

THE CÉVENNES NATIONAL PARK

THE RIGHT DESTINATION!

46 discovery trails; 244 circuits on foo by mountain-bike or on horseback; **22** sites to tempt you; events; accommodation and more.

Organise your stay and excursions at

www.destination.cevennes-parcnational.fr





France's national parks are natural areas that are protected because of their heritage value; their acknowledged status as "exceptional territories" has made them famous in France and internationally

They consist of two zones:

I the central zone, which is subject to specific regulations; and **I the membership zone,** which consists of municipalities that have chosen to adhere to the national park's charter and whose inhabitants the park supports in respectfully developing the area and enhancing its resources.



The Cévennes National Park is one of 11 French national parks, along with the Vanoise, Port-Cros, Ecrins, Mercantour, Pyrenees, Guadeloupe, Réunion, French Guyana, Calanques, and Forests National Parks.

The national parks are managed by a public body that is answerable to the Ministry of Ecological Transition. Their territorial project is drawn up together with local actors and set out in a charter that applies to both the central and the

The missions of a national park

It has three missions:

I knowing and protecting:

Identifying and monitoring fauna and flora, reintroducing species (such as the bearded vulture), monitoring and surveying the territory and local adherence to the re-

I receiving visitors and raising awareness:

Visitor reception and events, events in schools, discovery trails, highlighting heritage, publications, exhibitions and more.

accompanying the territory's sustainable development

supporting sustainable tourism, responsible farming, the sustainable management of forests, accompanying local and regional authorities, etc.

France's national parks, areas in which one can discover the great outdoors and revitalise oneself, attract over 8 million visitors a







▶ Fauna

2,410 animal species

A unique place for nature watching

The exceptional diversity of natural environments (forest, heath, steppe and short-grass prairies, wetlands, etc.) encourages the presence of a varied fauna that ranges from the discreet but fabulous world of insects to the more spectacular one of vertebrates.

2.410 animal species have been inventoried, including **45% of France's vertebrates** and two-thirds of its mammals (20 species of bats, over 200 bird species and 1,824 insect species, such as the magnificent and emblematic short-tailed bull bush cricket).

The area is home to **many endangered birds of prey**: the bald eagle, shorttoed snake eagle, peregrine falcon, Eurasian eagle-owl, boreal owl and others. It is also a special site for the griffon, cinereous, Egyptian and bearded vultures



The Cévennes National Park



The Cévennes National Park is situated in the southern Massif Central, in the departments of Lozère, Gard and Ardèche.

It consists of five geographical entities: the Mont Aigoual massif; the Méjean and Sauveterre Causses, including the Tarn and Jonte gorges; Mont Lozère; the Cevenol valleys; and the Cevenol piedmont.

The strongly contrasting climate, altitude and geology of each massif have influenced its landscape, architecture, human settlement and human activities as well as its vegetation and fauna.

A further particularity of the National Park is that it has a considerable population, including in the central zone, which is thus also home to permanent human activity.

The National Park's history

The idea of protecting the scenery of the Causses and Cévennes first appeared in the late 19th century. The famous speleologist E.A. Martel and the Club Cévenol were the first to talk of a "national park", in 1913.

In the 1950s, the idea of creating a national park was supported by local actors as the means of keeping the area alive, preserving Cevenol culture, identity and heritage, and addressing the major problem of the era: the rural exodus.

A framework law on national parks was passed in 1960, and the Cévennes National Park was established on 2 September 1970.

An internationally recognised, exceptional territory

The National Park's breath-taking scenery, the sheer number and diversity of sites, the abundance of springs, its large open or forested spaces and the equi**librium between humans and nature** have been rewarded by its designation as a UNESCO biosphere (1985) and its addition to the UNESCO World Heritage List for its living agropastoral landscapes ("Causses and Cévennes – Mediterranean agropastoral cultural landscape" - 2011).

The National Park's exceptional nocturnal environment has seen it become Europe's largest Dark Sky Reserve and one of the four largest in the world (IDSR - 2018).









▶ Flora

2,350 flowering plants

From the Artic Circle to the Tropics... The local flora is very diverse (11,000 species including 2,350 flowering ones). Of the 430 protected French flowering species, 40 can be found here (spring pheasant's eye, gagea, rockroses, orchids).

The range of vegetation is extremely wide: the subalpine short-grass prairies of Mont Lozère shelter some species that are more typical of the Arctic Circle (bog-sedge) or of mountains (spring pasqueflower), while the very warm rocky shelters of the Mediterranean Cevenol valleys are host to some species found in dry subtropical environments (Southern maidenhair fern).

