

From Plan du Lac to the Alpe du Pin refuge

Oisans - Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans



Arrivée au refuge de l'Alpe du Pin (© Parc national des Ecrins - Mireille Coulon)



Begin the hike with a first stage along the River Vénéon and its waterfalls for a beautiful ascent towards a small refuge built on a natural headland with a breathtaking view.

When you arrive half way, the view opens up. The summits opposite are more clear-cut, the mountains stand out differently. Below, the River Vénéon, surrounded by birch and aspen, challenges the daring canoeists keeping firm hold of their paddles. The deafening noise of the impressive Froide Pisse waterfall, which has been with the hikers since the bottom of the valley, now gently fades away. Moving away from the waterfall, you climb towards the sky, the Alpine pastures, the mountain peaks, the silence... and the organic local cuisine in the charming Alpe du Pin refuge!

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 3 h 30

Length : 4.7 km

Trek ascent : 632 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Stage

Themes : Flora, Hut, Pastoralism

Trek

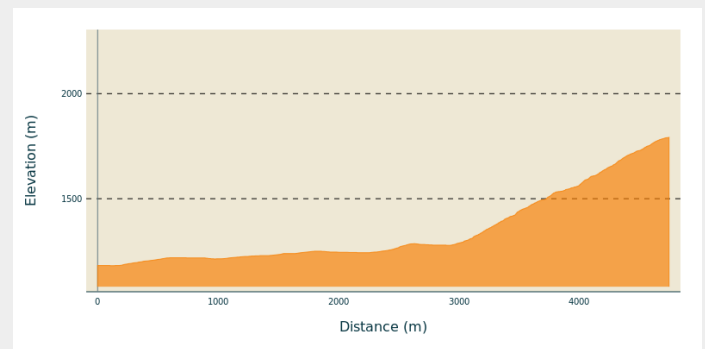
Departure : Plan du Lac

Arrival : Alpe du Pin refuge

Markings : — PR

Cities : 1. Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans

Altimetric profile



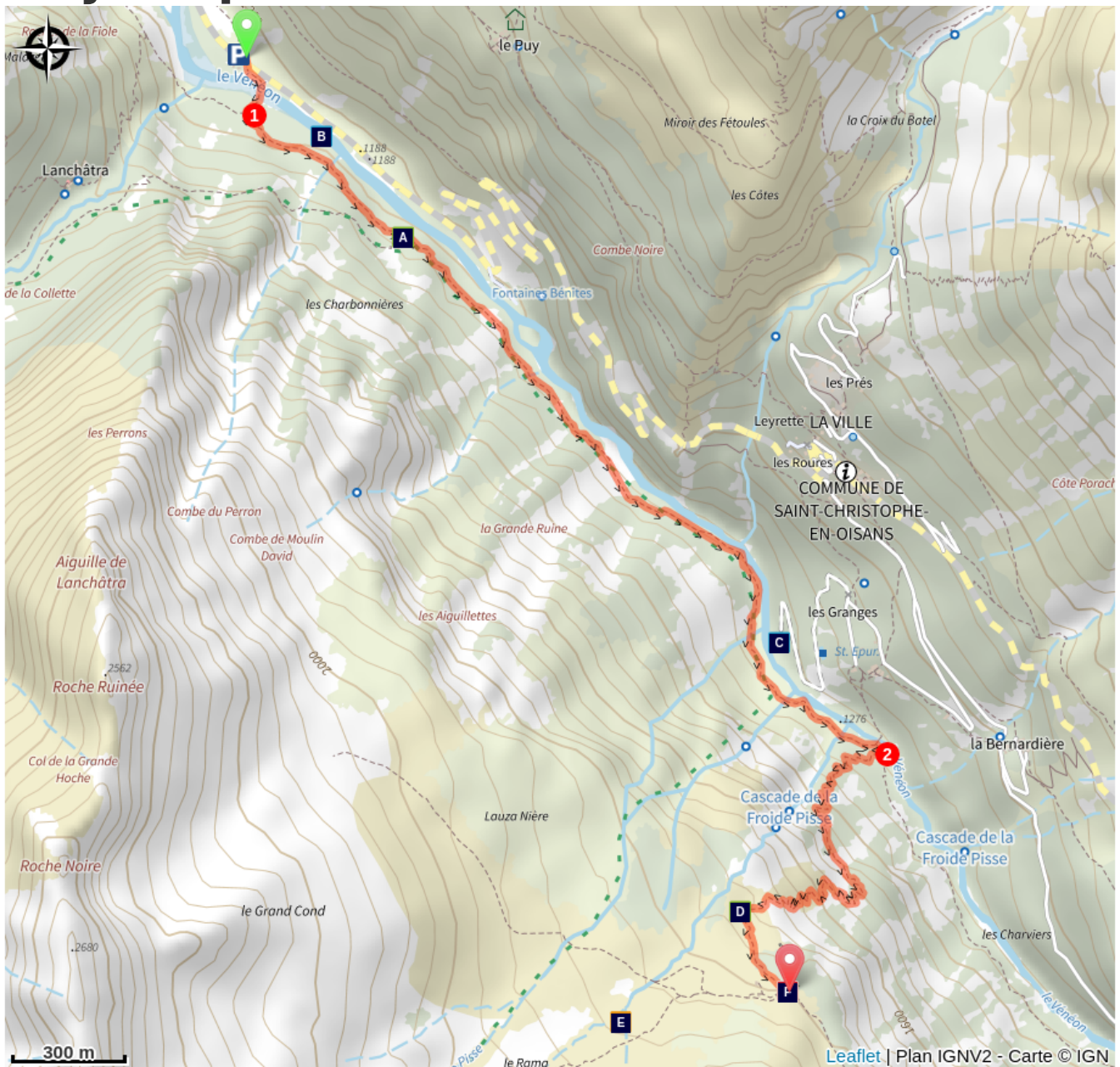
Min elevation 1182 m Max elevation 1793 m

From the Plan du Lac gîte car park, cross to the other side of the Vénéon.

