

Les Plagnes via Les Clots

Briançonnais - La Grave



Hameau des Clots, commune de Champoléon (Dominique Vincent - Parc national des Ecrins)



This varied trail introduces hikers to the small ski resort of Le Chazelet and provides an exceptional panorama over the north face of La Meije, as well as all the villages in the canton.

Granaries, terraces, oratories... all the magic of Meije country. Here, hiking is a chance to enjoy the architecture and traditions of Le Chazelet, as well as the unique plant life all around.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 2 h 30

Length : 6.8 km

Trek ascent : 341 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Loop

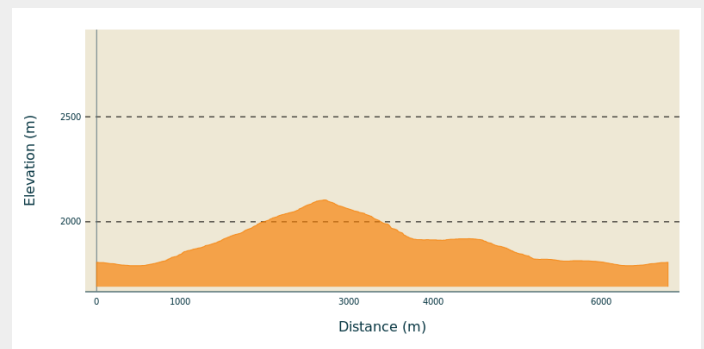
Themes : Flora, History and architecture

Trek

Departure : Hamlet of Le Chazelet

Cities : 1. La Grave

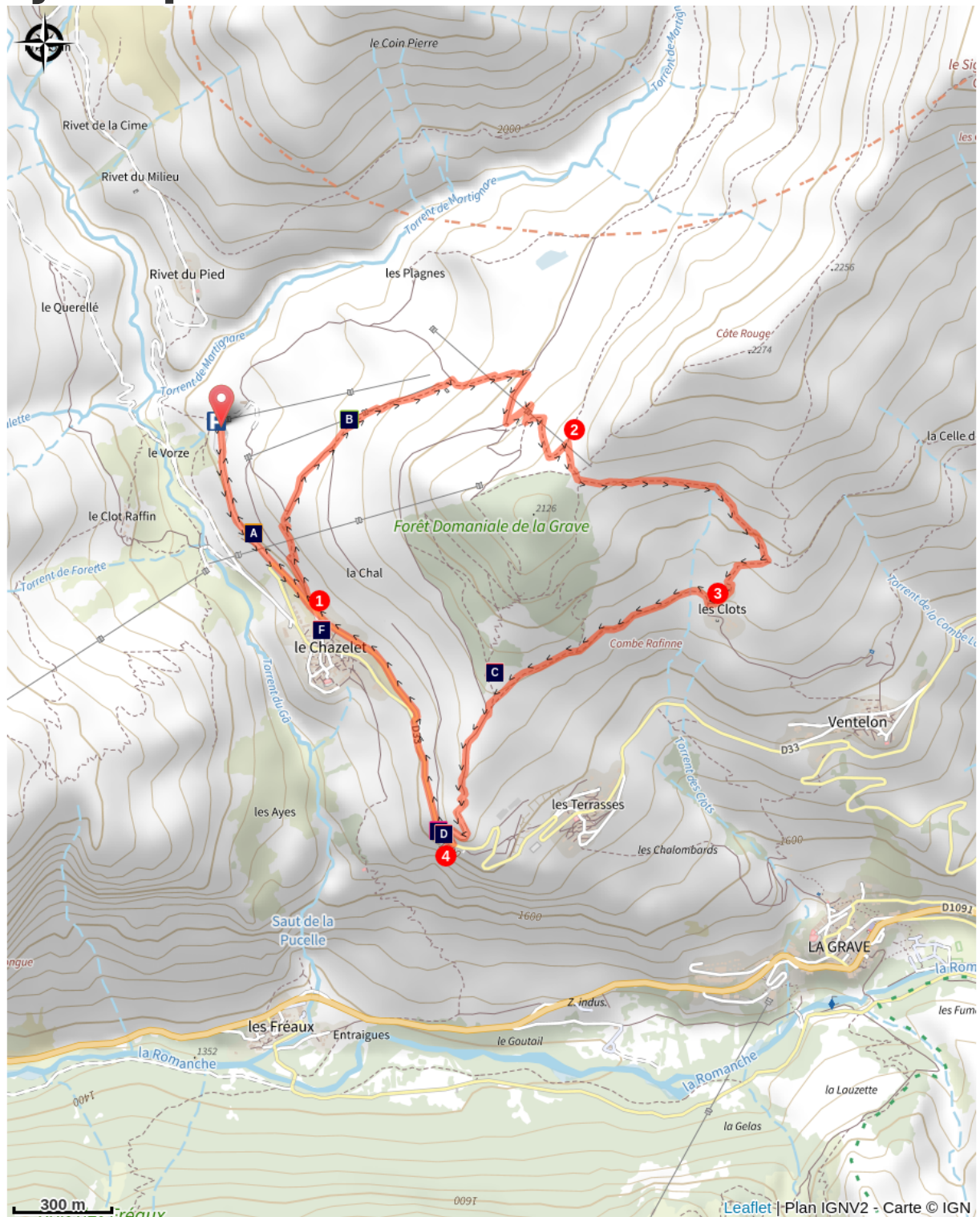
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1792 m Max elevation 2105 m

