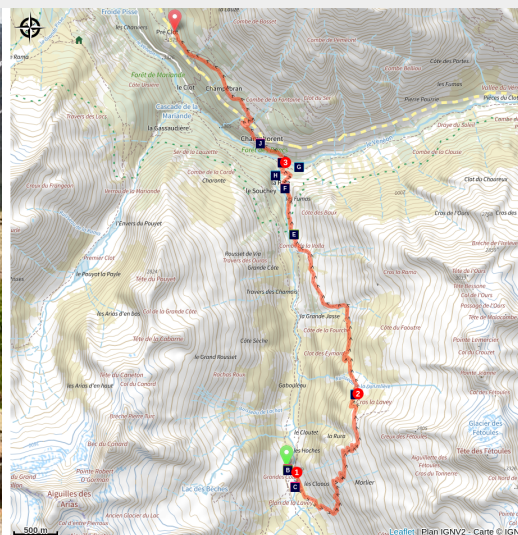


From the Lavey refuge to Pré-Clot via Lac des Fétoules

Oisans - Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans



Lac des Fétoules. (© Parc national des Ecrins - Thierry Maillet)

To limber up there's nothing like an ascent to Lac des Fétoules, a lake looking down on the Lavey valley, before going down towards the River Vénéon and the sunny south-facing slope.

Above the Lavey refuge, the Lac des Fétoules provides the happy hiker with a chance to rest with a wide-open view over all the valley and the glaciers. A mountain atmosphere, with silence reigning supreme and life growing more discreet. A few hours later, lower down, in La Raja, the atmosphere is radically different. Here there is a mountain environment that was once inhabited, with its ruins and beliefs, at the heart of fine forests with a wide range of species. The night is spent at the gîte des Arias in Pré-Clot with its mountain specialities.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 5 h

Length : 9.7 km

Trek ascent : 800 m

Difficulty : Medium

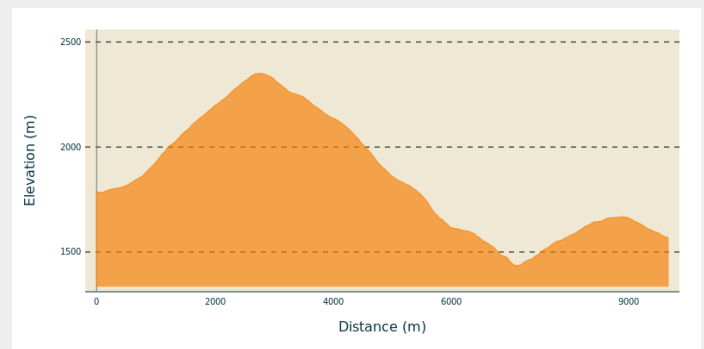
Type : Stage

Themes : Lake and glacier,
Panorama, Top

Trek

Departure : Refuge de la Lavey
Arrival : Pré-Clot
Markings : — PR
Cities : 1. Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans

Altimetric profile

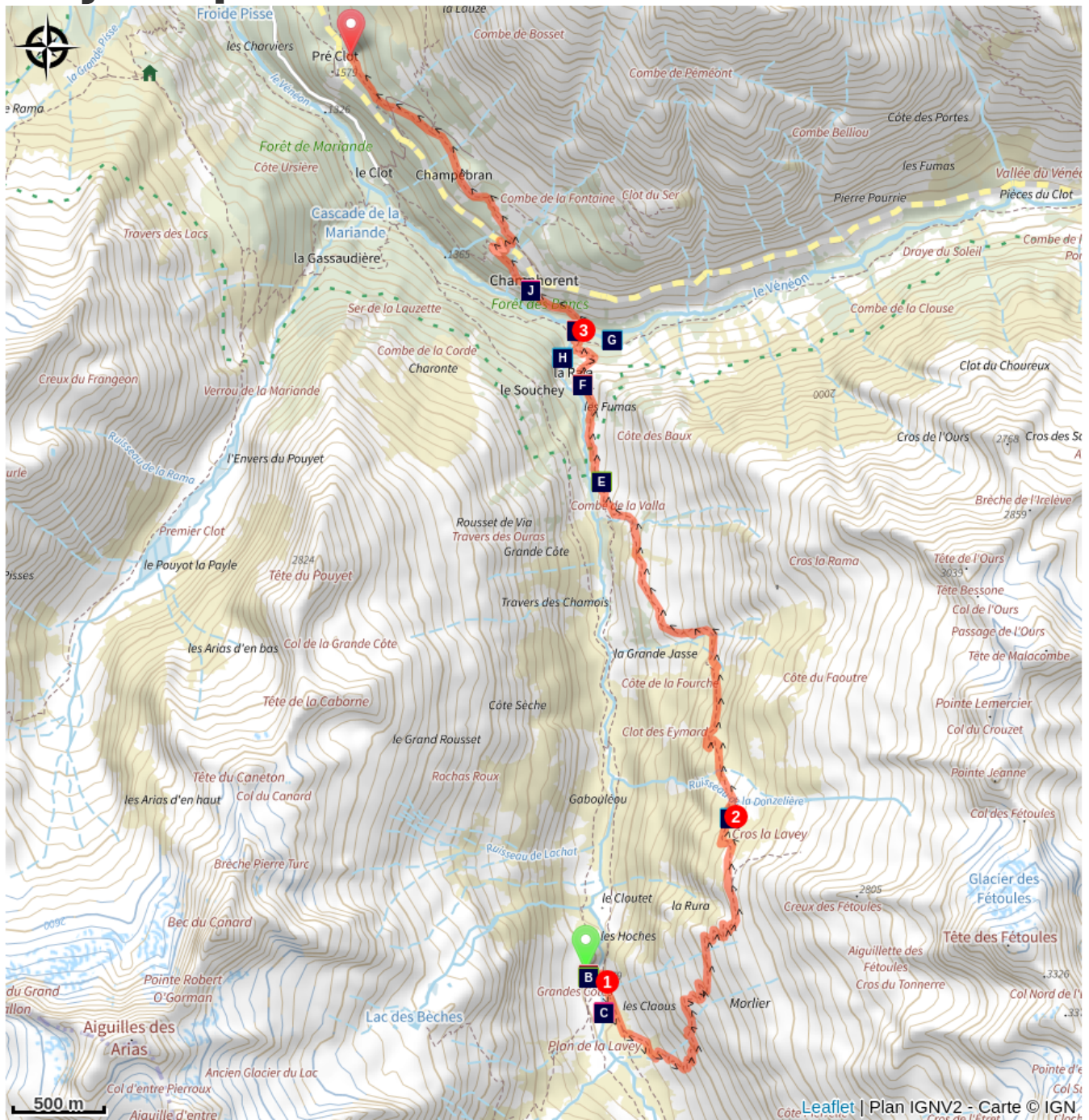


Min elevation 1436 m Max elevation 2351 m

From the Lavey refuge, turn left towards Lac des Fétoules (signposted) and cross the small wooden bridge.

1. Walk up towards the top of the valley for about 200 m and then turn left towards Lac des Fétoules (signposted). The path is narrow and sometimes very steep as far as the highest point of the day, at an altitude of 2,323 m. Quite high sections. Follow the cairns, paying attention to the yellow markings as far as the small Fétoules lake, which can already be clearly seen.
2. Continue on down into the main valley as far as the main path and turn right. The descent is steep in places.
Pass in front of the oratory and the houses of the Raja then continue along the wide path that winds its way as far as the stone bridge over the River Vénéon.
3. Go up opposite, as far as the Champhorent car park, go past it and then cross the road leading to the village of Champébran (signposts). From Champébran, go straight on as far as Pré-Clot along a nice path that you feels rich in history.

On your path...



- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|--|
|  | The Lavey refuge (A) |  | European common frog (B) |
|  | View over Lake Muande (C) |  | Lac des Fétoules (D) |
|  | Bilberry (E) |  | Oratory of the Virgin and Child in Raja. (F) |
|  | Mountain streams (G) |  | La Lavey waterfall (H) |
|  | Pont du Vénéon (I) |  | View over Tête des Fétoules (J) |

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

In wet weather, the rocks can be very slippery, so take care on the descent. If the weather is too bad, don't go up to Lac des Fétoules but descend directly to La Raja along the path on the right bank of the Lavey torrent.

For the more courageous, the ascent to Lac des Fétoules is a must, as it allows you to enjoy the panoramic view of the Lavey valley. For the rest of you, take the path back down from the refuge towards Champhorent, which follows the left and right banks of the valley and passes through the hamlet of La Raja.

Information desks

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

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



Source



Parc national des Ecrins

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

On your path...

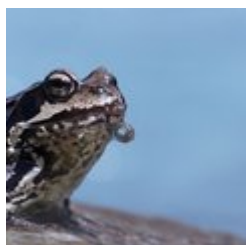


The Lavey refuge (A)

This is a refuge in the Ecrins range, at an altitude of 1,797 m in the Lavey valley, which leads to the Vénéon valley. In 1881, the Isère section of the CAF (Club Alpin Français) bought two buildings in the village of La Lavey. The refuge was renovated and had a storey added to it in 1949 (24 places), and was extended in 1972. It can currently sleep 44 people. The refuge provides access to the lakes of Bèches, Rouies and Muande, with the latter still developing, after the withdrawal of the glacier at the end of the Muande. It is also the starting point towards Tête des Fétoules, Les Rouies, L'Olan, Pointe Maximin, L'Aiguille d'Olan or L'Aiguille des Arias, and a way to pass through the Olan gap towards Le Valjouffrey. One can also pass through the Col de la Lavey to reach the Chardon valley. In winter 2011, a spectacular rock slide, which can still be seen today, with several thousand m³ of rock, occurred near the refuge. The refuge is the culmination of a very fine trail, and famous for its cuisine.

There is also a fine site of climbing stones around the refuge !

