

WALKS



**Laroque
des Albères**





The map printed here does not replace the topographical one IGN 2539 OT, Banyuls to Col de Perthus. It is strongly recommended to purchase this map.

YOUR SAFETY

You must be well prepared for every walk that you do in the Alberes Massif. Knowledge of the weather forecast is vital and you will find both the daily weather forecast and fire risk briefing at the Tourism Office.

BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE

Carefully choose your footwear for the walk that you intend. Avoid tennis shoes, basketball boots and espadrilles, as the soles are too smooth and there is a great danger of slipping if you wear them, especially on wet rocks and in damp vegetation. Always take a rucksack with you daily requirements of food and water and additionally protective clothing (headgear, sunglasses, sunblock etc) even for half a day's outing. A first aid kit is advisable.

DURING YOUR WALK

Never leave on your own without hill walking knowledge and ensuring that you are physically fit. Take a guide or a companion versed in hillwalking. If leaving in the morning during summer, go early as the air is fresher. Walk at a steady pace. Take regular rests on the way. Eat and drink at regular intervals.

Beware of drinking water from springs or rivers; check with the Tourist Office.

Keep to the marked pathways. If you get lost, retrace your steps and find the correct way. The markers on the hills are there to guide you; therefore never remove or alter them even if they appear not to be markers. (odd stones, empty barrels, stakes etc.).



FIRE RISK

In this part of the world it is a severe problem; therefore:

Never light a fire in the forest or use a portable heater.

Do not smoke. Do not throw away matches or cigarette ends.

Do not camp outside areas that are not designated as such by forest Officials.

If you spot a fire, ring the Fire Service on 18 or 112.

RESPECT THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

Admire the flowers but do not pick them; they form part of our natural heritage. They are for other walkers to admire as well and remember that some species of plants could be close to extinction.

TAKE HOME YOUR RUBBISH

Take all your empty bottles and food containers and packaging back with you. Discarded rubbish pollutes the environment.

Dogs must be kept on a lead. They can seriously upset wild animals and flocks of farm animals if not kept well in check. Shut and secure gates behind you to avoid animals straying. Respect private property. Cabins and other shelters are kept especially for walkers and climbers if needed. Do not leave rubbish in them or cause breakages. Carefully close all doors and windows when leaving them.



A PATH FOR EVERYONE

The route to the Col de l'Ullot, which is planned by the National Forests' Office, allows access to forest areas by persons with reduced mobility and additionally allows them to enjoy the countryside in comfort and safety.

To use this route, take the metalled road D71 from Perthus. You take the path 300 metres after passing the Albère Chalet in the direction of "Pic de Néutols". The Chalet de l'Albère has toilets for handicapped persons.

The route goes along a forest track which has a small gradient for about 1200 metres. This allows one to see the forest, including the Laricio pines and goes through a beech wood which ends at an area giving an excellent view over the plain of Roussillon, the coastline and the Mediterranean. It is best to avoid this pathway during the time of the Tramontana wind.

All the equipment specific to handicapped persons on this route is for their use alone.

Common Departure point for all Walks

This section refers to all walks except for "Les Cabanes du Mataport" (The Mataport cabins).

From the Tourism Office, Walkers' Centre, return to the church at the old village. With your back to the church door, go up the "Rue de l'Église" and at the end, take the footpath with a small stream on the left: this footpath leaves the village. On the right hand is the old windmill - "Moulin de la Pave". Shortly you come to fine shady spring - "Fontaine des Oiseaux".

The footpath then goes uphill following a half-buried pipe. Arriving at a fork, go right and immediately on the right will be a small reservoir at the end of which is a crossroads with a signpost.

Take the path towards "Dolmen-Pic Neulus - Col de L'Ullat". To the left of the footpath is a small watering canal that you follow until you arrive at a main pathway crossroads where you can hear the river below.

Two Fountains Walk

Rated: Easy.
Climb: 400 metres.
Duration: 2 hours 40 mins without stopping.
Follow: Route No. 5

Noteworthy Points: The springs of Laroque des Albères. The spring of "The Simiots" ... these mythical beasts had a bad reputation for taking infants from the village and they lived near this spring after being chased away from Arles-sur-Tech. Secondly the "Fountain of Vernosa". From this well conserved spring you have a superb view over the Roussillon Plain.

