

Two-day tour of Vallaisonnay

Vanoise - CHAMPAGNY-EN-VANOISE



La Pointe Mathews et la Grande Casse (PNV - FOLLIET Patrick)

Far from the tumult of the great towers of Vanoise, the tour of the Vallaisonnay provides an opportunity to enjoy the surrounding nature. Panoramas and views over the highest peaks of the massif, great wildlife and alpine flowers are part of the itinerary.

"To experience the mountain is to let the senses take over: the roar of the cascading waterfall, the silence of the mountain in the early morning, the wind in your face as you walk through a pass, the brightly coloured flowers or scent of fresh grass, first or last rays of the sun reflected by the glaciers... Walking around Vallaisonnay will bring all these emotions to life! Walking around a mountain doesn't involve "walking round in circles", but discovering that very close valleys can be completely different in character. An overnight stay in a refuge gives you the chance to immerse yourself in the unique atmospheres of the morning and evening and to take the time to look, feel, touch and listen to what the mountain has to say. Alexandre Garnier, Vanoise National Park ranger"

Useful information

Practice : Walking hike

Duration : 8 h

Length : 22.4 km

Trek ascent : 1462 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Trekking

Themes : Fauna , Pastoralism , Viewpoint

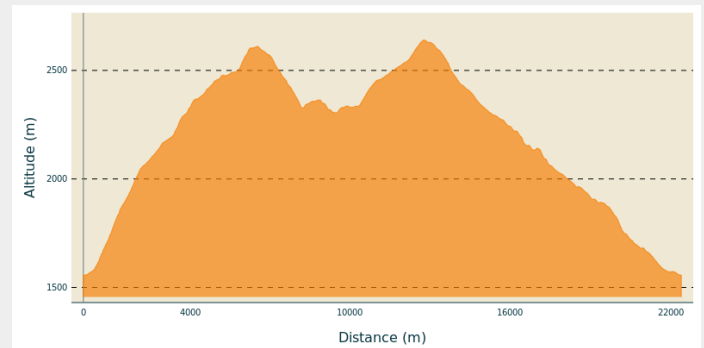
Trek

Departure : Car park at the hamlet of Laisonnay d'en bas

Arrival : Car park at the hamlet of Laisonnay d'en bas

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

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1556 m Max elevation 2640 m

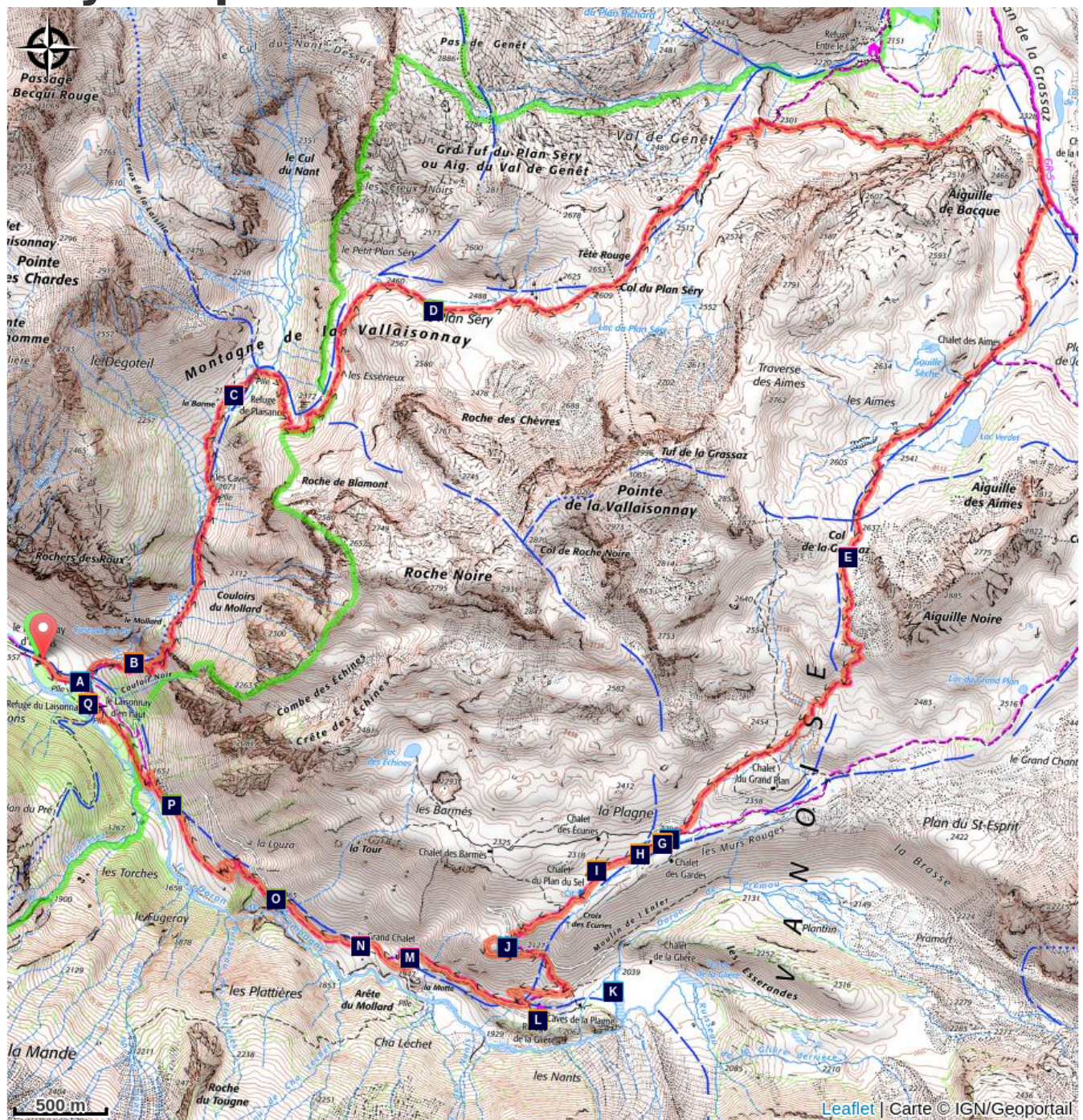
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
