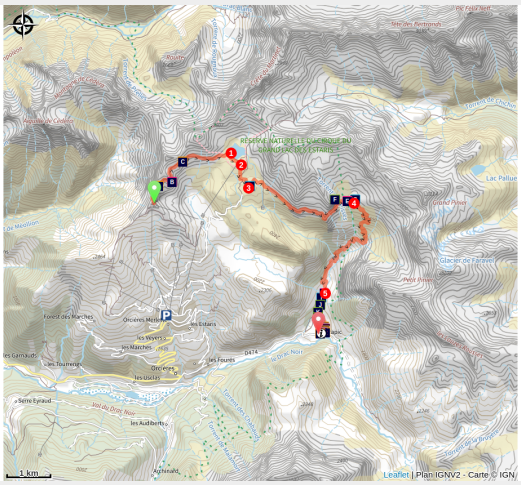
From the Drouvet summit to Prapic

Champsaur

Renoncules des glaciers (PNE - Corail Marc)



This crossing progresses in a grandiose panorama of the high Champsaur, between lakes glittering in the sun and dark "gates of heaven".

The alternating landscapes make this walk particularly enchanting and as often, the descent is made amongst summits and lakes, dales and pastures. The colour of the water contrasts with the more austere, wild schistose slopes of the valley that is nicknamed 'Heaven's gate'. Near to Prapic, the landscape opens onto vast pastures.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 5 h 30

Length : 14.2 km

Trek ascent : 241 m

Difficulty : Medium

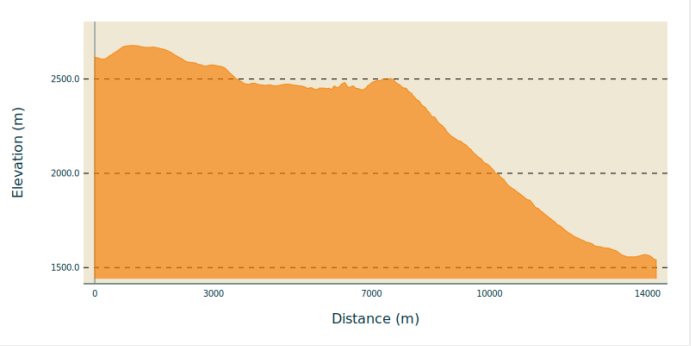
Type : Descent

Themes : History and architecture, Lake and glacier, Pastoralism

Trek

Departure : Drouvet summit, Orcières
Arrival : Prapic, Orcières
Cities : 1. Orcières
2. Champoléon

