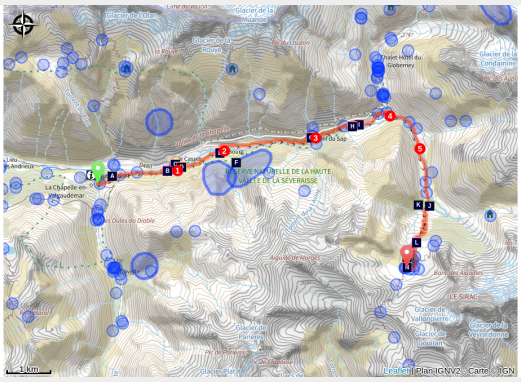
Tour of Vieux Chaillol Stage 2 out of 5

Valgaudemar

Montée au refuge et lac de Vallonpierre (© Parc national des Ecrins - Thibaut Blais)



Keep your eyes open on the climb towards the Gioberney glacial cirque, followed by the Vallonpierre mountain refuge. Chamois, Turk's cap lilies and orange lilies await you.

You will go through several hamlets with architecture characteristic to Valgaudemar, which is a reward for the elevation on this stage. It ends at the Vallonpierre mountain refuge and the charming nearby high altitude lake.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 5 h

Length : 14.2 km

Trek ascent : 1231 m

Difficulty : Hard

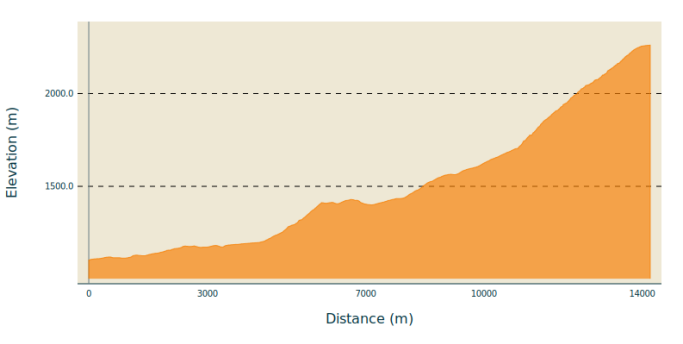
Type : Stage

Themes : History and architecture, Hut

Trek

Departure : La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar
Arrival : Vallonpierre
Markings : GR
Cities : 1. La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

