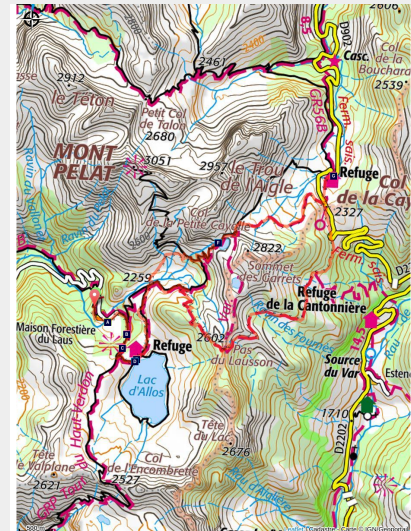




# Lakes trek - West Mercantour Family Walk

Vallée haut Verdon - Allos



Randonnée lac d'Allos au mois de juillet, nombreuses fleurs encore présentes et des névés résiduels au pied des Tours du lac. (BENSA Marion - PNM)

*A family walk around the lakes, from the most well-known ones to the most secretive ones.*

Often busy, this loop offers a landscape suitable for contemplation. Enjoy it in summer and fall when golden larches line the surrounding mountains. You will pass through Lac d'Allos, Lac de la Petite Cayolle and Lac des Garrets. The Pas du Lausson offers a stunning view of Lake Allos, the largest natural lake in Europe.

## Useful information

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Practice : Hiking

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Duration : 2 days

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Length : 20.0 km

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Trek ascent : 1063 m

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Difficulty : Medium

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Type : Walking breaks

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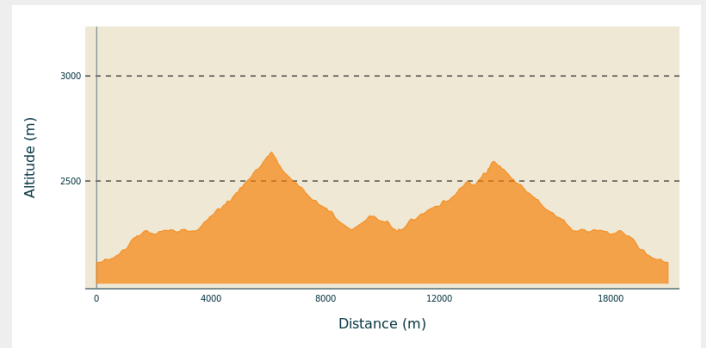
# Trek

**Departure** : Park Laus

**Arrival** : Park Laus

**Cities** : 1. Allos  
2. Uvernet-Fours  
3. Entraunes

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 2111 m Max elevation 2638 m

