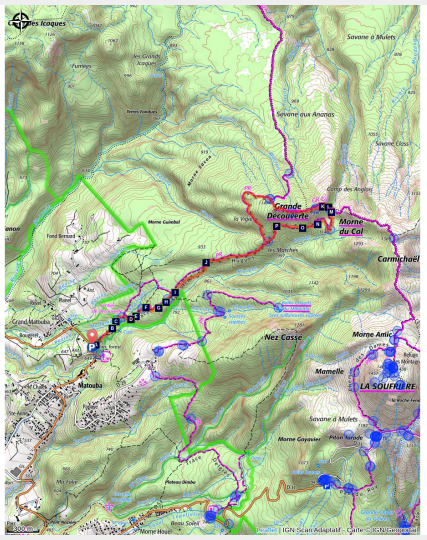
Grande Découverte

Basse-Terre Sud

point de vue depuis la Grande Découverte (C.Lesponne - PNG)



A hike that combines quite a challenging walk, some impressive views and a chance to visit la Rivière Rouge, a spot that is renowned for its cool waters.

Useful information

Practice : Walking

Duration : 4 h

Length : 7.5 km

Trek ascent : 578 m

Difficulty : Difficult

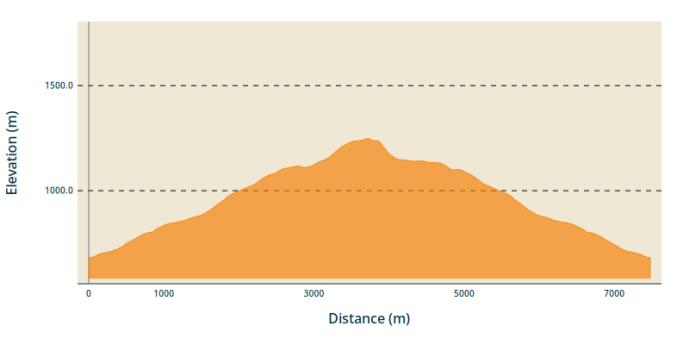
Type : Return trip

Themes : Geology

Trek

Departure : Matouba forest house, Saint-Claude
Arrival : Matouba forest house, Saint-Claude
Markings : PR (short hike network)
Cities : 1. Saint-Claude
2. Capesterre-Belle-Eau

Altimetric profile

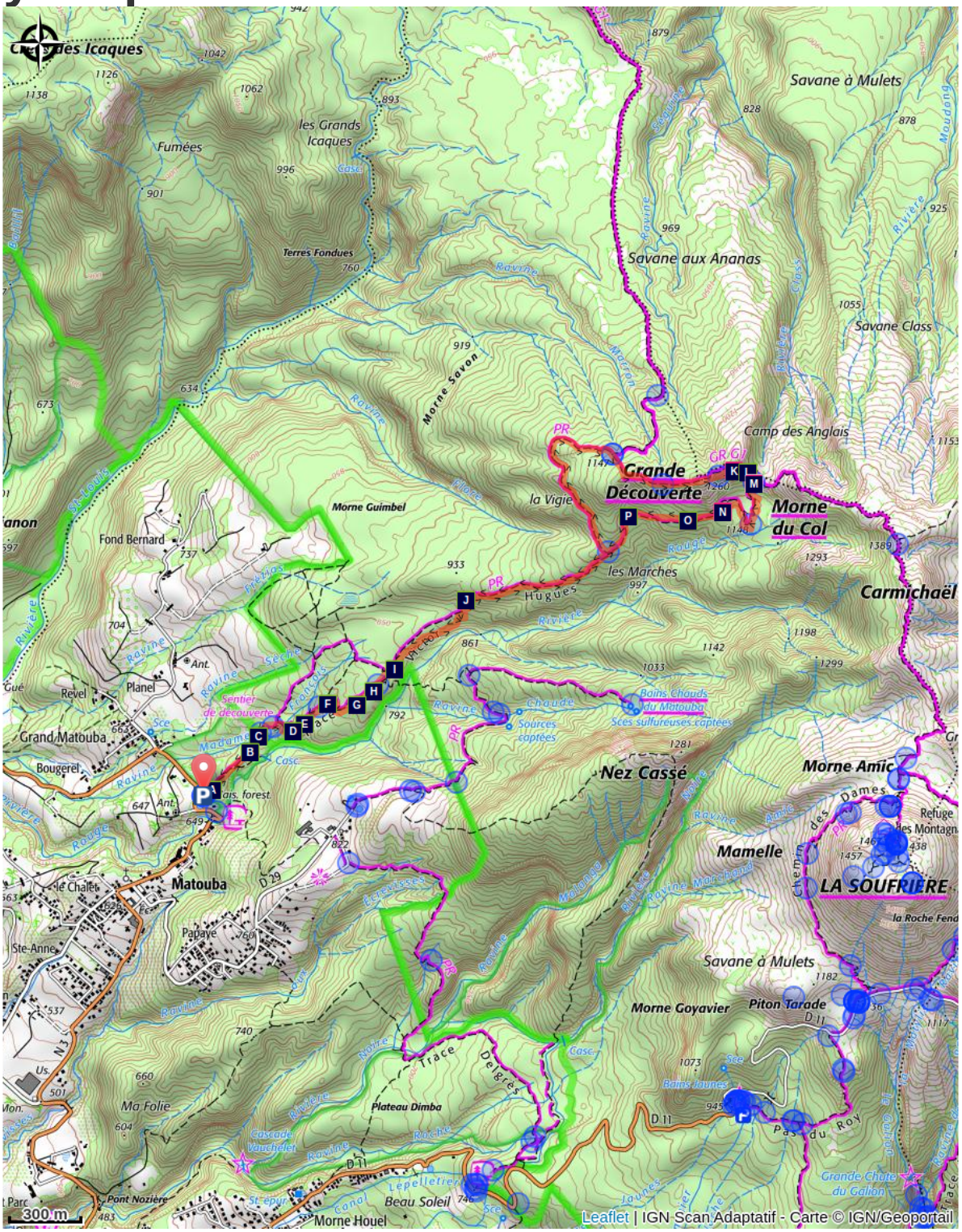


Min elevation 681 m Max elevation 1248 m

Hiking trail colour: yellow

Take the trail that leads up to the left of the information board. The path begins with a steady climb among the tall trees of the rainforest. Cross the Madame François ravine. Turn right at the intersection. Cross the ravine once more. Keep going on the same path. At the next intersection, go straight ahead towards "Grande Découverte par la Vigie" (the path on the right leads to the Bains Chauds du Matouba).
Turn left towards "Grande Découverte par la Vigie", "Sarcelle" and "Merwart". The climb gets steeper here and the path is narrower. You reach la Vigie at the next intersection. Then turn right towards "Grande Découverte" and then "Soufrière par Carmichäel".
The trail crosses the ridge and reaches the summit of the Grande Découverte, offering some spectacular views. The descent is initially steep, with views of the Carmichäel trail opposite. Turn right at the intersection towards "Matouba". The trail is noticeably rocky. Keep going and return to the parking area at the start.

On your path...



- Eucalyptus (A)
- West Indian Mahogany (C)
- The Yucca Plum Pine (E)
- Antillean euphonia (G)
- Mangrove cuckoo (I)
- The ridge and the summit (K)
- Cyprus trees (B)
- Caribbean pine (D)
- "Bwa bandé" (F)
- Candlewood (H)
- Guadeloupe woodpecker (J)
- Clusia mangle (L)

Morne du Col (M)
Le Nez Cassé (N)
Symphonia globulifera (O)
Amanoa caribeae (P)

All useful information

Is in the midst of the park

The national park is an unrestricted natural area but subjected to regulations which must be known by all visitors.

Advices

As Guadeloupe is prone to natural risks, extra care should be taken in this natural environment. For the benefit of all hikers, responsible behaviour is very important.
Warning : the parking area is unsupervised.

How to come ?

Transports

En Guadeloupe, 2 applications pour le covoiturage :
Dépozé : https://depoze.fr
KAROS : https://www.karos.fr

Access

GPS coordinates of the start point : Lat : 16,04668 N - Long : 61,69177 W.

In the village of Saint-Claude, go past the Post Office and take a left onto Avenue du Maréchal Foch. Then go past the Tourism Office and City Hall. At the stop before the church, turn right on Route RN3 which goes towards Matouba. Go past three bridges and the picnic area of the Rivière Rouge. Then keep going until you reach the top of the hill. A sign showing the way for Matouba will direct you to the parking area on the right-hand side of the road, before the Maison Forestière (run by the National Forestry Office).

Advised parking

Matouba forest house

Accessibility

Signage

Nouveau dispositif "balises de secours" en Guadeloupe (04.2025).
En vue de faciliter les opérations de recherche et de secours, l'ONF Guadeloupe a mis en place un dispositif de balises de secours sur plusieurs sentiers de randonnée.
Ce dispositif a pour objectif d'aider les randonneurs en difficulté à se localiser et d'améliorer l'action des secours grâce à un système de repérage standardisé.
Les sentiers équipés de ces nouvelles balises sont : le Pas du Roy et le Chemin des Dames (zone Soufrière), Carmichaël et la Grande Découverte (Saint-Claude), le saut des Trois Cornes, ainsi que la boucle de Tête Allègre (Sainte-Rose).

Information desks

Headquarters of the National Park of Guadeloupe
Montéran, 97120 Saint-Claude

info@randoguadeloupe.gp
Tel : 0590 41 55 55
http://www.guadeloupe-parcnational.fr/fr/des-decouvertes/ou-sinformer/siege-de-saint-claude

Source

Rando Guadeloupe

https://www.randoguadeloupe.gp/

On your path...

Eucalyptus (A)

Members of the Myrtaceae family, Eucalyptus trees were originally imported from Australia. They prosper in moist and acidic soil. The bark comes off in patches and the tree exudes a resinous gum when damaged.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

Cyprus trees (B)

The cypress tree belongs to the Cupressaceae family. With an easily recognisable smell, this tree was introduced to Guadeloupe as an ornamental species.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

West Indian Mahogany (C)

The West Indian Mahogany *(Swietennia macrophylla)* belongs to the Meliaceae family. It is a perennial tree with a large, upright, cylindrical bole and small, yellow-green flowers. This species - highly prized by woodworkers on account of its hardness and colouration - was introduced for the purposes of producing timber, leading to the tree being overexploited in its area of origin. It is listed in Appendix II of the threatened species covered by the Washington Convention.

Caribbean pine (D)

The Caribbean pine *(Pinus caribeae)* is a member of the Pinaceae family. Now considered an invasive species in Guadeloupe, this tree was introduced so that its wood could be used as timber. It has noticeably cracked, reddish-brown bark, while the inner bark is highly resinous. It has a slender top which is shaped like a rounded pyramid.

Attribution : PNG

The Yucca Plum Pine (E)

A member of the Podocarpaceae family, the Yucca Plum Pine *(Podocarpus coriaceus)* is also known locally as the "Wood rose". Closely related to conifers, it is an average-sized tree, with leathery leaves that are dark green on top and similar to an oleander's. Its brown-coloured seeds in their floral buds are particularly eye-catching. It has a thin layer of bark. This species flowers mainly in December/January, with inconspicuous flowers.

Attribution : E.Savy - PNG

"Bwa bandé" (F)

Richeria grandis belongs to the Phyllanthaceae family. It is a large variety, distinctive for its tough leaves and reddish-brown bark that so often falls victim to rogue extraction. Also known as bwa bandé in Créole, it is renowned for its aphrodisiac qualities. Its wood is used as timber or in carpentry. It has very distinctive, green, grape-like fruits which form small pods and form copiously on its branches.

Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG

Antillean euphonia (G)

The Antillean euphonia *(Euphonia musica)* is also known as Douvan nwèl in Creole. The bird is distinctive for its bright blue crown and neck, while its cheeks are a darker shade of blue/green. It has a bright yellow breast and chin. Its back is olive and green, while its belly is yellow/green. This sedentary nesting bird is not very common in Guadeloupe, but it is found in the rainforest at medium altitude. It is on the IUCN Red List and is one of the species on to make the list of nesting birds in Guadeloupe.

Attribution : Anthony Levesque / Amazona

Candlewood (H)

Symphonia globulifera, also commonly known as the chewstick tree, belongs to the Clusiaceae family. The tree grows in thick, humid and swampy forests. Reaching up to 25-30 metres in height, it has stilt roots and a yellow latex trunk. Its flowers are formed of bright red petals, while its fruits resemble nutmeg, are oval in shape and yellow when ripe. It wood was one used as timber for houses and resin for boats.

Attribution : AAMG

Mangrove cuckoo (I)

The Mangrove cuckoo *(coccyzus minor)* is also known as the Coucou Manioc in Creole. It is recognisable for its black patch over one eye, for its long, layered tail and for its beak, which curves downwards. It measures between 28-31 cm.

Attribution : F. Hemery

Guadeloupe woodpecker (J)

The only endemic bird species to the country, the Guadeloupe woodpecker measures 26-28 cm. Its beak is long and slender and, in the male, is longer than the head, unlike in females. It is adorned with black plumage, has a blood-red throat and belly and blue/black back. It can be seen quite frequently on tree trunks, which it hammers into with its powerful beak (hence its Creole name of "Toto bwa"). It moves over short distances in rippling, gliding movements. The Guadeloupe woodpecker is included on the list of endangered species.

Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG

The ridge and the summit (K)

The ridge and summit of the Grande Découverte offers stunning views towards the south (Nez Cassé, La Soufrière) and the southwest (Saint-Claude, "Papaye", Baillif and Basse-Terre).

Attribution : C.Lesponne - PNG

Clusia mangle (L)

Clusia mangle is a member of the Clusiaceae family. It is endemic to the Lesser Antilles, where it is found above 800 metres above sea level, where winds are often fierce and humidity is constant. It is a shrub with leathery, fleshy and shiny leaves. Its fruits, which are between 1-2 centimetres, are similar to big yellow/green olives.

Attribution : Fabien Salles / PNG

Morne du Col (M)

Heading south, views of la Grande Faille de la Soufrière and le Morne Amic. Le Camp Maréchal is located in a caldeira, formed during a volcanic eruption. Towards the northeast, overlooking la Montagne de la Capesterre.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

Le Nez Cassé (N)

Views of le Nez Cassé, summit located to the west of la Soufrière.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG

Symphonia globulifera (O)

Symphonia globulifera, also commonly known as the chewstick tree, belongs to the Clusiaceae family. The tree grows in thick, humid and swampy forests. Reaching up to 25-30 metres in height, it has stilt roots and a yellow latex trunk. Its flowers are formed of bright red petals, while its fruits resemble nutmeg, are oval in shape and yellow when ripe. It wood was one used as timber for houses and resin for boats.

Attribution : PNG

Amanoa caribeae (P)

Amanoa caribeae belongs to the Euphorbiaceae family. This species is endemic to the Lesser Antilles.
It is a large tree with a trunk that rests straight on its buttresses, depending on the terrain. The most distinctive features of this species are its reddish bark and roots at the foot of the trunk. Its leaves vary in shape: sometimes they are whole, sometimes pointed. Its flowers form small clusters. The hard wood of this tree was used as timber or in carpentry.

Attribution : Emilie Savy / PNG