Altimetric profile

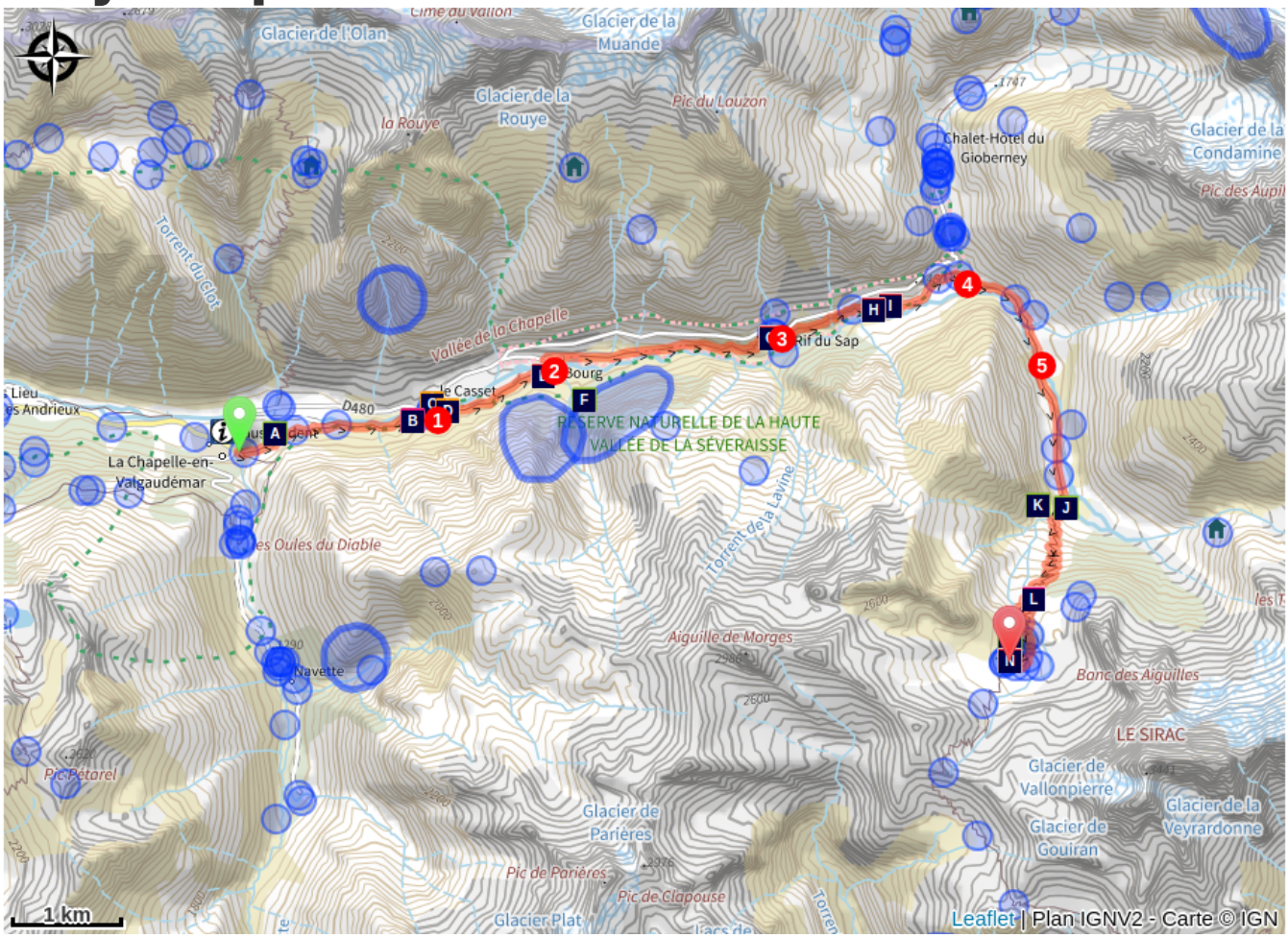


Min elevation 1102 m Max elevation 2261 m

Cross La Chapelle en Valgaudemar, staying on the left bank of the Séveraisse until you reach the stone bridge at Casset.

1. With the hamlet to the left, continue on the left bank to the Bourg.
2. Cross the footbridge over the Séveraisse and head to Rif du Sap by the old track that heads up on the right bank.
3. Then descend to the Xavier Blanc mountain refuge. From here, continue up the Séveraisse on the right bank and cross the Gioberney stream.
4. Once you get to the ruins of the hamlet of Clot, pick up the footpath that goes through the Ravin de la Baumette woods, leaving to the left the "Minister's" footpath that descends from the Gioberbey mountain refuge.
5. Cross the Séveraisse and when you arrive at the Surette hut, continue over the Surette prairie. Continue up and cross the bridge over the Vallonpierre stream. Follow the bends upwards on the right bank, until you reach the Vallonpierre mountain refuge.

On your path...



- Hayfields (A)
- An itinerary packed with history (C)
- Traditional dwellings (E)
- "Toune" (G)
- Clot Xavier Blanc mountain refuge (I)
- Marmot (K)
- Alpine ibex (M)
- Waterfalls and view points over the valley (B)
- Toponymy in the Valgaudemar area (D)
- Golden eagle (F)
- Walled paths (H)
- High altitude birds (J)
- Impressive geology (L)
- The Vallonpierre refuge (N)

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

Shuttle from Saint-Firmin to La Chapelle during the summer.
Be sure to reserve 36 hours in advance at 05voyageurs.com or by calling 04 92 502 505.

Access

From the N85, follow the D985a to La Chapelle en Valgaudemar.

Advised parking

Car park at the Maison du Parc, La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

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

Bearded vulture

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

Contact: Parc National des Ecrins - Yoann Bunz- 06 99 77 37 65 yoann.bunz@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Le Rompeau
Le Gypaète barbu est une espèce très sensible au dérangement tout au long du cycle de reproduction. Dans les Alpes, la population est en installation suite aux réintroductions débutées en 1987. Le nombre de couples présent est encore faible.