The plant communities associated with holm oak (warm and dry climate) offer a **striking contrast** to the beech-fir forest that occurs naturally at altitude on north-facing slopes (cold and wet climate).





Date created: 2 September 1970

Total surface area: 3,120 sq km

Central zone surface area: 937 sq km

Central zone: Lozère (82%), Gard (18%)

Membership area: Lozère (43%), Gard (54%), Ardèche (3%)

Number of member municipalities: 114, of which 39 are partly in the central zone

Number of inhabitants in the membership area: 71,290 (Insee study - January 2017)

Minimum/maximum altitude: 101 m (Berrias) / 1,699 m (Finiels, Mont Lozère)



The National Park's central zone is situated on both sides of the Atlantic/ **Mediterranean watershed** in the southern Massif Central and consists of distinct geographical entities.

The limestone plateaux of the Méjean and Sauveterre Causses, which belong to the ensemble of the Grands Causses and are delimited by the Tarn and Jonte gorges, have an Atlantic climate (sheep farming and endurance-horse farming).

The schist Cévennes, which have a Mediterranean climate at lower altitudes: ▶ Mont Lozère, granite (cattle farming and sheep transhumance);

- **the Bougès massif, granite and schist,** wooded on its north-facing slopes (forestry, sheep and cattle farming);
- **the Gardon valleys,** southern, **schist** (chestnut orchards, sheep and goat farming, beekeeping, etc.).

I to the southwest

the Aigoual and Lingas massifs, schist and granite, very wooded (forestry, sheep and cattle transhumance).



Water

5,630 km of waterways

The Tarn, Lot, Gardon, Cèze, Chassezac and Hérault rivers have their spring in the Cévennes National Park.

The National Park's territory is crossed by the Atlantic/Mediterranean watershed,

which shapes the landscapes and climate.

The more than 2,000 wetlands (peatbogs, wet meadow, etc.) and 5,630 km of waterways, of which 1,605 km are in the Park's central zone, are home to a significant biodiversity with many emblematic species, such as the whiteclawed crayfish, otter, beaver and southern burbot.



Forest



2,000 sq km of forest

From 1970 to 2010, the forest cover of the National Park's central zone increased from 48% to 62% (70% of the Park as a whole). It stood at 16% in the second

Today, more than 2,000 sq km of forest cover the Park's territory, composed of 53% of deciduous trees (chestnut, beech), 26% resinous trees (fir, Scots and Austrian pine, spruce, etc.) and 21% mixed stands. Three-quarters are species native to the region and one-quarter are introduced resinous species.

These species populate the territory **in three stories**: holm oak (up to 500 m in altitude), deciduous oak and chestnut (500 – 900m) and beech-fir (900 – 1,500m).

The central zone of the Cévennes National Park contains the greatest concentration of assets that have forged its character.

For millennia, these partly hostile and arid lands and climates have received visitors who have had no choice but to adapt. This union between humans and nature has given rise to an ecological **equilibrium** that is both diverse and

Locals have successively marked the landscape by their presence, beliefs and economic activities: standing stones and chamber tombs, religious edifices, chestnut orchards, drovers' roads, slopes fashioned into terraces, and a ver-

nacular architecture whose very specific styles depend on the type of bedrock (granite, limestone, schist, etc.).



Agropastoralism has left the strongest mark on the territory. The Causses and Cévennes preserve much evidence of the evolution of local pastoral societies: built heritage, drovers' roads, hydraulic systems, etc. Agropastoralism may be thousands of years old, but it is still the main agricultural activity within the National Park, which is a seasonal home to some **20,000 sheep** on its approximately 6,000 hectares of collective summer pastures



The area's history also derives from the **spirit of resistance** and identity, which was notably forged during the ong and tragic period of repression of ne Protestant religion. Many sites (Le Pont-de-Montvert, Plan de Fontmort, e zones. Find out where! Can de l'Hospi¬talet, Bougès, the 'King's" roads including the Corniche des Cévennes) remain to this day places www.cevennes-parcnational.fr/Le-Parc/Reglementation of historical interest linked to the epic struggle of the Camisards.

Discovering the National Park

3,400 km of waymarked paths



Including 1,200 km in the central zone

62 mountain-biking circuits on dirt tracks

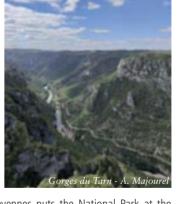
61 trails routes 26 road-biking circuits

46 discovery trails

Outdoor activities

On foot, on horseback, by bike, with a donkey, on skis or as a trail runner, you can appreciate the **beauty of the** scenery, absorb the spirit of the **area** and, above all, meet locals who like to share their culture.

