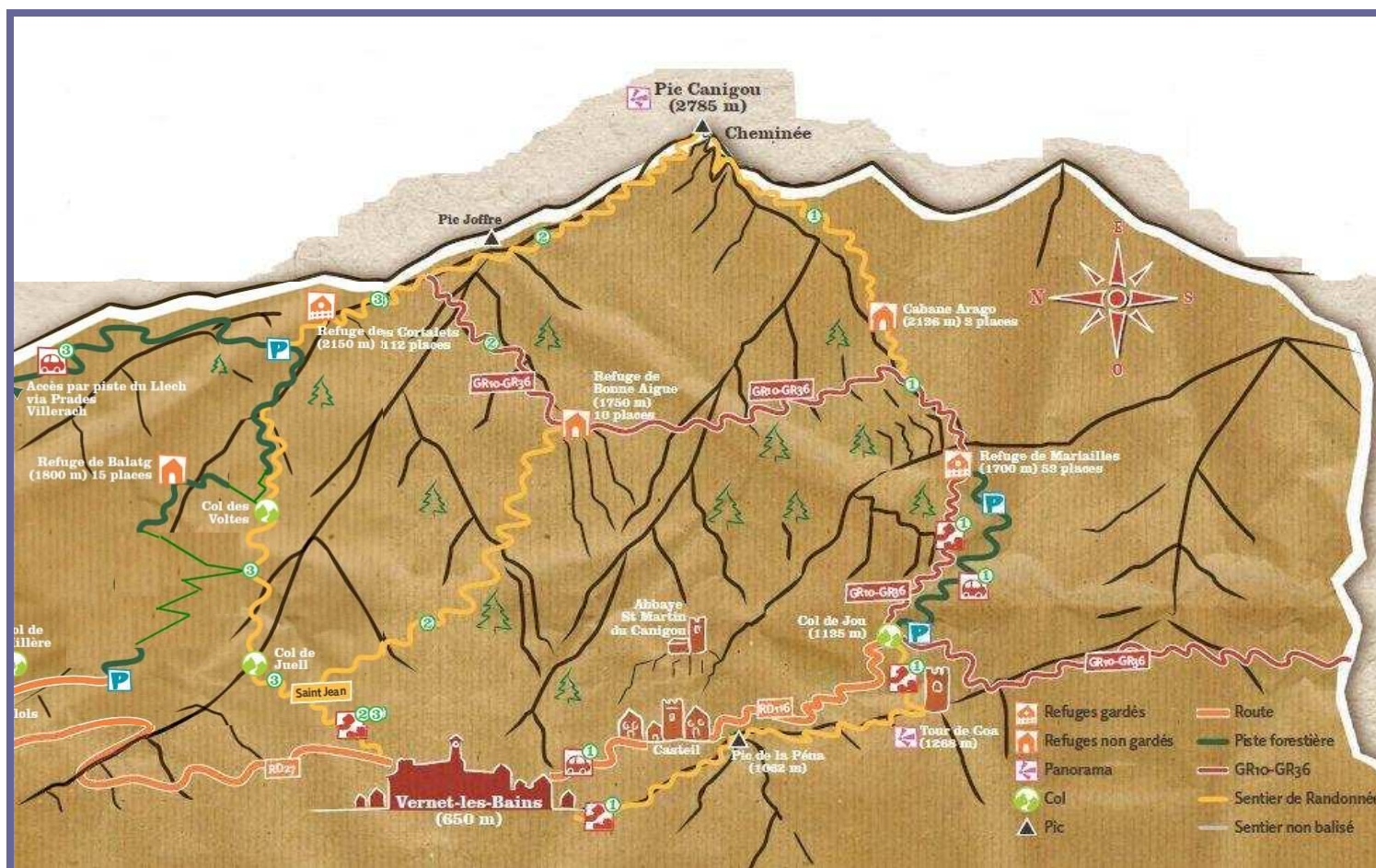


## How to reach the PIC DU CANIGOU from Vernet-les-Bains

Access routes on foot and by motor vehicle

Mountain huts

Safety on the mountain



## Take care while in the mountains

**The ascent of Canigou (altitude: 2,785 metres, 9,200 feet)** is a high mountain walk, for which you must allow at least a whole day. The walking times indicated on footpath signs are only approximate. They do not include pauses. Many walkers may need more time. Remember that it takes a lot longer to walk a kilometre in the mountains than it does on the flat. It is recommended that you leave early in the morning, to avoid walking in the latter part of the day when the heat and the risk of storms are greatest (especially in the summer). Take the detailed, 1:25,000 map: IGN Top 25, Massif du Canigou, 23 49 ET. **Do not rely exclusively on the sketch map in this leaflet.** You must be well equipped with, in particular: walking boots or shoes; warm, windproof clothing (it can be cold at altitude, even in summer); drinking water; energy-giving food; and a first-aid kit. **Note the telephone number to use in case of emergency: 112.**

Respect the environment and bring back with you all your litter.

