

# Col de la Bailletta from le Fornet

Vanoise - VAL D'ISERE



Le Lac de la Bailletta devant la Pointe de la Bailletta (BOUCHE Michel)

*A long-distance hike, all uphill, but with a rare landscape on arrival.*

This path, which is well worth the hike, lets you visit the National Nature Reserve of Baillettaz. With a little luck and a keen sense of observation, the hiker will have the opportunity to approach (but not disturb) the king of the mountains, My Lord, the Alpine Ibex!

## Useful information

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Practice : Walking hike

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Duration : 6 h 30

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Length : 17.1 km

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Trek ascent : 1360 m

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Difficulty : Easy

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Type : Return

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Themes : Fauna , Flora , Viewpoint

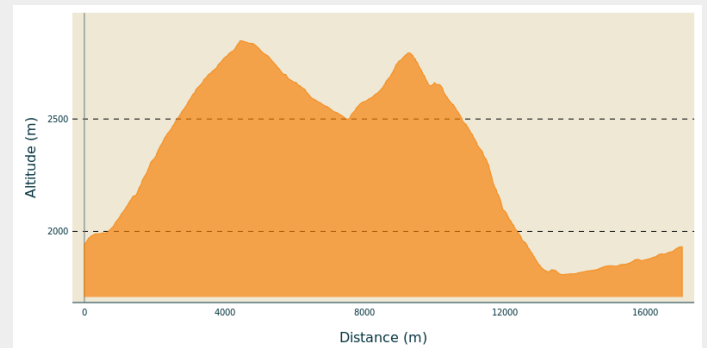
# Trek

**Departure** : Car park, hamlet of Fornet

**Arrival** : Car park, hamlet of Fornet

**Cities** : 1. VAL D'ISERE  
2. TIGNES

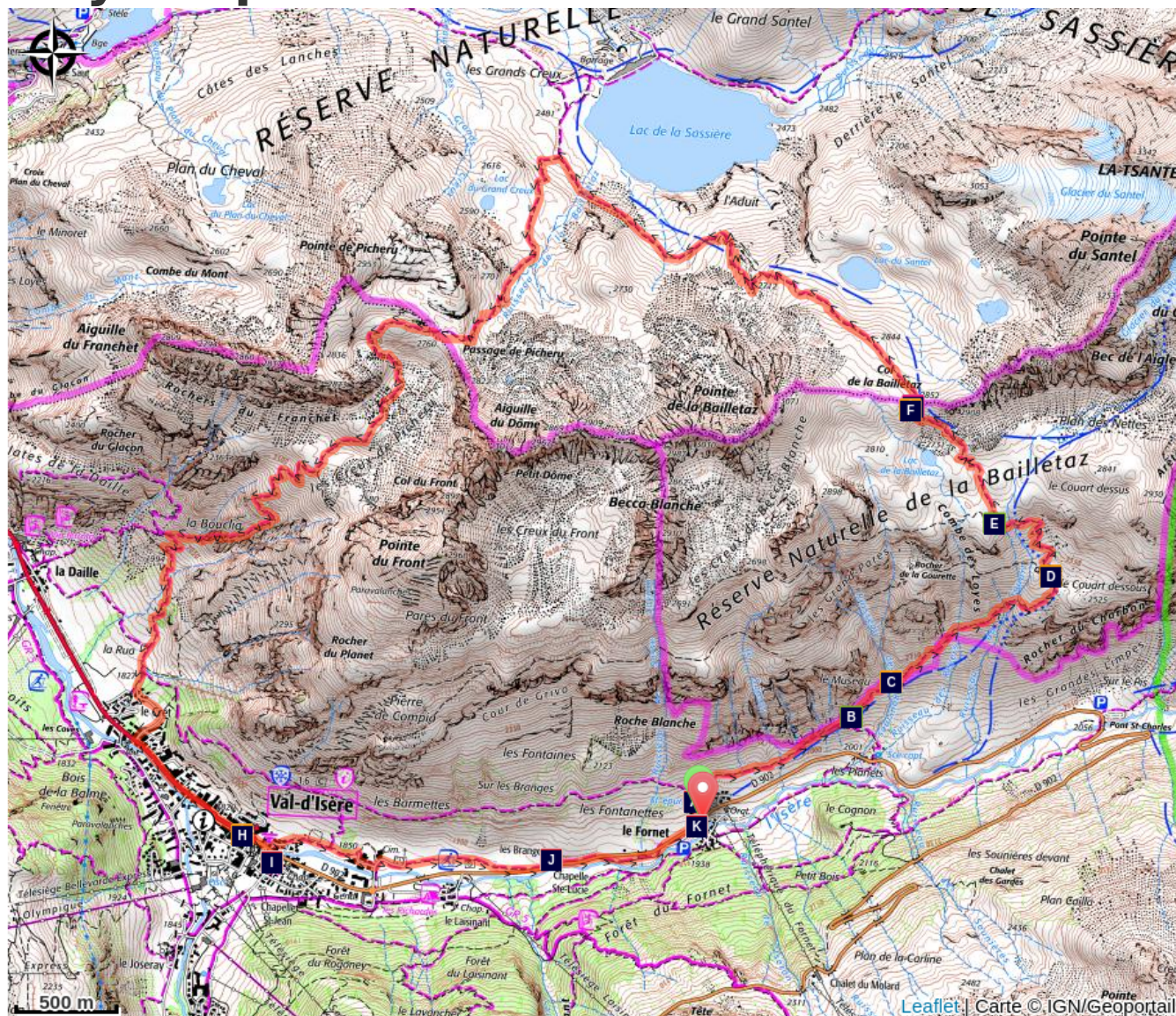
## Altimetric profile









Min elevation 1808 m Max elevation 2848 m

From the Fornet cable car departure station, go back down the RD 902 for about 150 m. Take the only tarmac road that climbs steeply to the right. After passing the “tourne” (embankment followed by a ditch) follow the trail that goes to the right. At each intersection, take the left junction until the Col de la Bailletta. The path has a flat-uphill profile after the crossing through the hamlet (about 1 km), the slope is accentuated between the entrance into the nature reserve (Rouvines stream) and the first plateau of Couart below (850 m). The trail winds up to the 2nd plateau of Couart above. Then cross a scree up to the Col de la Bailletta: follow the cairns in case of late snowfall. For a picnic, don't hesitate to go down to the Bailletta lake as the pass is often windy..

# On your path...



-  The tourne (A)
-  The history of the Bailetaz Natural Reserve (C)
-  The flora of the reserve (E)
-  Panoramic view (G)
-  St Roch's Chapel (I)
-  Sainte-Marie-Madeleine du Fornet Chapel (K)
-  *Primula pedemontana* (B)
