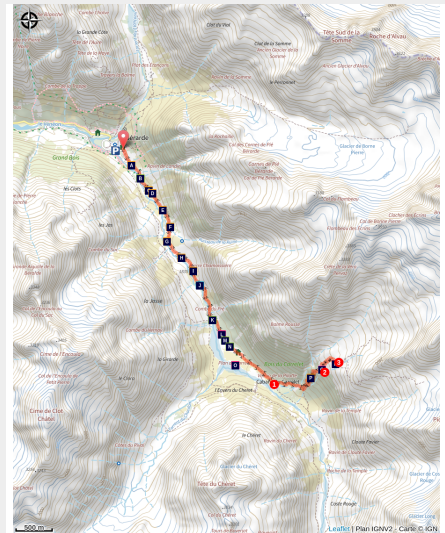


# The Refuge Temple Écrins

Parc national des Ecrins - Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans



Refuge Temple Ecrins (Thibaut Blais - Parc national des Ecrins)



*This itinerary takes you to the Refuge Temple Écrins and offers a magnificent panoramic view over the legendary peaks of Les Écrins, a major mountaineering destination.*

An excursion with a near-Himalayan backdrop, which hugs the Vénon and climbs up through the pines to the Refuge Temple-Écrins, which stands at the foot of the Pilatte glacier.

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 4 h 15

Length : 12.8 km

Trek ascent : 696 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Return trip

Themes : Flora, History and architecture, Hut

# Trek

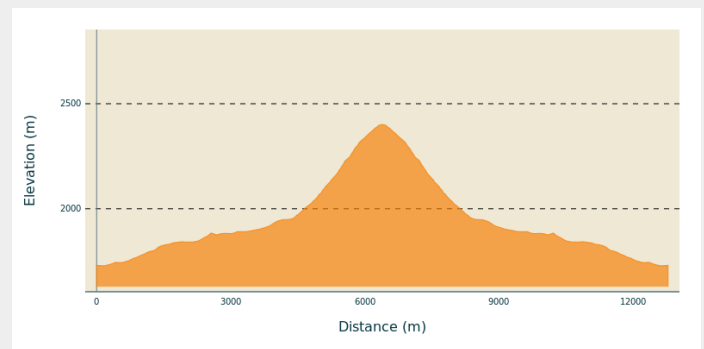
**Departure** : La Bérarde

**Arrival** : La Bérarde

**Markings** : — PR

**Cities** : 1. Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans

## Altimetric profile

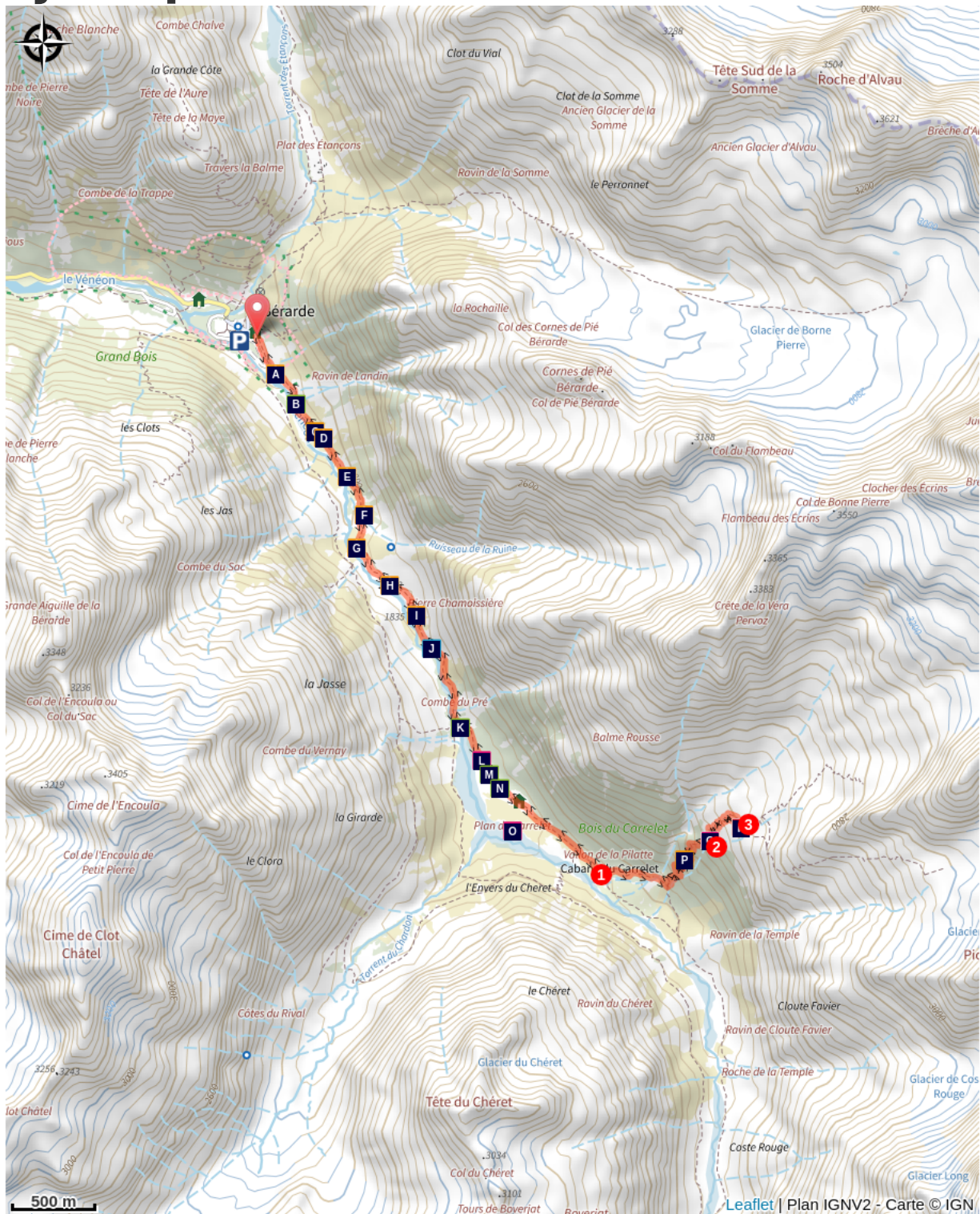






Min elevation 1730 m Max elevation 2402 m

1. From the FFCAM buildings and the Mountain Centre ("Maison de la Montagne"), join the path running along the Vénéon towards the Refuge de Temple-Écrins (sign). The path gradually rises along the left-hand bank of the Vénéon, running for 4 kilometres along the valley bottom.
2. Continue past the Refuge du Carrelet and after a short distance, turn left towards the Refuge de Temple-Écrins (sign). You rise steadily through the woods of Le Carrelet, with some large stone steps.
3. As you emerge from the forest onto grassy slopes, the landscape opens up before you and the refuge is just 15 minutes away.
4. To return, follow the outward route in reverse.







# On your path...




-  La Bérarde en Oisans, Laurent Guétal (A)
-  Modification work around the trails (C)
-  Extension of the limits of the first «National Park» (E)
-  Prioritizing nature (G)

-  Rock Clover (B)

-  The beginning of the National Park in 1913 (D)
-  Supervision, knowledge and layout Bérarde Park (F)
-  The Pilatte Valley, Laurent Guétal (H)

 The creation of the Ecrins National Park (I)


 Large Blue Butterfly (K)

 Mountain Pine pinewood (M)


 Plan du Carrelet (O)

 High attitude passages (Q)

 Haut Vénéon (J)

 Conquest of the Ailefroide (L)

 Mountain Pine (N)

 Upkeep of the slopes and paths (P)

 Temple Ecrins Refuge (R)

# 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.



## How to come ?

### Transports

Grenoble bus station: +33 (0)4 76 87 90 31

Transisère: +33 (0)820 08 38 38 / <http://www.transisere.fr/>

Lines 3000 & 3030 run between Grenoble and Bourg d'Oisans. Then, line 3040 links Bourg d'Oisans and La Bérarde.

### Access

From Bourg d'Oisans or from La Grave, take the D1091 and then the D530 following signs to Vénosc. Continue straight on until you reach La Bérarde. During the winter, the road is closed to traffic between Champhorent and La Bérarde. The hamlets of Les Étages and La Bérarde are therefore cut off during this period, the duration of which varies according to snow conditions. To contact the Departmental Council: +33 (0)4 76 80 03 48.

### Advised parking

Car park in La Bérarde

# 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.

## Golden eagle

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

Contact: Parc National des Écrins  
Julien Charron  
julien.charron@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Nidification de l'Aigle royal

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec l'Aigle royal en période de nidification sont principalement le vol libre et les pratiques verticales ou en falaise, comme l'escalade ou l'alpinisme. Merci d'éviter cette zone !

Attention en zone cœur du Parc National des Écrins une réglementation spécifique aux sports de nature s'applique : <https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/thematique/sports-de-nature>

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## **Information desks**

### **Office de tourisme de Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans / La Bérarde**

infos@berarde.com

Tel : 04 76 80 50 01

<http://www.berarde.com/>



### **Oisans Park house**

Rue Gambetta, 38520 Le Bourg d'Oisans

oisans@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 76 80 00 51

<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



## **Source**



Parc national des Ecrins

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



# On your path...

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## La Bérarde en Oisans, Laurent Guétal (A)

From the village of La Bérarde, you can go all the way up the River Vénéon as far as the Pilatte refuge. This is probably the route that inspired Laurent Guétal (1841-1892) in his painting *La Bérarde in Oisans and the Pilatte Valley*. From his forties, the artist travelled all over the Chartreuse, Belledune and Oisans. Considered one of the major painters of the Dauphiné landscape in the second half of the 19th century, he transmitted his passion for the mountains to a large number of pupils, in particular Edouard Brun and Charles Bertier.

Attribution : © Musée de Grenoble

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## Rock Clover (B)

This small rare clover colonizes the moraines and the crystalline gravel like that at the confluence of the Vénéon with the Romanche up to the Chardon valley. With a whitish colour or pinkish its flowers are small and have white hairs that gives them a fluffy appearance.

Attribution : PNE - Nicolas Marie-Geneviève

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## Modification work around the trails (C)

In La Bérarde area, some trails are very popular. The presence of hikers, as well as sometimes intense natural erosion, has led to work being carried out by technicians from the national park. There are several kinds of renovation work : channels allowing the water on the slopes to be evacuated and prevent the trail from turning into a mountain stream, steps or paving to protect the ground from rapid erosion by rain and making progress easier for hikers, and low supporting walls. All the renovation work is carried out using materials found onsite and respecting traditional methods.





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## 🕒 The beginning of the National Park in 1913 (D)

At the beginning of the 20th century, the need to protect the slopes of the high mountain at Haut Vénéon emerged in order to limit the erosion of the ground and the torrential flooding that the Omanche and its affluent the Vénéon were subjected to. Deforestation and pastoral exploitation were blamed at that time. So in 1913, after long negotiations the State bought around 4000 hectares of ground from the commune of Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans to make a « National Park ». The development of tourism and mountaineering spearheaded by the CAF and the Touring Club of France from the second half of the 19th century in the sector of Oisans was not unconnected from this either. The Inspector for Waters and Forests wrote that the creation of a Park would involve « advantages for the commune of Saint-Christophe as well as for the development of tourism in the Dauphiné ». This innovative Park, at that time, was not drawn up in relation to any written law or regulatory framework resulting in several vague points like the different denominations used (Bérarde, Oisans, Pelvoux, etc.).

Attribution : Thierry Mailet - Parc national des Ecrins

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## 🕒 Extension of the limits of the first «National Park» (E)

It has been evoked that the park was known locally as the "Parc de la Bérarde". The Administration sometimes employed the denomination "National Park of Oisans" until the acquisition new plots at Pelvoux in 1923 (Celse-Nière valley, the black glacier, the white glacier). The appellation of the Park now concerning the different slopes of the Pelvoux massif became henceforth the « Pelvoux National Park ». The extension of the Park to the territory of Valgaudemar carried out in 1924, brought the whole surface area of the park to 13 000 ha. In 1955, A national hunting reservation was created on the perimeter of the Pelvoux National Park. Despite the action of the foresters after the war it was not a favourable period for the Pelvoux National Park which experienced limitations: a small amount of financial credit, the absence of a managerial structure and practically inexistent scientific studies. The "Ecrins National Park" saw the light of day on the 27th March 1973 within the framework of the law of 1960, which created a real status for the French National Parks.

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## 🕒 Supervision, knowledge and layout Bérarde Park (F)

The conservationist at Waters and Forests in Gap was concerned about supervision at the Park and suggested that land-guides be recruited like auxiliary-guards. « These experienced mountaineers would help to supervise hunting, The Park must be a first rate reserve of chamois, they should help the forestry service in the studies and the work to be carried out in the Park. ». Two positions were created in 1927. In 1910, the request made to the Italian administration concerning the re-introduction of Alpine Ibex came to nothing. In 1913, an authorization for the transport of Wood Grouse from Belgium was issued without anybody knowing whether or not the birds were actually released on the massif.



## 🕒 Prioritizing nature (G)

In the first years, the principal of letting nature to itself prevailed concerning requests to the reforestation of Larch and Swiss pines in certain forests. In spite of everything after the second world war the terrains would be restored by the reforestation of the Park and its close periphery. The presence of visitors had never been excluded and the Forestry Administration which carried out arrangements for tourists... It was mainly structures linked to mountaineering like the opening of restoration of the tracks like those enabling access to the refuges at Temple-Ecrins, the Pillate and Gioberney. Grants were also awarded for the construction of refuges. The Ailefroide route to Pré de Madame Carle was also opened in 1937-1938 for touristic purposes.

Attribution : PNE - Collection Tron Lucien



## 🕒 The Pilatte Valley, Laurent Guétal (H)

Laurent Guétal began painting natural scenes at an early age, but only began painting the mountains in the last few years of his life, creating the works that made him famous. Among them are *Lake Eychauda* (1886), the *Entraigues Valley* (1887) and the *Pilatte Valley*, a painting that was exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1888. He was the first artist to show the real face of the Dauphiné Alps, a mountain range that was still little known at the time.

Attribution : © Musée de Grenoble



## 🕒 The creation of the Ecrins National Park (I)

Lucien Devies, president of the Fédération Française de la Montagne and former President of CAF wrote a plea in the December 1963 issue of the CAF review for the creation of a « National Park in the Haut Dauphiné » on the perimeter of the Ecrins massif. The State Administration then took over. However, the project for a National Park in the Pyrénées was keeping the agents occupied. They had to wait until 1969 and a new intervention by Lucien Devis (still by way of the CAF review) for the project to be launched. A fact finding mission was given to Florent in 1971. After several phases of consultation and concertation with local politicians , le decree for the creation of the «Ecrins National Park » was signed on the 27th March 1973 over a protected surface of 91 800 ha. Making it the fifth National Park officially created. Others would follow; in 2013, France can count 10 National Parks...

Attribution : Cyril Coursier - Parc national des Ecrins



## 💧 Haut Vénéon (J)

It's in this valley that the Vénéon torrent has its source which gives its name to the valley. In the Autumn , then in Winter and Spring, the waters of the Vénéon have a remarkable colour depending on the light of the day... This particular shade can be explained by the strong mineralization which saturates the water and reflects the sun's rays. In fact, under the action of the melting snow, the water runs in all directions and washes fine particles of silica more or less coloured and partially dissolved. You just have to collect some water, let it evaporate to see the very finely textured deposit: rock flour.

Attribution : PNE - Roche Daniel



## Large Blue Butterfly (K)

This butterfly with blue wings spotted with black frequents the mountain grasslands and entrusts the ants with rearing its caterpillars... It lays its eggs on the host plant, the Breckland Thyme, whose flower buds feed the caterpillar until it lets itself fall to the ground. The Fire Ants take over. They are attracted by the honeydew produced by the caterpillar and they transport it to their anthill to milk it. . The caterpillar becomes carnivorous and eats the young ant larvae without being disturbed. It hibernates until the Spring. When it reaches maturity, it creates a chrysalis in the anthill. The butterfly hatches and quickly goes out in to the open air to carry out the reproduction of the species.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Bernard



## Conquest of the Ailefroide (L)

By its magnitude, its height, its steepness, the conquest of the North-West face of the Ailefroide (impressive view of the North-West face of the Ailefroide which dominates Carrelet plain at an altitude of 3954 m) it is comparable with the famous Northern face of the Grandes Jorasses by Devies. The first ascent carried out by the corded team Devies and Gervasutti on the 23rd and 24th July 1936. On the approach from the Temple-Ecrins refuge Gervasutti broke a rib which did not stop him from carrying out this prestigious first.