Attribution : Bertrand Bodin



European common frog (B)

Each year, in late March or early April, when the little pond in front of the Lavey Refuge is filled with water, some forty European common frogs come here to reproduce. Among the forty or so amphibians, some spend the winter hibernating at the bottom of the pond while others make their way here across the snow. This frog is a member of the family of brown frogs and, like its cousin of the plains, has a brown mask extending from behind its eardrum to its eyes. In Europe, the common frog is thought to be the amphibian that can live in the highest altitudes. The frog's spawn is like a compact ball that can contain several hundred eggs floating on top or at the bottom of the pond. The very large number of eggs is needed to guarantee the survival of the species, since very few reach adulthood.

Attribution : Ludovic Imbertis



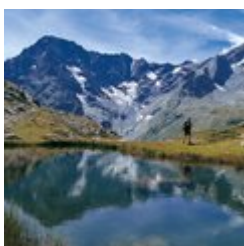
View over Lake Muande (C)

Lake Muande is a glacier lake at an altitude of 2,380 m in the Lavey valley, which leads to the Vénéon valley.

It appeared in the early 1990s, as a result of the withdrawal of the Muande glacier. The absence of a connecting gorge means it occupies the small area behind the confluence tier.

The lake is still emerging, making the site a kind of laboratory where nature is carrying out its powerful creative work.

Attribution : © Parc national des Ecrins - Martial Bouvier



Lac des Fétoules (D)

The Lac des Fétoules is a very small lake of approximately 300m², lying at an altitude of 2,249 metres at the foot of the Tête des Fétoules (3,459 m).

From the lake, the panorama sweeps across the cirque formed by the Aiguille d'Olan, the Aiguilles d'Arias opposite, the Aiguille du Plat de la Selle (3,596 m) to the right and just above, the Tête des Fétoules and the Fétoules glacier.

Grassy stretches surround this little lake.

Attribution : PNE



Bilberry (E)

Just like the bearberry, the cranberry, the lingonberry and the European blueberry, the bilberry belongs to the Ericaceae family. It is a thick shrub, 20 to 60 cm high, with small leaves that are soft, alternating, oval and finely serrated. From August, the edible berries with their reddish blue flesh - hence their local nickname of *gueule noire* (black face) - provide a fine reddish colour to the sub-Alpine prairie slopes at the end of summer. It can grow beside the European blueberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) with its white pulp and non-serrated leaves.

Berry-picking is subject to specific regulations : In the Ecrins National Park, a maximum of 1 kg can be picked per person per day, and the use of a berry-picking comb is forbidden. In the partnership zone of the Ecrins National Park and throughout the Isère department : 1 kg per person per day, with the use of a berry-picking comb forbidden before 15 August.

Attribution : © Parc national des Ecrins - Christophe Albert



Oratory of the Virgin and Child in Raja. (F)

In the mountains where the villages are sometimes isolated from each other and too small to have a chapel, oratories were often built. They are mainly small and made of local stone, with an alcove at the centre where a small statue, a plaque or a holy image is placed, representing an important element in religious life. A local place of worship, they are often dedicated to the Virgin Mary or to a saint. They become the goal of a procession or a votive festival for the local population.

Attribution : Parc national des Ecrins - Thierry Maillet



Mountain streams (G)

Mountain streams are characterised by a sometimes very steep slope and a tumultuous current. Due to the continual intermingling of elements, the water is highly oxygenated and favourable to certain animal species (brown trout, water invertebrates, etc.) that are adapted to the ecological conditions of these ecosystems (even when the water turns to ice !). Mountains streams are also a major factor in erosion due to their role in crushing elements and transporting sediment from the upper slope pools to the large rivers. They represent a very fragile and threatened environment, particularly due to human development, and are among the ecosystems needing to be protected !

Attribution : © Parc national des Ecrins - Thierry Maillet



La Lavey waterfall (H)

The valley of La Lavey is crossed by the mountain stream La Muande. One hundred and fifty metres upstream from the confluence of this mountain stream with that of the Vénéon, the valley culminates at a gorge and the La Lavey waterfall.

Attribution : Daniel Roche - PNE



Pont du Vénéon (I)

Crossing the Vénéon, this superb stone humpback bridge dates back to the seventeenth century. It is an example of the know-how of our forebears, and the fact that this substantial project was undertaken at all is an indication of the importance of this valley. This bridge also constitutes built evidence of the age-old human occupation of the La Lavey valley. The arch of this bridge was restored in 1972. The structure was decrepit and the joints were completely re-grouted. As you cross the bridge, note the colour of the water of the Vénéon. This is due to fine particles in suspension, the result of erosion of the glaciers in the upper reaches of the Vénéon and dissolved silica from the feldspars contained in the crystalline rocks.

Attribution : Parc national des Ecrins - Thierry Mailliet



View over Tête des Fétoules (J)

The Tête des Fétoules, a summit in the Ecrins mountains, rises to an altitude of 3,459 metres. Along with the Tête de l'Etret, among others, it is one of a series of peaks separating the Vallon des Etages (to the east) from the Vallon de la Lavey (to the west).

It was first climbed on 29 August 1876 by Emmanuel Boileau de Castelmanu with Pierre Gaspard and his son.

Attribution : Thierry Mailliet - Parc national des Ecrins