In each season, the great diversity of reliefs, vegetation and climate will allow you to engage in many activities that respect the environ-



The geographical location of the Cévennes puts the National Park at the crossroads of a dense network of long-distance hiking trails taking several days, including seven major long-distance routes:

- ▶ the Stevenson trail (252 km) GR® 70
- ▶ the Urban V trail (329 km) GR® 670
- ▶ the Régordane (245 km) GR® 700 ▶ the St-Guilhem trail (240 km)
- **the GR® 7** (1 471 km)
- ▶ the GR® 736 Tarn gorge & valley (240 km)
- the crossing of the Massif Central by mountain-bike (1400 km)

Two outdoor centres (Mont Aigoual and Mont Lozère) are located in the National Park's central zone and offer a range of activities on the different Cevenol massifs (mountain-biking and horse-riding circuits, via ferrata, bicycle touring, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and more).

Esprit Parc National

Espuit In the Cévennes National Park, **279** products and services created by **153** men and women committed to **preserving** and promoting our territory are labelled Esprit Parc Na-

tional. Market gardeners, producers, accommodation providers, restaurant owners, holiday organisers and others have their heart set on offering you an eco-responsible way of discovering our region! Find them on our Destination site or at www.espritparcnational.com

The regulations in the central zone of the Cévennes National Park

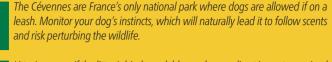
The Cévennes National Park can be freely accessed by all; it is also an exceptional area and, as such, **is protected by specific regulations** that apply in its



s must not be lit, so as to avoid the risks of forest fires, soil degradation and



dator by both wild and domestic animals. Overflights below 1,000 m in alude are prohibited without prior authorisation.



nd risk perturbing the wildlife. tering, even if the litter is biodegradable, can have a direct impact on animal

plant species, such as causing poisoning or injuries. Please take your waste



night, nature belongs to the local wildlife. Campervans, mobile homes and nping are strictly regulated and prohibited in the central zone outside of de-



peaceful experience in the great outdoors. ou may drive motorised vehicles on departmental and national roads as well



ikers without motor vehicles may bivouac overnight near the GR® they are hig on (no consecutive nights). NB. This is not allowed in certain particularly sen-

The museums, sites and discovery trails

A network of museums, sites and trails extends over the territory and offers the

There are six museums in the National Park: Le Climatographe - Observatoire du Mont Aigoual (Val d'Aigoual), Maison rouge (Saint-Jean du Gard), Musée Cévenol (Le Vigan), Musée du Désert [Huguenot museum] (Mialet), Biosphera (Cendras) and Musée de la soie (Saint-Hyppolite du Fort).

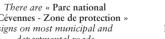
The Maisons du Parc and associated network of other information centres wel-

3 Maisons du tourisme et du Parc national des Cévennes (joint tourist office and National Park information centres)

Florac-Trois-Rivières, Génolhac and Val d'Aigoual (at the Col de la Serreyrède

rueis, Pont de Montvert, Vialas, Le Collet de Dèze, Saint-Germain de Calberte, Sainte-Croix-Vallée Française, Val d'Aigoual, Valleraugue, Saint-André-de-Valborgne, Lasalle, Ganges, Le Vigan, Anduze, Saint-Jean-du-Gard, Alès, Génolhac, Bessèges, Saint-Ambroix, Les Vans, Villefort, Le Bleymard, Bagnols-

How can I tell that I'm in the central zone?



There are « Bienvenue, vous entrez dans un territoire protégé. Respectez la réglementation, merci. » signs on tracks and paths





The central zone of the National Park is marked by road signs and, on paths, by markers. On IGN maps, the central zone is enclosed by a wide green line.

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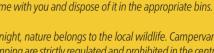


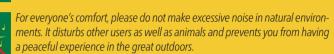


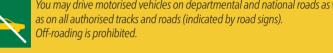




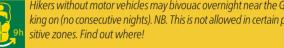












keys to understanding the local wealth of natural, cultural and scenic heritage.

Maisons du Parc information centres and associated touristinformation network (tourism offices, tourist sites, etc.)

come you and help you to (re)discover the attractions of the Cévennes National Park, local ecotourism, and the activities carried out by the public body that

26 public information centres Florac, Ispagnac, Sainte-Enimie, Meyrusis Port de Maria and Maria

des Cévennes - Zone de protection signs on most municipal and departmental roads

