

La cabane de Rif Meyol

Valbonnais



La Cabane de Rif Meyol - Kinaphoto © Parc national des Ecrins (Kinaphoto © Parc national des Ecrins)



The climb takes you through a softwood forest and leads to the Rif Meyol pastoral hut.

There is no lake here, no impetuous stream, no glacier but a silent cirque that is far from busy, where the fauna, as well as the exuberant vegetation impress by their abundance and diversity. A wild but calm environment synonymous with a protected area.

Bernard Nicollet, warden in the Valbonnais area

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 5 h

Length : 8.4 km

Trek ascent : 919 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Return trip

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Pastoralism

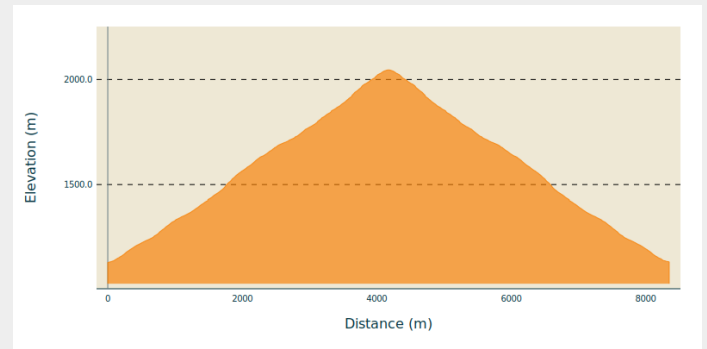
Trek

Departure : Confolens waterfall car park or Périer village car park

Arrival : Parking de la cascade de Confolens ou du village du Périer

Cities : 1. Le Périer

Altimetric profile












Min elevation 1128 m Max elevation 2047 m

After taking a small forestry track, directly from the Confolens waterfall car park, the first two-thirds of the route go through a beech and pine forest to reach the bottom of the high grass pastures. From the old half-ruined stone hut, the meandering path leads up to another altitude "pessière" (spruce forest). You will then reach the pastures, in the true sense of the word, which form a patchwork of rhododendron and blueberry moors, green alder thickets, adenostyles alpinas, raspberry plants and meadows of fleshy grasses. Now at the subalpine stage, there are few trees to obstruct the view over immense greenery surrounded by rocky ledges in the distance. The Rif Méyol is not far. It is discreetly located in the relief and surrounded by large splashes of dark green that are monk's rhubarb.

On your path...



-  The history of pine and spruce (A)
-  Black woodpecker (C)
-  Forest regeneration (E)
-  Broad shouldered adenostyle leaf beetle (G)
-  « La rhubarbe des moines » - Monks rhubarb (I)

-  Pine or spruce (B)
-  Timber harvesting (D)
-  Hazel grouse (F)
-  Bovine pastoralism (H)

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

For early morning walkers, do not forget your gaiters to protect against the abundant dew.

How to come ?

Transports

Transière bus Line 4120 Chantelouve-La Mure Bus stop at Périer (village)

Access

From la Mûre: follow the D114 (for 1.5 km) then the D26 and the D526. From Bourg d'Oisans, follow the D526. There is a first car park above the Grissard graveyard (altitude 1001 m). It is possible to continue up to the Salsette, where there is a second car park near to the Confolens waterfall.

Advised parking

Confolens waterfall car park or Périer church car park

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...



The history of pine and spruce (A)

The two fir trees that can grow up to 40 metres high, not only live together on the north facing slopes of the mountains, but also look very much like each other. Their ancestors appeared on Earth 250 million years ago, 100 million years before the main flowering plants, which in this respect means they are honourable peers of the forest. Both reproduce later in life thanks to seeds contained in cylinder-shaped cones that grow at the end of the branches.