Attribution : PNE - Roche Daniel



## Mountain Pine pinewood (M)

The pinewood of Mountain Pines at Carrelet is rightly considered to be the highest in Europe. In fact, it occupies a slope at an altitude of 2400 m. It is also developing downwards due to the end of pastoral bovine activity at the beginning of the 1970s. Progressively, the grassland has been colonized by the juniper heath which encourages the implantation of Mountain Pine.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Bernard



## 🌲 Mountain Pine (N)

The Mountain Pine is a high altitude species. This tree can be seen on the sunny slopes up to an altitude of 2450 m. If it can reach a height of 15 m locally it becomes much shorter and crooked even bushy when conditions are difficult... Its roots are solid, it is a frugal species that can support a very short vegetative period, extreme cold, snow, drought, the alpine brightness, the wind and the black ice,. It can be used as a species for reafforestation at altitude with a view to protecting certain soils and to fight against the beginning of avalanches...

Attribution : PNE - Lévy Frédérique



## 📍 Plan du Carrelet (O)

At the meeting point of the Vénéon and Chardon valleys, the Plan du Carrelet is a vast plateau of glacial origin. It was originally a lake, after the glaciers withdrew, and was then gradually blocked by sediment coming down from the slopes all around, forming the vast plateau that can be seen today. Fed by the many mountain streams flowing into it, it is exceptionally rich in plant life, particularly species that are at home in wet and turbulent environments, like the banks of a mountain stream. In early summer, the plants bloom, providing an impressive sight , in the midst of the mountain pines, replanted at the beginning of the 20th century by the foresters, and which are now the prevailing species.

The Carrelet Refuge standing in the middle of the plateau was one of the oldest refuges set up by the Club Alpin Français, and dates from 1879. It is now a private residence and closed to the public.

Attribution : © Parc national des Ecrins - Cyril Couriser

## 👉 Upkeep of the slopes and paths (P)

The Restauration des Terrains en Montagne (RTM, "Restoration of Mountain Land") service, now part of the ONF, has been carrying out civil engineering work to combat erosion in the ravines near the path leading to the Temple-Ecrins refuge since 1882. Permanent monitoring and major annual maintenance work are needed to maintain thresholds, wire-mesh fencing, planting indigenous species and laying turf. Each year, the park rangers set up temporary walkways across the mountain streams.





## High attitude passages (Q)

The Col de la Temple (to the east of this trail), at an altitude of 3,322 m, constitutes a relatively easy passage between the Vallouise and the Vénéon. The last access slope to the pass is occupied by a small glacier that has greatly diminished in size in recent decades. The pass seems to be free of ice, but the ice is actually hidden by the stones. The story goes that once, a priest managed to go through the pass from the Vallouise to say mass at La Bérarde. Today, the pass is mainly peopled by mountain-climbers on their way to Pic Coolidge, standing at 3,774 m.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Ecrins



## Temple Ecrins Refuge (R)

Half buried on a fine plateau facing the most beautiful peaks of the mountain range, the Temple-Ecrins Refuge takes its name from the Col de la Temple, a little higher up, and from the famous Barre des Ecrins, the highest point in the range, looking down on it. Like many other refuges in Oisans, the first was built in 1925. It was made of wood and was a little higher up than the present-day refuge. It was destroyed by an avalanche 13 years later. It was only rebuilt in 1947 by the "Jeunesse et Montagne" organisation. The refuge is easy to access and is the goal of a fine family hike rounded off by a hearty meal and the starting point of such famous Alpine races as the Col de la Temple, the Pic Coolidge or the Face Nord de la Barre.

Attribution : © Parc national des Ecrins - Jean-Pierre Nicollet