

# 8-In search of the hamlet of Les Prioux's secrets

Vanoise - PRALOGNAN-LA-VANOISE

Le hameau des Prioux (Gilles Lansard)



*An easy route to explore Les Prioux, a delightful hamlet typical of the mountains, and other fascinating features.*

At the gateway to the Vanoise National Park, the Chavière Valley unveils its many treasures as you follow an easy but out-of-the-ordinary loop itinerary starting in the centre of Pralognan-la-Vanoise. Set off alongside the Doron de Chavière river in discovery of the typical hamlet of Les Prioux. A popular departure point for summer hikes, this authentic village will speak to you of life past and present, lived to the rhythm of the seasons: life in the high mountain pastures, production of Beaufort cheese, the development of tourism... En route, you might stop off and take a look at how the hydroelectric plant operates... And when you get there, enjoy a ride on the Mont Bochor cable car and view the Valley from on high!

## Useful information

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Practice : Mountain bike (electric)

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Duration : 2 h

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Length : 12.1 km

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Trek ascent : 360 m

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Difficulty : Very easy

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Type : Loop

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Themes : Architecture, Lake and glacier, Pastoralism , Viewpoint

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Accessibility : Chien autorisé

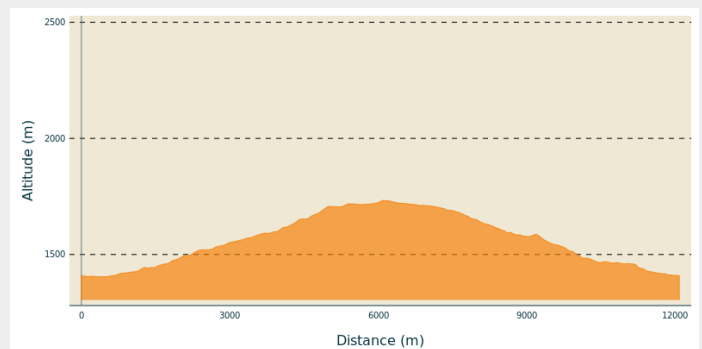
# Trek

**Departure** : Pralognan-La-Vanoise Tourist Office, 290 Avenue de Chasseforet 73710 Pralognan-la-Vanoise

**Arrival** : Pralognan-La-Vanoise Tourist Office, 290 Avenue de Chasseforet 73710 Pralognan-la-Vanoise

**Cities** : 1. PRALOGNAN-LA-VANOISE

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1404 m Max elevation 1733 m

Setting off from Pralognan Tourist Office, this route heads to Les Prioux along the road and then a mountain pasture track. From Les Prioux, you can walk or ride along the interpretation trail. The subsequent downhill section takes you to Pralognan via a woodland trail. There are a few more technical stretches along this bit so do pay attention.

Follow the green waymarks Les Prioux.

E-bike rental shops:

