



Champagnat

From Saint-Chamond (N.-D. de l'Hermitage) to Marlhès

Length : 32 km – Average time : 9 hours

In 1989, on the occasion of the bicentenary of the birth of Marcellin Champagnat, those responsible for the Natural Park du Pilat, had the happy initiative of opening trail No. 10, called "Sentier Marcellin Champagnat", which connects Le Rosey, Marcellin's native hamlet, in the commune of Marlhès, to Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage where he rests. Young pilgrims, and even those not so young, are interested in covering the thirty or so kilometers of the trail. Indeed, the knowledge of a Founder also involves discovering the places where he lived and walking is probably one of the best way to learn about him.

This path is marked in both directions and can be traveled either from Notre Dame de l'Hermitage in Saint Chamond or from Le Rosey in Marlhès.

It is described in this text below, starting from Saint Chamond.

Departure :

- **From Saint Chamond : 2 km.**
- Take the road to La Valla-en-Gier then, at the water tower, turn left and reach the house of Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage.
- **Notre-Dame de l'Hermitage (1) – La Valla-en-Gier (4)**
- **6,5 km – alt. 420m – 650m – average time 2 hours**

The trail starts on a path at the edge of the property and rises quickly to Lardière (2) from where you overlook the town of Saint-Chamond and the imposing factory of former Navy Steelworks. Turn right towards Pouay. The path overlooks the Soulages dam. After Pouay, the path descends gently towards the hamlet of La Rive (3), located between the three dams: de la Rive, du Pinay and Soulages. Join the D2 at the inn near the dike of the Rive dam. Cross the D2 and join La Valla-en-Gier (4) via a path overlooking the reservoir. The path climbs towards the "cradle of the Marist Brothers".

- **La Valla-en-Gier (4) – Le Bessat (6)**
- **7,5 km – alt.650m – 1 150m – average time 2 h 30**

In La Valla-en-Gier (4) the path climbs steeply to the left of the Fougères housing estate towards Luzernod. He joined D2, then left it again and joined it at Pissort. On the left we can

see the Saut du Gier. Leave the road and take the path on the right, it crosses a spruce plantation. We come out and find a beautiful panorama of the Gier Valley. The path joins the D2 again and follows it until Rôt (5). There, turn right for 50m on a forest track then on the left a path which goes down through a spruce plantation to an old electrical transformer. The path then goes back towards Bessat (6) towards the statue of the Sacré-Cœur.

