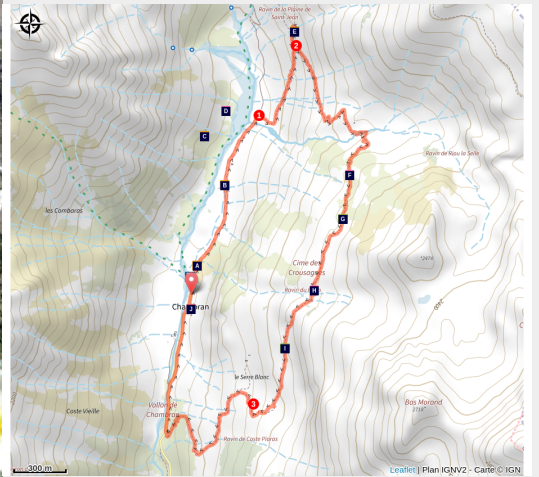


THEMED PATH: In the shepherds' footsteps

Parc national des Écrins - Vallouise-Pelvoux



Sur les traces des bergers (Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins)



From a vantage point overlooking the small valley of Chambran, discover this themed path marked by animal husbandry.

“You feel rather isolated from the world on this itinerary. Yet the busy valley of Chambran is just below you. But there you are, under the high walls of the Montbrison massif. You feel so high above the world, and so small under these fortresses of limestone.” Marie-Geneviève Nicolas, park ranger at the Parc National des Écrins

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 3 h 30

Length : 7.3 km

Trek ascent : 460 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Fauna, Geology, Pastoralism

Trek

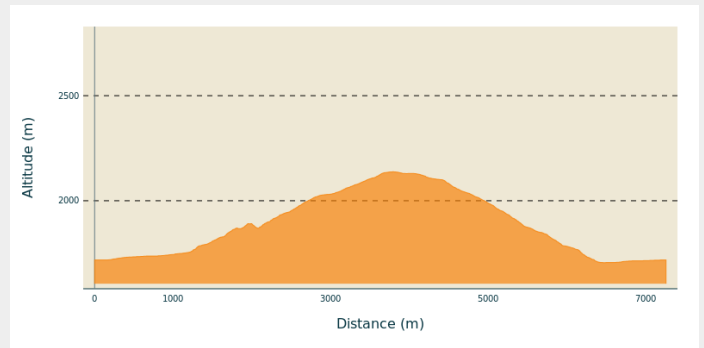
Departure : Chambran

Arrival : Chambran

Markings :  Sentier thématique

Cities : 1. Vallouise-Pelvoux

Altimetric profile

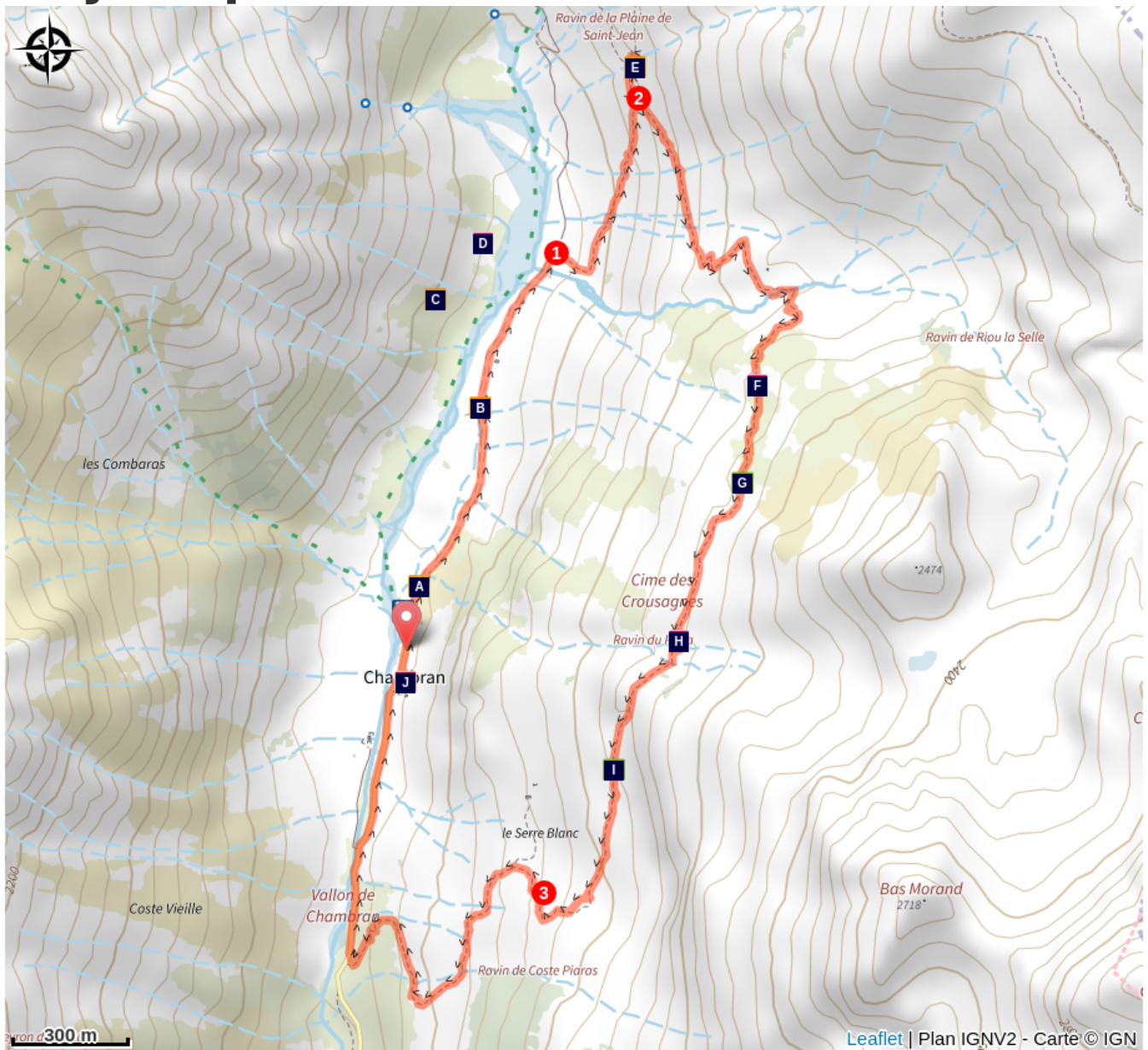











Min elevation 1706 m Max elevation 2139 m

From Chambran, follow the track leading towards the valley bottom.

1. Turn right to start the ascent.
2. Make a there-and-back detour to admire the view down over the Cabane des Fons standing in the valley. Retrace your steps and then follow signs for the cabin ("Cabane"). Take the path on the right leading towards the Cabane du Clot de la Selle. The route runs close to the mountain hut, and then rises above it up an escarpment. The path then runs along the hillside; it leads across a vast scree of limestone blocks and carries on level through the alpine pasture before dropping down to the recent Cabane des Prés du Rocher.
3. Take the access track to the mountain hut, to join the road. Follow it for a few hundred metres until you reach Chambran.

On your path...



- | | |
|--|---|
|  Chambran Hamlet (A) |  The realm of sheep (B) |
|  Evolution of pastoralism (C) |  The front of the nappes (D) |
|  The old hay meadows (E) |  The scree (F) |
|  The heart-leaved globe daisy (G) |  The panorama (H) |
|  Crickets in the alpine meadows. (I) |  Chambran chalets (J) |

All useful information

Advices

Some sections of the circuit are vertiginous and pass through rocky screes on the mountainside. Depending on their walking ability, young children may have difficulties crossing them.

Binoculars are recommended for observing the fauna

Check weather conditions before setting off.

Rescue services contact details: Secours Montagne (Mountain Rescue): +33 (0)4 92 22 22 22 or 112

Show consideration for the work of farmers, livestock keepers and owners

Close all gates behind you

Take your litter home

Do not take shortcuts across pastureland

How to come ?

Transports

Public transport >> www.pacamobilite.fr

Consider car-sharing >> www.blablacar.fr

For more information, ask at the Tourist Information Office nearest to the trail starting point.

