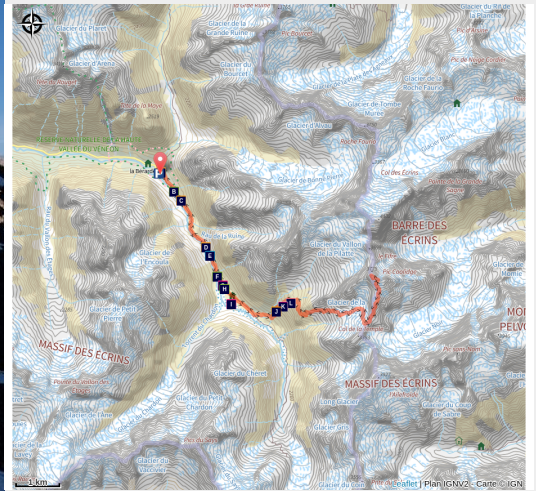


Pic Coolidge (3,775m)

Oisans - Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans



Pic Coolidge (Thierry Maillet - PNE)



Pic Coolidge is an essential peak in the massif. Easy and accessible from the valleys of Vénéon and Vallouise, in the heart of the central area of the Parc National des Écrins, it offers an unparalleled view of the Barre des Écrins and Ailefroide mountains.

This peak is one of very few itineraries suitable for a discovery of alpinism in all its dimensions: refuge or bivouac, snow, rock, route-finding. But above all it yields the secrets of the incredible architecture of these high places, invisible from the valley below.

Useful information

Practice : Mountaineering

Duration : 2 days

Length : 22.4 km

Trek ascent : 2038 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Multi-day trekking

Themes : History and architecture, Lake and glacier, Panorama

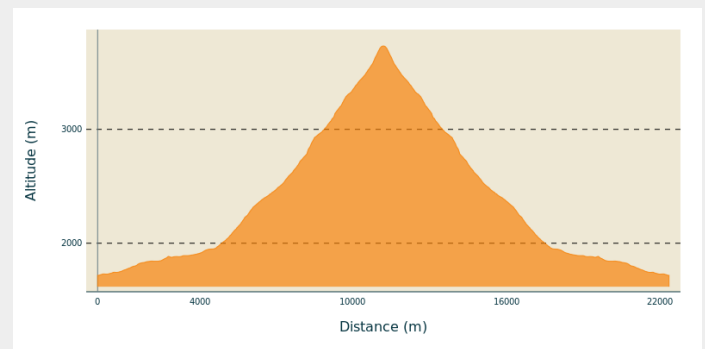
Trek

Departure : La Bérarde

Arrival : La Bérarde

Cities : 1. Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans
2. Vallouise-Pelvoux

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1719 m Max elevation 3733 m

To get to the Temple-Écrins refuge, you have to walk along the Vénéon, up through the Carrelet wood and climb a few stone steps before the landscape gradually opens up. At the end of the path, the refuge comes into view.

