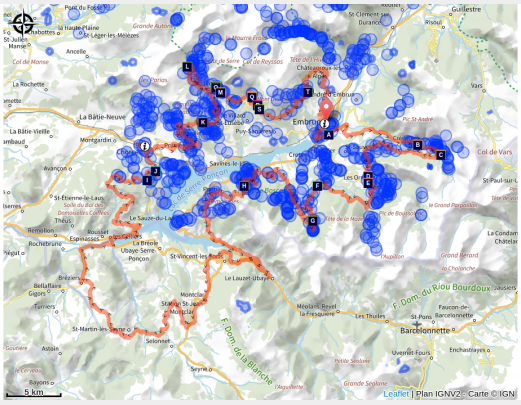
Around Lake Serre-Ponçon - Gravel

Parc national des Ecrins

(Kinaphoto)



On your marks. Get set. Go!
A 5-day tour covering almost 250km and over 8,000 metres of ascent.*
An extraordinary sporting challenge that also offers an insight into the diversity of the Haute-Alpes region.

**Due to a technical problem, the actual altitude difference on the Tour du Lac de Serre-Ponçon is around 8,000m, and not 9,000m as announced in the route specifications.*

The Tour of Lake Serre-Ponçon (TSP) is back with a Gravel version! On the programme: great rolling DFCI tracks, interspersed with stretches of mountain gravel and amazing panoramic

Useful information

Practice : Gravel

Duration : 5 days

Length : 233.6 km

Trek ascent : 7383 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Multi-day trekking

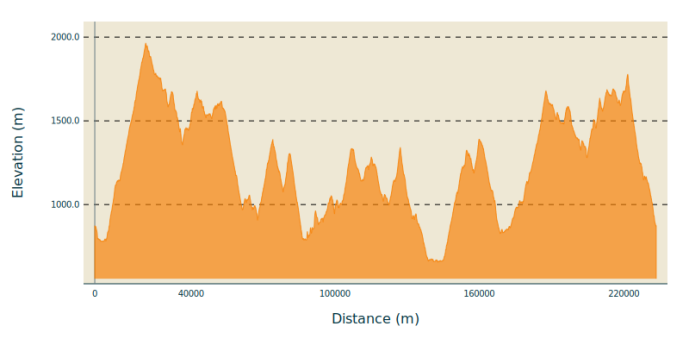
Themes : Lake and glacier, Panorama, Pass, Pastoralism, Top

views. And for the particularly brave, there are a number of legendary passes and summits, including Mont Colombis, Parpaillon and Pontis. The most demanding ascent will be rewarded with one of the most beautiful balconies of this trip on the slopes of Mont Guillaume: the Chemin de la Baume.

Trek

Departure : Embrun
Arrival : Embrun
Markings : PR GRP GR
Cities : 1. Embrun
2. Saint-Sauveur
3. Crévoux
4. Les Orres
5. Baratier
6. Crots
7. Savines-le-Lac
8. Pontis
9. Le Lauzet-Ubaye
10. Rousset
11. Espinasses
12. Montgardin
13. Chorges
14. Prunières
15. Saint-Apollinaire
16. Réallon
17. Puy-Saint-Eusèbe
18. Puy-Sanières
19. Châteauroux-les-Alpes