### Go Sport Montagne - Favre Sports

Avenue de Chasseforêt  
73710 Pralognan-La-Vanoise  
+33 (0)4 79 08 71 20

### Intersport - Pralo Sports

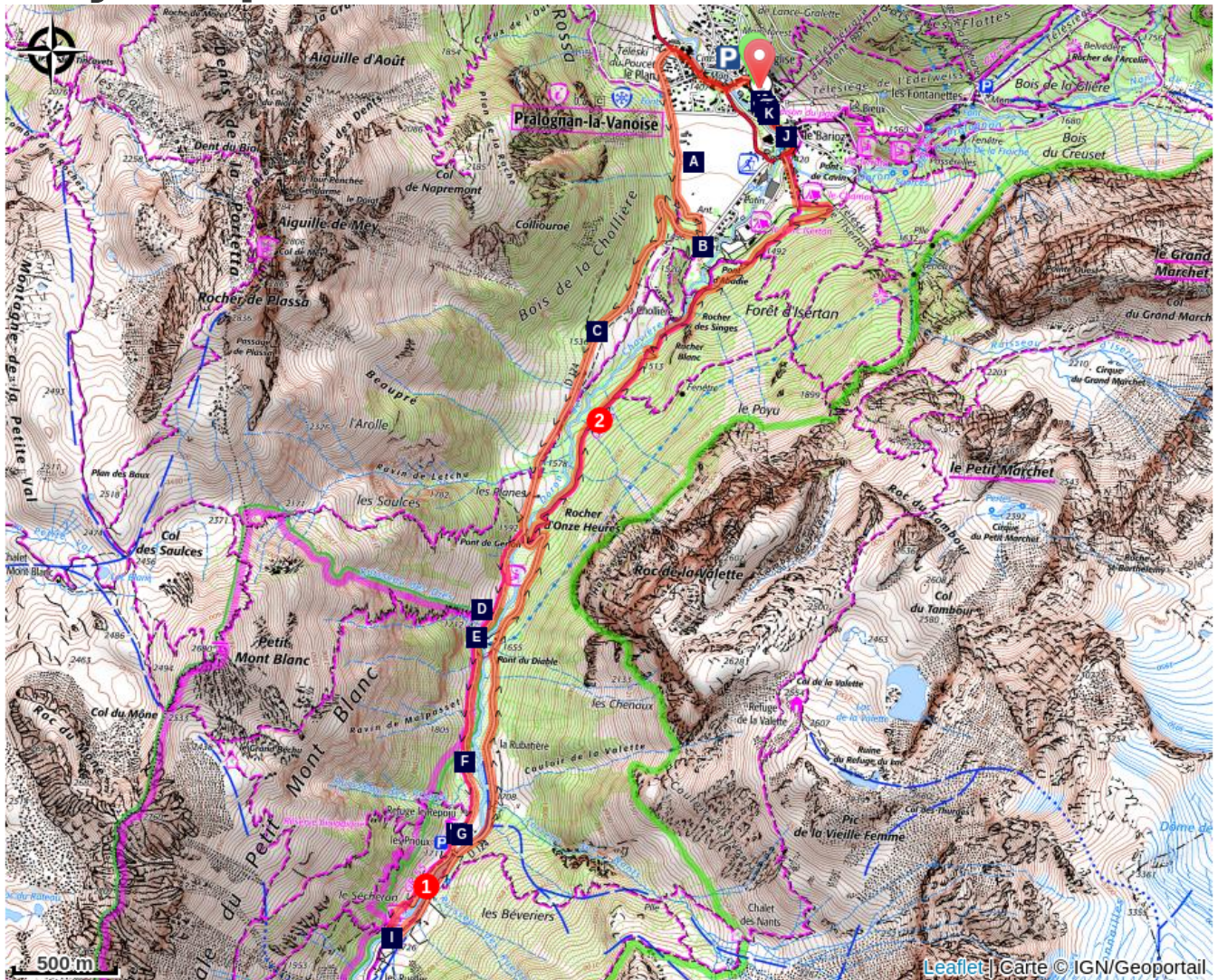
228 Avenue de Chasseforêt  
73710 Pralognan-La-Vanoise  
+33 (0)4 79 08 70 89















### Skimium - Régis Sport

18 rue du dou des ponts  
73710 Pralognan la vanoise  
+33 (0)4 79 08 72 41



# On your path...



-  Chavière goat farm (A)
-  Viewpoint over La Grande Casse (C)
-  Chavière water abstraction point (E)
-  Les Prioux hamlet (G)
-  "Passerelle des anciens" footbridge (I)
-  Mont Bochor cable car (K)
-  Maison de la Vanoise (M)
-  Entrance to Chavière Valley (B)
-  The blue thistle path on the GR®55 (Couloir des Diés) (D)
-  View of the Grande Casse (F)
-  Les Prioux (H)
-  E-bike rental: Skimium - Régis Sport (J)
-  E-bike rental: Go Sport Montagne - Favre Sports (L)
-  E-bike rental: Intersport - Pralo Sports (N)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

Rando Vanoise has been designed to help you pick and choose your outings, but cannot be held liable where they are concerned. The mountain offers up a wide range of routes and trails for cyclists of all levels, but remember, it is a living, unpredictable environment and it is important that you head out suitably equipped. Ask advice from cycle rental operators.

If in doubt, you can take an introductory lesson in how to ride an electric bike with an instructor.

