

# Tour of Tête Noire and Lac de la Partie

Vanoise - VILLARODIN-BOURGET

Vue sur le Lac de la Partie, avec l'Aiguille Doran en arrière-plan (Maëlle LEPOUTRE)



*Route that goes through two preserved valleys and provides access to a crystal-clear lake. Easy route showcasing the landscapes of the surrounding high mountains.*

It is with some regret that we leave the captivating and serene Orgère valley, but you will be even more amazed by its splendour as you climb up the valley. You will quickly find yourself immersed in the surrounding summits, the view of the Chavière glaciers and the discovery of Lac de la Partie, nestled at the foot of the Aiguille Doran. Dazzled by the different perspectives, you will slowly descend to the hamlet of Polset, before taking advantage of a shady path that gently leads you back to Orgère.

## Useful information

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Practice : Walking hike

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Duration : 8 h 30

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Length : 12.9 km

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Trek ascent : 851 m

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Difficulty : Challenging

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Type : Loop

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Themes : Fauna , Flora ,  
Pastoralism

# Trek

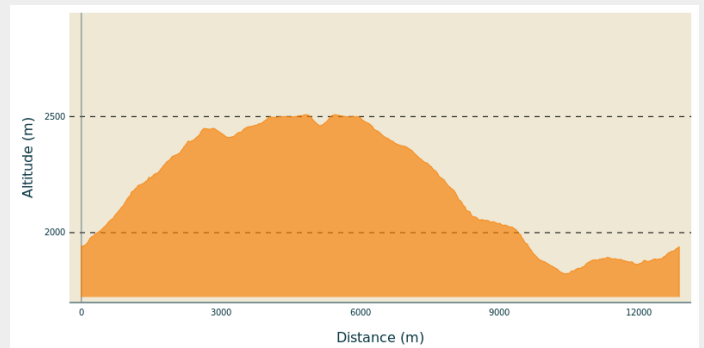
**Departure** : Orgère car park, Villarodin-Bourget

