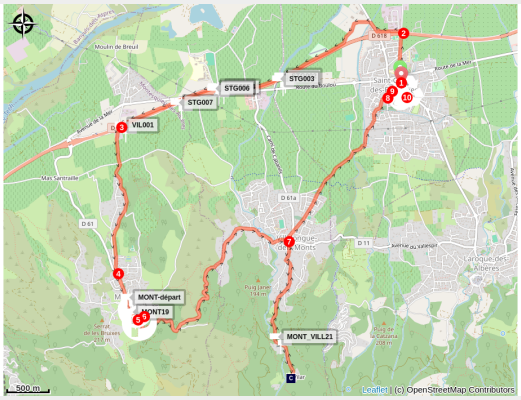
"The Albères loop" Rediscovered Heritage

Albères



(Elisabeth Coste)



A local mobilization to help the architectural heritage.

A short itinerary, yet rich in heritage discoveries!
From the Romanesque cloister of Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines to the Château of Montesquieu, passing by the priory of Santa Maria del Vilar, this route combines charming narrow streets, scenic balconies overlooking the Albères, and remarkable historical treasures.

Useful information

Practice : Cycling

Duration : 2 h

Length : 17.3 km

Trek ascent : 349 m

Difficulty : Medium

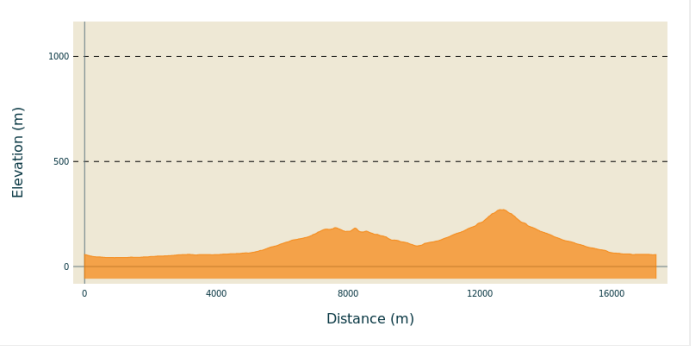
Type : Boucle

Themes : Flora, Plaine, Architecture, Histoire, Artisanat, Patrimoine

Trek

Departure : The cloister of Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines
Arrival : The cloister of Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines
Cities : 1. ST GENIS DES FONTAINES
2. VILLELONGUE DELS MONTS
3. MONTESQUIEU DES ALBERES

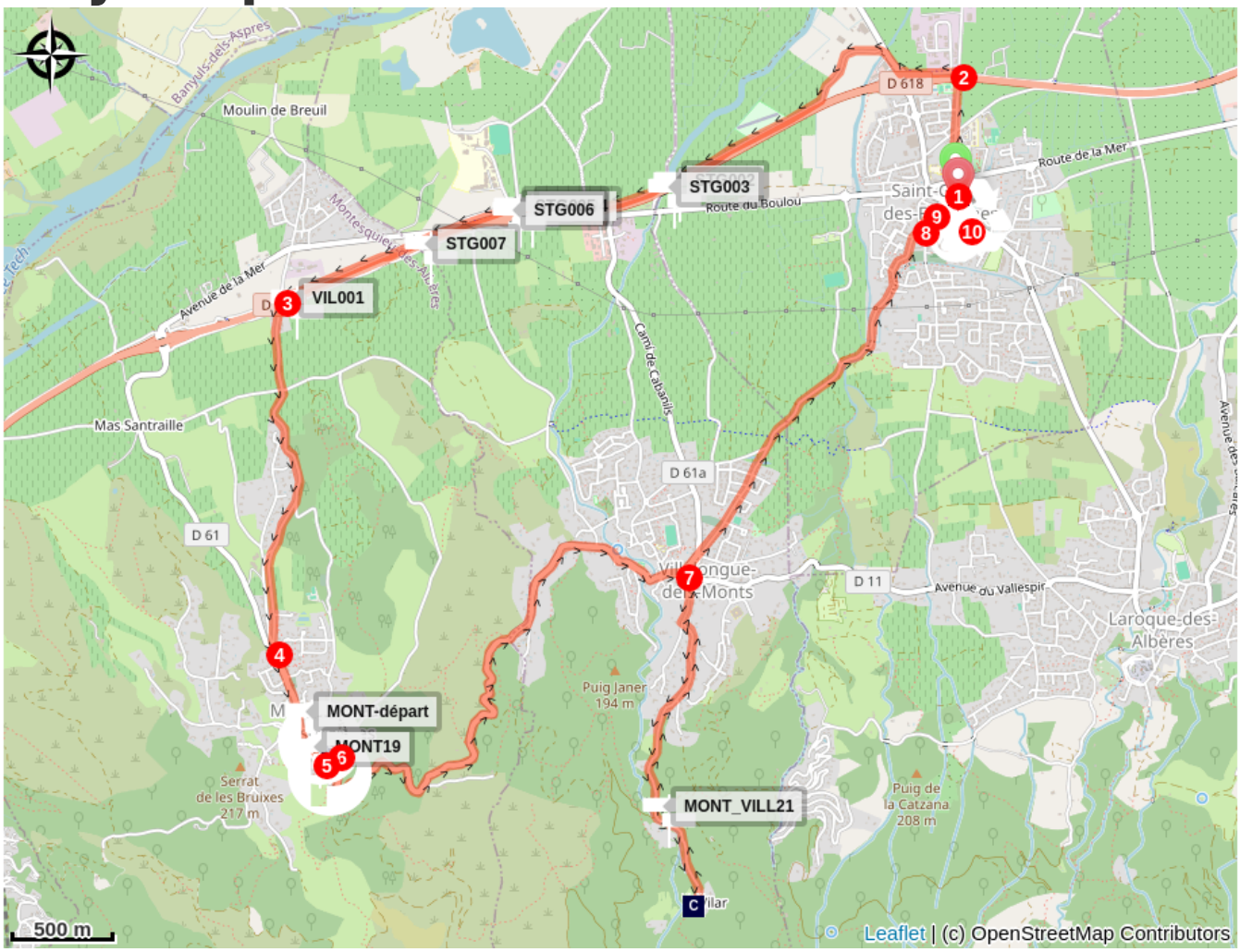
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 42 m Max elevation 271 m

1. Upon leaving the cloister, head towards the gendarmerie on Allée des Moines. Continue along the street, pass under the highway, and turn left onto Avenue de la Tuilerie.
2. At the roundabout, turn right towards Brouilla, then immediately after the bridge, turn left to join the bike route. Follow it in the direction of Le Boulou.
3. Pass Lycée Sauvy and continue on the bike route towards Montesquieu. Upon arriving in Montesquieu at the stop sign, leave the bike route and turn left onto Rue Longue, passing under the departmental road bridge.
4. Cross the EV8 and continue towards Montesquieu Centre.
5. Go straight ahead until you reach Place de l’Houm, located on the heights of the village. For a magnificent view, climb up to the bell tower.
6. Resume the D11 towards Villelongue-dels-Monts. Visit the Santa Maria del Vilar Priory, an exceptional site nestled in greenery.
7. Descend onto Avinguda Albères, then take the second right onto Cami de l’Agullo to return to Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines. At the stop sign, continue straight ahead.
8. Rejoin the bike route against the one-way traffic. Continue until the water tower. After the stop, turn left onto Rue Pasteur.
9. After passing the medical center, turn right onto Rue des Jardins and follow the EV8 signs towards Argelès-sur-Mer.
10. At the end of the street, turn left, then left again to reach the cloister parking lot 100 meters ahead on the right.

On your path...



Cloister of Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines (A)

Castle of Montesquieu (B)

Priory Santa Maria del Vilar (C)

All useful information

⚠ Advices

Plan for snacks and hydration. Make sure to follow the traffic rules. This route takes place on small shared roads. Wearing a helmet is mandatory for children and recommended for adults.

How to come ?

Transports

Bus à 2€

Access

D618,

Advised parking

Jean Rolland Square Parking

On your path...



Cloister of Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines (A)

The cloister of Saint Genis des Fontaines was built in the 13th century. Its specificity is characterized by the polychromy of its marbles: the white of Céret, the pink of Villefranche de Conflent and the black of Baixais. With the old theme of flora and fauna, the art of Saint Genis combines new ones drawn from the local environment (turtle, frog ...). See also the famous lintel in white marble in front of the church. It is the first Romanesque sculpture dated in stone (1019-1020). The date of realization is indicated in the two lines in Latin which appear there. The Saint Michel church is to be discovered during the visit with its interior treasures. Indeed, it houses altarpieces ranging from the XVIth to the XIXth century, a pre-Romanesque font and the Carolingian altar table of the primitive church.
Monthly exhibitions are organized at the "Galerie des deux clochers" (upper ambulatory above the Cloister).

Attribution : Frédéric Hédelin



Castle of Montesquieu (B)

Feudal castle built by the lords of Sant Cristau, who then took the name of Montesquieu, dates back to 1080. The central dungeon houses the former home of the lord which was later backed a vaulted room which was the subject of a restoration. The enclosure wall to protect the whole measures nearly 12 meters high. A breathtaking view awaits you!

Attribution : Mairie Montesquieu-des-Albères



Priory Santa Maria del Vilar (C)

Nestled in the heart of Albères, priory Santa Maria del Vilar crosses the ages. Founded in 1083, monks transformed the building from the Carolingian era into a hospitable pilgrim for Compostela and added a church. In 1802, the place changes completely function since it is sold to a farmer who transforms the church into a stable. Abandoned in 1942, it disappears gradually under the vegetation but has now been restored and hosts opera concerts.

Attribution : CCACVI