-  Agricultural practices (D)
-  The Vaudois passage (F)
-  Val d'Isère village (H)
-  Sainte-Lucie aux Branges Chapel (J)



# All useful information

## **Advices**

Remember to bring sufficient water for the day as no water sources are available. Take a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen as it is extremely sunny in the summer months. If you want to get a better look at the large wildlife, the best times would be either early in the morning or late in the evening. Visitors to the nature reserve are kindly asked to respect the regulations.

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

"Rail connection to Bourg-Saint-Maurice. Information: [www.voyages-sncf.com](http://www.voyages-sncf.com)  
Then transport by coach to the administrative centre of Val d'Isère. Information: [www.transavoie.com](http://www.transavoie.com)

Free shuttle buses serve all the hamlets of Val d'Isère, including le Fornet."

### Access

Val d'Isère, continue on the RD 902 towards the Col de l'Iseran, then park in the hamlet of Fornet.

### Advised parking

Hamlet of le Fornet

# Environmental sensitive areas

Along your trek, you will go through sensitive areas related to the presence of a specific species or environment. In these areas, an appropriate behaviour allows to contribute to their preservation. For detailed information, specific forms are accessible for each area.

## Alpine ibex - winter

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, Decembre

Contact:

Parc national de la Vanoise - Elodie Antoine -  
elodie.antoine@vanoise-parcnational.fr  
04 79 06 03 15

Les réserves naturelles de la Grande Sassièrè, de la Bailletaz, ainsi que le vallon de Prariond sont des espaces privilégiés pour la présèrvation et le développement de la population hivernante de bouquetins.

Les milieux sont favorables pour les bouquetins : exposition sud, gradient altitudinal, altitude élevée (1800 à 3600 m) pentes abruptes entrecoupées d'éboulis et de pelouses, replats et crêtes).

Même très limitée, la fréquentation hivernale peut générer des perturbations lourdes de conséquences pour la faune sauvage à une époque où elle doit limiter strictement ses dépenses énergétiques.

Les activités hivernales telles que le ski de randonnée ou la raquette sont à éviter dans les zones concernées par l'hivernage du bouquetin.

