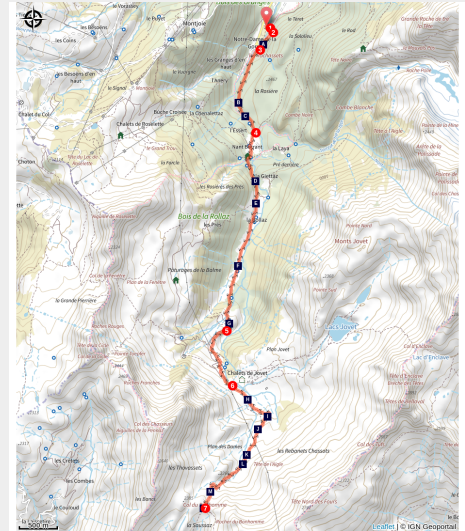


# An uphill hike to the Col du Bonhomme mountain pass

CC Pays du Mont-Blanc - Les Contamines-Montjoie



Panorama sur la Réserve depuis le Col du Bonhomme (Julien Heuret - CEN 74)



## *Taking on a legendary pass*

From pasture to pasture, reach this pass between the Mont Blanc Mont Blanc massif and Beaufortain and enjoy the exceptional panorama.

## Useful information

Practice : Summer hike

Duration : 7 h

Length : 16.5 km

Trek ascent : 1162 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Aller-retour

