Montagnes du Giffre

Haute-Savoie Mont-Blanc

Châtillon-sur-Cluses,
La Rivière-Enverse, Mieussy - Sommand,
Morillon, Samoëns,
Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval,
Taninges - Praz de Lys, Verchaix

haute savoie le Département

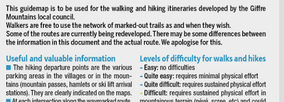
650 kilometres of signposted routes

54 guided walks

€6

Echelle 1/25000 - 1 cm = 250 m

destination-montagnesdugiffre.fr



HOW TO USE THE GUIDEMAP

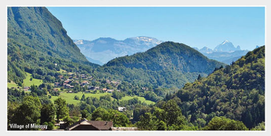
This guidemap is to be used for the walking and hiking itineraries developed by the Giffre Mountains local council.
Walkers are free to use the network of marked-out trails as and when they wish.
Some of the routes are currently being redeveloped. There may be some differences between the information in this document and the actual route. We apologise for this.

Useful and valuable information

■ The hiking departure points are the various parking areas in the villages or in the mountains (mountain passes, hamlets or ski lift arrival stations). They are clearly indicated on the maps.
■ At each intersection along the waymarked route, you'll find a post with:
- information about the location with the name of this intersection and the altitude. You'll find these names in the guidemap so you will always know where you are.
- information indicating the main directions so you always know where you're headed.
■ These signs will also provide the walking time to various locations. This will help you plan your route duration.
■ The information on this map will help you choose your route: whether you'd be walking along a road or a wide path, a footpath, a narrower, more varied section that can sometimes be more difficult.
■ The altitudes of the varied places will help you estimate the difficulties of the chosen route.
■ The legend will provide the necessary information to help you read this map and the signposts and markings that you'll come across along the way.

Follow the guide

This document provides details of a selection of routes. They are all suitable on foot. The durations there and back are indicated for pedestrians, and calculated based on a leisurely pace (flat terrain: 3 km/hr, downhill: 4 km/h or 500 m elevation gain/hr, uphill: 2 km/h or 300 m elevation gain/hr.



Levels of difficulty for walks and hikes

- **Easy:** no difficulties
- **Quite easy:** requires minimal physical effort
- **Quite difficult:** requires sustained physical effort
- **Difficult:** requires sustained physical effort in mountainous terrain (névé, scree, etc) and could include dangerous but equipped sections.
- **Very difficult:** requires sustained physical effort in mountainous terrain (névé, scree, etc) and could include dangerous sections that may or may not be equipped.

Guided outings: so many discoveries to be made..

To gain a better understanding of life in this area, of the history and local wildlife, set off with a mountain guide. They will share their passion for the Giffre Valley.
Find out more at the Tourist Offices, the contact details for which are on the back of this guide.

Using the lifts

The lifts at the ski resorts operate during the summer to allow hikers to reach the mountains without having to take on the steep climbs to get there, and to then be able to walk around the Alpine pastures and enjoy the views. These lifts will allow easy access to the resort's peaks and MTB track departure points. Opening hours and prices are available from the Tourist Offices.

MIEUSSY - SOMMAND

Bartou Trail

This trail departs from the village of Mieussy and will lead you to Jourdy cave, along a steep rocky path to Roche-Pallud pastures and then back down a spectacular ledge overlooking Saix waterfall.

View of Mieussy and Barlon mountain

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **5.5 hrs**
■ Elevation gain: **562 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **difficult (exposed passages)**

Departure
Le Jourdy, 2 km from Mieussy, towards Sommand.

Route
From Jourdy car park, the path leads you up to Jourdy cave, then up a narrow path along the cliff edge, equipped with a handrail, until you reach **Roche-Pallud**. The route then crosses Sommand plateau and bears left at an apartment complex, towards **Mieussy**. The path leads to the top of a waterfall over a footbridge, crosses a cliff along a narrow path equipped with a handrail and then heads down a scree slope until you reach Clos d'en Bas. You'll then be walking along some pleasant rural paths back to **Jourdy car park**.

To discover
- The Way of the Cross.
- Jourdy cave, used as a hiding place for the vicars of Mieussy during the Reign of Terror (1792-1796).
- The Alpine pastures and Sommand plateau.
- The view of the Mont-Blanc massif.

The Chapel of Saint Grat

An easy walk through the village and forest, with a peaceful viewpoint at the Chapel of Saint Grat, at an elevation of 850 m.

■ Type: **out - back**
■ Duration: **1 hr 20**
■ Elevation gain: **173 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **easy**
■ **Suitable for off-road wheelchairs.**

Departure
Mieussy Church

Route
Follow the road up to the right behind Mieussy Church, pass through the hamlet of Les Rasses and carry on along the Guillard forest track towards the **Chapel of Saint Grat**. You'll be walking up a gentle slope that isn't challenging.
There is a bench in front of the chapel, facing a great view of the Alps. Go back along the same route. If you're feeling brave, you could carry on up to the Roche-Pallud / Sommand pastures along a very steep cobblestone path dating from the Middle Ages.

To discover
- Along this route, you'll have some superb views of Mieussy, the entrance to the Giffre Valley and Mont Orchez.
- Mieussy Church, at the beginning of the route, can be recognised by its onion dome and Gothic-style door listed as a Historic Monument.
- The Chapel of Saint Grat (1697), devoted to the Holy Family and Saint Grat, protector of crops.

Pointe de Chalune

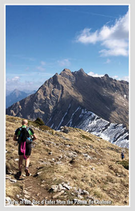
On this uphill hike, you'll have beautiful views of the Roc d'Enfer and Mont-Blanc.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **3 hrs**
■ Elevation gain: **550 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite difficult (exposed passages at the peak)**

Departure
Sommand, Pierre Rouge car park

Route
From the car park, go along the gravel track towards **Chalet Blanc**, at the heart of the Alpine pastures. After 1.3 km, go left along a small footpath towards the foot of the **Pointe de Chalune**. Then follow the mountainside path on the right up to the **Col de Chalune**. There is a path to the left that leads up to the **Pointe de Chavasse**. From the **Col de Chalune**, 30 to 45 minutes walk along a steep path to reach the peak, at an altitude of 2,116 m.

To discover
- Wild hike across Alpine pastures, with superb panoramic views of the surrounding mountains.
- On this route, you'll run into cows and sheep as well as remarkable mountain flora.
- In this sector, the route passes through privately-owned pastures and dogs are not permitted due to the presence of flocks and guard dogs.



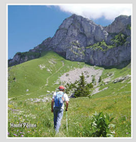
Chapel of Saint Grat

Tour of Haute Pointe

A pleasant trail to explore the lush-green pastures up on the slopes of this pretty, rugged peak.
Do not bring dogs on this route, even on a lead as you'll be passing by guard dogs and their flocks.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **3.5 hrs**
■ Elevation gain: **478 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
Sommand lake car park, to be reached from Mieussy.


Hamlet Frêtes

Route
From the lake, follow signs to the **Col de Cordon**. From this mountain pass, head down towards **Les Charmettes** and then up to **Les Charmettes d'en Haut**. Follow the path to the **Col de Chavannais**. The route crosses, below **Haute Pointe**, some very steep slopes (rocky passage equipped with a handrail) to reach the **Col de Chavan**. From this mountain pass, you can continue up to the peak of **Haute Pointe** (1,958 m) in around twenty minutes. Carry on as far as the **Chalets du Coin**, follow the farming track to the road, cross this road and then go along the road that leads to the **La Ramaz** chalets and then Sommand lake.

To discover
- As well as the lush-green pastures of Le Chablais, this trail also features some great views of the Sommand plateau, the Mont-Blanc massif and the peaks of the Alpine foothills all around.
- In this sector, the route passes through private-ly-owned pastures and dogs are not permitted due to the presence of flocks and guard dogs.

Haut Fleury from Roche-Pallud

This route runs along the ridges between the Praz de Lys and Sommand plateaus, with some magnificent views along the way.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **3 hrs**
■ Elevation gain: **550 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
Sommand – hamlet of Roche-Pallud. From Mieussy, after the Sommand tunnel, go right towards Roche-Pallud, around 2 km further on.

Route
From the hamlet of Roche Pallud, follow the easily visible footpath across the pastures towards **Pertuiset**. When you reach the paragliding take-off spot, follow the gravel track that passes below the 3 mountain chalets. From the **Platière** car park, head up to the ridge as far as the **Pointe Perret** (alt. 1,941 m). From the **Pointe Perret**, go on to the **Pointe de Haut-Fleury**. Go back along the same route.

To discover
- Mid-mountain route with some superb panoramic views of the Praz de Lys and Sommand plateaus and then the Chablais, Aravis mountains and Mont-Blanc in the distance.
- The very first paragliders took off from Pertuiset pastures in 1978.

Roche Pallud

Pertuiset - Start of the paragliding take-off area

TANINGES

Traditional villages loop trail

A hike to explore the villages on the southern side of the Giffre valley, where the traditional houses of Savoie are still intact. The way back is along the Art and Nature trail.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **4 hrs**
■ Elevation gain: **280 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
Taninges, car park at the Place du Château on the right banks of the Foron, opposite the old town.

Route
From the car park, head to the marketplace and go up the **Montée du Char** (steps at the beginning) towards the village of **Avonnex**. When you leave the village, cross the D902 and follow a small tarmac road for 100 m, then go right up the path that leads to the peak of this trail, **La Suet** (alt. 920m). From there, head down towards the village of **Le Mont**, then carry on towards **Verney**. Then you'll be crossing the hamlet of **La Chavonnette** and the villages of **Verdevant**, **Etry** and **Petit Jutteninges**. For the way back, cross the D902 and follow the path along the right banks of the river Giffre to **Taninges**.

Dominican at the Chapel of St. Anne - Taninges

To discover
- Along this varied route there are countless historic constructions such as a chapel, wash houses, traditional farms, a granary, etc.
- This is also a superb trail in terms of nature as you'll be walking across meadows and through forests to the banks of the river Giffre (Art and Nature Trail and Mélan Carthusian monastery). There are some magnificent panoramic views of the Haut-Giffre peaks to admire along the way.

Loëx Plateau Loop Trail

Family-friendly loop trail through the wilderness, with the local point being the pretty Jacquicourt Chapel.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **1 hr 45 min**
■ Elevation gain: **120 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **easy**

Giffre Mountain from Loëx plateau

Departure
From the village of Taninges. Follow signs for **Les Gets** (D907) for 3 km and then at the hamlet of **Les Moulins**, go right towards **Loëx mountain**. At the **Moulille Rouge junction**, go right and park at the departure point for the **Les Côtes** trail.

Route
Follow a wide forest track to the right that will lead you up over the hamlet of **Les Côtes** (1,450 m), an ancient Alpine village surrounded by perfectly maintained pastures. 500 m further on, follow the steep forest track up to the left to **Vercay chalet** (1,570 m) for a superb view of the **Col de Joux Plane**, **Pointe de Chamossière** and **La Bourgeoise**. After the chalet, go along the track to the left which leads onto a small path at the end of this walk, and then to **Jacquicourt Chapel**. After the Chapel, the route goes back down into the forest and then onto a narrow road back to the departure point.

To discover
- Loëx Plateau is a protected, Natura 2000 site. There are some remarkable plant and animal species here.
- Jacquicourt Chapel was built in 1679, marking the border between Taninges, Verchaix and Les Gets. It was destroyed the same year due to disputes regarding the borders of pastures, and then an exact replica was rebuilt between 1986 and 1989, putting an end to six centuries of conflicts.

Praz de Lys via the Cobblestones

This cobblestone path was built according to the Roman technique and was first unveiled in the Middle Ages by the monks from Mélan Carthusian monastery to get to the **Praz de Lys pastures, 1,000 m further up**. For a long time, **it was the only way to get to Praz de Lys.**

■ Type: **out - back**
■ Duration: climb: **2.5 hrs** descent: **1 hr 45 min**
■ Elevation gain: **850 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
Taninges, car park at the Place du Château on the right banks of the Foron, opposite the old town.

Cobblestone path - Taninges - Praz de Lys

Route
From the Place du Château, go up the 'Montée du Sapey' towards **Praz de Lys** via the cobblestones, on a small road which then leads onto an easier path. The cobblestone path leads into the forest before reaching **Le Pontet**, at an elevation of 1,300 m. The route then continues across the **Praz de Lys** pastures where you can choose to follow signs to **Le Grand Planey** and **Plic du Marcelly** or the centre of the resort. It is possible to turn around at **Praz de Lys** and go back down the same route.

To discover
A wide variety of landscapes, between villages, forests and pastures. Some magnificent views from the highlands of Taninges and from Praz de Lys over the Mont-Blanc and Chablis mountains.

Praz de Lys

PRAZ DE LYS

Roy Lake

Easy, family-friendly walk across Alpine pastures to Roy Lake, a treasure of Praz de Lys Sommand, facing Mont-Blanc.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **1 hr 10 min**
■ Elevation gain: **42 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
Col de la Ramaz car park (D308)

Route
From the mountain pass, follow signs for the 'Lac de Roy'. This stony footpath is wide and fairly flat, so the route is suitable for everyone. Go back along the same route.
There are several hikes from this lake: Pointe Perret (1,941 m), Pointe de la Couennaise (1,980 m) and the Plic du Marcelly (1,999 m).
There is also a loop trail from Les Moilliettes: at Roy Lake, continue towards Briny (25 min) and then to Les Moilliettes (10 min).

To discover
- An added bonus for this walk is that the route is a very popular one with marmots!
- Roy Lake is a natural, glacial mountain lake set at the heart of the pastures bearing the same name. It is a magnificent place. The walk up to the lake via the balcony trail up the Col de la Ramaz facing Mont-Blanc is also incredible.

View of Roy Lake and Mont Blanc from River Fleury

Roy Lake

Marcelly loop trail

Mid-mountain loop trail with a section along the ridges, remarkable views of Roy Lake, the Alpine pastures, the Mont-Blanc massif and Chablais peaks.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **4 hrs**
■ Elevation gain: **500 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **difficult (exposed passages)**

Departure
Les Moilettes car park on the Route du Col de la Ramaz (D308), as you leave Praz de Lys.

Route
100 m after the car park, follow a fairly steep rocky path that quickly leads up to Roy Lake. Go around the lake to the left towards the 'Frêtes de Penaille'. The path is quite exposed along the ridges towards the Pointe de la Couennaise.
To reach the Plic du Marcelly at an elevation of 1,999 m; avoid the Pas de l'Ane equipped with a handrail and go around via the north side of the peak. This route is not recommended for young children as there are some exposed sections between the Frêtes de Penaille and the Plic du Marcelly.
Go back via Gron pastures.

To discover
- The surrounding area of Roy Lake, a natural, glacial lake, and Gron pastures are natural areas where you're very likely to see marmots and chamois. Of course, cows will also add to the beauty of this area in the summer grazing period.
- Along the ridges, you'll have a view of the Giffre valley, Le Môle and the Aravis mountains. The 360° view from the Plic du Marcelly is incredible.

The Pic du Marcelly via Le Planey

Mid-mountain trail with remarkable views of the surrounding valleys and mountains, Mont-Blanc, Jura, Bornes-Aravis, etc.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **3.5 hrs**
■ Elevation gain: **500 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
Le Planey car park, Praz de Lys. When you arrive in Praz de Lys from **Taninges**, go left twice and then in **Canevet**, continue along the small road to the right.

Route
From the car park, follow a footpath that begins at the embankment above the road, follow signs to the **Plic du Marcelly**. The path through the meadow is quite steep up to the bend and Le Planey ski tow. At this bend, there's a path to the left for a detour via **Le Planey** (viewpoint). Carry on until you reach the ski tow arrival station, then go up the rocky path into the forest. This climb isn't a particularly difficult one. When you leave the forest, a narrow path will lead you to the north side of the Plic du Marcelly. Go back via **Gron pastures**.

To discover
Along this loop trail, there are many viewpoints overlooking the Chablais mountains, Mont-Blanc massif, the peaks of the Haut-Giffre and the Aravis mountains. Make sure you stop for a break at Le Planey. There is a bench here and a breathtaking view of the Haut Giffre peaks. At the Pic du Marcelly, there's an orientation table featuring the names of each of the surrounding peaks.