To begin this hike, head due north on the steeply climbing trail parallel to the Cascade du Py. Once at the waterfall, the slope gradually subsides and the trail continues along the stream.

In about 2 hours, you reach the friendly Refuge de Plaisance (2,160 m in altitude). After a good night spent in this charming dwelling, you are ready for an early start. The trail rises quietly towards the Col de Plan Séry. Continue the well marked path after the Col de Plan Séry, until you come to a fork in the road (2,320 m in altitude) and on the right, towards the Col du Palet, take the path that overlooks the Lac de la Plagne. You will reach the GR®5 alongside the Plan de la Grassaz. Follow it for 350 m then turn off towards the Col de la Grassaz. You pass not far from Lac Verdet and see the Lac du Grattaleu in the distance. Once at the pass, begin the descent by following the direction for "Laisonnay". The trail passes next to the Park rangers chalet, the Chalet d'alpage du Plan du Sel and the Refuge de la Glière where you can stop to eat.

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On your path...



-  Glacier Trail (A)
-  The Refuge de Plaisance (C)
-  The Grande Casse (E)
-  Mountaineering (G)
-  The mountain pasture of Grande Plagne (I)
-  The Dry Lake of Glière (K)
-  Mountain forms and rock (M)
-  The Py Waterfall (B)
-  Plan Séry and its flora (D)
-  The glaciers (F)
-  Beaufort cheese (H)
-  The Grande Motte (3,653m) (J)
-  The Refuge Communal de la Glière (1,996m). (L)
-  Dos de l'éléphant (1,850 m) (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

"Leave in the late afternoon and sleep at the Refuge de Plaisance. If you leave in the morning, take the opportunity to watch the ibex not far from the refuge or admire the ""Cul du Nant"" cirque."

How to come ?

