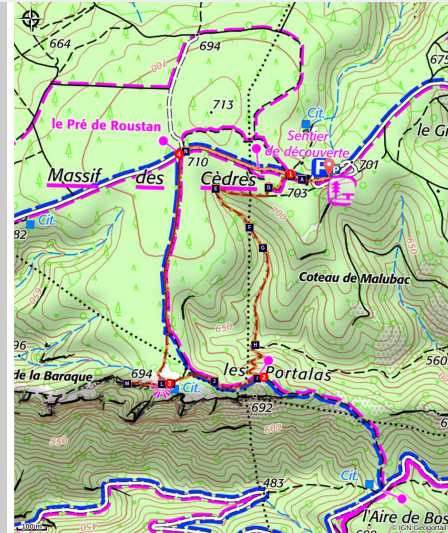


## The Portalas trail

Bonnieux



L'arche du Portalas (©Vincent Damourette - Coeurs de nature-Sipa)

*A magical immersion in the cedar forest, wandering the heart of the scrubland and panoramic contemplation on the south of the Luberon ...*

« I love the contrast between the cedars which by their size and beauty, release a sense of calm and peace, and the herbaceous vegetation in open areas of the summit's plateau so dry and windy. The view from Portalas allows you to see the south side of the Petit Luberon and its valley bottoms of holm oaks. Lastly, the nearby rocky areas are home to several species of raptors. Let's just say lots of excitement! ». Laurent Michel, botanist at the RNP of Luberon.

### Useful information

Practice : WALKING

Duration : 1 h 15

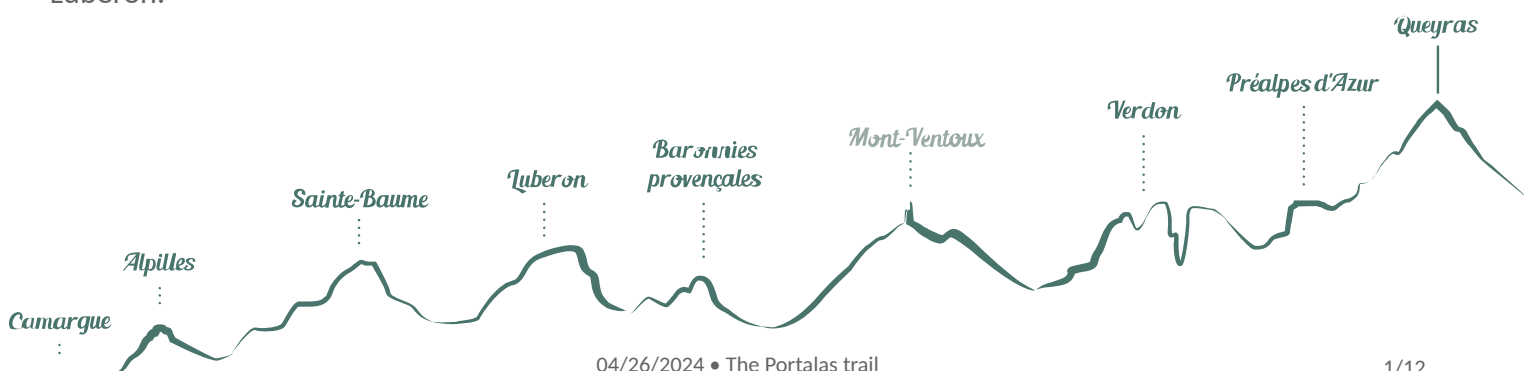
Length : 3.5 km

Trek ascent : 104 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Boucle

Themes : A lookout, a viewpoint, Flora, Geology



# Trek

Departure : Parking area of the cedar forest of the Petit Luberon

Arrival : Parking area of the cedar forest of the Petit Luberon

Markings :  PR  PR local

Go to the far end of the car park, cross the barrier by the dedicated pedestrian crossing and reach the welcome sign. Continue a few metres to reach to the starting area of the Portalas trail.

**1** - Go to the left on the Portalas trail, yellow arrow. Continue about thirty metres on the itinerary accessible to people with disabilities and take a right at the labyrinth and its maze of decking. Come a little further back on the main route and regain the area of interpretation on pastoralism. Exit the "Chemin des Cèdres" trail to take the path on the left. 20m further, turn right and go down slowly to the shaded valley. After the well-marked left hand turn, continue descending for 600m. Upon arriving at a coal production site (point 623), leave the valley and take a right on a winding path.

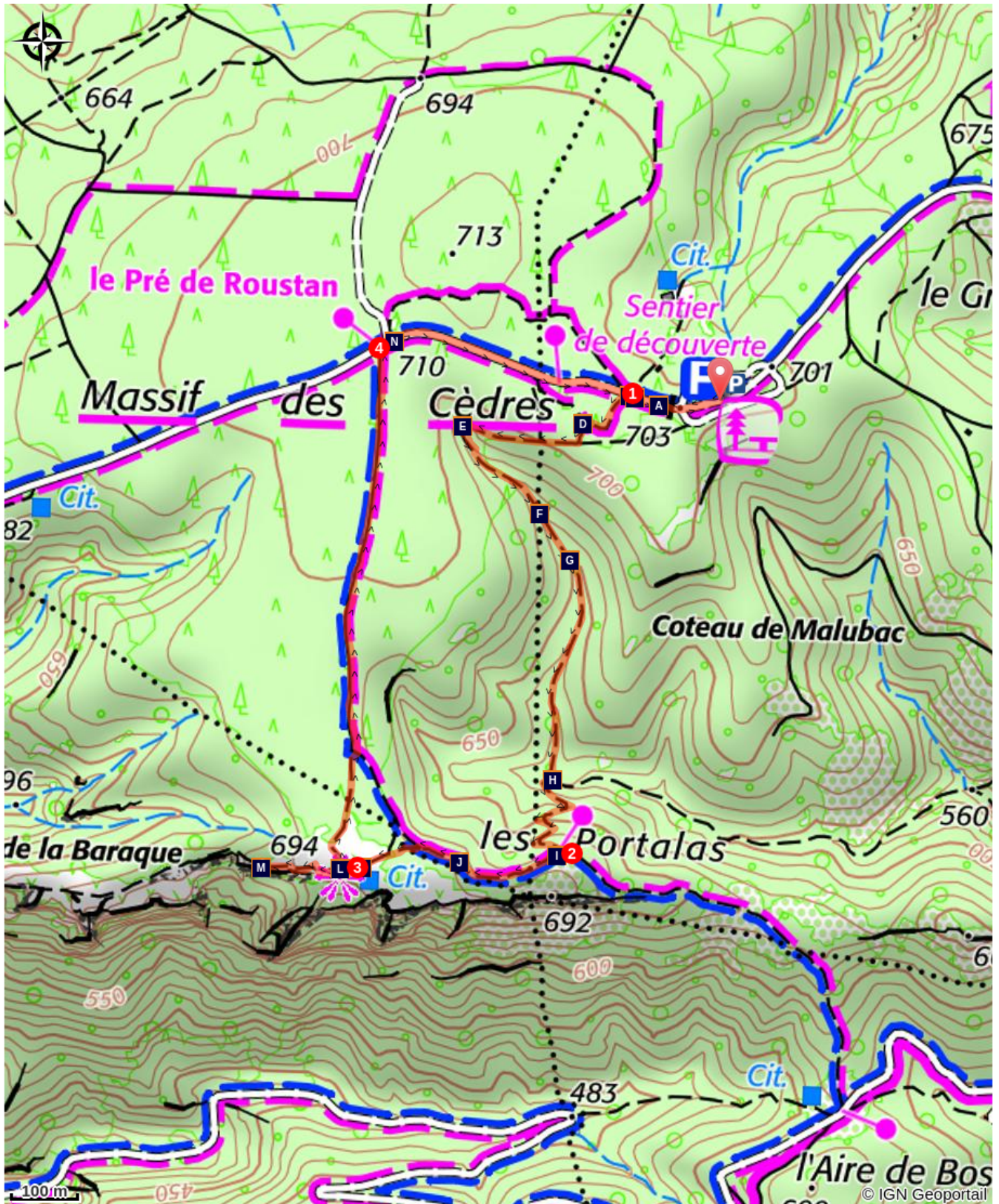
**2** - At the crossroads "Le Portalas", turn right. Continue on the path between boxwoods and oaks. Just after a rocky ledge, turn left and climb a steep path to reach the edge of the plateau and its panoramic view.


**3** - Continue straight on the plateau and 70m further, turn right. Follow the path that goes into the woods. Continue straight until the paved forest path.





