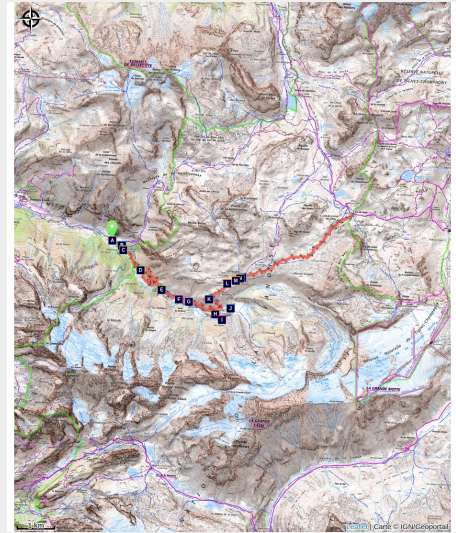


# Col du Palet from Laisonnay

Vanoise - CHAMPAGNY-EN-VANOISE



Bouquetin des Alpes mâle près du hameau du Laisonnay d'En Haut (Christophe GOTTI)



*A one-day hike to the foot of the north face of the Grande Casse, a little long, but not particularly difficult.*

Le guide de haute-montage et écrivain Roger Frison-Roche décrivait Laisonnay comme " un simple hameau estival, dorant ses pierres couvertes de lichens au pied d'une belle cascade." Le parcours débute parmi ces quelques bâtisses de pierres, au charme hors du temps. **Plus loin, au cœur du Parc national de la Vanoise, le refuge de la Glière offre une halte bienheureuse, là où s'échouent les glaciers et où s'ébat une faune sauvage nombreuse.** Surplombant un petit lac, le **Col du Palet** fait face au point culminant de la **Savoie : la Grande Casse, à 3855 m** d'altitude.

## Useful information

Practice : Walking hike

Duration : 8 h

Length : 23.9 km

Trek ascent : 1121 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Return

Themes : Geology , Lake and glacier, Summit

# Trek

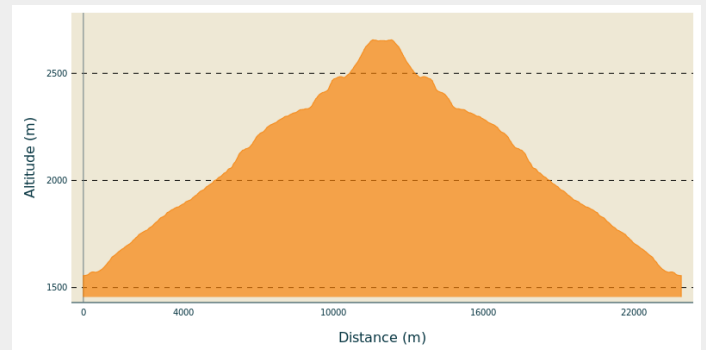
**Departure** : Car park, Laisonnay d'en bas, Champagny-en-Vanoise

