



# Tour du Rateau d'Aussois

Vanoise - VILLARODIN-BOURGET

Transhumance des brebis vers le Col du Barbier (Mathieu BEURIER)



*This hike will allow you to discover the high mountains before gradually bringing you back to your starting point by a long panoramic trail through the alpine pastures and forest.*

After zigzagging through the alpine pastures, you will be surprised to meet a mineral landscape specific to the high altitude. Yet by venturing further into these places, you will discover all the riches of the bright shimmering flowers and a discreet but ubiquitous fauna. This itinerary is filled with opportunities to see the fauna, perhaps leading you to encounter the ibex, surprise a ptarmigan or a mountain hare or see a bearded vulture.

## Useful information

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Practice : Walking hike

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Duration : 8 h

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Length : 15.7 km

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Trek ascent : 1239 m

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Difficulty : Difficult

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Type : Loop

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Themes : Fauna , Flora ,  
Pastoralism

# Trek

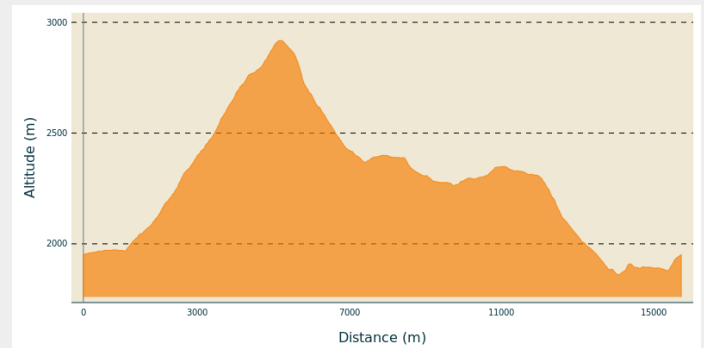
**Departure** : Orgère car park, Villarodin-Bourget

