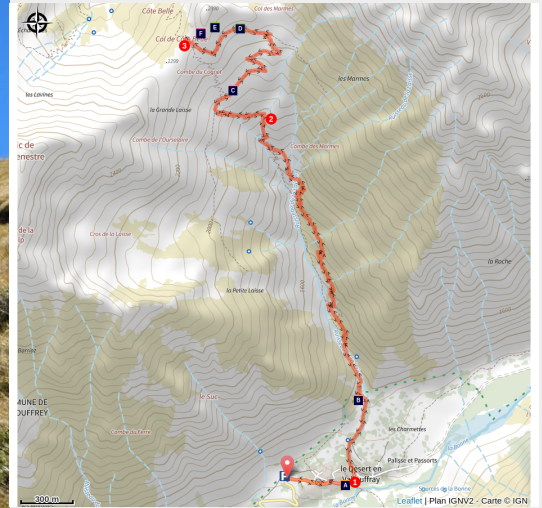


# Mountain pass by Côte Belle by the Desert

Parc national des Ecrins - Valjouffrey



Randonneurs au col de Côte-Belle (Christophe Albert - PNE)



*Crossing the flowery pasture of Côte-Belle results in a view across the western buttresses of Ecrins massif.*

«For decades we have taken up the challenge of consolidating the last stretch under the Côte Belle mountain pass on an unstable terrain. Very onerous for the park, we have undertaken the responsibility of recreating it. From 2013, the path heads in the direction of the Marmes mountain pass, it seems more agreeable with more stability and safety of the walkers».

*Bernard Nicollet, Park ranger in Valbonnais*

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 4 h 30

Length : 11.0 km

Trek ascent : 1035 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Return trip

