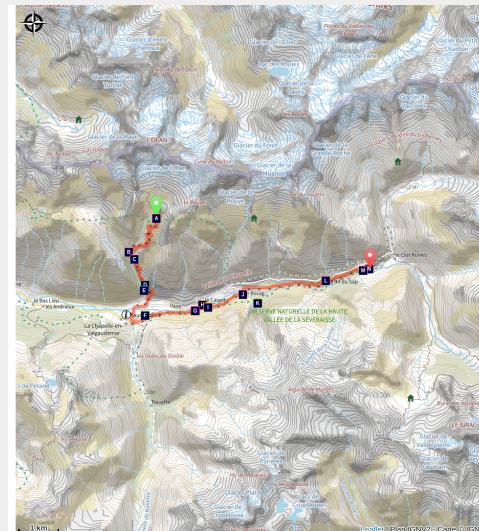


# Du refuge de l'Olan au refuge du Clot Xavier Blanc

Valgaudemar - La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar



Haute Séveraisse et la vue sur les Rouies (© Parc national des Ecrins - Emilie Dupin)



*Une agréable étape permettant d'effectuer un retour en vallée avant de replonger dans l'ambiance montagnarde.*

*La descente surplombant la Chapelle donne l'impression de marcher au bord du vide, alors que visite du village niché aux pieds de ces montagnes invite à un voyage dans le temps ; avant d'aborder la remontée au refuge de Xavier Blanc aux allures champêtres... voici tout ce qui confère à cette randonnée son caractère unique.*

*Tommy Bulle*

## Useful information

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Practice : By walk

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Duration : 4 h

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Length : 13.6 km

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Trek ascent : 394 m

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Difficulty : Medium

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Type : Stage

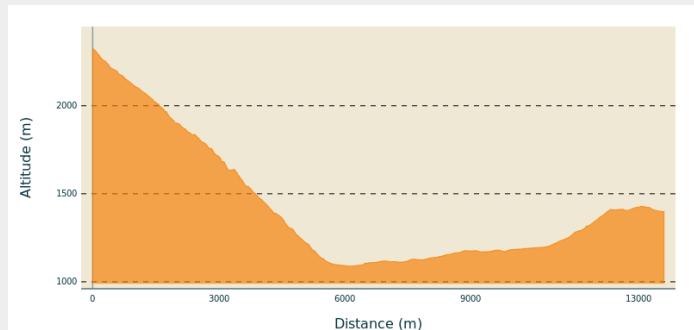
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Themes : History and architecture, Hut, Panorama

# Trek

**Departure :** Refuge de l'Olan  
**Arrival :** Refuge Xavier Blanc  
**Markings :** GR  
**Cities :** 1. La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

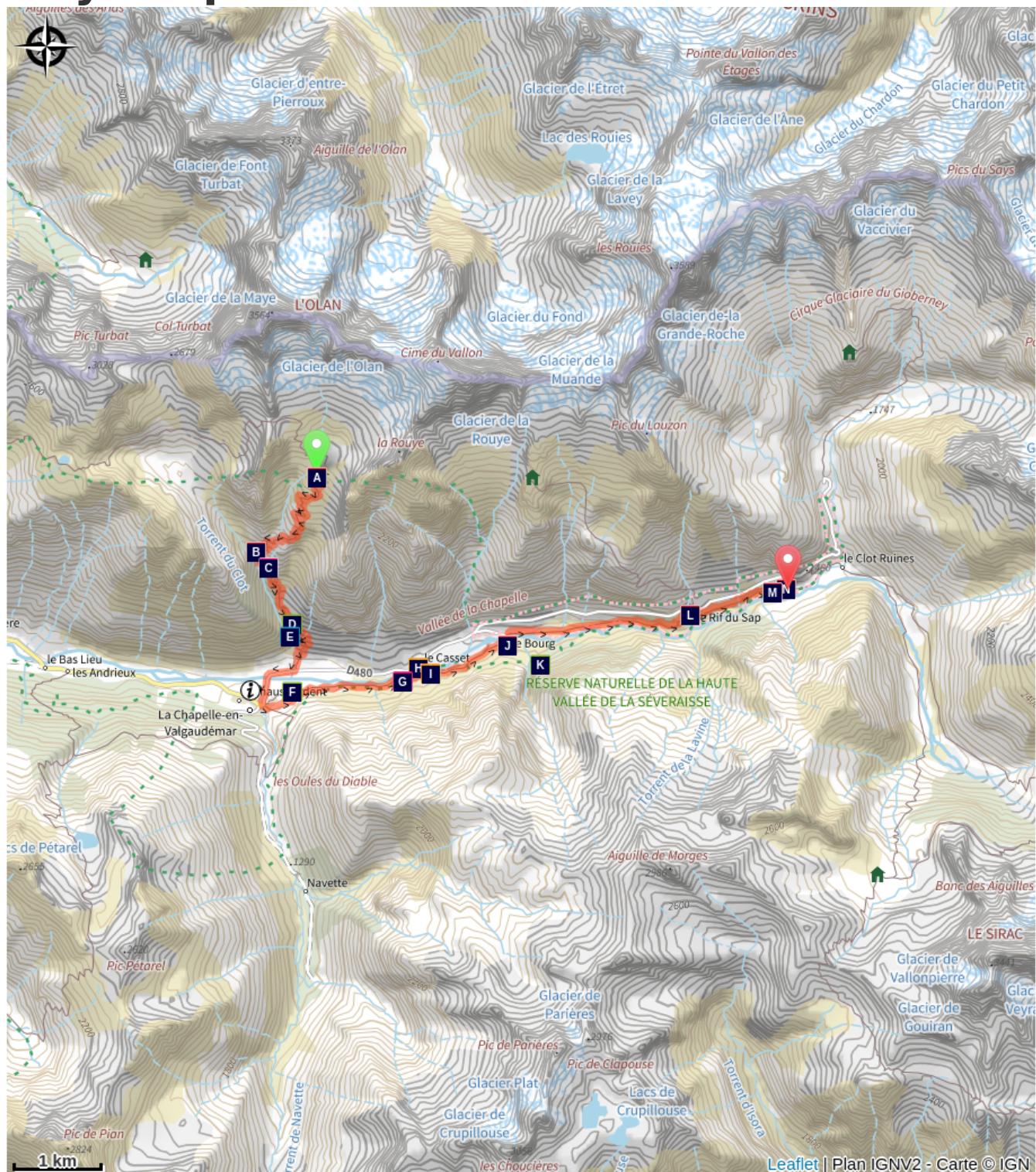
## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1090 m Max elevation 2322 m

Du refuge, remonter pour rejoindre le croisement de la veille et partir en direction de la Chapelle. Le sentier passe sur deux dalles en béton datant de la construction du premier refuge dans les années cinquante. C'est une avalanche qui a causé ces dégâts. Le sentier tricote sur le flanc de la montagne. Passer une première passerelle, puis arriver à un croisement avec un chemin qui indique le refuge des Souffles. Poursuivre la descente, le sentier conduit à une autre passerelle. Les derniers lacets offrent le contentement d'être arrivé en bas de cette descente. À la route, prendre à droite et continuer jusqu'au centre du village. Au croisement à proximité de la Maison du Parc national des Ecrins prendre à gauche puis de nouveau à droite au premier croisement. Rejoindre alors le GR de Pays du Tour du Vieux Chaillol, qu'il faut suivre jusqu'au refuge. Le sentier longe la rive gauche de la Séveraisse. Il s'agit de l'ancien accès pour les hameaux en amont. Quelques ouvrages, murs en pierres sèches, dallages, vieux ponts, témoignent de la présence humaine durant les siècles passés. Sur la rive opposée de trouve le hameau du Casset. Un kilomètre après, arriver au hameau du Bourg. Traverser la rivière et continuer sur la rive droite. Le chemin s'élève petit à petit pour atteindre le hameau du Rif du Sap : le traverser. De ce point, le sentier permet alors de rejoindre rapidement le refuge du Clot Xavier Blanc.

# On your path...



-  Olan Refuge (A)
-  Bourelle Gorge (C)
-  Combefroide Waterfall (E)
-  Waterfalls and view points over the valley (G)
-  Toponymy in the Valgaudemar area (I)
-  Golden eagle (K)
-  Walled paths (M)
-  Jas crossing of the Bourelle (B)
-  Heather fields (D)
-  Hayfields (F)
-  An itinerary packed with history (H)
-  Traditional dwellings (J)
-  "Toune" (L)
-  Clot Xavier Blanc mountain 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.



## ⚠️ Advices

Prudence en descendant du Refuge de l'Olan, surtout par temps humide.

# **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](mailto: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, December

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

### **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...

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## 🏡 Olan Refuge (A)

Situated at an altitude of 2350 m, this large building constructed in 1957 was carried away by an avalanche two years later. A witness to this is a concrete slab below the refuge. Rebuilt in 1966, it was definitively extended in 1978 with a capacity of 54 places. A stage of the Tour de l'Oisans (GR 54), it welcomes hikers in the summer season and provides a shelter in the winter; it belongs to the Club Alpin Français.

Attribution : Olivier Warluzelle - PNE

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## 筶 Jas crossing of the Bourelle (B)

Just above the signpost, there are the ruins of a pasture shelter commonly called the, « jas ». Often built using dry stones, this kind of shelter was used to protect the flocks during the summer season.



## ✿ Bourelle Gorge (C)

Since the end of the ice age, water has carved the rock and the passage of materials has created a small gorge polishing the base rock (gneiss, micaschists). The National Park has taken on the challenge of building a wooden walkway for walkers to cross this gorge.

Attribution : Dominique Vincent - PNE



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## ✳ Heather fields (D)

Over a change in altitude of a hundred metres there is a covering of heather which provides pollen for the bees and purple colour in Autumn. A small persistent shrub with tiny leaves and little pink flowers, it is called Common Heather or False Heather.

Attribution : Daniel Roche - PNE



## 💧 Combefroide Waterfall (E)

At the beginning of the path, is a big waterfall that you can approach on a narrow footpath just before climbing the coast. Situated on Combefroide torrent at a rocky escarpment, this waterfall has several projections and presents a total drop of several dozen metres.

Attribution : Olivier Warluzelle - PNE



## ✿ Hayfields (F)

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 (G)

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 (H)

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 (I)

Valgaudemar! The sound of this name resonates in our ears. Some claim that it is in reference to the valley of Mary "Gaudemarie" 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 (J)

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 (K)

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" (L)

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 (M)

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.

Attribution : Dominique Vincent - PNE



## Clot Xavier Blanc mountain refuge (N)

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