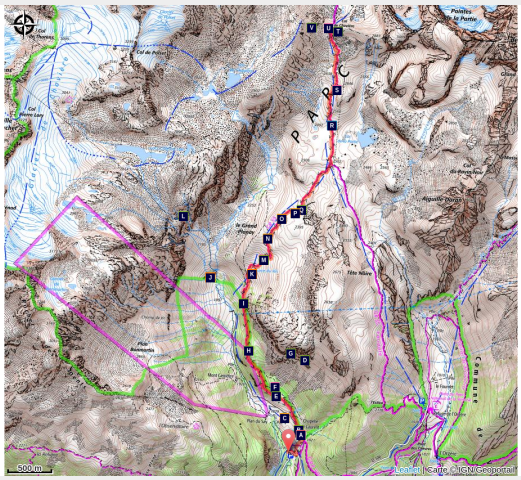
Col de Chavière

Vanoise - SAINT-ANDRE

Vue en direction de Pralognan-la-Vanoise depuis le col de Chavière (LEPOUTRE Maëlle)



A gentle climb to the high mountain by an easy trail which leads to a breathtaking panoramic view and access to a pass scattered with névés.

Ÿou climb into the privacy of a small authentic valley. After the hamlet you cross a sparse forest before reaching the alpine pastures. Then you roam through a mineral landscape where you will be rewarded with a 360° view of the Vanoise glaciers.

Useful information

Practice : Walking hike

Duration : 7 h

Length : 13.5 km

Trek ascent : 1018 m

Difficulty : Easy

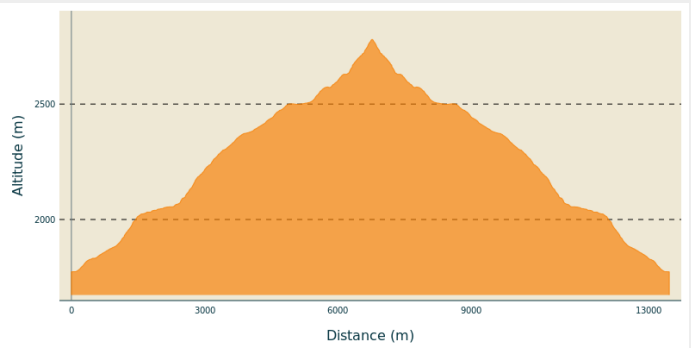
Type : Return

Themes : Architecture, Flora , Lake and glacier

Trek

Departure : Polset car park in Modane
Arrival : Polset car park in Modane
Markings : GR
Cities : 1. SAINT-ANDRE
2. MODANE

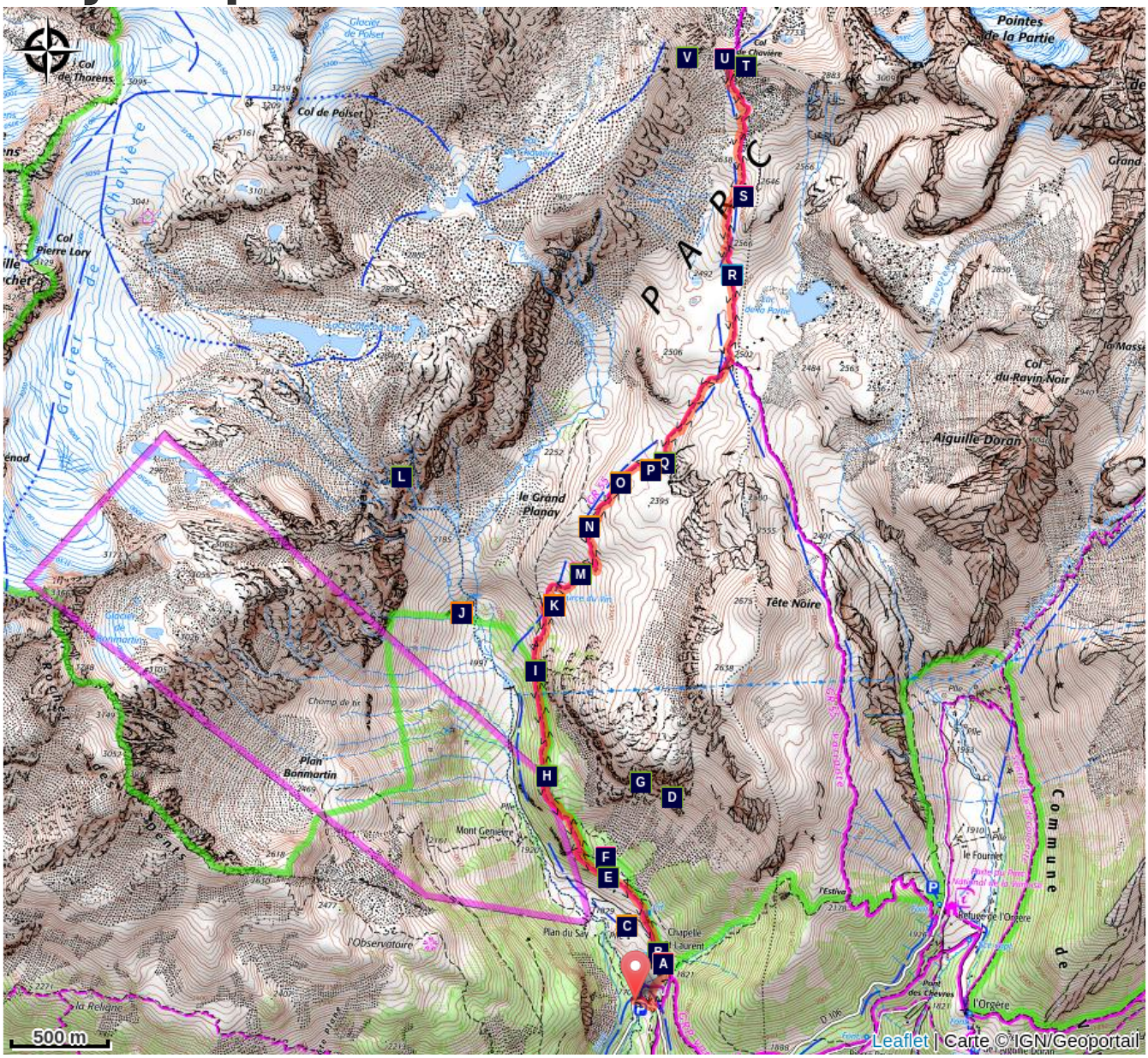
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1773 m Max elevation 2780 m