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

**Markings** :  GR

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

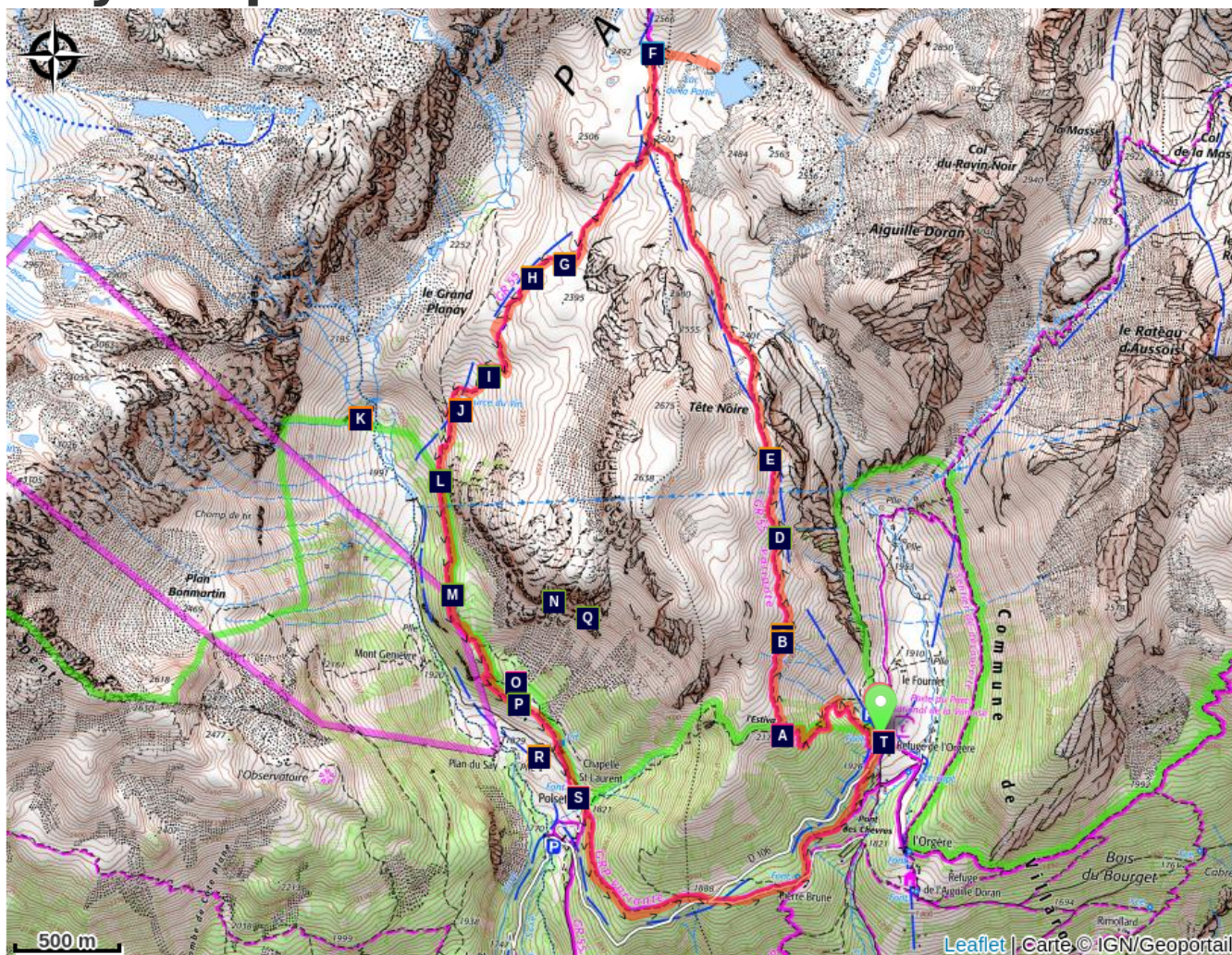
## Altimetric profile

















Min elevation 1823 m Max elevation 2508 m

"From Orgère car park, go down the road to the refuge and take the trail on your right signposted by the Park. Climb through a wooded combe to reach the ruins of Estiva. Continue north via a gentler terraced path. Arrive at a recently restored calade and follow this gently sloping paved trail. Arrive once again at a quieter relief, cross an area of scree before reaching a crossroads. On your right, below is Lac de la Partie. To go back down, reach this crossing and follow the signs for "Hameau de Polset". Once at the hamlet, cross it following a track, then before the track makes a first turn, take the route for Refuge de l'Orgère. Enter the forest before crossing a road and continue to follow the sign marked "l'Orgère" for the return."

# On your path...



-  L'Estiva (A)
-  The ovine breed Thônes and Marthod (C)
-  The calade made with the Lycée Professionnel des Métiers de la Montagne. (E)
-  Transhumance (G)
-  The great yellow gentian (I)
-  The Polset waterfalls (K)
-  The high-altitude forest (M)
-  Sheep on the summer pastures (B)
-  The wheatear (D)
-  Lac de la Partie (F)
-  The cattle rests (H)
-  The Source du Vin (source of wine) (J)
-  The ring ouzel (L)
-  The eagle and festooning. (N)

# All useful information

## **i** 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

"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)"

### 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, Refuge-Porte de l'Orgère 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>

**Point info Parc national de la  
Vanoise - Modane**

Maison cantonale - Place sommeiller,  
73500 Modane

Tel : 04 79 62 30 54

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

# On your path...

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## ✿ L'Estiva (A)

"Situated just above the forest boundary, the ruins of "L'Estiva", testament of former pastoral activity, offer a breathtaking view of the whole valley of Maurienne and the valley of l'Orgère."

Attribution : PNV - PERRIER Jacques

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## 🐑 Sheep on the summer pastures (B)

During the summer grazing period you will be able to see the sheep on the alpine pastures. This ancient pastoralism, evident in the stone ruins still standing in Estiva, still continues today. These flocks of sheep, reared by farmers in the valley, gradually climb from the village of Villarodin-Bourget by following the evolution of the growing grass.

Attribution : PNV - BEURIER Mathieu

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## 🐑 The ovine breed Thônes and Marthod (C)

After a sharp decline, local breeding began to recover at the end of the 20th century, thanks in particular to the Thônes and Marthod breed. This breed, with its curly wool, well-developed horns in both sexes and the black outlined eyes and ears, is easy to recognise. This sheep is remarkably adapted to the alpine pastures of southern Savoy. Although its origins are ancient, it does not seem to have spread from its original pre-alpine birthplace. Its hardiness, its excellent fertility and its good milking aptitude undoubtedly explain this renewed interest.

Attribution : PNV - TISSOT Nathalie

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## 🐦 The wheatear (D)

A small sparrow characteristic of the alpine grasslands, the northern wheatear is easy to recognise by its white rump and its tail with an inverted black T. The rest of the male's plumage is grey, white and ochre, while the female is uniform beige. Often perched on a rock, it alerts its presence with a "wit wit" or "chac chac". This is a migratory bird that only inhabits the Vanoise during the summer months before crossing the Sahara to spend the winter in Equatorial Africa.

