

## 5- La Rouquette spring



Another precious source of water on the cause, this spring comes out of the limestone rock forming the little cliff above it. Rainwater makes its way underground through the karst and reappears in the open here, feeding 2 troughs dug where it comes out. They once served as a laundry trough as well as a watering trough for animals. This spring was also used to provide water for for the hamlet of Pauliac sited higher up (particularly in times of drought)

## 6- Pauliac Castle in Cieurac

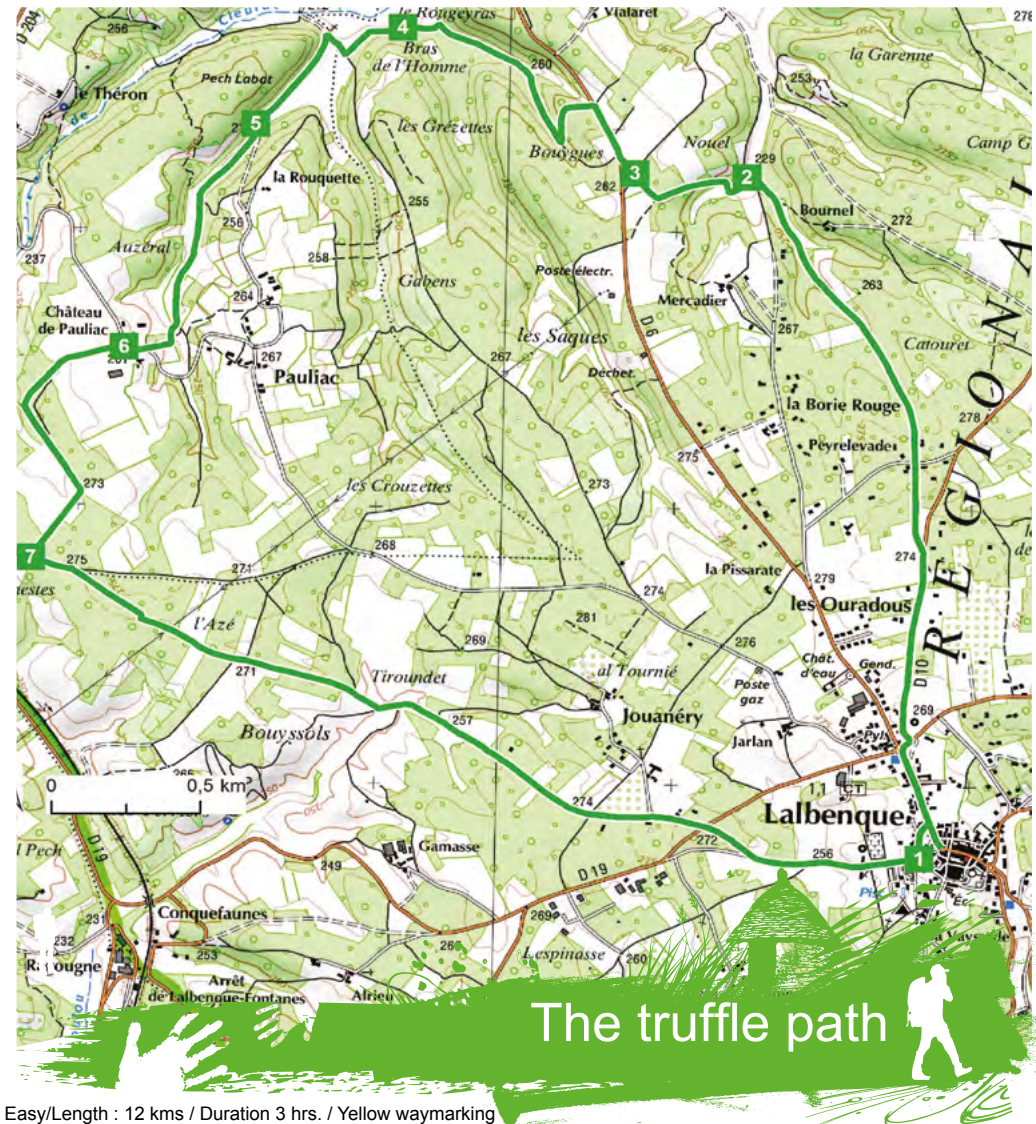


Pauliac Castle dates back to the 12th C. At first, it was a flourishing priory dependent on the Lagarde de Dieu Abbey in the Bas Quercy founded in early 1000 AD. The abbey's possessions never recovered from being pillaged by Calvinists from Montauban in 1567. Pauliac also suffered during the Wars of Religion at the hands of the Protestants of Puy Larroque. During the Revolution, the castle was sold off as National Property. It then passed into the hands of the Cassan family who sold it on in 1976 to the Abadie family. They then undertook several restoration projects (façades, windows). A solid, rectangular building with a square tower jutting out from the southern façade, Pauliac Castle is composed of a ground floor, which has long been used as cellar and stables, and two inhabited floors consisting of vast rooms without any particularly special features apart from a few fireplaces. The exterior walls are 1.5 m thick. Apart from a few Renaissance windows, some of which have been walled up, there are few openings, giving the building a somewhat austere appearance, nevertheless softened by the fine trees and box topiary of the gardens.

## 7- The Ginestes truffle orchard



This young plantation of truffle oaks (spring 2008) is a sign of the renewal of truffle growing in this area. Here you can see evidence of the use of both traditional and modern methods: alternating pubescent and holm oaks, all with the truffle fungus already implanted on their roots, well spaced-out (8m x 6m) on a formerly cultivated plot, planted on mounds of earth with stones around the base of each tree, and the earth turned over with a cultivator. This gives hope for a crop in the near future, especially as the first «brûlés» (areas without grass) are appearing around the oaks. The fence is intended to prevent wild boar and roe deer from causing damage to the plantation.



Easy/Length : 12 kms / Duration 3 hrs. / Yellow waymarking

This footpath takes you to see the landscapes and the truffle-related heritage of the Lalbenque Area. It follows the path n° 9 of the «Promenades et Randonnées au Pays de Lalbenque» and has 7 points indicated by totems (points 1 & 5) or wooden posts with green numbered plates (points 2, 3, 4, 6, 7).  
*Practical advice : wear appropriate clothing according to the weather. Wear good shoes/boots. Don't forget to carry water and a snack with you. Keep to the paths. Respect private property. Take care of Nature. Don't leave any rubbish behind.*

Enjoy your walk.



## 1- Fajal Cross in Lalbenque (start point)



A commune with 1700 inhabitants between the Causses and the Quercy Blanc, in the south of the Causses du Quercy Regional Natural Park, Lalbenque is the «capital of the truffle country», the main centre of black truffle production in Quercy. At the beginning of the 20th C., the rural exodus led to a progressive drop in local production, which fell to very low levels, and to the truffle-producing zones being overgrown with vegetation. But for some years now, truffle-growers, canners, restaurateurs, researchers, associations and local authorities have been active in encouraging the restart of truffle production (replanting and regular care of truffle oaks), promoting it (events) and enabling the marketing of truffles (markets, restaurants). The Lalbenque truffle market, recently classified Site Remarquable du Goût, takes place in the village centre every Tuesday afternoon in winter (December to March).

## 2- Bournel : truffle orchard and well



From the start, you have walked alongside several traditional truffle-orchards : more or less old pubescent oaks, with «brûlés» or grass-free areas (visible or not). You'll see others all along the route. Often located in a not very favourable environment (hemmed in with vegetation), they are suffering from a lack of attention and produce little or nothing. This is not the case of the one you have just passed on your right, on the path where the oaks are regularly spaced out, the ground cleared

and the «brûlés» visible around the trees. Here, in this depression, a layer of clay enables water to be retained in the «lac», fed by run-off water and the outflow of the so-called «Roman» well higher up. An aquatic habitat in the middle of the dry causse, this environment is home to some remarkable species of amphibians and dragonflies. The well with its constant water level - 2m deep - is a resurgent stream from the karst (modified limestone) which traps water in caves, underground rivers or lakes. Steps (don't go down them) enabled users to draw water at a constant, cool temperature (10-12° C).

## 3- The Nouel caselle



Caselles (or cazelles) are little dry-stone huts with lauze (stone slab) roofs. They were used as shelters for people and animals, especially pig(let)s needing care, or else as tool stores, very rarely lived in. Characteristic of the Quercy Causses, the majority date from the middle of the 18th and from the 19th centuries. These little buildings vary in shape according to the district : round base and conical roof on the Lalbenque Causse, round base and domed roof on the Causse de Gramat, square base and pyramidal roof around Marcihac-sur-Célé... Abandoned for a while,

there has been renewed interest in them for several years now, on the part of proprietors, heritage preservation societies and local authorities. Grants have helped to restore many of them. This is the case of the Caselle de Nouel, one of the largest in the area, remarkably well-restored by the owner, with the help of the Lalbenque Environment Preservation Society.

## 4- The coomb and château of Cieurac



Typical of the Quercy causse landscape, a coomb is a little «dry» valley, through which used to run a river, now dried up or flowing through the limestone underground. Real ecological corridors, they play an important rôle in the preservation of flora and fauna. Coombs provide a deep, damp layer of silt ideal for agriculture : cereals, and permanent or temporary meadows. Cultivated or grassed fields, lovely little stone-built barns and deeply-worn paths along the edge of the wooded slopes provide a green, fertile landscape very unlike the more arid causses.

On the hilltop, the silhouette of the Château de Cieurac stands out. This was bought back from the English by the Consuls of Cahors in 1358. The Lord of Cieurac, of the family of Cardaillac-Lapopie, resided there from the 15th C. onwards. In 1790, the château belonged to Pierre-Jacques de Godailh, Knight, Marquis of Cieurac and mayor of Montauban. It was pillaged during the revolution and the Gothic chapel destroyed. This Renaissance château and its mill were given Historic Monument listing in 1937. Now entirely restored, the privately-owned château has been open to the public since 1987.