

# From La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar to Les Souffles (stage of the GR 54)



Valgaudemar - La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar



Sentier en direction du refuge des Souffles (© Florence Chalandon)



*After passing through the Valgaudemar mountain valley, the GR footpath rises again over the Olan foothills.*

We set off gently from La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar, along the river, discovering the last few villages of the Séveraisse mountain valley. The atmosphere is similar to the mountain cirques in Reunion Island, but this really is the wild and abrupt Valgaudemar you can see before you. The climb soon brings us above the Villar mountain stream, leading to the alpine pastures under the Pic des Souffles. Then it is time for a rest at the foot of an impressive glacier cirque, the foothills of the Olan, at 2000 metres of altitude.

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 4 h 30

Length : 10.0 km

Trek ascent : 975 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Stage

Themes : Fauna, Geology, Panorama

# Trek

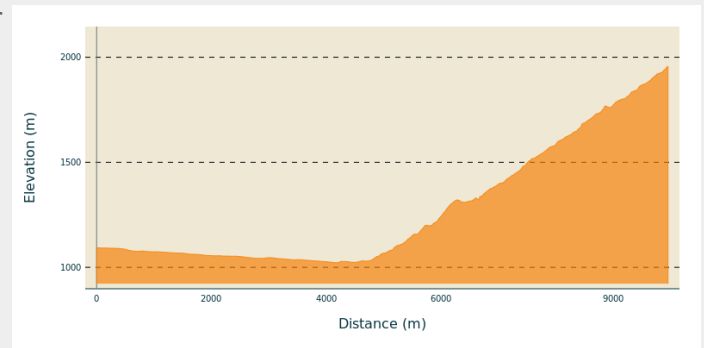
**Departure** : La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

**Arrival** : Les Souffles, Villard Loubière

**Markings** :  GR

**Cities** : 1. La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar  
2. Villar-Loubière

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1023 m Max elevation 1958 m

Walk through La Chapelle, past the municipal campsite and the grocer's, then along the D985 as far as an oratory.

1. Cross the River Séveraisse and walk along the right bank as far as Andrieux bridge (1 043 m). Take the right-hand path to follow the Séveraisse, this time along the left bank.
2. At Séveraisse Bridge (1 025 m) cross the river again and walk to the village of Villar Loubière (1 033 m). Head north out of the village until you reach ""Le Relais de la Vaurze"" and ""La Charrière"" gîtes.
3. At the Parc des Ecrins signs, walk a short way along the road before turning left onto the footpath. Follow the Villar mountain stream as the path rises gradually. Cross the wooden footpath over the Lautier stream (1 220 m). The footpath meanders upwards back and forth, mostly through woodland. At the intersection (1 720 m), take the right-hand path leading gently up to the Refuge des Souffles (1 975 m).

# On your path...



 Sundial by Rémy Potey (A)


 Arraches (C)

 Black Grouse (E)

 Variety of plant life (G)

 Villar-Loubière windmill (B)

 Sheep on the mountain pasture (D)

 Variety of the natural environment (F)



# 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

The most battle-hardened hikers can combine this stage with the following day's, arriving at Le Désert-en-Valjouffrey, via Col de la Vaurze in 9 hours 30 minutes.

# 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.

## Short-toed snake eagle

Sensitivity period: March, April, May, June, July, August, September

Contact: Parc National des Écrins  
Julien Charron  
julien.charron@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Nidification du Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec le Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc en période de nidification sont principalement les pratiques aériennes comme le vol libre ou le vol motorisé.

Attention le survol motorisé dans la zone cœur Parc National des Écrins est interdit en-dessous de 1000m sol et une réglementation spécifique s'applique au survol non-motorisé.

Voir la réglementation pour les survols non-motorisés : <https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/les-survols-non-motorises>

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## Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

# On your path...

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## Sundial by Rémy Potey (A)

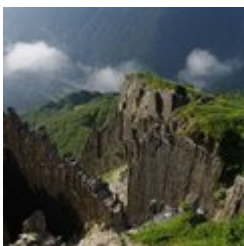
A real open-air museum piece in the rural landscape, the pictorial art of the sundial aims to foster silence and to be accessible to all. For walkers today and for travellers yesterday. A sundial is a call to reflection and meditation, visible in all its magnificence on religious buildings or carefully hidden, in the little streets of a mountain village. The the Hautes-Alpes department, with its sun-rich climate, has the highest concentration of this example of the people's art. Today, through the work of the sundial maker Rémy Potey, chamois and golden eagles can be beside the imaginary birds of the mysterious and famous Zarbula, the 19th century Piedmont artist.



## Villar-Loubière windmill (B)

As you begin the steep climb towards the Col de la Vaurze, don't miss the unusual Villar windmill, covered in vegetation. Built in 1838, this legacy from past times has been perfectly preserved with its curious horizontal wheel. It was still in use 50 years ago, milling wheat, but also nuts and rapeseed. It was restored in 1979 and is the last working windmill in the Valgaudemar valley.

Attribution : Florence Chalandon ©



## Arraches (C)

From the refuge, or during the climb, a peculiar geological formation may catch your eye on the opposite bank, above the old hamlet of Peines. Sedimentary rocks are trapped in the middle of crystalline formations where erosion has created a specific pattern of erosion that looks like a giant tiger has clawed at the rock. This morphology is what gave it the name Arraches.

Attribution : Olivier Warluzelle - PNE



## Sheep on the mountain pasture (D)

During your walk, you might come across sheep on the mountain pastures. This is an old form of pastoralism, as proven by the dry stone enclosures that you will see. These are known as 'jas'. You will also notice a rock shelter near to the Clot. The sheep that are in these pastures belong to breeders from the valley or from the Bas Champsaur area.

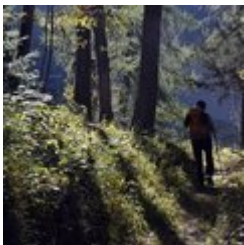
Attribution : Jean-Philippe Telmon - PNE



## Black Grouse (E)

The upper limit of the forest is where you are likely to see the black grouse. The female has faint in her bland-coloured feathering that camouflages her in the vegetation, making her difficult to spot. On the other hand, the male, which is black and white with red "eyebrows", is not so private, particularly during the reproduction season when their cooing and hissing sounds echo in the mountain in the early morning.

Attribution : Robert Chevalier - PNE



## Variety of the natural environment (F)

This walk is a summary of south facing slopes in the Valgaudemar area. It starts in the warm scree that is more or less vegetated. It then progresses over lawns and moors of juniper, blueberries or bearberries... They give way to mountain ash, whitebeam and amelanchiers indicating that the forest will soon take over. Higher up, the beech forest casts shade on the walkers, next a beautiful larch forest is a sign that the forest environment will give way to the high altitude moors and lawns. The Lautier lake and the surrounding ponds are a haven for aquatic species. Still higher, is the realm of rocks and chamois.

Attribution : Bernard Guidoni - PNE



## Variety of plant life (G)

There is a large variety of plant life along the itinerary, particularly on the slopes above the refuge, due to the exposure, the soil types and the altitude. Marjoram, lis, laserwort, houseleek, stinecrop, gentian, columbine, aconite and many others are present.

Attribution : Olivier Warluzelle - PNE