Themes : Flora, Pastoralism, Refuge

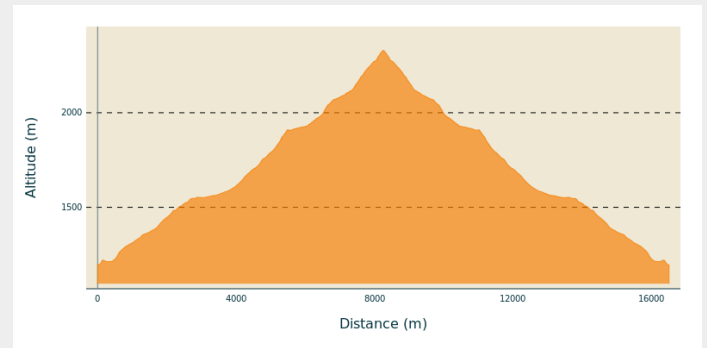
# Trek

**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

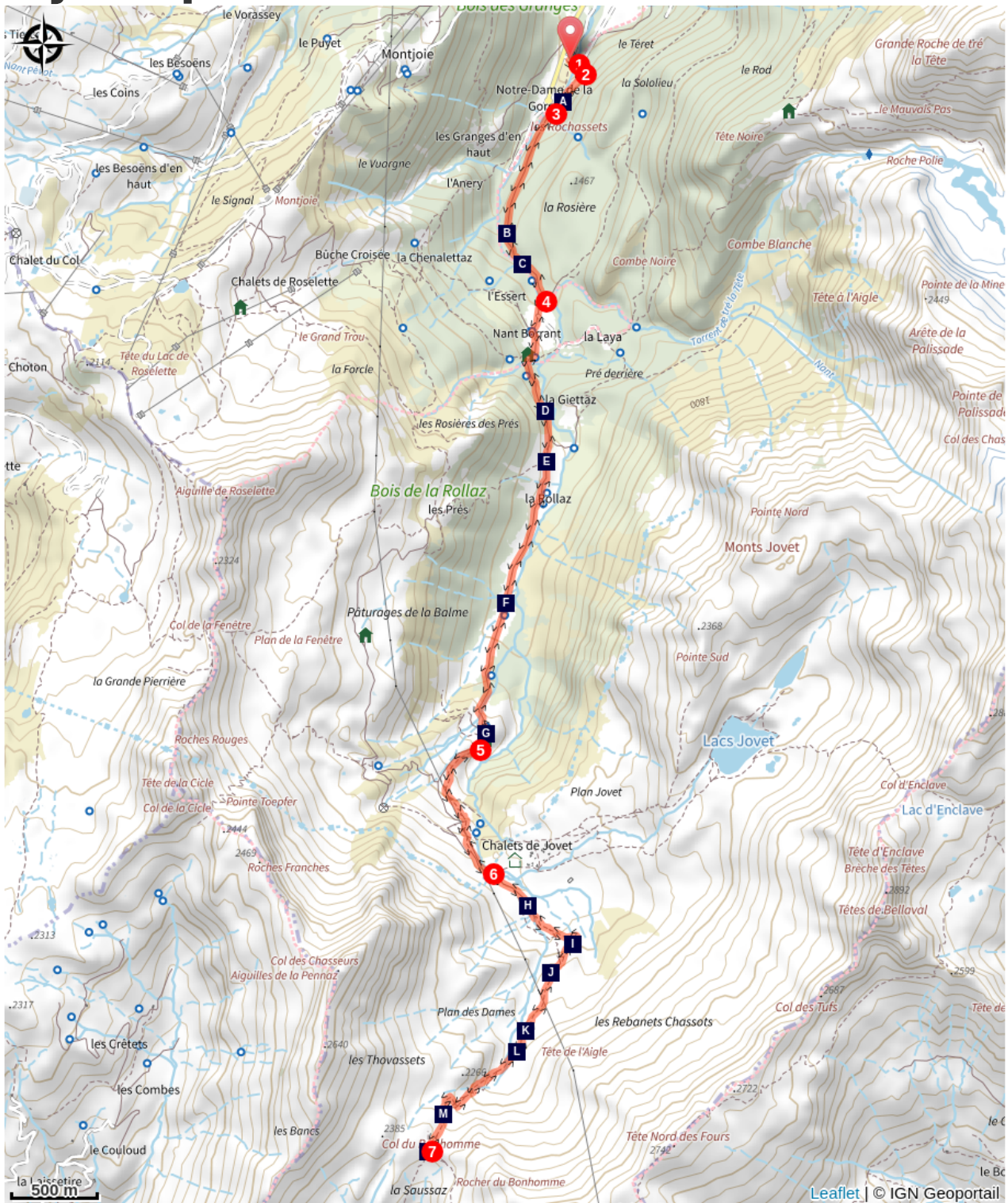
## Altimetric profile













Min elevation 1196 m Max elevation 2329 m

From the Notre-Dame de la Gorge car park in Les Contamines-Montjoie : Cross the footbridge over the stream to join the itinerary. Stay on the main route which goes upstream on your right. Stay on the GR and take the Roman road that rises in front of you. Stay on the route and cross the Roman bridge. At the crossroads, take the left-hand path towards "Col du Bonhomme". At the crossroads, turn left towards "Col du Bonhomme". You have arrived; the return journey takes the same route.

# On your path...



-  The Roman roads (A)
-  The round-leaf Sundew (C)
-  The mountain pasture (E)
-  The mountain refuge of la Balme (G)
-  Black glaciers (I)
-  Rosière boglands (B)
-  The Stoat, a mountain chameleon (D)
-  Cow mountains (F)
-  The Arctic Rush (H)
-  Plan des Dames mound (J)

 Studies and Ibexes (K)

 Restauration de la flore (M)

 Excessive trail frequentation, the actions of Asters CEN74 (L)

 Col du Bonhomme (N)

# All useful information

## Animaux acceptés

De manière générale votre chien, s'il est autorisé, doit être tenu en laisse en espaces naturels. Par sa présence, son odeur et ses déjections, votre chien peut perturber la biodiversité. Sa divagation dans la nature peut avoir des conséquences lourdes pour la faune sauvage et les troupeaux (transmission de germes, stress de la faune sauvage, destruction des couvées au sol). Les chiens sont interdits en cœur de parcs nationaux et dans la plupart des réserves naturelles.

## Advices

Always exercise caution and plan ahead when hiking. Asters, CEN 74 cannot be held responsible for any accident or incident that may occur on this trail.

## How to come ?

### Transports

Bus shuttle service from Les Contamines (late June to early September).

### Access

Reach Les Contamines-Montjoie (74170). Drive through the village and stay on the Route de Notre-Dame de la Gorge (D902) for 2 kilometres until the road ends at the large Notre-Dame de la Gorge car park on your right.

### Advised parking

Parking Notre Dame de la Gorge

# Environmental sensitive areas

Along your trek, you will go through sensitive areas related to the presence of a specific species or environment. In these areas, an appropriate behaviour allows to contribute to their preservation. For detailed information, specific forms are accessible for each area.