From the car park, walk up the tarmac road passing above the village for about 200 m. Take the left-hand fork in the road before the first houses and follow the Chemin des Plagnes. After about 200 m, go up to the right along a small path leading to a cross. Follow the path upwards across the hay meadows to the second hairpin bend, and there take the small path (in the locality of Founcato), which goes up to the button lift, then runs alongside it as far as the wooden cross (locality of Jacques Mathonet). Continue along the path that crosses the Plagnes button lift, and rejoin the path that makes its way towards the Martignare valley. Head right and make for the “Col des Plagnes” (2106 m), following the markings, along the edge of the Chazelet forest. Go down the narrow path leading to the village of Les Clots (1916 m) (don’t take the path on the left leading to La Celle des Juges). Cross the upper part of the village and turn right onto a mountainside path. After crossing the small slate mines (cables), you come to a wide track that runs below the forest. Go down towards the oratory, passing the orientation table. You arrive at a road, which you follow for 300 m towards Le Chazelet. Walk through the village and continue on back to the starting point of the trip.

On your path...



Chazelet Cattle Fair (A)



The terraces of La Grave (C)



Chazelet perch (E)



Yellow bellflower (B)



Sainte-Anne du Chazelet oratory (D)



The greniers of Le Chazelet (F)

All useful information

Advices

Pay attention when crossing the slate mines on the way back - use the cable to help you.

How to come ?

Transports

Grenoble bus station/SNCF - La Grave / Villar d'Arène - Briançon (LER 35 - Transisère).

Access

From Col du Lautaret, follow the D1091, before the tunnel entrance, turn left onto the D33 and head for Le Chazelet.

Advised parking

Car park above Le Chazelet

Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

On your path...



Chazelet Cattle Fair (A)

This is an old market that still exists and gives local farmers the opportunity to sell young "Abondance" or "Tarine" cows, that are needed to make Beaufort and Reblochon cheeses, to farmers from Savoie, Haute Savoie and Italy. The traders, who are easy to identify with their hats and black cloaks, and the worried-looking breeders barter, whilst stalls of bells and other objects lend a festive feel to the event.

Attribution : Gérald Lucas



Yellow bellflower (B)

Immediately recognisable, this bellflower bears yellow flowers in very compact spikes. This flower formation is also called a thyrsa. It is one of the few biennial alpine plants. In the first year, the seeds dispersed in the autumn germinate into plants with rosettes of large elongated leaves. They only flower in the second year, and then it sets seed and dies. This plant is found on alpine grasslands (from 1,000 to 2,600 metres above sea level) and rocky ground, in rather chalky soils. With an upright stem that is thick, hollow and bears many leaves, it reaches 10 to 30 cm in height.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



The terraces of La Grave (C)

On the south-facing slope of La Grave, farming terraces and villages are inextricably linked. This is a landscape heritage recognised at European level, which incorporates numerous architectural, archaeological and natural elements. This high-mountain farming system is largely shaped by past and present agricultural activity. In earlier times, sloping ground necessitated the construction of terraces in order to be able to cultivate them. Today covered by natural meadows, these old farming terraces are cut for hay or grazed. Highly sensitive to this new usage for grazing, they have slowly been affected by erosion.

Attribution : Yves Baret - PNE



Sainte-Anne du Chazelet oratory (D)

Although it stands beside an ordinary road, the Chazelet oratory is famous for one of the most beautiful panoramas of the Alps and the Meije mountains. Built in dry stone, the edifice is at 1 834 m and overlooks the valley and the Ecrins and Meije mountains. It has been sketched, photographed and painted many times, including in the famous Meije by the Japanese painter Foujita.

Recently a new orientation table was placed a few metres above the oratory. In two parts, it shows the northern slope of the Meije and the southern slope in the direction of Chazelet and Savoie.

Attribution : PNE

Chazelet perch (E)

To test your head for heights, there is nothing like this new, life-size game played facing the Meije a steel walkway suspended over empty space. The first few steps are daunting, but reaching the end of the walkway – or rather, empty space – calls for even more courage! Beneath your feet, all the way down below is the village of Les Fréaux, nestling against the Romanche, and above you, the giants of ice. If you add in the element of air, with gusts of wind blowing all around you, then strong sensations are guaranteed!



The greniers of Le Chazelet (F)

In Le Chazelet there are a dozen or so very distinctive buildings which are unique to this village, called greniers (the French word for granary or storehouse). These small buildings made from larch wood, all very similar in style, are found right across the village. They were built to hold the chests in which the peasants stored their most prized valuables. So, in the event of a fire in a house, the occupants' property was safe. The doors behind which the precious contents were locked away in the greniers are extremely sturdy and well-constructed; They are studded all over and have a large worked lock, a fareuille. When you return from a walk, take the time to explore the village and try to track down the 12 greniers!

Attribution : Eric Vannard - PNE