



Vars

LA FORÊT BLANCHE

YOUR HIKES / **IN VARS**

[VARS.COM](https://vars.com)

YOUR OPINION MATTERS

We'd love to hear your thoughts to help make your hiking experience in Vars even better!

If there's not enough signage, some of the route is in poor condition, a mistake in our descriptions or you want to share some positive feedback, we want to hear from you.

Please email us your comments and suggestions to info@otvars.com or visit us at the Tourist Information visitor centres.

NB: All details are correct at time of going to press. Some changes may occur due to roadworks, forestry, farming or adverse weather.

In this event, please refer to the ground markings ahead of the map and descriptions in this booklet. Please inform us of any changes you notice.



You can do some hiking trails both ways and even do them on mountain bikes: be careful!

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HOW TO CHOOSE / YOUR HIKE



LEVELS OF DIFFICULTY

- **GREEN:** very easy.
- **BLUE:** easy.
- **RED:** medium.
- **BLACK:** difficult.

OUR ADVICE : Check the elevation and journey time before you set off (see route data sheet).
For example, a "green" trail may be steep and not suitable for everyone.

► Are you with your family?

If you're a family with children, you're probably looking for a leisurely hike, right?

Go for **green trails and educational trails**.

You can pick up the "**easy walks**" guide from Tourist Information.



► The weather: check, check and check again!

Before you set off, it's best to check the day's forecast. **The weather can change fast in the mountains, don't get caught out.**

Daily weather forecast available from Tourist Information

+33 (0)4 92 46 51 31 / www.vars.com

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Some walks start from the top of the ski lifts which are open in summer.

A valid pass is required.

Information/prices at the ticket booths and Tourist Information or vars.com



THE RIGHT ATTITUDE / AT ALTITUDE

Flower picking: not allowed.

Noise: wild animals and livestock need peace and quiet. Please avoid any unnecessary noise.

Fires: Only allowed in approved barbecue areas.

Dogs: Must be kept on a lead.

Litter: Keep it clean, take your litter with you or dispose of it properly.

Your outing: Remember, some routes are shared with mountain bikes. The paths and farm tracks may be used by motor vehicles. Stay on the marked paths and respect the hay meadows. Watch out for livestock and guard dogs. Close the gates behind you.

SUMMER INFORMATION POINTS:

- Tourist Information in Vars les Claux, Vars Sainte-Marie and Val d'Escreins visitor centre

USEFUL CONTACTS:

- Vars Town Hall - +33 (0)4 92 46 50 09
- Ski lift office (Sem Sedev):
+33 (0)4 92 46 51 31
- Medical centre: +33 (0)4 92 46 54 05
- Police: +33 (0)4 92 46 60 05
- Fire service: 112
- Weather: 3250 / www.meteofrance.com

ENJOY YOUR WALK!



GEAR UP

IT'S GOOD TO HIKE

Having the right gear can make all the difference when you're hiking. We've all heard the saying, "Fail to prepare, prepare to fail", so let's make sure your outing is a roaring success.

Dress for the occasion!

Adapt your clothing to the environment you're in! So leave your flip-flops in the cupboard if you're going for a walk! If you don't have **good hiking shoes**, our sports shops sell a wide range of products and advice tailored to suit you thrown into the bargain.

When it comes to clothing, make sure it's comfortable and never leave home without a **reliable jumper, raincoat, hat, sunglasses and sun cream**. The weather can change very quickly in the mountains.



What about your rucksack?

Pack your **map, a bottle of water, snack, Swiss knife** and a small **first aid kit**: the essentials you don't want to leave home without.

Feel free to take a **pair of binoculars** to get a good look at any wildlife you may encounter.

Hello?

As for your mobile phone, it may prove very useful if you run into any issues (112) and if you want to capture the beautiful scenery.

Tell someone your route before you leave: a family member, friend or even your host during your stay!

NEW ENCOUNTERS / IT'S GOOD TO HIKE

A guided hike is worlds away from a solo outing: their expertise, unrivalled knowledge of the area and their passion will give you a better insight and understanding of the environment you're in.

WHY JOIN A GUIDE?

They bring the mountain to you.

- You don't need to worry about the route, just look up from the map and **enjoy the scenery!**
- They'll show you how to «**read**» the mountains.
- You'll know everything about the **plant and animal species** you encounter.

They have unique routes tailored to suit you

- Based on your **level of fitness**.
- Based on your **interests** (fauna/flora/lakes etc.).
- Based on your **time** (half day/full day/overnight in bivouacs etc.).
- Off the **beaten track**.

They safeguard your outing

- You'll be joined by **qualified professionals** who know the mountains inside out.
- Learn **how to get the right gear** for hiking.
- Learn the basics of **getting your bearings in the mountain**.

Let's not forget the **social** aspect of **sharing an experience** that a guide can provide!

Feel free to contact the guides and instructors in Vars!





HIKES / WITH THE DOG

What a joy it is to go on holiday in the mountains with your family and take absolutely everyone with you, including your most loyal companion: your dog. Here are a few tips to help make your walks/ outings magical instead of a dog's dinner.

Know your dog's limits

It's exactly the same as for people: opt for **walks that suit your pooch's** ability and endurance levels!

Your companion (we mean the dog!) doesn't suddenly turn into an athlete overnight... If they spend most of their time on the sofa and only get up to eat and do their business, don't set off on a 7 hour expedition! **Get them used to it.**

Know your dog's personality

Whether they're a hunter, runaway, naughty or shy, **your companion's personality will affect your plans.**

Start with an "introductory" walk because the new terrain and all the new smells that Fido experiences could affect how well they obey.

Be responsible Dogs

On hiking trails **must always be kept on a lead**, especially when approaching areas occupied by livestock and watched over by the guard dogs. **You are responsible for your pet** and you must keep them under control at all times, including when you run into other hikers and mountain bikers.

Prepare your «doggy hiking bag»

You wouldn't leave without your essentials, so the same goes for Fido too: **Harness and lead, water, food, poop bags,**

little treats and snacks to reward them during the walk.

Don't forget to put a collar on with your telephone number, you never know!

So now you're ready to take your most faithful companion with you on your adventures.

WHAT TO DO IF / YOU ENCOUNTER A PATOU

Have you see or heard the word "patou" around these parts and been wondering what it means?

It's a breed of guard dog to protect livestock from wolves and other potential predators.



The "patou" spends its entire life with the livestock and sees them as family. Remember that they are not used to people.

They're not pets, they're protection dogs and not to be confused with sheepdogs! The "patou" is part of the flock.

During your hikes, you may come across some of them. Stay calm and do the right thing.

You'll get a "patou" on the back if you follow our advice! / We'll tell you how in 10!

- ① Check if your route goes through livestock areas before you set off.
- ② If you encounter livestock, **make your presence known** to avoid surprising the animals, **stay calm** and keep your cool.
- ③ **Don't make any sudden movements or noise.** If you're on a bike, get off and walk.
- ④ **Don't plough through but do avoid** the livestock as much as possible.
- ⑤ If the dog approaches you, stop and talk to it calmly to reassure it. **Don't stroke the dog** but do put something between the two of you (e.g. a hat).
- ⑥ **Remain vigilant while ignoring it** (don't make eye contact, don't turn your

back on it).

⑦ Don't feed it.

⑧ Keep your **dog on a lead**.

⑨ Keep **children at a safe distance**.

⑩ If it follows you, don't worry, just imagine it's seeing you out! It's showing you the way out. During your hikes, you may come across some of them. Stay calm and do the right thing.



/ YOU'RE BEING WATCHED

A WILDLIFE HIKE

Silence often reigns over the mountain. Make no mistake! You're not alone, keep your eyes open as our four-legged friends are also keeping a close eye on you.



Go for a themed and rewarding walk observing **the animals in their natural environment.**

Walking is one thing, wildlife spotting is another.

Your guide will give you a few breaks so you can look up and see what you can see. A golden eagle in the sky, a few curious marmots and ibex basking in the sunshine surrounded by scree.

You can get a closer look at them with your **binoculars** without disturbing them.

As wildlife and mountain enthusiasts, mountain guides provide a fascinating insight into the wonderful world of wildlife here: their lifestyle, survival instincts, habits and more.

**Join our mountain guides
on your hike!**



A SUNSET / HIKE EXPERIENCE SUGGESTION

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO TO AN OPEN-AIR CINEMA?

You'll never get bored of this blockbuster that's been showing since the dawn of time: the sunset over the mountains.

Get ready to go as the afternoon draws to a close. It's time for an educational hike with one mission: to find the perfect spot to watch the evening's natural show-stopper: the sunset over the mountains.

The bold and beautiful Sun is the star, supported by the local chamois and all the surrounding mountains: they may be background characters, but they're what make the magic happen.

The plot is as important as the ending: **stories about the wildlife and surrounding flora** with a dash of geology, all presented by the director, none other than your guide.

A walk to suit hikers of all kinds, from novice families to hardened rambblers.

Our mountain guides are here to help.



HIKE TO LITTLE CANADA VARSINC

The Val d'Escreins is the green heart of Vars, with its wild expanses and the Rif Bel torrent—a veritable lifeline of water that flows through the forest, rising from the rocky heights that reach an altitude of 3,385 metres.



/ Orienteering trails in the Val d'Escreins

Three fun trails of varying difficulty, to be explored on your own, in a group or with the family.

Pick up a map and a compass from the visitor centre and set off in search of the wooden markers dotted around the valley. An activity that requires careful navigation., d'observation. et de fun !

/ The barbecue spot

After a good day's walk, what could be better than a lovely picnic?

Find your perfect picnic spot among the 33 areas set aside for this purpose. After a hearty meal, you can choose between a quick nap under the shade of the trees or a chat over a cup of coffee. As for the menu, it's entirely up to you!



ACCESSIBLE / EXPERIENCE SUGGESTION

VIEWPOINTS

THE HIGHER YOU GO, THE BETTER THE VIEW!

The best way to get a bird's-eye view is still to go hiking in the mountains. Whether you're a beginner looking for easy family walks or seeking more challenging hikes, Vars offers a walking tour of the area where you can take in the stunning views.

Whether you're with your family, with children, or simply looking for an easy stroll, these three viewpoints offer a mountain experience that's accessible to everyone.

/ Le Château

Set off on a circular walk from Saint-Marcellin, with a heritage guide under your arm and a packed lunch to enjoy once you reach the spot known as Le Château, one of the most beautiful panoramic views in Vars.

/ Lake Chabrières

Head up to the heights with the whole family on the Chabrières T-bar lift! Head for 2,210 metres above sea level for a getaway suitable for everyone, all ages welcome. An outing that ticks all the boxes: easy, quick and with a breathtaking view.

/ Les Balcons de Vars

This accessible hike through the mountain pastures is an invitation to slow down and enjoy the scenery. On the way to Lake Peyrol, there are several natural stopping points where you can admire the panoramic views that unfold along the route.



1 DAY / 1 LAKE

EXPERIENCE SUGGESTION

Your week in Vars is looking bright: the weather forecast says you're in for some sunshine. So cool off with a walk to the mountain lakes every day. Nothing beats a bit of sunshine to get you ready and raring to go!

LAC NAPOLÉON

1987m: The trout reigns supreme.



The perfect place for fishing. How to get here: drive towards Col de Vars, catch a free shuttle bus or walk, it takes 45 minutes from the top of Les Claux village.

LAC DES 9 COULEURS

2711m: No pain, no gain.



This stunning walk takes you to the perfect picnic spot with a lake that glows like a

rainbow!

If your legs aren't too sore, push on to the Mortice! (+1.5 hr - difficult)

Hike details on pages 54-55

LAC DE L'ÉTOILE

2755m: 360° views.



This small but mighty lake is near the Lac des 9 Couleurs.

It's only for good walkers and you have to go to the top of Paneyron to get there, making it a challenge and full-day hike. Take the easy route and hit Col de Serenne to get there.

A real little gem.

LAC DE CHABRIÈRES

2210m: in the heart of the resort



Hop on board the Chabrières ski lift and head 2210m for THE perfect outing, no matter your age: the seats in the cabins mean you can take both Grandma and baby with you (min. 18 months old) on an outing that will tick all the boxes: short and sweet with a view!

LAC DE PEYROL

2140m: Ideal for families.



Head for Lac de Peyrol for a fishing trip, a picnic on the waterfront or a visit to the sled dogs.

LAC DE PEYNIER

2210m: The great outdoors is yours!



Treat yourself to a round trip from Refuge Napoléon up to the Peynier hill reserve and the nearby Vallon des Prises.

WELLBEING TRAIL / EXPERIENCE SUGGESTION

OF THE MARMOT 14



Discover the wellness-themed trail!

At the top of the Chabrières T-bar lift, head up into the mountains and find your balance through a range of activities directly linked to the natural environment: meditation, yoga or even a nap in the heart of the mountains to help you refocus and reconnect with yourself.

Features:

- Access: Chabrières T-bar lift
- 600m loop at the top of the T-bar lift
- Green level
- Elevation gain/loss: +/- 40m

5 workshops await you, offering a chance to connect fully with the surrounding nature.

How long will the trail take? It's up to you!

Stay as long as you like and make the most of the wellness areas:

- Nap area: Hammock
- Listening area: Acoustic horn
- Breathing area: Breathing workshop
- Meditation area: Small meditation bench
- Yin-Yang area: Shavasana yoga bench





HIKES

**IN VAL
D'ESCREINS**





The entire Val d'Escreins is in the Vars area and is one of the biggest municipal reserves in France.

It feels massive, like you're on the other side of the globe.

Once you're off the tarmac cliff road, a door closes behind every visitor and lets them into a slice of Canada in Vars. Simply unmissable.

LE VAL / D'ESCREINS

PROFILE	
AREA	25km ²
ALTITUDE From 1625m at Pont de Vars to 3385m at Pic de la Font Sancte.	
RIVERS The Rif Bel, a tributary of the Chagne, which is a tributary of the Guil.	
THE RIGHT ATTITUDE Val d'Escreins is a nature reserve. That means there are some rules to follow: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keep your dogs on a lead - Take your litter with you - No bivouacs or camping allowed - Do not light fires anywhere other than the barbecue areas - No flower picking allowed: protected species - No unnecessary noise: the wild animals and livestock need peace and quiet. - Zero waste area 	

DO VAL YOUR WAY

- A leisurely stroll by the river, soaking up the plant species.
- Challenging hikes to summits in excess of 3000m.
- Family barbecues in specific areas.
- 3 orienteering trails for all abilities
- 3 trail running routes for all abilities

FANTASTIC FLORA AND FAUNA

The Val d'Escreins nature reserve boasts a wide variety of mountain birds and mammals, so keep your eyes and ears open: eagles, ptarmigans, black grouse (or capercaillie), chamois, mountain hares and the "star" of our mountains, the marmot.

When it comes to flora, don't forget to bring your camera because the variety of flowers and other amazing natural species will give your snaps the WOW factor: Scots pine, spruces, larches, gentians, edelweiss and aster blue beauty.

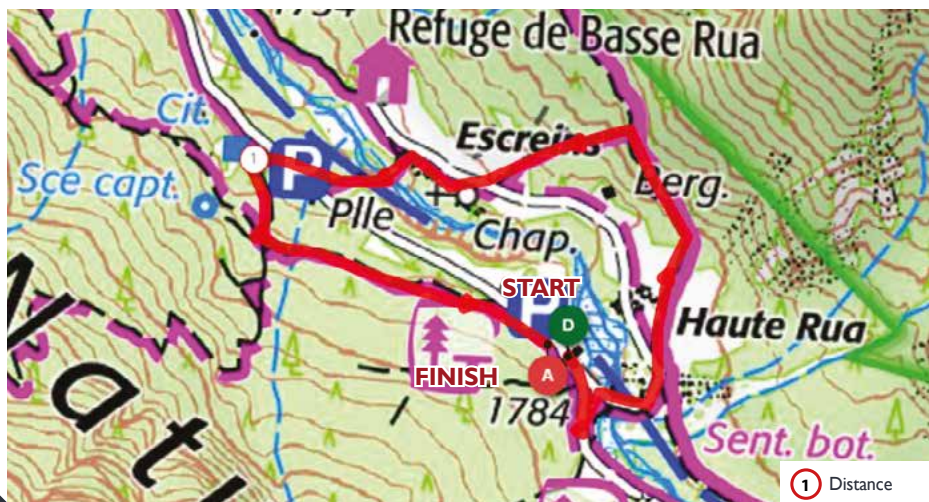


20 SENTIER / DU TÉTRAS-LYRE

The Sentier du Tetras Lyre is an all-round way to explore the setting. Family-friendly boards introduce everyone to the local geology, flora, history and traditional housing.



DURATION	1 hr 15
LEVEL	Green
DISTANCE	1.2km loop
ELEVATION	180m
MARKINGS	Yellow grouse
ALTITUDE	1780m
START	Main car park



21

LE TOUR

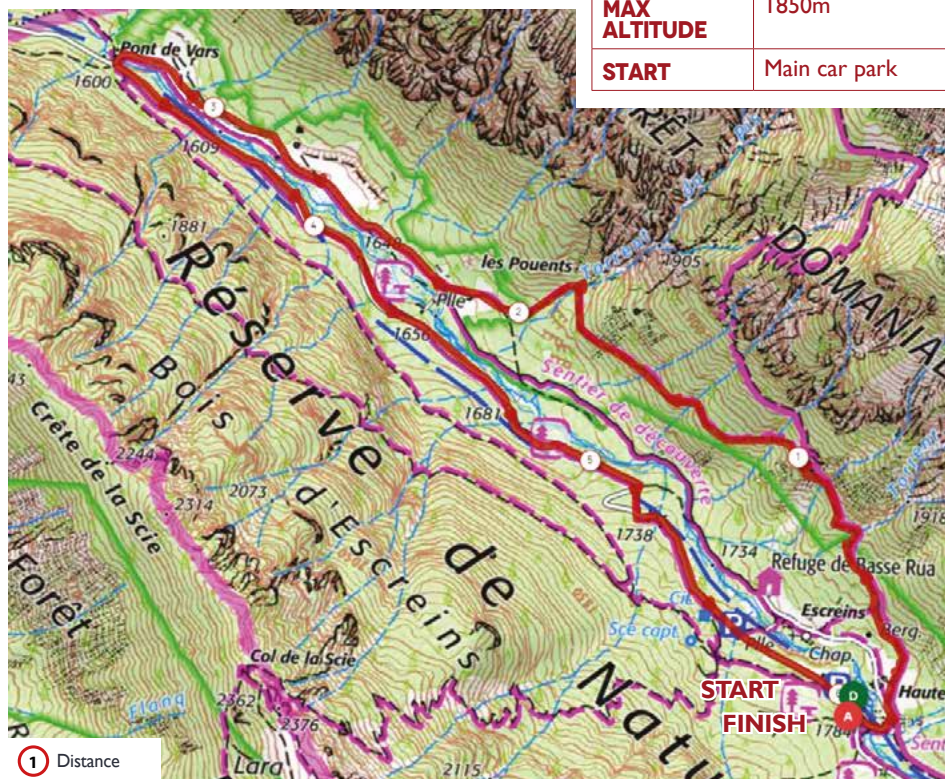
DU VAL D'ESCREINS

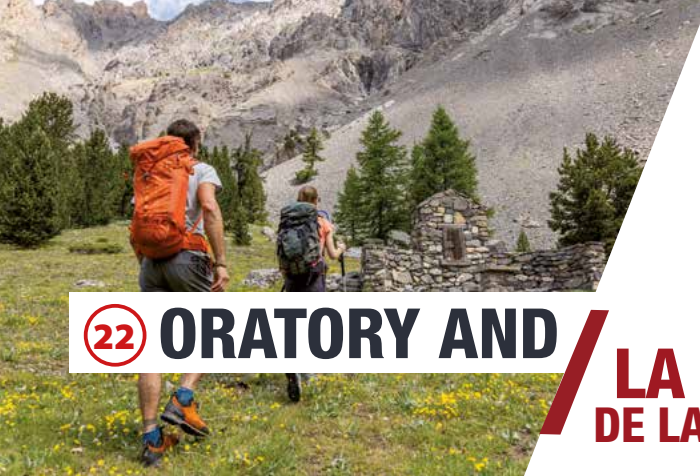
BLUE LEVEL

Get a real insight into the site as you venture through woodlands, along streams and go on your very own adventure with a family outing in an unspoilt setting.

From the car park at the bottom of the reserve, head towards the Basse-Rua ruins and the refuge. Go past the refuge and continue along the downhill path to Pont de Vars. Cross the Rif Bel, then go back up to the car park along the road.

DURATION	1 hr 30
LEVEL	Green
DISTANCE	6km loop
ELEVATION	285m
BALISAGE	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1600m
MAX ALTITUDE	1850m
START	Main car park





22 ORATORY AND

LA SOURCE DE LA FONT SANCTE

FULL DETAILS	
DURATION	4 hr 30 return
LEVEL	Red
RETURN DISTANCES	• Oratory: 9.4km • Spring: 10.4km
ELEVATION	• Oratory: 492m • Spring: 580m
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1785m
MAX ALTITUDE	• Oratory: 2277m • Spring: 2365m
START	Main car park
SPECIFIC CHALLENGES	Steep gravel slope up to the spring from ④ to ⑤

DESCRIPTION:

① From the car park at the bottom of the reserve, cross the Rif Bel river and turn right at the sign for Font-Sancte. Walk on the right bank through the mountain pasture then through the the coniferous forest (columbines) to the "Colette Verte" trail.

② Continue through the undergrowth and along the stream until you reach the wooden footbridges.

③ Cross the second footbridge and go back up the path leaving the Col des Houerts route behind on your right. Climb up a small slope (don't miss the beautifully sculpted Swiss pine tree) then cross the Rif Bel again before reaching the oratory at the end of the woods..

④ After the oratory, head towards a stony ridge and climb it. Cross the footbridge and continue to the Rif Bel spring. NB: the last part of the hike to the spring is quite steep.

⑤ To get back to your start point, simply retrace your steps.



23 SENTIER / DES ARBRES REMARQUABLES

DURATION	3 hr
LEVEL	Red
DISTANCE	8.6km
ELEVATION	Elevation : 447m
MARKINGS	Yellow

On the way back from the Oratoire, take a right after 500m and explore the Sentier des Arbres Remarquables trail that winds downhill for 1km.

It hooks up with the route that brought you here: a lovely alternative way back through the Escreins's genetic heritage, exploring trees that are hundreds of years old and measure over 4m in circumference.



① Distance



What hiker hasn't dreamed of doing a "cheeky" 3000 during their holidays in the mountains? This one is just incredible!

24 POINTE D'ESCREINS

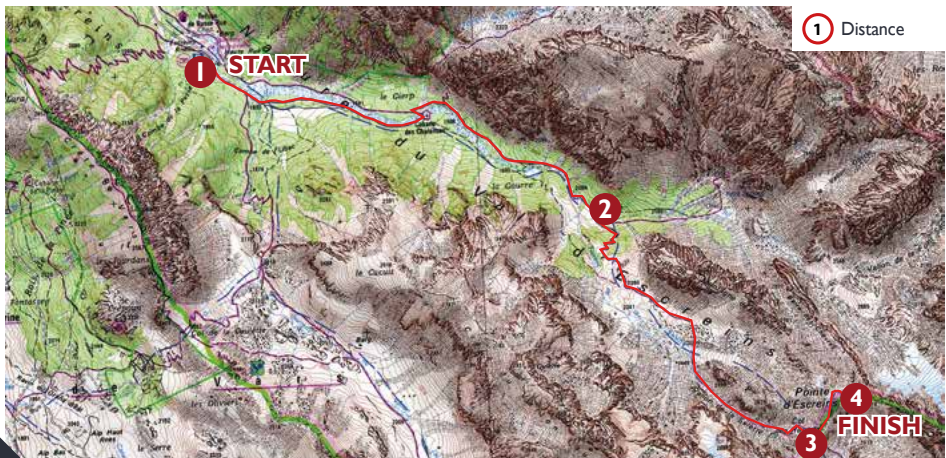
FULL DETAILS

DURATION	4 hr 30 - 5 hr one way
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE	7km one way
ELEVATION	1253m +
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1785m
MAX ALTITUDE	3038m
START	Main car park

1 From the car park at the bottom of the Val d'Escreins reserve, head towards Font Sancte oratory and Col des Houerts. Walk along the Rif Bel past the Cabane de Chalances and continue through the beautiful Val d'Escreins, where Swiss pines and larches watch over you.

2 After walking for 1 hr 15, head for Col des Houerts at the fork for the oratory up to the edge of La Selette valley. You come out on a plateau after a steep walk up through the forest. You're almost 2.5 hours into your walk. Take a good look around you: a few marmots should be spying on you!

3 Cross the Vallon to Col des Houerts within a 2 hour walk. Pointe d'Escreins is yours for the taking. You're just 30 minutes away from your 3000 target. **4** Drink in the incredible views: nearby Pic de Panestrel, Font Sancte, Pic des Houerts and Les Écrins, Ubaye and Brec de Chambeyron in the distance.



1 Distance

26

VALLON

LAUGIER

BLACK LEVEL

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	4 hr 30
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE	8.8km loop
ELEVATION	570m +
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1785m
MAX ALTITUDE	2355m
START/ FINISH	Main car park

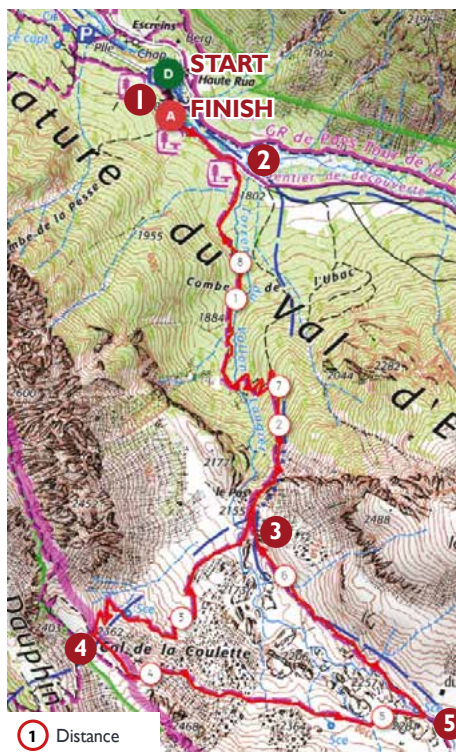
1 From Val d'Escreins car park, follow the path to the Lac des 9 Couleurs on the right of the Rif Bel.

2 After 400m, turn onto the path on the right towards "Col de la Coulette" and begin your ascent up the "Pas" along the Vallon Laugier river.

3 You'll reach the "Pas" after 2km. Leave the path going up to the Vallon Laugier behind on your left and turn right towards Col de la Coulette. Then it's a 1.3km climb to the summit.

4 At Col de la Coulette, turn left to go down to the Bergerie du Vallon Laugier, 1.5km down the road.

5 At the junction, turn left to head back down the valley to the "Pas". To get back to your start point, simply retrace your steps.



1 Distance



This rocky and floral path takes you to Bois d'Escreins. Experience a rainbow of colours with edelweiss dotted here and there in a field by a slope worthy of the Dolomites (better than a pot of gold!).

25 LES CRÊTES DE VARS

PAR LE VAL D'ESCREINS

1 From Val d'Escreins visitor centre, walk along the road to the path leading down to the ford opposite the Basse Rua refuge.

2 Turn left onto the signposted path at the sign for Sainte Catherine. First, go up through the floral undergrowth in Bois d'Escreins, then continue under the rocky ridge to Col de la Scie, where you gain ground. Admire the views overlooking the valley.

3 At Col de la Scie, turn left onto the path which climbs towards the ridge, passing under the mountain pines then onto the grass. Continue along the path to Col de la Coulette with edelweiss along the trail.

4 At the junction with the path back down to Sainte Catherine, turn left onto the downhill path winding through Vallon Laugier. Cross the stream and go up the right bank towards the rocky opening in the glacier: the Pas.

5 Go through the opening on the marked path, cross the stream and go down the left bank to Rif Bel, then take a left to the car park you started from.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	5 h 30
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE	9.2km loop
ELEVATION	763m
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1785m
MAX ALTITUDE	2549m
START/ FINISH	Main car park
SPECIFIC CHALLENGES	A few peaks between 3 and 4

NOT TO BE MISSED!

- Edelweiss ➤ Marmots
- Mountain stream ➤ Beautiful valley views of Vallée de Vars, Vallon Laugier and Val d'Escreins



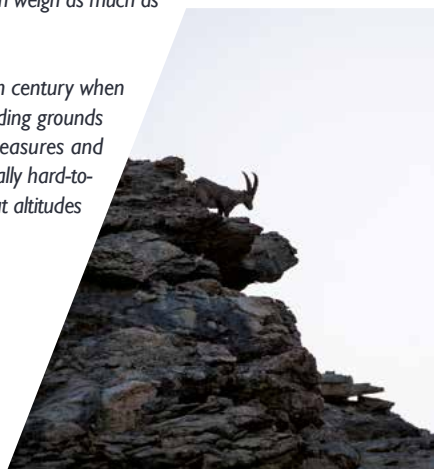
AN INSIGHT INTO /YOUR HIKE:

Pyrenean ibex:

This stocky mammal is certainly at home on the Vars ridges. But you'll have to get up early to spot them! They may be heavy-set with short but strong legs, a broad neck and wide-set eyes, but what really sets the male ibex apart are its horns. Three months after birth, they grow a pair of horns which carry on growing all their lives albeit at a slower pace the older they get. The horns curve backwards, are more or less wide apart depending on the individual, and have ridges known as growth rings or winter rings.

When fully grown, the male's horns reach 70-100cm and can weigh as much as 6kg per pair.

This species almost became extinct at the end of the 19th century when there were only just a few left in Piemonte (Italy). The breeding grounds haven't stopped expanding with the help of protective measures and reintroductions. The animals live in mountain areas, specifically hard-to-reach areas such as cliffs, scree slopes and rocky summits, at altitudes ranging from 1000m to over 3200m.





HIKES / IN VARS

HIKES USING THE SKI LIFTS





② SENTIER / DES SAGNES

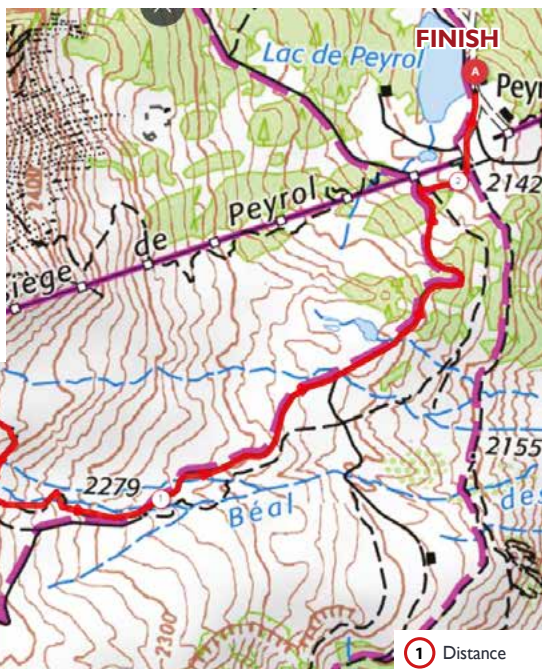
Take the path on your right as soon as you reach the top of La Mayt chair lift.

It's a steep walk down for a good kilometre then it evens out until you reach Lac de Peyrol.

This short and sweet walk is ideal for a family trip to the lake.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	0 hr 30
LEVEL	Green
DISTANCE	2.1km
ELEVATION	320m descent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2140m
MAX ALTITUDE	2460m
START	Top of La Mayt chair lift
FINISH	Lac de Peyrol



① Distance

LE GRAND VALLON

13

1 Take Les Crêtes de la Mayt trail no. 7 to reach the start point: On the 4x4 track, follow signs to Peyrol down to the bottom of the valley to reach the start of the route on the left about 500m ahead. You follow a ridge with the clearing on your right and the Mélézin on your left before going into the forest at the next information board **2**

Carry on until you reach the wetlands **3** and then continue for about 1km before merging **3** onto the forest road. **4**

The end of the trail takes you by mountain huts in the Forest and back to the bridge at the bottom of the village of Saint Marcellin.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION 1 hr 30

LEVEL Blue

DISTANCE 4,9km

ELEVATION 652m descent

MARKINGS Yellow

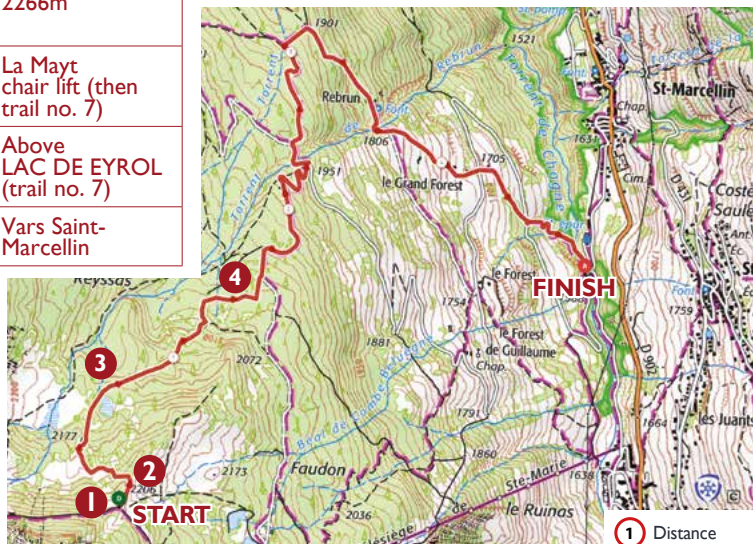
MIN ALTITUDE 1611m

MAX ALTITUDE 2266m

HOW TO GET HERE La Mayt chair lift (then trail no. 7)

START Above LAC DE EYROL (trail no. 7)

FINISH Vars Saint-Marcellin



1 Distance



1 EDUCATIONAL / FORÊT DES ESCONDUS TRAIL

1 From the top of the ski lift, go up to the lake and turn right under the Baby G2 ski lift departure station at the top of the zig-zags to reach the start of the educational trail.

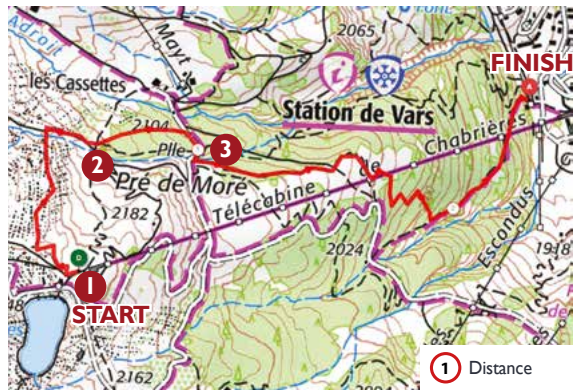
Continue until you cross paths with the «Crazy Marmot» MTB trail: be careful!

2 You will come to a large flat area. Turn left for 50m towards the mountain restaurant, then turn right immediately onto the narrow path.

3 When you reach the forest trail, go 100m back up and turn left after going under the MTB bridge.



FULL DETAILS	
DURATION	1 hr
LEVEL	Green
DISTANCE	2.8km
ELEVATION	380m descent /20m ascent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1850m
MAX ALTITUDE	2200m
START	Top of the Chabrières ski lift
FINISH	Bottom of the Chabrières ski lift





10 EDUCATIONAL TRAIL / SENTIER DE LA REINE

1 From the top of the ski lift, go right around Lac de Chabrières and follow signs for the trail. Be careful, mountain bikers also use this trail.

2 At the start of the «Marmottons» MTB track, turn right until you reach the snowpark hut. **3**

Then cross the ski piste onto the themed trail that continues straight after.

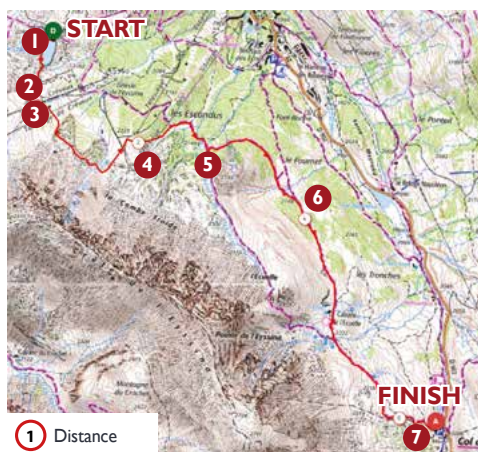
4 Follow the MTB track.

5 Turn right and follow the signs when you reach the 2.8km mark.

6 At the next junction, leave the Sentier des Myrtilles the left and continue to Col de Vars on your right **7**.

Walk back to Vars les Claux on the Col de Vars route (1.5 hr/3.8km/194m descent) or catch the free shuttle bus (check timetable)

FULL DETAILS	
DURATION	2 hr
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	5.5km
ELEVATION	260m descent /174m ascent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2109m
MAX ALTITUDE	2269m
START	Top of the Chabrières ski lift
FINISH	Col de Vars



9 LES BALCONS / DE VARS



FULL DETAILS	
DURATION	1 hr 15
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	4.3km one way
ELEVATION	60m ascent / 122m descent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2140m
MAX ALTITUDE	2244m
START	Top of the Chabrières ski lift
FINISH	Lac de Peyrol

This is the perfect way to visit Lac de Peyrol on a walk through the mountain pastures, so take time out to stop and gaze at the magical views before you. The iconic Vars mountain, the Eyssina, watches over you on your way back

TOP OF THE SKI LIFT TO LAC DE PEYROL

Take the Chabrières ski lift in Vars les Claux. Follow signs for the "Balcons de Vars" trail at the top.

The first 600 metres are uphill. The rest of the walk is slightly downhill and flat to Peyrol with fantastic views (hence the name which translates as "Vars balconies").



① Distance



LAC DE PEYROL TO VARS LES CLAUX

Just retrace your steps to get back to Vars les Claux with the Eyssina in front of you. After 2.5km, you'll branch off towards Les Claux and the walk ends with a mix of footpath and forest trail.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	1 hr 30
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	4.5km one way
ELEVATION	57m ascent / 312m descent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1887m
MAX ALTITUDE	2189m
START	Lac de Peyrol
FINISH	Vars les Claux



6 SENTIER / DES HEUREUX



- 1 At the top of La Mayt chairlift, hit the path in front of you to Col des Saluces for 200 metres.
- 2 Then turn left and follow the track towards Vars les Claux.
- 3 At the junction 1.2km further down, turn left and carry on towards Vars les Claux. The La Mayt chair lift route is nearby. Merge onto the "Balcons de Vars"
- 4 Turn right to go back down to Vars les Claux past the mountain restaurant.
- 5 Cover 150m of the forest trail, go under the MTB bridge and hook up with the path to Les Claux on your left.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	2 hr
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	4.3km
ELEVATION	577m descent / 29m ascent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1870m
MAX ALTITUDE	2437m
START	Top of La Mayt chair lift
FINISH	Vars les Claux



1 Distance

SENTIER / 12 DES MYRTILLES

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	1 hr 30
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	5.1 km
ELEVATION	333m descent 62m ascent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1934m
MAX ALTITUDE	2235m
START	Top of the Chabrières ski lift
FINISH	Vars les Claux

1 Go right around Lac de Chabrières from the top of the ski lift. Follow signs for "Col de Vars, Sentier de la Reine". Be careful, mountain bikers also use this trail.

2 At the start of the «Marmottons» mountain bike track, take the path on your right. You will reach the snowpark hut **3** and cross the piste that starts up again just after.

4 Follow the MTB track, go under the Sibières chair lift then you reach a crossroads.

5 Turn left towards "Les Myrtilles".

6 100m after the Pain de Sucre footbridge, turn left to reach Le Fournet.



1 Distance



Get away from it all in the mountains up to Lac de Peyrol along the La Mayt ridges from the top of their namesake's chair lift.

CRÊTES DE / 7 LA MAYT

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	1 hr 30
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	3.,1km
ELEVATION	390m descent 70m ascent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2140m
MAX ALTITUDE	2530m
START	Top of La Mayt chair lift
FINISH	Lac de Peyrol

1 At the top of La Mayt chair lift, tackle the short but steep slope. It takes you to the top of the Peyrol ski lift which is only open in winter **2** Continue along the ridges for 1.3km down to the valley below on the left. **3** Then turn right onto the forest track which leads to Lac de Peyrol **4**



NOT TO BE MISSED!

- ▶ View from the ridges
- ▶ Picnic at Lac de Peyrol

1 Distance

8 SENTIER / DE FAUDON



FULL DETAILS

DURATION	1 hr
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	2.5km
ELEVATION	490m descent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1650m
MAX ALTITUDE	2140m
START	Lac de Peyrol (accessible via trails n°2, 9 or 7 at the top of the ski lifts)
FINISH	Vars Sainte-Marie

1 At Lac de Peyrol, go to the start point under the Sainte-Marie chair lift arrival station (open in winter). The path clings to the edge of the forest before venturing deep into the woods under the larches.

2 You will cross the "Elixir" MTB track twice. Be careful: avoid this track.

3 After just over a kilometre, at the junction of a shared path, take a sharp right to reach the village.





You may well spot Eyssina's chamois as you climb up the sandstone of the former rocky glacier that is Combe Froide. Follow in the footsteps (or hoof prints) of flocks taken up to pasture on L'Ecuelle in summer.

L'ECUELLE &

11

COMBE FROIDE

FULL DETAILS	
DURATION	3 hr 30
LEVEL	Red
DISTANCE	10.1km loop
ELEVATION	510m
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1932m
MAX ALTITUDE	2409m
START	Le Fournet Vars les Claux Optional start from the top of the ski lift on trail n° 10.
CAR PARK	Caribou Plateau in Le Fournet

NOT TO BE MISSED!

- View of Col de Vars and the valley
- Haute-Ubaye mountains

- 1 Hit the "Myrtilles" path on the Caribou plateau, near the toboggan run, and go up into the forest.
- 2 You will cross the "Caribou" MTB trail after 600 metres: be careful!
- 3 Once you're out of the woods, follow signs for the path which will take you to the ski lift after a kilometre.
- 4 Then turn left towards Col de Vars via Combe Froide.
- 5 After another 2km, you come out near Cabane de l'Ecuelle which you can get to on a 400m loop: ideal for a well-deserved break.

You are 2km from Col de Vars 6 Go back down towards Les Claux along the roadside path. Finish at the car park you started from after going past the heliport then Lac Napoleon.

CABANE DE L'ECUELLE IS WITHIN EASY REACH OF COL DE VARS

1.6km / 119m ascent / 45 min





① Distance

AN INSIGHT INTO YOUR HIKE:

The Eysyssa ridges

The Eysyssa towers over the entire valley and is the iconic Vars mountain.

Its name comes from the word "échine", meaning "backbone". It forms a meteorological barrier which stops bad weather on the Ubaye from reaching Vars.

A little local saying: "Lorsque l'Eysyssa porte son manteau et le Paneyron son chapeau, le temps est plus au mauvais qu'au beau" (When the Eysyssa wears her coat and the Paneyron wears his hat, the weather isn't good, it's bad).

Geologically, the stratified Eysyssa cliff switches between pale, hard sandstone and dark layers of "schist". This geological formation is called flysch.



3 4 5 PIC DE CHABRIÈRES

3 ON THE JEAS DU BOEUF RIDGES

- 1 Head towards Col des Saluces from the top of the chair lift. You're just 500m away.
- 2 From the mountain pass, start going up to Pic de Chabrières on the Jeas ridges: you're in for a steep climb lasting nearly 2km. You need to be a mountain person!

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	1 hr
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE	2.3km
ELEVATION	305m ascent / 10m descent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2435m
MAX ALTITUDE	2750m
START	Top of La Mayt chair lift
FINISH	Pic de Chabrières



4 VIA COL DE JAFFUEIL (COL DE CRÉVOUX)

1 At the top of the ski lift, go straight up the service track towards the KL huts and continue for 2.3km to Col de Jaffueil.

2 At the pass, turn right towards the Pic and follow the ridge markings.

3 You will pass the top of the Speed Master chair lift and see the Pic a few dozen metres away.



FULL DETAILS

DURATION	2 hr
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE	3.8km
ELEVATION	530m ascent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2220m
MAX ALTITUDE	2750m
START	Top of the Chabrières ski lift
FINISH	Pic de Chabrières

5 ON THE COL SANS NOM

1 At the top of La Mayt chairlift, hit the path in front of you to Col des Saluces. You're 500m from it.

2 At the pass, follow the arrows for 400m downhill then the path climbs steeply up to the Pic on Col Sans Nom.



FULL DETAILS

DURATION	1 hr 30
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE	3km
ELEVATION	327m ascent / 65m descent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2435m
MAX ALTITUDE	2750m
START	Top of La Mayt chair lift
FINISH	Pic de Chabrières



HIKES

**FROM THE
VILLAGES**



FROM ONE VILLAGE / TO THE NEXT

Vars is home to 4 villages that you can explore one after the other... On foot... or on the free shuttle bus!

Want to explore the villages on foot? Here are the journey times between the villages. Please note that mountain bikes also use these trails. Take care



29 ▶ Saint Marcellin - Sainte Catherine:
1 hr - 840m // Ascent: 120m

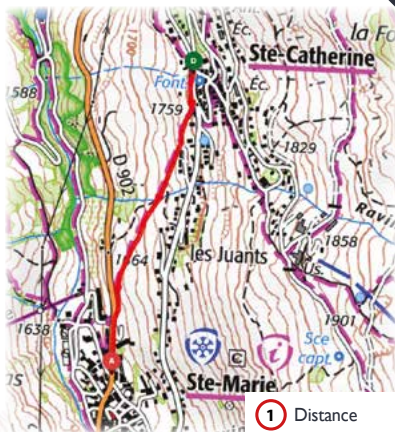
▶ Sainte Catherine - Saint Marcellin:
35 min - 840m // Descent: 120m

30 ▶ Sainte Marie - Saint Marcellin:
45 min - trail 30 - 1.3km // Elevation: 36m



28 ▶ Sainte Catherine - Sainte Marie:
25 min - 1km // Descent: 103m

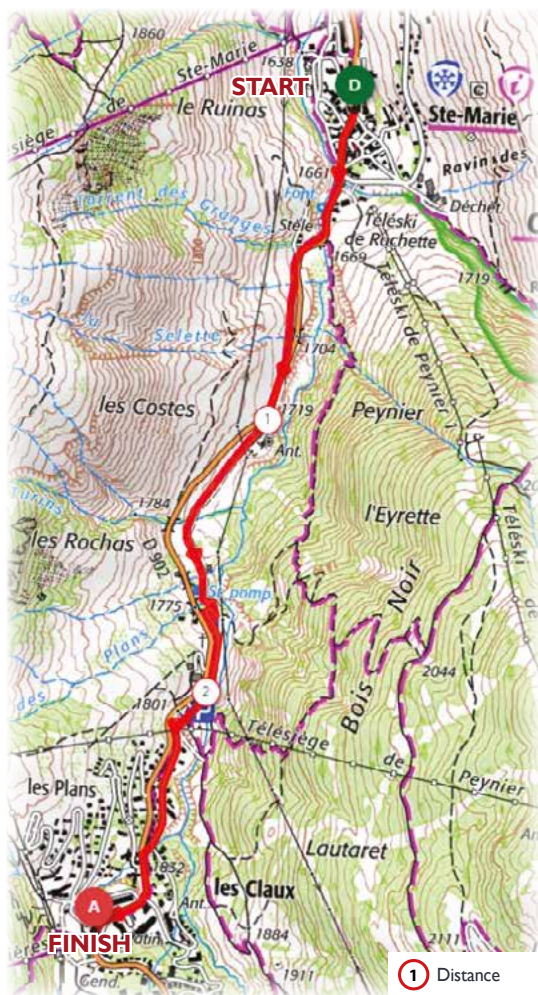
▶ Sainte Marie - Sainte Catherine:
45 min - 1km // Ascent: 103m



① Distance

27 ▶ Les Claux - Sainte Marie:
"Le chemin du Facteur"
50 min - 2.9km //
Descent: 195m

▶ Sainte Marie - Les Claux:
"Le chemin du Facteur"
1.5 hr - 2.9km //
Ascent: 195m



① Distance

FREE INTER-VILLAGE SHUTTLE BUSES:

Hop on one of the many free shuttle bus services and get around the villages at your leisure.

Leave your car in the garage and use the shuttle buses to get where you need to be for a race, get to the start point of your hike or get out and about around Vars! pour découvrir Vars!

Timetables and dates available from Tourist Information and service display boards.

It's the perfect way to see the Vars villages from on high: heritage and nature at their best.

LE CHÂTEAU

DE VARS 31

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	2 hr
LEVEL	Green
DISTANCE	4.1 km loop
ELEVATION	230m
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1640m
MAX ALTITUDE	1870m
START/ FINISH	Vars Saint-Marcellin
CAR PARK	Pétanque pitch
SPECIFIC CHALLENGES	Gaps in the slope between Sainte-Catherine and the Château

NOT TO BE MISSED!

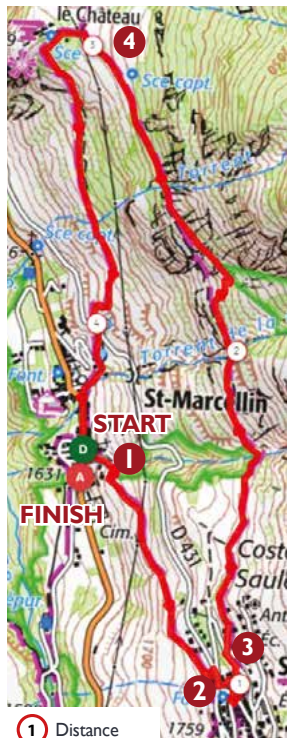
- ▶ Fountain, village oven, lanes and old houses in Sainte Catherine.
- ▶ Unobstructed views from the Château

1 Go up the stairs to the pétanque pitch then continue up the street in the village. Turn right onto the path going up to Sainte-Catherine through the mountain pastures. You're under 1 km from the village..

2 When you reach the main road, go past the washhouse then back up the village streets until you reach Rue du Serret on your left, then carry on to Auberge de la Coulette.

3 Go back down the main road for a few metres. The Sentier du Château starts from the bottom right, opposite the recycling bins. It's about 2km to the Château on the path overlooking Saint-Marcellin.

4 It's a bit of a steep walk back down to the village but it's not too tricky.



1 Distance

32 LE PONT DE LA SALCE

A gentle hike taking you up through fields of flowers and undergrowth along the Chagnon river: refreshing!

LOOP FROM SAINTE-MARIE

Head up to Tourist Information from Sainte-Marie car park and walk along the main road for a few metres towards Saint-Marcellin. The path leading up to Sainte-Catherine is just outside the village on the right. Walk up for 1km to Sainte-Catherine. Cross the lanes and go up to Place des écoles. When you get to the car park on the square, hit the lane at the bottom then go up to the top of the village to the sawmill.

At the sawmill, walk south on the agricultural road for about 1.5km to Pont de la Salce, the bridge over the Chagnon.

Take the path on the right before the bridge to Sainte-Marie until you reach the maintenance facilities.

Go back down to the car park you started from.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	2 hr
LEVEL	Green
DISTANCE	4.5km loop
ELEVATION	220m ascent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1665m
MAX ALTITUDE	1893m
START	Vars Sainte-Marie
CAR PARK	Near the chair lift at the bottom of the village

NOT TO BE MISSED!

- ▶ RTM dams (mountain restoration campaign) built to prevent flooding



1 Distance



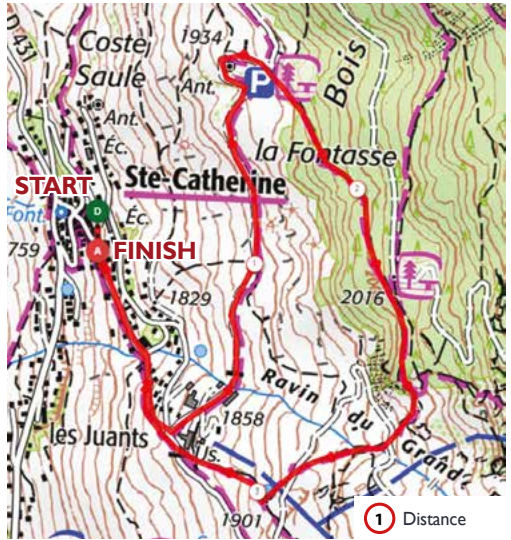
Soar high above Sainte Catherine, a village that was once the area's granary. Go up into Bois de la Pinée and soak up the cool and peaceful setting.

33 LE BOIS DE LA PINÉE

From the school car park in Saint Catherine, go up the lane on the edge of the square to the sawmill. Go on the byway to the left towards "Bois de la Pinée" From the car park (television mast) on the edge of the woods, follow Sentier Bois de la Pinée. When you come out of the woods, take the path on the right back down to Sainte Catherine.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	2 hr
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	3.7km loop
ELEVATION	225m
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1780m
MAX ALTITUDE	2005m
START	Vars Sainte-Catherine
CAR PARK	Place des écoles



AN INSIGHT INTO YOUR HIKE:

The origins of Bois de la Pinée:

Originally, forests had to be cleared to build houses in the mountain so people could live here. The problem is that bare slopes erode faster, exposing Sainte-Catherine and its villagers to landslides and other natural disasters. So in 1870 and 1964, to stabilise the land, the RTM (mountain restoration campaign) planted a larch and Swiss pine forest under Col de la Coulette. It was called "Bois de la Pinée".

NOT TO BE MISSED!

- The abundant flora



A trail with unobstructed views of the Massif des Ecrins peaks and Vallée de Vars, your way to Cabane de la Pinée winds its way through a enchanted forest.

Flowers and animals in their natural habitat, the sap from trees perfuming the air: the magic happens as soon as you step into the woods.

34 LA CABANE / DE LA PINÉE

FULL DETAILS	
DURATION	2 hr
LEVEL	Green
DISTANCE	3.5km loop
ELEVATION	231m ascent / 220m descent
MIN ALTITUDE	1941m
MAX ALTITUDE	2171m
START	Vars Sainte-Catherine

DESCRIPTION:

From the sawmill at the top of Sainte-Catherine, take a left onto the path to the TV mast car park.

- 1 Turn right into the woods until you reach a clearing after around 1 km.
- 2 Continue up towards Col de la Coulette, past the tank
- 3 before reaching the junction for the climbing site.
- 4 Walk on the left-hand path towards Cabane de la Pinée for just over a kilometre. There are lots of ups and downs leading you deep into the forest.
- 5 You will then branch off on the right to reach the hut 600m away.

6 Have a picnic at Cabane de la Pinée! You can start your hike on the other side in a lofty and earthy setting, still with unobstructed views of the Ecrins on one side and the Eyssina ridges on the other.

7 300m after the hut, hook up with the path coming down from Col de la Scie. Take a left for 500m to reach the carriageway 8 taking you back to Sainte-Catherine.



35

LE COL / DE VARS

Be inspired by the cyclists and walk up to the top of Col de Vars! Perched at an altitude of 2109m, it marks the transition from the Hautes-Alpes to the Alpes de Haute-Provence. Keep your eyes peeled along the way... lots of our marmot friends live here...

From the car park south of Les Claux (Le Fournet), follow signs to the path running parallel to the D 902 which starts in the forest then goes through mountain pastures past Lac Napoléon up to Col de Vars.

You can take a free shuttle bus up to Col de Vars and just do the hike downhill.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	2 hr
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	3.7km one way
ELEVATION	19m descent / 194m ascent
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1934m
MAX ALTITUDE	2109m
START	Le Fournet Vars les Claux
CAR PARK	Le Fournet, Plateau du Caribou

AN INSIGHT INTO YOUR HIKE:

Soak up the famous Route des Grandes Alpes.

The Route des Grandes Alpes officially opened in 1937 and is the most beautiful mountain road: from Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean, 684km and 16 mountain passes, including Col de Vars, taking cyclists, cycle tourists, motorcyclists and drivers through a breathtaking land.

Col de Vars: landmarks

Guillestre slope - Vars: 19.4km,
1111m elevation,
5.7% average gradient,

9.5% maximum slope,

The Tour de France has passed through here 35 times.



NOT TO BE MISSED!

- Lac Napoléon and its refuge
- Wildlife and more, the many marmots to be specific.

1 Distance

An easy walk taking you to one of the most beautiful vistas in Vars: Peynier. Drink in views of the resort's sprawling cirque and the surrounding peaks from here.

PEYNIER / 36 PEAK

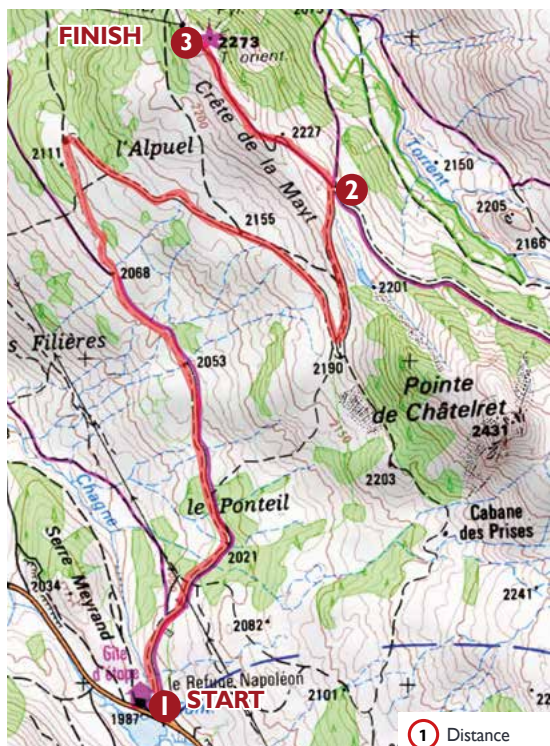
FULL DETAILS

DURATION	2 hr 30
LEVEL	Blue
DISTANCE	4.4km one way
ELEVATION	261m
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1993m
MAX ALTITUDE	2254m
START	Vars les Claux
CAR PARK	Refuge Napoléon

NOT TO BE MISSED!

- Lac Napoléon and its refuge
- Peynier reserve founded in 2020

- 1 At Refuge Napoléon, take the track to the left and climb up to the 3rd bend.
- 2 When you reach La Mayt ridge, follow signs for «Peynier» onto the marked path. Carry on along the ridge to the top of the chair lift of the same name. Views of the Eyssina and Ecrins-Pelvoux peaks.
- 3 Retrace your steps to get back to the start point.





Here's the deal: marmots galore, edelweiss fields and the cherry on the cake is a lake gleaming with 9 colours from blue, green and gold to pink marble.

37 38

LAC DES

9 COULEURS AND MORTICE

FULL DETAILS

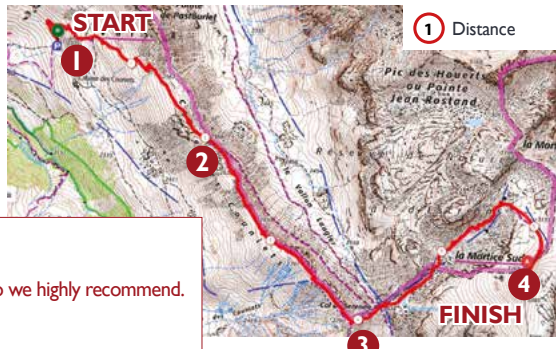
DURATION	Lac des 9 couleurs: 2 hr 30 Mortice: 4 hr
LEVEL	Red
DISTANCE ONE WAY	• Lac des 9 couleurs: 4.5km • Mortice: 6.4km
ELEVATION	416m (lac des 9 couleurs) 874m (Mortice)
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2295m
MAX ALTITUDE	• Lac des 9 couleurs: 2711m • Mortice: 3169m
START	Cabane des Couniets, 7km of track after the Sainte-Catherine sawmill NB: only suitable for 4x4s or SUVs
CAR PARK	On the edge of the track by the fence

FROM LES COUNIETS/ SAINTE-CATHERINE 37

- 1 Follow signs for the Lac des 9 Couleurs from Les Couniets car park. Go through mountain pastures to the ridge and byway. There are lots of marmots here!
- 2 Below the ridge overlooking the Vallon Laugier, continue along the path heading south to reach Col de Serenne.
- 3 From here, go up a few hairpin bends on the left to the Lac des 9 Couleurs.
- 4 Walk to the Mortice Sud within 1.5 hr of the lake. Be careful, this last section is very steep and switches to the black level.

From Sainte-Catherine:

- Lac des 9 Couleurs: 10km / 5 hr / Ascent: 931m
- Mortice: 11.9km / 6.5 hr / Ascent: 1389m



IMPORTANT

The track to Les Couniets is very tricky, so we highly recommend using a suitable car like a 4x4. Starting from the Sainte-Catherine sawmill, it's a 5.6km walk and 439m elevation to Les Couniets.

RED LEVEL

BLACK LEVEL

FROM VAL D'ESCREINS 38

1 From the Val car park, follow the path towards the oratory to the right of the Rif Bel.

2 After 400m, take the path on the right towards Col de la Coulette and start going up the "Pas" along the Vallon Laugier river.

3 You'll reach the "Pas" after 2km. Leave the Sentier de La Coulette path behind on your right and turn left to go back up Vallon Laugier.

You'll pass near the Bergerie du Vallon on your left **4**
Continue your ascent for almost 4km to Col de Serenne.

5 The Lac des 9 Couleurs is around 300m away. **6**

7 It's another 1.5 walk to the Mortice Sud.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	Lac des 9 couleurs: 4 hr 30 Mortice: 6 hr
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE ONE WAY	• Lac des 9 couleurs: 7.5km • Mortice: 9.4km
ELEVATION	926m (lac des 9 couleurs) 1384m (Mortice)
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1785m
MAX ALTITUDE	• Lac des 9 couleurs: 2711m • Mortice: 3169m
START	Main car park in Val d'Escreins

**NOT TO BE MISSED!**

- ▶ Old housing in Sainte Catherine on the road uphill
- ▶ Gouffre de la Mortice
- ▶ Marmots galore!

Nothing stands between him and the sky, whose clouds are easily reflected in its crystal-clear waters, which resemble a sapphire set in the rock.

41 LAC DE

L'ÉTOILE

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	2.30 hr
LEVEL	Red
DISTANCE ONE WAY	5 km
ELEVATION	498m D+ / 31m D-
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2295m
MAXI ALTITUDE	2790m
START	Cabane des Couniets, 7km of track after the Sainte-Catherine sawmill NB: only suitable for 4x4s or SUVs
CAR PARK	On the edge of the track by the fence

FROM LES COUNIETS/SAINTE-CATHERINE

- 1 From the Couniets car park, take the track following the sign for the Lac des 9 Couleurs. Continue through the mountain pastures to the ridge and the traverse. There are plenty of marmots around!
- 2 Climb up to the ridge on your right overlooking the Laugier valley, and follow the path to a junction.
- 3 From here, continue right along the ridge to the Pic de Serenne.
- 4 Below lies the Lac de l'Étoile

From Sainte-Catherine :

- Lac de l'étoile : 10km / 4h30 / 999m D+

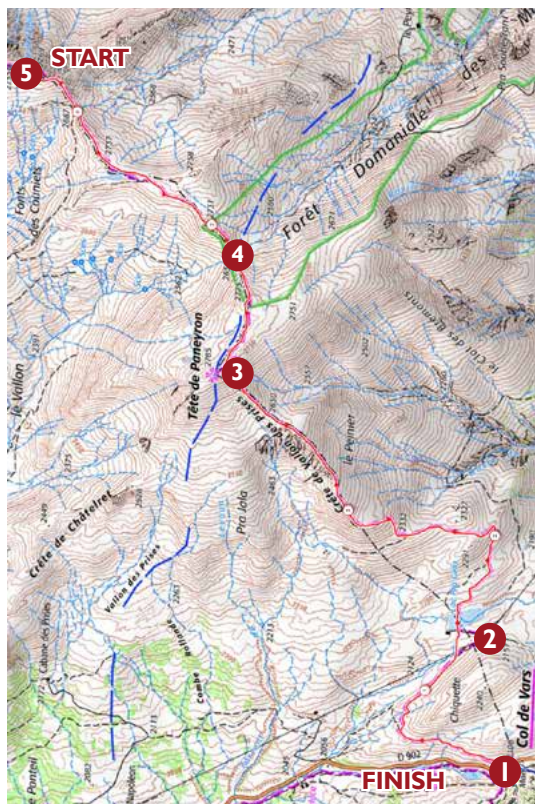


IMPORTANT

Swimming is prohibited in mountain lakes, both for visitors and dogs. Please respect this rule to help preserve water quality and protect these fragile natural environments.

FROM LE PANEYRON

- 1 At the pass, cross the road towards the inn and head towards Saint-Paul-en-Ubaye. After about a hundred metres, turn left onto the dirt track that climbs uphill.
- 2 At the next junction, take the track on the left towards the sheepfold. Cross over and continue uphill on the other side through the meadow. Keep heading to the right.
- 3 Follow the Crête du Vallon des Prises and, at the summit, leave the path to the Tête de Paneyron on your left and take the path to the right towards Lac de l'Étoile, 1.5 km further on.
- 4 Caution: there is a very steep slope before you reach the lake. 5




FULL DETAILS

DURATION	3.30 hr
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE ONE WAY	6,4 km
ELEVATION	764m D+ / 120m D-
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	2109m
MAXI ALTITUDE	2757m
START	Car park Col de Vars

NOT TO BE MISSED!

- ▶ 360° view of the ridges
- ▶ Turquoise waters



As you walk along the sun-kissed ridges where guardians of the mountain pastures pop out from tufts of edelweiss, you can see all of Val d'Escreins and its war-ravaged bell towers that cry tears of stone in spring.

CRÊTES DE VARS

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PAR LA PINÉE

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	5 hr
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE	10km loop
ELEVATION	760m
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1788m
MAX ALTITUDE	2550m
LOCATION	Sainte-Catherine
CAR PARK	Place des écoles
SPECIFIC CHALLENGES	Steep hillsides on the ridges

1 From the school car park in Saint Catherine, go up the lane on the edge of the square to the sawmill. Then take the left-hand signposted track which climbs towards the Bois de la Pinée. After 1.5km, take the path on the left in the undergrowth just after a sharp bend.

2 Follow this path towards the Col de la Scie.

3 At the top, stay on the Vars side and follow the path towards Col de la Coulette via the Vars ridges. The whole way along the ridges has views over Val d'Escreins on the north-facing slope before you go back down through scree and limestone peaks to Col de la Coulette.

4 At Col de la Coulette, take the path back down towards Sainte-Catherine. After the reservoir, continue to the sawmill and then to the village car park near the schools.

NOT TO BE MISSED!

- Old housing in Sainte-Catherine
- Beautiful valley views of the Vallée de Vars, Vallon Laugier and Val d'Escreins





AN INSIGHT INTO YOUR HIKE:

Edelweiss:

This "stars" of the mountains carpet Col de La Coulette.

Walk carefully through the meadows as you spot the white and yellow bouquets blooming on the mountain grass. Due to the extreme climate, this flower has developed very strong defence mechanisms to cope with the freezing temperatures, strong winds and intense sunshine. These assets mean the mountain flower is used in both cosmetics and medicine.





You won't believe how beautiful and magical it is as you venture from one valley to the next. From the Châtelret headland to the playful Chagnon river, the least you can say is that this walk's exciting!

LES CRÊTES

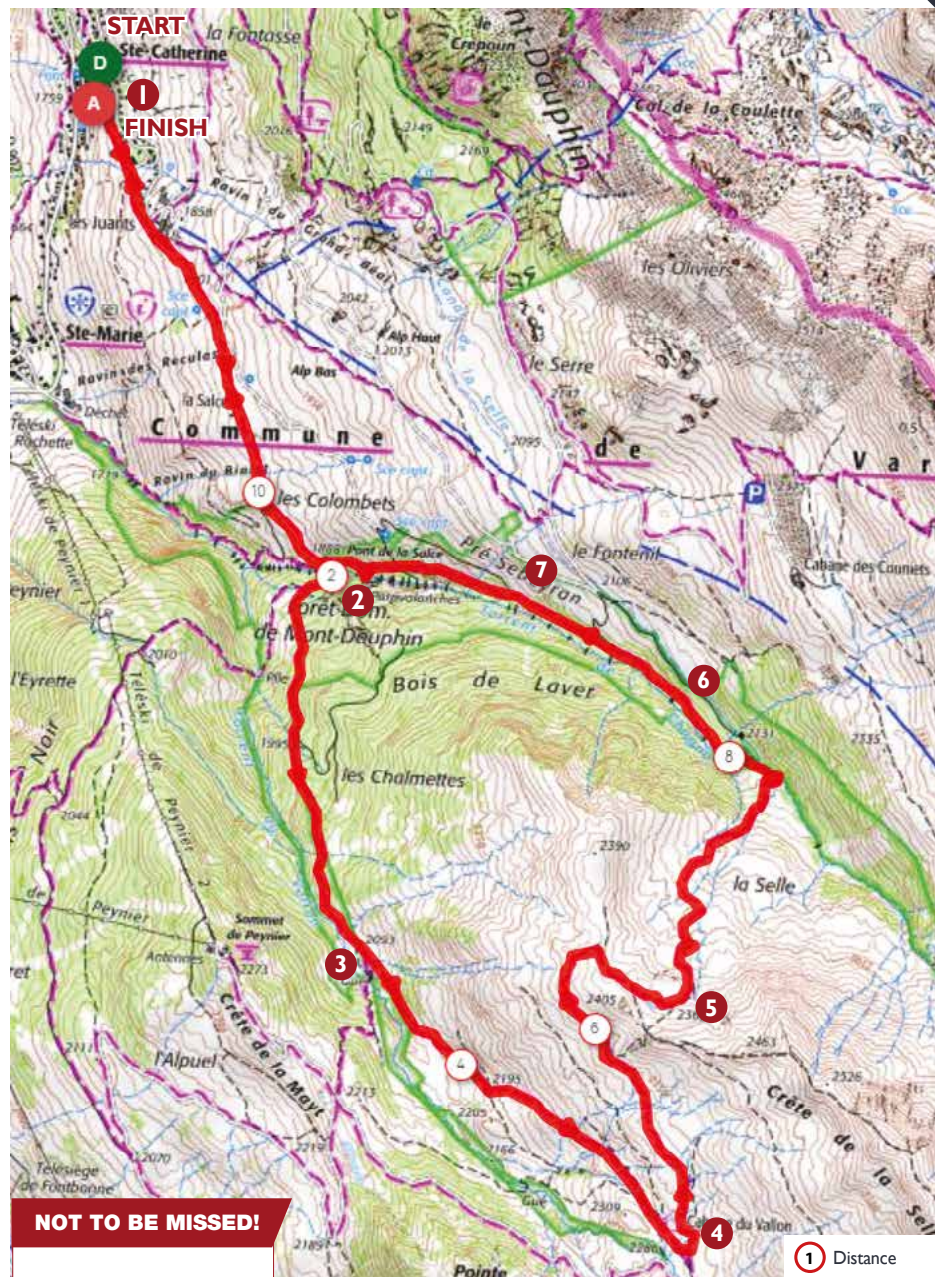
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DE LA SELLE

- 1 From the school car park in Saint Catherine, go up the lane on the edge of the square to the sawmill. Take the agricultural track south to Pont de la Salce.
- 2 Cross the bridge then take the path on the left 150m ahead. Further on, cross a stream and go up into the mountain pastures through several grassy terraces to the stone scree.
- 3 From there, continue along the winding path following yellow markings on the stones. The path goes up into a balcony above the valley and takes you to Cabane du Vallon. Watch out for the livestock.
- 4 Go on the path heading up from the Cabane. Go past an old stone enclosure and round the grassy dome. (vista: the Eyssina to the west, Ecrins/Pelvoux to the north, Couniets ridge to the east and Paneyron to the south). Continue downhill on the other side of the ridge to a pond.
- 5 Continue as far as Chagnon and along the left bank for 300m.
- 6 Then cross the Chagnon over the ford to go upstream on the right bank. The path gets wider as you walk towards Sainte-Marie. Watch out for the livestock.
- 7 Go down the path on the left and after a few bends you reach Pont de la Salce. Back to 2. Leave the path to Sainte-Marie behind on the left and continue towards Sainte-Catherine.

FULL DETAILS

DURATION	5 hr
LEVEL	Black
DISTANCE	11.5km loop
ELEVATION	584m
MARKINGS	Yellow
MIN ALTITUDE	1788m
MAX ALTITUDE	2372m
START	Sainte-Catherine
CAR PARK	Places des écoles



Vars

LA FORÊT BLANCHE



Offices de
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QUALITÉ
TOURISME
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NB: the IGN maps do not include the two new ski lift routes: TMX Chabrières and TSD Mayt

Route map background: Kalibule