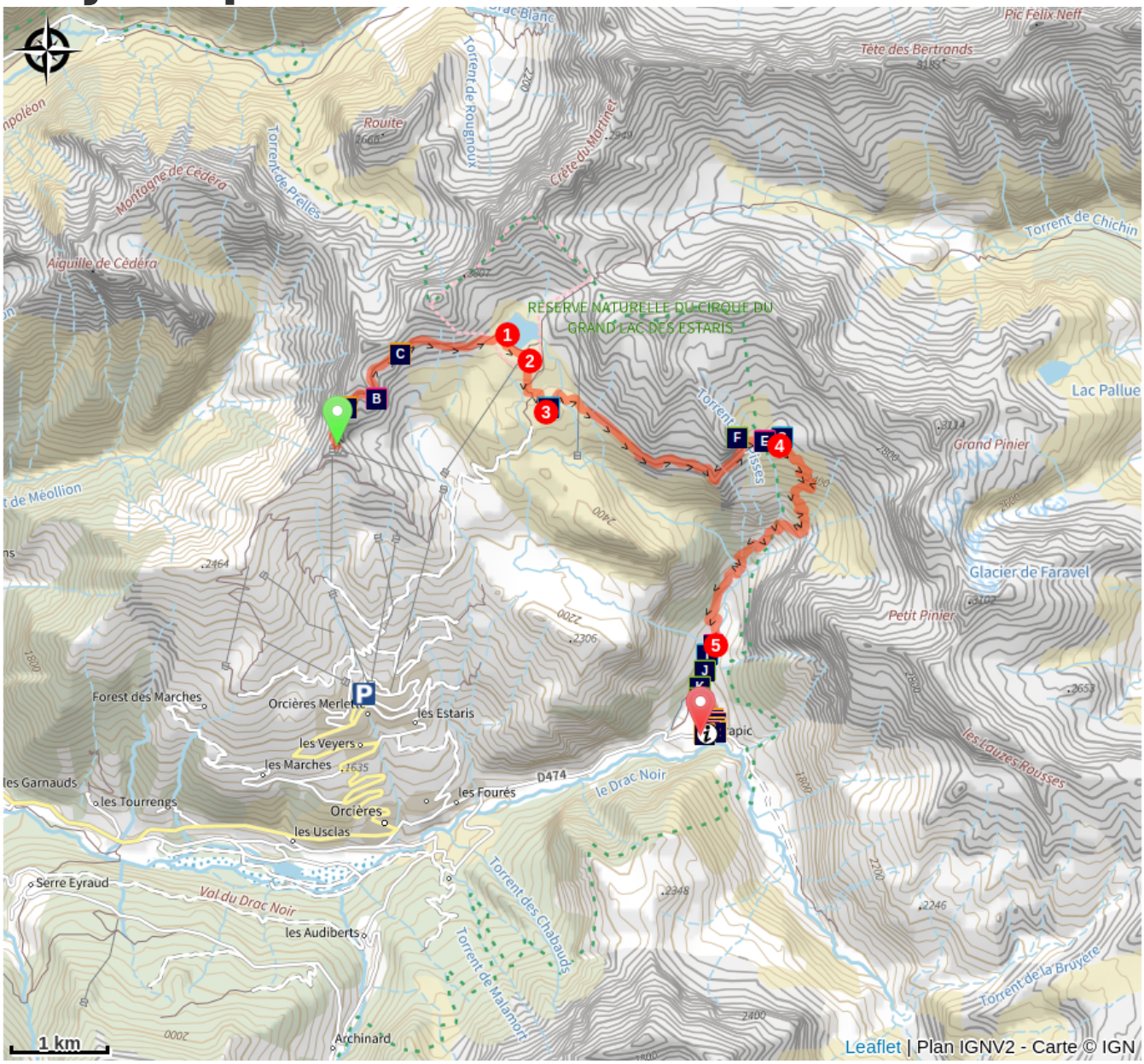
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1541 m Max elevation 2678 m

The start point is the Drouvet summit. To get there, take the “Telemix” next to the Orcières 1850 Tourist Information centre. At the top, head towards "Lac des Estaris" to the right. Continue on the footpath past the Roc des Hommes and cross a zone of scree. Go along the right of the Lac des Staris. When you get to the Estaris mountain refuge, take the path on the right towards the Lacs Jumeaux. After skirting the lake nearest to the footpath to reach the outflow (point where water runs from the lake), head eastwards (left). You will come close to the Lac des Pisses. Continue until you reach the Pisses mountain hut. In the bottom of the valley, the footpath joins up with the Tombeau du Poète one to the left, towards Prapic. To return to Orcières, take the shuttle, which must be reserved in advance and without fail at Orcières' Tourist Information.

On your path...



- Flocks of sheep (A)
- Point de vue sur l'ubac d'Orcières (B)
- A valley of pastoralism (C)
- Altitude lakes (D)
- View of the Prapic ledge (E)
- Wallcreeper (F)
- Lake Pisses (G)
- Ancient Gravel Pit (H)
- Blaisil torrent (I)
- Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly (J)
- Dung Fly (K)
- Yellow billed Chough (L)
- "Tadpole" trees (M)
- Prapic (N)
- Barn gable (O)
- Votive Festival (P)
- Last Bear (Q)
- Running water (R)
- Prapic Hamlet (S)
- Prapic Church (T)

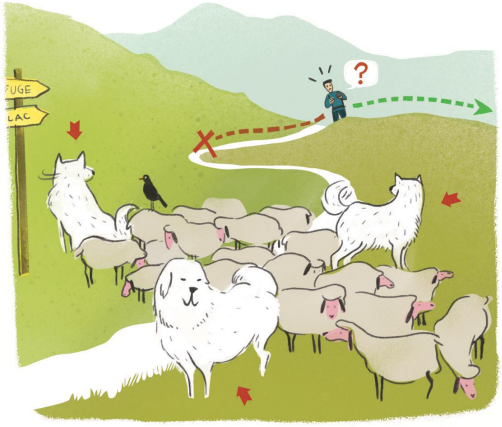
All useful information

Herd protection dogs

In mountain pastures, protection dogs are there to protect the herds from predators (wolves, etc.).

When I hike I adapt my behavior by going around the herd and pausing for the dog to identify me.

Find out more about the actions to adopt with the article "Protection dogs: a context and actions to adopt".
Tell us about your meeting by answering this survey.



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

Avoid this route in bad weather. Certain slopes can be slippery.
The indicated time does not take into account time on the shuttle or the telemix.

How to come ?

Transports

Télémix payble: from Orcières 1850 to the Drouvet summit
Navette payable: from Prapic to Orcières (compulsory advance reservation at the Tourist information Centre)

Access

Once you have gone through the village of Orcières, head to the Orcières 1850 resort.

Advised parking

Maison du Tourisme, Orcières 1850

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 à moins de 300m sol (3250m d'altitude).

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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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

Information centre of Prapic (summer only)

champsaur@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 92 55 61 92
http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/

Source

Parc national des Ecrins

https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr

On your path...

Flocks of sheep (A)

Out of respect for the work of the shepherd, certain precautions are to be taken should you encounter a flock of sheep. Walk widely around the flock when possible; avoid walking through it. Sometimes flocks are guarded by "patous", large dogs that are trained to protect the flock against intrusion. It is considered part of the flock. In its presence, stay calm; stop to give it time to see who you are. Do not stroke it, do not make any sudden movements.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Jean-Pierre

Point de vue sur l'ubac d'Orcières (B)

Here you have a view of the mineral framework of Orcières and its terraces.

Attribution : PNE - D'Houwt Stéphane

A valley of pastoralism (C)

Roughly 2000 cattle graze in the Orcières valley, which is managed by mountain breeders. The pastures are divided into sectors according to snowmelt. As the summer progressively settles in, the flock goes to a higher altitude to graze on the fresh grass. Along with salt blocks, these meadows are the sole source of nourishment during the summer season.

Attribution : PNE - Telmon Jean-Philippe

Altitude lakes (D)

Just as the glaciers, lakes are emblematic of the mountain landscape. They are an invaluable source of water and represent a priceless aesthetic and touristic heritage that well deserves our attention. Their altitude ecosystems are home to fauna and flora that are specific to such an environment. Their stability is fragile however. Indeed, the lakes "collect" waste from the mountain refuges, animal droppings and even atmospheric pollution from further afield.

Attribution : PNE - Gonsolin Gabriel

View of the Prapic ledge (E)

View of the hamlet of Prapic, its terraces and its natural pastures.

Attribution : PNE - Albert Christophe

Wallcreeper (F)

Discreetly latched to the rock face thanks to its long claws, the wallcreeper is searching, trying to spot insects or spiders that its long, thin, hooked beak can dislodge. Sole representative of the tichodromadidae family, the 'wallclimber' is dependent on the vertical rock faces in the mountains where it finds a home and food. The wallcreeper is a species that is far from timid and is emblematic of the mountains. It sometimes nears the villages in winter.

Attribution : PNE - Combrisson Damien

Lake Pisses (G)

The lakes were created in different ways. Lake Pisses was formed by the large glaciers of the quarternary age that carved out the softer rock as they advanced from Lyons to Sisteron. When the glaciers melted, 8000 years ago, these dips became lakes known as "basin lakes".

Attribution : PNE - Corail Marc

Ancient Gravel Pit (H)

Just forty years ago, the bottom of the valley was a sterile gravel pit, completely bare, where the torrent reigned supreme. Little by little, it became colonized and today the stones have given way to a forest. From time to time an avalanche makes sure that it kept is clear.

Blaisil torrent (I)

Blaisil torrent is the addition of two torrents one from Pisses lake and the other at Estaris. These two lakes situated at an altitude of 2500 m are accessible to walkers who set off early. But the effort is worth it: they present a remarkable setting and history!

