

The Ossau Valley

LEV
1 CIRCUIT N° 10

Les cercles de pierres



If you are looking for an easy, family-friendly hike with a great view of the valley, this is the one for you.

The site is full of mystery, and bears witness to a time when the inhabitants of the valley began to build for eternity.

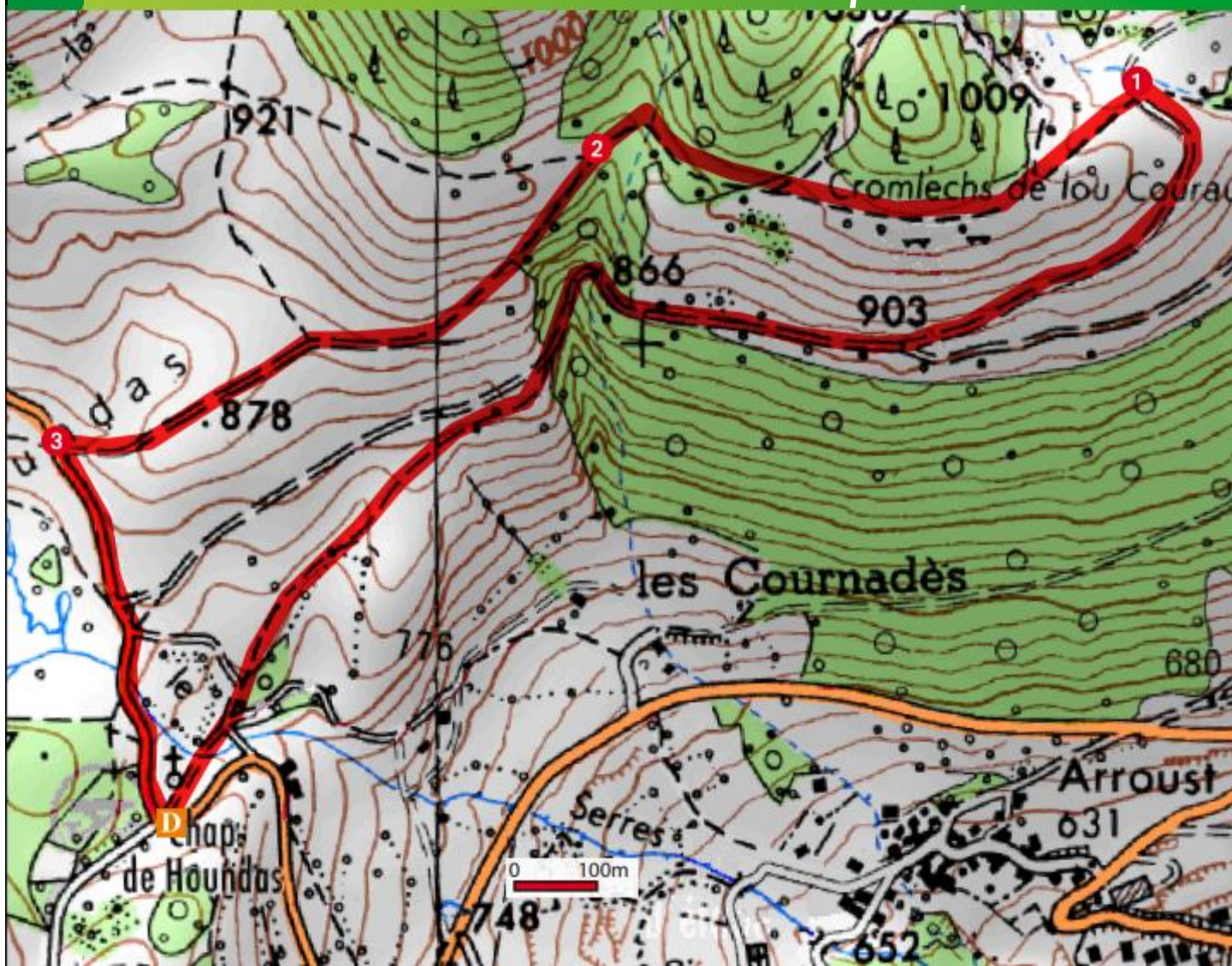
D Start at the stream near the chapel of Houndas. Take the path to the right of the chapel. Go up through a fern grove and join a track which you follow up to the right. Go through a gate and walk about 700 m.

