

Walk 12 - The Badabany towers

Duration: 3h00 - 3h30 (plus stops)

Distance: 12.5 km

Waymarks: yellow-and-red; yellow

Difference in altitude between highest and lowest points:
150 metres

You climb in total: 380 metres

Level: Easy

In the summer, this walk is best undertaken in the morning.

Avoid very hot periods. It is essential to take a sun hat,
sunglasses and plenty of drinking water.

Emergency telephone number: 112 (or 15)
Weather forecast (in French): 08 99 71 02 66
Tourist office, 2 rue de la chapelle, Vernet-les-Bains:
(00 33) (0)4 68 05 55 35
Website: www.vernet-les-bains.fr

Types of waymark (Copyright symbols of the *Fédération française de la randonnée pédestre*):

GR - national long-distance path

GRP - regional long-distance path

PR (*Labellisé*) - registered local path

PR - other local path

Confirmation waymark

Turn left

Turn right

Do not follow this route

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

Start: Tourist office, "Place de la République" - 0h00 - altitude 658m

Follow yellow-and-red waymarks down towards the River Cady. Cross the river by the "Rudyard Kipling" bridge. Turn right and pass the Paganini garden on your right (now following yellow waymarks).

Turn left up the "Route de Sahorre" (D27) and follow that road for 50 metres. Then turn right **(1)**, into the "Promenade Claude Nogué". Follow that road, downhill, for 750 metres, then take a lane on the left that heads towards a former horse-riding centre. After 350 metres, take a path on the left **(2)**. The path climbs the side of the hill, in the shade of oak trees, and then it joins a jeep track **(3)**.

Follow the track to the right for 150 metres, then follow a path on the right. The path climbs to the partially-restored Saint-Clément de la Serra chapel, which dates from the 10th and 11th centuries. 20 metres before the chapel, in a rock on the left, are cup marks, thought to be of prehistoric origin.

(4) Saint-Clément de la Serra chapel - 0h45 - altitude 676m

The path continues on the other side of the chapel. Follow that path along the crest of the hill. It runs roughly parallel to the jeep track and eventually leads to the dolmen.

(5) Dolmen de Cobartorat - 1h00m - altitude 628m

At the dolmen, follow the wide track straight ahead. It winds up the open hillside. On the way up, you have a magnificent view over Corneilla de Conflent, in the valley on the right. Where the track goes sharp left **(10)**, go straight ahead. You soon arrive at a disused red marble

quarry **(6)**. Follow the path as it passes to the right of the quarry, then continues uphill, towards the Badabany towers.

(7) Path junction (at this junction, the path ahead descends to Villefranche)

At this junction, turn right, to visit the remains of the smaller of the two "Badabany towers" **(8)**. This was a medieval watchtower overlooking Villefranch, built in 1346 at the time of Pierre IV of Aragon. Only the lower part of the tower remains.

Return to path junction, and go straight ahead to arrive at:

(9) The larger of the two "Badabany towers" - 1h45 - altitude 761m

This was another watchtower from where signals were sent out – to warn, for example, of impending danger. Again, only the lower part of the tower remains. In the centre was a well ("citerne"). The tower was destroyed by Vauban, the military architect who rebuilt Villefranche after the French took control of this region from Spain in 1659. The tower is thus known (erroneously) as the "Citerne Vauban".

At the tower you also have one of the most spectacular and wide-ranging viewpoints in the area.

Take the track leading away from the tower, along the crest of the hill, heading south in the direction of Vernet and Canigou. It winds downhill and eventually brings you back to a junction **(10)** near the disused red marble quarry. There, you turn right and you are now on the outward route. Follow that route back towards Vernet.

Beyond the dolmen, you can stay on the jeep track to avoid the climb via the Saint-Clément de la Serra chapel.

In addition, there is an alternative route back through Vernet after passing the former horse-riding centre. Turn left at the junction with the "Promenade Claude Nogué" **(11)**, then take two right turns and walk back towards the centre of Vernet up the avenue Saint-Saturnin, going past the *Salle Polyvalente* and the swimming pools. Continue up to the "Rudyard Kipling" bridge, then turn left and go up to the town centre.

Arrive back at the tourist office - 3h00

Mountain code of conduct

Respect fauna and flora

Keep to waymarked routes

Carry out all your litter

Act in accordance with signs and notices

Go well equipped. Wear

walking shoes or boots, and

carry some drinking water

Leave gates and fences as you find them

Make no unnecessary noise

Check the weather forecast

Don't light fires

Tag your best photos

#vernetlesbains on
instagram

See photos on our facebook
page.

"Like" us by scanning the QR
code opposite or by visiting
us on facebook at
facebook.com/officedetourismdevernetlesbains

