







4

Circuit Balcon de Combeloup

This beautiful long circuit guides us through a variety of landscapes, from the peaceful vineyards of Champ-Ruti to the wild mountainous ridges of Combeloup.

Distance	Cumulative climb & descent	Time to walk circuit	Effort	Technicality	Risk
 11 km	 510m	 3h30	 3	 3	 2

FFR rating system - See last page

Immediately after Saint-Nizier we'll start walking through open countryside, then pass through a more overgrown landscape to enjoy the scent of the vines. Finally we climb Combeloup giving wonderful views of the high peaks of Belledonne opposite.

Departure → Saint-Nizier d'Uriage.

Access: from the village of Saint-Martin d'Uriage, take the RD 111 towards Chamrousse; at the first crossing turn left towards Allevard. Follow the RD 280 road for 1.5 km. At Saint-Nizier, park on the parking lot on the left before the chapel.

- ① **Alt. 650 m** → From the car park in front of the Chapel of Saint-Nizier, walk towards St Nizier and turn left at the crossroads to descend on Route de Champ-Ruti for about 200m. Now take the first road on the left (Chemin de Champ Arnaud) where you'll pass a group of houses called Grand-Pré Vert.

Keep going down staying to the right following the road until it becomes a wide path that runs alongside a field. You'll pass some undergrowth and come to a large meadow.

Follow the edge of the meadow and admire the beautiful view of the village. Look out for the sign to turn right - the path turns sharp right and crosses a stream, continuing several hundred metres through the undergrowth and descends to the Route de la Rivoire. Turn right passing in front of an old farm and follow this small track for about 900m to come out on the road to Champ-Ruti. Turn left downhill on the road for 100m, cross the bridge then take the wide Champ-Ruti path signposted on the right.

- ② **Alt. 544 m** → Follow this magnificent path along the flat, through old vines with their small cabins and ponds. This is the heart of the "Ruti field". After around 800m turn right uphill by a small shed to follow an uphill path. (It's signposted and you will almost turn back upon yourself). You will climb for about 1km to arrive at the "Champ de l'église" or "Church Field" and the road to Venon shortly after.

- ③ **Alt. 660 m** → Go downhill on the Venon Road to the right, to the pretty hamlet "Paradis." Just after the last house at Paradis (and before a right-hand bend,) turn left on the Chemin de Bonafond. You'll notice a beautiful stone basin as you walk uphill to the Route du Faux (RD 280 bis) where you'll arrive opposite a recycling centre. Turn left and follow the road for about 200m to La Ronzière, where you'll turn left again onto Route de la Ronzière.

- ④ **Alt. 720 m** → Walk uphill on Route de la Ronzière. After two bends and the last houses the tarmac ends but the track continues. Stay on this track which branches gently to the right. This is the beautiful balcony path on Combeloup. After a slightly steeper part, the track levels out and gives wonderful views of the Belledonne Massif and the hamlets of Le Pinet La Croix de Pinet. The track becomes less steep and you'll arrive at an intersection where you can take a shortcut.*.

* *The shortcut or Variant shortens the circuit and makes it easier: from this intersection continue straight on the path which, after 1.5 km, leads to the north face of Combeloup where you'll again join with the classic circuit.*

Looking up at the signpost, turn left to continue on the classic circuit and climb on a lovely path through undergrowth which starts off fairly flat then becomes very steep. The path levels slightly before arriving below the Combeloup ridge. Continue straight following the signs - the path forks to the right taking you to the ridge. To the left you'll see the "Pierre Virouille" or "Spinning Rock", left by the glaciers and endowed with various paranormal properties according to some!

Turn right and head north-east along a magnificent undulating path which culminates at 999m., the highest point on the walk. Take care as the descent from the ridge will quickly become very steep and sometimes slippery. Before the end of the descent, you'll pass the Variant path coming from the right.

- ⑤ **Alt. 910 m** → At the crossroads where the variant joins, continue straight (or turn right, if you came from the variant) on the fairly steep descent to another crossroads. Turn right heading downhill due south on the Chemin du Faux which eventually levels out. You'll have a clear view of La Grande Lance de Domène and the Grand Colon Mountain from an unusual angle, as well as of the hamlets behind Saint Martin and the village of Revel. Continue down on this path (eventually roughly stone surfaced) to the houses of Le Faux. Take the (paved) Faux Road to the right, following it downhill again to La Ronzière, where you'll take the path on the left which climbs just before the recycling centre.

- ⑥ **Alt. 714 m** → Walk uphill behind the recycling centre. The path levels out and crosses a field, to reach the junction of Grosse-Pierre. Turn right (left will take you to Pinet) and gently descend to arrive on a steeper paved surface. Continue going downhill on Impasse Sansaret and cross the RD 280 using the mirror to help see approaching traffic. Rejoin the path and admire Saint-Nizier and the lovely chapel opposite. You'll find the starting point and car park down the road to your left.

The chapel of Saint-Nizier was rebuilt around 1675 on a small mound overlooking the road. It is surrounded by ancient tombs and a beautiful lime tree known locally as "de Sully" and classified as a "remarkable tree".

After the small estate of the Grand-Pré-Vert, the trail follows the stream of the Chapelle or the Cotes.

The hillside of Champ-Ruti used to be covered with vines.

The hamlet of La Ronzière takes its name from the word "roseau" (reed).

Combeloup was situated above an important wetland

The slopes of Combeloup are "dry lawns": natural environments that develop on calcareous soils, often on steep slopes (hillsides) and "enamelled" by rocky outcrops. The flora and fauna of these areas must be preserved through careful grazing management.

On arrival at the Fau, the corner house on the left was a cheese dairy (1927 to 1950). The milk came from the local farms and the whey was used to feed pigs.

From the Grosse-Pierre road, observe how the vegetation changes with the altitude of the Belledonne Mountains. The lower levels are home to agriculture and hardwoods; in the level above are found conifers and above again are the mountain pastures and alpine lakes. Highest of all are the rocky peaks where little vegetation grows.

In and around Uriage, many rural paths have been restored and incorporated into circuits of varying difficulty and length. Some can be walked in half a day, others take longer. They may be interesting for their views, for nature or for local heritage. Most are in the forest in a wild environment, despite the nearby urbanisation. Trail runners will be quick to realise that these circuits can be combined to create alternative routes to suit every level of runner.

Please respect nature and leave no trace of your passing. Nature will thank you!
 Don't over-estimate your capabilities - these circuits are, after all, hiking trails.
 Please help us maintain our circuits by reporting any work which needs to be done.

[asso-des-sentiers-de-smu.eklablog.com]

Rating system of the FFR*

To rate the difficulty of a hike, three characteristics are graded from 1 to 5



Effort - the length and climb involved in the hike



Technicality - need to use hands or place feet carefully



Risk - consequence of a fall

*Fédération Française de Randonnée pédestre

The Signposts

7

Circuit number

7a

Circuit variation number



Direction to follow



Continue



Alternative route



Turn right



Turn left



Wrong direction

The editor and author of this document cannot under any circumstances be held responsible for any incident or accident which may occur on the hike, no matter how it occurs.

In an emergency call 112  beware signal dead zones

Uriage

LES-BAINS

Office de Tourisme
 5, avenue des Thermes
 38410 Uriage
 04 76 89 10 27
info@uriage-les-bains.com



www.uriage-les-bains.com