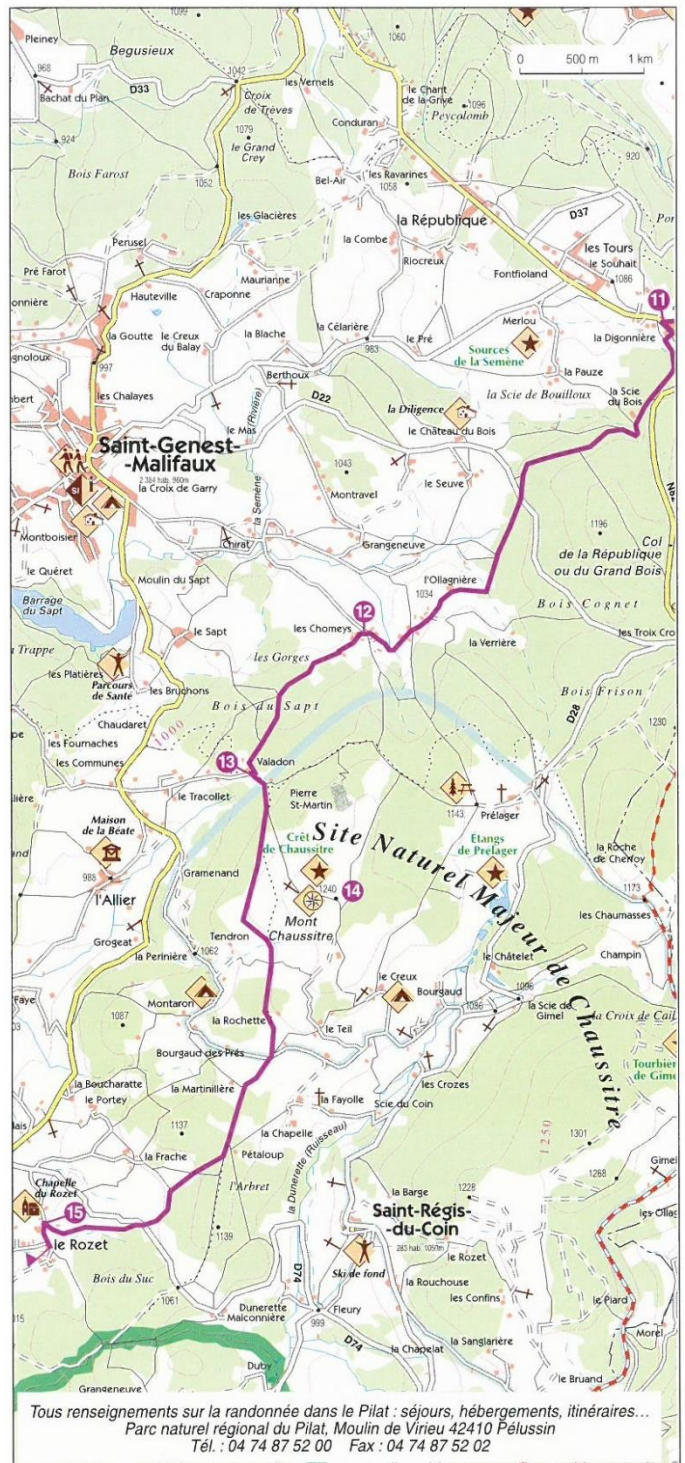
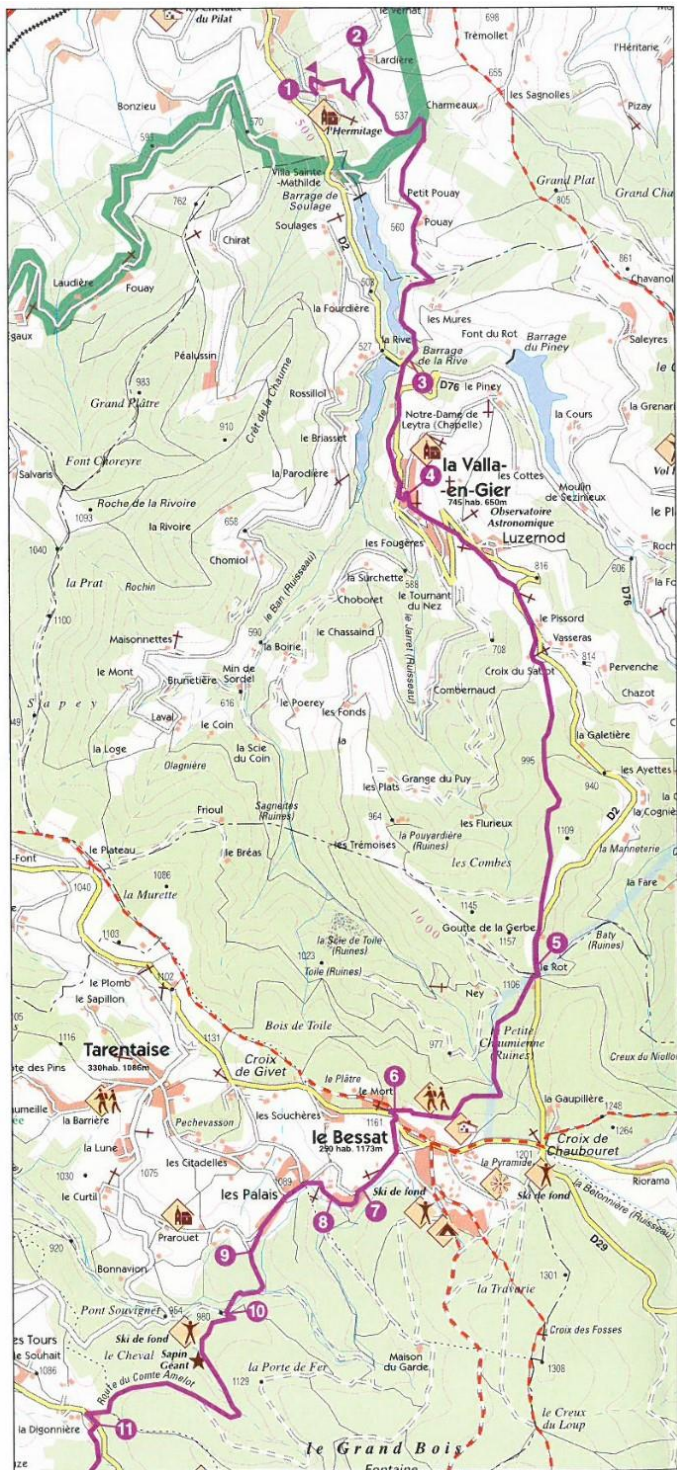
- **Le Bessat (6) – La Digonnière (11)**
- **6 km – alt. 1 150m – 1 000m – average time 1 h 30**

In Bessat the path immediately crosses the D8 (6) it continues on a tarmac road which we will leave on the left at a place called “Les Palais” (7) shortly after we move on to “Maison Montagne” (8). After having crossed the hamlet of Palais take the direction of Godemard; At the exit of this hamlet (9) the path enters the forest and takes a sloping path, some sections of which are completely paved, you can also observe old sawmills. Cross the Furan and arrive on a wide forest track, follow it to the right for 300 m towards Pont Souvignet. (You can combine a return to Saint-Etienne via the Park trail no. 6). The Champagnat trail does not go as far as Pont Souvignet, but at a large forest trail crossroads (10) it takes on the left, the track called “route du Comte Amelot” which leads to Digonnière (11). To the right below the track, we pass next to the Giant Fir: a remarkable tree 47 m high and 4.10 m in circumference at eye height venant de Prélage.

- **La Digonnière (11) – Le Rozet (15)**
- **12 km alt. 1 000m – 1 000m – average time 3 heures**

At La Digonnière cross national road 82 (11) then follow it for 100 m, on the left. At a private car park, turn right onto a small path passing under an electrical line supported by a trestle-shaped post, the path winds between the woods and the national road before joining a forest track. Cross a small river “La Semène” and follow the track leading to “Scie du Bois”. The track continues then crosses the D22. The forest path passes Ollagnière then takes a tarmac passage which crosses the hamlet of Chomeys (12). From there, the path heads to the south following the forest track which passes along the side of Mont Chaussitre, the summit of which is dominated by a majestic cross (14). At a place called “Tendron”, we partially follow park path no. 3 which heads towards the Sapt dam. After crossing a small road the path goes down towards Pétaloup and la Frache without getting there. It runs alongside a fir forest, gently descends towards the D74 which it crosses to arrive at Rozet (15)

You can download the Champagnat trail route from the web page: <http://fr.wikiloc.com/wikiloc/view.do?id=13887618>



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