



Vens Lakes via Tortisse

Vallée haute Tinée - Saint-Étienne-de-Tinée



Lac de Vens (2380 m), son refuge, au fond à droite la brèche Borgogno (2944 m) (Eric LE BOUTEILLER)



In the very heart of the National Park, discover an exceptional panorama with Alpine grasses, lakes, refuges and high transnational summits.

This itinerary takes place entirely in the heart of the Maercantour National Park and is much enhanced by the panoramic view of the Vens lakes. The omnipresent fauna and generous flora are in no way diminished by the sheep pastures.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 9 h

Length : 16.0 km

Trek ascent : 1028 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Round trip

Themes : Fauna, Lake, Refuge, Viewpoint

Trek

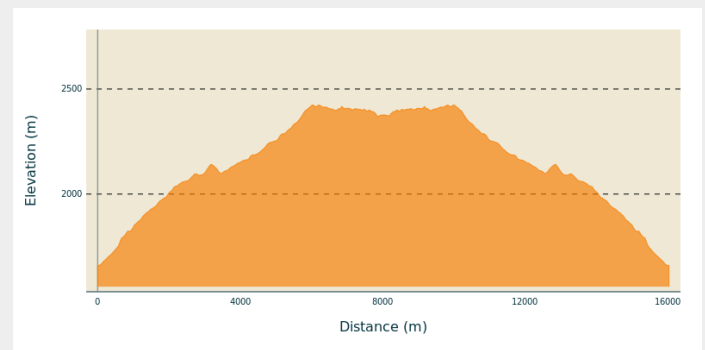
Departure : Le Pra

Arrival : Vens refuge

Markings :  PR

Cities : 1. Saint-Étienne-de-Tinée

Altimetric profile

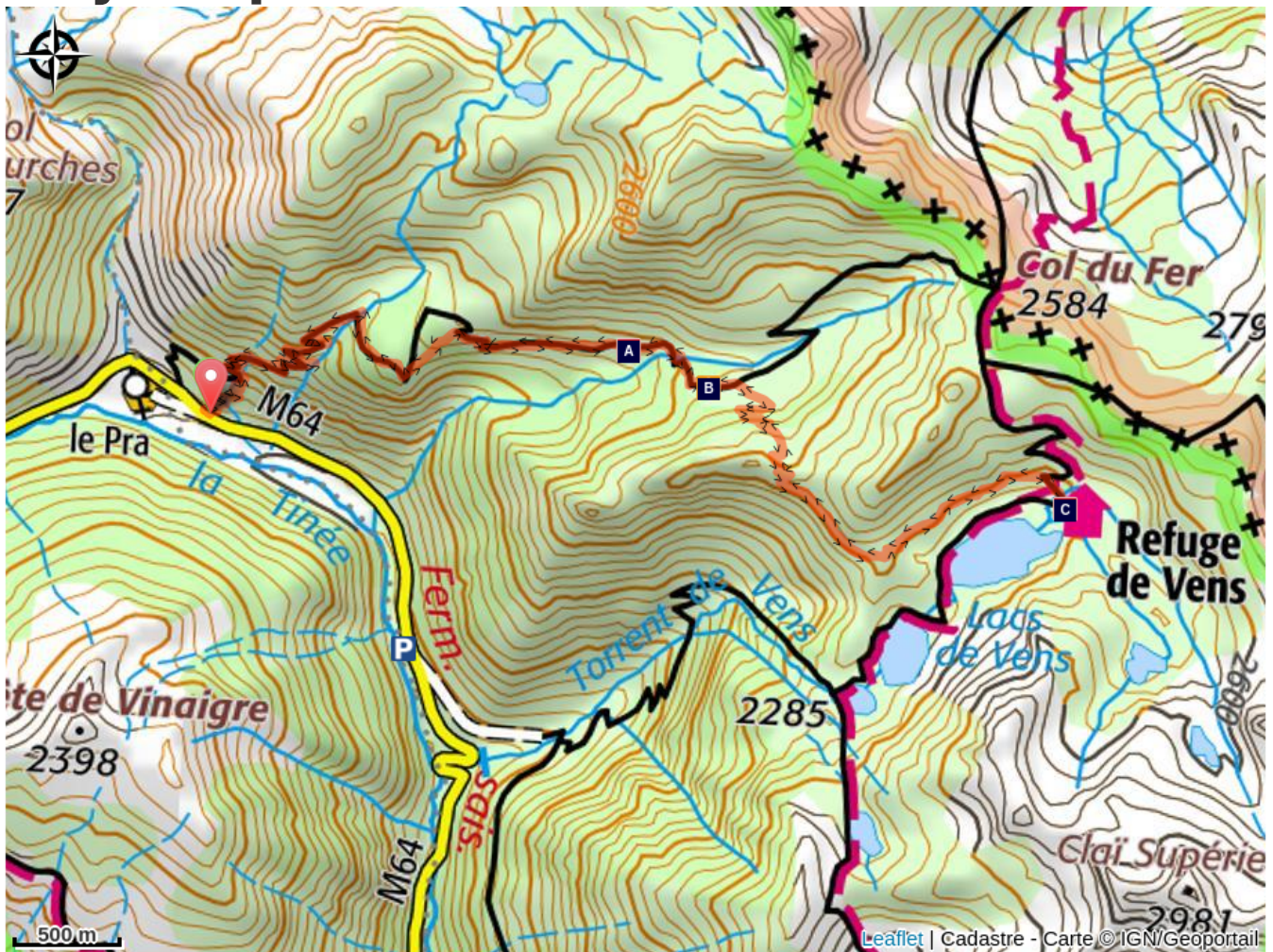


Min elevation 1659 m Max elevation 2424 m

From Le Pra (1700m, marker 32), which you can drive to, follow the zigzagging path which overlooks the road before reaching the peaceful Morgon plateau and its old metal footbridge. Head through the larch forest and then a narrow section, denoted by marker 33, which provides access to the Tortisse Valley and to the forest houses (2252m) via a long stony passage. At marker 34, with a view over the Aiguilles de Tortisse, branch off to the right and take a good-quality path, which is often in the shade, to a narrow section which has no name, overlooking the Vens Valley (2422m). An airy path, which goes via an intersection at marker 23, leads to another narrow section (2409m) overlooking the large lake of Vens Supérieur. The refuge of the same name (2380m) can be seen at the other end of the lake above the waterfall.

Follow the same route for the return journey. At marker 23, you can also, if the weather is not too hot, head down more quickly via the Vens valley and get back to the starting point of the itinerary.

On your path...



The fountain (A)



Tortisse forest house and Tortisse stacks (B)



Lac de Vens and refuge (C)

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

If you make an early start, there is the possibility of seeing chamois, mouflons (in springtime) or deer. Throughout the day, golden eagles, bearded vultures and marmots. Although they are very secretive, wolves are also present in this sector.

How to come ?

Access

Stopping and parking all vehicles is prohibited on the RM2205 near the village of Le Pra.

Advised parking

A possible parking area is located 2km downstream, at the start of the "sentier de l'eau" leading to the Vens torrent.

Information desks

Maison du Parc national du Mercantour - Saint Etienne de Tinée

Quartier de l'Ardon, 06660 Saint-Etienne de Tinée

tinee@mercantour-parcnational.fr

Tel : 04 93 02 42 27

<http://www.mercantour-parcnational.fr>

On your path...

The fountain (A)

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 (B)

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 (C)

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

No shower, meal included

Attribution : CAF / DR