From the Refuge de Chabournéou to the Refuge de Vallonpierre

Valgaudemar - La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

Tapie fleuri au pieds du Sirac, depuis Vallonpierre (© Parc national des Ecrins - Mireille Coulon)

This is the last mountain Stage on the trail route to run through the rocky and glacial environment.

The path crosses the Sirac mountain along the foot of its imposing northern face. From here, you can feel the cold, jagged world of the high mountain peaks and enjoy a beautiful view of the previous day's Stage.

Tommy Bulle

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 3 h 30

Length : 4.2 km

Trek ascent : 340 m

Difficulty : Hard

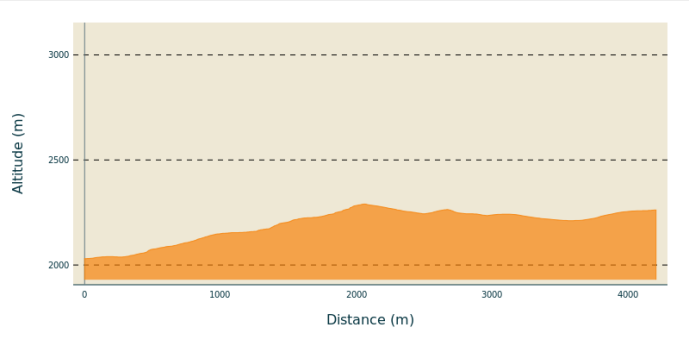
Type : Stage

Themes : Fauna, Lake and glacier, Pastoralism

Trek

Departure : Refuge de Chabournéou
Arrival : Refuge de Vallonpierre
Markings : PR
Cities : 1. La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 2031 m Max elevation 2291 m

From the terrace of the Refuge de Chabournéou, head directly southward on the path that runs along the mountain side. After a short distance, a signpost indicates the direction for the Refuge de Vallonpierre. This path leads directly to the refuge with no further forks. Initially, the path rises gently through an area of vegetation and crosses a few mountain streams running down from the permanent snow fields. Then, just below the eastern peak of the Sirac, the path runs across a rocky ledge. A few aids are present: three iron bars are placed to facilitate your ascent. Be sure to follow the twists and turns in the path to avoid ending up in the small gully below these iron bars. The path gently runs around the northern slope, in places running close to the ice, in other places rocks. There are a further two crossings that need to be negotiated with care. The first is close to a slab which has to be passed by keeping well to the left (indicated by a paint mark). Be alert: do not follow the animal trail on the right. Before reaching terra firma, the path runs across a ledge which, although wide, requires care. At the end of the slope, the path skirts around the mountain and starts to drop back down towards the pastures. From here, the path runs through a jumble of boulders, crosses moraine terrain and leads into a fabulous grass-covered plain. The refuge is here, with its small lake and the imposing western face of the Sirac.

On your path...

Chamois (A)
Alpine grey willow (C)
The Sirac (B)
The Vallonpierre refuge (D)

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.

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...

Chamois (A)

The chamois is an emblematic animal of the Alps and is at home anywhere in the mountains be it in the forests or rocky areas. It has short curved black horns and is a close relative of the antelope. It has particularly well developed sense of smell and hearing. It is consequently difficult to approach. However, near to the Chabournéou mountain refuge, and on the route towards that of Vallonpierre, it will be quite easy to enjoy the antics of the young kids on the névés that are still present. Did you know? While a walker is capable of climbing 400 m in an hour, the chamois is capable of climbing up 1000 m in ten minutes! This physical capacity is very useful for escaping danger.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE

The Sirac (B)

To the south of the Ecrins massif, the Sirac is the last high summit at an altitude of 3441 m. It stands at the end of the Séveraisse valley, proudly showing off it best side: its 1500-metre high north face. During this walk, you will regularly raise you amazed eyes as if to salute this Lord and its crown. You will walk at its feet whilst being overlooked by its hanging glaciers. Simply magic!

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE

Alpine grey willow (C)

At the subalpine level, above the highest limit of the forests, only bushes such as the alpine grey willow can be found. It is possible to find it on the north slopes of the Sirac, on the route between Chabournéou and Vallonpierre. It's milky green colour can be spotted from afar. If you look closer, you will notice its main characteristic, which is a silky hair that is on both sides of the leaves. One reasons for this peculiarity might be to store as much moisture as possible to avoid desiccation. Despite its abundance here, it should not be forgotten that it is not such a common species!

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE

The Vallonpierre refuge (D)

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