

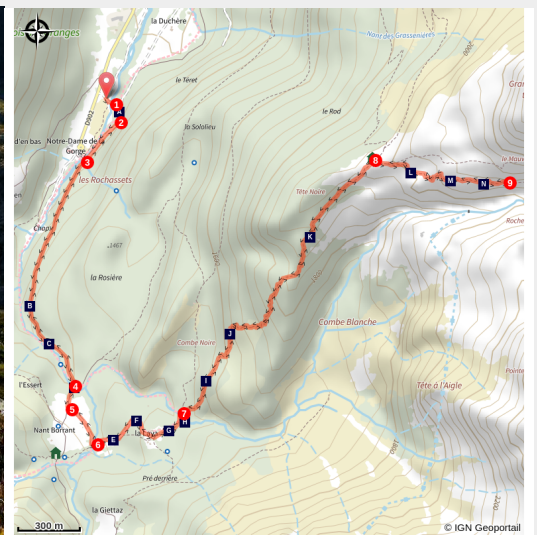
Tré la Tête Glacier by Combe noire Waterfall



Réserve Naturelle des Contamines-Montjoie - Les Contamines
Montjoie



Glacier de Tré la Tête (Julien Heuret - CEN 74)



Sporty hike from the forest to the glacier

Between forests, torrents, waterfalls, meadows and glacier, this hike crosses a great diversity of environments and breathtaking views. An effort rewarded by an amazing panorama.

Useful information

Practice : Summer hike

Duration : 6 h

Length : 10.8 km

Trek ascent : 937 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Aller-retour

