



LAKES AND REFUGES OF MERCANTOUR


self-guided


Archaeological and cultural treasures!





Mercantour National Park is a mosaic of natural environments which explains the richness of its fauna (not far from 9000 species, such as marmots, mouflons, golden eagles, grey wolves, amphibians.) and its flora (2067 plant species including edelweiss, genepi blanc, arnica, gentian...): the immediate proximity of the Mediterranean ensures ideal conditions for their existence.

The Mercantour is also characterized by its historical heritage. Dating from prehistoric times, the Valley of Wonders takes its name from the thousands of engravings on coloured stone slabs, the "ciappe", which decipher scenes of daily life and belief. It is characterized by its mineral and chaotic landscape, at the feet of imposing peaks.

 6 days

 Self-guided / without a guide

 With or without baggage transport

 Accommodation : Classic (dormitory)

 Level : ***

 From : 440€

You will like

- Unspoilt nature, exceptional flora and fauna.
- Varied hikes, between mineral atmosphere, high lakes, flowering valleys, peaks with 360° views.
- The Valley of Wonders and its 40,000 prehistoric engravings
- The particular geographical situation between sea and mountain
- One of the wildest national parks with the most varied landscapes

The route

Day 1

Meeting at Le Boréon where you can leave your vehicle for the week in one of the many parking lots of this small mountain hamlet.

BOREON - NO TOWN HALL - THE MADONNA OF FENESTRA

After the destructive storm of 2019, this particularly affected village compared to the rest of the Mercantour (no visible traces of damage on the rest of your route) is rebuilt with force... Facing the Alpha Park (interesting to visit if you arrive the day before), you climb in a remarkable conifer forest towards the Pas and the small refuge of Maïris to reach the Cime du Pisset. A panoramic view of the Vésubie opens up to you with, in the background, the famous Gelas, a stone colossus proudly dominating these remote valleys of the Alpes Maritimes. Descent on the hospices of the Madonna de Fenestre where you spend the night.

5h00 walk. 8.5km. Altitude difference +845m/ -400m

Day 2

LA MADONNE DE FENESTRE - PAS DU MONT COULOMB - SAINT GRATS

Leaving from the Madonna, do not hesitate to stop at the Petite Vacherie, at the edge of the torrent, to buy a piece of tomme for your picnic, it is delicious (open when the herds are in the alpine pasture). You go up the torrent of the Vésubie which takes its source on the foothills of the Gelas (3143 m) and you contemplate during all your ascent, the Pas du Mont Coulomb. The Pas du Mont Coulomb (2548 m) is characterized by a narrow gap forming a "secret passage" between the Vésubie and the Gordolasque. During your rapid descent on the Gordolasque, you are probably watched by herds of ibex or chamois in the surrounding bars! Descent on one of the accommodations of Saint-Grats.

5h walk. 11.5km. Altitude difference -700m/ -1050m

Day 3

SAINT GRAT- PAS DE L'ARPETTE - REFUGE DES MERVEILLES

Departing directly from Saint-Grat, you climb in a dense forest to reach the remarkable valley of Empuonrame. It is in this mineral universe that you finish the climb to the Pas de l'Arpette (2351 m), under the watchful eyes of the chamois. The Pas de l'Arpette is the entrance to the Mercantour National Park and the famous Vallée des Merveilles. Descent in the middle of many lakes to the refuge des Merveilles. **(without luggages)**

5h00 walk. 8km. Altitude difference +950m/ -410m

Day 4

REFUGE DES MERVEILLES - VALLEE DES MERVEILLES - BAISSÉ BASTO

A long and busy day visiting where you have to leave early! From the Refuge des Merveilles, you go up the famous valley of the same name... In the middle of this mineral landscape sculpted by melting glaciers more than 10,000 years ago, lies an archaeological treasure of about 40,000 rock engravings mostly dated to around 3,300 BC. You join the Baisse de la Valmasque (2552 m), the Basto lake and the Baisse Basto (2693 m), a narrow passage in a scree overlooking the Fous valley. Descent by the famous GR52 to the beautiful restored refuge of Nice where a break on the terrace of Christophe will be well deserved. Another 1h30 of descent in the Gordolasque valley to reach your accommodation

6h30 walk. 15.5 km. Altitude difference +720m/ -1200m

Day 5

LA BAISSÉ DE PRALS - BAISSÉ AUX 5 LACS - LA MADONE

A beautiful and intense morning climb from the valley of the Gordolasque to reach the valley of the Vésubie by the Lowers of Prals (2339 m) from where two variants are possible: or descend on the Madonna live by the "5 lakes", or tour a magnificent circus by 5 ridges, low in altitude, and that will delight lovers of panoramic walking. Go down to the Madonna and spend the night.

5h00 walk. 7.5km. Altitude difference +900m/ -580m

Day 6

LA MADONNE - LAC ET COL DE LA FENESTRE - LAC DE TRECOPAS - LE BOREON

A day at altitude with the Finestra border pass (2475 m) from where the neighbouring Italian valley of the Argentera is revealed. The Trecolpas lake is suitable for a picnic break on the edge of its green lawns. Return to Boréon by the Vacherie.

5h30 walk. 14km. Altitude difference +790m/ -1100m

The trip

LEVEL ***

Medium level.

- Overall altitude: between 1500m and 2500 m
- Altitude of accommodation: 1500 m on average
- Duration of the stages: 5 to 6 hours of walking per day
- Average positive altitude difference: 850 m per day
- Maximum altitude difference: 950 m.
- Maximum crossing altitude: 2600 m.
- Nature of the terrain: medium mountain terrain in alpine pastures with many stony areas, the passage of some passes can still be snowed at the beginning of the season.
- Special difficulties: itinerant circuit requiring good physical condition.

