

# The squirrel

Malepère - Rouffiac-d'Aude



## Useful information

Practice : By foot

Duration : 3 h

Length : 7.8 km

Trek ascent : 316 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Boucle

Themes : Flora

# Trek

**Departure** : ROUFFIAC - Allée des Maronniers

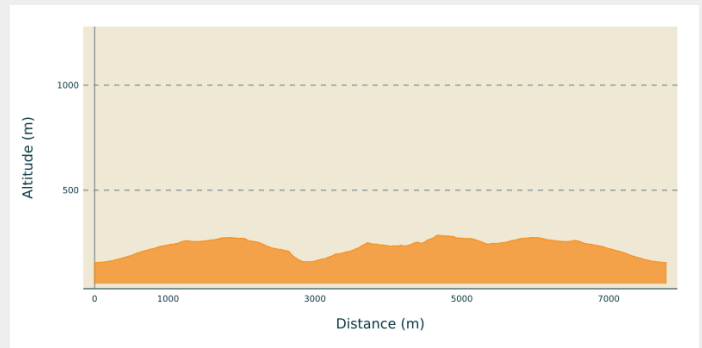
**Arrival** : ROUFFIAC - Allée des Maronniers

**Cities** : 1. Rouffiac-d'Aude

2. Montclar

3. Preixan

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 155 m Max elevation 286 m

## Signs : Yellow / Orange Squirrel

As you turn your back to the cemetery, turn left onto the “allée des marronniers” and then take the first right. Take the winding path to the mill. The view will reward you for your efforts.

In Rouffiac, a windmill dominated the village. Only the bottom part of the building remains, it is located after the last house on the right of the hill. On a promontory, it is easy to understand that this windy spot was perfectly suitable. Called "Ratataou Mill", its name comes from the miller who was thrown several metres by the blades that had caught him.

The path carries on along a ridge in the undergrowth. Follow the signs, that will tell you a little further on , to turn left. The path begins its descent slowly. On the edges many holm oaks grow, junipers, some pines and arbutus trees whose orange-red fruits are used to make jam. The pink flowers with six petals and a yellow-orange centre are called "white rockrose", a botanical mystery!

In wet weather, wild boar tracks are visible as well as badger tracks, easily recognisable by their claw marks. At the end of the descent by a steep slope, you will arrive on a plot of land with an arboretum created by the children of the village primary school. Here you will find a stream called "Le Rec Grand".

On your left, the section of the large slope gives you an example of sedimentation, a reflection of the Malepère massif. A small bridge invites you to go towards a waterfall, do not miss this detour! The waterhole, the plants and animals (newts) that occupy this place are adapted to cool, damp environments. Ferns, bamboo and poplars are the most easily observed.

On returning to the bridge, turn left and take the second path which gradually climbs into undergrowth covered with oak leaves offering a remarkable view.

As you climb, on your right, a barrier below, the site of an old tile oven. These ovens, of which there are many on the massif, fired the tiles which were shaped on the thigh, giving them a particular form. The colour was determined by the position of the tiles in the oven. Further up, the signs will lead you to turn left to take a small path. The scent of broom, privet and honeysuckle will follow you through the seasons.