## **Black grouse - winter**

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, April, Decembre

Zone d'hivernage de Tétràs lyre de la Balme, matérialisée par des fanions en décembre 2020 dans le cadre du POIA bidrski.

Ne pas y pénétrer lors des pratiques hivernales (ski de randonnée, raquettes).

## **Black grouse - winter**

Sensitivity period: January, February, March, April, Decembre

Les contreforts de Jovet abritent des zones d'hivernage pour la faune : tétras-lyres, chamois, cervidés.

Les zones arborées sont à éviter pour ne pas déranger les animaux. Repérer le couloir unique de descente qui évite les zones de quiétude.

## **Réserve naturelle nationale des Contamines-Montjoie**

Sensitivity period:

Contact: Asters - Conservatoire d'espaces naturels de Haute-Savoie  
contact@cen-haute-savoie.org

# On your path...

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## The Roman roads (A)

More than just a tourist attraction, the Roman roads were one of the main routes used to cross the Alps in ancient times! Before the Roman invasion, the Ceutrones, a Celtic tribe who farmed livestock, inhabited the Val-Montjoie. To make cheese, they used salt mined at Moutiers via the Col du Bonhomme. They were involved in building roads to Italy. These roads were taken over by the Romans when they invaded the Alps. Take a look at the Rochassets pass: it was carved out of the rock to allow chariots to pass through!

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74

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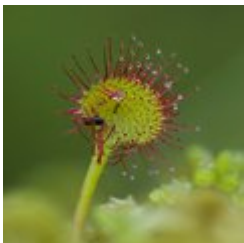


## Rosière boglands (B)

On your left are the Rosière boglands, but be careful to only admire them while walking along the path, as they are fragile environments and hidden treasures of biodiversity! Tracing its origins from the Ice Age, this boggy area is the result of a glacier erosion which caused water to stagnate. This is the kingdom of carnivorous plants such as the Alpine cattail or the round-leaved sundew...

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74

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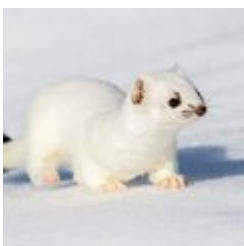


## The round-leaf Sundew (C)

It is a small carnivorous plant that lives in low-nutrient peat bogs. Don't worry, it only feeds on insects, which it attracts and digests using a viscous substance produced by the red bristles that cover its leaves. It is also known as " Rossolis or Sundew " because the substance sparkles when exposed to light. This species is fragile and protected, please do not touch it!

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74

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## The Stoat, a mountain chameleon (D)

White in winter and with brown backs and beige bellies in summer, stoats have black tail tips all year round. Often confused with the common weasel, the stoat differs in size. It is larger (17 to 33 cm) and has a two-coloured tail. A carnivore, its favourite prey are voles. Stoats are vivacious and playful. The Stoat often moves in leaps of up to 50 centimetres in height, covering great distances for its size of up to 15 km.

Attribution : @LionelRoux

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## 🐄 The mountain pasture (E)

Alpine pastures are a landscape that have been shaped by humans since prehistoric times, during the Neolithic period, when livestock farming was first practised. Had it not been for the grazing of domestic animals at this altitude, the area would have been occupied by a few species of bush accompanied by few animal species. The mountain pasture is a rare example where human activity generates a biodiversity of animal and plant species that is more prolific than what would be produced by the natural evolution of the environment. Many species of plants, birds, invertebrates, mammals, etc. can be found here.

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74

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## 🐄 Cow mountains (F)

How can you tell which breeds of mountain cow can be found here? The Abondance breed originates from the village of the same name in the Chablais region of Haute-Savoie. It can be recognised by its distinctive mahogany coat and white head and belly. The 'Herens' cow comes from Valais in Switzerland. They are bulkier, with a single-coloured coat that is often black, sometimes dark red or chestnut. Its provocative, aggressive behaviour is used in the traditional "battle of the queens" in the 3 countries around Mont Blanc. But rest assured, no animals are harmed in such contests!