To take this walk, follow the "Common departure Point" (from the church and to the main pathway crossroads), then take the right hand path which goes down to the river. Take the ford over the river which goes uphill becoming a small tarred road. Here there is a signpost; go left following the sign "Les 2 Fontaines". There is private property close by; please do not encroach it. The tarred way peters out and the path twists and climbs until you reach the 4th marking post; here, follow the yellow markers. On coming to an intersection, take the path to the right and continue straight ahead to the "Font dels Simiots".

Leaving this spring, turn off the path and take the one marked on a sign saying "Les 2 Fontaines". This pathway goes South East and follows a cliff face where you get a magnificent view of the plain and the sea.

At the next intersection, take the path ahead marked "Fontaine de la Vernosa". Continuing on this path, you come to an opening where is a shaded picnic spot just above. There is a signpost "Point d'eau"; go down the path for 10 metres to the freshwater spring — "Font de la Vernosa".

Leaving the spring, go downhill towards the plain and take the small path on the righthand which continues downwards. You come to an intersection which you crossed coming up; take the one which has several turns and becomes a small tarred road. To the left are the ruins of the "Chapelle de Roca Vella". Continue on towards the village until you reach the chapel of "Saint Sebastia" which has recently been restored. Go right immediately past the Chapel and take the "Chemin de la Florentine" which takes you through well maintained allotments to the old village. Cross the metal bridge and turning left and then right up the slope; continue on a further 150 metres to the church.

Roc del Grevol et Pic d'Orella

Rated: Difficult.
Climb: 900 metres.
Duration: 5 hours, without stops.
Follow: Route No. 11.

Follow the "Common departure Point" from the church and to the main pathway crossroads.

Take the path on the right that leads down to the river; cross by the ford then the path climbs to reach a small tarred road. There are signposts; take the route indicated — "Pic d'Orella". Please keep clear of private property. After 50m the tarred road disappears and you follow the route which goes upwards with several bends until you reach the 4th hairpin bend. At the track intersection on a hairpin bend, follow the track to the left marked (DFFC1 AL 11) and continue for 150m. You come across a track on the right; this is marked in yellow. Follow it upwards through a small rocky valley until you come to the top; here the views of the sea and plain are unrestricted and beautiful.

Trail intersection. Take the path that takes you to the top of "Le Roc del Grèvol" and ignore the path to the left which is signposted "Fontaine de la Vernosa". The path continues upward, often with steep sections.

"Gros Rocher — Roc del Grèvol". (902m). This gives a good view over the plain. Having left the "Roc", the track meets up with a larger trail, which must be crossed to lead up to the "Puig d'Orella" at 1030m. Once again superb view over the plain. Now descend from the summit in a South Easterly direction towards the "Col de l'Ullat".

At the "Col" there is a picnic area and a small chalet. From this summit descend in an Easterly direction to Laroque and follow a small metalled road to a spring situated just below it. This is the "Fontaine Reina de las Fonts". The path marked in yellow returns to Laroque from the spring and goes rapidly downhill through beech woods, crosses a ravine and continues down through chestnut trees. The descent takes you down through 4 forested areas. The pathway then comes close to the river Vèze which you cross by the ford; it then passes by an ice pit and continues to descend where it crosses the river named "Correc de les Teixoneres".

The way down now goes through a narrow passage between two rocks where shepherds used to count their animals. A few metres further on you come to a crossroads; here carry on straight ahead. Leave the right hand track, marked in yellow and take the left path downhill. You come to the main paths' junction, where you started. Take the route back to the church.

La Balma del Moro (Dolmen)

Rated: Medium.
Climb: 500 m.
Duration: 4 hours, without stops.
Follow: Route No. 8.

Points of interest: "La Balma del Moro" is one of 60 Dolmens in the Albères Massif; it is a mass burial Dolmen, about 4000 years old and in a particularly good state of preservation. It is a "Corridor" Dolmen and was used between the period of 2500 to 1800 AD. This was during the "Copper Age", immediately prior to the Iron Age.