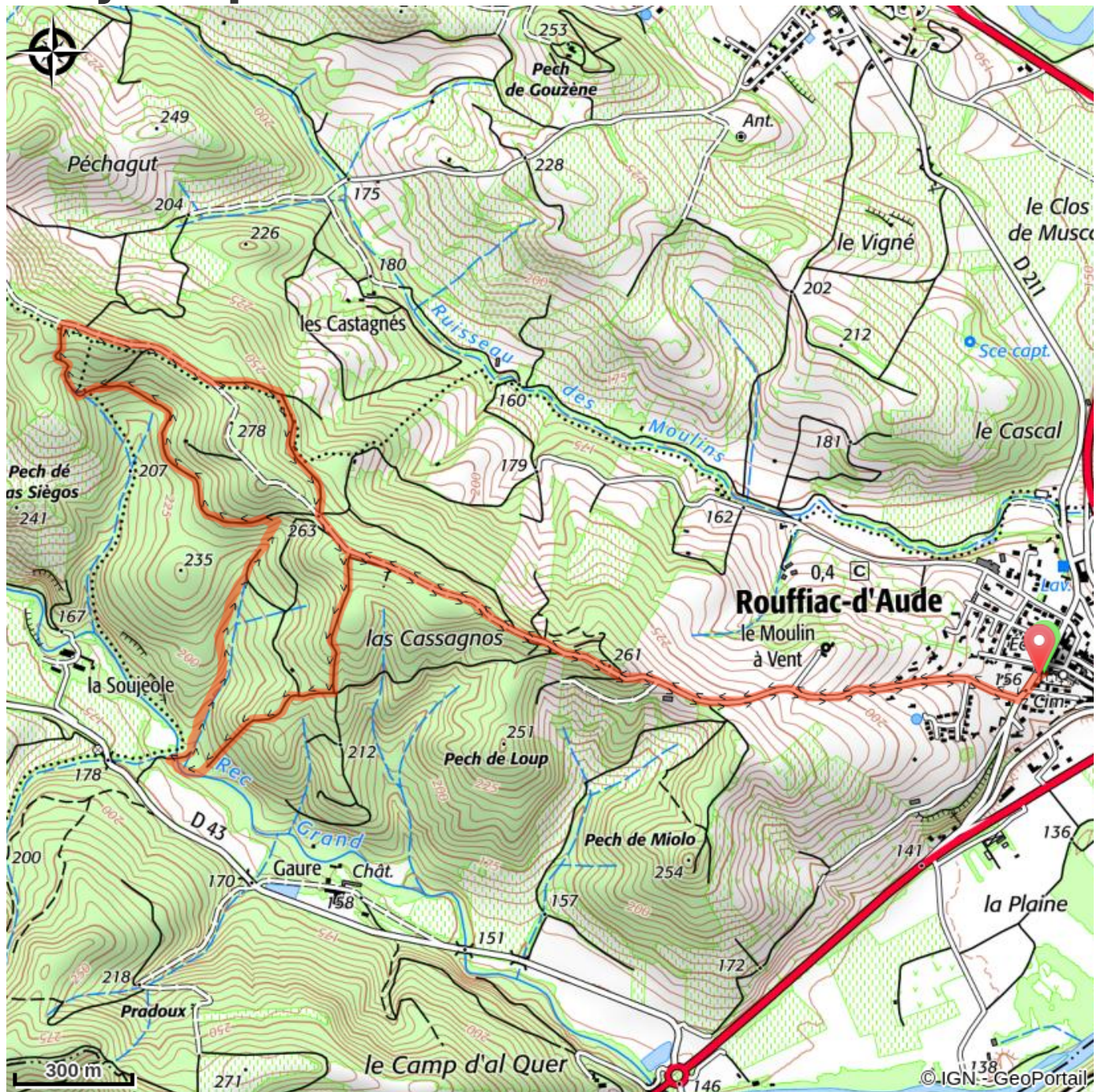
The grass on the other hand will remind you of the smell of tar. Just crumple up a leaf of this plant and smell it.

Sarsaparilla, whose berries are the exclusive food of the famous "Smurfs" and whose leaves are heart-shaped, grows along the path together with fragon (small holly, dark green leaves with a prickly tip).

When you reach the ridge line, turn right and then a little further on, in the middle of a small square, a magnificent holm oak (Auzina in Occitan), go down on your left. You will pass behind a wooden shed and when you come to the crossroads, go straight ahead on the ridge line.

The path goes up slightly but, on the way, back you will enjoy not only the descent but also the landscape.

# On your path...



# All useful information

## **Advices**

Respectez le lieu et ne laissez trace de votre passage.

## **How to come ?**

### Access

Cette balade familiale peut aussi être abordée par Montclar, au-dessus de la salle ou par Rouffiac, chemin du Moulin.