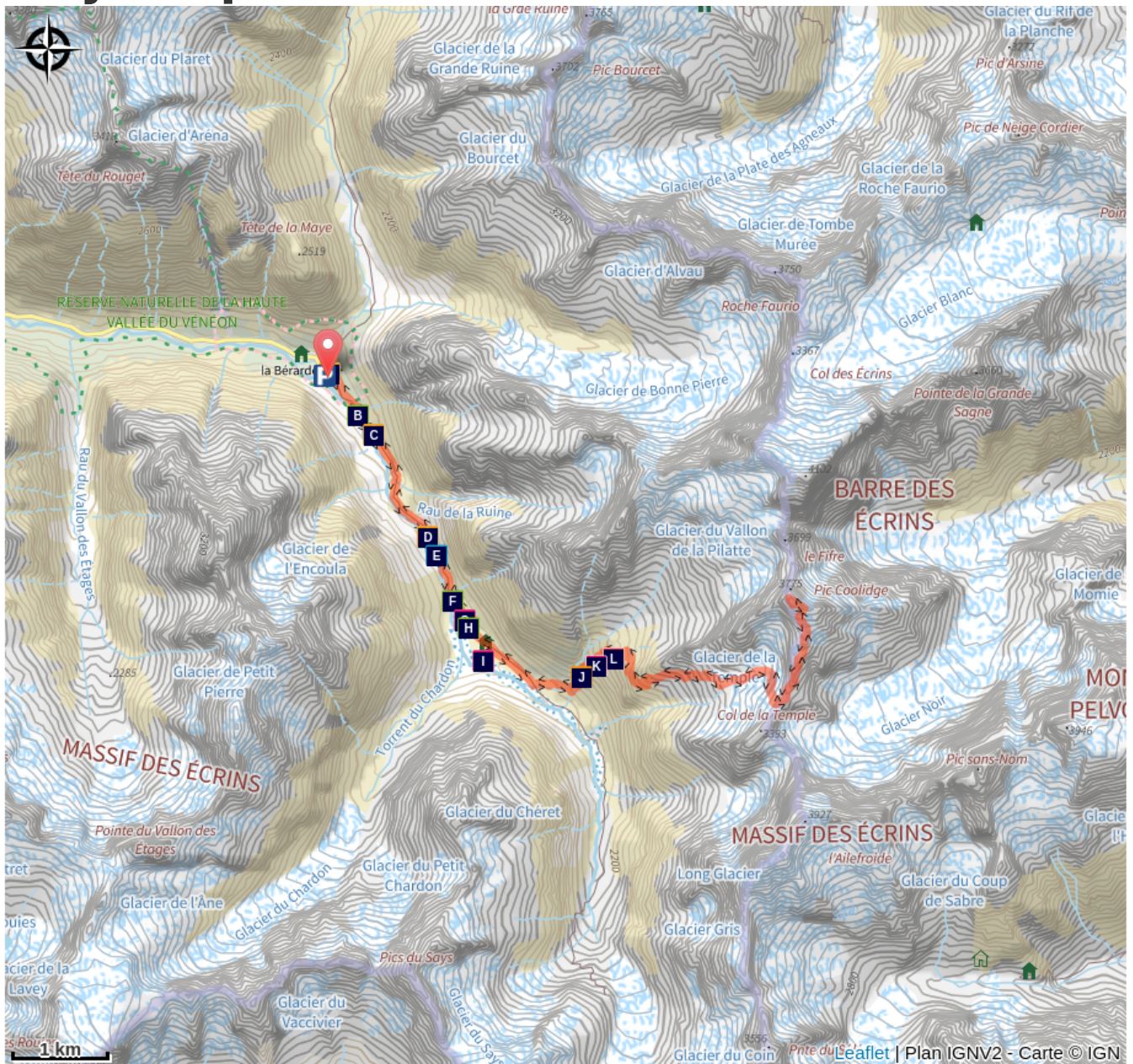
On the second day, we get to the heart of the matter with the ascent of Pic Coolidge. Leaving the refuge, you first reach the Col de la Temple-Épaulé at 3,321m. You then have to climb 450m to reach the summit of Pic Coolidge at 3,775m.

Return to La Bérarde via the same route.

Stages :

1. From La Bérarde to the Temple-Écrins refuge (approach)
6.5 km / 690 m D+ / 2 h 30
2. Pic Coolidge via the Col de la Temple from Temple-Écrins refuge (mountaineering)
15.5 km / 1329 m D+ / 11 h

On your path...



-  Bérarde Hamlet (A)
-  The beginning of the National Park in 1913 (C)
-  Haut Vénéon (E)
-  Conquest of the Ailefroide (G)
-  Plan du Carrelet (I)
-  High altitude passages (K)
-  Rock Clover (B)
-  The creation of the Ecrins National Park (D)
-  Large Blue Butterfly (F)
-  Mountain Pine pinewood (H)
-  Upkeep of the slopes and paths (J)
-  Temple Ecrins Refuge (L)

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

The round trip from La Bérarde with an overnight stay at the Temple Écrins hut is the easiest and least demanding, but also the most popular. It is recommended for those with a little experience. However, it is a long normal route, the speed of which is closely linked to the snow cover on the scree. In summer, the rocky parts of the route are well marked with crampons and cairns, which makes it easy to follow the correct route. At the end of the rocky section, be sure to mark the spot that will help you find the right route on the way down.

A very early start (at night) is recommended. To get the most out of this race, it is essential to be well trained and used to long walks.



Gear

Standard equipment for snow and mixed itineraries, not including glacial terrain: telescopic poles, crampons, ice axe, helmet, harness, 30m climbing rope, belaying and progress equipment, 30-litre bag, warm clothing, safety kit etc.

