



Self guided tour

Walking holidays in the
Mercantour national Park
France

Luggages transportation by
car.





Wolf are you there?

This journey is full of variety. Through the foot-hills and the fragrance of Provence and up to the alpine panoramas of the Mercantour National Park. From the oak to the larch; from the wheat fields to the gentian lawns; from a man-made landscape to a sweeping scenery of wilderness.

The last two days are a grandiose conclusion to the trip - with a good general idea of high mountain conditions and Europe's largest glacial lake. Marmots, chamois and golden eagles will be there to meet you! A wolf may observe you from afar, too fearful to draw near.

Diverse and contrasted landscapes :

- Lakes of turquoise nesting in lush alpine meadows scattered with gentian.
- Breathtaking passages through a canyon with rocks the colour of red wine.
- Woods of stern larch trees and stark mineral peaks.
- Refreshing aquatic fun in the rivers along the way.



Self guided walking tour, all inclusive in Provence Mercantour national park

Type of walking holidays : self guided tour with luggage transport by car, except on the last night.

Duration : 6 Days, 5 Nights. Can be adapted on a shorter or longer version on request.

Prices for 2023 : Adult, option gîte : 680€/adult
Extra option private room : 70€/adult.
Children aged 5 to 12 years old, option gîte : 580€/child
Extra option private room : 70€/child.

Trek departure : from the farm of Villeplane. Every day according to availability from 01/06/2023 to 25/09/2023.

Trek arrival : Estenc, 50km / one hour by car from Villeplane, where we will pick you up at the end of your journey to drive you back to Villeplane.

Path conditions : Very well signposted and marked with easily distinguishable yellow rectangles. They do, however, remain mountain paths.

Minimum knowledge : The ability to read a map is mandatory, so as to avoid difficult detours, as is some experience in mountain hiking.



Accommodation :

Family rooms in auberge , gites, mountain refuge. This includes full board. You only need to bring sheet sleeping bags and sleeping bags. There are showers in each lodging, please bring your own towel.

You have two options regarding the accommodation : 'option gite' where you will usually sleep in shared dormitories of 8 in the mountain refuge (on the two last nights), or 'option individual room' which is subject to availability, so get in quickly if you're on honeymoon!

Various trekking options each day!

The Mercantour National Park is ideal for trekking. The number of variants means there are so many new paths to explore. By opting to have your luggage transported by car, you are free to set off with nothing but yourselves and your picnic.

Each day on this circuit consists of alternative routes, which allow you to see more remote features and more rugged and austere scenery. The walking time per day varies between 6 - 8 hours, and the ascent levels between 800 m - 1200 m.



Day by day programme

Day 1 : Around Villeplane

Welcome at 8.00 at the farm of Villeplane. Our local guide will assess the various possibilities together, taking into consideration the weather forecast and your physical abilities.

Option 1 : Tour around the 'collet de la cime'. We offer a lovely, relaxing half-day hike, far from everything. The top of the Collet peak offers a 360 degree vista of all the peaks of the valley.

Accumulated Ascent : 300 m - Accumulated Descent : 300 m

Distance : 6 km - Continuous walking time : 2.5 hrs

Option 2 : The red gorges of Daluis. Your trek begins in the Redlands. A stroll around the balcony over a relief unique which is in Europe, and spectacular gorges truffled with copper mines!

Accumulated Ascent : 525 m - Accumulated Descent : 525 m

Distance: 10,5 km - Continuous walking time : 4h30

Option 3 : The crests of the St. Honorat. This trek in high altitudes leads you to Mont Saint Honorat (2520m). Dominating Villeplane its summit offers a breathtaking view of the valley.

Accumulated Ascent : 1200 m - Accumulated Descent : 1200 m

Distance : 12 km - Continuous walking time : 6 hrs 30

Night at the ecolodge of Villeplane.



Day 2 : Villeplane / Saint Martin d'Entraunes

Option 1 : By Villetalle Basse. This fairly long hike borrows an ancestral path connecting villages between them. It will impregnate you with the wilderness charm of our mountains and their 2500 meter sommets cutting through the blue of the sky punctuated by small hamlets perched with their walls made of dry stones, shaded forests and amusing halts in the pools of refreshing torrents.

Accumulated Ascent : 680 m - Accumulated Descent : 880 m
Distance : 14,5 km - Continuous walking time : 6 hrs

Option 2 : By Enaux. A discovery of the other hamlets and the wild aspect of average mountain altitudes. You will voyage along the ancient paths on mid-slopes, paths which in times gone by, enabled communication between these small villages of similar altitudes, and created the valley's livelihood.

Accumulated Ascent : 680 m - Accumulated Descent : 880 m
Distance : 19 km - Continuous walking time : 7 hrs

Night at gite de Pelens or at hotel des Etrangers depending on availabilities. Shared bathroom at hotel des Etrangers.



Day 3 : Saint Martin d'Entraunes / Entraunes

Option 1 : by the Ubac. This itinerary is entirely shaded along wide forest paths and crosses several beautiful streams suitable for bathing. Through ancient countryside, we spare a thought for the generations of mountain dwellers who have shaped the landscape to the best of their advantage. This itinerary offer refreshing aquatic fun in the stream of Chastelonnette.

Accumulated Ascent : 870 m - Accumulated Descent : 660 m

Distance : 10 km - Continuous walking time : 5hrs30

Option 2 : by the Col des Champs. A splendid trek towards the vast alpine landscapes of the mountain pass of Champs, meeting marmots along your way and what is more, an open panorama over the high valleys. You will be stunned by the power of the dense, vertical waterfalls awaiting you towards the end of your day.

Accumulated Ascent : 1143 m - Accumulated Descent : 910 m

Distance : 16 km - Continuous walking time : 8hrs

Night at Villa Noë or auberge Roche Grande depending on availabilities. Shared bathrooms at auberge Roche Grande.



Day 4 : Entraunes / Estenc

Option 1: By the waterfalls. You will follow a pretty path along the bed of the impressive Var river, between towering cliffs, and across the footbridges over the torrent of Garréton, Aiglière and the Var, with their gorgeous vertical falls!

Accumulated Ascent : 530 m - Accumulated Descent : 0 m

Walking time : 3 h - Distance: 7 km

Option 2 : By the “ Villard”. Typically alpine, deep into the Mercantour park, this course combines all the attractive elements of high mountain environments: Panoramic passes, barren ravines, gnarled larch and prancing chamois.

Accumulated Ascent : 650 m - Accumulated Descent : 235 m

Walking time : 4 h 30 - Distance: 9 km

Option 3 : By vallon de l’Estrop. One of the most beautiful and wild walk of the week trough a beautiful valley, a bit challenging due to the level up.

Accumulated Ascent : 1260 m - Accumulated Descent : 790 m

Walking time : 8 h - Distance: 17 km

Night at refuge de la Cantonnière or gite Ferran depending on availabilities. Shared bathrooms at refuge de la Cantonnière. Extra cost of 25€ per person at gite Ferran.



Day 5 : Estenc / Col de la Cayolle

There is no bags transportation by car to refuge de la Cayolle. You have to carry your stuff for 2 days and 1 night in a day backpack.

Option 1 : By the woods of the Garrets. An ascent which progresses in altitude up a beautiful path through a centennial larch tree forest to the timberline (edge of inhospitable climate), where you emerge to find high mountain pastures and the charming mountain range of Sanguinière with its wild scenery, typical of the contrast and diverse southern Alps.

Accumulated Ascent : 590 m - Accumulated Descent : 0 m

Distance : 7 km - Continuous walking time : 3.5 hrs

Option 2 : Col de la Boucharde (2539m)

A mineral valley, where chamois and marmots soak up the sun! Crossing over the Garret torrent, you will head for the core of the Mercantour national park. A charming journey through the woods, following the torrent, will bring you to the 'Cabanes de Sanguinière', shortly after which the woods will be replaced by a high mountain pasture.

Accumulated Ascent : 990 m - Accumulated Descent : 440 m

Distance : 13 km - Continuous walking time : 6 hrs

Night at refuge de la Cayolle. Rooms and bathrooms shared.



Day 6 : Col de la Cayolle / Estenc

Option 1 : The breathtaking tour of the lakes. Your weeks trek rounds off in a climax with an enchanted tour around the glacial lakes of Allos, Garrets and la petite Cayolle. You will lose yourself on this journey through nature, where the blue sky is reflected in the clear waters of the lakes and the endemic flora strewn with alpine pastures.

Accumulated Ascent : 410 m - Accumulated Descent : 970 m

Distance : 13 km - Continuous walking time : 5.5 hrs

Option 2 : Highest summit, the Mont Pelat at 3050m. If you are a keen mountain-goer, you will not be able to leave the region without climbing the Mt Pelat, the highest local summit. A mountaintop whose name is etymologically transparent, it's flanks of barren rockslides cut across the blue sky. The tradition is to reach the summit at the rising of the sun and, on a clear day, enjoy this majestic 360° view : To the south, Corsica; a faint shadow on the liquid horizon, to the north, the distant Mont Blanc glistening white, and to the east, the Italian and Swiss Alps.

Accumulated Ascent : 1260 m - Accumulated Descent : 1820 m

Distance : 20 km - Continuous walking time : 8 hrs

You will be picked up at at 17.00 in front of refuge de la Cantonnière and driven back to Villeplane. You will be back to Villeplane at 18.30.

End of your journey.

If you have not come by car, you have the choice at the end of your week between staying an **extra night** in Villeplane (depending on availabilities) or returning to *Nice* by the mountain train which leaves *Entrevaux* at 19:21, arriving in *Nice* at 20:53! Please specify your choice when booking.



How to reach us

By Plane : To *Nice* airport or train station.

Airport Bus Services : (depart from terminal 1)

For the Train station 'Gare SNCF'

By Mountain Train : from *Nice* to *Entrevaux*

From the mountain train station 'Gare des chemins de fer de Provence' (not the 'Gare SNCF') There are 2 appropriate Micheline trains a day:

Please notify us if you are arriving at *Entrevaux* by the mountain train and we will arrange your 45 mins transfer to *Villeplane* (60€ per group).

By Coach : from *Nice* to *Guillaumes*

From « *Nice Grand Arénas* », bus station in *Nice* centre. (N.B. : There is one bus a day, do not miss it!). The bus station is not at the same place .

You must check time table before to book.

Times : Leaving *Nice* at

- From Monday to Saturday : 16.30
- Sunday : 08.00 and 16.30

Duration : 2 hrs

Please notify us if you are arriving at *Guillaumes* by coach, and we will arrange your 30 mins transfer to *Villeplane* (30€ per group).

By Car :

From Nice : Less than 2 hrs drive following directions for '*Digne*' (right) up through the stunning *Gorges de Daluis*.

From Digne-les-bains : 95 km drive, heading southeast to *Barreme*, then east to *St. André les Alpes* and *Les Scafarels*. 7 km east of *Annot*, head north again up the *Gorges de Daluis*.

From Barcelonnette : Come over *Col de Cayolle* (2326 m) and down past *Entraunes*.



CONTACT

Itinérance Trekking
"I-Trek"
Villeplane
06470 Guillaumes
FRANCE

info@itinerance.net
www.itinerance.net

tel : 00 33 (0) 4 93 05 56 01

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