**4** - At the crossroads "Bois Roustan" turn right and follow the forest track to return to the car park.





*Alternative route for the return: from the crossroads "Bois Roustan" (point 4), return to the car park following in the opposite direction the "Chemin des Cèdres" trail that winds through the woods behind the interpretation area "Forest exploited by man".*

# On your path...



-  The Cedar forest (A)
-  1952, the big fire (C)
-  Boxwood: Yesterday's fertiliser (E)
-  Young people will inform you (B)
-  Guardians of the rich natural heritage (D)
-  Fraxinella or "Burning bush" (F)

-  Flower of tales (G)
-  The iconic Egyptian vulture (I)
-  The Portals viewpoint (K)
-  Arch of Portals (M)

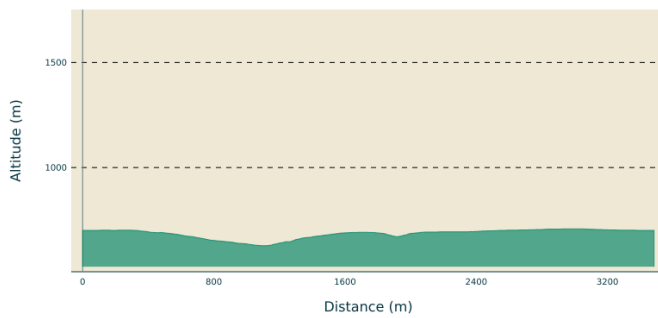
-  Ophrys of Sarato (H)
-  Mourre Nègre (J)
-  From Matorral (shrubland) to Phoenician juniper (L)
-  The forest exploited by man (N)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

Caution with your ankles and some of the rocky passages.

## **Altimetric profile**



Min elevation 628 m  
Max elevation 708 m

## **Access**

At 8km from Bonnieux taking the D36 and 15km from Lourmarin taking the D945, the D36 and the route des crêtes of the forest of Cedars of the Petit Luberon.

## **Advised parking**

Parking area in the forest of Cedars of the Petit Luberon (parking spaces reserved for the disabled and buses)

## **Source**

Luberon Géoparc mondial  
UNESCO



## Information desks

House of the Luberon Regional Nature Park



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

Luberon UNESCO Global Geopark

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Tel : +33 (0)4 90 74 03 18

<http://www.luberon-apt.fr/>

# On your path...

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## The Cedar forest (A)

In 1862, cedar seeds from the Algerian Atlas are sown by some convicted foresters, to try to reforest the summit of the Petit Luberon. This first generation of cedars are now 150 years old and have an imposing figure and are great-grandparents. Their descendants surround them and form the forest we know today.

Attribution : ©Léa Samson - PNR Luberon

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## Young people will inform you (B)

Between July 1 and August 31, you will meet on this trail one of the 36 assistants trained for the prevention and monitoring of forest fires (APSIF). These young people are recruited and trained by the Luberon Regional Nature Park to raise awareness about the risks of fires but also to inform on the regulations and access to the forest. It is essential to ensure the good behaviour of the users and to reduce the risk of fires.

Attribution : ©Noanne Adam - PNR Luberon

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## 1952, the big fire (C)

On July 18, 1952, the Luberon mountain range experienced the biggest and most catastrophic fire in its history. It destroyed 2030ha of forest, particularly affecting the towns of Lacoste, Bonnieux and Ménerbes and sparing only the heart of the cedar forest. The fire lasted seven days because of the Mistral (wind). Some old cedars bear the scars of this devastating fire, and others, seeming spared on the outside are charred inside.

Attribution : ©ONF Luberon

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## Guardians of the rich natural heritage (D)

The action of the sheep herd in the winter and spring, combined with bush clearing, contains the expansion of shrubs and ensures the preservation of this exceptional heritage that represents the lawns of the Luberon ridges. Pastoralism is also essential to the defence of forests against fire.

Attribution : ©Hervé Vincent



### Boxwood: Yesterday's fertiliser (E)

Recognizable by its foliage, evergreen and glossy, it is rich in nitrogen. Used until the beginning of the last century as animal litter, it was then common in the fields as nitrogen fertilizer. Inedible for the flock, the abandonment of this practice and the decline of pastoralism favoured the invasion of open areas by boxwood. It has an exceptional durability because it can live 5 to 6 centuries and reach several metres high.

Attribution : ©Laurent Michel - PNR Luberon



### Fraxinella or "Burning bush" (F)

In May, you can discover here the beautiful fraxinella (*Dictamnus albus*), with leaves resembling those of the Ash (*Fraxinus* = Ash in Latin). The entire plant is covered with glands smelling like cinnamon and lemon. It is said that these glands release a volatile oil naturally flammable in hot and muggy weather, hence the other nickname of the plant: "burning bush". Warning, : picking is prohibited because the plant is rare and protected in our region!

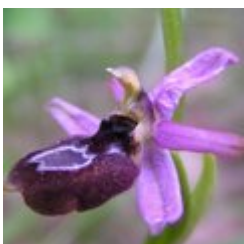
Attribution : ©DR-Björn S



### Flower of tales (G)

The Rampion bellflower (*campanula rapunculus*) is recognizable by its bell-shaped and dangling blue flowers placed along the stem to form a long bunch. Before blossoming, it has a great taste and can be eaten in salads. It is in fact the famous plant that treats the queen in the tale of the Brothers Grimm adapted by Disney who then gives the name to her daughter and princess, Rapunzel.

Attribution : ©DR-Daniel Villafruela



### Ophrys of Sarato (H)

The Ophrys are orchids of particularly aesthetic and complex forms, the lower petal called the "labellum", mimics the hairy body of wild bees. Attracted by these forms and the scent copying the pheromones of female bees, the male bees after being tricked, go from flower to flower transferring pollen. The Ophrys of Sarato (*Ophrys saratoi*), is present on these lawns during spring, a protected species, endemic to Provence and Dauphiné (Picking is prohibited!).

Attribution : ©Laurent Michel - PNR Luberon



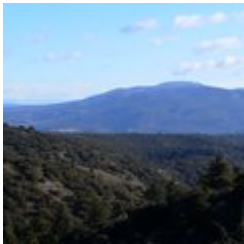


### The iconic Egyptian vulture (I)

The Luberon is one of the safe havens in France for this rare and protected vulture. A true natural knacker, it is threatened by the decline of herds and the depletion of food resources. To ensure the survival of this species, the Luberon Park ensures the supply of several feeding stations and has set up a specific device for monitoring, observation and conservation management.

Attribution : ©David Tatin

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### Mourre Nègre (J)

The Aiguebrun river, which originates from the Claparèdes plateau, has carved the Luberon mountain range, from north to south, digging the Lourmarin valley. It separates the Grand Luberon, with its rounded shapes culminating in Mourre Negro, from the Petit Luberon of which limestone summit plateau bears the Cedar Forest.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

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### The Portalas viewpoint (K)

This viewpoint offers a wonderful view of the south side of the Petit Luberon and its maze of valleys and then on the vast plain of the Durance. 200 000 years ago, this river was a stream that ran through the Lamanon threshold to go into the sea, building its delta at the current location of the Crau plain.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

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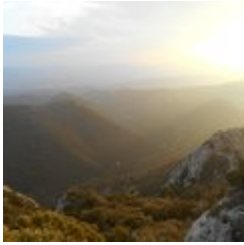


### From Matorral (shrubland) to Phoenician juniper (L)

The Phoenician juniper (*Juniperus phoenicea*) is a small conifer tree somewhat resembling the cypress because of its scaled leaves. Specialist of exposed rocky areas: walls, ledges, viewpoints... its inaccessibility sometimes allows it to live many centuries away from the hand of man and plant competition! In Portalas, it forms a beautiful "matorral", a term used in ecology referring to an open formation of trees and evergreen shrubs.

Attribution : ©Eric Garnier - PNR Luberon

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### Arch of Portalas (M)

Nature and especially the work of water have shaped this magnificent arch! The Portalas Arch corresponds to an ancient underground network that erosion uncovered. This paleo-network was also dug by rainwater, which has slowly dissolved the limestone by seeping in the subsoil.

Attribution : ©Marie Grenouilleau - PNR Luberon

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### The forest exploited by man (N)

Strong and fragrant, naturally weather-resistant, cedar wood is valued since ancient times. Here, the communal cedar forests of Ménerbes, Lacoste and Bonnieux are managed by the National Forestry Office (300ha). They are exploited regularly by thinnings which produces lumber, while ensuring the renewal of the forest. Cedar is used locally for carpentry and construction.

Attribution : ©Philippe Chiffolleau - 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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