

(On disk filename/dossier ref: Hounoux)

COMMUNITY OF COMMUNES
The Razès Hillsides

Hounoux Ridge footpath

Access routes:

Motorway A61: Take the BRAM exit, between Carcassonne and Castelnaudary, and follow signs for Fanjeaux. As you leave Fanjeaux at the top of the hill, follow D119 towards Mirepoix for 9kms. 8kms before Mirepoix turn left at St.Gauderic and follow signs for Hounoux.

Limoux: Take the Carcassonne road. At the junction by the sports stadium, turn left (D623) signposted to Castelnaudary and Belvèze. Turn off to Belvèze and follow signs to Bellegarde-du-Razès. When you approach Bellegarde, take the 2nd turning on the right after the small bridge, and follow signposts to Hounoux.

Carcassonne: Take the Montréal road. At Montréal follow signs for Mirepoix and Fanjeaux. As you leave Fanjeaux at the top of the hill, follow D119 towards Mirepoix for 9kms. 8kms before Mirepoix turn left at St.Gauderic and follow signs for Hounoux.

Mirepoix: Take the Carcassonne/Fanjeaux road (D673). 8kms from Mirepoix turn right at St.Gauderic and follow signposts for Hounoux.

Castelnaudary: Take the Limoux road. After Villasavary, follow signs for Fanjeaux at the roundabout. As you leave Fanjeaux at the top of the hill, follow D119 towards Mirepoix for 9kms. 8kms before Mirepoix turn left at St.Gauderic and follow signs for Hounoux.

Useful Information

Footpath (on its own)

Duration: 2 hrs

Distance: 8kms

Height variation: 100metres

Difficulty: None

Variant (can be added)

Duration: 2 hrs

Distance: 7kms

Height variation: 100metres

Difficulty: None

Waymarkers: Yellow lines.

Red & white lines on the GR7

IGN Maps: 1/25000

2246 Montréal East

Drinking water is available in the courtyard in front of the Hounoux Mairie

Further information:

Community of Communes

The Razès Hillsides

04 68 69 55 32

(Hounoux – verso/p2)

This walk around the village offers you the opportunity to admire the magnificent countryside from the Pyrenees to the Black Mountain, from the Lauragais Plain to the Low Razès.

The tops of the ridge offer a high level view down onto gently undulating countryside, in the midst of which stands out the characteristic architecture of the circular villages, the Malepère vineyards and a patchwork of woods, meadows and expanses of water.

The route follows part of the GR7. It leads along the top of the ridge that forms the watershed, with water one side flowing into the Mediterranean and the other side flowing into the Atlantic. This particular geographic feature leads to a bringing together of two climatic varieties, both influenced by the proximity of the Pyrenees, resulting in an exceptional variety of flora and fauna.

Among the botanical riches, 33 species of orchid rub shoulders with thyme, heather and broom, as well as many varieties of oak, certain hybrids of which grow alongside maritime pines, fir and beech trees. Because of this, the local birdlife is also quite outstanding. Amongst others, one can see hen-harriers, golden eagles, owls, song thrushes, a range of larks and finches as well as migratory birds which stop over in this area to feed and rest.

Description

(red & white markers – GR7)

Hounoux: Opposite the Church, go to the right and head for the Cross. At the foot of the slope, turn left. After the small bridge, take the ‘Cathar Way’ on your right, by a cross. Follow the ridge, ignoring tracks off to the right. At the foot of a slope, go to the right of a small hillock and follow the track as far as the ...

CD463. Take the track opposite. Go straight ahead once you reach the climb. At the top, turn left to follow the ridge. On reaching a crossroads, ignore the track that goes down to the left and follow the path which leads off to the right. Ignore all tracks to right & left and follow the ridge until, just after a short climb, you meet ...

Trail: turn right (yellow markers) and follow the trail, ignoring all tracks until you meet ...

CD673. Turn right to follow the road for 300metres, ignoring the first lane to left (Francy) and take the 2nd left, a little further on, marked to Raffègue (large tree). Continue for 600metres and at the bottom of the slope, take the lane to the right (picnic area in 200 metres, following the ‘Variant’), pass the stream and follow the lane which climbs up to Hounoux.

Variant: Go straight ahead, past Raffègue and Ginestas, follow a stream and ignore all tracks right & left until ...

Marc: turn right, pass a small bridge and turn and turn right for a 2nd time. Follow this little lane, ignore all tracks right & left, go past a small pond, then to the top of a slope in front of a farm, to arrive on ...

The ridge: turn to the right (red & white markers) and follow the lane as far as Hounoux.

Historical Notes:

Hounoux, perched at 421 metres above sea level, is situated on the ridge of a hill that dominates the Razès below. To the east, the Peak of Bugarach is visible, as well as the Peak of Balaguier; to the south, the Pyrenees, with a view over the Castle at Montségur and, finally, the Black Mountain to the north. In mediæval times, Hounoux was a Lord’s domain, governed by Montréal, and the name comes from the family “d’Honoso”. In 1213 Pierre d’Honoso, as well as his brother Guillaume, were named Lords of Hounoux. At that time, the village was a place of strategic importance. Covering an area of 800 hectares, the commune is nowadays mainly agricultural.

(Hounoux – 1 p)

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(fin / ends)