**Arrival** : Car park, Laisonnay d'en bas, Champagny-en-Vanoise

**Markings** : 🚲 VTT → Parc

**Cities** : 1. CHAMPAGNY-EN-VANOISE  
2. PEISEY-NANCROIX

## Altimetric profile

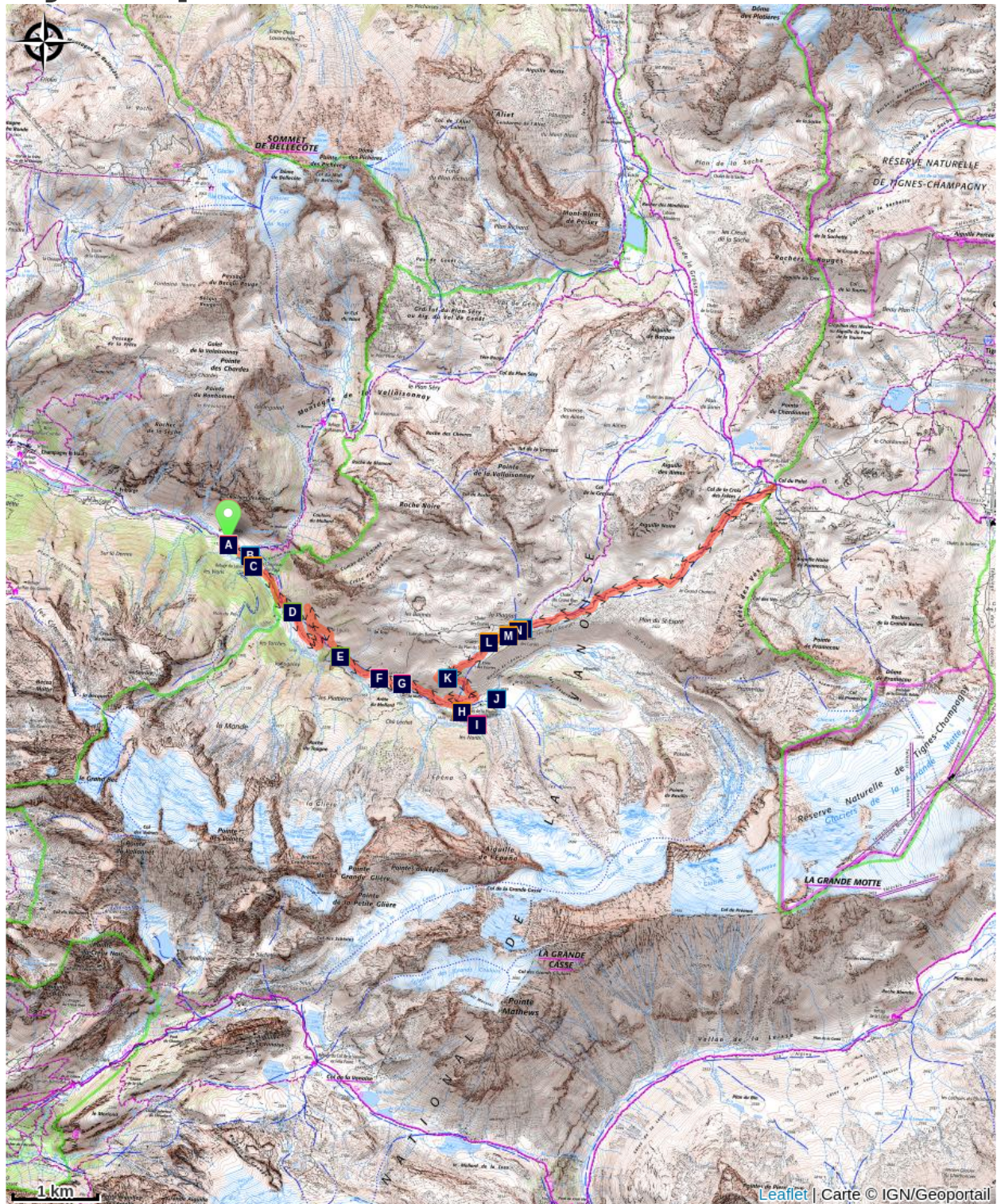


Min elevation 1556 m Max elevation 2657 m



From the Laisonnay d'en bas car park, follow the vehicle track to Laisonnay d'en haut, then the trail towards the Refuge de la Glière. The trail will cut through the pastoral track numerous times, to the level of the Plagne mountain pasture (600 m after the Chalet du Sel). Follow the signposts. Once at the Col du Palet, retrace your steps to the starting point.



# On your path...





-  Le Laisonnay d'En Haut (A)
-  Hamlet of Laisonnay (C)
-  The green alder (E)
-  Mountain forms and rock (G)
-  View over Lac de la Glière (I)
-  The Grande Motte (3,653m) (K)
-  Beaufort cheese (M)
-  Glacier Trail (B)
-  The marmot (D)
-  Dos de l'éléphant (1,850 m) (F)
-  The Refuge Communal de la Glière (1,996m). (H)
-  The Dry Lake of Glière (J)
-  The mountain pasture of Grande Plagne (L)
-  Mountaineering (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**

Mountain biking is only permitted on the vehicle track to the level of the Chalet du Grand Plan.

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

"Rail connection to Moûtiers. Information: [www.voyages-sncf.com](http://www.voyages-sncf.com)  
Then transport by coach to Champagny le Bas. Information: [www.transavoie.com](http://www.transavoie.com).  
Transport by taxi is still possible to Laisonnay d'en bas.  
Also think about car-sharing with [www.mobisavoie.fr](http://www.mobisavoie.fr)"

### Access

From Moûtiers, follow the RD 915 to Bozel, then the RD 91b towards Champagny, up to the car park of Laisonnay d'En Bas.

### Advised parking

Car park, Laisonnay d'en bas, Champagny-en-Vanoise

 **Information desks**

**Tourist Information Office -  
Champagny en Vanoise**

Le Centre, 73350 Champagny-en-Vanoise

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

Tel : 04 79 55 06 55

<http://www.champagny.com/>

**Maison du Parc national de la  
Vanoise - Pralognan**

Maison de la Vanoise, Avenue

Chasseforêt, 73710 Pralognan-la-Vanoise

[info.pralognan@vanoise-parcnational.fr](mailto:info.pralognan@vanoise-parcnational.fr)

Tel : 04 79 08 71 49

<https://www.vanoise-parcnational.fr>

# On your path...

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## Le Laisonnay d'En Haut (A)

The hamlet of Laisonnay d'En Haut consists of a dozen stone buildings. The traditional roofs are made from lauze (stone) and shingles (wood). More recent materials such as corrugated iron and steel panels can also be seen. The houses are grouped together to use the rare sites not exposed to natural hazards (avalanches, rock falls, flooding from the Doron). This is also done so as not to encroach on the pastures intended for livestock. Note the chapel of Notre Dame des Neiges downstream of the hamlet, and the old baker's oven upstream.

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe

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## Glacier Trail (B)

Take in the valley's true magnificence from the Palet Pass, which provides you with views of some of the massif's highest glaciers, with eight numbered marker posts located along the trail by the Vanoise National Park.

The itinerary, which takes around 4 hours to complete, was created and waymarked by the Vanoise National Park. The accompanying booklet contains all the information you might need as you get better acquainted with mountain glaciers. On the itinerary: the Glière mountain hut (restaurant service and beds for the night), the high mountain pastures of the Plan du Sel and the secrets of Beaufort cheese production, and above all, no end of marmots!

You can get a copy of the booklet at the Laisonnay Reception and Information Point.

Attribution : Gouedard

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## Hamlet of Laisonnay (C)

Laisonnay is the oldest and most remote hamlet. It was here that the first inhabitants (of Haute-Tarentaise) settled, after crossing the Palet Pass into the valley. It contains a dozen or so stone buildings with traditional stone slate and wooden shingle roofs and a renovated with smattering of more recent materials. Houses are grouped together in order to make use of the few locations not exposed to natural risks (avalanches, rock falls and flooding by the Doron). Notre Dame des Neiges Chapel downstream of the hamlet and the old oven upstream are both well worth a visit.

Attribution : OTGP



## The marmot (D)

An iconic animal of the alpine grasslands, the marmot is closely related to the squirrel, with 4 digits on the front paws and 5 digits on the back paws. The marmot lives on a family territory that the dominant adults defend tooth and claw. The marmot hibernates and lives idly for 6 months on its reserves of fat accumulated during the summer. The marmot is present throughout the entire route, but especially around the chapel of La Glière.

Attribution : PNV - HERRMANN Mylène

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## The green alder (E)

The green alder, called locally as the arcsosse, grows on the ubac (north facing slope) of the valley, as it prefers cooler environments. This shrub has the peculiarity of bending under the weight of the snow without breaking. It can therefore grow even in avalanche paths. The green alder between the hamlet of Bois and the Épéna glacier is the largest green alder in Europe at 7 km long. Green alder wood was once used for baking Beaufort.

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe

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## Dos de l'éléphant (1,850 m) (F)

"A mica schist outcrop polished and striated by the passage of quaternary glaciers, the last great ice age goes back more than 10,000 years. The glaciers descended to Lyon at that time, and ice over 1,000 m in thickness filled the great valleys (Grenoble). The English call these "roches moutonnées" whalebacks. The inhabitants of Champagny-en-Vanoise call this rock ""Dos de l'éléphant" (the elephant's back)."

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe

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## Mountain forms and rock (G)

The shape of the mountains depends on its natural surroundings, particularly on the hardness of the rock. The Grand Bec and the Pointe des Volnets are comprised of mica schist. The Aiguille de la Grande Glière, nicknamed the Matterhorn of Vanoise is comprised of very hard quartzite. The Épéna - the highest limestone cliff in France, with a vertical drop of 800 m - has a very sharp but very disintegrated summit ridge. The Grande Casse, comprised of black schistous limestone, has a highly ravined sloping north side.