Altimetric profile

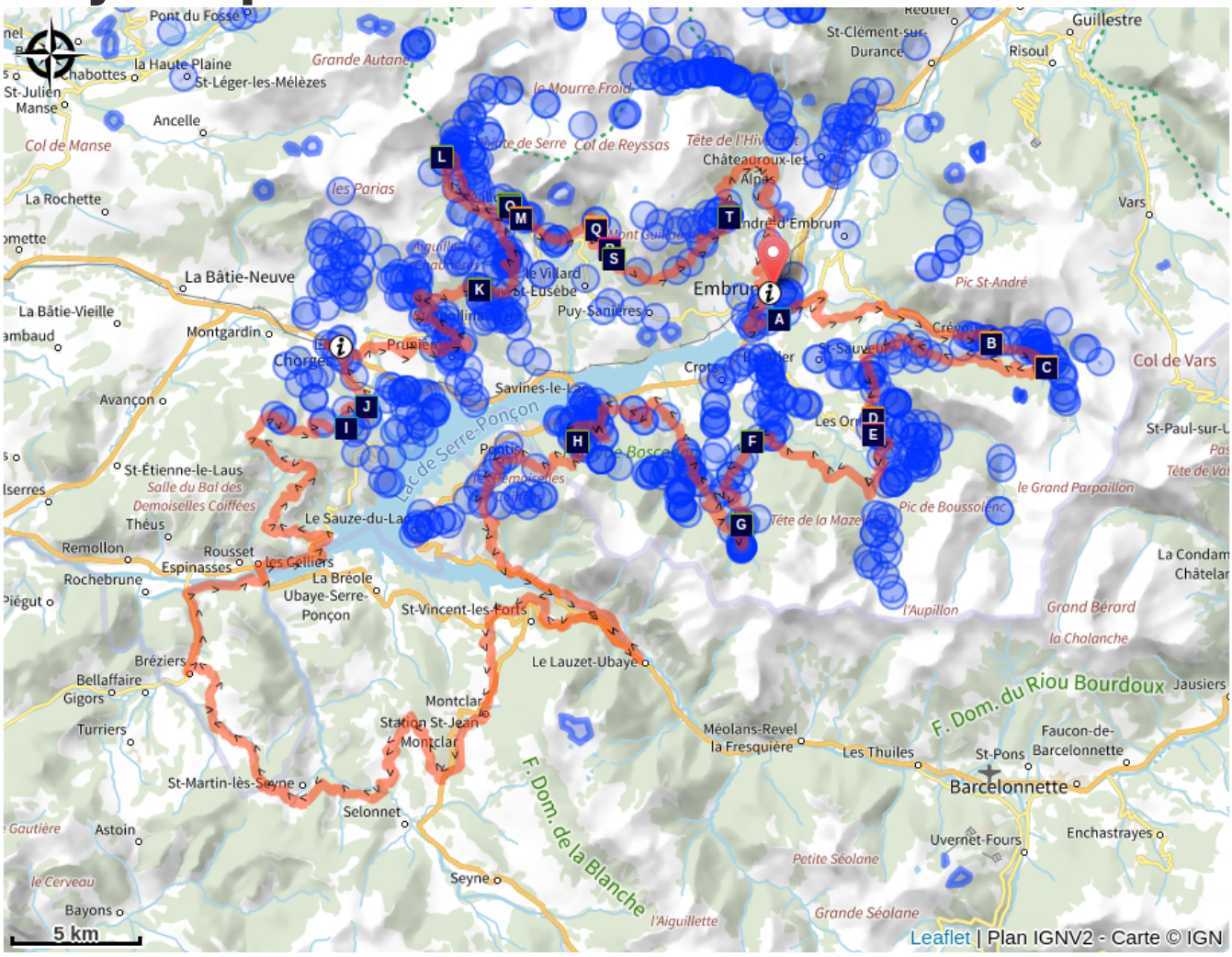


Min elevation 657 m Max elevation 1963 m

Stages :

1. Embrun - Les Orres (TSP Gravel)
   38.1 km / 1453 m D+ / 3 h 15
2. Les Orres - Le Lauzet-Ubaye (TSP Gravel)
   56.3 km / 1668 m D+ / 4 h 30
3. Le Lauzet-Ubaye - Rousset (TSP Gravel)
   49.4 km / 1315 m D+ / 3 h 45
4. Rousset - Réallon (TSP Gravel)
   55.5 km / 2042 m D+ / 5 h 45
5. Réallon - Embrun (TSP Gravel)
   36.2 km / 918 m D+ / 2 h 45

On your path...



The Durance (A)
Cabane des Espagnols (C)
Church of Marie-Madeleine in Les Orres (E)
Bellflower (G)
View over the Lac de Serre-Ponçon (I)
The Golden eagle (K)
Retaining walls (M)
Black Redstart (O)
Retaining walls (Q)

Chaffinch (S)

Crévoux (B)
The pastre (D)
The Larch (F)

White Birch (H)
Addos mountain stream (J)

Turk's cap lily (L)
Common Rock Thrush (N)
Abandoned farms (P)
Vantage point overlooking the Lac de Serre-Ponçon (R)
The larch (T)

All useful information

Herd protection dogs

In mountain pastures, protection dogs are there to protect the herds from predators (wolves, etc.).

When I hike I adapt my behavior by going around the herd and pausing for the dog to identify me.

Find out more about the actions to adopt with the article "Protection dogs: a context and actions to adopt".
Tell us about your meeting by answering this survey.

Gear

Before setting off, check the condition of your bike, keep an eye on the weather and equip yourself according to the season and the length of your trip.
If you're riding in a mountainous area, choose wide gravel tyres, hydraulic disc brakes and keep an eye on your speed.
Be careful on the descent from the Hameau de Vière and on the way to the Durance valley
For extra security, hire a cycle guide
Rescue: 112

How to come ?

Transports

SNCF: Chorges station, Embrun https://www.sncf-connect.com/
Bus : Valserres, La Bâtie Neuve, Chorges, Puy Saint Eusèbe, Puy Sanières, Embrun Baratier, Les Orres, Remollon, Theus, Espinasse
Marseille-Briançon : (LER29)
Marseille, Nice : Lignes Express Régionales (LER) +33 (0)809 400 415
Grenoble : Transisère +33 (0)4 26 16 38 38
Gap-Barcelonnette (LER535)
Carpooling area : Rond point des Orres - 05200 Baratier
Plane:
Marseille Provence Airport (188km) - +33 (0)820 811 414
Grenoble Alpes Isère Airport (158km) - +33 (0)4 76 65 48 48

Lyon Saint Exupéry Airport - (203km) +33 (0)826 800 826
Turin Caselle Airport - (178km) + 39 011 567 63 81

Advised parking

Station car park, Embrun

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.

Short-toed snake eagle

Sensitivity period: March, April, May, June, July, August, September

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

Nidification du Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc

Les pratiques qui peuvent avoir une interaction avec le Circaète-Jean-le-Blanc en période de nidification sont principalement les pratiques aériennes comme le vol libre ou le vol motorisé.

Merci d’essayer d’éviter la zone ou de rester à un distance minimale de 300m sol quand vous la survolez soit 1470m d'altitude !

Information desks

Tourist office Chorges
Grand rue, 05230 Chorges

chorges@serreponcon-tourisme.com
Tel : 0492506425
https://www.serreponcon.com

Tourist office Embrun
Place Général Dosse - BP 49, 05202 Embrun

embrun@serreponcon-tourisme.com
Tel : 0492437272
https://www.serreponcon-tourisme.com/

Source

Serre-Ponçon

https://www.serreponcon.com

On your path...

The Durance (A)

The Durance is the most important river in Provence and the third largest tributary of the Rhône, behind the Saône and the Isère. It rises in the Hautes-Alpes in the municipality of Montgenèvre and is soon joined by the Clarée and Guisane rivers, which flow past it despite being longer and having a greater flow at the confluence point. The Durance valley has been a major communication route for centuries, and its capricious nature has been controlled by the artificial lake at Serre-Ponçon and a canal running downstream. The old proverb from the Ancien Régime, which once claimed that "the three scourges of Provence are the Mistral, the Durance and Parliament", has now been forgotten, and the Durance now brings nothing but life to the land it irrigates.

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Attribution : Agence Kros_Rémi Fabrègue

Crévoux (B)

Nestled amongst peaks approaching 3,000m, such as the Grand Parpaillon and Pic Saint André, the village of Crévoux occupies a deep valley that has seen the establishment of several hamlets, including La Chalp, which extends over a narrow alluvial terrace. Once at the heart of a major craft industry, with the rise of basket-making and cabinet-making, the village now revolves around its small ski resort, created in 1937, making it one of the oldest in the Hautes-Alpes.

Cabane des Espagnols (C)

This hut is a memorial to the Spanish refugees who were mobilised in Crévoux to maintain and repair the Parpaillon road, a militarily important road in those troubled times. The Spanish camp at Crévoux was set up in 1939, on the eve of the Second World War and in the twilight of the Spanish Civil War, which saw Franco's victory and the flight of many Spanish republicans to France.

The pastre (D)

This is the Provençal word for shepherd. The trail got its name because of its many traces of pastoral activity along the way. Among other things, you can see the remains of ancient shelters known as muandes. These were used as stopovers between the farm and the mountain pastures during the transhumance up to the summer pastures at the start of the summer and during the transhumance to lower pastures in the autumn.

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Church of Marie-Madeleine in Les Orres (E)

Characteristic of Hautes-Alpes architecture, it was built around 1501 and is remarkable for its size and painted decorations.

The Larch (F)

The Hautes-Alpes offers all the right conditions for the development of larch and is home to half of France's larch trees. The larch needs open, sunny land and colonises abandoned plots: it is a "pioneer" species. It can live for 500 years and is the only softwood to shed its needles. Its rot-proof wood can be used to make gutters, fountains and shingles. Its strength makes it ideal for carpentry and its colour also makes it popular in joinery.

Bellflower (G)

This bellflower is highly characteristic, in particular because of its bell-shaped flowers. The bellflower has hermaphrodite flowers, that is to say, both male and female. This rustic plant loves the sun and dry ground. Some species of seedling can withstand arid soils at high altitude.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier

White Birch (H)

This is a beautiful tree that can reach 15 m in height. Its leaves can be identified by the white tomentose down on the underside. Its white flowers are grouped together in an inflorescence and bud fruit called "alises", which appear at the end of summer. This species likes a lot of light and tolerates dry conditions well. It can be found in open woods and on sunny, even rocky, dry slopes in the mountains.

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Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE

View over the Lac de Serre-Ponçon (I)

From this spot, you can see the Lac de Serre-Ponçon. This is the second biggest artificial lake in Europe. It covers 2,800 hectares and is fed by the Durance and Ubaye mountain rivers. Filled with water in 1960, it offers numerous water-based activities, beaches with amenities and lifeguards and small harbours for pleasure craft. Despite all this, the majority of its shores remain wild with numerous craggy coves which make Serre-Ponçon so charming, as the nearby Baie des Moulettes illustrates.

Attribution : Hélène Photographie - OTSP

Addos mountain stream (J)

The Addos mountain stream (torrent in French) is 4 kilometres long. A mountain stream is a natural water course located in the mountains. The flow regime is characterised by a steep gradient, with a very fast and therefore turbulent water flow producing significant erosion. It is also defined by a significant variation in flow rate depending on precipitation levels. In this mountain stream, as in many others, numerous small sills (small dams) have been created to slow down the water flow and limit the impact of floods.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier

The Golden eagle (K)

The Golden Eagle is a large bird of prey with a wingspan of up to 2.30 metres. It is a predator par excellence, armed with fearsome weapons: rapid flight adaptable to the most acrobatic situations and powerful, sharp talons. Its sharp eyesight, eight times sharper than a human's, lets it detect its prey: from marmots and young chamois to ptarmigan and hare. The Golden Eagle is also a keen scavenger, especially in winter when food is scarce.

Attribution : Cyril Coursier - PNE

Turk's cap lily (L)

In the undergrowth at the beginning of the route, then in the meadows, it stands out with its long upright flowering stem. It is embellished by three to ten flowers that are a purple-pink and crimson and have long orange stamen. Admire them without smelling, as they are as beautiful as they are smelly!

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - PNE

Retaining walls (M)

The retaining walls are made of dry stone. They are called restanques in Provence. In steep areas, they can be used to create farmed terraces by retaining the soil. At the time, their construction enabled generations of farmers to make a living from their land, which became fertile and arable. Today, many researchers and craftsmen are trying to bring back this age-old technique.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier

Common Rock Thrush (N)

The Common Rock Thrush likes sunny rocks. It only visits us in April until the end of August to nest either on the ground, or in a rock cavity. Orange breast, blue head, white rump, its song consists of sweet, clear melodious stanzas.

Attribution : Pascal Saulay - PNE

Black Redstart (O)

Mr. Black Redstart sports a grey skullcap and white marking on his wings, a black tail and rump. Originally a mountain bird, it has adapted to other environments, as long as there is a rocky atmosphere. Which is the case here, on the slope of the Roche Méanne. The Black Redstart is a common bird, bright and very lively: it constantly hunts insects in flight and on the ground. Often perched up high on a wall or a rock, it makes brief cries of alarm while bending its legs. Its chatty song, punctuated with sounds of « paper rustling » is characteristic. Partially migratory, it spends winter in the bottom of the valleys.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE

Abandoned farms (P)

Numerous abandoned farms can be seen. Some are no longer visible today because they have been overrun by vegetation. They were abandoned during the significant agricultural decline seen in the region during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, commonly called the "rural exodus" This altered the landscape significantly, with vegetation taking over in the abandoned fields and around ruined buildings. It is easy to imagine the harsh living conditions endured here by the peasants.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier

Retaining walls (Q)

In the very steep areas of the mountains, growing conditions were difficult. In order to alleviate the difficulty of cultivating steeply sloping ground, dry stone retaining walls were built. In Provence, they are called restanques. These had the effect of retaining the earth and levelling out the ground, making it possible to grow crops. This is known as terrace cultivation.

Attribution : Amélie Vallier

Vantage point overlooking the Lac de Serre-Ponçon (R)

This vantage point from the Pra Marin wood offers a sweeping view over the Lac de Serre-Ponçon. To the far left, the bridge of Savines-le-Lac and the Pic Morgon can be seen; to the right the view extends almost as far as the dam downstream from Sauze-du-Lac. In clear weather you can see in the background the La Blanche mountain range and the L'Estrop massif, in Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. On the right-hand shore of the lake stands the hamlet of Chèrines, together with the ski resort of Réallon at the foot of the Aiguilles de Chabrières.

Attribution : amelie.vallier

Chaffinch (S)

The common chaffinch can easily be recognised by its double white wing stripe. It is the most common and widespread of the three species of chaffinches. Territorial during the breeding season, it gathers into large flocks to feed in winter. From the coast to the alpine zone, a year-round resident in the mountains, it is demanding, although it has a preference for open and cool forests. It is usually a seed-eater, it becomes an insectivore during the breeding season.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - PNE

The larch (T)

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