Access

18 km from L'Argentière-La Bessée, take the D994E.

Advised parking

Car park, Chambran

Information desks

Vallouise Park house

vallouise@ecrins-parcnational.fr
Tel : 04 92 23 58 08
<http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/>



Bureau d'Information Touristique de Vallouise

Place de l'Eglise, 05340 Vallouise
contact@paysdesecrins.com
Tel : +33(0)4 92 23 36 12
<https://www.paysdesecrins.com/>



Source



Pays des Ecrins

<https://www.paysdesecrins.com>

On your path...



Chambran Hamlet (A)

At an altitude of 1700 meters, this hamlet is inhabited in summer, at the beginning of the summer pasture. The old dairy has been spruced up to become a snack bar. It's pretty little chapel dedicated to Saint Jean is very simple and bare.

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - PNE



The realm of sheep (B)

Together with its entire catchment area, the Chambran valley constitutes an enormous alpine pasture. Sheep belonging to several different owners are gathered here for the summer grazing season. Many of them come from the department of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. The landscape (sheep paths, old hay meadows), vegetation, built structures (old dairy, pastoral cabins)... everything has been marked by centuries of animal husbandry.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins



Evolution of pastoralism (C)

In the valley, the ruins of numerous piles of stones resulting from the removal of stones in the hay meadows are witness to another age. Most of these old prairies are now grazed by sheep. Pastoralism has evolved: no more local flocks so less hay, the valley is now occupied by a large flock from the Haute-Provence Alps.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



The front of the nappes (D)

The two slopes of the Chambran valley are very different: the right bank, minerals are very present. There are granites and gneiss making up the crystalline base of the Ecrins massif. On the left bank, the prairies are sandstone and chalky. These are part of the glacial thrust sheet: they are ancient sediments deposited mostly to the East, in the Alpine ocean, then carried here by compression at the time of the formation of the Alps.

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas



The old hay meadows (E)

Lower down as you cross the area, near the pastoral Cabane de l'Eychauda, you can make out piles of stones, the clapiers formed by the removal of stones from the hay meadows. In order to feed the livestock right through the winter, it was necessary to garner a large amount of hay! With changes in livestock farming practices, there are no longer cut for hay, but used for grazing. Only a tiny area of the valley - the flattest - is still mown for hay, mechanically.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins



The scree (F)

The path winds around large blocks of limestone, fallen from the overlooking cliffs. Limestones are ancient sediments, deposited on the alpine ocean seafloor and then raised up, folded, solidified, broken and displaced by the compression forces which resulted in the disappearance of the ocean and the formation of the Alps.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins



The heart-leaved globe daisy (G)

This little carpet-forming plant is characteristic of rocky limestone terrain. Its leaves are indented at the tips, giving them the appearance of a heart - with a little imagination! The purple-blue flowers are arranged into little round heads, hence the name, globe daisy. It is a very fast coloniser and can cover stony ground and boulders... even to the point of being invaded itself by other plants once it has fixed the soil.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins



The panorama (H)

The slope opposite, on the right-hand side of the Chambran valley, is part of the crystalline basement of the Les Écrins massif. The peaks and needles of granite and gneiss are quite unlike the imposing limestone cliffs overlooking the path! The glaciers left their mark here, carving out the rock and then leaving behind vast stretches of moraine as they retreated. Unfortunately, the Séguret glacier up ahead, extremely reduced in size and having retreated to the bottom of its cirque, has not escaped the effects of climate change.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins



Crickets in the alpine meadows. (I)

It is high summer and at the hottest time of the day the crickets start to chirp. The presence of crickets in an alpine meadow, their density and diversity are signs of the quality and good management of the meadow. If cricket numbers are low, the meadow is over-grazed!

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins



Chambran chalets (J)

Remnants of a way of life that has disappeared, the Chambran chalets were once a high-altitude village where flocks stayed during the summer months. Today this is a welcome stop along the GR54 and the starting point for hikes towards Lake Eychauda.

Attribution : Marie-Genevève Nicolas - PNE