



Grand Tour of Argentera and Vallée Merveilles - Stage 6

Vallée haute Vésubie - Belvédère



Randonnée Gordolasque. Reflets fantomatiques en été, dans les eaux du lac de la Fous en Gordolasque. (Guigo Franck - PNM)

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 5 h 30

Length : 11.8 km

Trek ascent : 1053 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Walking breaks

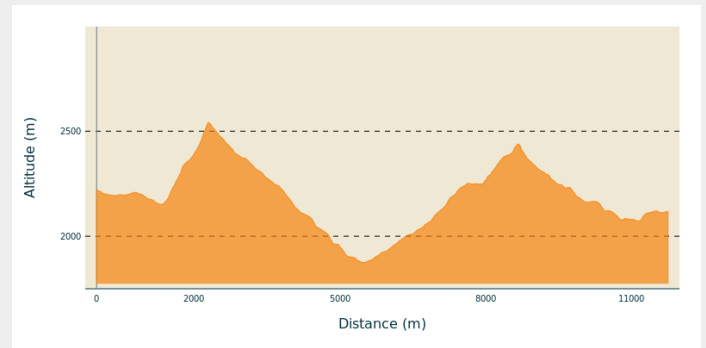
Trek

Departure : Nice refuge

Arrival : Cougourdes refuge

Cities : 1. Belvédère
2. Saint-Martin-Vésubie

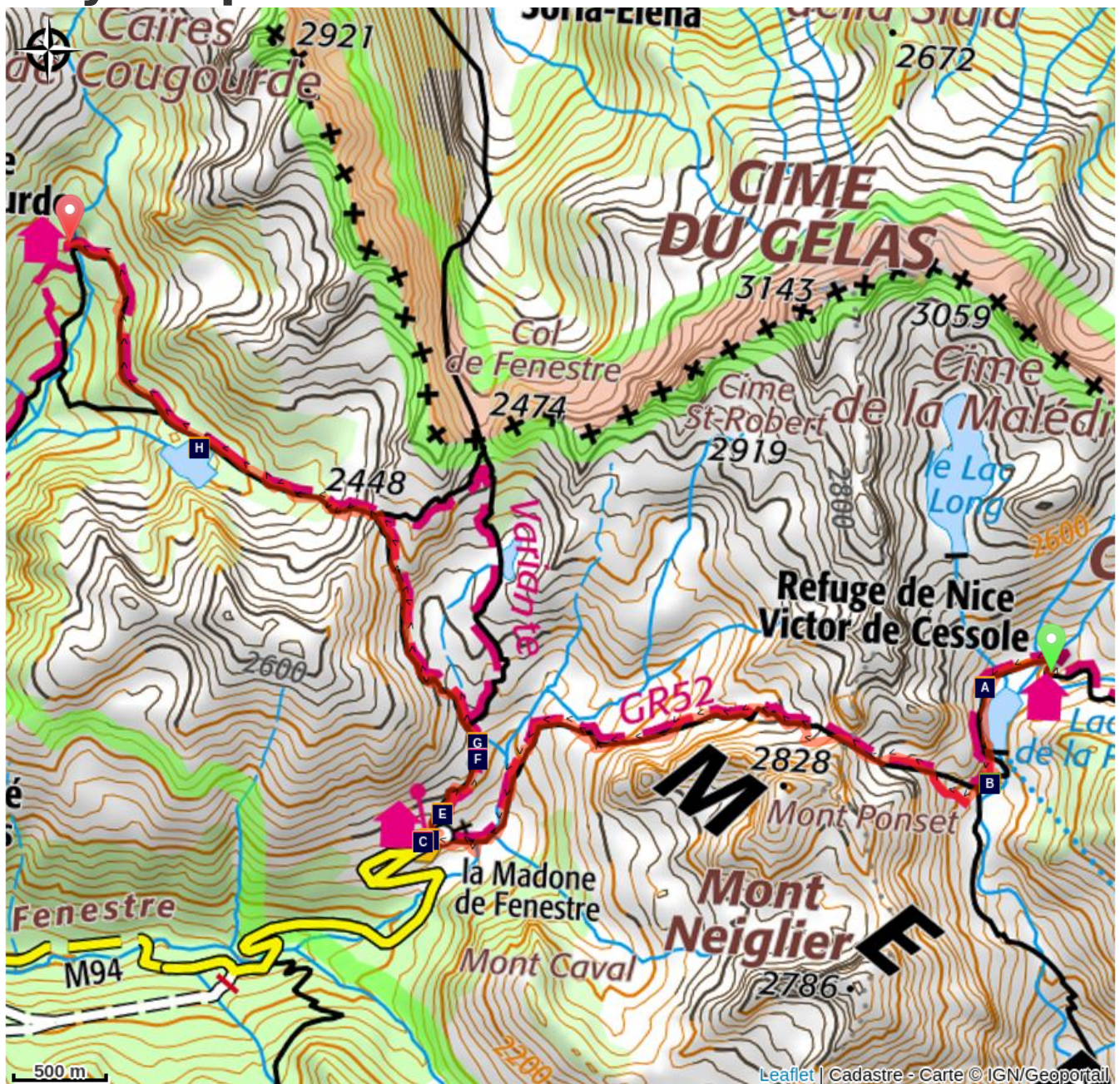
Altimetric profile











Min elevation 1874 m Max elevation 2541 m

All of this stage takes place along GR52. Reach the lake at La Foux. At the dam, turn left and continue downhill towards the valley. At marker 416, turn right onto the itinerary which heads uphill along steep slopes amid the scree; in 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes, you will reach Le Pas du Mont Colomb (2548m). The downhill section is initially somewhat steep and then the itinerary, which heads due south at this stage, flattens out, reaching the cow barn at Fenestre. Cross the mountain stream on a bridge close to the cow barns and head up the short final climb to the La Madone refuge (1909m). Continue along GR52 until you reach Pas des Ladres (2448m - m428), head downhill along a path with hairpin bends until Lac de Trécolpas. Shortly after the spillway - m427- take the path on the right which leads up the mountain slope to the Cougourde refuge.

On your path...



-  The Salt Road (A)
-  La Madone de Fenestre refuge (C)
-  Col de Fenestre mule track (E)
-  Terre de cour (G)
-  Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) (B)
-  La Madone de Fenestre sanctuary (D)
-  The scars of erosion (F)
-  Mountain climbing in the Mercantour (H)

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.

On your path...



The Salt Road (A)

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



Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) (B)

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



La Madone de Fenestre refuge (C)

Club Alpin Français

Capacity: 62 Possibility of eating and having a shower

Warden: Mid-June to late-September + school holidays and weekends in winter

Tel. 04 93 02 83 19

Out of season upon reservation: Patrick Miraillet: 04 93 03 91 02

Online reservations: <http://chaletmadonedefenestre.ffcam.fr/>

Useful numbers:

St-Martin-Vésubie Tourism Office: 04 93 03 21 28

Park House: 04 93 03 23 15

Attribution : CAF / DR



La Madone de Fenestre sanctuary (D)

In the 8th century, a modest refuge already, providing accommodation for travellers. This sanctuary with its imposing forms was built by the Benedictines of Borgo San Dalmasso and destroyed by the Saracens in the 10th century. The Templars restored it in the 13th century shortly after the Virgin Mary appeared at the Grand Caire window. Subsequently, the sanctuary was devastated by fire several times and then rebuilt. Today it belongs to the diocese of Nice.

Attribution : LEBOUTEILLER Eric



Col de Fenestre mule track (E)

This track has been used for a thousand years and was regularly maintained to allow mules transporting salt to pass with ease. The technique used to make and maintain these tracks involved self-locking stones. Identically sized slabs were arranged vertically in close lines. Fine materials were then used to hold it all in place. Gutters provided a run-off area for rainwater.

Attribution : LOMBART Guy



The scars of erosion (F)

When they converge, runoff streams of water leave the ground bare, breaking a fragile equilibrium. In addition, footfall due to tourism damages the ground and raises the question of preservation of natural environments. Plant cover has to be maintained as it protects the ground from erosion and guarantees its stability. Restoration work has been carried out to guide and direct the hundreds of hikers who love these wild areas.

Attribution : GUIGO Franck



Terre de cour (G)

The black rock marks one of the borders of the Terre de Cour, formerly a domain of the Count of Provence, before it was returned to the House of Savoy in the 14th century. Two inscriptions on the black rock provide a reminder of the past: “B” for Belvédère, “SM” for Saint-Martin-Vésubie. Terre de Cour was located exclusively in these two communes but they have to share the ancient rights to pasture and wood with Lantosque and Roquebillière.

Attribution : RICHAUD Philippe



Mountain climbing in the Mercantour (H)

At the start of the 20th century, for the first mountain climbers, the Mercantour was a taste of adventure. Little by little, the summits of the chain were conquered, initially via the normal routes and then, with the arrival of modern mountain climbing, along the most difficult routes. From Victor de Cessole to Patrick Bérhault, the greatest names have been involved in climbing in the Mercantour. Today, whether they are snowy, icy or rocky, the reputation of certain routes is well established.

Attribution : GUIGO Franck