How to come ?

Transports

Daily bus services from Grenoble and Briançon :

<https://www.itinisere.fr/>

<https://carsisere.auvergnerhonealpes.fr/>

<https://zou.maregionsud.fr/>

Access

From Le Clapier, which is accessible from Le Bourg d'Oisans or Briançon via the D1091 (4km south-east of Bourg d'Oisans), follow the D530 up the Vénéon valley for 26km to La Béarde. At the entrance to the village, cross the bridge over the Étançons stream and go down a narrow road to park in the car park below the village.

Advised parking

Béarde car park

Environmental sensitive areas

Along your trek, you will go through sensitive areas related to the presence of a specific species or environment. In these areas, an appropriate behaviour allows to contribute to their preservation. For detailed information, specific forms are accessible for each area.

Golden eagle

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August

Contact: Parc National des Écrins
Julien Charron
julien.charron@ecrins-parcnational.fr

Nidification de l'Aigle royal

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec l'Aigle royal en période de nidification sont principalement le vol libre et les pratiques verticales ou en falaise, comme l'escalade ou l'alpinisme. Merci d'éviter cette zone !

Attention en zone cœur du Parc National des Écrins une réglementation spécifique aux sports de nature s'applique : <https://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/thematique/sports-de-nature>

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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...



Bérarde Hamlet (A)

La Bérarde, is a hamlet representing the history of mountaineering and its corollary touristic development in the vallies. A heterogenous collection of welcoming buildings and businesses. So many modest but representative examples of the successive periods in time of tourist facilities on this emblematic site in the history of this valley.

Attribution : Collection PNE



Rock Clover (B)

This small rare clover colonizes the moraines and the crystalline gravel like that at the confluence of the Vénéon with the Romanche up to the Chardon valley. With a whitish colour or pinkish its flowers are small and have white hairs that gives them a fluffy appearance.

Attribution : PNE - Nicolas Marie-Geneviève



The beginning of the National Park in 1913 (C)

At the beginning of the 20th century, the need to protect the slopes of the high mountain at Haut Vénéon emerged in order to limit the erosion of the ground and the torrential flooding that the Omanche and its affluent the Vénéon were subjected to. Deforestation and pastoral exploitation were blamed at that time. So in 1913, after long negotiations the State bought around 4000 hectares of ground from the commune of Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans to make a « National Park ». The development of tourism and mountaineering spearheaded by the CAF and the Touring Club of France from the second half of the 19th century in the sector of Oisans was not unconnected from this either. The Inspector for Waters and Forests wrote that the creation of a Park would involve « advantages for the commune of Saint-Christophe as well as for the development of tourism in the Dauphiné ». This innovative Park, at that time, was not drawn up in relation to any written law or regulatory framework resulting in several vague points like the different denominations used (Bérarde, Oisans, Pelvoux, etc.).

Attribution : Thierry Maillot - Parc national des Ecrins



The creation of the Ecrins National Park (D)

Lucien Devies, president of the Fédération Française de la Montagne and former President of CAF wrote a plea in the December 1963 issue of the CAF review for the creation of a « National Park in the Haut Dauphiné » on the perimeter of the Ecrins massif. The State Administration then took over. However, the project for a National Park in the Pyrénées was keeping the agents occupied. They had to wait until 1969 and a new intervention by Lucien Devis (still by way of the CAF review) for the project to be launched. A fact finding mission was given to Florent in 1971. After several phases of consultation and concertation with local politicians , le decree for the creation of the «Ecrins National Park » was signed on the 27th March 1973 over a protected surface of 91 800 ha. Making it the fifth National Park officially created. Others would follow; in 2013, France can count 10 National Parks...

Attribution : Cyril Coursier - Parc national des Ecrins



Haut Vénéon (E)

It's in this valley that the Vénéon torrent has its source which gives its name to the valley. In the Autumn , then in Winter and Spring, the waters of the Vénéon have a remarkable colour depending on the light of the day... This particular shade can be explained by the strong mineralization which saturates the water and reflects the sun's rays. In fact, under the action of the melting snow, the water runs in all directions and washes fine particles of silica more or less coloured and partially dissolved. You just have to collect some water, let it evaporate to see the very finely textured deposit: rock flour.