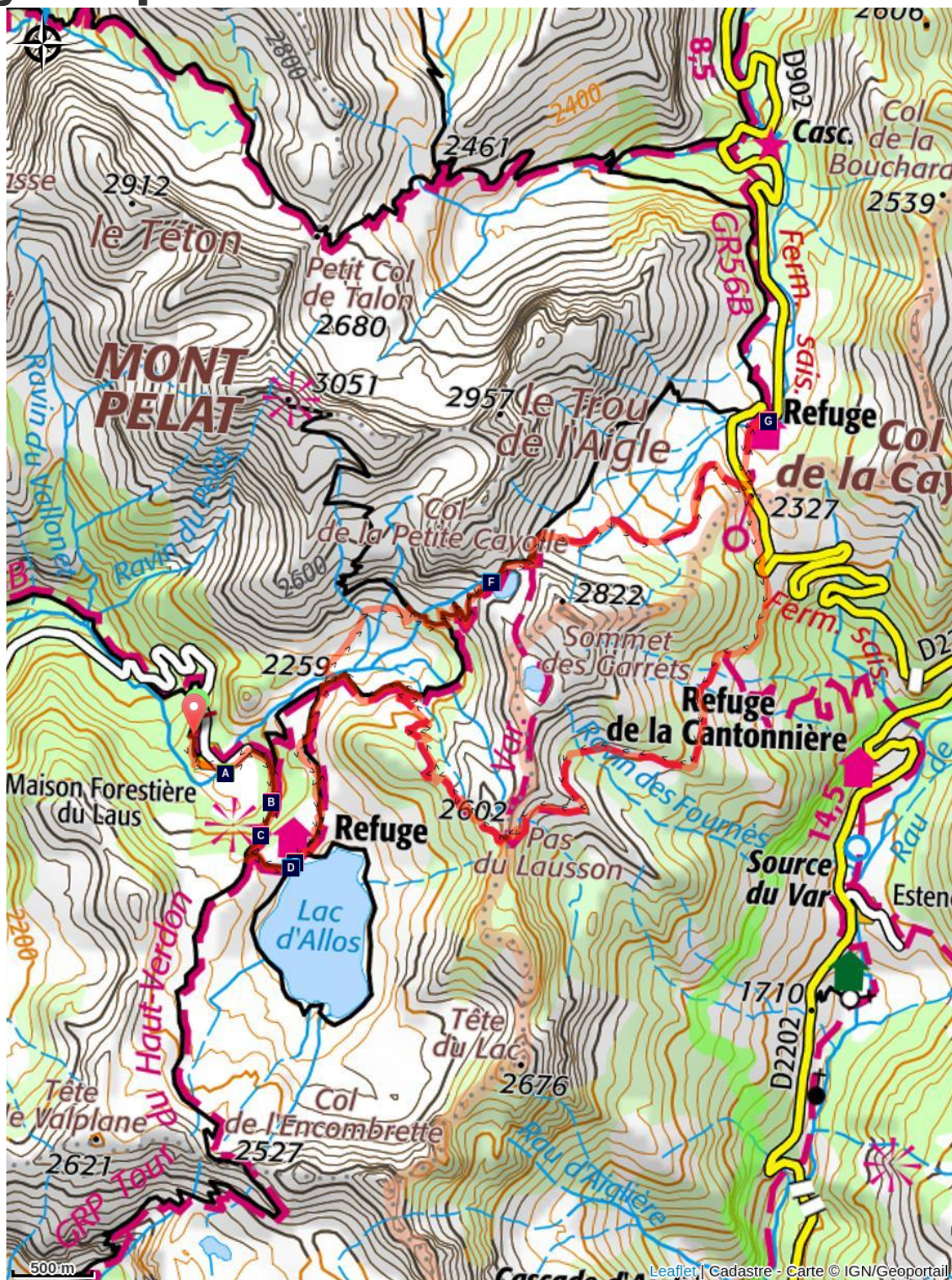
The first day will allow you to access the Cayolle refuge where you will spend one night (Remember to book: <https://refugedelacayolle.fr/>) This first day is the opportunity to discover the Plateau de Méouilles, Mont Pelat, the Lac de la petite Cayolle before discovering the alpine meadows leading to the refuge of La Cayolle. The next day, at dawn, you will head towards the emblematic Col de la Cayolle, then you will climb quietly to Pas du Lausson, overlooking the superb and wild Haut Var valley. At Pas du Lausson, a panoramic view will be offered to you over the Allos Lake. From there, you will descend to the Lac d'Allos refuge then the Laus car park.








## Stages :

1. Lakes Trek - West Mercantour family walk - Stage 1  
8.9 km / 577 m D+ / 3 h
2. Lakes Trek - West Mercantour family walk - Stage 2  
11.1 km / 483 m D+ / 5 h



# On your path...



-  Secrets of the peat bog (A)
-  Where is this water coming from? (C)
-  Lac d'Allos refuge (E)
-  La Cayolle refuge (G)
-  The grassy plateau of Laus (B)
-  Lac d'Allos (D)
-  Lac de la Petite Cayolle (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**

Specific regulations concerning protected species in the Mercantour National Park. This itinerary takes place along high-valley Alpine paths.

The accommodation sites listed are the only ones which are available along this route.

Before heading off on a hike, ensure that you have studied the safety advice. If you are setting off on this hike in the early part of the season, you will need to take particular care as patches of snow can still be present in higher areas.

## **How to come ?**

### Access

In Allos, take the RD226 towards Lac d'Allos. The road ends at the carpark, where you can leave your vehicle.

More information on access and parking: <https://www.valdallos.com/lac-d-allos.html>

### Advised parking

Laus carpark, Allos



# On your path...

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## Secrets of the peat bog (A)

This vast grassy expanse is one of the finest peat bogs in the Mercantour.

Peat bogs are rich in information: its depth is more than 8 metres. The succession of layers contains precious clues (grains of pollen, plant debris, etc...). They allow scientists to date things back as far as 9500 years ago.

These wetland areas which have little oxygen but plenty of nitrogen are home to flora adapted to the environment, namely bog plants: sphagnum moss, cotton grass with its gracious white cotton toupee as well as Alpine butterwort, one of the carnivorous plant species which can be found in France.

Attribution : Le Bouteiller Éric

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## The grassy plateau of Laus (B)

The grassy plateau of Laus has been a living memory of life for 9000 years. It was created as the glaciers shrank, a lake occupied the site. The fact that it was not very deep, in addition to the floods of sediment and organic matter flowing into it accelerated the process of filling in this lake. The biggest role was played by bryophytes: while their roots decompose, bryophytes keep growing upwards, trapping pollen. Analysing them allows us to retrace the history of existence in the area.

Despite gradually drying out for several thousand years, the process is still ongoing today. This environment is still damp and contains plants which are more readily associated with peat bogs. The winding curves of the Serpentine gleam on this plateau.

Attribution : CULOTTA Jean-marc



## Where is this water coming from? (C)

The beautiful outlet that you see before you is a singular case in hydrogeology: it is unique in the Mercantour and almost so in the Alps! Indeed, this water is escaping from Lac d'Allos which makes it a very rare case of a lake without an overflow and it is even more remarkable when you consider that this is the biggest natural high-altitude lake in Europe whose depth varies from 42 to 49 metres depending on the year.

The spring formed is called Chadoulin, an affluent of the left bank of the Verdon.

Attribution : LE BOUTEILLER Eric



## Lac d'Allos (D)

Created by the glaciers of the quaternary period, Lac d'Allos is the biggest natural lake at this altitude in Europe (62ha). Its waters come from the thawing snow as well as from springs, and they reach up to 42m in depth. It burgeons with more life than in the previous lakes: invertebrates, juvenile fish, brown trout and arctic char.

Lac d'Allos is an incredibly fragile environment due to the extreme conditions and the low number of plant and animal species. The arctic trout which exist here are, for reasons which remain unknown, affected by dwarfism. Any pollution or modification of the environment would be disastrous. But the presence of the National Park should today ensure that the lake can live in peace.

Attribution : GOURON Claude



## Lac d'Allos refuge (E)

Refuge managed by the commune of Allos

Refuge-bar-restaurant

Capacity: 40 places

Warden: June to September. Shelter room located just above the refuge, open 365 days per year.

Tel. 04 92 83 00 24

<http://refuge-du-lac-dallos.com>

Val d'Allos Tourism Office: 04 92 83 02 81

Attribution : LAURENT Olivier



## Lac de la Petite Cayolle (F)

It is a story of long ago, of the great glaciers which, as they slowly but unstoppably moved, shaped the Alps. Their flow hollowed out softer rocks and smoothed the harder ones, ripping any obstacles out of their way.

10000 years ago, the time of the great blanket of ice and snow came to an end and the glacier began shrinking, leaving behind it great hollows and terminal moraines: the glacial lakes found a home there, like Lac de la Petite Cayolle 3000 years ago.

Attribution : COSSA Jean-Louis

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## La Cayolle refuge (G)

Refuge managed by Mercantour National Park.

Capacity: 36 in refuge

Warden: 04 92 81 24 25 (from 15th June to 15th September) or 04 93 05 54 90 (all year if no reply at first number).

E-Mail: [fan.refugedelacayolle@orange.fr](mailto:fan.refugedelacayolle@orange.fr)

Website: [www.refugedelacayolle.com](http://www.refugedelacayolle.com)

Attribution : PNM/DR