

Cabane de l'Aiguille loop

Parc national des Ecrins - Embrun



Chemin dans le Mélézin (Amélie Vallier)



This trail leads through a larch forest, where plentiful havens of tranquillity await.

Wend your way to the Cabane de l'Aiguille through the larch forest of Mont Guillaume, the larch being the iconic tree of the Alps. The ever-present greenery and vegetation make this a trail full of colour. The shape of these giant trees allows a gentle and tranquil light to filter through. And not forgetting the presence of the many and secretive inhabitants of the forest. After these shaded, green environments, you will be taken by surprise by the wide-open spaces of the area of alpine pasture at the Cabane de l'Aiguille, before dropping back down through the forest.

Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 3 h

Length : 5.4 km

Trek ascent : 402 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Loop

Themes : Fauna, Pastoralism

Trek

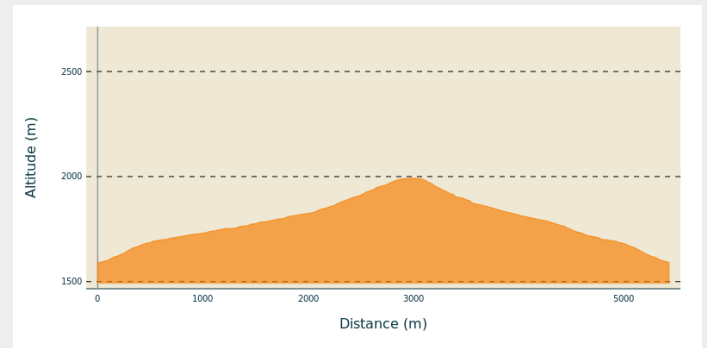
Departure : Forest car park, Embrun

Arrival : Forest car park, Embrun

Markings :  GR

Cities : 1. Embrun

Altimetric profile







Min elevation 1591 m Max elevation 1993 m





From the car park, take the track on the left, heading towards « Belvédère de la Pare ». Immediately after this, follow the path rising uphill on the right. At the next intersection, turn right towards the Lac de l'Hivernet via Les Fontainiers and L'Aiguille. When you reach the track, turn left and carry on in this direction. Go past the Refuge des Fontainiers and carry on to the chalet.

1. At the intersection, turn left towards the Lac de l'Hivernet via Prés-Clos and Pierre Pointue. Continue heading in this direction.
2. When you reach Prés Clos, stay on the track bearing left. This is a beautiful winding ascent.
3. Then, just before the spring, take the path on the right (barely visible). Cross the Pierre Pointue [canal]. At the next intersection, turn left. On this track, follow signs to the Lac de L'Hivernet.
4. A few metres further on, turn right at the crossroads. Then, take the path on the right leading towards L'Aiguille and Les Fontainiers. When you reach the Cabane de L'Aiguille, follow the track on the right which leads to the locality of Les Fontainiers.

On your path...



-  The larch (A)
-  common nettle (C)
-  Meadow buttercup (E)
-  Dandelion (G)

-  Woodland grazing (B)
-  Dyer's Woad (D)
-  The roe deer (F)
-  The Grey Cuckoo (H)

All useful information

AdVICES

On this trail, the locality identified as "Fontainiers" on the map is called "Fontaniers" on the signposts, but it is one and the same place.

How to come ?

Transports

Public transport >> www.pacamobilite.fr
Consider car-sharing >> www.blablacar.fr

Access

From the train station in Embrun, head uphill towards the top of the town, cross the railway line and then follow signs for Caleyère until you reach this hamlet. Then follow signs to the accesses into the forest ("Portes de la Forêt").

Advised parking

Forest car park, Embrun

Information desks

Maison du Parc de l'Embrunais

Place de l'Église, 05380 Châteauroux-les-Alpes

embrunais@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 92 43 23 31

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



Tourist office Embrun

Place Général Dosse - BP 49, 05202 Embrun

embrun@serreponcon-tourisme.com

Tel : 0492437272

<https://www.serreponcon-tourisme.com/>



On your path...



The larch (A)

The king of mountain trees in the Southern Alps, the larch is the only conifer to drop its needles in winter. In spring, its cones are a characteristic dark purple. The larch is one of the few European tree species that is imputrescible, that is to say, it does not rot. This is why, despite the fact that it twists as it dries out, it is widely use in frameworks, drinking troughs and other water holding vessels in the mountain villages. Incapable of germinating in its own undergrowth, it needs natural openings such as avalanche corridors for the young shoots to develop. It is found at altitudes in excess of 2,200 metres, adopting dwarf forms in these "combat" zones. The larch tree growing at this point on the trail is several hundred years old.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE



Woodland grazing (B)

The Embrun communal forest reconciles forestry and pastoral objectives. This 646 ha larch forest consists of a light wood enabling the growth of forage crops. 1200 sheep and 150 cows graze in one of the most beautiful larch forests in the Hautes-Alpes. This forest which protects the lower slopes from avalanches, from mud slides and from falling stones is a lovely example of a multifunctional forest where the production of wood for timber or for heating, coexists with grazing and for the general appreciation of the public.

Attribution : Christian Couloumy - PNE



common nettle (C)

Called the common nettle, this is a stinging plant. During difficult times in history – the Middle Ages or the world wars for instance, it was consumed to help survive periods of famine and scarcity. Rich in protein, vitamins and minerals, it is highly effective health cure and is taken as a soup, and added ingredient to various other dishes or as a soft drink. Apart from this usage, in the sixteenth century it was put to industrial use, in the manufacture of paper, garments etc.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier



Dyer's Woad (D)

Punctuating the edges of the paths, this green and blue-green biennial, is also known as « Saint Philippe's herb ». A large robust plant topped with a parasol of yellow flowers, it has many uses. While its leaves provide a blue dye used to colour clothes, façades and carts (the famous « blue cart » which had the virtue of repelling flies), its roots are used against the mumps, infectious hepatitis, sore throat or the fever.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE



Meadow buttercup (E)

More commonly called the buttercup, this is a very familiar flower. It flowers from May to September, and commonly grows in grasslands and the edges of tracks. Its stems and leaves are slightly hairy. It is seldom eaten by livestock because it is toxic, and it only loses its toxicity when dried. This plant is a member of the large family Ranunculaceae.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier



The roe deer (F)

Slender, agile and quick-footed, the roe deer is very shy but leaves the imprint of its delicate hooves in the snow or mud, right up to the alpine zone. It can also be identified by its loud "vocalisation" because it utters a loud bark when disturbed. In the half-light, they are sometimes given away by their "mirror", the white mark under their tails, heart-shaped in the does and bean-shaped in the stags. When very young, the fawn is covered in white spots which camouflage it. This «bambi» very often lies concealed in the grass. If you see one, don't touch it. It hasn't been abandoned.

Attribution : Albert Christophe - PNE



Dandelion (G)

Called dandelion (from the French dent de lion - lion's tooth) with reference to its toothed leaves. Although despised by gardeners, this plant is actually a valuable ally. The use of the dandelion as a medicinal plant goes back to Ancient Greece. Young dandelion leaves are served as a salad or blanched like spinach. The flowers were traditionally used to make a wine reputed to be fortifying and they can also be infused in a sugar syrup, creating a kind of honey-like jam called cramailotte.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier



The Grey Cuckoo (H)

This is a medium-sized migratory bird, identified by its "cuckoo" song, from April to July, between woodland and open spaces. The females seek out the nests of small sparrows and eat one of the eggs of the occupied nest before laying their own. In the cuckooed nest, the cuckoo chick, which is born before the others, will eject all the other eggs so it can be raised by its adoptive parents.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE