

Col de la Lose

Vanoise - VAL D'ISERE



Harde de bouquetins au Col de la Lose (Maëlle LEPOUTRE)



A one-day hike discovering the Prariond valley and finishing on the border ridges, with an eye on the "older brother" National Park of Gran Paradiso.

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Lovely hike up the Isère, through the plateau de Prariond and a view over the glaciers of the Isère springs. Hiking is best appreciated during the "Indian summer" under the lights and colours of late summer, and perhaps the chance to run into the lord of the place - the alpine ibex.

"

Useful information

Practice : Walking hike

Duration : 5 h 30

Length : 11.8 km

Trek ascent : 941 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Return

Themes : Fauna , Geology , Viewpoint

Trek

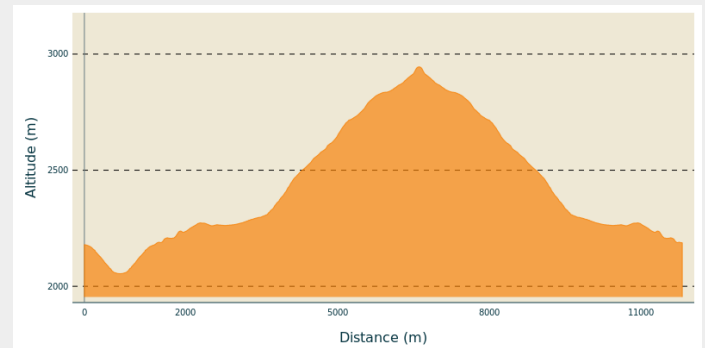
Departure : Pont Saint-Charles car park, Val d'Isère

Arrival : Pont Saint-Charles car park, Val d'Isère

Markings : → Parc

Cities : 1. VAL D'ISERE

Altimetric profile















Min elevation 2054 m Max elevation 2945 m

Park at the Pont Saint-Charles car park. Follow the single trail via the gorges of Malpasset, which leads to the Prariond plateau and its refuge at the end. Take the trail that winds up above the refuge to the sloping ledge of the Grande Tête. Follow the cairns that lead to the crossroads of the paths between the Col de la Galise and the Col de la Lose. Take the trail on the right. From this moment the trail is less visible and may be cut by névés. The pass will be indicated by a reading table and a Vanoise National Park signpost. To return, take the route in the opposite direction.

On your path...



-  The water intake of Pont Saint-Charles (A)
-  The mudslide of Rouvines de Bazel (C)
-  The Alps are moving! (E)
-  The former refuge and alpine chalet. (G)
-  The Refuge de Prariond. (I)
-  View over the glacier of the Isère springs from Roche des Loses (K)

-  The viola pinnata (B)
-  The gorges of Malpasset (D)
-  The Monument of Remembrance (F)
-  Marmots (H)
-  Trail restoration (J)
-  From the Col de la Lose (L)

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

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Despite a ""wide"" mountain trail (0.70 to 1 m in width) and the presence of 3 handrails, the crossing of the Malpasset gorges has a ""steep incline"" for about 1 km. Be extra vigilant with young children or people prone to vertigo. The use of some reins for children may be reassuring for everyone.

"

How to come ?

Transports

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Rail connection to Bourg-Saint-Maurice. Information: [SNCF](#)

Then transport by coach to the administrative centre of Val d'Isère.

Information: [Transavoie](#)

Free shuttle buses (during the station's opening hours) serve all the hamlets of Val d'Isère, including le Fornet. At certain times, they go as far as Pont-St-Charles.

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

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Access

From the Tourist Information Office of Val d'Isère follow the RD 902, in the direction of the Col de l'Isèran. Cross the hamlet of Fornet. Walk for approximately 3 km.

Before crossing the Isère river, enter the Pont Saint-Charles car park on the left of the road. It is indicated by a large built cairn.

Advised parking

Pont Saint-Charles car park

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 préservation 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>

On your path...



The water intake of Pont Saint-Charles (A)

"This ""basin"" is one of the inlets of Val d'Isère. This mainly supplies water to the 30,000 weekly visitors that the resort receives each winter. The water from the catchment area is used for drinking water, the residents' sanitation needs, the municipality's public facilities and also for the manufacture of part of the artificial snow of the ski slopes. Like all ski resorts, these winter collections coincide with the low water period, when the flow rate is the lowest."

Attribution : PNV - STORCK Frantz



The viola pinnata (B)

"The term ""pinnata"" applied to this violet (*Viola pinnata*) refers to the deeply-cut lobe shape leaves, a feature that is only observed in this species in Vanoise. It grows on scorched grasslands, clear forests rocks, preferably on limestone, gypsum and on well-exposed slopes (south, south-east). In France, it is listed in just four alpine departments from Savoy to the Alpes-Maritimes. The Savoyard towns are limited to five Tarentaise municipalities. Historical records are still to be found in Maurienne. It's in the valley of Prariond that the highest known populations live at 2,610 metres in altitude! Its rarity justifies its protection nationwide."