1. Turn left onto the footpath. Follow the Vénéon, sometimes right next to the water, sometimes above the gorges. A few stony and elevated sections.
2. After passing the Froide Pisse waterfall, turn right onto the footpath rising towards the Alpe du Pin refuge (signposted). This is a good path, but sometimes quite steep, with 14 amusing and fun panels set up by the Jarrets d'Acier association, which runs the refuge. Great views over the waterfall and a few quite elevated sections. Once in the Alpine pastures, the path is easier and the refuge is only 15 more minutes away!

What's more, a walk in the mountain pastures above the refuge is an extra treat for the afternoon.

On your path...



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|  Riparian woodland (A) |  Whitewater sports (B) |
|  Hydroelectric station (C) |  Rhododendron ferrugineum (D) |
|  Animal husbandry in the valley (E) |  Alpe du Pin Refuge (F) |

All useful information

Advices

C'est le premier jour, prendre son temps !
Montée vers l'Alpe du Pin glissante par endroit par temps de pluie.

How to come ?

Transports

Lignes de bus Grenoble – Le Bourg-d'Oisans – Les Deux-Alpes – La Bérarde.
<https://carsisere.auvergnerhonealpes.fr/>
<https://www.itinisere.fr/>

Access

Depuis Bourg d'Oisans ou depuis la Grave, emprunter la D1091, puis la D530 en direction de Venosc et continuer jusqu'au parking du gîte du Plan du Lac.

Advised parking

Parking du gîte du Plan du Lac

Information desks

Office de tourisme de Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans / La Bérarde

infos@berarde.com
Tel : 04 76 80 50 01
<http://www.berarde.com/>



Oisans Park house

Rue Gambetta, 38520 Le Bourg d'Oisans
oisans@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 76 80 00 51
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

On your path...



Riparian woodland (A)

Riparian woodland is woodland bordering rivers and streams. This is a highly specific environment, requiring vegetation to adapt to flooding, in particular, and so we can often see fast-growing trees such as willows and alders, and bushes such as the sea buckthorn.

It plays a major role in maintaining biodiversity acts as a filter improving water quality. Riparian woodland has been transformed by mankind's redirecting rivers, totally transforming it or even causing it to disappear altogether. Mountain streams and rivers are among the last places where it can be found intact.

Attribution : Daniel Roche



Whitewater sports (B)

The Vénéon is an internationally famous river for whitewater sports. Canoeing with a double paddle gives visitors a chance to take on the turbulent waters and keep their heads out of the water using the Eskimo roll technique. Rafting, on a large, inflatable vessel, is very popular with beginners in the company of a guide, and is a big source of thrills and excitement. Here you can also see hot-dogs, a kind of bi-place canoe, and hydrospeeds, a sort of aquatic board sport where you descend the river on your front. Every year, the Vénéon Derby, one of the longest extreme canoeing races in the world, takes place here !

Attribution : Parc national des Ecrins - Thierry Maillet

Hydroelectric station (C)

On the right bank of the River Vénéon is a small hydroelectric station. It is called a run-of-the-river station, which means it has no capacity to store water. Water is channelled along a pipe to drive the turbine, which is connected to a generator producing the electricity. There is no dam, so production varies according to the amount of water immediately available, with the maximum amount reached, of course, in spring, when the snow melts.



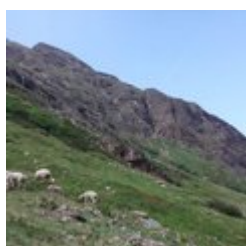
Rhododendron ferrugineum (D)

The rhododendron ferrugineum is a member of the family Ericaceae, like the cranberry, lingonberry and bilberry. It is a bushy shrub, 30 to 100 cm tall and common at altitudes of between 1,400 and 2,500 metres. It retains its leaves all year round. Its leaves are tough, elongated (3 to 5 cm long and 1 to 2 cm across), dark green and glossy on the upper side and yellowish changing to rust on the underside, hence its name "ferrugineum". This particular colouring is due to the presence of russet coloured glands.

In late June to early July, the rhododendron plants are covered in clusters of pink scented flowers which are very attractive to pollinators: it is a bee forage plant.

Just one or two rhododendrons can result in the colonisation of an entire slope.

Attribution : PNE



Animal husbandry in the valley (E)

In summer, some 300 sheep graze the valleys of L'Alpe du Pain and La Mariande.

They are herded up the mountain in early June and brought back down again, lovely and plump, in early October. For four months they are free to roam the high mountain pastures, happily feeding on the rich alpine grass. From time to time, their young owners go up the mountain to tend them. At the end of the season, some linger and it is not unusual to come across them even in late October. They will be gathered by the farmers before the onset of winter.

Attribution : PNE



Alpe du Pin Refuge (F)

The Alpe du Pin Refuge is little known and discreet, and stands on the mountain pasture of the same name. It belongs to the Jarrets d'Acier association. It has everything needed to delight the heart, the soul and the calf muscles! Built in 1947, it has preserved its humble origins down the years by making reasonable adaptations to the needs of contemporary comfort. The Alpe du Pin Refuge is located at an altitude of 1,805 m, at the foot of the Tête de Laurantou (3,325 m), the view of which from St-Christophe leaves no one indifferent. With a capacity of 20 places in a single dormitory, the visitor soon feels at home, and the layout of the refuge helps promote meetings and conversation. You can count on a simple, warm and friendly welcome from the refuge keepers.

Attribution : Parc national des Ecrins - Mireille Coulon