



Grand Tour of the Vallée des Merveilles - In the heart of the Mercantour National Park

Vallées Roya&Bevera - Tende



Randonnée Vallée des Merveilles : le lac Basto, le lac Noir, et le lac Vert (Guigo Franck - PNM)



An itinerary which is adorned with magnificent lakes on the way to exploring the open-air museum in a high-mountain setting known as Vallée des Merveilles.

The presence of thousands of rock engravings helps create a “magical” atmosphere, illuminated by the passage of the seasons and the weather conditions.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 2 days

Length : 23.9 km

Trek ascent : 1321 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Walking breaks

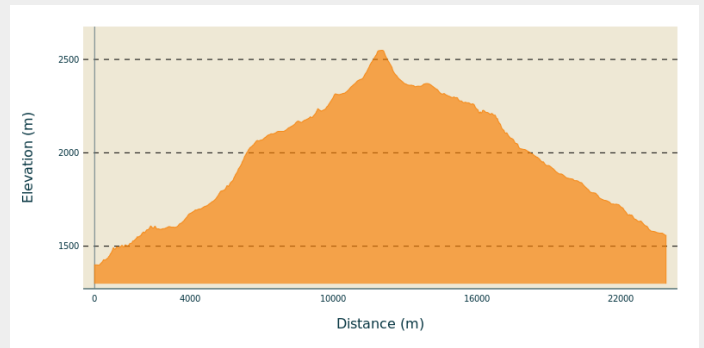
Trek

Departure : Lac des Mesches

Arrival : Castérino

Cities : 1. Tende

Altimetric profile

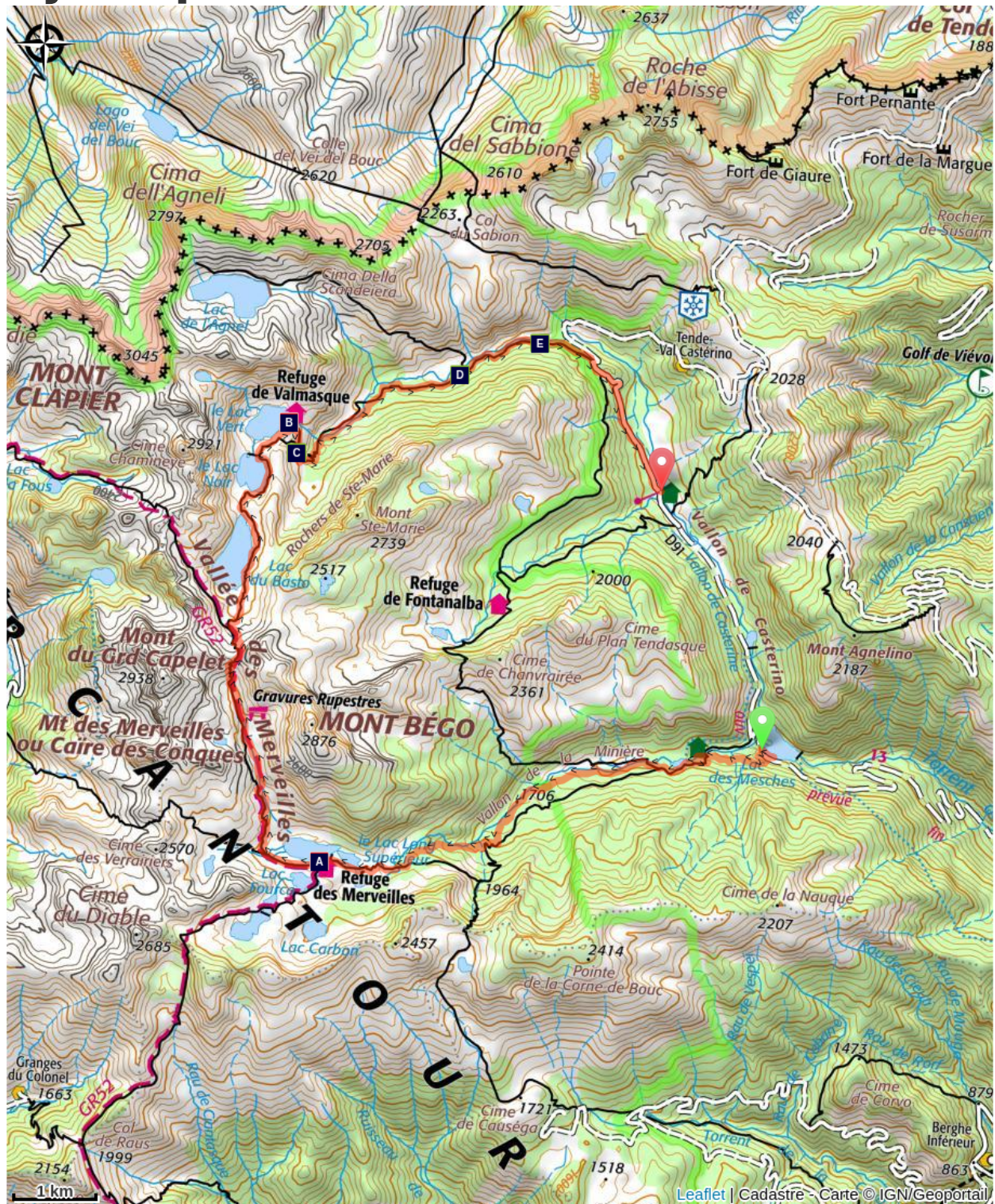


Min elevation 1399 m Max elevation 2549 m

Stages :

1. Grand Tour of the Merveilles - In the heart of the Mercantour National Park - Stage 1
8.0 km / 796 m D+ / 3 h
2. Grand Tour of the Merveilles - In the heart of the Mercantour National Park - Stage 2
15.8 km / 515 m D+ / 5 h 30

On your path...



Les Merveilles refuge (A)



Alpine ibex (*Capra ibex*) (C)



Rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) (E)



La Valmasque refuge (B)



Mountain ash (*sorbus aucuparia*) (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.

Advices

Specific regulations apply when you cross Vallée des Merveilles. Signs on site.

- Do not leave the marked paths
- Do not touch or damage the rock carvings
- Do not use hiking poles without placing rubber tips on the ends.

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

66km from Menton, follow the A8 motorway eastwards to Vintimille (Italy). Go up the Roya valley and reach St-Dalmas-de-Tende on the RD6204. As you leave St-Dalmas-de-Tende, turn left onto the RD91 to reach Lac des Mesches along a narrow and winding road.

Advised parking

Carpark lac des Mesches (06430 Tende)

On your path...



Les Merveilles refuge (A)

Club Alpin Français

Capacity: 75 in refuge – Possibility of eating and having a shower

Warden: 15th June to 15th September: Hugo PUTELAT

(Refuge telephone): 04.93.04.64.64

Winter: October to June (upon reservation): Mouloud CADDUR
refugedesmerveilles@ffcam.fr

The refuge is therefore OPEN for self-catering and with a warden when a reservation is made for 8 people or more, 19 places available for hikers who have covers (2 per person) and pillow.

If you wish to have a warden at the refuge, contact:
refugedesmerveilles@ffcam.fr

Useful numbers:

Tende Tourism Office/Park House: 04 93 04 73 71

Attribution : MALTHIEUX L.



La Valmasque refuge (B)

CAF Refuge

Commune: Tende

IGN Map: 3841 OT

Departure: Castérino (entrance Park National du Mercantour)

Elevation: 540 m

Capacity: summer (54), winter (12)

Possibility of eating and having a shower

Warden: Mid-June – end September

Information CAF: 04 93 62 59 99

Out of season upon reservation: 04 92 31 91 20

CAF website: <http://refugedevalmasque.ffcam.fr/reservation.html>

Useful numbers:

Tende Tourism Office: 04 93 04 73 71

Park House: 04 93 04 67 00

Attribution : Franck GUIGO



Alpine ibex (Capra ibex) (C)

From 1920 to 1930, 25 ibexes from Gran Paradiso were released in the royal reserve of Valdieri. Since 1987, reintroduction operations have been jointly undertaken by the Mercantour National Park and the Parco naturale Alpi Marittime. Today, the herds live around Col de Fenestre. The males do not live with the females. The latter remain with the kids and juveniles until they are two years old.

Attribution : BRETON François



✿ Mountain ash (*sorbus aucuparia*) (D)

A species of light, the mountain ash attempts, along with the larch and laburnum, to conquer the high pastures which have been abandoned by the flocks. Birds, particularly thrushes, love eating its seeds, which means that this elegant tree has spread far and wide. Its leaves provide light shade while its clusters of fruit are amusingly capped by the first snows. While the wood can be carved, the berries are rich in vitamin C and are used to make jam and, most of all, brandy.

Attribution : GUIGO Franck



✿ Rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) (E)

A companion of the fir and the spruce, assisting their reproduction, rosebay willowherb lights up the clearings with its purple flowers from June to August. Its flowers develop in bunches at the end of a long stalk which can reach 1.2m in length, giving rise to light seeds with silky hairs, allowing them to be easily carried off by the wind which distributes them onto the northern faces of mountains and beside mountain streams up to 2000m in altitude.

Attribution : CEVASCO Jean-Marie