. The site that you are discovering only has three today.

Attribution : ©Orlane Fougeroux



An island in the middle of the plains (C)

The Chaîne des Alpilles stretches over 30km, culminating at 498m at the top of the Opies. At the whim of peaks, cliffs, valleys and foothills, this very Mediterranean limestone massif is home to remarkable environments. The Alpilles are composed of emaciated soils of which the white limestone was formed 125 million years ago by the accumulation of microorganisms in the ocean which covered it here. It was the collision of the African and European tectonic plates that created these mountainous areas.

Attribution : ©Jason Gaydier - PNR Alpilles



Rocks of Pène (D)

The rocks of the Pène, which shelter the Castillon Towers, belong to the narrow chain of "Hills" extending for 15 km from west to east, in the Alpilles massif. Traveling Fontvieille, Paradou, Maussane-les-Alpilles and Mouriès, it ends at the Caisses de Jean-Jean. The rocks of the Pène peak at 58 meters altitude south of Paradou. They have a marked southward slope and consist of calcareous beds of the Upper Cretaceous.

Attribution : ©Rémi Sérange - PNR Alpilles



The spotted dragon of the Alpilles (E)

Ranging from 60 to 90cm long, the Ocellated Lizard (Jewelled Lacerta) is the largest of its kind. This lizard enjoys dry, sunny places such as olive groves or unoccupied rocky areas. It is essentially characterized by its few blue spots along its flanks. Its diet consists of fruits as well as small mammals, through other insects. It is protected and the person that even manages to catch it will be fined.

Attribution : ©Nicolas Sadaillan - Mairie de Sénas



The draining of the swamps (F)

The depression between the Rochers de la Pène and the Crau plain far off gets runoff water from the Alpilles and rising groundwater tables. This bowl effect creates the natural conditions of the swamp of Baux, a phenomenon reinforced by low altitude (-1 to 2m). The gradual draining of the marshes was conducted to diversify crops, thereby producing the Crau hay, wheat and other cereals. Today there is only a small marsh area to the west.

Attribution : ©Jason Gaydier - PNR Alpilles



An exceptional hay (G)

An Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (European label for quality guarantee) since 1997, the hay of Crau is the only animal food with that label. Its production began with the first irrigation canals built under the supervision of Adam de Craponne. Its production follows five steps: watering, cutting, turning (hay drying), gathering in windrows (lining up the raked hay to facilitate harvesting) and finally storing. It is renowned worldwide, and Arab princes have it imported to feed their animals.

Attribution : ©Jason Gaydier - PNR Alpilles



The Provençal farmhouse, called Mas (H)

South of the Pène massif, the road skirts the Mas of St-Jean, of Castillon, of Baraquet as well as the Mas du Pas de Loche. They are testimony to the establishment of agricultural systems of the 18th century. The openings are reduced to the northeast for protection against the Mistral. Annexes were built gradually according to the family's needs and cultivation requirements. The climbing vine, the well and the plane trees hedges complete the image of the farmhouse.

Attribution : ©Jason Gaydier - PNR Alpilles



The role of hedges (I)

Many hedges segment the territory and separate the various areas. From cedar or cypress, these hedges have the primary function to partially protect the various crops from the wind and frost. Other action, they help to create corridors of favourable winds for the circulation of bat species. Finally, these trees are known for their wood, very strong, fragrant, and have served to form the framework of many farmhouses in the Alpilles.

Attribution : ©PNR Alpilles



The pastoralism remains (J)

The Alpilles are grounds for farming and pastoralism. Extensive cattle, goat or sheep grazing guarantees a plant biodiversity preventing the overrunning and the closing of the environment, contributing at the same time to the fight against fire. Here, herds and flocks are fond of Castillon grasslands or the marsh, as evidenced by this former shepherd's hut, now collapsed. The latter has similar features as the borie.

Attribution : ©Jason Gaydier - PNR Alpilles



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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.

www.cheminsdesparcs.fr

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