

C050-ECO the Queyras



Located to the South-East of Briançon, close to the Italian border, lies the Queyras, a remote area accessed in winter through the Combe du Queyras, and during the summer by the Izoard and Agnel passes. The original relief and sunny climate combine to create a privileged region where Alpine and Mediterranean vegetation coexist. All the villages have managed to maintain their authentic character. You will discover rustic houses that reflect the harshness of life at this altitude – Saint Véran's altitude is more than 2000 meters – all ornamented with beautiful sundials. On your way there, you will appreciate the freshness of a mountain stream or spring, the beauty of the mountain lakes or the simplicity of a tiny chapel built in a secluded but breathtaking site. If you are courageous enough to walk to the top of the hills, you will be rewarded by discovering the most wonderful panoramas.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival at AIGUILLES. This small, cosy resort holds amazing sites like The Great Hotel, built during the Belle-Epoque, the Eiffel House, made of iron and endowed with a square tower, and Le Château de l'Auche, a castle which now houses the town's school. Half-board accommodation in a two-star hotel.

Day 2 - AIGUILLES - RISTOLAS (7 and a half hour walk – altitude gain: 1350 meters). You will leave the village after walking along and then crossing the Lombard Torrent. You will start walking uphill to the Chalet de la Pause, cross the road that leads to the hamlet of Le Lombard, and come to the chalets and the oratory of Les Eygliers. You will disappear into Les Eygliers Woods, pass above the Bergerie des Lombards (sheepfold) and will keep walking to the pass which will allow you access to the Crête du Serre de l'Aigle (a crest). You will join the Malrif Lakes : Le Grand Laus (2579 m), Le Lac Mézéan (2675 m), and Le Petit Laus (2805 m). This last one isn't the nicest, but is definitely the most peaceful during the summer months, as few people actually climb that high! The most energetic climbers could continue uphill to Le Pic de Malrif (summit) and then retrace their steps. You will then start the descent to Abriès, quite steep in the beginning. You will reach another sheepfold, the Bergerie des Bertins, and continue down through mountain pasture to the abandoned hamlet of Le Malrif. You will reach a tiny chapel, Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs, and will pass in front of the stations of Le Chemin de Croix (Way of the Cross) before arriving at the village of Abriès. You will end the day's journey along the Guil River, reaching the little village of Ristolas.. *Half-board accommodation in a small hotel with all conveniences.*



Day 3 – RISTOLAS - LE REFUGE AGNEL - SAINT VERAN (8 and a half hour walk – altitude gain: 1200 meters). You will leave Ristolas, the last village of the Guil Valley before the Italian border, by following the torrent to the hamlet of l'Echalp and will then start climbing uphill to the Egorgeou Lake, beautiful and wild. You can take the little path on the left that goes up to the small Baricle Lake, the only interest of which is the lovely view it gives of the first lake. You will continue up to the Foreant Lake, and then to Le Col Vieux (pass). If the weather is clear and you still have a bit of energy, you could walk up to Le Pain de Sucre (3210 m). Your efforts will be rewarded by a gorgeous panoramic view of the Alps. You will walk down to Le Col Vieux and the Refuge du Col Agnel. Then, the long descent to St Véren will start. *Half-board accommodation in a small refuge-hotel outside the village (with all conveniences)*



Day 4 - SAINT VERAN - CEILLAC (6 and a half hour walk – altitude gain: 850 meters). At 2042 meters, Saint Véran is one of the highest villages in Europe and has a very unique architecture adapted to its heights. Take time to visit the village, its 18th and 19th century houses made of larch wood, its fountains, the Croix de la Passion, its bread-baking ovens and its numerous sundials. We recommend the Musée le Soum and the Vieille Maison Traditionnelle (a very old traditional house). After having seen these treasures, you will leave the village, passing through different quarters – Pierre Belle and Le Raux – before crossing the Aigue Blanche Torrent. You will walk through grazing pastures and forest up to the Estronques Pass. You will reach the mountain pastures and will have to deal with rocky terrain before arriving at the pass. You will descend into the Cristillan Valley, and reach the ancient

hamlets of Rabinous and Le Touré, the second of which was built around its charming chapel. You will cross a few torrents and the ruins of the village of Le Villard near the Sainte Barbe Chapel before joining the charming village of Ceillac. You will walk up out of the valley from the Mézelet Torrent to the Le Pied du Mézelet, where your hotel lies facing the Pisse Waterfall. *Half-board accommodation in a small family-run hotel in the village (all conveniences)*

Day 5 - CEILLAC - CEILLAC (7 hour walk – altitude gain: 1200 meters). You have the choice between 2 different routes.