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Panorama

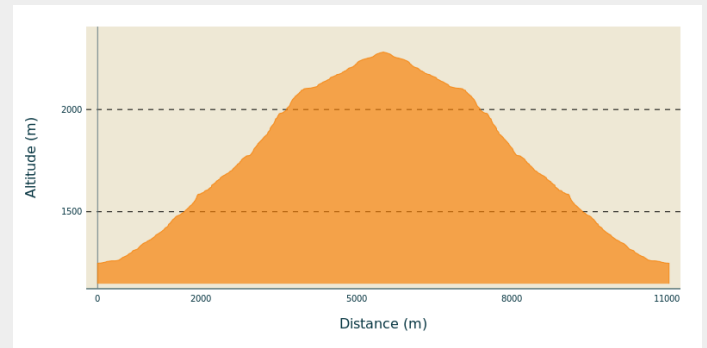
# Trek

**Departure** : Le-Désert-en-Valjouffrey

**Arrival** : Le-Désert-en-Valjouffrey

**Cities** : 1. Valjouffrey

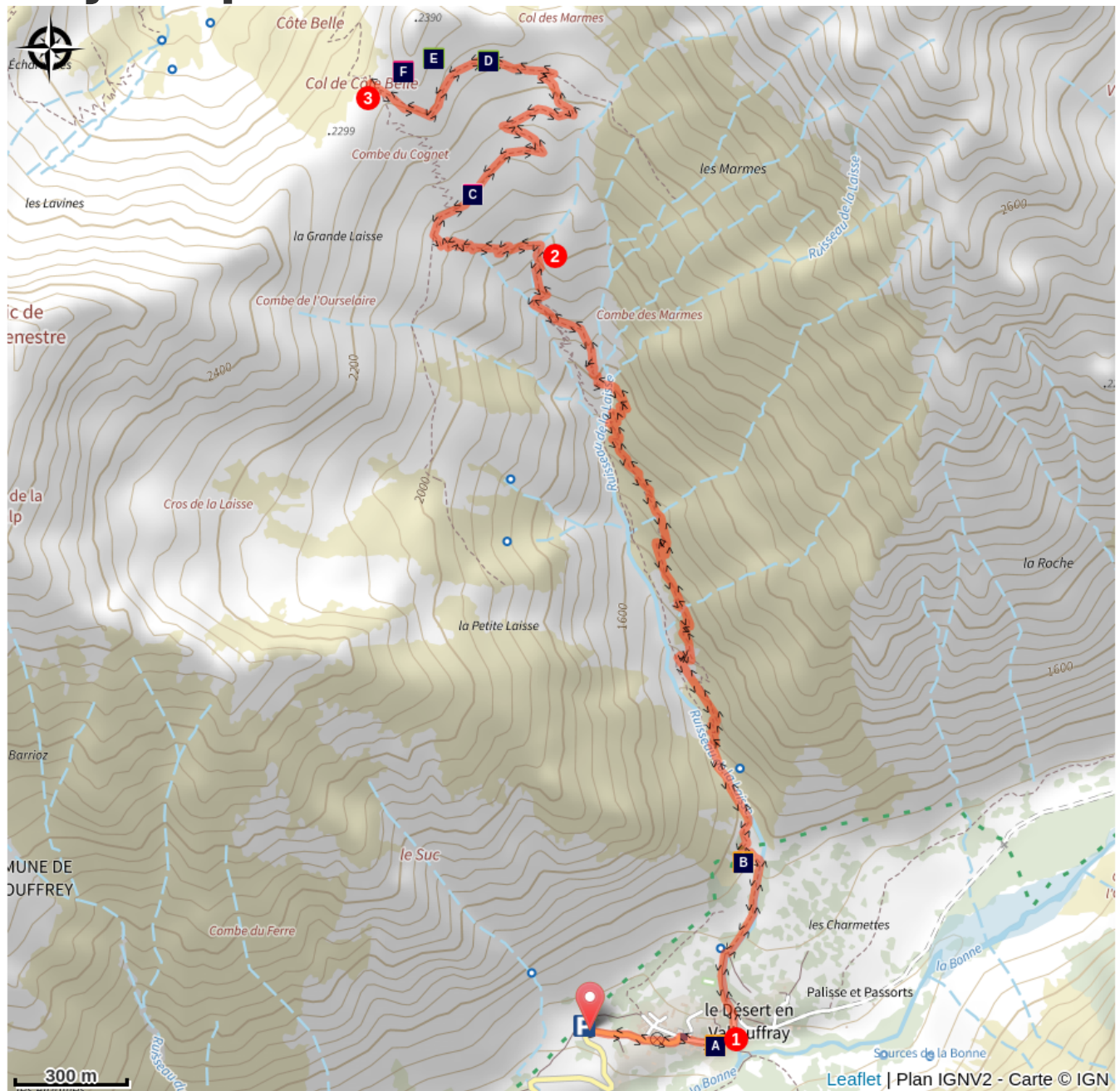
## Altimetric profile









Min elevation 1249 m Max elevation 2282 m

Park your car at the entrance to the Desert. Cross the village up until the torrent de la Laisse without passing it and continue North in the direction of the Côte Belle mountain pass. The path follows the carved out channel of the torrent and passes close to the paravalanche. . The itinerary runs through the heart of the Ecrins National Park. It goes down next into à quite narrow gorge. The track continues its ascent with large bends through ancient hay fields and comes out in the Côte Belle mountain pass. The view is of the Arcanier massif, the pic du Clapier du Peyron, la Roche de la Muzelle and the other summits and glaciers of the cirque de Valsenestre. The descent follows the same path.

# On your path...



-  The Désert-en-Valjouffrey (A)
-  New path (C)
-  Edelweiss (E)

-  Paravalanche (B)
-  Viviparous Lizard (D)
-  Landscape of the cirque de Valsenestre (F)

# 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

Take water with you to the Désert since there are no sources of drinking water along this itinerary. Protect yourself from the sun because the valley is exposed to the South...

## How to come ?

### Access

From Entraigues take the direction to Valjouffrey (D117). Continue along the valley to the hamlet of Désert en Valjouffrey.

### Advised parking

Parking à l'entrée du village du Désert

# 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

Sensitivity period: June, July, August, September

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

Zone de présence du Bouquetin des Alpes

En période de mise bas et d'élevage des jeunes (juin à septembre) les bouquetins peuvent être très sensibles au dérangement notamment en cas de survol à basse altitude. Dans leur fuite les risques d'accidents sont multipliés. Merci de rester à bonne distance et d'éviter le survol de la 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>

## Information desks

**Maison du Parc du Valbonnais**  
Place du Docteur Eyraud, 38740  
Entraigues  
valbonnais@ecrins-parcnational.fr  
Tel : 04 76 30 20 61  
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



## Source



Parc national des Ecrins  
<https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr>

# On your path...

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## The Désert-en-Valjouffrey (A)

No sand or barren lands, the name of Desert comes from the word "essarter" which means to clear the land of forest in order to produce a clearing. Forest clearing was necessary for the implementation and the development of agriculture in the mountains... Nowadays, the Desert is one of the only hamlets at altitude which is inhabited all year round in spite of the harsh mountain climate.

Attribution : PNE - Collection Tron Lucien

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## Paravalanche (B)

In 1961 and 1962 big avalanches descended as far as the riverbed of the Bonne, threatening the houses in the hamlet at Désert en Vajouffrey. In 1982 major works enabled the construction of a paravalanche in order to increase the safety of the hamlet and the prairies, by diverting possible threats coming from the Côte-belle valley.

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## New path (C)

The last section of the path allows access to the mountain pass has required numerous days of maintenance since its creation. In fact the unstable character of the soil associated with the steepness of the slope have made it necessary for the rangers to create wooden benches to contain the weight of the earth.. In Autumn 2012, it was decided to create a new section of the path by using part of a sheep track further East in the direction of the Marmes mountain pass. The work was carried out by a team creating 50 m per day during 26 days with pick-axes and courage. In total, it is a section measuring 1300 m which has been created, which makes the path less steep and much more stable.



## Viviparous Lizard (D)

The viviparous lizard can be distinguished from the wall lizard by its rounded muzzle. It is capable of living at an altitude of 2500m and you will most often see them in the meadows. It likes to warm itself in the sun, resting on the grass or the dry moss to hunt grasshoppers, crickets or spiders. During the winter, it buries under the ground where in a lethargic state it can survive negative temperatures. The viviparous lizard is named like this because the females keep their eggs in their abdomen up until they hatch. So the young are completely formed when they are born, it is an adaptation to the cold environment.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE



## Edelweiss (E)

In Latin léontopodium signifies the foot of the lion which is the general shape of the edelweiss. By looking at it closely, you realize that it is not one flower but a group of 5 to 10 flowers grouped in a flower head. The edelweiss is in the astéracées family like dandelions. It is a white plant, milky and perennial growing in rocky alpine meadows at subalpine level up to 2900 m. It often mixes with the Alpine Aster. The emblem of numerous guides, it symbolizes the high mountains and represents strength in the language of flowers...

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - PNE



## Landscape of the cirque de Valsenestre (F)

From the mountain pass, climb the little summit above to better see the landscape which shows the cirque de Valsenestre : on the left is the Signal du Lauvitel (2901m) and the Clapier du Perron (3169m), the mountain pass at Muzelle (2613m) where the GR54 is. At this level you can really see a geological fault separating the Grandes Rousses which are granite from the Muzelle block in gneiss. On the right, the principal summits are the Roche de la Muzelle (3465 m), and the pointe Swan (3294m). Le col de Côte-Belle separates the Pic de Valsenestre (2752m) on the left from the l'Aiguille des Marmes (3046 m) on the right.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - PNE