Attribution : Michel Francou - PNE

Small Tortoiseshell Butterfly (J)

Precocious, the Small Tortoiseshell is the first butterfly to visit the flowers that have only just come out through the snow. Its caterpillars feed uniquely on nettles where you can see them gathered together with two yellow stripes on their backs. The butterfly has bright orange wings on top, incrusted with ebony and edged with blue lunules ringed with black.

Attribution : Joël Blanchemain - PNE

Dung Fly (K)

The Dung Fly is a difficult name to bear for such a pretty insect with a golden body! You can often see it on a fresh cow pat or a pile of manure, busy hunting or reproducing on the warm matter. With 240 million years of evolution, it is an expert in "aerobatics". It has 360° vision and it can locate an odour from a distance of several kilometers.

Attribution : Blandine Delenatte - PNE

Yellow billed Chough (L)

A whirl of black birds moves noisily along the edge of the mountain wall before landing on a heath covered with juniper bushes. Dozens of them in a joyful rumpus, the Yellow billed Choughs feed on the berries left in winter. Real acrobats, they are capable of breathtaking aerial demonstrations. This ease of flight enables them to travel daily from places of high altitude spending the night there in holes in the rocks, to the bottoms of the valleys where they often find food near to the villages. This small member of the Corvidae species is protected and is on the regional red list because its natural habitat is very localized.

Attribution : PNE - Fiat Denis

"Tadpole" trees (M)

The fodder distributed to the livestock during the winter is a precious commodity. To increase their supplies, the mountain dwellers use everything they have. In Autumn, before the leaves fall, the breeders cut branches from trees (ash and maples) and make bundles of wood. These will be treats for sheep and goats! This explains why the trees here have big heads... They are known as « tadpole » trees.

Attribution : Marc Corail - PNE

Prapic (N)

Prapic, at the foot of the Charnière plateau, is the most famous of the 23 hamlets of Orcières commune. You just have to look upwards to appreciate the richness and the quality of the architecture of the dwellings. The large Champsaurines houses have kept all their character here when the corrugated metal has not replaced the Prapic slate.

Attribution : PNE - Collection Tron Lucien

Barn gable (O)

In a poor country, ingenuity is increased. How do you close the gable of the barns while letting the air in to finish drying the hay without having to spend too much money? There are several examples here of the techniques used.

Attribution : Michel Francou - PNE

Votive Festival (P)

In the memory of the inhabitants, the votive festival for Saint-Anne has been celebrated for generations in Prapic Chapel. Previously it was celebrated in the old chapel situated at the top of the valley, but in 1870, it burnt down. Every Sunday following the 26th July, the faithful pay tribute to Saint Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary. However votive festivals are traditionally organized in order to answer a wish or to give thanks for a miracle.

Last Bear (Q)

In Blaisil valley, near to Prapic, the last bear in the region was slaughtered in 1895. This species had disappeared progressively between the 19th and the middle of the 20th century. In the French Alps, its disappearance is due to its classification as a harmful animal by the legislator in 1844. However, the reduction of its territory due to human activity also contributed to its disappearance. Its reintroduction in the Pyrenees is a controversial subject.

Attribution : PNE - Dequest Pierre-Emmanuel

Running water (R)

Running water came to Prapic in 1924. The first pipes were made from metre long sections, hollowed out trunks of larch. Their fitments probably did not enable all the water collected from the six village fountains to be transported!

Attribution : Michel Francou

Prapic Hamlet (S)

Surrounded by vegetable gardens, piles of stones and mown terraces the village nestles on the banks of the Drac and gives the best land over to agriculture. The typical house is most often perpendicular to the slope, based on an architecture created from materials collected locally and showing great intelligence in its elaboration. From course plasterwork to the delicacy of walnut wooden doors, shale roofing with gables made from plaited alder, this is the architectural vocabulary that punctuates your visit.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE

Prapic Church (T)

Dedicated to Saint-Anne, Prapic Church dates back to the 1860s. It was built following the request of the inhabitants for a place of worship, who were faced with the hazards of winter and the distance from the parish church in Orcières. On the stained glass choir window, you can admire the portrait of Prapicois: Jean Sarrazin (1833-1914), nicknamed the «the poet of the olives", a different poet from that in the tomb ... Can you find it?

Attribution : Michel Francou - PNE