Follow the "Common departure Point" from the church and to the main pathway crossroads.

Take the path to the left; note the wood boundary marker which is coloured blue and white. The path ascends through low vegetation and the route markers are yellow.

At the intersection, take the route which goes ahead and to the right, continuing to follow the yellow markers.

You come to a new pathway intersection; here, there is a stone marked with yellow writing - take the path to the left. Eventually the pathway comes out onto a larger track - go up this track, keeping to the right hand side and after about 200 m you will come across an old ruined farmhouse on the left. After this ruined building, come off the track and take the pathway to the left.

You come to a pathway intersection: go to the left and after a short distance you come to an enclosure. The route becomes very gullied and you come to a path crossing. To the right there is an enclosure and a metal gate; to the left a pathway marked with a yellow cross. The path to take is straight ahead. This path climbs steeply under chestnut trees; keep following the yellow markers (you will pass a black plastic pipe on the way). The pathway levels out bringing you to an intersection with a signpost. Take the left hand route which ascends and a few metres further on you come to a fork; take the left hand path which takes you directly to the Dolmen on the crest.

The Dolmen itself

Behind it you will find you will find a small path leading to a good viewpoint. Retrace your steps to a signpost on the right hand, take the pathway on the left; this goes down gently through the forest. You cross a first gully where you will come across the "Fontaine Galdriq". Progress on the side of the gully and change over to another small valley; here the pathway rejoins an old route, covered with vegetation, leading to the stream (Correc de les Teixonerres). Cross this river and continue onwards passing the spring "D'en Pep" which is slightly above you. There is a fork; take the left path which rejoins a forest track which goes down to the right. This track crosses a ford over the "Correc de les Teixonerres". Continue on down towards the plain.

There is an intersection which leads to "Parraguères"; take the path to the left and continue downwards. After a right hand bend you come across the ruined farmhouse which you passed on the way up. 200m further on, come off the path and take a track to the left, marked in yellow, which goes down through vegetation. At a crossroads, take the right hand route. At a second crossroads, take the left fork. At the main crossroads, take the route to the Church in the opposite direction to the one on which you started out. Arrive at the Church or continue to the tourism office, if required.

Le Puig Neulos

Rated: Difficult.
Climb: 1100 metres.
Duration: 6 hours without stops.
Follow: Route No. 12.

Points of interest: "Le Puig Neulos" or "Pic Neoulos" is the highest point of the Albères massif. It is at 1256 m and marks the frontier between France and Spain. On the top you will see the stone obelisk which commemorates Manel, a well known shepherd of the Albères and which is in strong contrast with the modern TV relay station next to it. There is a superb view from here over the plain of Roussillon, bordered by the Mediterranean, with the Pyrenees and the Spanish plain of Ampurdán (Empordà).

Follow the common departure point from the Church door. At the main signposted crossroads, take the left route. Notice further on the wooden boundary marker in blue and white. The path has yellow markings and passes through low scrub, climbing all the time. You come to a new signpost; a stone on the ground has writing in yellow; take the path to the left.

The pathway comes out onto a track where you take the right hand route. After a further 200m you will come to an old ruined farmhouse on your left. Immediately after this ruin come off the track and take a path to the left. This route is through scrubland which becomes very gullied. At the next pathway intersection, take the left fork; the pathway runs alongside a fence and the route continues to be very gullied.

You come to a crossing of paths: to the right there is a fence and a small metal gate, to the left a route marked with a yellow cross. Take the path straight ahead. This path climbs steeply under chestnut trees; keep following the yellow markers (you will pass a black plastic pipe on the way). The pathway levels out bringing you to an intersection with a signpost. Take the left hand route which ascends and a few metres further on you come to a fork; go left to the Dolmen on the crest. From the Dolmen, the path climbs steeply and you come to an area of scrubland, then a beech wood before coming out onto a forest track. Cross over it and take in front of you a good path which leads off to the side; initially in a rocky area and then a beech wood before arriving at the "Col de la Vaca Vella" which is at 910m. A lovely area, where the crest separates the two valleys of Laroque and Sorède.