Le Planey

On the ridge between Roy Lake and Pointe Perret

Marcelly - Roy Lake - Briny Lake

The Pointe du Haut Fleury

Family-friendly hike through the Alpine pastures of Praz de Lys-Sommand. From the viewpoint at the peak, there's a remarkable view from Lake Geneva to the Alps.

On the ridge between Roy Lake and Pointe Perret

■ Type: **out - back**
■ Duration: climb: **1 hr 35** descent: **1 hr 05**
■ Elevation gain: **476 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
Les Moilettes car park on the Route du Col de la Ramaz (D308), as you leave Praz de Lys.

Route
From Les Moilettes, follow a fairly steep rocky path that quickly leads up to Roy Lake. Carry on to the left around the lake and follow the steady climb up the mountain until you reach the path up to the Pointe du Haut Fleury, at an elevation of 1,981 m. Go back along the same route.

To discover
- Roy Lake, a superb mountain lake set at the centre of Alpine pastures.
- At the peak, there are two orientation tables with a panoramic view and names of the peaks before you. From mid-July to mid-August, you can take the chairlift. You'll have a view of the Jura, Lake Geneva, the Chablais mountains, Mont-Blanc massif and the Aravis mountains.

The Pointe du Hauet Fleury

Mid-mountain hike through forests and across pastures, with countless views of the entire region.

■ Type: **out - back**
■ Duration: climb: **2 hrs 20 min** descent: **1 hr 45 min**
■ Elevation gain: **728 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
La Crotte car park. From Taninges, after **Fry** and the intersection with the Route du Col de l'Encrenaz, go right along the small road at the 1st bend for 1 km until you reach the small car park.
You can also access this route from the centre of **Praz de Lys** or from the **Pierre Rouge car park**.

Route
From the car park, go along the path to the right up to the **Rosset chalets**. The path then leads into the cliff and the forest, quickly comes out at a meadow and then goes up again to a flat section in the middle of the Alpine pastures. From there, a path to your left will guide you up along the ridges and then to the peak (1,963 m) in around 1 hour.

To discover
- A hike through mountainous terrain, far from the crowded villages and resorts. Moufions and chamois are often seen in this area.
- Magnificent views of the valleys and surrounding peaks.

View of Mont-Blanc from the climb up to the Pointe d'Ublé

Geographic information

main secondary road
secondary road
urban area
other tarmac road
footpath, forest track
path
track
Ski lift / open in summer
lake
watercourse
forest
rocks / scree
couloir line (liquidizance: 20 m)
peak
mountain pass (col)
challenging section

SIXT 757 m
LUCHE 660 m
LES VAGNYS 1295 m
Fargot 638 m
Roche Plane 2198 m
Passage du Désir 2347 m

Touristic informations

car park
Tourist Office
train station
mountain refuge
campsite
shelter
motor home parking area
museum
discovery trail
via ferrata
climbing spot
paragliding take-off/landing site
horse-riding centre
leisure complex
swimming spot
cheese for sale
heritage site to visit
natural site to visit
orientation table/viewpoint
major peak
church/chapel/oratory/cross
Sixt-Passy Nature Reserve boundary

Signs and markers

Main departure point for walks: All each departure point, there's a post indicating the various directions (see diagram).

Secondary departure point for walks: All each departure point, there's a post indicating the various directions (see diagram).

Main direction: Peaks and other interesting places to explore.

Network intersection: All each of these intersections, there's a post indicating the various directions. (see diagram).

Signpost

Markers

Marked trail (PR - walks and hikes)
Wrong direction
Loop-distance (GR) hiking trail
GRD
GRP®

'Au Fil du Giffre' (Along the Giffre) trail
GRP® long-distance hiking trail (Red and yellow markings - GRP® (see diagram).
Marked trail (PR - walks and hikes) Yellow markings (see diagram).

THE GIFFRE VALLEY

The Giffre Mountains stand between Lake Geneva and Mont-Blanc, offering a wild area of greenery close to the big cities. This 351 km² area stretches across eight towns: Châtillon-sur-Cluses, La Rivière-Enverse, Mieussy - Sommand, Morillon, Samoëns, Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval, Taninges - Praz de Lys and Verchaix.

The countless peaks surrounding this area, some of them standing at elevations of over 3,000 metres, as well as the exceptional diversity of wildlife have made it one of the most fascinating hiking sectors in France. Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval, Samoëns, Mont-Blanc, Aravis, Bornes-Aravis, Fiz-Platé and Les Aiguilles Rouges are the highlights of a much-loved hiking destination, which attracts hikers to Haute-Savoie. The highlight of a much-loved hiking destination, which attracts hikers to Haute-Savoie. The highlight of a much-loved hiking destination, which attracts hikers to Haute-Savoie. The highlight of a much-loved hiking destination, which attracts hikers to Haute-Savoie.

For decades, walkers of all ages have been coming from all over world to explore the rare and abundant landscapes here, with ancient farms, chapels steeped in history, Alpine pastures, waterfalls and mountain lakes.
The 650 km of waymarked trails offer a wide range of routes, for family-friendly walks to sporty hikes over one or several days.

Chalets de Vry

MIEUSSY

Tour of Mont Mailly

A peaceful hike through the forest before coming to vast foothills and the very beautiful village of Ivoray.

Ivoray hamlet

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **1 hr 45 min**
■ Elevation gain: **280 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
The Pont du Diable bridge

Route
From the Pont du Diable bridge, follow the wide path to the right alongside the river Giffre to reach **Bieully-Est**. Head towards **Ivoray** as far as **Le Platy**, then go left towards **'Le Charjoux'**. The path then leads into a very beautiful, leafy forest. At Le Charjou, head towards **Ivoray** as far as **Les Étergées** before reaching the village of Ivoray. Then go along the 'La Monère du Bouton' road (towards the Pont du Diable). When you get to Les Tooséères (marker), follow signs for the **Pont du Diable** via **Bieully-Est** (same route as the way out) or head towards the **Pont du Diable** via **Dessy**.

To discover
- Pont du Diable gorges.
- The plateau and village of Ivoray.
- Dessy viaduct.

Ivoray – Sur le Mont

This is an easy nature walk departing from Mieussy to explore the remarkable village of Ivoray with its impressive farms and the little mountain village of Sur le Mont with wonderfully restored farms.

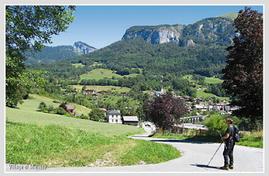
■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **1 hr 40 min**
■ Elevation gain: **280 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
The **Pont du Diable** bridge that can be reached from the village of Mieussy.

Sur le Mont

Route
From the **Pont du Diable** car park, follow signs for **Ivoray** as far as **Bieully-Est**. Continue heading towards **Ivoray** until you reach the village. When you leave the village, go along the narrow road to the hamlet of **Les Rouges**, turn left and head to the hamlet of **Bois Gervaz**. Follow the path and then the road to **Sur le Mont**, then head into the forest up a steep path that leads to the ridge marking the border between the Arve and Giffre valleys. Cross a meadow along the edge of the woods until you reach the **La Biolle chalets**. Follow the first path to the left down to **Bois Gervaz**. Go back to the car park by following signs to the **Pont du Diable**.

To discover
- The villages of Ivoray and Bois Gervaz.
- The very beautiful village of Sur le Mont, the view across the Giffre and Arve valleys.
- Bois Gervaz pottery workshop.


Village of Ivoray

Hamlets of Leÿ and Messy

An easy nature walk from Mieussy to explore the rural hamlets where farming practices are still very much alive.

■ Type: **loop**
■ Duration: **1 hr 45 min**
■ Elevation gain: **280 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
CEN Viaduct (former railroad used by the 'Chemins de fer économiques du Nord'). This viaduct is in front of the community centre in the centre of Mieussy.

Hamlet of Messy

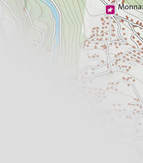
Route
Head to Le Foron bridge and follow the path to the right to Messy, via **Vivier** and **Fromenson**. At the junction with the Route de Sommand, go straight on along the main road. Follow the Route de la Crusaz towards **Leÿ**. In **Leÿ**, turn left just after the chapel and then follow the path to **Anthon**. Follow the road for 500 m then go along the path to the right that leads to the Route de Vivier.

To discover
- As you approach Messy, you'll have a view of Mont-Blanc and the Pointe d'Orchez and then Le Môle.
- As you pass via the Bois de Cher: view of the Haute-Pointe, Buet and Aiguille Verte peaks.
- Chapel of Leÿ (dating from 1837).

Leÿ hamlet

Jourdy cave

Jourdy cave is an unusual sight in our valley. A spring of very cold water flows from this vast cavity.



■ Type: **out - back**
■ Duration: climb: **55 min** descent: **35 min**
■ Difference in altitude: **260 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
Le Jourdy, 3.5 km from Mieussy, towards Sommand.

Route
The climb begins with quite a steep track which then leads onto a small footpath which is just as steep. It is a Way of the Cross with thirteen stations. You're in for a surprise. The cave has been transformed into a sanctuary devoted to the Holy Family. You'll feel a stream of fresh air coming from the depths.

To discover
Jourdy cave was used as a hiding place for the vicars of Mieussy during the Reign of Terror (1792-1796). A plaque on the cave wall tells us that this sanctuary devoted to the Holy Family was founded on 8 May 1881.

The Môle and the Arve valley from the Pointe d'Orchez

CHÂTILLON-SUR-CLUSES

Mont Orchez - 1,347 m

Mont Orchez is the peak of Châtillon-sur-Cluses and overlooks Arve valley. A short detour will take you to the Chapel of Saint Innocent.

■ Type: **out - back**
■ Duration: climb: **1 hr 45** descent: **1 hr 05**
■ Elevation gain: **517 m**
■ Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
The hamlet of Larroz in Châtillon-sur-Cluses. At the Col de Châtillon, head towards Larroz for 2 km. Park just before the hamlet.

Route
From the car park, go up the road to the hamlet of Larroz. At the basin, go right towards **Mont Orchez via the Creux du Plane**, then follow the arrow signs to the left, up towards the forest. The path up through the undergrowth is quite steep, and leads all the way up to the **Creux du Plane** junction. Carry on towards **Mont Orchez**. After around a 30 min walk up a fairly steep path, the path leads into the forest before reaching the peak. From the peak, you'll have a view of the Arve valley, the Môle and Bargy mountains just opposite.

To discover
- The hamlet of Larroz.
- Chapel of Saint Innocent.
- A view looking down across the Arve valley, the Môle and Bargy mountains.

The Môle and the Arve valley from the Pointe d'Orchez

RECOMMENDATIONS

This area has been shaped by past generations. Let's protect it for the future generations. Enjoy this environment but make sure you respect it.

Respect and courtesy

■ Some of the paths are used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. To make sure everyone can enjoy this path, ensure you respect other users (farmers, foresters, local residents, etc.).
■ Cyclists and horse riders, bear in mind that you go at a faster speed than pedestrians, so to avoid any accidents, slow down, be vigilant and let users coming the other way pass.
■ On the mountainside with the lifts, special pedestrian and MTB routes have been created so that everyone can enjoy their chosen activity. Be careful at any intersections where these routes cross over one another. On downhill MTB routes such as Enduro routes, some sections are to be shared with pedestrians. Mountain bikers and pedestrians, remain vigilant to ensure everyone's safety.

Pleasure and safety

■ In the mountains, an enjoyable walk can very quickly turn sour if you don't have what you need in your backpack to deal with the various circumstances: heat, rain, wind, fatigue, hunger, thirst. Clouds can appear suddenly, carried by strong winds, and you might not have time to get back to your departure point. Plan for your outing!
■ If you are alone, imagine the consequences of hurting your ankle in the depths of the forest late afternoon! Always let someone know where you're going and what time you expect to arrive back.
■ The Adret mountainside is south facing and is often very sunny. You are advised to go for a hike on this side in the mornings to avoid high temperatures.

Farming and the Forest

■ **Farmers and foresters** use these natural spaces and paths for their livelihood. Most of the paths cross through or near private property which is often used as farming land. Respect the work of these farmers!
In Alpine pastures, do not scare the herds, keep your dogs on a lead.
■ In the mountains, the grass in the fields and pastures is very important for farmers, and the same applies to recently planted trees for foresters. To protect these resources, stay on the footpaths, close gates behind you. If animals escape, they could be injured or cause an accident.
■ Wood is a significant economic resource. The resources of the forest are used to produce wood for the lumber industry and heating, to protect the ground and make access easier for the various users of the forest. Respect the work of foresters.
■ On private forest land, it is forbidden to take anything out of the forest, such as mushrooms for example. In a state-owned forest, any foraging must be done sparingly.

Pertuiset - Paragliding take-off area

Access and parking

■ With the protection of nature in mind, the Environmental Code forbids any motor vehicles outside of national, departmental and local public roads, country lanes and private paths that are open to the public.
■ Farmers, foresters and maintenance workers use these paths to work. A badly parked vehicle can obstruct these workers and could be damaged. Please do not block any access roads when you park and use the authorised parking areas marked on the map.

In winter

■ The suggested routes are not all feasible in winter. In mountainous areas, some sectors are at risk of avalanches. In periods of snowfall, signs might also be partly covered or hidden.
■ Make sure you stay on the routes that have been specifically designed for pedestrians and for snowshoeing. Ask at the Tourist Office for information, they have available documentation.
■ If you plan on leaving the safe, marked-out areas, make sure you are aware of the risks, the snow conditions and dangerous areas that should not be accessed.

Buet Peak

DRIVING TIME BETWEEN VILLAGES

approximate time in minutes	Cirque du Fer à Cheval	Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval	Samoëns	Morillon	Verchaix	La Rivière-Enverse	Taninges	Mieussy	Châtillon-sur-Cluses
Cirque du Fer a Cheval	0 min	10 min	15 min	20 min	25 min	25 min	30 min	35 min	30 min
Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval	10 min	0 min	10 min	15 min	15 min	20 min	20 min	30 min	20 min
Samoëns	15 min	10 min	0 min	5 min	10 min	10 min	15 min	20 min	15 min
Morillon	20 min	15 min	5 min	0 min	5 min	5 min	10 min	20 min	10 min
Verchaix	25 min	15 min	10 min	5 min	0 min	10 min	10 min	20 min	15 min
La Rivière Enverse	25 min	20 min	10 min	5 min	10 min	0 min	10 min	15 min	5 min
Taninges	30 min	20 min	15 min	10 min	10 min	10 min	0 min	10 min	5 min
Mieussy	35 min	30 min	20 min	20 min	20 min	15 min	10 min	0 min	15 min
Châtillon sur Cluses	30 min	20 min	15 min	10 min	15 min	5 min	5 min	15 min	0 min

THE 'PATOU' PYRENEAN MOUNTAIN DOG, A BORN-AND-BRED LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN

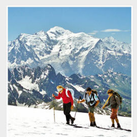
This big white dogs, commonly known as *Patous*, are trained to protect flocks from predators. They will react instinctively to any threat to the flock.

To avoid any protective reaction, make sure you respect the following precautions:

■ When you are approaching a flock, give the animals a wide berth and walk around the pasture.
■ Be aware of gestures that may seem harmless to you such as taking photos or trying to pet or feed a lamb.
Be calm and passive around the dogs to reassure them.
■ The '*patou*' protects and defends their flock, respect their role.

Leÿ hamlet - Pyrenean mountain dog

MOUNTAIN PROFESSIONALS



They will be delighted to advise you, assist you, and help organise a tour that is suited to your needs.

You will then be able to set off on the footpaths of the Giffre valley, to explore the hidden gems of our mountains, and also discover Alpine fauna, flora and the history of these mountains and the people who have helped shape them.

If the tour guides are available at the Tourist Offices.

If you require any further information, contact the Tourist Offices.

THERE ARE THREE NATURA 2000 SITES ACROSS THE GIFFRE MOUNTAINS

3 NATURA 2000 sites stretch across the Giffre Valley, and each one boasts a superb natural environment both in terms of landscape and wildlife. These areas were classified by the European Union thanks to their fascinating plant and animal biodiversity (rare or fragile species of wild plants or animals, and the natural habitats they flourish in).

The goal of the NATURA 2000 classification is to ensure these areas are protected and kept in optimal condition for the natural habitats and the remarkable species there. There is a balance here between human activity (pastoralism, leisure activities, hunting, etc.) and the protection of biodiversity.
The French State and the European Union allocate funding every year for specific initiatives.

The NATURA 2000 sites here are:

NATURA 2000 Roc d'Enfer

VERCHAIX

Verchaix Trail

This trail is a chance to explore the fascinating history and natural environment in this area, thanks to the informative panels along the way.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: **1 hr**
- Elevation gain: **95 m**
- Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
Verchaix Church.

Route
This route begins with a visit of the church built in 1783 and devoted to St. Guérin.
After the church, take the first road on the left. It leads past the 'Maison Rouge', with a traditional pebble stone curtain wall.
The route then bears left once again, back behind the church and along the 'La Voie Courbe' path down to **Charnière-Lornaz**.
After the cross, go straight on until you reach the intersection with the footpath leading to the footbridge over the Valentine.
Follow signs to **Verchaix**. The path then leads up to the village after passing Lornaz farms.

To discover
- Panoramic view of the Giffre valley, the resorts of Morillon and Samoëns and the Giffre mountains.
- Built heritage in Verchaix.

Jacquicourt Chapel (1,610 m)

The chapel is in a remarkable setting, at Loëx Plateau, a 400 ha site which is protected by a biotope order.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **3 hrs 25 min** descent: **1 hr 25 min**
- Elevation gain: **670 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
Verchaix town hall.

Route
From Verchaix town hall, follow signs for **Jacquicourt Chapel** via **Les Têtes**. Go along the wide footpath to **Les Devants**, then follow signs for **Le Frêne** and then **La Plaigne d'Etry**.
When you leave this village, take the path that leads up to the **La Fetaz** chalets, and then a few minutes later to the **Les Têtes** chalets.
Carry on along a gravel track and then leave this path in **Veroy** to follow another path to **Jacquicourt chapel**.
On the way back, walk back as far as the intersection with **Veroy** and then head down to the **Pré du Four** meadow. Keep going down towards **La Chaumette – Verchaix**. **From La Chaumette chalets**, follow signs for **Verchaix centre** until you reach the town hall.

To discover
The history of the chapel began in June 1679 when it was finally built following legal proceedings that lasted 366 years. The ownership of the plot of land where it was built was disputed between the towns of Les Gets, Taninges and Samoëns and it was demolished in August of the same year. In 1986, the chapel we can see today was built on the foundations of 1679.

The Pointe d'Angolon (2,090 m)

From the Col de Joux Plane, this trail along the ridges goes from the Pointe de Chamossière to the Pointe d'Angolon peak. This is a quiet hiking trail and it is well worth the visit with some beautiful panoramic views.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **1 hr 55 min** descent: **50 min**
- Elevation gain: **400 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
The Col de Joux Plane, accessible from Samoëns.

Route
From the mountain pass, go along the path on the right before the 'Accueil Nordique' chalet, to **La Bourgeoise**.
Follow the path to **Mapellet**. Continue along a ridge towards the Pointe d'Angolon. This path winds around to the **Collu de Chamossière** and then there's a steep climb up to the arrival station of Chamossière chairlift.
The path then leads around the back of a Gazex avalanche control system and then there's a steep rocky passage up to the Collu peak, equipped with a handrail. Continue along the ridge to reach the Pointe d'Angolon.
On the way back, head back to the chairlift station and then go along the track down towards the lake.

To discover
- Care must be taken along the ridge from which you'll see the dizzying couloirs of loose rock plunge down to the Cléveux torrent.
- The 360° panoramic view from Lake Geneva to the Chablais peaks: Cornettes de Bise, Dent d'Oche, the Haut Giffre peaks and the Mont-Blanc massif.

SAMOËNS

The Criou Chalets (1,664 m)

Criou mountain is iconic in Samoëns. It is also a fantastic viewpoint across the Giffre valley and Mont-Blanc massif.
The limestone pavements here feature one of the deepest chasms in the world: the Mirdoïda - 1,630 m.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **3 hrs 10 min** descent: **1 hr 45 min**
- elevation gain: **934 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Route
From the car park, the route begins along a wide forest track. At the hamlet of **Les Turchets** follow signs for the Chalets de Pertuet.
At the Chalets de Pertuet, go right along a path that crosses over the Alpine pastures towards Le Trot, with no uphill sections.
From the Chalets du Trot the route then leads to the nearby Chalets de Criou along a pleasant path shaped into the limestone pavement.
For the way back, head back to the Chalets du Trot. Go left and follow signs for the **Chalets des Feux** then **Vallon**. At the **Les Turchets** marker, you'll be back on the same route as the way out. Carry on until you reach the car park.

To discover
The mountain chalets: Pertuet, Trot (bar/café), Criou and Les Feux. This is the only hike that is along an exposed route the whole way.

Chantemerle and Les Suets forest

There were once people living in this magnificent village all year round and there was a school just below the chapel. The farms all feature beautiful, elegantly sculpted stone lintels.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: **3 hrs 20 min**
- Elevation gain: **530 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
The 'Gros Tilleul' square in the centre of Samoëns.

Route
From the Place du Gros Tilleul (linden tree planted in 1438), go between the church and the town hall, then go right behind the Écuries du Château, and follow the path to **Chantemerle**.
The path then goes up to the hamlet of La Granglat, crosses the village of **Les Combes** to **Chantemerle**. Go through the village and follow signs to **Les Chosalets**.
Just before Les Chosalets, go right to **Samoëns via Les Suets forest**.
The path leads into the forest and then down towards **Chantemerle**. Follow signs to **Samoëns** to the left. The path then leads through the hamlet of **La Granglat** then back to **Gros Tilleul** square.

To discover
- The lintels of the doors and windows in cut stone, sculpted by 'Kegnes and Frahans' (builders and sculptors who made Samoëns famous).
- Chantemerle Chapel, built in 1684 and devoted to Saint François de Sales.

Le Bérouze - Mathonex - Vigny

This route will mainly take you along ancient rural footpaths that have since been restored, to explore chapels and old chalets and discover how people lived in this valley and their traditions.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: **3 hrs**
- Elevation gain: **300 m**
- Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
The Place du Bérouze, west entrance from Samoëns on the Taninges side.

Route
From the village, follow the path up the valley. Very quickly, you'll come to the Combe des Verdets where a small lake can be found at certain times of the year. There is a slight uphill section to the Col de Bostan. The sign at the peak marks the border with Switzerland.
From there, go left along a footpath that winds across the steep grassy slopes of the Tête de Verdet and then to the Tête de Bostan.
The path then goes downhill across the peak of Les Terres Maudites until you reach the Les Lagots intersection. Follow signs for the **Refuge de Bostan**.

To discover
The Clos Parchet ecomuseum, the many ornatories, the traditional architecture of the valley's farms.

The Tête and Col de Bostan (2,295 m)

This is one of the valley's classic trails and it is possible to depart either from La Golése refuge or Bostan refuge. The Col de Bostan marks the border with Switzerland.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **2 hrs 15 min** descent: **1.5 hrs**
- Elevation gain: **526 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
You can get to Bostan refuge from the Plan des Arches car park above the village of Les Allamands, in Samoëns.

Route
From the refuge, follow the path up the valley. Very quickly, you'll come to the Combe des Verdets where a small lake can be found at certain times of the year. There is a slight uphill section to the Col de Bostan. The sign at the peak marks the border with Switzerland.
From there, go left along a footpath that winds across the steep grassy slopes of the Tête de Verdet and then to the Tête de Bostan.
The path then goes downhill across the peak of Les Terres Maudites until you reach the Les Lagots intersection. Follow signs for the **Refuge de Bostan**.

To discover
- From the Tête and Col de Bostan, there's a panoramic view of the rugged peaks of the Dents du Midi and the peaceful Val d'Illiez pastures. You'll also be able to see the western side of the Dent Blanche and Col du Pas au Taureau.
- A few metres lower down, towards the Pas de La Boîte, is the small Swiss refuge of Bossetan (Swiss spelling), without a guardian.

Bostan Refuge (1,769 m)

Bostan Refuge is in a glacial combe down from the Col de Bostan, the Swiss border.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **55 min** descent: **1 hr 15 min**
- Elevation gain: **673 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
The **Plan des Arches** car park above the village of Les Allamands, in Samoëns.

Route
Follow the wide footpath at the far end of the parking area. This path is a steady climb into the pretty Bostan forest and then you'll be leaving the forest just before arriving at the Bostan mountain chalets.
(You'll pass by a basin sculpted into stone, dating from 1873).
The route overlooks the superb Bostan valley, dotted with sections of limestone pavement and rock, with the Dents d'Oddaz peaks towering to the right.
The path then continues across Alpine pastures that are still in use, and then to the refuge, a sturdy building between the pastures and limestone pavement.

To discover
Overlooking the refuge is an impressive line of rugged peaks, including the Dents d'Oddaz and Dents Blanches mountains. These sharp peaks give this area its Alpine character.

Folly Refuge (1,558 m)

Folly Refuge is on the impressive slopes of the Criou and Tendraische, facing the Pointe du Tuet and Dents D'Oddaz.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **2 hrs** descent: **1 hr 15 min**
- Elevation gain: **699 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
The **Pied du Crêt** car park on the Routes des Allamands, in Samoëns.

Route
Follow the footpath alongside **Latay** pastures. The path then follows a series of hairpin bends up into a forest of spruce and beech trees, to the austere environment of the Folly pastures. You'll then come to the refuge, a sturdy building nestled up against a rocky cliff. The upper terrace is facing the Pointe du Tuet, the Dents d'Oddaz and also overlooks Latay valley.

To discover
The Dalles du Tuet climbing spot.

The Lac des Chambres (2,100 m)

The Lac des Chambres is a very surprising lake. It is rare that this lake is abundant in water, and you are more likely to witness a polar-type landscape with blocks of ice either floating or washing up on the shores, depending on the season.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **1 hr 35 min** descent: **1 hr**
- Elevation gain: **542 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
The Folly Refuge can be reached from the Pied du Crêt car park on the Route des Allamands, in Samoëns.

Route
From the refuge follow signs for the **Lac des Chambres**. The path is quite steep and after walking uphill for around 45 minutes, there's a track to the left leading to one of the entrances to Jean-Bernard chasm. Shortly after, you'll reach **Les Eaux Froides** via a scree slope that is often covered in snow. Towering over 700 m up to your left are the staggering rock faces of the Pointe des Chardonnières and Pointe Rousse, which give this lake a 'high-mountain' feel.
There is a steep uphill section via a sub-alpine meadow that leads to the Lac des Chambres.
Go back along the same route.

To discover
This is a proglacial lake. A thick layer of ice can be found across the surface of the water during the spring and until the end of July. Water drains little by little into the maze of underground networks and the ice melts on the lake's uneven bed, then cracking to form a blocksfield made from blocks of ice.

Refuge and Col de La Golése (1,671 m)

The path up to the Col de La Golése has been used for many years and is fairly easy to access. This route was used to get to the neighbouring country of Switzerland via the Col de Coux.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **1 hr 40 min** descent: **1 hr 05**
- Elevation gain: **575 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
The **Plan des Arches** car park above the village of Les Allamands, in Samoëns.

Route
From the Les Allamands car park, follow signs for the Refuge de La Golése. After the Chanonnes Chalets, there is a steady uphill section that leads to the Alpine pastures, with the Pointe d'Angolon towering over to the left, then the route continues to the La Golése Refuge on the right just before the mountain pass.
You can either go back the same way you came or head across the Bostan valley (45 min).
From the refuge, follow the footpath to the east (towards **Bostan Refuge**) which goes slightly uphill before crossing over the path to the Tête de Bostan in **Les Lagots**.
The route will lead you to Bostan Refuge. Follow signs for the Plan des Arches car park.

To discover
- Overlooking the peaceful Alpine pastures are the staggering Dents d'Oddaz peaks and the Dents Blanches mountains.
- This route was once used by peddlers and pilgrims on their way to St. Maurice abbey (Valais, Switzerland).

La Bourgeoise

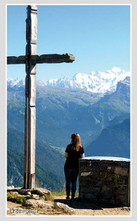
The La Bourgeoise peak is a fantastic viewpoint across the Giffre valley and Mont-Blanc massif. There is an orientation table featuring the names of the main peaks you can see.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: **1 hr 15 min**
- Elevation gain: **79 m**
- Level of difficulty: **very easy**

Departure
The Col de Joux Plane, accessible from Samoëns.

Route
From the mountain pass, go along the path on the right before the 'Accueil Nordique' chalet, to **La Bourgeoise**. Follow the wide footpath until you reach the peak marked with a cross. Go back along the same route.

To discover
The Mont-Blanc massif and Giffre valley.



Geographic information
main secondary road
secondary road
urban area
other tarmac road
footpath, forest track
path
track
Ski lift / open in summer
lake
watercourse
forest
rocks / scree
contour line (top distance 20 m)
peak
mountain pass (col)
challenging section

Touristic informations
car park
Tourist Office
train station
mountain refuge
campsite
shelter
motor home parking area
museum
discovery trail
via ferrata
climbing spot
paragliding take-off/landing site
horse-riding centre
leisure complex
swimming spot
cheese for sale
heritage site to visit
natural site to visit
orientation table/viewpoint
major peak
church/chapel/oratory/cross
Sixt-Passy Nature Reserve boundary

Signs and markers
Main departure point for walks: At each departure point, there's a post indicating the various directions (see diagram).
Secondary departure point for walks: At each departure point, there's a post indicating the various directions (see diagram).
Main direction: Peaks and other interesting places to explore.
Network intersection: At each of these intersections, there's a post indicating the various directions. (see diagram).
Signpost
Markers
Marked trail (PR - walks and hikes)
Wrong direction
Long-distance (GR) hiking trail
GR©
GRP©
'Au Fil du Giffre' (Along the Giffre) trail
(GRP®) long-distance hiking trail (Red and yellow markings - GRP® (see diagram).
(Marked trail (PR - walks and hikes) Yellow markings (see diagram).

SIXT-FER-À-CHEVAL / PASSY NATURE RESERVE (Decree no. 2019-1218 of 21 November 2019)

Réserves naturelles de SIXT-FER-À-CHEVAL / PASSY

From Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval, two valleys nestle into the high peaks marking the borders with superb cirques: the Fer-à-Cheval, the Fond de la Combe and Les Fonts.

The power of the water is added to these majestic rock formations when in spring the waters of the 30 waterfalls in the Fer-à-Cheval and Rouget waterfall cascade with sheer force into the streams and the upstream waters.
From the vast and slightly slanted limestone surfaces transformed into limestone pavement, the many underground rivers then wind through galleries and caves. The most well-known of these places is the Désert de Platé, with a surface area of 15 km2. This karstic underground network is ideal for caving.
Limestone is dominant here but there are also siliceous surfaces found locally (clay, sandstone). These surfaces, when added to the major variations in elevation (700/3,100 m) and exposure, result in extreme diversity with regards plant life: 650 to 700 species, including 25 orchids, 14 gentians, 13 willows, 33 sedges and many more.

Bernard Snodgrass

The varied range of animal species reflects the different habitats found here: mixed forest, Alpine meadows, rocks, lakes and marshland are home to over 110 species of vertebrates.
Some of the most well-known are the chamois, ibex, golden eagle, grouse, rock partridge, black grouse, wood grouse, and it is only here that we can see this diverse range of Alpine species together in the same place.

Besides protecting this natural environment with fascinating heritage, the Nature Reserve also drives initiatives to showcase and spread awareness of this natural environment where the role of humans is at the centre. Humans were a late arrival to the area (no permanent residents before the religious conquest of the 12th century), but now play a key role with their housing, use of the pastures and forests, know-how, language, etc. The way that living beings, and humans in particular, have adapted to the stark conditions of the mountains is exemplary here.

BFF

Technical information
- Creation: 02/11/1977
- Surface area: 9,800 ha
- Towns: Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval and Passy
- Management: ASTERS
- Visitors reception desk: Fer à Cheval Maison de la Réserve/reception chalet 74740 Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval Tel.: +33 (0)4 50 34 91 90.
- Geology- geomorphology: The limestone terrain of the Fauciigny region of Hautes Alpes, part of the separated sedimentary layer of the Passy Reserve (Morcles nappe for geologists).
- Animal species: 110 species including 3 fish, 5 amphibians, 6 reptiles, 70 nesting birds, 26 mammals.
- Plant species: around 700 plant species, 23 of which are protected.

Regulations: rules of good conduct
The beauty of the landscapes and diversity of habitats make the Haut Giffre a very popular area with visitors.
However, high visitor numbers can cause issues: damage created by trampling, fires, vehicles, rubbish.
To be able to make the most of this welcoming natural environment, respect the regulations in force:

- No rubbish left behind. It is damaging to the environment and sometimes causes harm. Take any rubbish with you.
- No fires. They leave irreparable and catastrophic damage.
- No motor vehicles, they disturb nature. Only service and farming vehicles are authorised.
- No dogs permitted. They disturb the wildlife and pastoral life here.
- No picking or collecting any plants or wildlife. Flowers, fruit, shrubs and fungi belong to the wilderness. Respect them.
- No camping. Sleeping under the stars for

Bernard Snodgrass

Alain Lacroix

SIXT-FER-À-CHEVAL OPERATION GRAND SITE

Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval has been involved in an initiative known as 'Operation Grand Site' since the beginning of the 2000s, with the aim of obtaining the 'Grand Site de France' label.

This initiative involves the development and implementation of a collaborative project along with the French State to restore, preserve and showcase the local area.

This includes improving services for visitors at the remarkable natural areas such as the Cirque du Fer-à-Cheval, and to improve the management of the natural environment with sustainable development in mind.

Bernard Snodgrass

MORILLON

Chemin de la Vieille Ile 1360

The 'Croix des 7 Frères' (7 Brothers' Cross) (1,684 m)

In July and August, the lifts are open and will take you directly up to the La Vieille pastures and the Igloo chalet/restaurant.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **Chairlift + 15 min** descent: **1.5 hrs**
- Difference in altitude: **- 614 m**
- Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
From Morillon church, follow the RD53 opposite towards the resort of Les Esserts. Head to the cable car arrival station and the Les Esserts chairlift nearby.

Route
From the Igloo restaurant, follow signs for 'La Croix des 7 Frères'. In just a few minutes, this trail will lead you to the viewpoint overlooking the pastures. You'll have a view of the Giffre Mountains. Turn around and go back, at the Igloo marker, follow signs for **'La Vieille d'en Haut'**. *Alpine chalets* (it takes five minutes to get there). Go back as far as the 'Carrefour de La Vieille' marker and follow signs for **Les Esserts via Bergin**. The wide stony path will lead you back to the resort of Les Esserts.

To discover
The mountain farm, **La Vieille d'en Haut**, organises tasting afternoons at the farm. A great way to meet the locals and learn about what they do here, while enjoying a blueberry tart.

'Alpage de la Vieille' pastures (1,590 m)

This route departs from the centre of Morillon and will then lead you through several villages, a forest, past mountain chalets and then a strenuous uphill climb to the La Vieille d'en Haut pastures.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **3 hrs 20 min** descent: **1 hr 50**
- Elevation gain: **908 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
Morillon Church.

Route
Head for the **La Vieille d'en Haut pastures**. Go along the road opposite the church. The route leads up to **Châblaird Chapel**, crosses the **Pont de La Bioille (bridge)** and then along the **Chozal Raymond** rural path. The route then continues via **Les Maisonnettes**, and **Les Perrières**. You'll be walking through a beautiful natural spruce forest before taking on an uphill section to the **Tréchard** chalets. The route crosses **Le Mottal** before reaching the mountain chalet, **La Vieille d'en Haut**. For the way back, follow the stony path towards **Les Esserts** until you reach the resort, then follow signs for **Morillon via Les Cuttes**. You'll be passing through several villages before you reach the centre of **Morillon**.

To discover
This long hike is a chance to see farms, traditional chalets, forests and Alpine pastures.

Les Miaux - Le Châtelard

This superb trail will lead you into the hamlets of Morillon along discreet little footpaths, to explore traditional architecture and two very beautiful chapels.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: **2 hrs**
- Difference in altitude: **100 m**
- Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
The Pont du Giffre bridge is next to the Lac Bleu in Morillon.

Route
From the Pont du Giffre, follow signs for Les Miaux. The path follows the banks of the Giffre as far as **La Grasse** footbridge. Follow signs for **Les Miaux** via the village of **Vers le Pont**. A narrow path leads to the village of **Les Miaux** and the chapel dating from 1529. Follow signs to **Le Châblaird**. Follow the path uphill through the woods to **Les Rasses**. Continue towards **Le Châblaird** with a brief section along the road and then a wide footpath. The path then goes down to Le Châblaird chapel, built in 1750, then down to Morillon church before arriving at the Lac Bleu.

Le Châblaird Chapel

To discover
- The village of **Les Miaux with** some beautiful restored chalets and a chapel dating from 1529.
- Le Châblaird chapel, built in 1750, with a superb panoramic view across the Haut Giffre peaks.
- An alignment of standing stones (see Sixt stone by Michel Ducastel), between Morillon church and the Lac Bleu.

Alpine forget-me-not

SAMOËNS

Gers Lake 1544

Gers Lake and refuge (1,544 m)

After walking through a dark spruce forest, arriving at the sun-kissed Alpine pastures of Gers lake is a memorable moment.
The slopes surrounding the lake are popular with chamois and marmots.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **55 min** descent: **1 hr 40 min**
- Elevation gain: **364 m**
- Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
The Pont de Lédédian (bridge) car park. Go along the road leading to Saix Plateau. At the hamlet of **Le Béné** go left towards the **'Gîte du Lac du Gers'**.

Route
From the car park, follow the easy gravel track to the **Chalets de Portes** (there are sometimes 4x4 vehicles on this track). In the forest, there are several viewpoints overlooking Vallon plain, Le Mont, the Criou chalets, etc. Then you'll be leaving the forest to head towards the chalets and **Gers Lake**.
Go back along the same route.

To discover
Most popular overnight stay at Gers gite. The terrace area faces the lake.

The villages of Vallon

The village of Vallon is a wonderful place that has been particularly well looked after by the local residents, the Caverées, and is split into two parts: Vallon d'en Bas and Vallon d'en Haut.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: **1.5 hrs**
- Difference in altitude: **17 m**
- Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
The car park at the Pont du Giffre (bridge) in Samoëns (in front of the campsite).

Route
Follow signs to **Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval** as far as Becchi footbridge over the **Cléveux**. Carry on in the same direction alongside the river Giffre. Pass the **Pont de Revé** (bridge) to reach **La Joux**. Head for **Vallon d'en Haut**. The route takes you across Vallon plain and then along the main road before going along a small road opposite that leads to **Vallon d'en Haut**. Carry on until you reach **Vallon d'en Bas**. Just after the chapel, go right in front of a large basin. You'll come to an intersection. Go left, follow the **Cléveiu** torrent until you reach Becchi footbridge that you crossed on the way there.
Go back to the **Pont du Giffre** car park.

To discover
- The fountain in Vallon d'en Haut, dating from 1873 and sculpted from one single block of stone.
- Vallon chapel, founded in 1638, was placed under the patronage of Saints Jacques, Philippe and Joseph to thank them for their protection during the plague outbreak of 1630.

From the Lacs aux Dames to the Lac Bleu in Morillon

This walk is definitely the most popular walk in the valley. Besides the lakes in Samoëns and Morillon, this route also takes walkers along the beautiful banks of the river Giffre, close to R'Bioille footbridge.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: **1.5 hrs**
- Elevation gain: **flat terrain**
- Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
From Samoëns, head to the Lacs aux Dames leisure complex and follow signs for the swimming pool. From the centre of Morillon, go along the footpath to the Lac Bleu leisure complex.

Lacs aux Dames

Route
Samoëns leisure complex is spread across two lakes linked by a small waterfall. The route to the Lac Bleu in Morillon includes the wooden bridge between the two lakes. Just after the footbridge, bear right, then left to head into the forest of spruce and beech trees.
A wide footpath then leads to R'Bioille footbridge which straddles the river Giffre in a single 17-metre-long construction.
After this footbridge, the path leads around to the right and then through Ebellet woods and along the river Giffre to the Lac Bleu in Morillon, where you can go for a swim.

To discover
The Lacs aux Dames were created in 1930/1931 when the Annemasse - Samoëns railroad was extended as far as Sixt. This railroad used by the 'Chemins de fer économiques du Nord' was a straight route from Annemasse to Samoëns. In 1932, the extension from Samoëns - Sixt was officially unveiled. The line was then closed in 1959.

