

# Pic Nord des Cavales (3,158 m)

Parc national des Ecrins - Villar-d'Arène



Lac du Pavé (Thierry Maillet - Parc national des Ecrins)



*The Pic Nord des Cavales is an impressive granite monolith that has always attracted climbers thanks to its situation and the quality of its rock.*

This climb offers the opportunity to tackle high-mountain climbing on excellent rock. Slabs, deep fluting, precipitous arête... all offering a fun and not overly intensive itinerary. According to their level and experience, climbers can make the most of an easy terrain to practise picking out the line of their route according to the difficulty presented by the various sections.

## Useful information

Practice : Mountaineering

Duration : 2 days

Length : 26.3 km

Trek ascent : 1705 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Multi-day trekking

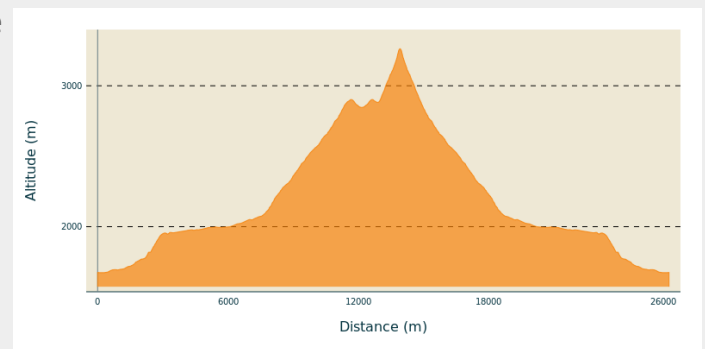
# Trek

**Departure** : Le Pied du Col, Villar-d'Arêne

**Arrival** : Le Pied du Col, Villar-d'Arêne

**Cities** : 1. Villar-d'Arêne

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1675 m Max elevation 3264 m

At first, the route follows the GR 54, then leaves it in the Pas d'Anna Falque to join the right bank of the Romanche. At the Valfourche bridge, continue on the left bank of the Torrent des Cavales. There are two ways to reach the Pavé hut : stay on the edge of the moraine and follow the path to the bottom of the valley, then cross horizontally to the right (heading north-east) to reach the hut, or descend into the talweg formed by the moraine to the right and follow a steep path that slopes over the rocky bars (cables) that defend the entrance to the Cirque du Pavé (faster but tricky).

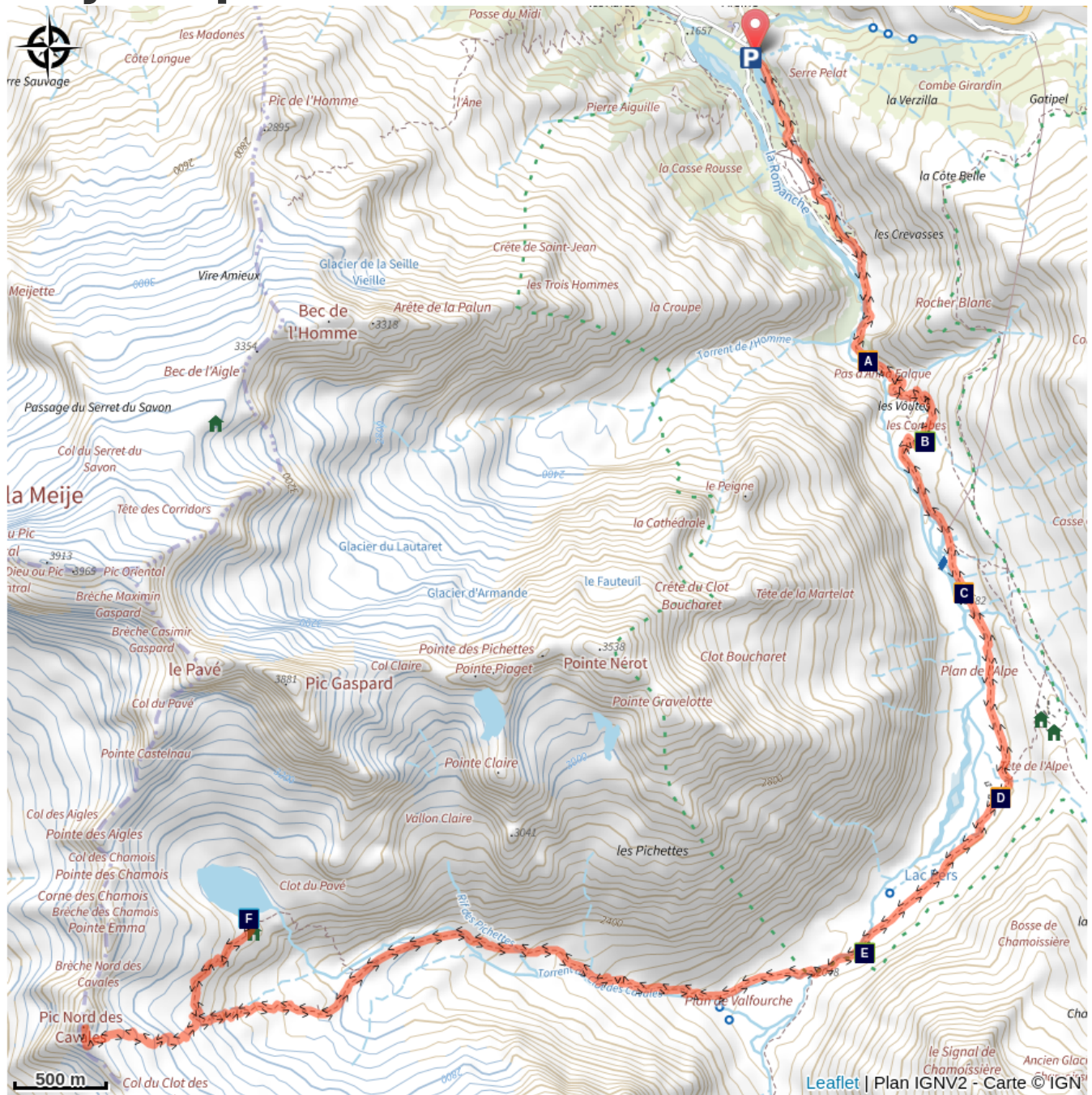
The mountaineering route starts on the second day from the Pavé refuge to the summit of the Pic Nord des Cavales.




## Stages :




1. From Villar d'Arêne to Pavé refuge (mountaineering)  
10.8 km / 1203 m D+ / 4 h
2. From Pavé refuge to Villar d'Arène via the Pic Nord des Cavales (mountaineering)  
14.2 km / 460 m D+ / 9 h



# On your path...



-  Romanche valley, Charles Bertier (A)
-  Alpe Valley (C)
-  Small Apollo Butterfly (E)

-  Alpine Columbines (B)
-  Exploitation of the mines (D)
-  Pavé Lake (F)

# 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

For this short, rocky climb, you need to deploy all the basics not only of roped progression on rocky terrain, but also those of downclimbing and rappelling. It is possible to complete the climb with a 50m rope, limiting the rappels to 25m, but two 50m strands allow for an easier descent with longer rappels. It is also possible to complete the climb starting from the Vénéon valley and from the Refuge du Châtelleret in the Étançons valley. This option is more demanding and involves a long approach walk over high-mountain terrain crossing the Col du Clot des Cavales. It is equipped with wires and is clearly waymarked in green; the easy sections are equipped with anchor points (bolts) allowing for effective belayed progression. Note that the route does not run through the geographical col, but via the notch 3,196 m slightly to the north of the Col du Clot des Cavales. Take care not to stray from the waymarked and wired route in low snow cover conditions (unstable and hazardous terrain). Of course, it is possible to envisage the itinerary as an A to B route in the direction Vénéon/upper Romanche (the simplest).



## Gear

Standard equipment for snow and mixed itineraries and glacial terrain: telescopic poles, crampons, ice axe, helmet, harness, 50m climbing rope, belaying and progress equipment, 30-litre bag, warm clothing, safety kit etc.

## How to come ?

### Transports

Bus line Grenoble - Briançon, via Col du Lautaret :

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

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

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

### Access

From Villar-d'Arêne, which can be accessed via the D1091 from Le Bourg d'Oisans or Briançon, take the minor D207 road toward Le Pied du Col. At the first intersection turn right and follow this road for 1.25 km to the Pont d'Arsine (bridge). Cross the bridge and take the first track on the right. Follow this for 1.5 km until it comes to an end and park in the car park 1,714 m.

### Advised parking

Car park at Le Pied du Col, Pont d'Arsine bridge

# 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 et de privilégier un survol de la zone à une distance de survol de 300m sol soit à une altitude minimale de 2600m.

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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/>



### **Tourist information office of La Grave**

RD1091, 05320 La Grave

lagrave@hautesvallees.com

Tel : (+33) 04 76 79 90 05

<http://www.lagrove-lameije.com>



### **Bureau des Guides de la Bérarde Meije Écrins**

La Bérarde, 38520 Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans - La Bérarde

guides.berarde.veneon@gmail.com

Tel : 04 76 79 54 83

<https://www.guidesberarde.com>

### **Bureau des Guides et Accompagnateurs de La Grave-La Meije**

Place du Téléphérique D 1091 La Grave,  
05320 La Grave

info@guidelagrove.com

Tel : 04 76 79 90 21

<https://www.guidelagrove.com>

## **Source**



Parc national des Ecrins

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



# On your path...

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## Romanche valley, Charles Bertier (A)

The Romanche was a source of inspiration for many mountain artists and it have been painted repeatedly. Charles Bertier (1860-1924) was inspired to paint Vallée de la Romanche au Pied-du-Col and Les Fréaux près de la Grave, two oil paintings that were painted in 1894. The artist from Grenoble learnt to paint landscapes with Jean Achard, and mountains with the abbot Guétal and did not hesitate to set up his easel on the high summits of the Dauphiné Alps. More to the point, his mission was to make his contemporaries 'understand the mountains'!

Attribution : © Musée de Grenoble

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## Alpine Columbines (B)

Hidden at the foot of a rhododendron bush, caught between the scree and the edge of the, is a rare species, it is as bright as it is rare. Do not rub against the Columbine, or it will lose its petals. The leaflets are split with deep incisions, in a double layer to form simple leaves, lifting up young milky buds at the end of the stalk and magnificent widely spread out flowers, azur fragments lost in the vegetation. Columbine flowers are the only ones that possess five spurs, five petals at their extremities in a cornet, protected by five sepals in the form of a lance.

Attribution : Thierry Maillat - PNE

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## Alpe Valley (C)

Mountaineers have always particularly liked the Alpe valley. It has long been a place for a base camp, for several big classic climbs in the Massif des Ecrins. It is over the ice cap that the famous roped party Coolidge-Almer succeeded in making the first ascension into the mountain of the Agneaux. Le 17 July 1873 following this they carried out the first crossing of the Casse Déserte mountain pass and the ascent of the Pointe Brevoort at the Grande Ruine.

Attribution : PNE - Roche Daniel





## Exploitation of the mines (D)

The valley has not only been a centre of interest for botanists and mountaineers. It still carries traces today of mining activity. Between 1835 until the beginning of the First World War, thirty to forty people worked in the extraction of minerals, mainly copper, on the slopes of the Chamoissière. A stamp mill enabled minerals to be ground. It remains at the site but is completely broken...

Attribution : Cyril Coursier - PNE



## Small Apollo Butterfly (E)

A hardly perceptible rustling in the frozen morning grass betrays the presence of a butterfly disturbed by our steps and unable to use its damp wings... A few delicate jerks and there it is clinging onto some dry grass, then with successive spasms, it opens its pearly wings which are almost translucent in the sunshine, and finally exposes the totality of its anatomy. The Small Apollo, rare and protected – catching or transporting it are forbidden – and there, before our eyes, with its miniscule red ocellus on the edge of each of its upper wings and its finely black and white striped antennae.

Attribution : PNE - Albert Christophe



## Pavé Lake (F)

In the current context of global warming, the retreat of the highest glacier of Les Cavales a few decades ago, made way for a lake at an altitude of 2820 m. The water in the recently formed lake is very cold: 4°C on the surface. Despite this, measures taken in 2010 as part of the monitoring of high altitude lakes surprised everyone by revealing the presence of plankton.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - PNE