Before setting off, **check the weather:** Météo France 08 99 71 02 66.

## **Access routes**

*From Vernet-les-Bains, several tracks and footpaths criss-cross the mountainside. Three routes to the summit are summarised below. Bearing in mind their length and the height to be climbed, you are advised to allow two days for the ascent, staying overnight in a mountain hut. A few forest tracks are open to jeeps and cars at certain times of the year. But access by motor vehicles is strictly regulated. Before your departure, you are strongly advised to check the regulations that are in force at any given time, by contacting the tourist office.*

### **Route 1 :Via the wardened mountain hut at Mariailles (altitude 1700m)**

#### **On foot: Via the Pic de la Pena and the Tour de Goa. Eight hours walking time (ascent).**

From Vernet-les-Bains, take the path indicated by yellow waymarks that starts between the Hôtel du Portugal and the Thermes and that climbs steeply to the Pic de la Pena. The path continues along an open ridge to the Tour de Goa (two hours). Then follow a track downhill to the Col de Jou (20 minutes). From there, take the GR10-36 long-distance path, which is indicated by red-and-white waymarks. After two hours walking on this path, you reach Mariailles. From there, continue to follow the long-distance path. Ten minutes after crossing the River Cady (no footbridge), leave the GR10-36 by turning right to follow a path that is indicated by yellow waymarks and that leads to the Cabane Arago (a small, unwardened hut 1h 30mins from Mariailles). From here, there remain about two hours of walking to the Cheminée (a steep, 50-metre-high natural stone staircase), and to the summit.

#### **By motor vehicle: 40 minutes by motor vehicle, then four hours walking.**

From Vernet-les-Bains, drive to Casteil (five minutes), then continue on the tarmac road to the Col de Jou (about ten minutes from Casteil). From there (and subject to the points listed below), a forest track can be followed as far as Mariailles (25 minutes).

Motor vehicles are allowed on this track, subject to the following restrictions:

- 1 - Camping cars are prohibited. In addition, the track is unsuitable for vehicles without high ground clearance.
- 2 - The track is closed to motor vehicles from the time of the first snowfall in autumn to about the end of May.
- 3 - The upper section of the track, beyond a parking area at le Randé, is closed to motor vehicles in July and August. (The exact closure dates can vary - consult the tourist office.) Allow 45 minutes to walk from le Randé to the Mariailles hut.

### **Route 2: On foot, via the unwardened mountain hut Bonne-Aigue (altitude 1750m). Seven hours walking time (ascent).**

From Vernet-les-Bains (starting near the Entente Cordiale monument by the town hall), follow the road that goes to Fillols for about one kilometre. Then turn right, up a narrow, tarmac lane that is indicated by yellow waymarks. Just beyond a small car parking area at Saint-Jean, turn sharp right to follow a path that is signposted for the Pic du Canigou. After a long climb (about four hours from the town hall), you reach the Bonne Aigue mountain hut. From here, follow on the left the GR10-36 long-distance path, which is indicated by red-and-white waymarks. After another 1h 30mins of climbing, you reach the Fontaine de la Perdrix, just below Pic Joffre. From there, either continue on the GR10-36 and descend to the Chalet des Cortalets (30 minutes), or climb directly to the Pic du Canigou (1h 30mins).

**Route 3: Via the wardened mountain hut of Cortalets (altitude 2150m).**

**On foot: via the Balatg forest track or via the Col des Voltes footpath. About seven hours walking time (ascent).**

From Vernet-les-Bains follow the route to Saint-Jean described under Route 2 above. There, bear left and follow the route indicated by yellow waymarks that takes you to the Col de Juell (45 minutes). Then bear right to follow a path that traverses the hillside, eventually crosses a river, and then meets a forest track coming up from Fillols. From here two routes to Cortalets are possible:

- via the forest track. This is the recommended route. It passes the Balatg unwardened mountain hut (about three hours from Vernet), then reaches Cortalets after about another two and a half hours.

- via a path on the right that climbs steeply through a forest to re-join the forest track at the Col des Voltes. Then follow the track to Cortalets. Four and a half hours walking from Vernet to Cortalets.

From Cortalets to the Pic du Canigou, allow two hours for the ascent on foot.

**By motor vehicle: 1h 30mins by motor vehicle to near Cortalets, on the forest track from Fillols via the Col de Millères and Balatg** (then two hours on foot to the summit). Please inform yourself about, and respect, the restrictions in force concerning the use of motor vehicles on this track.

It is also possible to reach a point near Cortalets by motor vehicle using the Llech forest track. (This track is also unsuitable for vehicles without high ground clearance.) This track can be reached via Prades, Los Masos and Villerach.

Jeep-taxi services from Vernet-les-Bains use the Balatg forest track to transport clients to near Cortalets (see below).

## Discover the Canigou massif

Apart from the ascent of the Pic du Canigou itself, the massif of which it is the highest point offers numerous other possibilities for outings on foot, on horseback and by mountain bike - for example, to the Cascades des Anglais (the "English visitors' waterfall"), the Tour de Goa (a restored medieval watchtower) and the abbey of St Martin du Canigou.

At the Vernet-les-Bains tourist office you will find:

- information about walking and cycling routes
- details of how to contact professional mountain guides
- an illustrated book of walks, the "Petit Guide de randonnée de la Vallée du Cady"
- a leaflet on a forestry interpretation trail between the Col de Jou and Mariailles.

### Gîte d'Etape, Vernet-les-Bains:

This simple but comfortable hostel, run by Vernet town council, is an excellent base from which to explore the northern sector of the Canigou massif. It has 32 sleeping places in dormitories and cubicles, and a self-catering kitchen.

(8.50 € per person per night)

00 33 (0)4 68 05 51 30

Salle Polyvalente, Avenue St Saturnin

### Wardened mountain huts:

The **Chalet des Cortalets** is open from mid-May until mid-October (although these dates may be changed, according to weather conditions).

It has 112 sleeping places. It also offers lunches, evening meals and packed lunches (if booked in advance).

Wardens: Sophie & Thomas

Contacts: 00 33 (0)4 68 96 36 19 (or 00 33 (0)6 70 65 55 58 outside opening period)

<http://cortalets.over-blog.com/>

E-mail: [cortalets@yahoo.fr](mailto:cortalets@yahoo.fr)

GPS - Long: 2.465247738. Lat: 42.534155354.

The **Mariailles Refuge** is open all year (but outside the main holiday seasons you must book in advance).

Contacts: refuge 0033 (0)4 68 05 57 99; Jean Jacques 0033 (0)6 83 56 82 10; Olivier 0033 (0)6 88 13 56 98.

[www.refugedemariailles.fr](http://www.refugedemariailles.fr)

E-mail: [refuge.mariailles@gmail.com](mailto:refuge.mariailles@gmail.com)

GPS - Long: 2.407538870. Lat: 42.501346537.

### **Reaching the Canigou wardened mountain huts by jeep-taxi:**

You can travel by 4x4 jeep-taxi from Vernet-les-Bains to locations near the Mariailles Refuge and the Chalet des Cortalets. The jeep-taxis climb the mountainside on forest tracks that pass through spectacular scenery. Two jeep-taxi services operate from Vernet-les-Bains:

Garage Villacèque, Rue du Conflent : 0033 (0)4 68 05 51 14

Jean-Paul Bouzan, Boulevard des Pyrénées: 0033 (0)4 68 05 99 89

The jeep-taxis leave Vernet-les-Bains early in the morning. (Later departures can also be booked in the main holiday season - ask the operators for details.)

Before setting off, check the weather: Météo France 08 99 71 02 66;

Take the detailed, 1:25,000 map: IGN Top 25, Massif du Canigou, 23 49 ET

Telephone number in case of emergency: 112

### **MAISON DU PATRIMOINE**

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[www.vernet-les-bains.fr](http://www.vernet-les-bains.fr)

GPS : Long 2.3890328 Lat 42.547284