1st route : Quite athletic, by the Tronchet and Girardin Passes, and the Sainte-Anne and Miroir lakes. You will follow a small road out of the Le Torrent du Tronchet Valley to Le Fond de Chaurionde and continue through grazing lands and along a rocky, winding path to the foot of the Tronchet Pass. You will cross through mountain pastures to La Cabane de Tronchet, an ancient sheepfold, and continue along the path that runs across the mountainside to the Girardin Pass. Once beyond the pass, you will walk down to Lake Sainte Anne, close to which lies a little chapel that is a place of pilgrimage. You will then arrive at the Miroir and the Prés Soubeyrand Lakes before going down to Le Pied du Mézelet, and the hotel. - 2nd route : Easier, up to the Sainte-Anne and Miroir Lakes. You will walk up to the Miroir Lake and will relax in one of the small, pleasant valleys around the lake before walking up to Sainte Anne Lake and then down to the hotel by the Fond de Chaurionde. *Half-board accommodation in the same hotel.*

Day 6 - CEILLAC - CHATEAU VILLE VIEILLE (6 hour walk – altitude gain: 850 meters). You will walk to the village of Ceillac and up through the Cristillan Valley once again to the hamlet of Le Villard and will then continue to the Fromage Pass. Walking through mountain pastures and a few larch woods, you will arrive at the Prés de Fromage Pass and the Buchet Summit (2254 m) which offers a great view of the Alps and the Guil Valley. Finally, crossing Le Bois de Gambare (Gambare Woods) you will walk down to Château Ville Vieille.

Bed and breakfast basis accommodation in a house of the village – dinner included



Day 7 - CHATEAU VILLE VIEILLE - LA CHALP (ARVIEUX) (7 hour walk – altitude gain: 1350 meters). You will leave the village and reach Château Queyras by crossing the forest and following along the Guil Torrent. Built on a rocky spur obstructing the valley, this fortified castle was once a medieval fortress, altered by Vauban to prevent the enemies coming from Italy. Crossing the forest, you will walk to the Roue Lake, quiet and calm. You will circle around it to reach the hamlet of Souliers. Then, walking along the torrent and through a few grazing lands, you will arrive in the Pré Soubeyran. You will pass quickly through a forest and arrive at the Bergerie des Souliers (a sheepfold). From there, a path climbs to the Souliers Lake, a small, round lake encircled by impressive summits. After a break, you will continue your trek to the Casse Déserte, a strange but fascinating site. The landscape there is almost lunar, nothing but stones, jagged rocks, gullied slopes, and fallen earth. You will cross the road that leads to the famous Iazard Pass and will arrive in Brunissart, walking along a torrent that starts from the Iazard Pass. Finally, you will reach the hamlet of La Chalp, part of the Arvieux district. *Half-board accommodation in a guest-house in the village.*

Day 8 - LA CHALP. Tour ends after breakfast. Transfer by taxi to the Montdauphin or Aiguilles train station at the end of morning.

Season

From end of June to end of September but be careful this area is very crowded in summer time and we recommend you (if you can) to come outside this period. Nevertheless this area attracts a lot of tourists and you have to reserve earlier to get the best rooms.

What's included?

- 7 overnight stops on a half-board basis in family-run hotels with all conveniences
- Hotel to hotel luggage transfer along the trail.
- A set of maps (1/25 000 scale) with the route marked on and detailed route notes
- A daily itinerary together with information about facilities and places of interest along the trail.
- Phone Emergency assistance

Visa fees - transportation fees to and from the walk area - Insurance (strongly recommended on all trips) - Transfers except those mentioned above – Drinks - Additional meals - Spending of personal nature e.g. laundry, souvenirs, phone calls,... are not included

Getting there and away

By train: The train station nearest Le Queyras area is the Montdaupin-Guillemestre station on the Valence – Briançon line. You can also arrive in Valence with the TGV. Bus connection to Aiguilles. To return, a taxi will bring you to the Montdauphin train station.

By car: Reach Gap at the South-East of Grenoble. Follow Route N94 in the direction of Embrun. After Embrun veer right on D902 road to Château Queyras-Aiguilles.

Where to park: There is no parking available near the hotel. You can leave your car on the square along the Torrent du Lombard in Aiguilles. A taxi will bring you back to your car at the end of the tour

Walk difficulty

Grade 4 - 6 to 9 hours walking a day with long ascents and descents more than 1000 m. You walk high mountains as the Alps or Massif Central, on rough and stony paths. On occasion route-finding may be tricky and request some walking experience. A reasonably high standard of fitness and stamina are essential for enjoyment of this hike