"From the car park, follow the road, cross the bridge straddling the Polset stream, then take the track on the left. Cross the hamlet of Polset. At the end of the hamlet, leave the track to take a path on your right signposted by the National Park: Lac de la Partie, Col de Chavière. Gradually climb through a forest. Arrive at the Source du Vin. Continue along the trail that winds through the alpine pastures, passing in front of a shepherd’s chalet. Merge onto a crossing of the trail, take the left still following the sign for ""Col de Chavière"". Ÿou can make a detour by the Lac de la Partie located below the trail to the east. Continue climbing through the cargneule terrain then through a long scree, sometimes covered with late névés. Ÿou have arrived. Turn back to retrace your steps to reach the departure point."

On your path...



Hamlet of Polset (A)
Pasture land (C)

The scarce swallowtail (E)
The eagle and festooning. (G)
The ring ouzel (I)
The Source du Vin (source of wine) (K)
The guard dog (M)

The black redstart (B)
Wintering grounds of the chamois and ibex (D)
The amphitheatre (F)
The high-altitude forest (H)
The Polset waterfalls (J)
The great yellow gentian (L)

The cattle rests (N)

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

Presence of a late névé at the edges of the pass. Bypass it and avoid undertaking it when the snow is still very hard.

How to come ?

Transports

"
Rail connection to Modane. Information: www.voyages-sncf.com
Suggested hitchhiking organised in the Haute-Maurienne valley. Information: www.rezopouce.fr
"

Access

From the exit of the A43 motorway, take the direction of Modane. At the Freney roundabout, take the RD 106 towards the Refuge de l´Orgère which is signposted. Cross the village of Saint-André, the hamlet of Col and park in the car park located below the hamlet of Polset.

Advised parking

Polset car park in Modane

Accessibility

One disabled car park space available.

Information desks

Point Info Tourisme Modane
Maison Cantonale, 9 Place Sommeiller,
73500 Modane

info@cchmv.fr
Tel : 04 79 05 26 67
https://www.cchautemaurienne.com

Office de Tourisme d'Aussois
43 route des Barrages, 73500 Aussois

info@hautemaurienne.com
Tel : 04 79 05 99 06
https://www.aussois.com

Point info Parc national de la Vanoise - Modane
Maison cantonale - Place sommeiller,
73500 Modane
Tel : 04 79 62 30 54
https://www.vanoise-parcnational.fr

On your path...

Hamlet of Polset (A)

The climate and local materials have brought about a special know-how in the construction of buildings, which are built on an East-West orientation, supported and well hung on the slope. The buildings take advantage of existing boulders and natural hollows to provide shelter from avalanches and the wind. In Polset, an interesting fact is that the builders combined both stone and wood. Beams embedded in the masonry form a chain that surround the building to strengthen its cohesion.

Attribution : PNV - MOLLARD Maurice

The black redstart (B)

Another bird that bears his name well! Generally dark, apart from the red tail feathers and the edge of the white wings in the male, it is easily recognisable. Its song is also quite simple and recalls the sound of crinkling paper. It likes old buildings where it can make its nest. The hamlet of Polset offers it shelter and cover during the summer months.

Attribution : PNV - HERRMANN Mylène

Pasture land (C)

The Vanoise is also an agricultural land. This pasture is currently used by sheep in the summer. These sheep are transhumant originating from the south of France. This pastoral vocation is old and the chalets are proof of it. Carrying on this activity is important for keeping the open spaces that are habitats for many species.