Attribution : PNV - POULET Laetitia

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## The calade made with the Lycée Professionnel des Métiers de la Montagne. (E)

This portion of the trail, whose work was completed in 2013, is the fruit of a valuable collaboration between the Park workers and the “Lycée professionnel des métiers de la montagne” (vocational school of mountain trades) of Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne. For three years, the pupils of this school, supervised by the workers, used the ancestral techniques of the calade to refurbish a portion of the trail that the particularly unstable terrain was damaging each year.

Attribution : PNV - BEURIER Mathieu



## Lac de la Partie (F)

Small shallow lake with glints of green at altitude, the Lac de la Partie undoubtedly originates in the rocky mounds which dominate to the south. This old rockslide has blocked the stream that flows in the base of the valley and still feeds the lake.

Attribution : PNV - FOLLIET Patrick



## Transhumance (G)

In summer, this part of the valley is occupied by a herd of more than 1,000 merino sheep. Unlike the herds that inhabit the valley of Orgère and Estiva, this herd spends the winter on the pastures of Crau in the Bouches-du-Rhône and it is only from June that it returns to the Alps and gradually climbs from the hamlet of Polset to graze on the alpine pastures.

Attribution : PNV - BEURIER Mathieu



## The cattle rests (H)

"Called ""cattle rests"", these grounds where the herds are stationed are greatly enriched with nitrates by the animal excrement. Often located near a shepherd's hut, they have a dense, exuberant and sparsely varied vegetation, composed mainly of alpine docks. This nitrophilous plant (which likes nitrate) is also called ""monk's rhubarb""."

Attribution : PNV - AUGÉ Vincent



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## ✿ The great yellow gentian (I)

Among the gentian species, the great yellow gentian is the most used: its roots have tonic, digestive and cleansing properties. Abandoned by cows for its bitterness, it was traditionally picked at the end of September. It should not be confused with the white hellebore (*Veratrum album*) which is similar in appearance before flowering but very toxic. Distinguishing between the two is easy: the leaves of the gentian are positioned in an opposing way while the *veratrum album* alternate in spirals. The gentian grows abundantly in the highland pastures.

Attribution : PNV - BALAIS Christian

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## ✿ The Source du Vin (source of wine) (J)

This small spring, which obviously does not produce wine, was set up by the workers of the National Park to offer a welcome pit stop on this very sunny route. The origin of the name of this place is not really known, but the most sensible explanation would be to say that it is a place where one could drink wine without restraint!

Attribution : Jacques PERRIER

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## ✿ The Polset waterfalls (K)

From the seasonal melting of the Chavière glacier, the water flows gently before gushing over the walls at a height of about 100 m. After a brief moment of respite where the stream winds through lush vegetation, it plunges again over a succession of falls which, although not as high, are equally as pretty. It is quite surprising to see the variations in colour and flow of these waterfalls that can be seen on the same the day.

Attribution : PNV - VON CONTA Beatrix

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## ✿ The ring ouzel (L)

It is easy to identify because it assumes the plumage of the common blackbird. It is distinguished by its large white bib on the breast and clear edging on the feathers of the wings and the belly. This wild, fast-flying mountain thrush inhabits the edges of the larch, Scots pine, spruce and cembro pine forests between 1,000 to 2,500 metres in altitude. You will easily notice this bird at the tops of the trees where it loves to perch!

Attribution : PNV - CHARRON Julien

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## ✿ The high-altitude forest (M)

The mountain forests, which like the one occupying the Polset valley, consist almost entirely of coniferous trees. These trees are in fact more resistant to the cold. The selection of species is influenced by the air humidity; at around 1,800 m, you will find the spruce, which then gradually makes way for the fir, and then in turn gives way to the larch and cembro pine on the southern slopes. Of course, the boundaries are not clear and we usually find a mixture of these four species with a predominance of one depending on altitude or exposure.

Attribution : PNV - JOURDAN Jérémie



## ✿ The eagle and festooning. (N)

The cliffs above Polset have provided nesting for the golden eagle. If the eyries (nests) are poorly visible, the eagles can still be seen during the mating season when they put on magnificent displays. During these displays, the eagles fly through the skies tracing the curves of a parabola, soaring rapidly then diving. It is said that the eagles festoon. The period running from March to April is the best time to see this wonderful spectacle.

Attribution : PNV - MOLLARD Maurice