Les Zones de Sensibilité Majeure (ZSM) Gypaète barbu sont désignées avec les acteurs locaux.

Vous visualisez les Zones cœur, toutes les activités sont à proscrire pendant la période sensible (du 1/11 au 31/08).

Attention aux réglementations (Parcs nationaux, Réserves naturelles…) qui s'imposent aux zones Gypaètes.

Information desks

Tourisme Office of Champsaur & Valgaudemar
Les Barraques, 05500 La Fare en Champsaur
Tel : 04 92 49 09 35
http://www.champsaur-valgaudemar.com/

Valgaudemar Park house
Ancien Asile Saint-Paul, 05800 La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

valgaudemar@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 92 55 25 19
http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/

Source

Parc national des Ecrins

https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr

On your path...

Hayfields (A)

Hayfields surround the village of La Chapelle. Unfortunately, such natural hayfields, and their flowers and insects, are more and more frequently replaced by temporary hayfields, in other words, certain years they are sowed. These prairies are still watered by the irrigation canals that are well maintained by the users with the help of the National Park. You will see the floodway of the Grande Levée canal not far from the stream as it nears the Sèveraisse. The canals are of great importance for preserving wetland flora, such as alternate-leaved golden saxifrage or yellow star-of-Bethlehem, both of which are protected species.

Attribution : Dominique Vincent - PNE

Waterfalls and view points over the valley (B)

Along the itinerary, you will see the Combefroide and Casset waterfalls that are situated on the south facing slopes of the valley. The route also gives a good view to the east and the west of the Sèveraisse valley from the hamlet of Casset. Downstream, from the hamlet of Rif du Sap, a good example of a U-shaped valley is proof of shaping by the quaternary glaciers.

Attribution : Dominique Vincent - PNE

An itinerary packed with history (C)

The Casset bridge is the oldest remaining bridge over the Sèveraisse that has not been washed away by floods. On the right bank of this magnificent "Roman" structure, the hamlet of Casset gets its name from the "casse" (large steep scree deposits at the foot of slopes) that surround it. This village, like that of Le Bourg, was partly covered by a landslide. As for Le Rif du Sap, an avalanche swept away the houses from the top of the hamlet in 1944. The hamlet of Le Clot, was flooded in 1928, and was totally abandoned in 1934 when a fire destroyed most of the dwellings.

Attribution : Jean-Claude Catelan (collection)

Toponymy in the Valgaudemar area (D)

Valgaudemar! The sound of this name resonates in our ears. Some claim that it is in reference to the valley of Mary "Gaude Marie" or "Rejoice Mary!" It is more reasonable to think that it is in reference to Gaudemar, the last king of the Burgundians (524) a Germanic tribe that invaded this area in 406...Vallis Gaudemarii can be read in texts as early as 1284. Poetic licence, legends and imagination are often red herrings when it comes to researching the origins of names.

Attribution : Olivier Warluzelle - PNE

Traditional dwellings (E)

A few typical, old Valgaudemar houses can be seen in the hamlets of Casse, Le Bourg and Le Rif du Sap. A few thatched roofs, vaulted entrances to dwellings ("tounes"), and stone paving, are some fine examples of architecture that are worth saving. Cheaper and requiring less maintenance, sheet metal gradually replaced the thatch on the rooftops.

Attribution : Stephan D'houwte - PNE

Golden eagle (F)

Between La Chapelle and Le Clot, it is not rare to see the golden eagle flying over the sunlit slopes. In the summer, this majestic bird of prey with its dark plumage (some have lovely white rosettes on the underside of their wings) mingles with the short-toed eagle, which is smaller and lighter-coloured, and the griffon vulture, which is larger, with a short tail and often flies in groups. There is nothing surprising about this as the south facing slopes provides thermal lift that enables them to fly high and far.