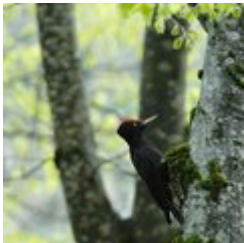
Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



Pine or spruce (B)

Pinecones are impossible to move and stand like large candles, but they are not easy to see perched high up towards the treetop. On the other hand, spruce cones hang from the end of the branches and finally fall when they are ripe. Concerning the foliage, spruce needles prick; which is not the case for pine needles, which stay a characteristic dark green to the extent that a colour "vert-sapin" (pine green) is named in reference to them.

Attribution : Jean-Pierre Nicollet - PNE



Black woodpecker (C)

The forest's estate agent, the large black woodpecker that has a red crest and a long pale beak, reduces the large tree's vermin-inhabited tree trunk to sawdust. Here, it feeds, lodges and shelters before moving on and leaving the trunk to other opportunistic lodgers such as martens, bats or forest owls (pygmy or boreal owls) Sometimes it is possible to hear the young squawking as the feeding parent approaches.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



Timber harvesting (D)

Forests of large conifers are still an important resource for small mountain districts. Periodical harvesting, which is difficult due to the relief and the slopes, involves harvesting growth in volumes of wood. Walking through a forestry plot shortly after timber felling or skidding sometimes gives a sense of desolation but nature quickly takes its course again.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE



🌿 Forest regeneration (E)

North facing forests rapidly recover - from timber felling - thanks to the speed at which the trees regenerate, the rotting of the tree stubs and recolonising of the ground by grass and moss. Man is not the only responsible party for renewing the forest. From the start of the footpath, at the Confolens waterfall, gaps and windfalls caused by the gale on 5th January 2012 shows that Mother Nature is sometimes harsh with her subjects.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



🐦 Hazel grouse (F)

It is so discreet and devoted to the forest cover that anyone who should chance to see it is very lucky. It hardly ever flies and prefers to run off on foot to flee danger. It lives on buds, willow catkins and mountain ash fruit. It is not surprising that it has chosen this habitat.

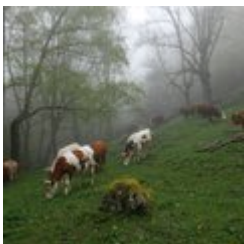
Attribution : Marc Corail - PNE



🐞 Broad shouldered adenostyle leaf beetle (G)

This insect, the same kind as the well-known potato beetle (that devastates potato plants), is mainly interested in adenostyles leaves, regardless of the species. The beetle is recognisable by its shiny elytra that generally vary from blue to green. In the summer, its voracity and its proliferation leads it to make "plant lace" out of its host. The broad shouldered leaf beetle also prevails on the leaves of butterburs and occasionally masterwort.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



🐄 Bovine pastoralism (H)

Until the 70s, every family that lived in the mountain valleys owned a few cows which supplied them in milk, butter and meat. Today, in valleys and high pastures, cattle has been replaced by sheep. In spite of this change, the valley of Rif Meyol still hosts in free mountain pastures, a small herd of aboriginal cows, as they roam less than sheep. In the alpine pastures, their reference and reunification point is the hut where the farmer fixes his heard, using salt that he scatters on the ground or on flat stones. A great opportunity for the chamois who take advantage of this unexpected supply of salt. Be very quite when you approach, you may spot them !

Attribution : Bernard Nicolet - PNE



✿ « La rhubarbe des moines » - Monks rhubarb (I)

« La rhubarbe des moines », or rhubarb of the Alps (*Rumex pseudoalpinus* in Latin) is the mountain cousin of our cultivated rhubarb. It was introduced in Europe by Marco Polo at his return from his journeys to Asia.

This subalpine plant by nature, is faithful to its place on the cattle's resting spots in the pastures. It pushes all of its neighbors aside thanks to its great size. Only the stinging nettle gets away with this invasion. It is no help today for the hiker. It will even soak him up to his thighs with dew from its very wide leaves. In the Middle Ages, a part of the leaves was served as a bitter dish to the farmes. The rest of the plant was given to the pigs.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE