

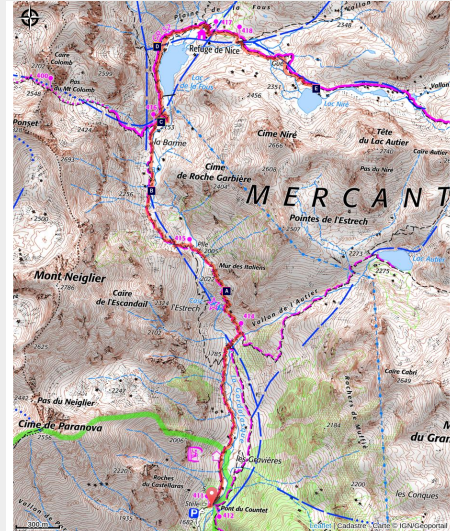


Lake Niré

Vallée haute Vésubie - Belvédère



Le lac Niré et la cime de Chamineye en tout début d'automne. (Franck GUIGO)



This Alpine itinerary in the heart of the Gordolasque Valley will lead you to the refuge of Nice or Victor de Cessole, the starting point for several of the great peaks of the Mercantour, and finally on to Lake Niré, a peaceful haven for chamois and ibex.

Shapes moulded by glaciers, migmatites, eclogites, the remains of lost ocean.... come here and discover the geological riches of the Gordolasque Valley.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 5 h

Length : 12.0 km

Trek ascent : 756 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Round trip

Themes : Fauna, Lake, Peak, Refuge

Trek

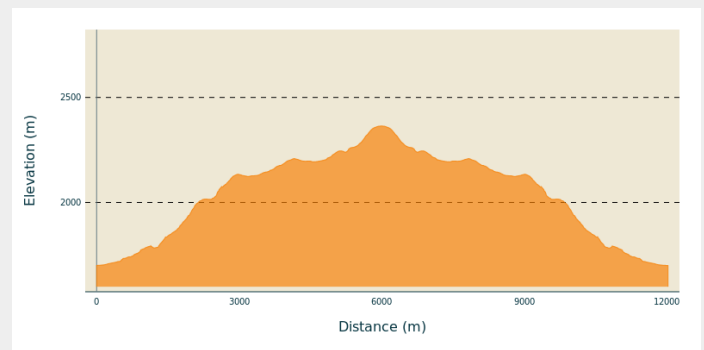
Departure : Countet Bridge, marker 411

Arrival : Countet Bridge, marker 411

Markings :  GR  PR

Cities : 1. Belvédère

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1699 m Max elevation 2364 m

From Countet Bridge (marker 411), take the path which runs alongside the Gordolasque mountain stream. On the right, the Grand Capelet (2935m) towers over the valley with its imposing bulk and the Tête du lac Autier (2740m) with its flat summit shows the way to go.

You will then go past a heap of big blocks which have fallen from the mountain, an ideal terrain for climbers.

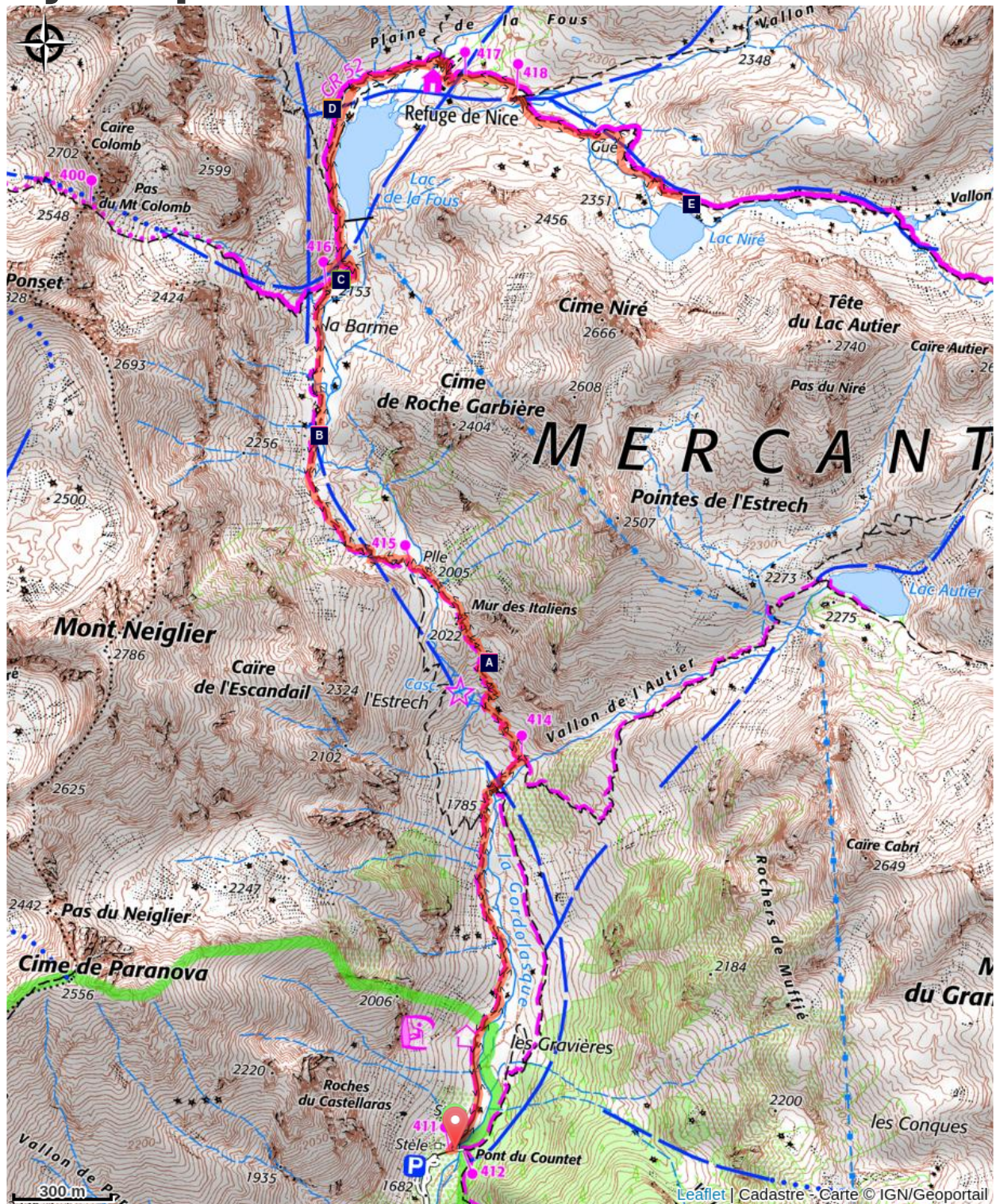
At marker 413, note the glacier cliff and its smooth rocks which the mountain stream flows over in waterfalls. Cross the river via the wooden footbridge and climb up the opposite bank. Follow the Autier mountain stream until marker 414. At the marker, take a left turn and climb over the Mur des Italiens.






