

The fountain path

Le chemin des fontaines

Mazamet

4 km - 1 h

Elevation : 150 m

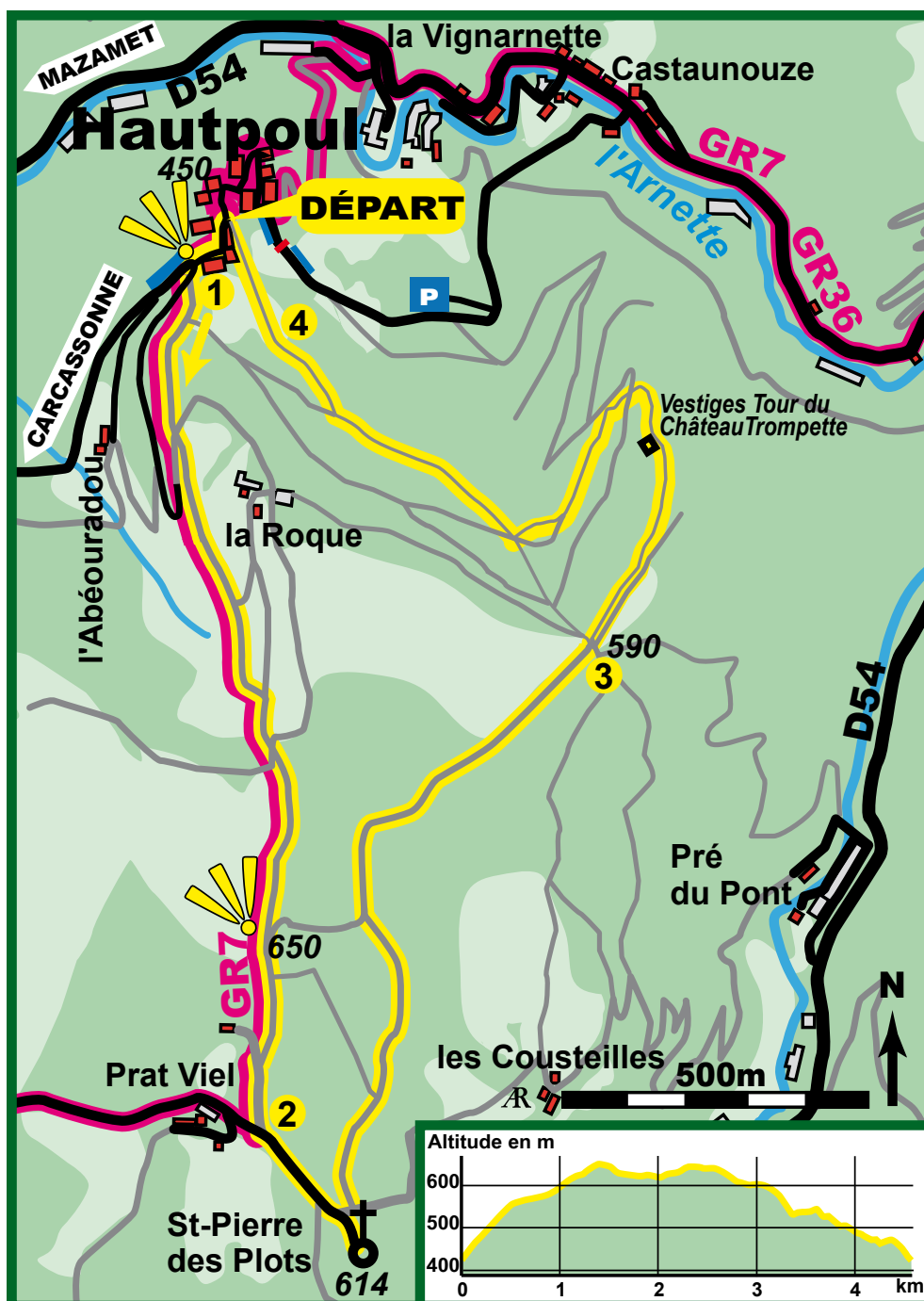
The high ground of Hautpoul...

This circuit takes you through the superb little village of Hautpoul, perched on the mountainside. The medieval character and uniqueness of this place should not stop your ascent. You can stop to admire the plot of chestnut trees at the end of the route and see the statue of the Virgin Mary at close range. You will need to climb the rock. It is most certainly the place that offers the best panoramic view from this village perched on the mountainside with its natural defences formed by the rocky cliff faces below. A place to forget all of the hard work you have had to put in along this circuit to reach this point.

The hike that you are going to undertake allows you to enjoy such a variety of landscapes in just a few kilometers by passing through the forest with a number of different species and constantly changing flora. There are numerous historical sites of interest and you will also be able to discover the marvelous village of Hautpoul, the site of St Pierre des Plots, the remains of the tower of Trompette Castle, and finally the fountain path that lends its name to this circuit.

Good to know

The outline of Hautpoul village, perched on the mountainside above its rocky defences has retained the imprint of its medieval past. Head of an important vassal lordship of Trencavel d'Albigeois and Labourgade, it is a beautiful example of a medieval site, which has long been a favourite refuge for the banned Cathar church (for its religious leaders and followers) and did not give in to attacks from Simon de Montfort who led the crusade. La Maison des Mémoires (the House of Memories) (05 63 61 56 56 - www.maison-memoires.com) houses the museum «Catharisme occitan, la mémoire retrouvée» which makes Mazamet the main place to discover Cathar culture in the Tarn.



Access : There are two options to reach Hautpoul from Mazamet: the D54 towards Pic de Nore, or the D118 towards Carcassonne. Each one leads to a car park. Camping cars are however obliged to use car park P at the bottom of the village. This can be reached via the D54 (factory road).

Start : Find the centre of the village with a plot of chestnut trees and go up the lane until you reach the summit of the village.

① By the statue of the Virgin Mary you will have a clear view over Mazamet and the Arnette Valley. From this point, slightly to the left, 100 metres away as the crow flies, you can see the ruins (Cathar) of Saint Sauveur church. From the car park, follow the small path to the left, also part of the GR circuit. A short, steep, shaded path will take you on to a calm former botanical path. As you return to the clearing you will once again have a panoramic view over Mazamet.

② As you reach Prat Viel, take the tarmac road to the left until you reach Saint Pierre des Plots church, atypically characteristic of this area. Take the logging road to the left in front of the cemetery, going through and area shaded by the pine trees, then go along the side of the meadow on the descent.

③ At the junction pass behind the fence and along the logging road and then go back into the forest before going up to the ruins of the tower of Trompette Castle. You will have to make your way through the woods via a series of small tracks (this section can be difficult to cross when it has been raining).

④ This last section, called Chemin des Fontaines (fountain path), really lives up to its name. Both of these fountains are very old and supply water to the gardens of Hautpoul which you will pass on the way to the area of chestnut trees.

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