Les éléments du plan de gestion: <http://www.vanoise-parcnational.fr/fr/des-actions/gerer-et-proteger-les-patrimoines/les-reserves-naturelles-nationales/la-reserve-1>

## **Information desks**

### **Tourist Information Office - Tignes**

Maison de Tignes-le-lac BP 51, 73321  
Tignes

[information@tignes.net](mailto:information@tignes.net)

Tel : 04 79 40 04 40

<http://www.tignes.net/>

### **Vanoise Information Desk - Val d'Isère**

Immeuble le Thovex, Office de tourisme,  
73150 Val-d'Isère

Tel : 04 79 06 06 60

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

### **Office de Tourisme de Val d'Isère**

Place Jacques Mouffler, 73150 Val-d'Isère

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

Tel : 04 79 06 06 60

<https://www.valdisere.com>

# On your path...

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## The tourne (A)

The historic Fornet is located on the left bank of the Isère which keeps it protected from avalanches and rock falls. The extension of the Fornet on the right bank, where you stand, was only allowed with the construction of this tourne (mound + ditch) against avalanches and rock falls. Also notice the absence of walls that face its slopes. In the eighteenth century, the Fornet d' Aval, between the Laisinant and the current Fornet, was completely destroyed by an avalanche. The ruins remain visible.

Attribution : Mylène HERRMANN

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## Primula pedemontana (B)

The Primula pedemontana is recognisable in the spring by its beautiful pink flowers and edged leaves and small red glands, which distinguish it from its cousin, the Primula hirsuta. It is a species that lives on siliceous rocks, like quartzite (white-green rock) overhead. It is a protected species at the national level and, as such, cannot be picked. In the nature reserve, all vegetation is protected. You can touch it with your eyes and nose!

Attribution : PNV - BALAIS Christian

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## The history of the Baillettaz Natural Reserve (C)

The Baillettaz National Nature Reserve was created in 2000, following the complete decommissioning of the Col de l'Isèran Nature Reserve (created in 1963), in order to reclassify the valley's ski area. It covers an area of approximately 495 ha. Its natural heritage consists mainly of flora, large fauna (chamois and ibex), as well as birds of prey (golden eagle, bearded vulture and common kestrel).

Attribution : PNV - CHASTAIN Alain

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## Agricultural practices (D)

You arrive at the level of the 1st plateau called “Couart dessous”. The dry-stone walled park was once used to pen the flock for the night. Until the end of the 1990s, there was a communal flock of sheep, containing around 800 animals owned by several Val d’Isère farmers. With the change of pastoral practices, this flock was replaced by a private herd from Aiton, part of which is still owned by Christophe Mattis, who resides in Fornet.

Attribution : PNV - STORCK Frantz



## The flora of the reserve (E)

The majority of the reserve’s natural habitats are either attached to alpine grasslands or to rocks and screes, as well as some rare wetlands. The heritage species, often protected, include the carex bicolor on the wetlands, the saxifraga diapensioides on the limestone cliffs, Saxifraga muscoides on the screes and damp calcschist cliffs. Kœlerie of Mont-Cenis (Kœleria cenisia) is a fine example of the flora that grows on the reserve’s dry, scorched limestone grasslands.

Attribution : PNV - BALAIS Christian



## The Vaudois passage (F)

The mountain pass before you is that of Iseran. The road was opened in 1937. Prior to this road, only a mule track existed. The passage of man can be traced to the Roman era, with coins and a statuette found in Val d’Isère. Some crossings have even left their mark on history. In 1689, the Vaudois (an austere Christian minority who took refuge in Switzerland) wanted to return to their asylum grounds (4 Italian valleys, adjoining the Queyras) and passed with weapons and baggage. No one intervened despite the orders given!

Attribution : PNV





## ☼ Panoramic view (G)

Before you, you can see from west to east: the Pointe Pers (3,327 m in altitude) and the Signal de l'Iseran (3,237 m in altitude) to the left of the Col de l'Iseran (2,764 m in altitude). The Pointe du Charbonnel and glacier (3,752 m in altitude) at the back of the pass, in Maurienne and the crest of Leissières (3,043 m in altitude) to the right of the pass. Then to the right of the Leissières crest, the Pointe de Méan Martin (3,330 m in altitude) and the Pointes du Châtelard (3,378 m in altitude) and respective glaciers.

Attribution : PNV - BOUCHE Michel



## 🏠 Val d'Isère village (H)

It all began back in 1888 when the first hotel opened in Val d'Isère. Skiing became fashionable from the 1930s, and Val d'Isère soon established itself as a leading destination (the ski school opened, its first ski lift opened and the Col de l'Iseran mountain pass road opened). Winter sports really took off after World War II and Val d'Isère became a world-class resort thanks to its unique ski area and the authentic charm of its village. In 1955 it launched the Criterium de la Première Neige, a mythical downhill ski race, followed by other renowned competitions. The traditional Savoyard architecture showcases local materials: stone, timber, metal and lauze slate. Although timber chalets are still the best-known mountain house, the architecture in Val d'Isère also features a range of other types. Most chalets in Val d'Isère have been built in keeping with the traditional style and the different hamlets across the resort (Le Joseray, Le Fonet, Le Crêt, etc.) all harbour architectural secrets that are well worth uncovering on outings.