Keep climbing amid this more chaotic and rocky scenery until you reach the dam of the Lac de Fous, which was built in 1968 (marker 416).

Head right on the GR52 which runs alongside the artificial lake and lead to the Nice refuge (marker 417). Continue towards "Baisse du Basto".

At marker 418, cross the mountain stream and start climbing the Niré valley until you reach Lake Niré (2350m), which is aligned with the summit of the same name. Follow the same route for the return journey.

On your path...



-  Disappeared oceans (A)
-  Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) (C)
-  The eclogite of Lac Niré (E)
-  The Gordolasque valley (B)
-  The Salt Road (D)

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.

Parking Gordolasque Countet

[Nombre de places limité. Cliquer pour connaître en temps réel le taux d'occupation du parking du pont du Countet. Pensez aux transports en commun et au co-voiturage.](#)

Advices

Although this itinerary is a long one, it does not include any particularly difficult passages. However, it should be noted that until late June there could still be snow which reduces the visibility of the markers.

How to come ?

Transports

En juillet et août, une navette touristique rejoint la vallée de la Gordolasque depuis Roquebillière en correspondance avec la ligne de Bus 90 au départ de Nice Grand-Arénas.
Uniquement du vendredi au dimanche.

[Ligne 90 depuis Nice](#)

[Navette Gordolasque](#)

Access

From Belvédère, take the Gordolasque road for 12 kilometres, leave your vehicle at the Countet carpark, which is the end of the road up the Gordolasque Valley.

Advised parking

Carpark at the end of the Gordolasque Valley road (D171) - Countet Bridge -

Information desks

Maison du Parc national du Mercantour - Saint-Martin-Vésubie

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Tel : 04 93 03 23 15

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On your path...



Disappeared oceans (A)

During the climb towards the refuge, you will see the summits of recent mountain chains like the Alps. Glaciers, water, wind and gravity are the agents of erosion which will gradually break down the mountain reliefs and transfer the eroded materials towards the Mediterranean. In the Maritime Alps, glaciers were the initial agents of active erosion. They have now disappeared and the erosion continues due to mountain streams and rivers which wear away the floors of valleys, the cycles of freezing weather followed by thaws which crack the rocks and the effects of gravity on the steepest slopes.

Attribution : GOURON Claude



The Gordolasque valley (B)

The western flank of Grand Capelet and the steep high peaks overlook the itinerary to the Nice refuge and Lac Niré. This wild glacial cirque is characteristic of the rapid and intense erosion during the last period of glaciation. 20000 years ago, glaciers covered all of the valley and then hollowed out the Gordolasque valley into the shape of a trough. Today, there still remains evidence of glacial erosion along the itinerary: immense smooth slabs on which you walk at times were smoothed by this phenomenon.

Attribution : GUIGO Franck



Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) (C)

A mammal of the Bovidae family and the subfamily of the Caprinae, the chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) is a mountain dweller par excellence. It can climb 1000m upwards in 15 minutes (a hiker would take 3 hours). It can be recognised thanks to its horns, which are straight and then curved backwards, and quite small compared to those of the ibex.

Attribution : MALTHIEUX Laurent



The Salt Road (D)

The track which leads to the Nice refuge is one of the secondary passages of the Salt Road via the “Pas de Pagari”. Frequented since ancient time, this Pas gets its name from Paganino dal Pozzo, an Italian entrepreneur who, in 1453, was appointed as salt tax adjudicator by the Duke of Savoie. Paganino was responsible for the construction of a new route via the “Pas de Pagari” to transport salt from Provence to Cuneo in Piedmont.

Attribution : LE BOUTEILLER Eric



The eclogite of Lac Niré (E)

Just above Lac Niré, on the right bank of the mountain stream, among the migmatite, can be found very dark rocks which take the shape of huge lentils (geologists call them “black puddings”).

When you look closely at these one of these lentil, you can see very different minerals to the ones you find in migmatite. The rusty red coloured ones are garnet and the darker ones are amphibole.

This very distinctive rock with characteristic fine and very dense crystals is eclogite; it is quite rare and a remainder from oceans which have disappeared. It is a metamorphic rock which springs from the transformation of basalts, ancient lava from the oceanic crust.

Attribution : GUIGO Franck