

## Walk 6: DENTELLES DE MONTMIRAIL

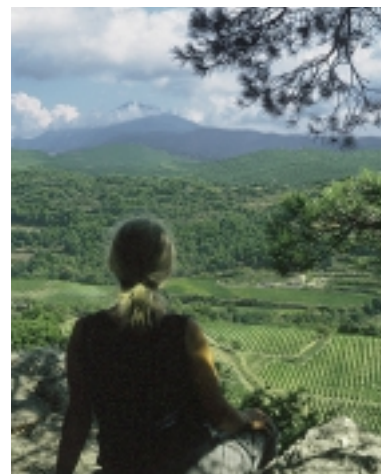
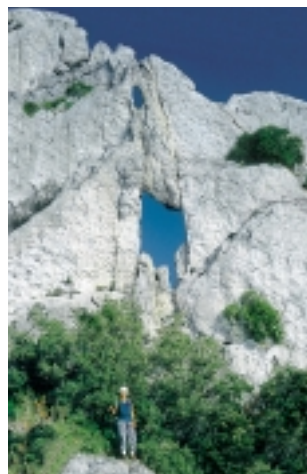
**Distance:** 8km/5mi; 3h25min  
**Grade:** moderate-strenuous, with ascents/descents of 350m/1150ft overall. Some of the descent paths are steep and stony; you must be sure-footed and agile, but the paths are not vertiginous. Adequate shade. Blue, then yellow PR waymarking. *IGN map 3040 ET*  
**Equipment:** see page 55; walking stick(s). No refreshments available beyond Gigondas  
**How to get there:** 🚗 to the Col du Cayron (large parking area). From Gigondas (Car tour 3) follow LES FLORETS, DENTELLES DE MONTMIRAIL. When the road re-

verts to track continue ahead for another 0.7km and park at the col, just over 2km from the turn-off. Or 🚗 to Gigondas and walk to the col (add 4km/1h15min return)  
**Short walk: Col du Cayron — Rocher du Midi — Col du Cayron.** 3.5km/2.2mi; 1h40min. Moderate climb/descent of 220m/720ft, *requiring agility*. Follow the main walk to the crest, then return to the fork at the 25min-point and head left. The path climbs a bit initially, then leaves the crest and after 30 minutes descends to the Rocher du Midi (⚡). There turn right on the track back to the col.

One of the most exquisite walks you will ever take, *anywhere*, this magnificent hike leads you up, over and between the Dentelles and their glistening vineyards — with splendid views to Mont Ventoux.

**Start out at the Col du Cayron** (394m): first follow the yellow sign 'COL D'ALSAU 2,5KM', then climb the signposted SENTIER D'ACCES AUX DENTELLES. From here until you reach the Col d'Alsau, *carefully follow* the blue dots (*some of which bear the number '2' painted in white*). At a fork (25min), keep left uphill (blue Ⓣ); the path to the right is followed in the Short walk. Six minutes later you are in the setting shown opposite (above). (*Here the Short walk returns to the fork*) Turn right and scramble along the undulating ridge, rounding the **Rocher du Turc** with its 'window' (626m/2050ft, the highest point in the Dentelles). Ignore a *very difficult* path signposted back sharp left to the Rocher du Turc (1h); keep ahead beneath the 'window' of the **Tête Vieille**. Soon the steep descent begins (sometimes on all fours); this drops you down to the pine-scented **Col d'Alsau** (445m; 1h15min). Turn left at the col but, after 50m/yds, turn left uphill (\*: CANTON

DU CLAPIS, ignoring the track right to Beumes-de-Venise. At a Y-fork almost immediately, climb steps to the right (blue Ⓣ and yellow waymarks). The climb quickly levels out, as you skirt the **Grand Montmirail** on your right. *Now you must assiduously follow sparse but crucial yellow waymarks*. Make for the 'needle' of rock eventually seen ahead in the valley (the western edge of the **Lame du Clapis**). Just as you reach the 'needle' (blue Ⓣ), skirt to the left of it and then scramble up over bedrock (blue dot with '3.5' pointing back in the direction from which you've come). Beyond here, bear in mind that you must cross to the far side of the valley *before* it becomes a gorge. Watch for the *yellow* waymarks and, when the path forks, keep to the lower path. This takes you *very steeply* down to the left in hairpins, where you cross the pretty rock pools of the **Ravin du Vallat de l'Aiguille** (2h). Just past here, at a three-way fork, keep straight ahead. Soon the pine-scented path heads



You climb quickly to the ridge atop the Dentelles Sarrasines (top and left), where you follow the path west past a stupendous array of jagged rocks pierced with 'windows'. From the Chapelle St-Christophe, you look out west over vineyards to Mont Ventoux.

east towards a 'sugar loaf' hill. Cross two streams; beyond the second keep straight ahead, with a vineyard on your left (*no waymarks*). Rise up to a lane (2h25min). Turn right and, at a bend, climb the path up left to the beautifully-

sited **Chapelle St-Christophe** (2h35min), a shady spot for a break. Then return to the lane and turn right. Some 450m/yds beyond **Cassan**, at a fork (2h50min), go left past vineyards, back to the **Col du Cayron** (3h25min).