Themes : Géologie, Lac et glacier, Refuge

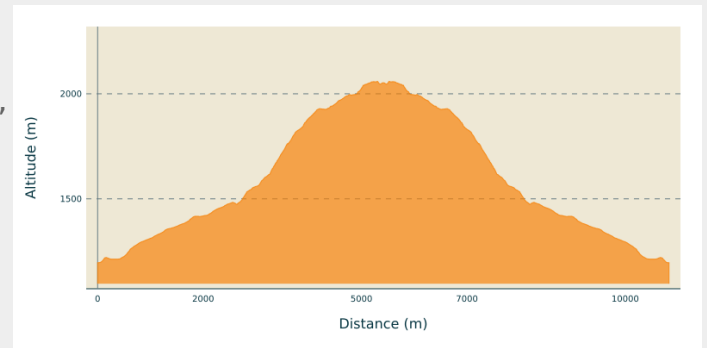
Trek

Departure : Parking « Notre Dame de la Gorge », Les Contamines-Montjoie

Arrival : Parking Notre Dame de la Gorge, les Contamines-Montjoie

Cities : 1. Les Contamines Montjoie

Altimetric profile

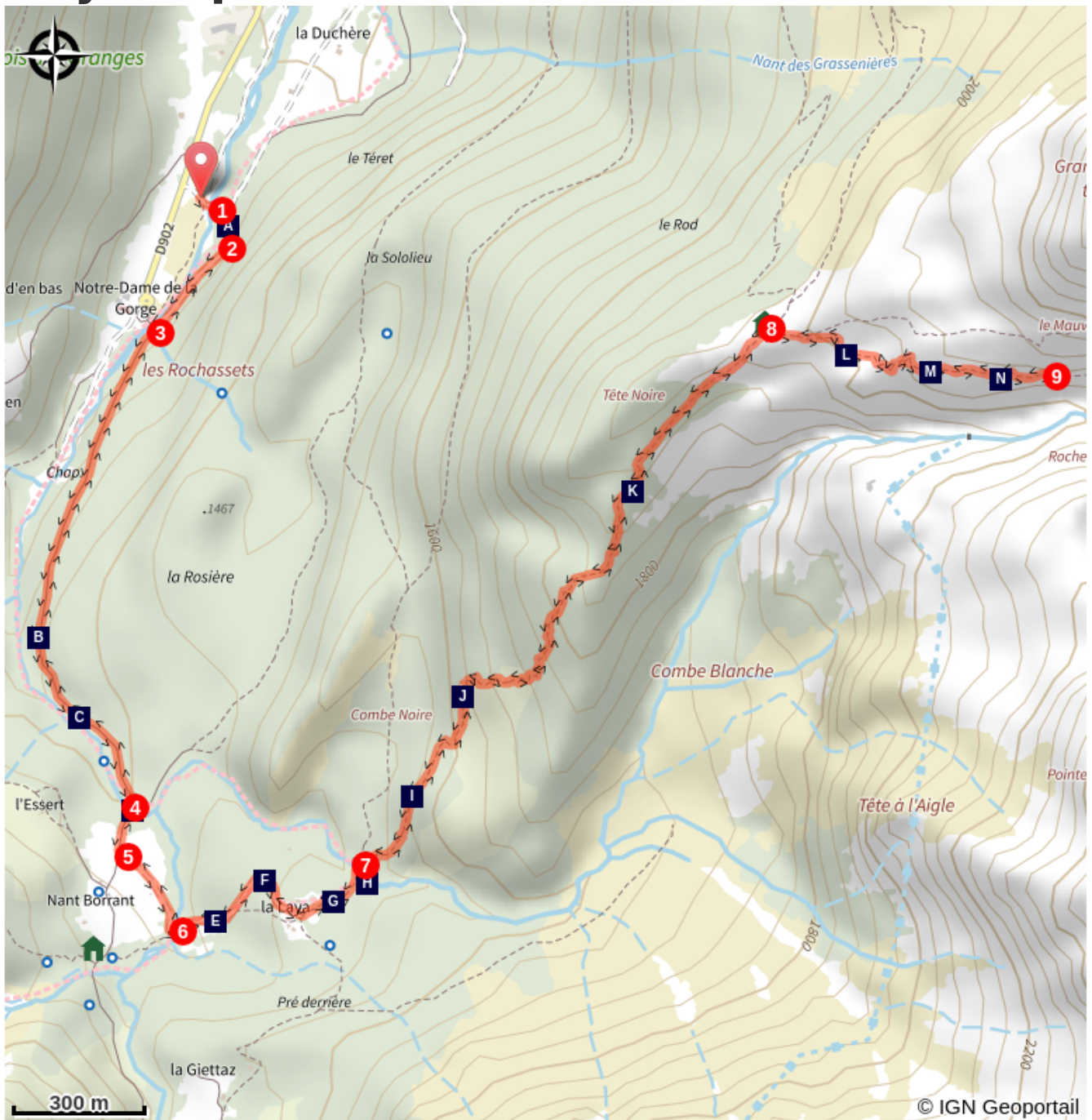









Min elevation 1196 m Max elevation 2059 m








From the Notre-Dame de la Gorge car park:

1. Cross the footbridge over the torrent to reach the track.
2. Stay on the main track following the torrent upstream.
3. Stay on the GR and take the ancient roman route which rises in front of you.
4. Stay on the route and cross the "Pont romain".
5. Turn left in the direction of "la Laya" - "Tré la tête".
6. Turn left to access the Combe Noire waterfall.
7. At the end of the bridge facing the cascade, turn on your right direction "Tré la tête"
8. At the refuge, turn to the right direction "glacier de Tré la tête"
9. You have arrived. The return is by the same route.

On your path...



-  The nature reserve (A)
-  The round-leaf Sundew (C)
-  Hay meadows at la Laya (E)
-  The Sparrowhawk (G)
-  The Crested Tit (I)
-  The Golden Eagle (K)
-  A water intake under the glacier (M)

-  The bogs at la Rosière (B)
-  The roman bridge (D)
-  The Alpine autumn Crocus (F)
-  The waterfall of Combe noire (H)
-  The belvedere of Combe noire (J)
-  A glacier and humans (L)
-  The glacier of Tré-la-tête (N)

All useful information

i Réserve naturelle des Contamines Montjoie

La réserve naturelle est un espace exceptionnel, ouvert à tous, dont les patrimoines naturels, culturels et environnementaux sont rares. Pour profiter et admirer encore longtemps cette nature sauvage et préservée, merci de prendre connaissance de quelques bonnes pratiques :



! **AdVICES**

Always be careful and plan ahead when hiking. Asters, CEN 74 can not be held responsible for the occurrence of an accident or any inconvenience on this itinerary.

How to come ?

Transports

Shuttles from the center of the village of Contamines-Montjoie (from the end of June to the beginning of September).

Access

Go to Contamines-Montjoie (74170). Pass through the village and stay on Route de Notre-Dame de la Gorge (D902) for 2 kilometers until you reach the large parking of Notre-Dame de la Gorge located on your right.

Advised parking

Parking Notre Dame de la Gorge

On your path...



The nature reserve (A)

A few steps away from the true entrance to the nature reserve, a panel presenting the issues of this protected and regulated natural space.

Attribution : CEN 74

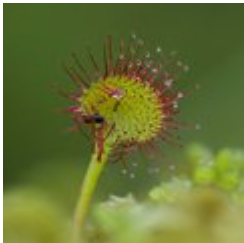


The bogs at la Rosière (B)

On your left are located the bogs of La Rosière, but be careful, admire them from the trail because these are fragile habitats with high biodiversity!

Originating from the ice age, this wetland was first a depression eroded by the glacier in which the melting ice stagnated. It's a paradise for carnivorous plants such as Alpine Butterwort or the Round-leaved Sundew...

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



The round-leaf Sundew (C)

It is a small carnivorous plant that lives in peat bogs, environments offering few nutrients. Don't worry, it feeds only on insects, which it traps and digests thanks to a sticky substance produced by the red hairs covering its leaves.

It is called "Rossolis or Sundew" because of the scintillation of this substance in the sunlight.