The upward path goes up the hillside through beech trees towards the "Col de l'Arriquet" which is at 1010 m and leads on to another forest track. Take this track on the right which leads you to an old orientation table. From here take the left hand path towards the "Pic Neulos".

Pic NEULOS (1256 m). Here, descend in a westerly direction, either by the tarred road or by the crest which follows the French / Spanish boarder; here you will come across a small gate on your left which gives access to the snow pits. There is a sign there in Catalan - "Pou de gel".

Go back up to the tarred road, and follow the sign for the GR 10, (which is a mountain route between Perthus and Banyul-sur-Mer). Take this road westerly and which goes along the crest in between the forest and descends to the "Col de l'Ullat", where there is a picnic area and a small auberge. From the crest, take the road North towards Laroque and you will come across a spring (Reina de las Fonts), situated below the road. This spring is the departure point for the way back to Laroque and which has yellow track markers. The path descends rapidly through beech woods and crosses several forest tracks before coming close to the Laroque river where you cross at a ford. It also comes close to some ice pits and continues to descend towards the village.

You come to a passage between two rocks where in the past, shepherds used the narrow passage to count their animals. A few metres further on you come to a pathway crossing; this you passed about 30 minutes after you left Laroque village behind on the way up. Follow the path down which you took coming up and you will soon arrive in the village.

Le Puits à Glace et Casot del Guardia

Rated: Easy.
Climb: 400 m.
Duration: 2h30 without stops.
Follow: Route No. 6 & 7

Points of Interest: There are several snow and ice pits in the Albers Massif. It is thought that their origins began at the end of the 16th. / beginning 17th. Centuries. In these high areas the snow heaped up in the pits and during hot summers people were able to have ice.

Start at the common departure point at the Church. At the main pathway crossroads take the left fork uphill. There is a blue and white coloured boundary marker. The yellow marked track goes upward through low vegetation until you come to an intersection; take the path to the right. You come to another intersection with yellow writing on a stone; take the path straight ahead. The path goes through a narrow passage between two rocks. This was used, in times past, by shepherds to count their animals. The yellow marked path continues slowly upwards and South; it goes around a cliff face where there is a good view of Laroque. It then crosses a first ravine and then a river (Correc de les Teixonerres) and continues upwards twisting and turning.

It continues along a well built stone wall, to the left, then you reach a signpost marked "PISTE". Continue straight ahead alongside this wall. Further on you come to a sign indicating a snow pit - "Puits à Glace" which is a few metres below. Go back on your tracks and continue on left; you come to the river again (Correc de les Teixonerres). Go across it and follow the path which turns to the left. 50 metres further on there is another signpost indicating to the right towards "Col de l'Ullat" and to the left "Casot del Guardia". Take the left path which leads to the "Casot", which is basically a stone refuge.

Close by is another crossing of paths. Crossing the concrete bridge, take the descending path which is orientated firstly North and then turns East. You are now changing valleys and have to cross another ford and continue the descent. A signpost indicates "Parraguèrres". Continue the descent by the path to the left. After a turn you come across two ruined farmhouses to the right and slightly below you. 200 m further on, come off the track and take the path to the left which is marked in yellow. This goes down through vegetation and loose stone ravine. You next come across an intersection you used coming up: continue going down to the right. At the next crossing of paths, go left. Coming to a further intersection, take the path down toward the village, which is now the original one that you took to come up the mountain. You finish at the Church.

Le Col de l'Ullat

Rated: Medium.
Climb: 800 m.
Duration: 4h30 without stops.
Follow: Route No. 9.

Points of Interest: Le Col de l'Ullat has a good climate all year round. It rarely has snow and is pleasantly fresh in summer. There are groups of Laricio pines and the scenery is continually changing.

Depart from the Church and continue to the small reservoir with the first signpost. Here, take the left path, passing a blue and white coloured wooden boundary post. The path has yellow markers and climbs slowly uphill to an intersection. There is a stone with yellow writing; take the path straight ahead. You go through a narrow passage between two rocks, where, many years before, the shepherds used this to count their animals. The way continues due South and keeps climbing. Going around a cliff face you have an excellent view of Laroque.

