

# The Béal Neuf canal: canals and men, an iconic history

Parc national des Ecrins - Vallouise-Pelvoux



Le Canal du Béal Neuf (Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins)



## *Roam along the waters of the Béal Neuf canal!*

A waterside route taking you along the path followed by the Béal Neuf canal, the embodiment of men's enormous efforts to irrigate their fields! An exploration that also offers enjoyment of the surrounding landscapes and unrivalled views over the Vallouise valley and the Pelvoux.

### Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 2 h

Length : 4.3 km

Trek ascent : 154 m

Difficulty : Very easy

Type : Return trip

Themes : Flora, Lake and glacier

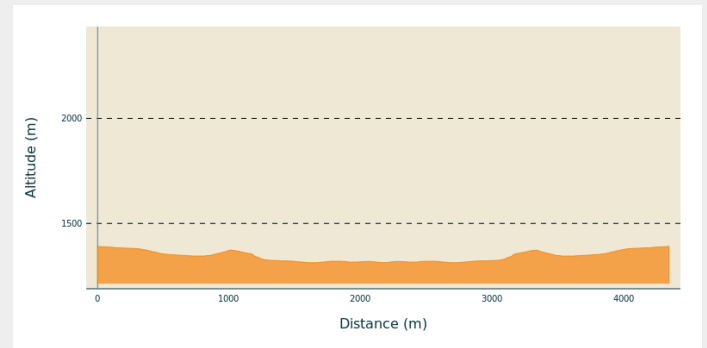
# Trek

**Departure** : Route de Chambran

**Arrival** : Route de Chambran

**Cities** : 1. Vallouise-Pelvoux

## Altimetric profile

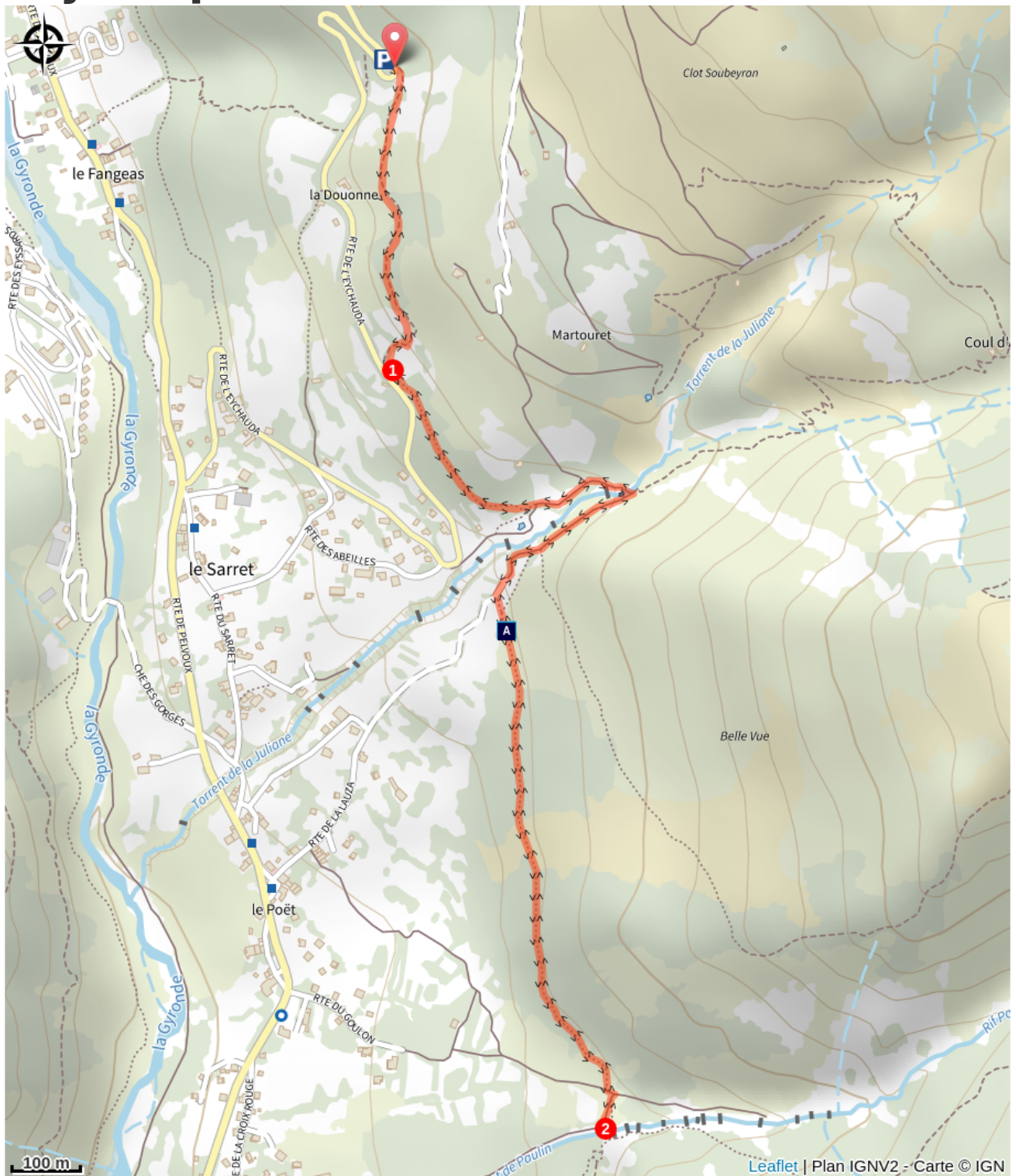





Min elevation 1314 m Max elevation 1392 m




From the car park, take the path running above the road (signs for the Béal Neuf). It runs level at first and then drops sharply along the side of a stream before levelling out again just above-the road. The path comes to a track; turn right onto this and carry on downhill for 50 metres.

1. Turn left to cross the mountain stream La Juliane (no footbridge). You then continue downhill again, passing a cross, and a little further down turn left onto the path following a new section of the Béal.
2. When you reach the Rif Paulin stream, retrace your steps back to your starting point.

# On your path...



-  The wild mint (A)
-  The role of the canals (C)
-  The Montpellier thistle (E)

-  Willows (B)
-  The acanthus-leaved thistle (D)
-  Mountain land rehabilitation projects (F)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

Access to the canal is prohibited for herds or flocks of animals and all vehicles (motorised or otherwise).

There is an alternative section following the Béal Neuf canal: “Du torrent au canal” (from the mountain stream to the canal). It starts 1 kilometre above the starting point of this last path, near a picnic table-nique.

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](http://www.pacamobilite.fr)

[Consider car-sharing >> www.blablacar.fr](http://www.blablacar.fr)

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

### Access

13.5 km from L'Argentière-La Bessée, take the D994E and then the D421T.

### Advised parking

Route de Chambran car park, picnic table

## 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...

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## ✿ The wild mint (A)

Mints (there are several species) often live on the water's edge. The wild mint found here is very common. If you rub its leaves gently they give off a pleasant and recognisable scent. The small purple flowers gathered into a dense spike are very attractive to insects.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins

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## ✿ Willows (B)

Willows grow in places with cool soil. There are many species of willow. Many of them aren't trees at all, but bushes and even, at high altitudes, tiny sub-shrubs hugging the ground. Here, in the bed of the mountain stream and in its immediate vicinity, two easily identifiable willows grow: the hoary willow, a shrub with long narrow leaves curled at the edge and with white undersides; and the purple willow, also with long narrow leaves, but they are bluish-green and it has purple shoots.

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - Parc national des Écrins

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## 💧 The role of the canals (C)

Irrigation of meadows and private gardens; preservation of traditions; the promotion of social contact through collective canal maintenance operations carried out by local people; development of canals to create trails for tourists and locals... The canals have fulfilled a variety of roles, hence the benefit of conserving and maintaining them.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins

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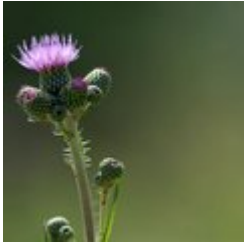


## ✿ The acanthus-leaved thistle (D)

This is a hot, west-exposed slope with rocky ground. The plant life reflects this situation: the narrow-leaved lavender and acanthus-leaved thistle grow here. The latter looks like a large sun with its very big flower head which quickly turns golden and its leaves radiating out around it. It often used to be hung on house doors... but much better to leave it lighting up the stony meadows!

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins

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## The Montpellier thistle (E)

A large plant grows along the canal side; a sort of thistle although it is not spiky: the Montpellier thistle. Its oval, pointed leaves are edged with large, stiff but non-spiky cilia. Its flowers are pink. In France, it is only found in the Alps and the Pyrenees and a few departments in the south. Associated with wet areas, this species has become rare in many regions because of damage to its habitat.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins

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## Mountain land rehabilitation projects (F)

Stream correction dams have been built by RTM (Mountain Land Rehabilitation), a branch of the National Forestry Agency. The purpose of these structures is to limit erosion and mountain stream flooding. The RTM has been in existence for a long time, set up in the late nineteenth century. At that time, the slopes were much more sparsely wooded than they are today, and erosion was a very significant problem.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins