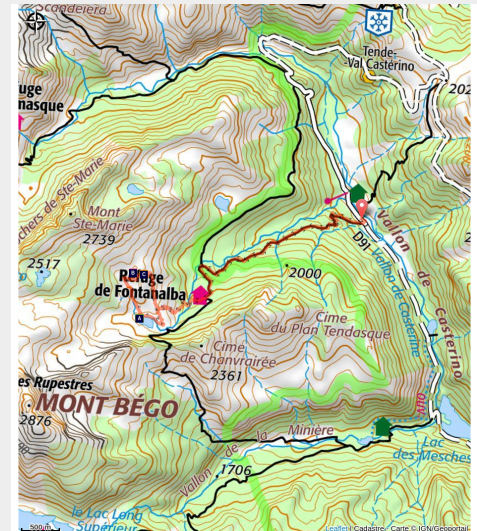




Engravings and lakes of the Fontanalbe Valley

Vallées Roya&Bevera - Tende



Le lac Vert de Fontanalbe en été, (2150 m), par une forte lumière. Mélézin clairsemé sur ses rives et pentes. (SARRUT Jacques)

Walk along the Sacred Way of Fontanalbe and discover the rock engravings (-5000 years old) of the Sacred Way, at the foot of Mont Bégo (2872m). A genuine open-air museum and one of the Park's essential sites.

A contrasting landscape of chaos but also of serenity and the beauty of the Green Lake of Fontanalbe... the fountain of dawn, the grave of a shepherd who was in love with the sunrise.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 6 h

Length : 11.8 km

Trek ascent : 792 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Round trip

Themes : Archeology and history, Flora, Lake

Trek

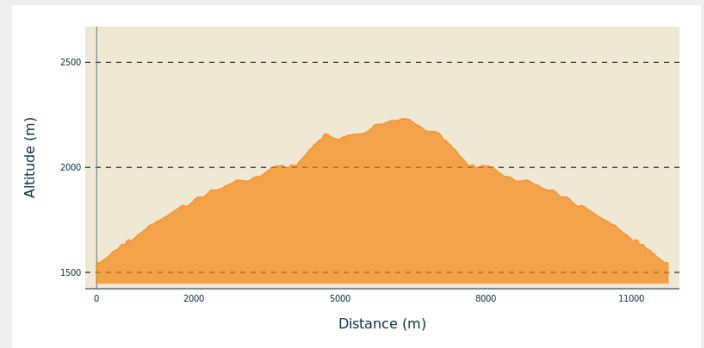
Departure : Castérino, marker 391

Arrival : The Green Lake of Fontanalbe

Markings : ■ PR

Cities : 1. Tende

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1546 m Max elevation 2232 m

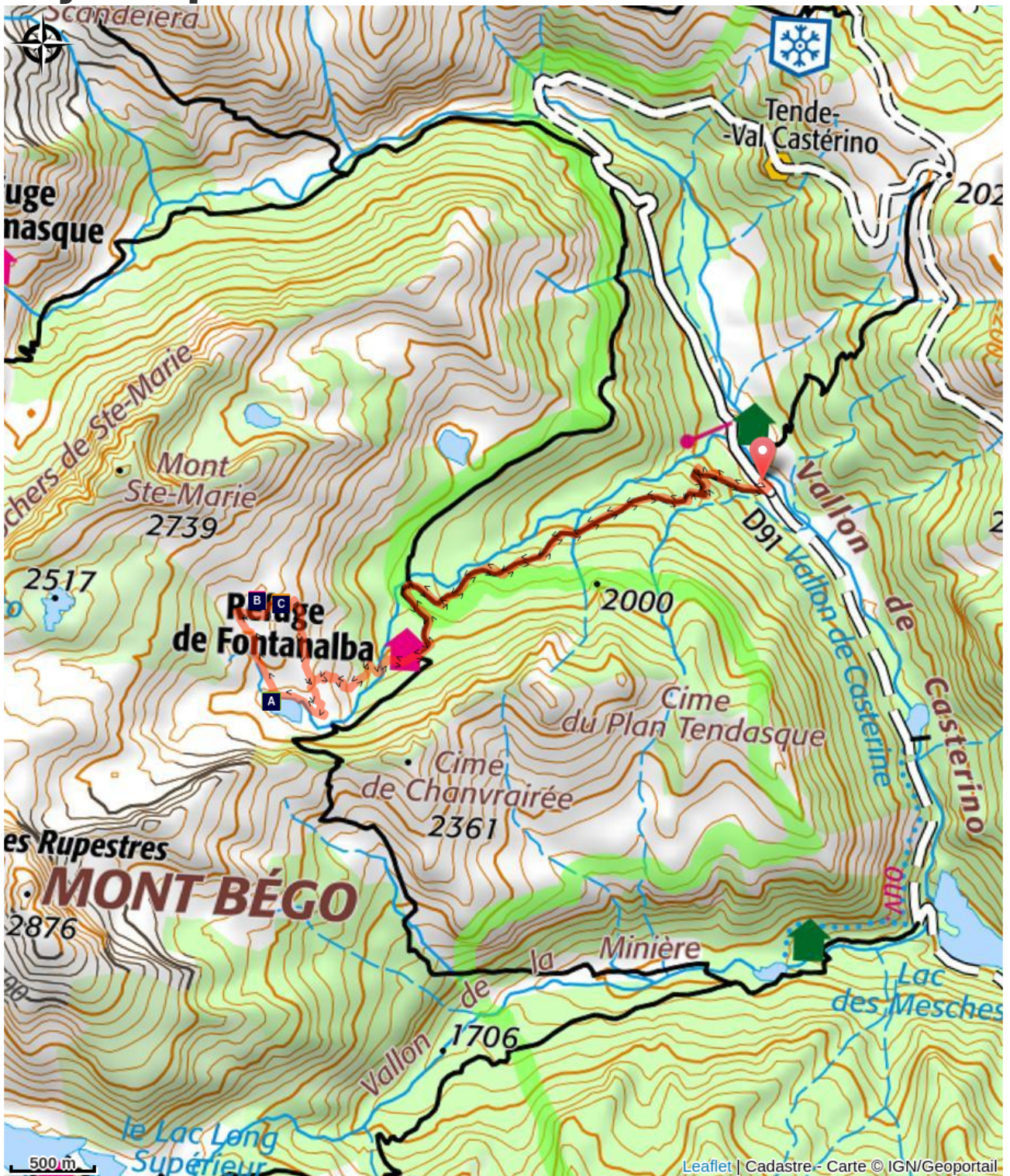
The hike begins on foot – at marker 391 – on a non-driveable track. Head towards “Lac Vert”. When you reach the halfway point, you will be in the heart of the National Parc (marker 390).



Take the path towards “Refuge de Fontanalbe”. If it takes your fancy, you can make a detour to the Lac des Grenouilles (Lake of Frogs). To do so, take the other path.

At the refuge, marker 389 indicates the direction of “Lac Vert”. Take the path that starts just below the refuge, over a footbridge and up in the larch forest. When the hiking trail reaches the military track again, meeting point for the guided tours, follow the sign for “Lacs Jumeaux” on your right. The path comes to a bridge, still heading towards “Lacs Jumeaux”. Continue along the paths until you reach the lakes. This is also where you enter the archaeological zone: a discovery course provides free access to the protohistoric carvings of the Sacred Way and of the Cathedral. Just before the “Gias des Pasteurs”, a sign indicates two possible directions; one directly to Lacs Jumeaux and the other towards the Sacred Way (via a loop which ends with an orientation table followed by Lacs Jumeaux).

For the return journey, follow the path which runs alongside Lacs Jumeaux, with a peat bog down below, until you reach a sign showing two directions; one towards Lac Vert and the other towards the end of the discovery course. In either case, take the path you used for the upwards journey and head downhill to return to Castérino.

On your path...



-  Swiss pine (*Pinus cembra*) (A)
-  The Sacred Path of Fontanalbe (C)

-  The writing tables (B)

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 guided visit with one of the National Park's guides will allow you to view the most interesting engraved rocks and to obtain accurate information about their meaning. You will also receive a presentation of the Park's exceptional fauna, flora and geology.

For more information about visits: <http://www.vallee-merveilles.com/>

How to come ?

Transports

From Nice or Italy, take the Train des Merveilles to St Dalmas de Tende, then a bus to Castérino (No. 923)

For more information: : <http://www.tendemerveilles.com/component/content/article/2-non-categorise/111-acces.html>

Tel.: 00 33 (0) 4 93 04 73 71

Access

At Saint-Dalmas de Tende, take the fork (RD91) to the hamlet of Castérino.

Park your vehicle as you come into Castérino.

Advised parking

Hamlet of Castérino, Tende

 **Information desks**

**Maison du Parc national du
Mercantour - Tende**

103 av du 16 septembre 1947, 06430
Tende

tende-tourisme@menton-riviera-
merveilles.fr

Tel : 04 83 93 98 82

<https://www.menton-riviera-merveilles.fr>

On your path...



Swiss pine (Pinus cembra) (A)

Held in place by its roots which have been petrified by freezing weather, whose colour has faded due to water and which allow it to grow on bare rock, the Swiss pine bends towards the waters of the lake

Coming from the Carpathians thanks to the glacial periods of the quaternary era, the Swiss pine reaches the southern and western limits of its domain in the Mercantour. It is stock and has adapted to the excesses of the Alpine climate, surviving its temperatures of under -40°C , while the acidic and cold ground is good for the Swiss pine's seeds to germinate in. Its biological rhythm is slow: it flowers for the first time when it is 60/70 years old and then every 6/10 years. It can reach 1000 years of age.

Attribution : LE BOUTEILLER Eric



The writing tables (B)

260 million years ago, in the depths of the Permian Sea, beds of very fine silt were being compressed, preparing the material which makes up certain mountains today. The huge pressure caused by the Alpine tectonic uplift and the internal heat of the mineral world metamorphosed the silt, forming "writing tables" upon which the glaciers of the quaternary era and then humans wrote their stories.

Attribution : CEVASCO Jean-Marie



The Sacred Path of Fontanalbe (C)

The Sacred Path is bordered by more than 280 engravings, the most well-known of which depict a pair of oxen pulling a scratch plough, guided by a peasant.

In the area reserved for guided visits, close to the green lake, you can see the "Roche des Peaux", covered in full geometrical figures engraved in circular fashion. On the "rocher des Guerriers", you will see a unique scene: there are two people bearing arms, one of whom is an archer firing an arrow.

Attribution : emmanuel.gastaud