The path then crosses a first ravine and then a river (Correc de les Teixonerres) and continues upwards twisting and turning.

It continues along a well built stone wall, to the left, then you reach a signpost marked "PISTE". Continue straight ahead alongside this wall. Further on you come to a sign indicating a snow pit - "Puits à Glace" which is a few metres below.

Continue on the path until you come to a river: cross it and 50 m further on you come to a signpost. Take the right hand path which leads you to a forest track. Take this track to the right for about fifteen metres where you come off the track and take a path to the left.

There is a yellow arrow marker; the path goes straight up through the beech woods and at the next intersection with a large track, on the left you rejoin the forest path. Stay on the path which goes straight ahead and which turns through many bends and continues to climb. The pathway leads to a track that it joins on a hairpin bend. Take the track that leaves opposite, on the bend and it continues up the hillside among rocks.

At a fork in the path, take the left one which climbs sharply and brings you to a forest track. Cross it and take the path opposite you which also climbs steeply ahead. You reach another forest track. Cross over it and follow the path which climbs more regularly and is still marked in yellow.

You come to a small ravine which you have to cross; this slowly climbs through the pines. You will reach a spring - "Fontaine Reina de las Fonts". It is just below you by a tarred road with a picnic area. Follow the road to the right to reach the "Col de l'Ullat". There is a refuge hut here and the area is well known for barbeques and relaxation.

Return by the same route to Laroque.

Cabanes de Mataporce

Rated: Easy.

Duration: 3h.

Follow: Route No. 4

Points of interest. These are old refuges for the shepherds who once kept their flocks on the Albères Massif.

At the Church take the rue de L'Eglise which ends in a pathway up to the old mill (**Moulin de Pavé**). Follow the path upwards to a spring (**Fontaine des Oiseaux**). The pathway then climbs upwards following a partly buried water pipe. This leads you to a small reservoir on the right hand and also to a signpost. Take the path indicated "Cabanes" which goes to the left. You pass a "Mas" on your right and continue on the path; always to the left. A yellow marker on your left indicates a spring below you called — "**Fontaine Matzac**".

A few metres further on you come to a pathway crossing which continues to the **Col de l'Ullat**. It is to your right; take it. Follow this until a further path branches off to the left. Take this new path which passes a water tank on the right; this leads you after a few metres to a small wire fence which goes up into the undergrowth. Passing through an area of vegetation, you go through some small oaks and then along a fence which brings you to a high track. Go left, through a barrier, then immediately right and the path climbs steeply. Continuing on this path, high up on your left there is a yellow marker by a cross chiselled in a rock.

Cross a small stream and to your right you will see some terraces which are still worked and have been cultivated for some 60 years. A little below you, you leave a small path on your right hand and follow the next to the right also. Climb up slightly and turn right to place you in front of the two first refuges.

Retrace your steps a little way, taking the main pathway below that you have just left and turn to the right. A few metres further on, and to the left, a footpath goes down into the forest; take it.

You reach an old pig enclosure (Cortal). This is the 3rd. Refuge. Go around it and follow a descending path which is quite steep and which rejoins the path which cuts across. Take this path to the right and follow it to the 3rd. Refuge; then continue on this yellow marked pathway to the 4th. Refuge. You will see a little stone table and a small spring. Go up above the spring and follow the yellow path to the main route which you previously left to go down towards the pig enclosure (Cortal). Continue on until there is a track on your left; go through a barrier that you came through on the way up and follow this downhill track to the intersection with the way up to the **Col de l'Ullat**. Here you take the path to the right.

On the way down, you leave to the right the path that you took up. Continue downwards until you come to a path on your left; take this one and you finally come to your departure point.

Useful Dates

On Sunday, July 1st:
Festiv' Laroque,

the appointment of nature and hiking

On Friday, July 20th and Friday, August 10th :
Rally Walking

Every Thursday of the summer:
Guided tour of the village