Attribution : PNE - Roche Daniel



Large Blue Butterfly (F)

This butterfly with blue wings spotted with black frequents the mountain grasslands and entrusts the ants with rearing its caterpillars... It lays its eggs on the host plant, the Breckland Thyme, whose flower buds feed the caterpillar until it lets itself fall to the ground. The Fire Ants take over. They are attracted by the honeydew produced by the caterpillar and they transport it to their anthill to milk it. . The caterpillar becomes carnivorous and eats the young ant larvae without being disturbed. It hibernates until the Spring. When it reaches maturity, it creates a chrysalis in the anthill. The butterfly hatches and quickly goes out in to the open air to carry out the reproduction of the species.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Bernard



Conquest of the Ailefroide (G)

By its magnitude, its height, its steepness, the conquest of the North-West face of the Ailefroide (impressive view of the North-West face of the Ailefroide which dominates Carrelet plain at an altitude of 3954 m) it is comparable with the famous Northern face of the Grandes Jorasses by Devies. The first ascent carried out by the corded team Devies and Gervasutti on the 23rd and 24th July 1936. On the approach from the Temple-Ecrins refuge Gervasutti broke a rib which did not stop him from carrying out this prestigious first.

Attribution : PNE - Roche Daniel



Mountain Pine pinewood (H)

The pinewood of Mountain Pines at Carrelet is rightly considered to be the highest in Europe. In fact, it occupies a slope at an altitude of 2400 m. It is also developing downwards due to the end of pastoral bovine activity at the beginning of the 1970s. Progressively, the grassland has been colonized by the juniper heath which encourages the implantation of Mountain Pine.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Bernard



Plan du Carrelet (I)

At the meeting point of the Vénéon and Chardon valleys, the Plan du Carrelet is a vast plateau of glacial origin. It was originally a lake, after the glaciers withdrew, and was then gradually blocked by sediment coming down from the slopes all around, forming the vast plateau that can be seen today. Fed by the many mountain streams flowing into it, it is exceptionally rich in plant life, particularly species that are at home in wet and turbulent environments, like the banks of a mountain stream. In early summer, the plants bloom, providing an impressive sight, in the midst of the mountain pines, replanted at the beginning of the 20th century by the foresters, and which are now the prevailing species.

The Carrelet Refuge standing in the middle of the plateau was one of the oldest refuges set up by the Club Alpin Français, and dates from 1879. It is now a private residence and closed to the public.

Attribution : © Parc national des Ecrins - Cyril Couriser

Upkeep of the slopes and paths (J)

The Restauration des Terrains en Montagne (RTM, "Restoration of Mountain Land") service, now part of the ONF, has been carrying out civil engineering work to combat erosion in the ravines near the path leading to the Temple-Ecrins refuge since 1882. Permanent monitoring and major annual maintenance work are needed to maintain thresholds, wire-mesh fencing, planting indigenous species and laying turf. Each year, the park rangers set up temporary walkways across the mountain streams.



High attitude passages (K)

The Col de la Temple (to the east of this trail), at an altitude of 3,322 m, constitutes a relatively easy passage between the Vallouise and the Vénéon. The last access slope to the pass is occupied by a small glacier that has greatly diminished in size in recent decades. The pass seems to be free of ice, but the ice is actually hidden by the stones. The story goes that once, a priest managed to go through the pass from the Vallouise to say mass at La Bérarde. Today, the pass is mainly peopled by mountain-climbers on their way to Pic Coolidge, standing at 3,774 m.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Ecrins



Temple Ecrins Refuge (L)

Half buried on a fine plateau facing the most beautiful peaks of the mountain range, the Temple-Ecrins Refuge takes its name from the Col de la Temple, a little higher up, and from the famous Barre des Ecrins, the highest point in the range, looking down on it. Like many other refuges in Oisans, the first was built in 1925. It was made of wood and was a little higher up than the present-day refuge. It was destroyed by an avalanche 13 years later. It was only rebuilt in 1947 by the "Jeunesse et Montagne" organisation. The refuge is easy to access and is the goal of a fine family hike rounded off by a hearty meal and the starting point of such famous Alpine races as the Col de la Temple, the Pic Coolidge or the Face Nord de la Barre.

Attribution : © Parc national des Ecrins - Jean-Pierre Nicollet