Attribution : PNV - BALAIS Christian

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## The Refuge Communal de la Glière (1,996m). (H)

Formerly an alpine chalet, with 2 cellars nearby, the Refuge de la Glière was extended in 2014 to provide greater comfort to more hikers and climbers. It is also accessible to wheel-chair users who sometimes come by the Joëlette. It is kept from mid-June to mid-September. The winter refuge is also open the rest of the year and the visitor is obliged to pay his passage fee in the collection box provided for this purpose. In return the visitor will find blankets, gas and dishes and a stove with firewood. Show respect for this refuge and don't forget to pay your fee which pays for its upkeep.

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe



## View over Lac de la Glière (I)

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This white lake, the Lac de la Glière, is not covered by ice, despite appearances. It actually dried up in the 19th century. In 1818, people lived in the "small ice age", a colder climatic period that began in the late 16th century in Western Europe and whose end we are now seeing. As a result, the Rosolin glacier "licks" the edge of the lake. Seracs, or pieces of glacier detached from the main tongue, then fell into its waters, blocking the natural flow at the outlet of the lake. The water ended up overflowing, carrying along its course the seracs, mud and rocks downstream. After this natural disaster of 1818, the lake dried up, taking on a new appearance. After draining, the sediment deposited at the bottom of the basin then came to light. The historic mountain pasture around the lake has not been affected, having been frequented since the thirteenth century.

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Attribution : PNV - Beatrix Von Conta



## The Dry Lake of Glière (J)

Above the Refuge de la Glière is an immense gravel pit. In 1818 a serac fall from the valley glacier created an ice dam on the Doron. The water accumulated upstream to form a lake several metres deep. The dam broke on the 15th June 1818, and the mass of water rushed into the valley, carrying all the bridges as far as Moûtiers. The thermal springs of Brides-les-Bains would have been rediscovered as a result of this debris flow. Following this disaster, a channel was dug to the west of the natural passage of the Doron.

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe



## The Grande Motte (3,653m) (K)

A magnificent glacial dome, visible from the valley of Champagny le Haut, the Grande Motte looms over the ski resort of Tignes. The Grande Motte cable car (3,450 m) serves the glacier of the same name, still used for summer skiing. This cable car's pylon, visible along the length of the hike, is located in the municipal territory of Champagny-en-Vanoise. The STGM (Compagnie des Téléphériques de la Grande Motte) pays a fee each year to the town of Champagny-en-Vanoise.

Attribution : PNV - BENOÎT Philippe



## The mountain pasture of Grande Plagne (L)

The alpine farmers lead the cows every year on to the mountain pastures of the Grande Plagne. At the chalet of Plan du Salt (2,250 m), the milk of the tarentaise and abundance cows (the only breeds authorised under the Beaufort PDO) is transformed into Beaufort d'Alpage over 100 days. The weak spot of this mountain pasture is the water resource. During periods of drought, the alpine farmer must obtain supplies downstream from the Refuge de la Glière, and pay for a number of trips to take up one tonne of water to the chalet.

Attribution : PNV - GARNIER Alexandre



## Beaufort cheese (M)

La Grande Plagne and its chalet of Plan du Sel is one of the places where the Beaufort d'Alpage is made. Raw whole milk, from tarentaise and abundance cows, is press-cooked, with at least 50% fat, moulded into a concave heel circle, before developing a natural crust which is strengthened by regular brushing. Each cheese weighs between 30 and 60 kg, with a diameter of 40 to 60 cm and a thickness of 12 to 16 cm. The Protected Designation of Origin imposes undeniable constraints, such as the obligation to manufacture cheese with the milk of a single herd twice a day. But it also ensures that quality farming in the high mountains is maintained which is essential to sustaining the Vanoise landscapes...and, in addition, is pleasing to the palate since this cheese is delicious!

Attribution : PNV - NEUMULLER Christian



## 🕒 Mountaineering (N)

Unlike Pralognan-la-Vanoise, Champagny-en-Vanoise was very late to be visited by mountaineers. The high summits were first climbed by the easiest slope, from Pralognan (Grande Casse, Épéna and Grande Glière). Thus, the northern faces were only scaled later: the small northern face of the Grande Casse by the Puiseux brothers in 1887; the Couloir des Italiens in 1933 and the northern face of the Epéna in 1966. Other famous northern faces had to wait until the twentieth century to be scaled. Grandes Jorasses, Cervin and Eiger.

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe