

# Châtelleret Refuge

Oisans - Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans



Around the refuge du Châtelleret (Rodolphe Papet - PNE)



*A lovely itinerary that enables you to reach the foot of the South face of the Meije without difficulty.*

This ascent gives the opportunity firstly to discover the magnificent moraine of the Bonnepierre valley and the West face of the Ecrins. Then, a crossing through the junipers and the rhododendrons, where the landscape opens out on to the South face of the Meije and the Rateau summit.

## Useful information

Practice : By walk

Duration : 5 h

Length : 12.2 km

Trek ascent : 508 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Return trip

Themes : History and architecture, Hut

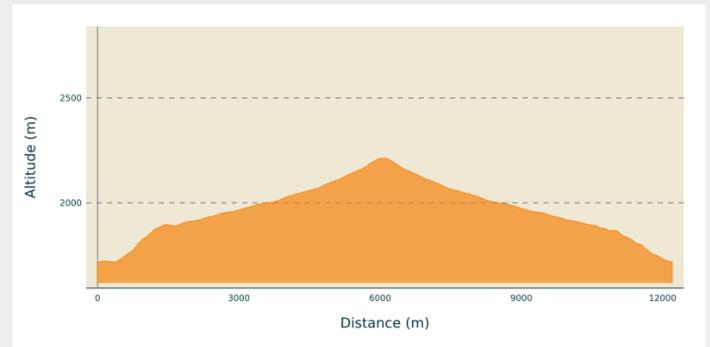
# Trek

**Departure** : La Bélarde, Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans

**Markings** : — PR

**Cities** : 1. Saint-Christophe-en-Oisans

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1719 m Max elevation 2213 m

Reach the 'Maison de la Montagne' at the end of the village and take the track that winds upwards to the pine forest. When you arrive at the lower shelf (entrance to the heart of the Park) follow the valley by crossing the walkway over the Bonnepierre torrent and join the Plat des Etançons, to observe the West face of the Barre des Ecrins. The track follows on flat ground in the valley. Having passed the confluence of the Plaret Gény valley, behind you to the left, the refuge appears in the distance, discreet among the stone boulders, la Meije at an altitude of 3983 m and the Râteau can be seen at the bottom of the valley. Stay on the marked trail to reach the Châtelleret refuge at an altitude of 2232 m. Return using the same itinerary.

# On your path...



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Bérarde Hamlet (A)                       |  The South face of the Meije (B)   |
|  Rochers à la Bérarde, Laurent Guétal (C) |  Coincya richeri (D)               |
|  Alpine Willow Herb (E)                   |  White Flowered Adenostyle (F)     |
|  Promontory Refuge (G)                    |  Châtelleret Refuge (H)            |
|  Favourite Mountaineering locations (I)   |  Mountaineering in the Bérarde (J) |
|  Beginnings of mountaineering (K)         |   |

# 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

On busy days, it is possible to park at the entrance of the village just before the bridge.

## How to come ?

### Transports

Coach stop : La Béarde

### Access

From Bourg-d'Oisans, take the D1091 then the D530 in the direction of Béarde (34 km). Narrow road from Champhorent hamlet, closed in winter.

### Advised parking

At the foot of the hamlet bordering the Vénéon

# 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>

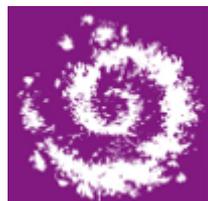
## Information desks

### 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...

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## Bélarde Hamlet (A)

La Bélarde, 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

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## The South face of the Meije (B)

Up from the Châtelleret refuge, numerous rocky boulders seem to have come from the lateral walls of the Étançons. In reality they come from the bottom of the valley. In the 1960s, three successive landslides marked the whole Étançons valley. One carried a part of the Zsigmondy breach and the two others originated in the Western Meije. During its surrection, the crystalline Écrins massif underwent big fractures which are still visible on the high summits around the Bélarde. The network of diaclese (cracks) not being very dense in the Meije, detachments of boulders from the wall resulted in landslides which covered the valley in large boulders. You can see on the South face of the Meije, a granite substructure surmounted by a crowning of darker gneiss. The contact between the two natures of rock is underlined by a ledge that you can follow really well in the landscape at the base of the Carré au Pavé glacier passing by the Western part of the Meije.

Attribution : PNE - Fiat Denis

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## Rochers à la Bélarde, Laurent Guétal (C)

Des alpages aux glaciers, Laurent Guétal parcourt la Chartreuse, Belledune, l'Oisans, et réalise en chemin des études lui permettant d'exécuter ensuite des toiles comme *Rochers à La Bélarde*. Très tôt considéré comme un des principaux peintres de paysages dauphinois de la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle, il transmet sa passion de la montagne à de nombreux élèves. Parmi eux, se trouve Ernest Hareux, à qui cette oeuvre est dédiée. Rencontré dans la Creuse, ce dernier viendra s'installer à Grenoble vers 1880 et remontera avec Laurent Guétal les vallées de la Romanche et du Vénéon, où il produira ses meilleures oeuvres.

Attribution : © Musée de Grenoble

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### ✿ Coincya richeri (D)

The *Coincya richeri* is an endemic plant that is uniquely found in the small region situated in the triangle of Mercantour-Ecrins-Vanoise. It colonizes granite scree. Its leaves are bluish and from them a shaft of pale yellow flowers escapes... Although it is not chubby like a garden cabbage, the same bloom (a sort of waxy dust) is found on the leaves. Its name in comes from the founder of the botanical garden in Montpellier Richer de Belleval after who was very famous in the 16th century.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Bernard

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### ✿ Alpine Willow Herb (E)

The Alpine Willow Herb stands near to the glaciers, in the scree and the rocky bed of the torrents. After burial, in the scree, it develops long and abundant runners (long stalks without leaves) that enable it to reappear. The Alpine Willow Herb flowers between July and September.

Attribution : PNE - Roche Daniel

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### ✿ White Flowered Adenostyle (F)

This *Adenostyle* grows at an altitude of between 1 900 and 3 100 m, where it colonizes the crystalline scree right up to the edge of the snow pockets and the glaciers. It sometimes slips between the boulders in order to benefit from the humidity created by the differences in temperature between the day and the night, which is great in this area. The leaf beetle particularly appreciates this location and it's covering of Adnostyles. This small insect, with a shiny blue and sometimes green carapace, abounds on the leaves that if feeds on without putting the plant in peril.

Attribution : PNE - Nicollet Bernard

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## Promontory Refuge (G)

The promontory refuge is situated at the bottom of the Etançons valley and can be seen from the Châtelleret. In 1901, a wood cabin (situated higher up) was built at the end of the way on the ridge of the Promontory at 3092 m at the Southern face of the Meije. This shelter of a frail appearance offered refuge to mountaineers in search of the prestigious summit: The Meije, the Barre and the summit of the Dôme des Ecrins. If the roof did not give in to the gusts of wind, the door was often stuck in the snow. However the cabin resisted all kinds of bad weather. More than 60 years passed before the construction of a new larger and more comfortable refuge in 1966. On this occasion a lift was used in order to transport materials left at the base camp by a helicopter.

Attribution : PNE - Fiat Denis



## Châtelleret Refuge (H)

In 1882, a very simple one roomed construction was built by the CAF at the place where Gaspard and his companions bivouacked. This pioneering refuge ensured survival and protection from bad weather for the mountaineers. Made with thick stone walls, covered with wood inside, it soon became too cramped and the base of the existing refuge was built in 1957. Following its extension in the 1980s, it can now sleep 68 people and welcomes hikers for a break in the day. Today, the name of the family Paquet from Saint-Christophe has been associated with the story of the refuge for the last 40 years...

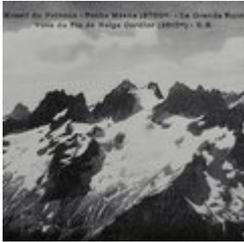
Attribution : PNE - Coursier Cyril



## Favourite Mountaineering locations (I)

The Etançons valley is the starting point for many mountaineering races: the breach and the crossing of the ridges of the Meije, Ecrins mountain pass, Northern peak of the Cavales, the Rateau, etc. Boileau de Castelnau accompanied by Pierre Gaspard carried out the first ascent of the Meije in August 1877, ending seven years of bitter competition. The former, greatly admired by the English, would become the symbol of the beginning of tourism in the Oisans. In fact, at that time, the massif was still unknown, the road only came up to Bérarde. Only a few chamois hunters and rare mountaineers had explored this wild and deep valley.

Attribution : PNE - Coursier Cyril



## 🕒 Mountaineering in the Bérarde (J)

The Ecrins massif only began to interest mountaineers in the second half of the 19th century. . Except for the ascent of the Pelvoux in 1830 by Capitain Durand, it was the British who victoriously signed their names on many of the summits. Coolidge remains without a doubt the greatest discover of the virgin peaks between 1870 and 1886, with no less than 53 ascents to his name! The highest summit, la Barre des Ecrins (at an altitude of 4102 m), as conquered in 1864 by Moore and Whympner. There just remained the Meije that certain believed to be inaccessible...

Attribution : Collection PNE



## 🕒 Beginnings of mountaineering (K)

The beginnings of mountaineering are linked with those of tourism in the mountains. In the first place, it was the site of Chamonix that provoked the interest of two English "tourists" William Windam and Richard Pococke. In the European salons, the mountain became progressively more fashionable... The local populations adapted to the demand: the inhabitants, experts concerning their mountain supplemented their pastoral activities by becoming mountain guides. . In 1786, two Chamoniards Doctor Paccard and Jacques Balmart reached the summit of Mont Blanc. The following year the conquest of the summits, benefited from a scientific project (the physical observation, re topographic survey of the massif). Moutaineering was born at last. In 1874, the first French mountaineering club was founded by Adolphe Joanne (geographer), Georges Hachette (editor) and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (architect).

Attribution : Collection PNE