This species is fragile and protected, please do not touch it !

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



The roman bridge (D)

Also called "Pont de la Téma", this structure dates back to Roman times! It is located on the ancient strategic route which made it than possible to reach the valley of la Tarentaise and Italy directly from Les Contamines.

This route, which has become the GR5 since, is a popular tourist destination.

The bridge overlooks the gorges of Bont Nant.

Admire the natural pools that the torrent has shaped slowly but surely!

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



Hay meadows at la Laya (E)

Once mowed and grazed, these natural meadows have slowly evolved into forest since all pastoral activity was abandoned. Shrubs and spruces have gradually colonized these old meadows. This encroachment of open habitats is threatening for certain species such as Golden Oats, appreciated by herds, or Alpine autumn Colchic.

Since 2014, the Nature Reserve has carried out brush clearing and later season mowing in order to restore this environment for autumn grazing.

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



The Alpine autumn Crocus (F)

It's the end of summer... It's during this season that the Alpine autumn Crocus flowers. Its name refers to Colchis in Greece, the homeland to the enchantress Medea.

This plant contains a very toxic alkaloid: colchicine. According to alchemists, this substance, used in very low doses, would cure rheumatism and acute flares of gout.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74



The Sparrowhawk (G)

Like a lightning, a silvery silhouette threads its way silently between the branches, accompanied by the alarm calls of tits and wrens... How lucky you are! You observed the Sparrowhawk!

This small diurnal bird of prey, is common but very discreet. It terrorizes passerines, an order including most songbirds, on which it feeds!

It is a predator using a special 'surprising' technic to hunt by flying as close as possible to the rock walls or hidden behind obstacles to startle its prey.

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



The waterfall of Combe noire (H)

Take a break on this bridge and enjoy the cool spray from the Combe Noire waterfall. Can you imagine that the glacier of Tré-la-Tête reached this exact location in 1870! Since then, it has lost a few hundred meters but you can still feel its presence through the torrential river which formed impressive sculptures called "giant's pots" by a deafening eroding process of the rock !

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



The Crested Tit (I)

It is a small forest passerine that often lives in the company of its congeners, such as the Black-capped Chickadee or the Willow Tit, because they like the same habitats. Its presence is linked to that of old trees, whether dead wood or aging trees, which are also called "senescent wood". It particularly appreciates softwood forests (spruces, pines and firs). It is a little bundle of energy, lively and in constantly in motion, easy to recognize by its crest. It feeds on small insects, larvae and spiders but also of conifer seeds.

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



🌿 The belvedere of Combe noire (J)

Enjoy this natural belvedere to catch your breath. But be aware that the rock is slippery and the area unsecured!

You overlook the forest and the hamlet of "Combe Noire". Its name refers to the forest cover composed almost exclusively of dark colored spruces.

From this amazing viewpoint, discover the pastures of La Rollaz crossed by the hiking trail. From the left to the right, you can see Roches rouges, Roches franches, Aiguilles de la Pennaz, Col du Bonhomme, Rocher du Bonhomme and at the end Tête Nord des Fours.

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



🦅 The Golden Eagle (K)

It is a predator, armed for hunting! Thanks to large and wide wings, it glides high in the sky in search of prey.

His exceptional view can locate groundhogs (his favorite meal), hares, foxes or ptarmigans and sometimes even young chamois or ibexes!

Its brow line provides a natural sun shield when diving to capture its prey. It is fully equipped for these hunting techniques, with claws called talons and a powerful, hooked and sharp beak for shredding flesh.

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



🧊 A glacier and humans (L)

The Tré-la-Tête glacier is a mountaineering spot.

It is indeed surrounded by the mythical peaks of the Mont-Blanc massif such as Dômes de Miage or Aiguille Nord de Tré-la-Tête, the highest point of the nature reserve with an altitude of 3892 m.

It is the crossing point for many classic high mountain or ski mountaineering routes.

Since the end of the nineteenth century this place witnesses the evolution of mountaineering activities.

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74



A water intake under the glacier (M)

In 1939, engineer Max Waeber achieved a world first by building a water intake under the glacier. This intake is still used to supply an artificial lake (Lac de la Girotte in Beaufortin) for hydroelectric production purposes thanks to a ten kilometers underground tunnel network.

In 2011, the nature reserve, in partnership with EDF, carried out a program to dismantle the industrial infrastructures (dormitories and cable cars) linked to the creation of this water intake.

Attribution : CEN 74



The glacier of Tré-la-tête (N)

This giant, whose name means 'beyond the head', is the fourth largest French glacier! It is monitored on climate change aspects.

Its health, monitored by the nature Reserve since 2014, is determined by the volume of ice gained or lost. This is called the mass balance.

8 km long, it spreads its tongue of ice from the mountain pass Infranchissable at the Italian border at 3300m of altitude, to the place where you are standing!

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74