Trip made in collaboration with our local partners, concerned like us to concoct an authentic stay

ROAD BOOK

Before departure, we give you a travel file containing:

- IGN map with route trace
- 1 road-book with all the necessary information for the hike
- 1 card holder
- List of accommodation.

ACCOMMODATION

Classic lodging: collective room from 4 to 12 people, sheets and towels are not provided, the sanitary are on the landing.

MEALS

The meals served in the accommodation are balanced and varied. The kitchen is hearty, adapted to the needs of hikers and often from local products. Special arrangements must be specified in the booking so that we can notify the accommodation.

FITNESS

Be able to easily walk 15 km (in plain) in 3 hours maximum.

If this is not the case, within three weeks of departure, 2 to 3 times a week, we advise you to start a good workout: 4 to 5 km of jogging or 3 to 4 hours of hiking or cycling. Your physical preparation will facilitate your stay and allow you to enjoy it all the more.

LUGGAGE TRANSPORT

With the luggage transport option except D3: you only carry your belongings for the day. The rest of your luggage is transported between the accommodations (on day 3, you will carry your personal belongings for one evening, or find your luggage the following day).

Practical information

MEETING

Departure from June 11 to September 25, 2023 and from June 9 to September 23, 2024.

Departure from Le Boréon, commune of Saint Martin Vesubie, where you can leave your luggage at the cottage of Boréon if you have taken the option luggage transport.

ACCESS TO THE STARTING POINT

BY BUS FROM NICE

Lines d'Azur: [BUS line no. 90](#) - departure 8:00 on Sunday from Grand Arénas, direction La Bolline Bus Station; 16, Avenue des Diables Bleus; 06300 NICE Tel. +33 (0)4 93 85 62 15

BY CAR

From the A8 motorway, exit at Nice Saint Isidore (exit 52), take the RM6202 towards Digne for a distance of 18 km. At the exit of the village of Plan du Var, take on the right the RM 2265, indicating the Vesubie Valley. Then for 32 km, walk through the gorges of Vesubie and cross the villages and hamlets of Cros d'Utelle, St Jean la Rivière, Le Suquet, Lantosque, Roquebillière to reach Saint-Martin-Vesubie.

In order to plan your trip, we advise you to inquire about your route at the different sites: [viamichelin.fr](#) [mappy.fr](#)

END OF STAY

End of the hike in Boréon, your luggage will be at the cottage of Boréon

TO CONTACT US

If you are late, contact the agency at: +33 (0)4 50 79 09 16 or +33 (0)6 42 49 76 07

Dates & prices

DEPARTURES AND PRICES

Departures possible every day from 11 June to 25 September 2023.

Without luggage transport:

440€ per person in classic accommodation.

Single departure supplement (without luggage transport): 45€.

With luggage transport (except days 1 and 3):

680€ per person on a basis of 2 to 3 participants

560€ per person on a basis of 4 to 5 participants

520€ per person on a basis of 6 or more participants

Available option:

Picnics: 80€ per person (5 picnics)

THE PRICE

Includes:

- Travel documents: the road book, description and IGN cards (1 complete road book for 1 to 4 people, additional file for 5 people or more. Additional file: supplement from 10 to 25€);
- Half board accommodation from dinner on the 1st day to breakfast on the last day;
- Luggage transport between accommodations, if you have chosen this option (except on day 3);
- Organization and booking fees;
- The tourist taxes.

Does not include:

- Transportation to and from the starting point of the hike;
- The drinks, the visits;
- The lunchtime picnics.

Equipment and baggage

EQUIPMENT LIST

Clothing

- Walking trousers
- Shorts (Bikini/swimsuit, just in case!)
- Breathable or merino wool t-shirts
- Breathable or merino wool leggings
- Fleece or jumper
- Wind stopper or Goretex jacket
- Waterproof poncho + gaiters or Goretex trousers + waterproof rucksack cover
- Pair of gloves and a warm hat
- Sun hat or baseball cap
- Walking socks (1 pair per day)
- Sturdy walking boots with a good sole, already broken in
- 1 change of clothes for the evening
- A pair of comfortable shoes for the evening

Other Equipment

- Toilet bag
- Quick drying towel
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Water bottle or Camelback (1.5 litre minimum)
- Knife, fork and spoon
- Plastic lunch box/plate for your picnic lunches
- Plastic cup for coffee
- Small First Aid kit (antihistamine, ibuprofen, Compeed type blister pads...)
- Survival blanket
- Head torch or hand torch
- Sleeping bag liner sheet and pillowcase (blankets provided at accommodation)
- Two adjustable and highly walking poles
- Identity card or passport

BACKPACK

Bring a comfortable backpack of 30 to 40 litres for your personal belongings for the day (warm clothes, waterproofs, water, plate and cutlery for your picnic, sunscreen and your identity papers) and please keep a little room to carry a picnic and snacks.

Details



Registration by mail form

Last name:

PRENOM:

Date of birth:

Address:

Phone number:

Mobile phone number:

Email address:

SEJOUR DEMANDE:

Number of days:

Insurance:

Price:

x 30% =

Deposit

Locality where signed:

Date

Signature:

A large, light gray rectangular box intended for the user's signature.

Return with your deposit to:
Altitude Mont-Blanc, 62 Passage du Nant Devant, 74110 Montriond, FRANCE