Attribution : Robert Chevalier - PNE

"Toune" (G)

This is an architectural feature of the Champsaur-Valgaudemar area and is the barrel-vaulted porch on the main facade of the house. It sheltered the entrance to the dwelling and stable and was sometimes used to stock items, such as wood, to keep it dry. The "toune" was often painted white to reflect the sunlight. They inhabitants would sit in them to do embroidery or darning, etc.

Attribution : Yves Baret - PNE

Walled paths (H)

On certain stretches of the route, you will walk between two stone walls. Such "via clause" were built to stop the domestic animals, on their way up to the pastures, from walking on or eating the grass in the prairies that was intended for them in the winter. The most remarkable "via clause" is on the way out of the hamlet of Le Clot. It has been restored by the Ecrins National Park.

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Attribution : Dominique Vincent - PNE

Clot Xavier Blanc mountain refuge (I)

What a strange idea to build this mountain refuge below the road leading to Gioberney, at an altitude of "only" 1397 m. In fact, it was already there more than a century ago, long before the road was built. This simple, sturdy building belonged to the Valgodemar Mining Company that operated in the area extracting copper and lead. When the business closed, the Club Alpin Français bought the building and named it after Xavier Blanc, in recognition of one of the founder members of the CAF, senator of the Hautes Alpes.

Attribution : Dominique Vincent - PNE

High altitude birds (J)

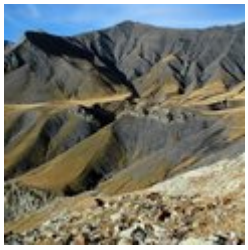
Autumn is migration season. The mountains, which are too harsh in winter, loses their inhabitants. Some opt for a change in altitude and go lower down the valley or to the coast. This is the case for the alpine accentor, the redstart, the redpoll, or the Eurasian linette. Others head off on a long journey to warmer countries. The Sahara offers a milder winter to the common rock thrush, whinchat and wheatear. The lesser whitethroat will head to the east. In the summer, this fine bunch will meet up again in the mountains. It finds a sanctuary where the diversity of plants and invertebrates is preserved. The alpine pastures seem to be favourable for the reproduction of all of these species that are diminishing and need to be protected.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE

Marmot (K)

A high-pitched whistle sounds in the mountain pastures it is the cry of the marmot on guard, warning its companions of the arrival of imminent danger from the sky. Any inattentive creature failing to take note should beware a golden eagle will carry them away in its talons to feed its young.
Native to the Alpine grassland, colonies of marmots live with their young until their third year. Gnawing and digging are their favourite pastimes, along with rolling down the slopes. And not forgetting an afternoon nap on a nice, warm rock and their long hibernation between October and March.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



Impressive geology (L)

From chabournéite, the native mineral of Valgaudemar, to the crystalline rock from the Sirac's gneiss, from the hollow of Vallonpierre made in sedimentary rock to the show that is given by the shale and tuffs on the Chevrettes pass, this circuit will take you back in time. The folds and the colours appear before you like an impressionist’s work of art.

Attribution : Bernard Guidoni - PNE

Alpine ibex (M)

The species had almost completely disappeared from the French Alpine regions, and they survived thanks to our Italian neighbours, the kings of Savoy. Until the mid-15th century, they were still to be seen, but they were not wary of mankind and were hunted for their meat. Superstitious medical practice at the period also hastened their decline: their horns were ground into powder and used as a remedy for impotence, while the cross-shaped bone over their hearts was thought to ward off sudden death.
Successfully reintroduced into the Vanoise area in 1960, they were also brought back into the Champoléon valley over 20 years ago.

Attribution : Jean-Philippe Telmon - PNE

The Vallonpierre refuge (N)

A small lake, pretty meadows and the benevolent Sirac... This magical setting would lead to the construction of a refuge at an altitude of 2270 m in 1942. However, it was a victim of its own success and in 2000 the decision was made to build a second, bigger one. It can accommodate 37 instead of 22. This new building was the first modern mountain refuge to be built using stones on site rather than imported materials. It copies the simplicity and the crow-stepped gable from the "small refuge" which has been kept as lodgings for a warden's helper.

Attribution : Dominique vincent - PNE