LAKES AND REFUGES OF MERCANTOUR self-guided

Archaeological and cultural treasures!

Reference · 294

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DURATION	TRAVEL STYLE	LUGGAGE
6 days	**Self-guided**	**With luggage transfer**

ACCOMMODATION	LEVEL	FROM
Classic (dormitory)	**3/4 ★★★☆**	**490 €**

Mercantour National Park is a mosaic of natural environments which explains the richness of its fauna (not far from 9000 species, such as marmots, mouflons, golden eagles, grey wolves, amphibians.) and its flora (2067 plant species including edelweiss, genepi blanc, arnica, gentian...): the immediate proximity of the Mediterranean ensures ideal conditions for their existence.

The Mercantour is also characterized by its historical heritage. Dating from prehistoric times, the Valley of Wonders takes its name from the thousands of engravings on coloured stone slabs, the "ciappe", which decipher scenes of daily life and belief. It is characterized by its mineral and chaotic landscape, at the feet of imposing peaks.

You will love

- Unspoilt nature, exceptional flora and fauna
- Varied hikes, between mineral atmosphere, high lakes, flowering valleys, peaks with 360° views
- The Valley of Wonders and its 40,000 prehistoric engravings
- The particular geographical situation between sea and mountain
- One of the wildest national parks with the most varied landscapes

Day-by-day itinerary

DAY 1

Meeting at Le Boréon where you can leave your vehicle for the week in one of the many parkings lots of this small mountain hamlet.

BOREON - PAS DE MAIRIS - LA MADONNE DE FENESTRE

After the destructive storm of 2019, this particularly affected village compared to the rest of the Mercantour (no visible traces of damage on the rest of your route) is rebuilt with force... Facing the Alpha Park (interesting to visit if you arrive the day before), you climb in a remarkable conifer forest towards the Pas and the small refuge of Maïris to reach the Cime du Pisset. A panoramic view of the Vésubie opens up to you with, in the background, the famous Gelas, a stone colossus proudly dominating these remote valleys of the Alpes Maritimes. Descent on the hospices of the Madonna de Fenestre where you spend the night, **without luggage transport.**
5h00 walk / Altitude difference: +845 m; -400 m / 10.4 km

DAY 2

LA MADONNE DE FENESTRE - PAS DU MONT COLOMB - SAINT GRATS

Leaving from the Madonna, do not hesitate to stop at the Petite Vacherie, at the edge of the torrent, to buy a piece of tomme for your picnic, it is delicious (open when the herds are in the alpine pasture). You go up the torrent of the Vésubie which takes its source on the foothills of the Gelas (3143 m) and you contemplate during all your ascent, the Pas du Mont Colomb. The Pas du Mont Colomb (2548 m) is characterized by a narrow gap forming a "secret passage" between the Vésubie and the Gordolasque. During your rapid descent on the Gordolasque, you are probably watched by herds of ibex or chamois in the surrounding bars! Descent on one of the accommodations of Saint-Grats.
5h walk / Altitude difference: -700 m ; -1050 m / 12 km

DAY 3

SAINT GRATS - PAS DE L'ARPETTE - REFUGE DES MERVEILLES

Departing directly from Saint-Grat, you climb in a dense forest to reach the remarkable valley of Empuonrame. It is in this mineral universe that you finish the climb to the Pas de l'Arpette (2351 m), under the watchful eyes of the chamois. The Pas de l'Arpette is the entrance to the Mercantour National Park and the famous Vallée des Merveilles. Descent in the middle of many lakes to the refuge des Merveilles, **without luggage transport.**
5h00 walk / Altitude difference : +950 m; -410 m / 7 km

DAY 4

REFUGE DES MERVEILLES - VALLEE DES MERVEILLES - BAISSE BASTO

A long and busy day visiting where you have to leave early! From the Refuge des Merveilles, you go up the famous valley of the same name... In the middle of this mineral landscape sculpted by melting glaciers more than 10,000 years ago, lies an archaeological treasure of about 40,000 rock engravings mostly dated to around 3,300 BC. You join the Baisse de la Valmasque (2552 m), the Basto lake and the Baisse Basto (2693 m), a narrow passage in a scree overlooking the Fous valley. Descent by the famous GR52 to the beautiful restored refuge of Nice where a break on the terrace of Christophe will be well deserved. Another 1h30 of descent in the Gordolasque valley to reach your accommodation

6h30 walk / Altitude difference : +720 m; -1200 m / 18.5 km

DAY 5

LA BAISSE DE PRALS - BAISSE AUX 5 LACS - LA MADONE

A beautiful and intense morning climb from the valley of the Gordolasque to reach the valley of the Vésubie by the Lowers of Prals (2339 m) from where two variants are possible: or descend on the Madonna live by the "5 lakes", or tour a magnificent circus by 5 ridges, low in altitude, and that will delight lovers of panoramic walking. Go down to the Madonna and spend the night in a gîte, **without luggage**.

5h00 walk / Altitude difference: +900 m; -580 m / 12 km

DAY 6

LA MADONNE - LAC ET COL DE LA FENESTRE - LAC DE TRECOLPAS - LE BOREON

A day at altitude with the Finestra border pass (2475 m) from where the neighbouring Italian valley of the Argentera is revealed. The Trecolpas lake is suitable for a picnic break on the edge of its green lawns. Return to Boréon by the Vacherie.

5h30 walk / Altitude difference: +790 m ; -1100 m / 13 km

The programme has been drawn up on the basis of the latest information available at the time of writing; unforeseen circumstances are always possible and situations beyond our control may alter the programme.

Dates and prices

DEPARTURES AND PRICES

Departures possible every day from 9th June to 23rd September 2026

Without luggage transport :
€490 per person in standard accommodation
Single supplement without luggage transport: **€55**

Luggage transport supplement (except day 1, 3 et 5):
Group of 2 to 3 participants: **€135** per person
Group of 4 to 5 participants: **€85** per person
Group of 6 or more: **€55** per person
Based on one person: on request

Optional extras
5 picnics: **€80** per person

THE PRICE

Includes:

- Travel documents: the road book, description and IGN cards (1 complete road book for per group);
- Half board accommodation from dinner on the 1st day to breakfast on the last day;
- Luggage transport between accommodations, if you have chosen this option (except on day 1, 3 and 5);
- Organization and booking fees;
- The tourist taxes.

Does not include:

- Transportation to and from the starting point of the hike;
- Luggage transfers
- The drinks, the visits and personal expenses,...;
- The lunchtime picnics ;
  Cancellation assistance insurance.

The journey

LEVEL ***

Overall altitude: between 1500m and 2500 m
Altitude of accommodation: 1500 m on average
Duration of the stages: 5 to 6 hours of walking per day
Average positive altitude difference: 850 m per day
Maximum altitude difference: 950 m
Maximum crossing altitude: 2600 m
Nature of the terrain: medium mountain terrain in alpine pastures with many stony areas, the passage of some passes can still be snowed at the beginning of the season.

You have to be in a general good fitness level. Please practice a cardio sport such as hiking, running, cycling, from 3 to 4 hours a week. Your physical preparation will enable you to enjoy your trek to the maximum.
Please find the description of the levels by clicking here: levels of difficulty

The roadbook provides sufficient information on the itinerary of your hike. However, it is essential to be able to read a 1:25,000 map and to be sufficiently autonomous in the mountains to be able to tackle the itinerary with confidence, whatever the weather (fog, snow, etc.). Guiding is not included in the self-guided package. You will be crossing areas with no telephone network. For your own safety, you may wish to bring along a radio of the latest generation telephone with satellite connection.

This trip is organised in collaboration with our local partners, who are as committed as we are to providing you with an authentic experience.

ROAD BOOK

Your road book will be sent to you by post on receipt of payment of the balance of your stay. It includes :

- A route book,
- A set of IGN maps,
- A itinerary sheet with a list of accommodation,
- Luggage tags, if you have booked this option,
- Access to the digital application downloadable onto your smartphone.

For all bookings made less than 3 weeks before departure, paper travel documents cannot be sent. Only the digital version will be made available.

ACCOMMODATION

CLASSIC: in a gîte. Shared room for 4 to 12 people, sheets and towels are not provided (bring your own), bathroom facilities are on the landing.

MEALS

The meals served in the accommodation are balanced and varied. The food is hearty, adapted to the needs of hikers and often made from local produce.
Picnics can be booked as an optional extra, or you will find the shops you need in the villages. You can also book them with the accommodation providers on arrival for the following day. There are no picnics on the first day.

Please inform us about your food allergies and special diets **at the time of booking**.
We do our best to accommodate special diets (gluten-free, vegetarian, etc.). However, we encourage you to bring some additional products for your own picnics.