Guided tours of the resort are organised by the Tourist Office.

Attribution : Andy Parant



## St Roch's Chapel (I)

St Roch's Chapel stands on the square, a stone's throw from the church. For a long time, the headrace that brought water to the adjacent mill flowed right in front of the chapel! (You can still see a millstone standing on the side). St Roch, Joan of Arc and the vicar of Ars can be seen in the recesses (the old statues were stolen). This chapel is mentioned during the pastoral visit in 1633. In 1790, a lawyer in Turin by the name of Boch gave a donation to enable 51 services to be held a year, i.e. one every Friday (what did he fear for the community and for himself we might wonder?). Nowadays, this chapel is still used as a chapel of rest.

Who was St Roch?

St Roch's feast day is celebrated on 16 August. He was a hermit who spent his time embarking on pilgrimages. Often associated with St Sebastian, St Roch is invoked against plague. Veneration of him began to spread across Savoie in the mid 15th century, swiftly gaining ground through the 16th and 17th centuries, before almost completely disappearing in the 18th century. Plague was a terrible disease. Its pandemics took a devastating toll on populations. Yersin's bacillus, the vector of the disease, was not identified until the 19th century. Rats carried the bacillus, and fleas, moving from the rats to humans, contaminated the population. In our mountain communities, which were crawling with hawkers, mule-drivers, merchants and smugglers, it's hardly surprising that the disease often blighted the local populations. All it took was for a flea carrying the bacillus to jump inside the lapel of a cloak and the disease was there...

Attribution : Val d'Isère Tourisme



## Sainte-Lucie aux Branges Chapel (J)

At the time it was mentioned during the pastoral visit in 1633, this chapel was dedicated to St Francis of Assisi. The painting showing the stigmata of St Francis now hangs in St Roch's Chapel. In the 18th century, it would be dedicated to St Lucy. In 1790, Mass was celebrated there for her feast day. The chapel was restored by Guy Turbil, who owned the house next door, in 1971. There were once several houses in the hamlet or village of Les Branges. This name refers to larch trees in local dialect. Who is St Lucy?

Born into a very wealthy noble family from Syracuse, Lucy (who died between 303 and 310) lived with her mother Eutychia and venerated St Agatha. As her mother suffered from an inflammatory bowel syndrome and blood loss, one day Lucy decided to take her to Agatha's tomb, in Catania, to ask for healing. The next day, Eutychia recovered. Following this healing, Lucy asked her mother's permission to distribute to the poor everything that her father had left her. Both women then began giving all that they owned to the poor, a little each day. But Eutychia had promised Lucy's hand in marriage to a young man who flew into a fit of rage when he heard that his fiancée wished to remain a virgin and was selling her fortune, which he had his eyes on, to give to the poor. So he denounced her to the Consul Pascasius, as an enemy of the deities of the Roman Empire. Refusing to give up her Christian faith, Lucy was sent to a brothel then martyred. Her name comes from the Latin word lux (which means light), and that is why she is associated with many festivals of light.

Attribution : Val d'Isère Tourisme



## Sainte-Marie-Madeleine du Fonet Chapel (K)

The chapels in Le Fonet have seen a fair bit of change over the centuries... that's because of the avalanches. There have been four in all, dedicated to St Mary Magdalene each time. The first chapel was built between 1600 and 1630 near the larch forest to protect the village from avalanches. The present-day chapel was built in 1890, thanks to funds from Joachim Bonnevie.

Above the entrance doorway, you can see the statuette of the Patron Saint in the recess. This was sculpted very recently as the original was stolen in the 1980s, along with many other religious artefacts. Up until the 1990s, on St Mary Magdalene's Day, the vicar would come and bless the houses, then hold Mass in the chapel for the local congregation.

Who was Mary Magdalene?

According to the New Testament, Jesus cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene. She went on to become one of his disciples - perhaps the most important. She was the first to witness Jesus' Resurrection, which makes her very important. She is also the woman who features most prominently in the New Testament. Mary Magdalene weeps, as she does not understand what the angels are saying, it's so unimaginable. That's when Christ appears and speaks to her. He tells her that he is going to ascend to be with God and that she must tell the other disciples. 22 July is her feast day.

Why does Mary Magdalene have a special place in Le Fonet?

At this exact spot, water flows at the bottom of the gorge. It would have been difficult to access the River Isère if there was a fire. So the locals relied on Mary Magdalene's tears to put out any fire.

Attribution : Val d'Isère Tourisme