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe



The mudslide of Rouvines de Bazel (C)

The stream that you cross is the Rouvines de Bazel. In 2011, during a storm, the stream turned into a torrential wash. The thalweg was embanked several metres and a mudslide flowed down to Isère (still visible). This geological incident led to the trail being moved by National Park workers. The mountain is constantly evolving and often cataclysmically! The étagnes (female ibex) subsequently made the most of this incident by exploiting the natural salt water on the mudslide.

Attribution : PNV - BALAIS Christian



📍 The gorges of Malpasset (D)

"In the last 2 million years, the glaciers have eroded the valleys by giving them a typical "U" shape. The valley of Isère is a fine local example. By contrast, when the rocks are harder, glacial rock bars are formed, such as the gorges of Malpasset or those of the Daille. It is then that the erosion of the stream below and upstream of the glacier takes over. The cliff screes of the rock bar end up accentuating this embankment."

Attribution : PNV - NEUMÜLLER Christian



📍 The Alps are moving! (E)

The gorges also show the traces of the uplift of the Alps. Following the collision between the Eurasian and African continental plates, the limestone and schistous layers became folded like marshmallows. You then begin to understand the colossal energies in action! This phenomenon is still ongoing. Proof can be seen in the recurring earthquakes in the Turin region, which, with time, herald the physical rapprochement of the two shores of the Mediterranean, but rest assured, it will be some time before it happens!

Attribution : PNV - ROULAND Patrick



🕒 The Monument of Remembrance (F)

This memorial is a reminder of the tragic fate of the British soldiers in November 1944. Captured in Tobruk (Lybia), then imprisoned in Italy where they later escaped, they were aided by partisan Italians in getting to France. In the valley of Prariond, a snowstorm raged. The refuge couldn't be found as it was buried under the snow. The majority of men died of cold or were buried under avalanches. Only 3 men out of 39 (including one 9 days after the storm) came out of this affair alive, thanks mainly to the aid of the Avalins (inhabitants of Val d'Isère) and other partisan Italians.

Attribution : PNV - CHASTAIN Alain



The former refuge and alpine chalet. (G)

This ruin is the former refuge, which also served as an alpine chalet for the shepherds of the communal flocks. Due to the snowfall covering the shelter, winter access was made via the roof through a still visible chimney equipped with a fixed metal ladder. The enclosure, with dry stone wall (known locally as "rama"), attests to its pastoral use. The chalet has not been used by shepherds since the 1950s. The new Refuge de Prariond, built in 1969 by Vanoise National Park, took over.

Attribution : PNV - FOLLIET Patrick



Marmots (H)

"The plateau of Prariond is home to a fine population of alpine marmots (*Marmotta marmotta*). This herbivorous rodent lives in a family colony, consisting of a couple, the young marmots born in the most recent year and the previous year's generation. The dominant male "politely but mannishly invites" his sons "to leave" his territory during their second summer under pain of forcing them out "manu militari". Hence, these marginalised offspring can be found in the peripheral territories learning how to live independently."

Attribution : PNV - BARRAUD Rémy



The Refuge de Prariond. (I)

"The Refuge de Prariond is a reception building with constraints specific to the isolated locations. The drinking water supply, more than 800 m in length, is piped from the opposite slope from which it must be conveyed by means of a cable work over Isère! Electricity is produced by photovoltaic panels and a pico-hydroelectric power station that turbines a small portion of the stream located to the west of the refuge. The provision of food requires 2 to 3 helicopter rotations per year plus wood for heating and gas for cooking. "Sobriety" and "public service" are the key words for the management of this shelter."

Attribution : PNV - GOTTI Christophe



👉 Trail restoration (J)

The Vanoise National Park provides trails for summer visitors. There are about ten seasonal workers who work to maintain the 550 km of trails in the heart of the park. The area you cross is subject to regular works to manage the water flows (gully erosion) and off-trail pathways in the bends. The occlusion by vegetation that you see is… 20 years old! Please help to protect the plant-life by staying on the trails.

Attribution : PNV - BUCZEK Jessica

❄️ View over the glacier of the Isère springs from Roche des Loses (K)

You can see the various glaciers still present around the valley which include, from left to right, the glacier of the Isère springs (cut in 2 by the ridge of the Grande Aiguille) and the glacier of Gros Caval. Two others are hidden from your point of view, those being the Pers glacier (cut in 3 parts) and the Col Pers. The IGN map Top 25 n ° 3633ET 2008 edition shows the glacial retreat between 1975 and 2006. It is illustrated in yellow.

🏔️ From the Col de la Lose (L)

You are at the frontier of the two twin national parks, the Vanoise and the Gran Paradiso. The Gran Paradiso takes its name from the Italian summit which culminates at 4,091 m facing you. The two parks were built around their mission to safeguard the alpine ibex. Its population is currently estimated to number 1,900 ibexes in Vanoise and about 2,500 in the Gran Paradiso. All European populations (approximately 50,000) come from the release of animals from the relict populations of the two parks.