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe

Wintering grounds of the chamois and ibex (D)

Thanks to their southern exposure and their steep declivity, the slopes above the hamlet of Polset are replete with chamois and ibex during the winter months. The steep terrain and its predominantly southern exposure facilitate the clearance of snow and allow the ungulates to quickly find the grass that is vital to their winter survival.

Attribution : PNV - CHASTIN Alain

The scarce swallowtail (E)

Large, generally pale yellow with black stripes that cut through its wings, it is easy to spot even in full flight. It tends to hover in flight. A beautiful butterfly that can’t be missed, it loves warm, herbaceous and slightly bushy areas with rocky outcrops. The Polset valley has a wealth of assets to welcome this butterfly.

Attribution : PNV - LACOSSE Pierre

The amphitheatre (F)

First stop to observe the “stones”. Strata are visible, so we have a sedimentary rock. 300 million years ago a chain of mountains covered what was to become France. Eroded, it left space for a warm, shallow sea. At the bottom of this sea, the sediments were deposited and our rock began to form between -240 and -233 million years. In 7 million years a rock thickness of about 150 m was created. We can only see about 5 metres here. It is grey limestone. The uplift of the Alps 80 million years ago moved and carried this rock to where we walk today.

The eagle and festooning. (G)

The cliffs above Polset have provided nesting for the golden eagle. If the eyries (nests) are poorly visible, the eagles can still be seen during the mating season when they put on magnificent displays. During these displays, the eagles fly through the skies tracing the curves of a parabola, soaring rapidly then diving. It is said that the eagles festoon. The period running from March to April is the best time to see this wonderful spectacle.

Attribution : PNV - MOLLARD Maurice

The high-altitude forest (H)

The mountain forests, which like the one occupying the Polset valley, consist almost entirely of coniferous trees. These trees are in fact more resistant to the cold. The selection of species is influenced by the air humidity; at around 1,800 m, you will find the spruce, which then gradually makes way for the fir, and then in turn gives way to the larch and cembro pine on the southern slopes. Of course, the boundaries are not clear and we usually find a mixture of these four species with a predominance of one depending on altitude or exposure.

Attribution : PNV - JOURDAN Jérémie

The ring ouzel (I)

It is easy to identify because it assumes the plumage of the common blackbird. It is distinguished by its large white bib on the breast and clear edging on the feathers of the wings and the belly. This wild, fast-flying mountain thrush inhabits the edges of the larch, Scots pine, spruce and cembro pine forests between 1,000 to 2,500 metres in altitude. Ÿou will easily notice this bird at the tops of the trees where it loves to perch!

Attribution : PNV - CHARRON Julien

The Polset waterfalls (J)

From the seasonal melting of the Chavière glacier, the water flows gently before gushing over the walls at a height of about 100 m. After a brief moment of respite where the stream winds through lush vegetation, it plunges again over a succession of falls which, although not as high, are equally as pretty. It is quite surprising to see the variations in colour and flow of these waterfalls that can be seen on the same the day.

Attribution : PNV - VON CONTA Beatrix

The Source du Vin (source of wine) (K)

This small spring, which obviously dœs not produce wine, was set up by the workers of the National Park to offer a welcome pit stop on this very sunny route. The origin of the name of this place is not really known, but the most sensible explanation would be to say that it is a place where one could drink wine without restraint!

The great yellow gentian (L)

Among the gentian species, the great yellow gentian is the most used: its roots have tonic, digestive and cleansing properties. Abandoned by cows for its bitterness, it was traditionally picked at the end of September. It should not be confused with the white hellebore (Veratrum album) which is similar in appearance before flowering but very toxic. Distinguishing between the two is easy: the leaves of the gentian are positioned in an opposing way while the veratrum album alternate in spirals. The gentian grows abundantly in the highland pastures.

Attribution : PNV - BALAIS Christian

The guard dog (M)

The natural return of the wolf has wreaked havoc on pastoral practices. In order to protect their flocks, breeders have put in place protective measures: the presence of a shepherd to monitor the sheep as well as the establishment of enclosures. To complete this measure, Pyrenean Mountain Dogs (Patous), used secularly, have been reintroduced to the mountain pastures. The word patou designates the dog’s protective role and not its race. The dogs generally used are Pyrenean Mountain Dogs. The patou protects the herd against everything he considers a predator, one of which is the wolf.

Attribution : PNV - TISSOT Nathalie

The cattle rests (N)

"Called ""cattle rests"", these grounds where the herds are stationed are greatly enriched with nitrates by the animal excrement. Often located near a shepherd´s hut, they have a dense, exuberant and sparsely varied vegetation, composed mainly of alpine docks. This nitrophilous plant (which likes nitrate) is also called ""monk’s rhubarb""."

Attribution : PNV - AUGE Vincent