



The 4 valley circuit - Stura - Maira - Haute Tinée - Ubaye

Vallée haute Ubaye - Pietraporzio



Randonnée Stura. Val Stura, Val Gesso et Tinée, Sommets émergents d'une mer de nuages. Entre Alpi Marittime et Mercantour. (Claude Gouron - PNM)

A trekking circuit spanning 2 countries and 4 valleys, a historic itinerary which links Piedmont and Provence.

A trekking circuit spanning 2 countries and 4 valleys, heading into both France and Italy. Stura - Maira - Haute Tinée - Ubaye, four major valleys brought together as you head over the Alpine cols surrounded by some of the most magnificent peaks of the Mediterranean Alps.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 5 days

Length : 81.7 km

Trek ascent : 5293 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Walking breaks

Trek

Departure : Pontebernardo

Arrival : Pontebernardo

Cities : 1. Pietraporzio

2. Argentera

3. Canosio

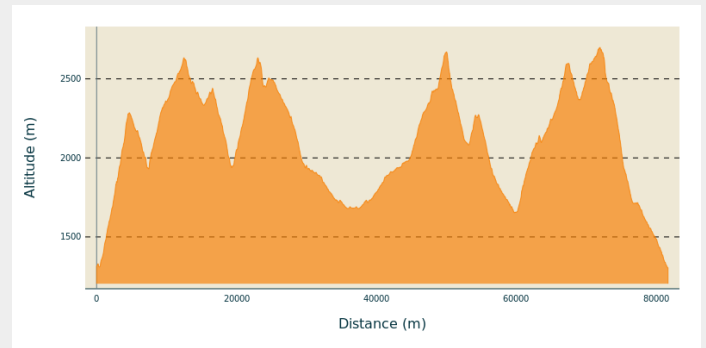
4. Larche

5. Val-d'Oronaye

6. Saint-Étienne-de-Tinée

7. Saint-Dalmas-le-Selvage

Altimetric profile

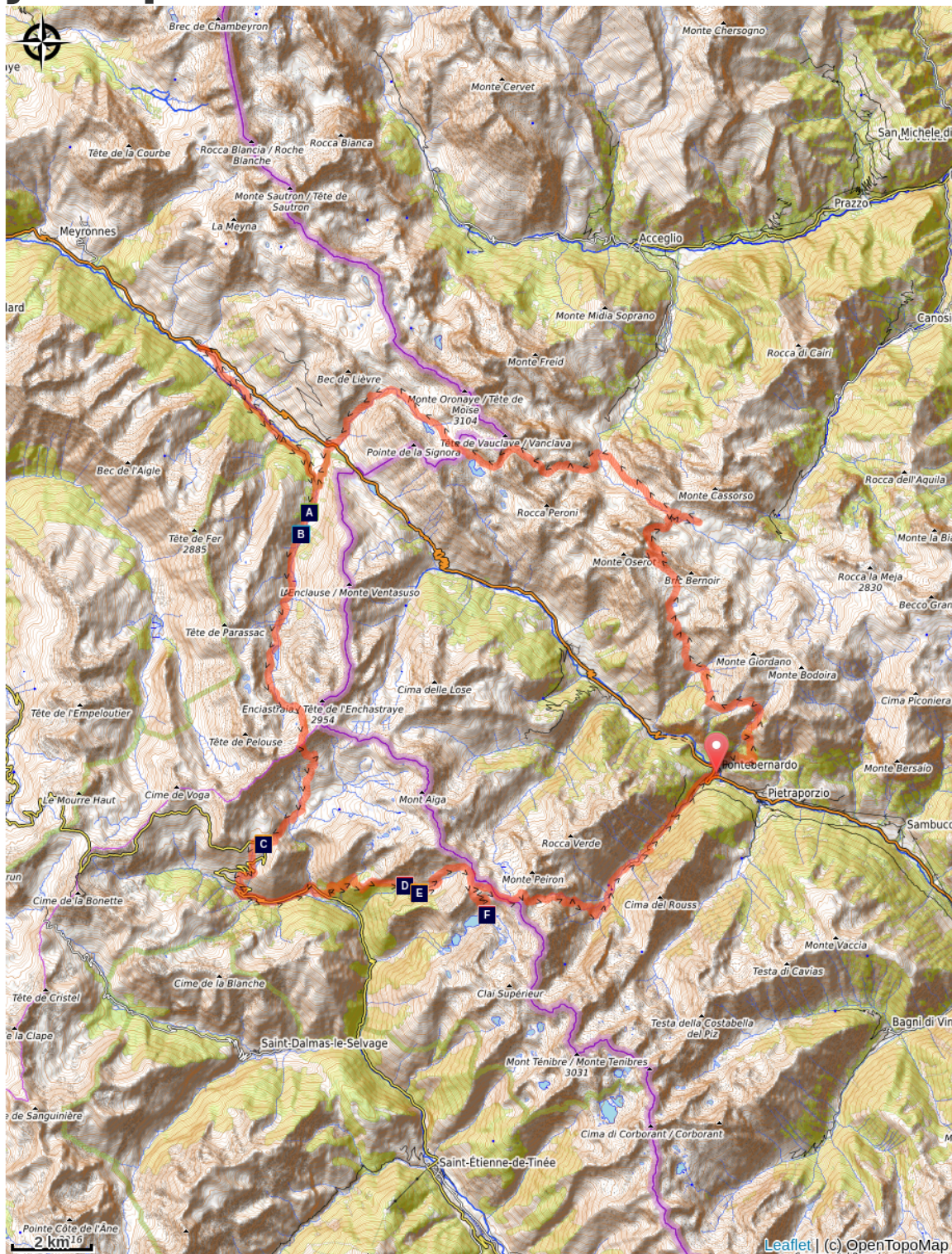





Min elevation 1304 m Max elevation 2699 m




Stages :

1. The 4 valleys circuit - Stura - Maira - Haute Tinée - Ubaye - Stage 1
15.3 km / 1743 m D+ / 5 h 30
2. The 4 valleys circuit - Stura - Maira - Haute Tinée - Ubaye - Stage 2
21.4 km / 940 m D+ / 7 h
3. The 4 valleys circuit - Stura - Maira - Haute Tinée - Ubaye - Etape 3
20.1 km / 1244 m D+ / 6 h 30
4. The 4 valleys circuit - Stura - Maira - Haute Tinée - Ubaye - Stage 4
12.4 km / 1015 m D+ / 4 h 30
5. The 4 valleys circuit - Stura - Maira - Haute Tinée - Ubaye - Stage 5
12.7 km / 351 m D+ / 4 h 30

On your path...



-  The Tardieu hut prairies (A)
-  Removal zones (C)
-  Tortisse forest house and Tortisse stacks (E)

-  The wetland zone (B)
-  The fountain (D)
-  Lac de Vens and refuge (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 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

From the A6 Turin-Savona motorway: exit at the Cuneo toll booths, head towards Borgo San Dalmazzo, then Demonte and Vinadio. From Col de Tende: heading down from Limone, head towards Borgo San Dalmazzo, then Demonte and Vinadio, Pontebernardo.

Advised parking

Pontebernardo

On your path...



The Tardieu hut prairies (A)

The prairies which surround the Tardieu hut are called “tall-festuca grassland”. This name comes from the dominant plant species, a tall kind of grass which grow in tall, tough clumps. The list of plants which grow alongside this tall grass and form the combination of plants constituting tall-festuca areas is long, but one of the jewels in the crown is surely Alpine sea holly or Queen of the Alps with metallic blue shades. This is currently the last area with Alpine sea holly in Ubaye, the department and the National Park.

Attribution : François BRETON



The wetland zone (B)

From the pastoral hut at Tardieu, the track, which is horizontal at this point, overlooks the great plateau where the winding Ubayette sparkles.

A few thousand years ago, you would not have had to go much further to find a deep lake. This great flat area with its tender green hues was covered by a lake, which was hollowed out by the Lauzanier glacier. It was not very deep and was filled in by the deposits which came off the brittle slopes.

Attribution : BRETON François



Removal zones (C)

The depression on your right was one of the zones from where material was removed from to build Camp des Fourches at the start of the last century. The former military dry-stone track allows you to reach Cime de Pelousette.

Attribution : Anthony TURPAUD

The fountain (D)

After a climb, often in the sunshine, a refreshing break at the fountain is very welcome.

The water emerging from the ground is very cool and provides you with the chance to take a break before continuing your climb or to have a drink before returning into the heat of the valley.



Tortisse forest house and Tortisse stacks (E)

Property of the National Forest Office, the Tortisse forest house is not open to the public. These buildings went up after the Second World War as accommodation for the people working for the Mountain Terrain Restoration (RTM) unit. The Tortisse plateau has been occupied by humans throughout all the ages. The rocky ridges contain iron which has often been mined and then smelted on the Morgon plateau. The slopes around the Tortisse plateau are often occupied by chamois and mouflons. If you lean in, you will also be able to smell the sweet vanilla scent of *Gymnadenia nigra corneliana*, kind of orchid.

Attribution : Philippe PIERINI



Lac de Vens and refuge (F)

The Vens refuge only has a warden during the summer months. In winter, only one room is open to allow hikers to shelter. The Vens refuge overlooks a series of lakes of the same name. These lakes are of glacial origin, they are the result of a long erosion process by glaciers. The lake below the refuge (the biggest) is 31 metres deep. Ibex, chamois, mouflons and golden eagles can often be seen at the site. Very close to the refuge, you can see the endemic plant which was for a long time the symbol of the Mercantour National Park: *Saxifraga florulenta*.

Club Alpin Français: Capacity: 45 in summer and 30 in winter (no warden)

Reservations only be e-mail in summer: <http://refugedevens.ffcam.fr/reservation.html>

No shower, meal included

Attribution : CAF / DR