If you see a herd ahead, slow down and go round it. If there is a patou, a guard dog, climb down from your bike and walk, pushing it alongside you. Avoid making any sudden or aggressive gestures towards the dog and move away from the herd slowly and calmly. The dog will only be checking that you do not pose a threat to its herd. Respect the parkland and close gates behind you after you've gone through them.

The mountain is living, please respect it by staying on the paths and tracks.

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

Train services run as far as Moûtiers-Salins-Brides-les-Bains. Find out more at: [www.oui.sncf.com](http://www.oui.sncf.com)

You can then get a coach to Pralognan la Grande Cordée

Find out more at: [www.transavoie.com](http://www.transavoie.com)

Have you also thought about car-sharing?

### Access

From Moûtiers, take the RD915 road to Pralognan la Vanoise.

### Advised parking

Le Bouquetin car park, Pralognan-la-Vanoise

## Accessibility

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Chien autorisé



# 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.

## Bearded vulture

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, November, Decembre

Contact: Parc national de la Vanoise

Jérôme CAVAILHES - 06.89.17.78.02 [jerome.cavailhes@vanoise-parcnational.fr](mailto:jerome.cavailhes@vanoise-parcnational.fr)

ATTENTION : nidification du Gypaète barbu !

En concertation avec les acteurs locaux, une zone de sensibilité majeure (ZSM) a été définie pour les Gypaètes barbus de Pralognan.

Toutes les activités dans cette zone sont à proscrire : survol motorisé ou non motorisé, ski, randonnée, chasse, escalade, etc ...

Cette espèce est particulièrement sensible au dérangement. Afin de favoriser les conditions de reproduction jusqu'à l'envol d'un gypaéton, il s'est avéré nécessaire de mettre en place cette zone sensible.

## Information desks

### Office de Tourisme de Pralognan-la-Vanoise

290 avenue de Chasseforêt, 73710

Pralognan-la-Vanoise

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

Tel : 04 79 08 79 08

<https://www.pralognan.com>

# On your path...

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## Chavière goat farm (A)

Audrey, Sylvain and their team would be delighted to welcome you and have an extensive range of farmhouse goat's cheeses available: pressed cheeses (such as tomette de chèvre and tomme de Chavière), fromage frais, Sérac (whey cheese) and faisselles as well as other goat-based produce (goat meat sausages, goat terrine, soap made from goat's milk). There are also other local farmhouse products too. Why not ask the team for some recipe ideas?

If you'd like to find out more about life at the goat farm, your hosts would be delighted to organise a guided tour for you, from December to April.

On the programme: presentation of the farm, milking and tasting sessions...! In milder seasons, so from mid-April to the end of October, the goats spend their days out of doors, and graze in the mountain pasture over July and August. Chapendu mountain pasture lies at the heart of Vanoise National Park (regulated area), an hour-and-fifteen-minutes' walk from Pont de la Pêche car park.

The Goat farm is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year! A photo exhibition both inside and outside the farm, open-air screenings, the Chapendu mountain pasture festival and many other surprises are in store!

Find out more and book tours at:  
<https://www.chevreriedechaviere.fr/>

Contact details:  
GAEC La Chevrerie de Chavière  
Audrey & Sylvain CHEVASSU  
237 Route de la Portettaz  
73710 PRALOGNAN LA VANOISE  
+33 (0)4 79 00 70 84  
[as.chevassu@orange.fr](mailto:as.chevassu@orange.fr)

The farm is open:  
From December to April: daily from 9:00 to 12:00 and from 16:30 to 18:30.  
From May to September: daily from 9:00 to 12:00.  
In October and November: by appointment

For health & safety reasons and to avoid any disturbance, Chavière goat farm would ask that you please not come with any pets.

Attribution : Vincent Auge



## Entrance to Chavière Valley (B)

Here, you'll find the entrance to Chavière Valley with an explanatory panel about the valley and the sustainable measures in place to protect it.

The power plant is located further down, in Le Villard village in the municipality of Le Planay. It gets its name from the waters it channels through turbines. Since the first half of the 20th century, Pralognan has had a hydroelectric power plant to capture the water from the Doron de Pralognan and its smaller tributaries (Isertan, La Glière, La Vuzelle) and turn it into electricity. In Savoie, water has been harnessed for key services ever since the late 19th century, as it was considered a plentiful resource.