INTERNAL TRANSFERS

No transfers.

Practical information

ACCESS TO THE STARTING POINT

In Boréon, in the commune of St Martin Vésubie. You can leave your luggage at the Boréon gîte.

BY BUS FROM NICE

Lines d'Azur: BUS line no. 90 - departure 8:00 on Sunday from Grand Arénas, direction La Bolline
Bus Station; 16, Avenue des Diables Bleus; 06300 NICE Tel. +33 (0)4 93 85 62 15

BY CAR

From the A8 motorway, exit at Nice Saint Isidore (exit 52), take the RM6202 towards Digne for a distance of 18 km. At the exit of the village of Plan du Var, take on the right the RM 2265, indicating the Vésubie Valley. Then for 32 km, walk through the gorges of Vésubie and cross the villages and hamlets of Cros d'Utelle, St Jean la Rivière, Le Suquet, Lantosque, Roquebillière to reach Saint-Martin-Vésubie.
In order to plan your trip, we advise you to inquire about your route at the different sites: viamichelin.fr , mappy.fr.

END OF STAY

End of the hike in Boréon, your luggage will be at the gîte in Boréon.

INSURANCE

In accordance with regulations, we are covered by Professional Liability Insurance. Under no circumstances, we can replace your personal civil liability.
The repatriation insurance **IMPACT EVASION** that we offer is dedicated to **people living in Europe**. If it is not your case, we advise you to subscribe to another travel insurance which will cover you in case of injury and repatriation during your trek.

If you chose to take out repatriation insurance IMPACT EVASION with whom we propose, Altitude Mont Blanc will only serve as an intermediary between the client and the insurer. We cannot influence either party. We adhere to strict conditions of sale. You are responsible for compliance with the reporting procedures of any incident.

Before making any decision, contact **EUROP ASSISTANCE / IMPACT EVASION.**

TO CONTACT US

If you are late, contact the agency at: +33 (0)4 50 79 09 16 or +33 (0)6 42 49 76 07

Equipment and luggage

EQUIPMENT LIST

Clothing

- Walking trousers
- Shorts (Bikini/swimsuit, just in case!)
- Breathable or merino wool t-shirts
- Breathable or merino wool leggings
- Fleece or jumper
- Wind stopper or Goretex jacket
- Waterproof poncho + gaiters or Goretex trousers + waterproof rucksack cover
- Pair of gloves and a warm hat
- Sun hat or baseball cap
- Walking socks (1 pair per day)
- Sturdy walking boots with a good sole, already broken in
- 1 change of clothes for the evening
- A pair of comfortable shoes for the evening

Other Equipment

- Toilet bag
- Quick drying towel
- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Water bottle or Camelback (1.5 litre minimum)
- Knife, fork and spoon
- Plastic lunch box/plate for your picnic lunches
- Plastic cup for coffee
- Small First Aid kit (antihistamine, ibuprofen, Compeed type blister pads...)
- Survival blanket
- Head torch or hand torch
- Sleeping bag liner sheet and pillowcase (blankets provided at accommodation)
- Two adjustable and highly walking poles
- Identity card or passport

BACKPACK

Bring a comfortable backpack of 30 to 40 litres for your personal belongings for the day (warm clothes, waterproofs, water, plate and cutlery for your picnic, sunscreen and your identity papers) and please keep a little room to carry a picnic and snacks.

LUGGAGE TRANSPORT

You are allowed **1 soft, sports type bag, with all your possessions inside, of 12kg maximum per person** . Your baggage will be transported daily between accommodation by a logistics vehicle (except days 1, 3 and 5) where access is not always easy.

Baggage which is too heavy won't be accepted by the drivers, please think of their backs!

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Capital 6000 EUR - IM 074100150 - APE 7912Z - SIRET 48156356700025 - VAT FR67481563567
Professional insurance MMA SARL SAGA - Groupama guarantee 840,000 EUR

Postal booking form

Complete this form and return it with your deposit.

Last name	
First name	
Birth date	
Address	
Phone	
Mobile phone	
Email	
Requested trip	**LAKES AND REFUGES OF MERCANTOUR self-guided**
Number of days	**6**
Insurance	
Trip price	**490 €**
Estimated deposit (30%)	**147 €**
Signed in	
Date	
Signature	

Return with your deposit to

Altitude Montblanc, 62 Passage du Nant Devant, 74110 Montriond

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