



Walk 2: MONT CHAUVE D'ASPREMONT

Distance: 10.5km/6.5mi; 3h20min
Grade: moderate ascent of 345m/1130ft and descent of 530m/1740ft. Good, but stony, paths and tracks underfoot. Little shade. Red and white GR, yellow PR waymarking. *IGN map 3742 OT*
Equipment: see page 61; refreshments available at Aspremont
How to get there:  to Aspremont; return on Nice town  25 or 70 to the centre

Alternative walk: Aspremont — Mont Chauve d'Aspremont — Aspremont. 8km/5mi; 2h40min. Grade as main walk (ascent/descent of 345m/1130ft). Follow the main walk to the FORT (1h 25min). The return path to Aspremont leaves from the north side of the outer wall (yellow waymark on the protective railing). *Watch carefully for the yellow waymarks on this narrow goats' path which descends through broom, lavender and thyme, heading towards the*

houses of Sambule below. At a wide crossing path, turn right, then keep downhill until you come to a TUNNEL on the left (30 minutes from the fort). Walk through it (no torch needed) and exit looking straight across to the neighbouring (ruined) fort, Tourrette. Head right on a gravel track and turn left on another track after 200m/yds. At the Y-fork that follows almost immediately, bear left. When you come to a yellow arrow pointing up to the right, *ignore it*; keep ahead on the lovely grassy path, now making straight for Aspremont. Keep left again at the next Y-fork. Some 500m/yds further on, the path deteriorates and zigzags downhill over skiddy rubble. When you meet a cart track, turn left. On coming to a lane (**Chemin de la Bergerie**), follow it to the left. This takes you back to the GR51, which you follow back to Aspremont.

The flanks of Mont Chauve ('Bald Mountain') are virtually treeless, so all along this invigorating ridge walk you'll have unimpeded views. The sense of isolation is wonderful, too; it's hard to believe you're at the edge of the Riviera — until you take in the panorama from the massive fort!

Start out at the BUS STOP/CAR PARK in Aspremont. Walk towards NICE on the D14, but quickly turn right down the **Chemin de la Vallière** (GR waymarks), taking concrete steps down into the **Magnan**

Valley. Meet the D14 again in five minutes and go straight over, up a lane. In two minutes keep ahead on a stony path. At a PYLON (10min), turn sharp right uphill on the GR5. (The path straight

ahead is the GR51, return route for the Alternative walk.) Rising on this stony path, you enjoy a fine view back over Aspremont on its conical hill and to the perched villages of Le Broc and Carros on the far side of the Var. Soon you pass a ruined building, **Fondalin (25min)** in a very pleasant, grassy setting. The path rises gently through golden grasses and *garrigues* until, when you are above Nice's crematorium on the main road, the sea comes into view ahead.

Les Faces (35min) is the next little ruin on route. Rising below abandoned hillside terracing, you come to a final ruin (**Les Templiers; 50min**) and reach a fork 200m/yds further on. Leave the GR here: turn sharp left uphill on a cart track, now following yellow waymarks and enjoying some fine views down over Nice and the coast. On approaching a rock face, follow the track in a U-bend to the left and then a sharp turn to the right (where a track goes straight ahead back towards Les Faces).

The observatory on Mont Gros, as well as Mont Alban, Mont Boron and the port (Walk 1) provide focal points on this stretch. The track contours above the rock face, with a fine view to the right along the Crête de Graus — the ridge you will follow back to Nice.

On meeting a road (**Piste des Morgues; 1h05min**), follow it uphill in tight hairpin bends to the **SUMMIT of Mont Chauve d'Aspremont (1h25min)**. The massive old FORT here, the last in a line of coastal defenses stretching from Ste-Agnès (Walk 9) to Nice, is one of the best viewpoints on the Côte d'Azur. While the coastal views are mesmerising, don't forget to look back north — up towards the Mercantour and the Alps! Take time, too, to walk down around the grassy 'moat' between the inner and outer walls.



From the fort retrace your steps to the GR5 (2h05min). Now follow it to the left along the **Crête de Graus**. A slight rise takes you up to a COL in about 35 minutes; ignore any minor or crossing paths, keep heading along the main path, towards a PYLON. The path descends to the ruined walls of the **Château Reynard (2h55min)**, from where there is another fine view. As the descent becomes more pronounced, you come to a T-junction: go left, towards another PYLON. At the pylon, *ignore* the yellow PR route straight ahead; go right on the GR, down towards a field. In the field, go left on a crossing path, into the olive groves and pines of a picnic area with tables (**Aire St-Michel; 3h12min**). On meeting a lane, follow it downhill past villas, to a BUS SHELTER on **Avenue Jules Roman (3h20min)**.

View north from the flanks of Mont Chauve d'Aspremont