Transports

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Rail connection to Moûtiers. Information: www.voyages-sncf.com

Then transport by coach to Champagny le Bas. Information: www.transavoie.com.

Transport by taxi is still possible to Laisonnay d'en bas.

Also think about car-sharing with www.mobisavoie.fr

"

Access

From Moûtiers, follow the D 915 until Bozel, then the D 91b, until Champagny-en-Vanoise. Continue on up to the Champagny-le-Haut valley, crossing the gorges of the Pontille, and join the end of the valley at Laisonnay d'en bas.

Advised parking

Car park at the hamlet of Laisonnay d'en bas

Accessibility

No

 **Information desks**

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

Maison de la Vanoise, Avenue
Chasseforêt, 73710 Pralognan-la-Vanoise

info.pralognan@vanoise-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 79 08 71 49

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

On your path...



Glacier Trail (A)

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 : Guedard



The Py Waterfall (B)

What could be more refreshing than starting your hike under the spray of the Py waterfall standing at 80m high! You will follow the mountain stream of the same name throughout the whole ascent towards the "Refuge de Plaisance". In the mountains the variations in stream flow are impressive! In spring, the meltwater hurtles down the slopes at full speed while in the autumn the water subsides. The colour of the water can also change: a violent thunderstorm can quickly turn this clear water into black mud. A hundred years ago, it was still possible to pass between the waterfall and the wall without getting wet! This is unthinkable today, which just goes to show how strong the eroding Py stream is.

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe



The Refuge de Plaisance (C)

The two "Chaloin" chalets at the Refuge de Plaisance were built by Vanoise National Park. They have suffered the rigours of winter on two occasions: in February 1999, a remarkable avalanche pushed the bunkhouse chalet, which weighs about ten tons, against the building housing the dining room. In January 2004, the roof of the chalet was damaged by a storm. Life is hard for the mountain refuges in winter!

Attribution : PNV - FOLLIET Patrick



❁ Plan Séry and its flora (D)

This lake now has more water and what a sight! This vast expanse appears to be an ancient dried glacial lake. If you take the time to look more closely, you might find the *Carex bicolor*, a small protected plant. This small grass can be recognised by its small two-toned spikelets in pistachio and chocolate. Like all rare species in Vanoise, Park agents map it to assess its presence within the territory. It is much less spectacular than the edelweiss that you can admire all around the lake. Even if this species is not protected contrary to popular belief, do not pick it! Flower picking is strictly prohibited in the heart of the Park especially because other hikers should be able to admire the snow stars.

Attribution : PNV - GARNIER Alexandre



⚔ The Grande Casse (E)

From the Col de la Grassaz you can admire Vanoise's highest summit, the Grande Casse standing at 3,855 m. The first ascent of the Grande Casse was made on 8th August 1860 by William Mathews, a British climber and his guides Michel Croz and Étienne Favre. But the impressive facing slope, with its hanging glacier, is the north face of the mountain and was much harder to climb. And so the first journey of the north-north-west face of the Grande Casse was made by Victor Puiseux and his son Pierre Puiseux, Amédée Crochet and Joseph Amiez.

Attribution : PNV - DELORME Michaël



❁ The glaciers (F)

On the left bank (downhill) of the Glière valley, there are about ten glaciers. They resist melting thanks to the shadow of the mountains looming over them. Here you can see the cirque glaciers (Becca Motta, Nord de la Glière), glaciers of the slope (Volnets, Troquairou), the valley (Epéna, Rosolin, Roche du Tougne), restored glaciers (Pramort) and the ice cap (Grande Motte). They cover a surface of 12 km².

Attribution : PNV - GARNIER Alexandre



Mountaineering (G)

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



Beaufort cheese (H)

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



The mountain pasture of Grande Plagne (I)

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



❄️ The Grande Motte (3,653m) (J)

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 Dry Lake of Glière (K)

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 Refuge Communal de la Glière (1,996m). (L)

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



Mountain forms and rock (M)

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



Dos de l'éléphant (1,850 m) (N)

"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