Les Bins

SIXT-FER-À-CHEVAL

The Dent de Verreu (1,901 m)

From the superb village of Le Mont, the peak of the Dent de Verreu boasts remarkable landscapes and views of the Criou mountain and the Fer-à-Cheval.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **3 hrs** descent: **2 hrs**
- Elevation gain: **521 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
Le Mont hamlet in Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval.

Route
The route begins to the right of the bread oven. The gravel track will lead you to the Praz du Mont farm. A pleasant footpath then crosses a beautiful spruce forest and leads up to Verreu pastures. After a basin and a few steps, Mont-Blanc will appear before you. Then you can admire the views of the Giffre valley down below: Samoëns, Morillon, Verchaix and Taninges. At the peak of the Dent de Verreu, there's a view of the Cirque de Fer-à-Cheval and the Criou mountain. There is an orientation table featuring the names of the peaks you can see.
Go back down along the same route.

To discover
- The village of Le Mont, Les Praz farm.
- The orientation table at the peak.

The Croix de la Frête (1,969 m)

Up above the Praz de Commune mountain chalets, the Croix de la Frête is a superb viewpoint overlooking the Cirque de Fer-à-Cheval.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **3 hrs 10 min** descent: **2 hrs**
- Elevation gain: **529 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
The hamlet of Passy (Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval) that can be reached from the village of Maison Neuve, on the road to Rouget waterfall.

Pont de Frêtes

Grenairon Refuge (1,974 m)

The refuge is an unmissable stopover on the climb up Mont Buet, on the Tour of Ruan, Tour of Haut Giffre or the Tour of Fiz mountains. There are countless ibex and marmots in this area and it is rare not to see them along the way.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: climb: **3 hrs 15 min** descent: **2 hrs 10 min**
- Elevation gain: **1,078 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite difficult**

Departure
The La Feuillatière car park. From the village of Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval, follow signs for **Salvagny**. When you leave the village of **Salvagny**, follow signs to **Les Fonts Refuge**. The car park is just before the bridge over the **Nant Sec** torrent.

Fer à Cheval

Route
Go along the footpath and then leave this path very quickly for another one up along the banks of the **Nant Sec** torrent. This path crosses the wide limestone strips with handrails and then continues through the green alder trees (locally known as 'vérécoses'). The wooded area is quickly replaced by Alpine meadows dotted with rocks. Then you'll cross over the ridge to reach the refuge on the other side.
For the descent, go along the wide 4x4 track down into Grande Joux forest and then follow the path that leads to Les Fonts Refuge. Bear right and continue until you reach the bridge over Nant Sec torrent.

To discover
This area is magnificent and you'll be able to admire the views of the Pointe de Salles, Rochers des Fiz, Vallon d'Anterne and Mont-Blanc.

Antoine Rimbert

The Fond de la Combe

The Cirque du Fer-à-Cheval is a one-of-a-kind place: you'll see the staggering 2,000 m high cliffs, and countless waterfalls along this remarkable trail.

- Type: **loop**
- Duration: **2 hrs 40 min**
- Elevation gain: **110 m**
- Level of difficulty: **easy**

Departure
The Cirque du Fer à Cheval car park which can be reached from the village of Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval.

Tour de la Vache pass

Route
From the Cirque du Fer à Cheval, follow signs for the **Chalet de Prazon**.
After passing by a small lake and then over two footbridges, the path leads you to the **Chalet de Prazon (bar/café)**.
The path continues into the combe until you reach the Fond de la Combe suspended footbridge. Waterfalls flow down the staggering limestone cliffs and along with the waters from Ruan and Prazon glaciers, flow into the river Giffre.
Cross over the footbridge and follow the left banks of the Giffre as far as Prazon footbridge. Cross this footbridge to reach Prazon bar/café.
Follow signs to the **Cirque du Fer à Cheval**.

To discover
- The Cirque du Fer-à-Cheval is a natural cirque. More than thirty waterfalls can be seen flowing down the sheer cliffs.
- The Combe du Bout du Monde is a unique and wild valley where you will most likely catch a glimpse of ibex.

Fond Dufer

The Buvette du Boret (bar/café)

Boret pastures offer a magnificent view of the Tenneverge peaks and Ruan massif. There is a mountain chalet that has been converted into a bar/café for hikers.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **1 hr 05** descent: **2 hrs**
- Elevation gain: **635 m**
- Level of difficulty: **difficult**

Departure
The Cirque du Fer à Cheval car park which can be reached from the village of Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval.

Route
From the Cirque du Fer à Cheval, follow signs for the **Chalet de Prazon**.
From the bar/café, go left towards the **Chalet du Boret via the Pas du Boret**. The path is equipped with handrails along a narrow series of staggering bends up to the top of the cliff, then to Boret chalets. For the descent, follow signs to the **Cirque du Fer-à-Cheval via Le Bout du Monde**. The path leads into a beech wood and then this route ends at the glacial cirque: Le Bout du Monde. The view here is spectacular. Continue the descent from here to Prazon bar/café and then the Cirque de Fer-à-Cheval.

Fond Dufer

To discover
- The Cirque du Fer-à-Cheval is a natural cirque. More than thirty waterfalls can be seen flowing down the sheer cliffs.
- Boret pastures, a wonderful viewpoint.
- The Combe du Bout du Monde is a unique and wild valley where you will most likely catch a glimpse of ibex.

Les Praz de Commune and Le Tenneverge

Pont de Frêtes

Sales Refuge (1,870 m)

This walk is one of the most popular walks in the valley. There is so much to see in Sales valley and along the path to get there.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **2 hrs** descent: **1.5 hrs**
- Elevation gain: **690 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
The Lignon car park in Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval, at the end of the road that passes by Rouget waterfall.

Route
From Lignon, the path leads up to the beautiful waterfalls of La Sauffaz and La Pleureuse.
Go past the path that leads to Anterne Refuge to the left and follow the other path to the right alongside the torrent. This path leads to the 'Cloc de Sales', a vast flat terrain where there was once a lake.
After a footbridge, the path leads onto the 'Pas de Sales' along the rock face. This section with a handrail is not difficult to overcome.
The path continues up to the Cascade de Sales (waterfall), then across the pastures to Sales Refuge.

To discover
- The waterfalls of La Pleureuse and La Sauffaz. - Sales waterfall.
- The Alpine pastures, chalets and Sales chapel.

Fer à Cheval

Anterne Refuge (1,810 m)

Anterne Refuge was built with the impressive wall of the Fiz mountains behind it. This is an unmissable stop on the GR5 long-distance hiking trail, and is also the departure point for the Anterne Lake hike.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **2.5 hrs** descent: **1 hr 40 min**
- Elevation gain: **630 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
The Lignon car park in Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval, at the end of the road that passes by Rouget waterfall.

Route
From Lignon, the route begins along a wide forest track which then leads onto a footpath to the waterfalls of La Pleureuse and La Sauffaz (classified sites). Go past the path to Sales Chalets to the right and head left towards the Collet d'Anterne. You'll come to a view across a vast, magnificent, wild wet plain, the view of which is slightly ruined by the high voltage electrical lines. From here the path is fairly flat and the walk to Anterne Refuge is an easy one.
Go back along the same route or via the Cirque des Fonts.

To discover
- The spectacular waterfalls of La Sauffaz and La Pleureuse.
- The vast Anterne Alpine pastures.

Fer à Cheval

Cirque des Fonts and Refuge (1,368 m)

The Cirque des Fonts is most certainly the most austere place in the valley, with its series of solemn black shale towers. That doesn't mean it's not one of the most beautiful places though, because it may be rugged but it's most definitely an endearing place.

- Type: **out** **back**
- Duration: climb: **1 hr 40 min** descent: **1 hr 20**
- Elevation gain: **443 m**
- Level of difficulty: **quite easy**

Departure
Les Fontaines car park. From the village of**Sixt-Fer-à-Cheval**, follow signs for **Salvagny**. When you leave the village of **Salvagny**, follow signs to **Les Fonts Refuge**. Cross a bridge and follow the road to the end.

Route
The wide path very quickly goes uphill and passes by a climbing rock.
It then joins onto the fork in the road leading to **Grenairon Refuge**. Pass by the refuge to the left, then in **La Grenire