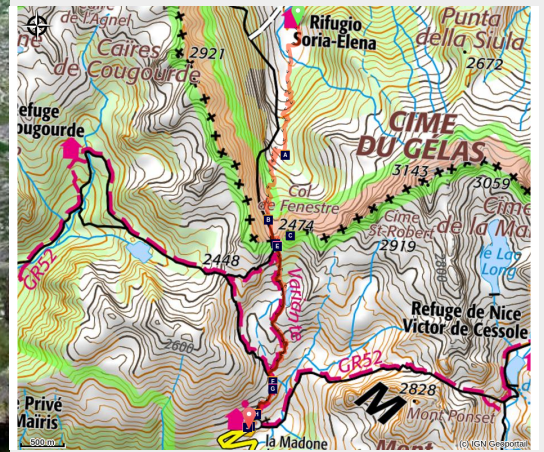




# The Wolf Trail - Argentera & Mercantour - Stage 2

Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime - Entracque



Randonnée col de Fenestre. Un ancien poste de chasse en pierres sèches du roi Victor Emmanuel II au dessus du Lac de Fenestre. (Guigo Franck - PNM)

## Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 4 h

Length : 8.1 km

Trek ascent : 681 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Walking breaks

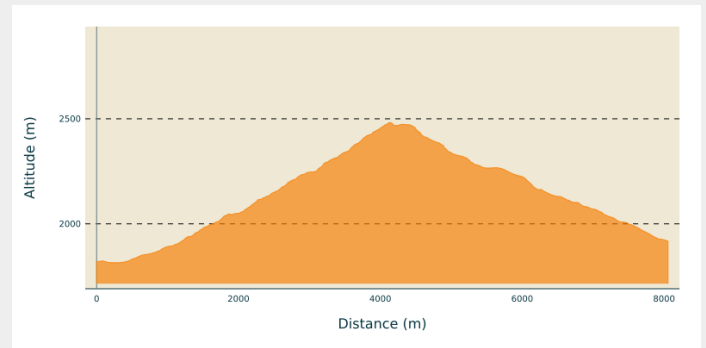
# Trek

**Departure** : Soria refuge

**Arrival** : Madone de Fenestre refuge

**Cities** : 1. Entracque  
2. Saint-Martin-Vésubie

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1815 m Max elevation 2482 m






From the Soria-Elena refuge, reach the bottom of the valley and then take the good-quality path, which is a former pilgrimage route and salt road, heading south towards Col de Fenestre. Before reaching the col, you will go past a former military barracks which constitutes a reminder of the events of September 1943. This itinerary and this area are ideal for seeing ibex.






From Col de Fenestre (2474m), head down the other slope along a sound path. You will pass close to several bunkers before reaching Lac de Fenestre (2250m) and then heading around its right-hand shore. Subsequently, still following a well-landscaped path, complete the descent to the bottom of the valley to reach the Madone de Fenestre refuge. 1905m



# On your path...



-  The Military Barracks at Colle delle Finestre and the other works of the Vallo Alpino (A)
-  The Alpine Ibex (C)
-  Col de Fenestre (E)
-  The scars of erosion (G)
-  La Madone de Fenestre sanctuary (I)

-  Trails of Freedom (B)
-  Il Colle di Finestra (D)
-  Terre de cour (F)
-  Col de Fenestre mule track (H)
-  La Madone de Fenestre refuge (J)

# 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 Military Barracks at Colle delle Finestre and the other works of the Vallo Alpino (A)

The barracks is a large building in stone and cement, still in decent condition, which was built to garrison the contingent tasked with defending the pass; its 16 rooms could house 50 men.

In addition to the barracks, other fortifications also defended the pass during the Second World War. On what is now the French side the remains of a nineteenth century shelter named for Lieutenant Mario Amedeo are clearly visible, as are two bunkers of the Vallo Alpino defensive fortifications; 126 to the left of the pass and 127 to the right.



## Trails of Freedom (B)

Between the 8th and 13th of September, 1943, just days after Italy's surrender, about twelve hundred Jewish civilians of all ages and walks of life, originating from Saint-Martin VÈsubie, crossed the Alps together with the Italian troops of the IV Army Corps. On foot, following two different routes, over the Colle di Finestra and the Colle di Ciriegia, the refugees arrived, respectively, in Entracque and Valdieri, where they were housed in the barracks and wherever else possible. A plaque affixed to the wall of the barracks at Colle di Ciriegia commemorates these events.

Attribution : Archivio EAM



## The Alpine Ibex (C)

Alpine ibex are a common sight at Colle di Fenestrelle and in the surrounding area. The Alpine ibex (*Capra ibex*), a mountain goat, lives in Alpine meadows and rocky terrain, even over 3,000 meters, descending to the valley floors (if they are not wooded) only in the early spring, when the long winter's hardships make the new sprouts irresistible. Both sexes have horns that grow each year, but the males' horns are decidedly bigger. Their coats, a light beige in the summer, turn dark brown in the winter months.

A permanent resident, this grazing mountain goat subsists mostly on grass, in addition to some mosses, lichens and leaves of mountain shrubs, especially during the winter.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj





## 🏔️ Il Colle di Finestra (D)

The pass is a direct link between Valle Gesso and Vésubie, and has been crossed since time immemorial - and immortalized in legend and historical annals - by saints, emperors and invading armies. Before the Savoys gained direct access to the sea, the Colle di Finestra pass was also an important supply route for the salt trade.

Its name, which first appears in the written records in 1041, has remained unchanged up to the present day: Colle di Finestra or, as written on the military maps of the early 1900s, Colle delle Finestre. The first version is the right one, though, because it refers to a single natural window (Finestra) that splits the northwest crest of the Cayre de la Madone.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj



## 🏔️ Col de Fenestre (E)

A communication route within the House of Savoy, the col became part of Italian territory in 1860 and a border col in 1947, the date at which the border was moved to the watershed. When the weather is clear, the view extends beyond the plain of Pô to 200km to the north: Cervin (4478m) and Mont Rose (4634m) are visible in these conditions.

Attribution : Guigo Franck



## 🕒 Terre de cour (F)

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



## The scars of erosion (G)

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

---



## Col de Fenestre mule track (H)

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

---



## La Madone de Fenestre sanctuary (I)

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



## La Madone de Fenestre refuge (J)

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