In 1943, construction began on Pralognan power plant following the merger of two hydroelectric development plans. But the war put the works on hold. In 1946, electricity was nationalised and the building work resumed with the national electricity provider, EDF. The plant was commissioned in 1949. Its architecture is typical of the post-war period, with imposing proportions. Nowadays, the plant's three units, all fitted with two Pelton wheels (double turbines), generate the equivalent of the annual household needs of 64,500 inhabitants. Major efforts are being taken to ensure that the energy generated is 100% sustainable, does not emit greenhouse gases and is capable of meeting consumption peaks. 148,000 tons/year of CO2 were avoided this year.

Find out more about Pralognan power plant here (in French): [https://www.edf.fr/sites/default/files/Hydraulique/pays-de-savoie/documents/EDF\\_Pralognan.pdf](https://www.edf.fr/sites/default/files/Hydraulique/pays-de-savoie/documents/EDF_Pralognan.pdf)

Attribution : OT Pralognan





## ✿ Viewpoint over La Grande Casse (C)

Along this route you can look forward to scenic viewpoints over the Vanoise glaciers and La Grande Casse, the highest peak in the Vanoise mountain range.

As the birthplace of mountaineering and a pioneering resort for winter sports, Pralognan-la-Vanoise has remained a leading destination in the French mountains for more than 150 years. Steeped in legend, with a special place in locals' hearts, the resort's history and culture are deeply anchored in the Alps. Its breathtaking natural scenery and stunning vistas make it a unique and memorable playground for all mountain lovers.

At the foot of the panoramic view over La Grande-Casse, discover the typical hamlet of Chollière.

Attribution : Gilles Lansard



## ✿ The blue thistle path on the GR®55 (Couloir des Diés) (D)

The Blue thistle (*Eryngium alpinum*) is a rare, declining and protected species in France. It lives mainly in the hay meadows and some avalanche paths between 1,000 and 2,000 metres in altitude. It does not tolerate competition with shrubs and overly premature grazing. When the paths where it grows are no longer used by agriculture, the Vanoise National Park conducts late mowing to maintain the species.

Attribution : PNV - STORCK Frantz

## 💧 Chavière water abstraction point (E)

Four water abstraction points capture the waters of the Doron de Pralognan and its smaller tributaries - the Chavière, Glière, Isertan and Vuzelle - before they are transported to the power plant. This is the Chavière water point. 8m<sup>3</sup>/s transit through an underground gallery around 13km long with a diameter of more than 2 metres and join a 1,700-metre penstock with a change in gradient of 765 metres.

Find out more about the Pralognan power plant (in French):

[https://www.edf.fr/sites/default/files/Hydraulique/pays-de-savoie/documents/EDF\\_Pralognan.pdf](https://www.edf.fr/sites/default/files/Hydraulique/pays-de-savoie/documents/EDF_Pralognan.pdf)



## View of the Grande Casse (F)

This renewed postcard summarises both the main physical changes to the landscape – glacial melting, forest recolonisation and agropastoral decline. The Grande Casse, the highest summit of the Vanoise massif and hallmark of the National Park, seems to provide a generous cradle to man who offers his thanks by drawing a heart in the centre of the landscape.

Attribution : Collection V.O. Communication



## Les Prioux hamlet (G)

At the edge of Vanoise National Park, Chavière Valley unveils its natural wonders along a refreshingly varied path: the Savoyard discovery tour around Les Prioux.

Life in this hamlet, perched at an altitude of 1,700m, is still very much in step with nature and the winter and summer seasons, and residents have had to adapt accordingly. As they are cut off from the world through the long winter months, they have so much to share with you about life in the past: the mountain pastures, making Beaufort cheese, the growth of tourism and mountain crafts and trades...

This refreshingly varied path unveils the wonders of Chavière Valley to you, with its awe-inspiring peaks and more relaxing hamlets.

The route is accessible to everyone, including families with pushchairs, the elderly and wheelchair users with helpers.

- Round trip takes: 40 minutes
- Elevation gain: 10 metres
- Distance: 1km 100

People with reduced mobility can reach Les Prioux via an adapted shuttle bus.

Open from 15 May to 30 September, except if snow closes the road to Les Prioux.

On-site you'll find a cheese dairy, restaurants and accommodation options, to make a proper holiday out of your trip!

Attribution : Gilles Lansard



## Les Prioux (H)

"Stop at the hamlet of Les Prioux, to witness (depending on the time) the making of Beaufort at Rolland. This cow's cheese, cooked, pressed and smear-ripened (salted and rubbed) has been labelled PDO (formerly CDO) since 1968. It is known as the "prince of gruyères". Only the tarentaise and abondance breed can claim to give their milk. The appellation ""Beaufort d 'Alpage"" is attributed only to cheeses made in summer, with the milk of a single herd, as is the case with your hosts."

Attribution : PNV - BASSARGETTE Denis

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## "Passerelle des anciens" footbridge (I)

This footbridge at the heart of Petit Mont Blanc botanical reserve overlooks the Doron de Chavière. There is an explanatory panel telling you more.

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## E-bike rental: Skimium - Régis Sport (J)

### **Skimium - Régis Sport**

18 rue du dou des ponts  
73710 Pralognan la vanoise  
+33 (0)4 79 08 72 41



## ☼ Mont Bochor cable car (K)

To round off your scenic outing, the Mont Bochor cable car takes you up to an altitude of 2,010m in just 3 minutes! At the top, you'll find an orientation table at an altitude of 2,023m, on the promontory of Mont Bochor, with 360° panoramic views over the Vanoise glaciers and peaks! In summer, this is also a start point for a range of hiking and mountain bike trails.

The history behind the Bochor cable car is a fascinating one! In the olden days, when our ancestors had to cross the mountain ravines, they used ropes on which makeshift gondolas were pulled along, carrying timber or livestock. This system was the precursor to our modern-day cable car! And this is how, in 1951, construction began on the very first service cable car for transporting tools and materials up to Mont Bochor. Timber posts supported the cables on which the cable car would travel. In 1952, the cable car was finally inaugurated after a challenging construction period, and its landmark maiden flight as it were took place that 31 December. In February 1953, it was finally commissioned: at the time it was the fastest cable car in the world!

Facts & figures at a glance:

Altitude of the bottom platform: 1416.50m

Altitude of the top platform: 2002.50m

Elevation gain: 586m

Length: 1086m

Course: 1048m

Journey time: 207 seconds

Max. slope gradient: 92%

Average slope gradient: 66%

10 trips an hour

32 passengers per car

170,000 journeys in winter

Open in the winter and summer.

Find out more in the guide Destination de légende : le téléphérique du Mont-Bochor (in French): <https://fr.calameo.com/read/0010480179e1abe5e2695>

Attribution : aptv\_redac

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## 🚲 E-bike rental: Go Sport Montagne - Favre Sports (L)

### **Go Sport Montagne - Favre Sports**

Avenue de Chasseforêt

73710 Pralognan-La-Vanoise

+33 (0)4 79 08 71 20



## ✿ Maison de la Vanoise (M)

At this Vanoise visitor centre, you'll find a reception and information point, a temporary exhibition space, a thematic permanent exhibition and an activity room giving you an insight into the key issues and initiatives across Vanoise National Park.

Set aside some time to learn about the fauna, flora and various measures in place to protect the natural, cultural and landscape heritage. All summer long, the warden-instructors eagerly share with you all the natural wonders of the Park. On the programme: encounters at the refuge or on the trail, film evenings followed by debates, nature awareness afternoons with organised games ... and much more besides! Contact the Maison de la Vanoise for the full programme.

Contact details:  
Maison de la Vanoise  
169 avenue de Chasseforêt  
73710 PRALOGNAN-LA-VANOISE  
+33 (0)4 79 08 71 49

Attribution : Gilles Lansard

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## E-bike rental: Intersport - Pralo Sports (N)

### **E-bike rental:**

**Intersport - Pralo Sports**  
228 Avenue de Chasseforêt  
73710 Pralognan-La-Vanoise  
+33 (0)4 79 08 70 89