**Arrival** : Orgère car park, Villarodin-Bourget

**Markings** :  GR

**Cities** : 1. VILLARODIN-BOURGET  
2. AUSSOIS

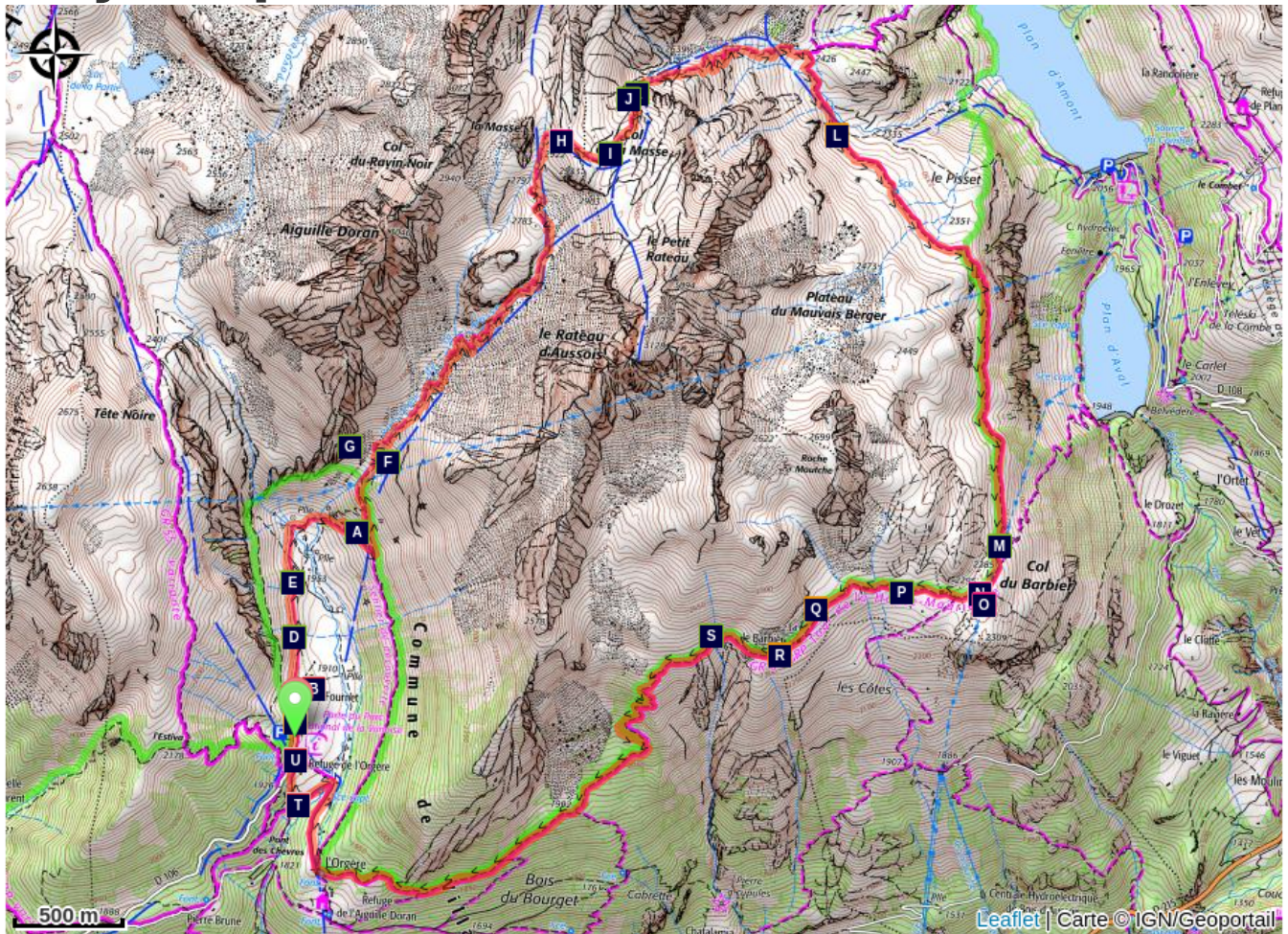
## Altimetric profile












Min elevation 1860 m Max elevation 2918 m

"Park at the Orgère car park, end of the road. Then take the old EDF track, located at the bottom of the car park. Follow the route for "Col de la Masse". Pass a concrete bridge that straddles the Povaret stream to reach the foot of the Aiguille Doran. Continue along the trail, cross a wooden footbridge to cross the Masse stream, then continue on this winding trail until you reach a crossing. Turn left as indicated by the sign "Col de la Masse". At the pass, you can descend by the same route and shorten the journey time. The more adept can also reach the summit of the Rateau d'Aussois by a sparsely marked and steep path. Otherwise, continue the circuit by a relatively marked descent path and reach a vast sloping ledge: the Plateau du Mauvais Berger. Then follow the sign for "Col du Barbier" and continue through a terraced path, passing through the Col du Barbier and chalets. Then go back down through the forest, then after a sloping ledge still in the forest go up slightly to return to the Orgère valley. Pass in the vicinity of the restored chalets, come to a stone bridge allowing you to cross the Povaret stream. Continue on, then cross a group of buildings, including a chapel on your left. Follow the markers for the discovery trail and climb through a Scots pine forest by a winding path. Come out on to a road, climbing back up to reach the car park where you departed."

# On your path...



-  The red deer (A)
-  The Orgère valley (C)
-  The colours of autumn (E)
-  The alpine ibex, a survivor (G)
-  The Silene acaulis (I)
-  The alpine forget-me-not (K)
-  The wolf (M)
-  The chalets (B)
-  The small tortoiseshell (D)
-  Mountain arnica (F)
-  Col de la Masse (H)
-  The mountain hare (J)
-  Goats and sheep (L)
-  Col du Barbier (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.

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

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Rail connection to Modane. Information: [www.voyages-sncf.com](http://www.voyages-sncf.com)

No public transport between Modane and Orgère car park.

Suggested hitchhiking organised in the Haute-Maurienne valley. Information: [www.rezopouce.fr](http://www.rezopouce.fr)

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### 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. After a 30 minute drive, pass the Refuge on your right to access the car park.

### Advised parking

Orgère car park, Villarodin-Bourget

## **Accessibility**

Two disabled parking spaces, certified "Accessible Tourism" for the 4 types of disability.

## **Information desks**

### **Point Info Tourisme Modane**

Maison Cantonale, 9 Place Sommeiller,  
73500 Modane

[info@cchmv.fr](mailto: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](mailto:info@hautemaurienne.com)

Tel : 04 79 05 99 06

<https://www.aussois.com>

### **Office de Tourisme de La Norma**

Maison de La Norma, 73500 La Norma

[info@hautemaurienne.com](mailto:info@hautemaurienne.com)

Tel : 04 79 05 99 06

<https://www.la-norma.fr>

# On your path...

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## The red deer (A)

As a result of hunting and logging, the deer had all but disappeared from the Savoy forests. Reintroduced between 1958 and 1973, it has adapted remarkably well to the mountain environment to form a fine population. In autumn the mating season gives rise to spectacular fighting between males, but it is the raucous and powerful cries of the deer that bring the valley to life. Taking advantage of the peacefulness of the place, the animals bellow practically all day long.

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## The chalets (B)

"When most of the flat areas, more suitable for building chalets, were occupied, it was necessary to build on the slope, in areas more exposed to avalanches. Some chalets therefore had to be built with a specific architecture in order to resist avalanches: semi-buried, oriented in the direction of the slope and protected by a protective promontory called a ""tourne""."

Attribution : PNV - BREGEON Sébastien

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## The Orgère valley (C)

Orgère, where barley was grown. In past centuries, the need for pastures, hayfields and cultivated land on flat or slightly hilly areas forced man to deforest, even at high altitude. The right bank of the valley, presenting a gentler profile, was the most exploited. The rocks which clutter the plots are regularly placed in heaps, to form mounds of stones which still remain in the valley. Used during the summer, the valley was brought to life by about fifteen families and their little flock.

Attribution : PNV - PERRIER Jacques

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## The small tortoiseshell (D)

The small tortoiseshell is the first butterfly to land on the flowers which are barely out of the snow. The caterpillars feed only on nettles. They can be seen on their leaves piled into bundles with their two yellow bands on their backs. The butterfly, on the other hand, is orange in colour, inlaid with ebony and hemmed with a ring of blue spots around the edge of the wings.

Attribution : PNV - FOLLIET Patrick

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## ✿ The colours of autumn (E)

If you get the chance, do this hike in the autumn. The mélézin is adorned by beautiful golden hues. The large-fruit fireweed opens up to release a multitude of seeds surmounted by silky-white snow like threads. And higher up the ubac, the bilberry moors take on a beautiful red hue. Under the effect of the first frosts the alpine pastures are adorned with pretty warm colours that contrast sharply with the white of the first snows covering the summits.

Attribution : PNV - DEFRENNES Benoit

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## ✿ Mountain arnica (F)

A true burst of sunshine, this yellow flower, daisy-like in appearance is rather common in the sub-alpine moorlands and grasslands. Best known for its medicinal properties, used in anointing, arnica is very effective in the resorption of haematomas. But be careful not to ingest this pretty flower as it is dangerously poisonous, even fatal.

Attribution : PNV - BALAIS Christian

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## ✿ The alpine ibex, a survivor (G)

It is the Vanoise National Park's signature species, which was at the very heart of its creation. Having practically disappeared from the entire Alps region, only a very few small population clusters remain in France in Maurienne, including one at the foothills of the Aiguille Doran. Thanks to the creation of the National Park and then the long-term endeavours to protect and reintroduce this species, the ibex has managed to recolonise many of the mountain ranges in the French Alps.

Attribution : PNV - BEURIER Mathieu

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## ✿ Col de la Masse (H)

At the summit of the track, the Col de la Masse offers a 360° panoramic view with the Écrins, the Meige and the Pelvoux to the south, the Pointe de l'Échelle to the north, the Vanoise glaciers and the Dent Parrachée to the north-east, and right at the bottom, to the east, the Albaron!

Attribution : PNV - BRÉGEON Sébastien

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## ✿ The *Silene acaulis* (I)

This high-altitude plant, easily recognisable by its violet colour, is particular for its cushion-like shape. This feature is particular to several high-mountain species and highly useful in resisting the cold and wind. This cushion-like flower, the oldest of which can reach more than 50 years, contributes to the creation of a micro-ecosystem which will then be exploited by other plant species, thereby contributing to plant colonisation.

Attribution : PNV - FOLLIET Patrick

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## 🐰 The mountain hare (J)

Also known as the white hare, it has a rock-brown coloured coat in the summer and an all-white coat in the winter except for the tips of its ears. Smaller and rounder than the European hare, the mountain hare also has shorter ears and a thicker coat to limit heat loss. Its wider back paws act as snowshoes which allow it to move easily over the snow.

Attribution : PNV - MOLLARD Maurice

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## ✿ The alpine forget-me-not (K)

Among the floral procession of dwarf plants covering the windy ridges, the king of the Alps predominates. Needless to say, this bright blue flower has been named the “blue king-of-the-Alps”. Its pretty blue flowers are found high up in the mountains at an altitude reaching 3,750 metres, grouped in cushion-like clusters, nestled into the rocky crevices of the exposed ridges, often in the company of g n pi and androsace. This small forget-me-not can live for decades. The alpine forget-me-not was named by botanist Schrader because of its hairy, silk-like appearance. In Greek, eiros means wool and thrix, or hair.

Attribution : PNV - BALAIS Christian

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## 🐐 Goats and sheep (L)

On this alpine pasture of the “mauvais berger” goats and sheep are to be found. The goats are dairy cattle that descend the pasture every evening to be milked. Their milk is used for the local production of cheese. The lambs and sheep are sent to the meat industry. The lambs are born around March and grow all summer in the alpine pastures. Only the breeding ewes are kept in the sheepfold for winter. The Mauvais Berger flock consists of animals from several different owners. Pooling the flocks means the costs of herd care are shared.

Attribution : PNV - BEURIER Mathieu

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## The wolf (M)

The wolves inhabiting the valley come from Italy and hence are called Abruzzo wolves. They are distinguished by their white mask and black line on the tibia. The wolves live in packs of 2 to 5 on average. The wolf is a carnivore which feeds mainly on ungulates such as deer or chamois. Only the dominant pair of the pack breeds. The cubs are born in a den in late spring. Although the preferred habitat of the wolf is the forest, it ventures into the alpine pastures in search of easy prey such as flocks of sheep.

Attribution : PNV - DELORME Michaël



## Col du Barbier (N)

After a short rising section, the Col du Barbier reveals the entire lower Maurienne Valley, with a view of the Aiguilles d'Arves, but also over all the summits of the left bank of the Arc taking in the Sarrazins, the Grand Argentier, the Pointe de la Norma and the Aiguille de Scolette.

Attribution : Joris BOUCHARD