

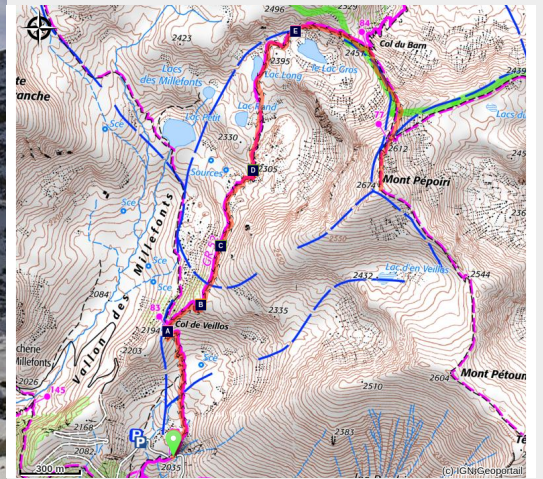


Lacs des Millefontes

Vallée haute Vésubie - Valdeblore



En contre-jour de lumière d'automne, un des lacs de Millefontes en début de phase de gel. (ANCELY Mathieu)



This itinerary goes through Alpine pastures and then rocky areas. At Col du Barn, there is a superb view of the peaks which denote the border between France and Italy.

Millefontes... or thousand springs. Brooks and lakes meet up in this superb setting of Alpine pastures, the summer quarters for large numbers of sheep.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 4 h

Length : 8.2 km

Trek ascent : 632 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Round trip

Themes : Lake, Peak, Viewpoint

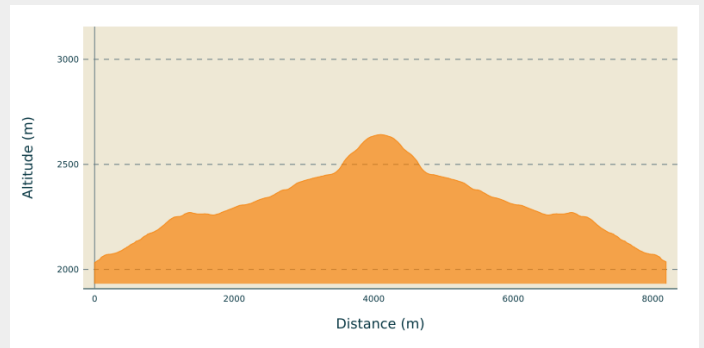
Trek

Departure : Carpark at Millefont, Saint Dalmas Valbeblone

Arrival : Carpark at Millefont, Saint Dalmas Valbeblone

Cities : 1. Valbeblone

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 2032 m Max elevation 2642 m

From the carpark at Millefont, go up path GR52 (red and white markers) which initially leads to the Col de Veillos, from where you can see the entirety of the valley. Go past a path which heads off to the left.

After a steep climb, you will see a shepherd's hut on the right. The itinerary continues towards the bottom of the valley, following the western slopes of Mont Pépouri, amid the Alpine meadows.

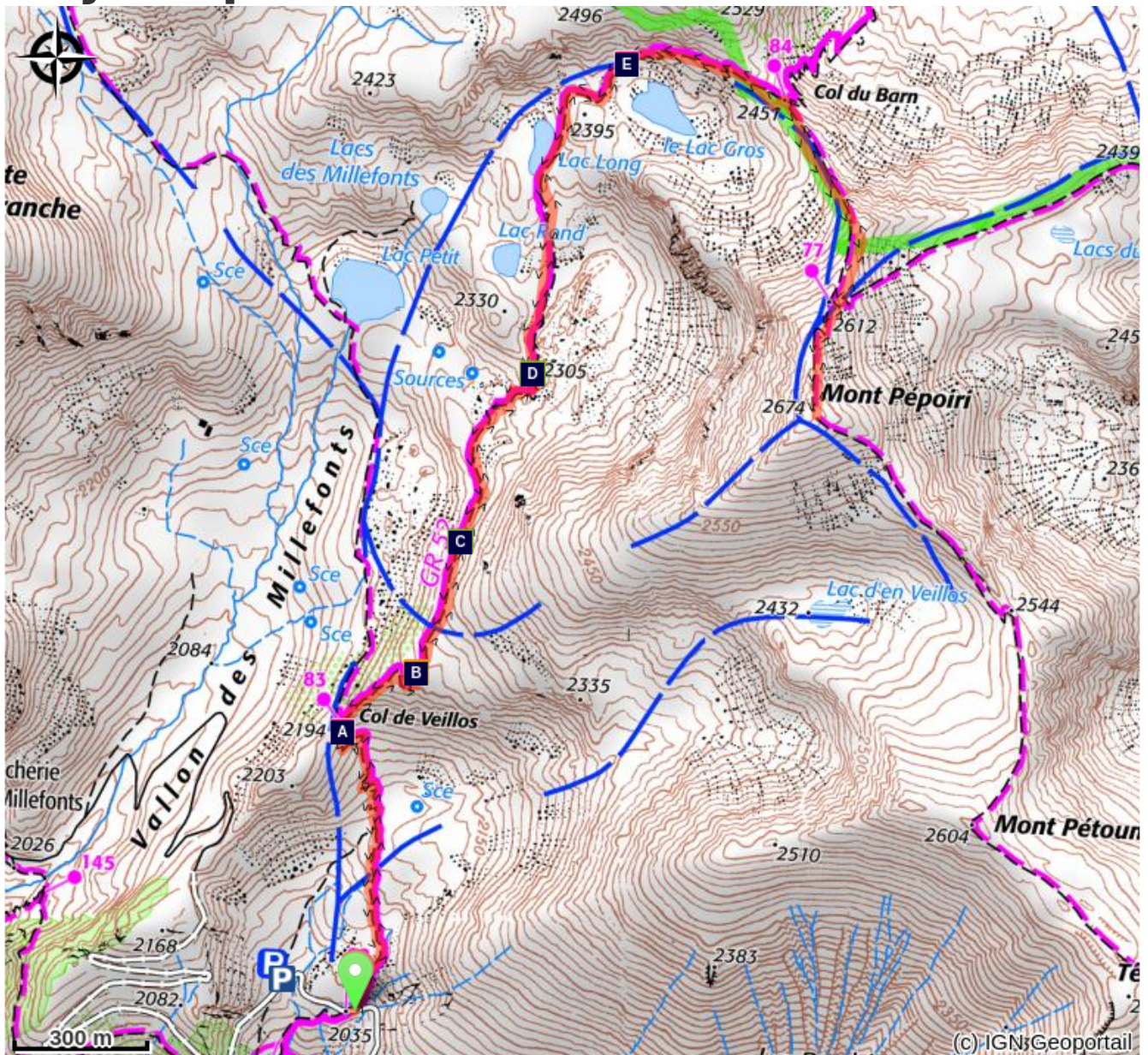
Below, you will see the first lake, which is oddly called «Lac petit» despite being the biggest of the five Millefont lakes.




The path then crosses an area of rocky scree and Alpine pastures. The climb then continues unhindered via a stony path which successively overlooks Lac Rond, Lac Long and Lac of the Millefont lakes, finally arriving at the Col du Barn (2 452m). A view over the delightful Barn valley and the Argentera chain, the highest peak of these mountains (3297m).



At the Col du Barn, the green hexagons, which can be seen on the rocks all along the crest, denote the boundary of Mercantour National Park. They are not markers for a hiking itinerary!

Follow the same route for the return journey.

On your path...



-  The geology of the Mercantour (A)
-  Alpine grasses (C)
-  The life and death of mountain lakes (E)

-  Mountain pastoralism (B)
-  Marmots (*marmotta marmotta*) (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

A variation on this itinerary is possible, including the ascension of Mont Pépoiri (2 674m). At the Col du Barn, leave the GR and follow the crest on the right until you reach the summit. The outward and return trips will take 2 extra hours.

How to come ?

Access

From Saint-Dalmas-Valdeblore, follow the tarmacked road for 11km. Leave your vehicle at the Millefonts carpark, at an altitude of 2 040 metres.

Advised parking

Carpark at Millefonts, Saint Dalmas Valbeblore

 **Information desks**

**Maison du Parc national du
Mercantour - Saint-Martin-Vésubie**

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On your path...



The geology of the Mercantour (A)

The site of Col de Veillos is marvellous for a geological reading of the landscape.

The rocks of the col form this singular relief, known as “ruiniform”. They are rauhewackes, of sedimentary origin. On the road to the Millefonts carparks, you may already have spotted the beautiful limestone piton of Baus de la Frema.

Opposite Col de Veillos, the ridge at the north, between the cols of Ferrière and Barn, is made up of crystalline metamorphic rocks: migmatite, with a mixture of light and dark colours.

And from Col de Barn, enjoy the view across Argentera and its famous granite.

Attribution : RIFFLET François



Mountain pastoralism (B)

On this immense Alpine pasture of Millefonts, the flocks settle in for the summer. According to the season, we can see many sheep here (destined for meat) as well as goats.

The big dogs whose job it is to defend the flocks against any attacks from predators (stray dogs, wolves...), are Pyrenean Mountain Dogs. If they approach you, stay calm and do not move. After they have looked at you for a while, they will quickly head back off to protect the flocks. These dogs are of great help to the shepherds.

Attribution : LOMBART Guy



Alpine grasses (C)

In the mountains, the rough climatic conditions (cold, wind...) prevent the forest from growing beyond an altitude of 2200 metres. Above this level, only grasses resist. Although it may appear rough and homogeneous, this ecosystem is actually extremely rich. Beyond the multiple plant species (such as carlina, lotus, blue gentian, clover, etc.), there are many insects (such as the famous Siberian cricket), mammals (marmots, voles, stoats) and birds (rock ptarmigans and rock partridges).

Attribution : GOURON Claude



Marmots (*marmotta marmotta*) (D)

Between screes and Alpine pastures, you can see – and more easily hear – marmots, delightful rodents which are typical of the mountain environment.

When you hear one emit its high call, look to the sky: it is perhaps the marmot's worst enemy, the golden eagle, soaring above...

Genuine hibernators, marmots spend half the year sleeping in their burrows. They can weigh up to 6kg before winter, making them walk somewhat heavily even if they retain their natural agility.

Attribution : BLANC Jacques



The life and death of mountain lakes (E)

The landscape of the grassland and the Millefontes lakes is the direct result of the geographical model put in place by the last glacial period. The glaciers created deep hollows in places and in other created natural dams called. The two phenomena naturally created mountain lakes. However, sediment and organic plant matter tend to fill the lakes in, leaving just a wet and marshy area: the peat bog.

These environments are very rich in plant life but also highly fragile. An excellent example can be seen downstream of the small Millefontes lake.

Attribution : GOURON Claude