0h30 **1** 708122 E - 708122 E At a bend in the road to the left, turn left onto a path that climbs up through the grass. Leave the GRP® Tour de la Vallée d'Ossau on your right. Pass a large fir tree and keep climbing. When the path flattens out, the cromlechs are on your left. Follow the path between the hazelnut trees or turn left and then right to follow the line of cromlechs. Pass the stone circle area and then head downhill. Go into the woods and continue downhill. Cross a small stream and then a muddy area that can be avoided to the right on wet days.

1h00 **2** 707502 E - 4771535 N At the end of the forest, turn left. Go down a small steep path and then cross fern slopes to the right as you descend.

1h30 **3** 706927 E - 4771190 N Turn left onto the road to the chapel.





D Above Bilhères en Ossau - Chapel of Houndas

GPS WGS 84 UTM 30T
707082 E - 4770876 N

1h30

3,7km

200m

★ Don't miss:

- The cromlechs.
- The breathtaking view over the whole valley!
- The Benou plateau. Go to the Ossau Museum in Arudy to see the results of the archaeological excavations.

⚠ Note:

- As you go downhill, be careful not to drop rocks onto the trail below.

The Cromlechs

Little is known about the stone circles of Ossau. Some have been excavated, but not many. Remains of human bones, charcoal, some pottery, and small tools were found, allowing the buildings to be dated to about 3000 years ago. Sometimes nothing was found, but the sites all have panoramic views and who knows what alignments.

Whether they were cremation areas, burial sites, or places of worship, the arrival of Christianity did not spell the end of them. In Houndas, the chapel was built nearby. The people who built these megaliths were Aquitains, neighbours of the Celts and Gauls.

Information :

Laruns/Arrouste Tourist Information Office : +33 (0)5 59 05 31 41
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Arudy Tourist Information Office : +33 (0)5 59 05 77 11

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Choose your hike

For each route, you will find technical and practical information to help you choose your hike

Levels of difficulty


The hikes are classified by order of difficulty defined by a colour code following the recommendations of the French Hiking Federation:


-  Very easy, less than 2 hours walking. Ideal for families, on well-marked tracks.
-  Easy, less than 3 hours walking. Suitable for families, on tracks with sometimes more difficult passages.
-  Difficult, less than 4 hours walking. For hikers used to walking, with some quite intense sections or steep slopes.
-  Very difficult, more than 4 hours of walking. For experienced and fit hikers. The itinerary can be long and technical (strong elevation gain, tricky passages).


 30T 710703O - 4776694N

GPS coordinates













Start

 Walking time, given in hours. This estimated time takes into account the length of the hike, the elevation gain and the possible difficulties.

 Elevation gain, expressed in metres. For each circuit, the value corresponds to the cumulative elevation gain.

 Distance, the value expressed in kilometres corresponds to the total length of the route.

Markers

Direction	Local routes and PR®	GRP®	GR®
Right way			
Turn left			
Turn right			
Wrong way			



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Recommendations

Before you leave

Check your equipment, the difficulty of the circuit and the weather conditions
If you are going alone, communicate your itinerary to friends and family
See the map of controlled fires

In the mountains / pastoral areas

Follow the marked paths and close gates after passing through
Respect nature and bring waste back
If accompanied by a dog, make sure that it is allowed on the chosen route and keep it on a lead
During the hunting season, avoid hunting areas or turn back
Go around herds and do not approach farm dogs (do not feed them or pet them)

National Park

The heart of the National Park is a natural territory and is open to all, but is subject to a code of conduct. Dogs are not allowed, even on a lead. No fires, no mountain bikes, no wild camping, only bivouacs are allowed - a small tent can be set up for the night from 7 pm and taken down in the morning before 9 am. It must be set up more than an hour's walk from any motorised access.

European emergency call : 112