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74

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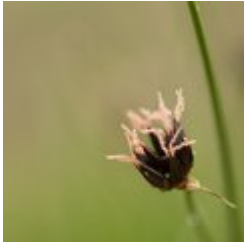
## 🏠 The mountain refuge of la Balme (G)

Situated at the foot of the Aiguilles de la Pennaz (2668 m) as part of the Mont-Blanc tour, this refuge has a strong heritage of family tradition. Three generations have welcomed hikers here. This former farmhouse is surrounded by mountain pastures that are still cultivated by mountain farmers. Just look at the height of the roof and little will be left to imagination; during winter, the only thing sticking out of the snow is the chimney! This refuge is open from June to September

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74

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## 🌿 The Arctic Rush (H)

As its name suggests, this plant species is found in mild climates in the Northern Hemisphere, but also in the Arctic and in the Alps! It can be recognised by the total absence of leaves and the sparse, blackish flowers in the upper third of the stem. It is a protected species in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. It is prohibited to pick or otherwise harm this species. It is particularly characteristic of certain alpine environments such as meadows and river banks.

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74

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## ❄️ Black glaciers (I)

At first glance, the slope overlooking Plan Jovet towards the Fours ridge to the south is nothing but rock. However, glaciers buried under a layer of sediment have recently been discovered here! These glaciers are known as "black glaciers", in contrast to "white glaciers". The layer that covers them protects them from the sun, meaning that they are now melting slower than the others.

Attribution : Jean-Baptiste BOSSON - CEN 74

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## 🗿 Plan des Dames mound (J)

This conical mound, which stands around 4m high and has a diameter of 5m, is a burial site. According to a legend dating from the end of the last century, this mound covered the remains of two English ladies who were buried after a terrible storm. It is considered to be cursed, so when passing through the Plan des Dames, it is customary to throw a pebble at the mound to ward off bad luck!

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel - CEN 74

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## 🐐 Studies and Ibexes (K)

This now-protected species almost disappeared from the Alps at the end of the 19th century, mainly as a result of hunting and poaching. Successive reintroductions throughout the Alps have helped to increase population numbers, although the species still remains threatened to this day. In the Haute-Savoie reserves, the ibex are monitored and studied as part of research programmes aimed at monitoring their overall health and improving the population management of the species.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74

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## 🛡️ Excessive trail frequentation, the actions of Asters CEN74 (L)

Asters-CEN74 and its partners of the Gebiodiv project (PITEM Biodiv'alp) spent two days restoring this very popular hiking section of the GR5 on the Tour du Mont-Blanc trail.

How to restore a degraded trail?

The team collected local seeds, raked the areas to be revegetated and installed geotextile membranes (made of coconut fiber) to increase seed growth.

Help us make this work last! Going off the hiking trails destroys the surrounding flora. Like scars, the new paths will encourage soil erosion causing the disappearance of vegetation. Be carefull! Stay on the main trail!



## 🌱 Restauration de la flore (M)

Asters-CEN74 et ses partenaires du projet Gebiodiv (PITEM Biodiv'alp) ont passé deux jours à restaurer cette portion de GR5 très fréquentée par les randonneurs du tour du Mont-Blanc.

### **Comment restaurer un sentier dégradé ?**

L'équipe a récolté des graines locales, ratissé les zones à végétaliser et posé du géotextile en fibre de coco pour favoriser la pousse des graines.

Aidez-nous à faire durer ce travail ! Sortir des sentiers de randonnée détruit la flore environnante. Telles des cicatrices, les nouvelles sentes favorisent l'érosion et font disparaître la végétation. Soyez vigilants ! Restez sur le sentier principal !

Attribution : Geoffrey Garcel



## 📍 Col du Bonhomme (N)

At an altitude of 2329 metres, the Col du Bonhomme links the Val Montjoie to the Beaufortin, and Haute-Savoie to Savoie. It is one of the passes crossed by the GR 5 trail, the Tour du Mont Blanc and the Tour du Beaufortin. Thanks to its strategic location, this pass has been a crossing point for Romans, peddlers, crystal smiths, and livestock merchants throughout history... In 1860, when Savoie and the Comté de Nice were annexed by France, a free trade zone was established over a large part of northern Savoie, with the pass as one of its boundaries.

Attribution : Julien Heuret - CEN 74