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# THE VALLÉE D'ILLIEZ WALKING TOUR



COMMUNE DE  
CHAMPÉRY



COMMUNE DE  
VAL-D'ILLIEZ

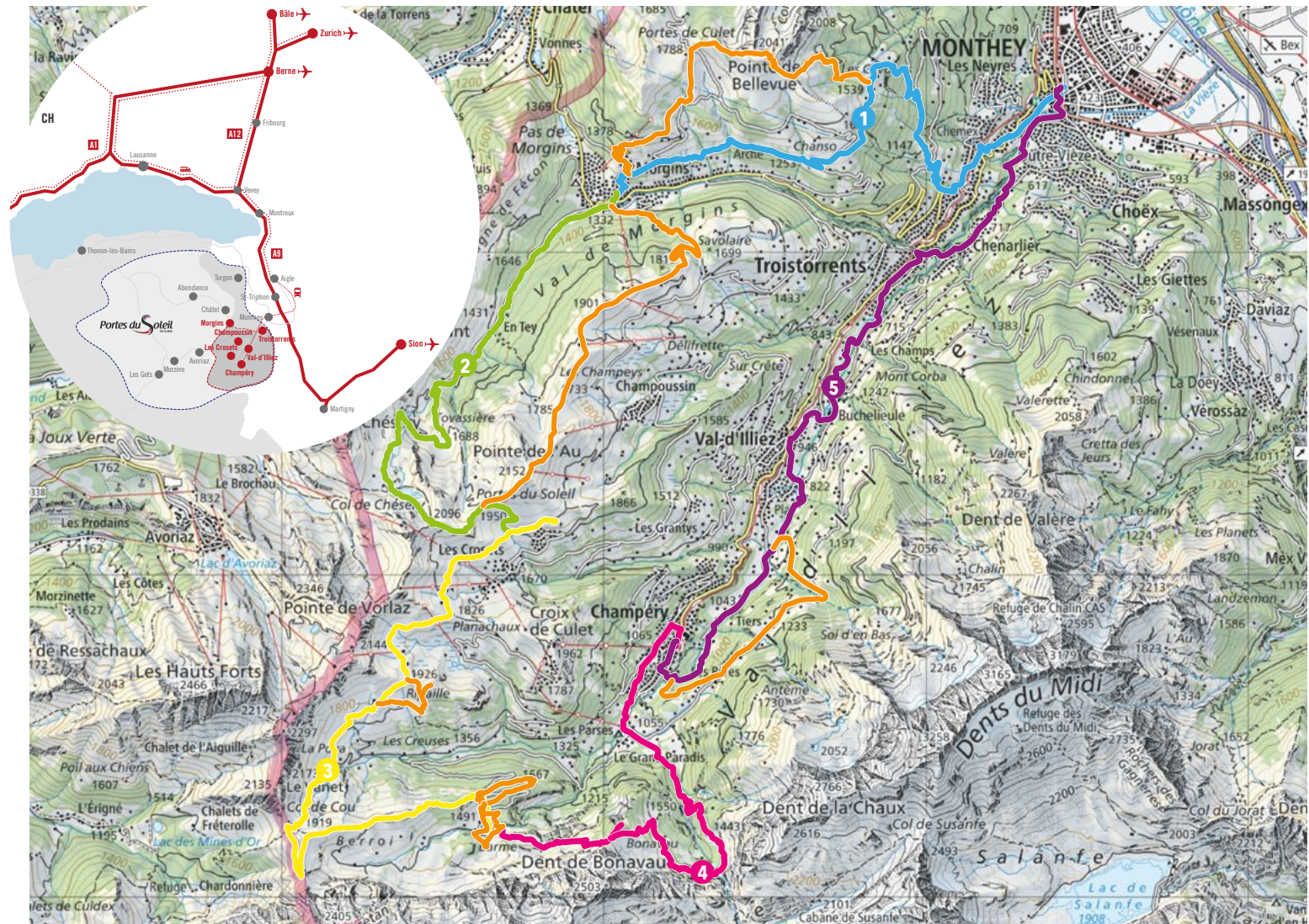


COMMUNE DE  
TROISTORRENTS



monthey

COMMUNE DE  
MONTHÉY



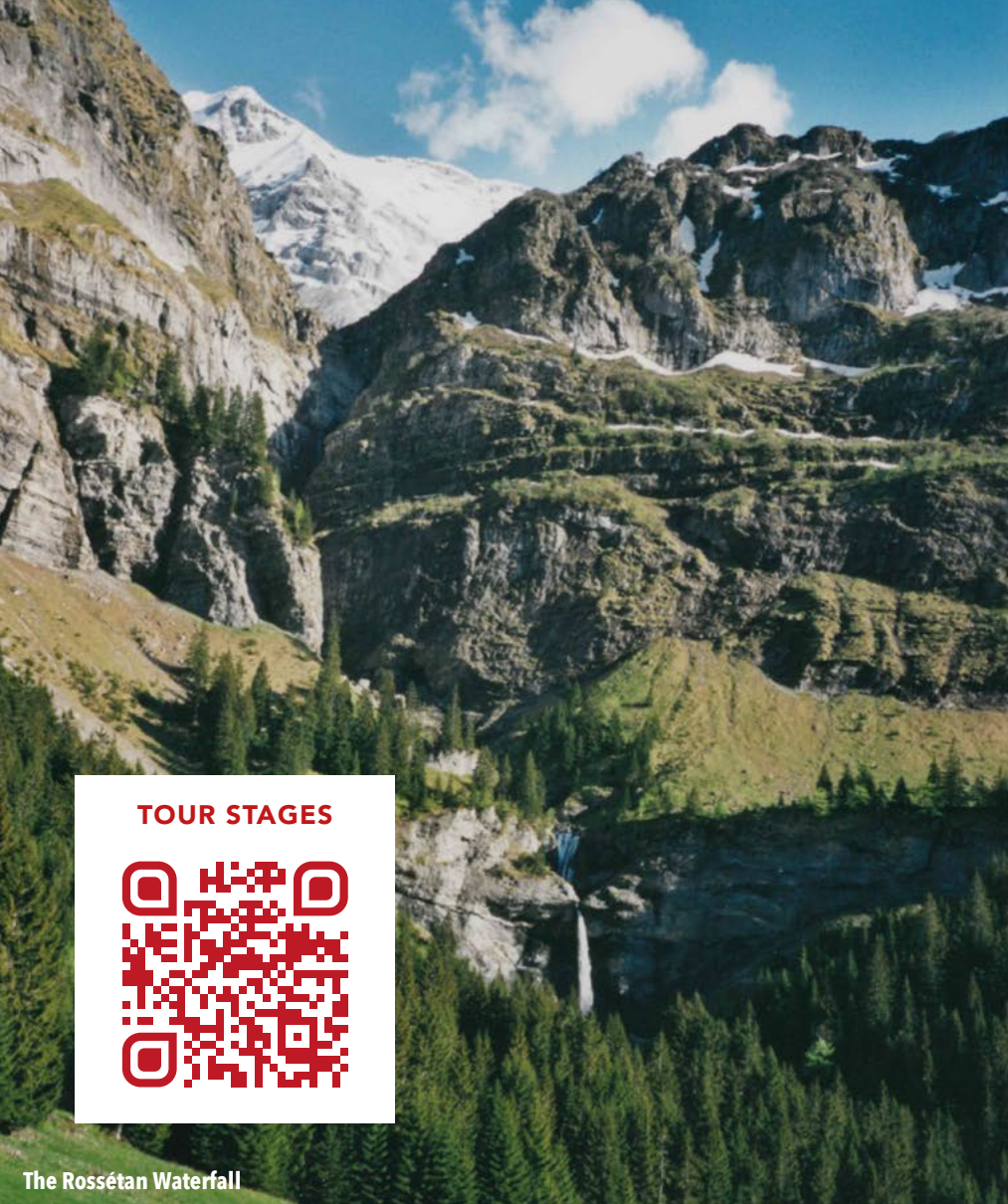
1 13.4 km 5h15

2 12.4 km 4h20

3 14.4 km 4h30

4 11.7 km 4h

5 15.8 km 4h50



## TOUR STAGES



The Rossétan Waterfall

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## INTRODUCTION

The Tour de la Vallée d'Illeiez (TVI) is a new multi-day hiking tour that links an ancient network of trails into one continuous circuit, offering a complete walking experience of the magnificent Illeiez Valley. This ambitious project was spearheaded by a local association, Les Amis des Sentiers de la Vallée d'Illeiez. The entire circuit is more than 60 km long with an elevation gain of 3,504 m and generally takes 3 to 5 days to complete.

Nestled in a bucolic valley at the gateway to the Franco-Swiss Portes du Soleil recreational area, the TVI showcases some of the region's most iconic landmarks. As you ramble, breathtaking vistas unfold before you, including the Dents du Midi and Dents Blanches massifs, and the Portes du Soleil, Cou, Bretolet, and Chavanette Passes. As you journey, you'll pass through stunning alpine landscapes rich with forests, lakes, and waterfalls. You'll also visit charming hamlets and villages for a delightful glimpse into local architecture and culture.

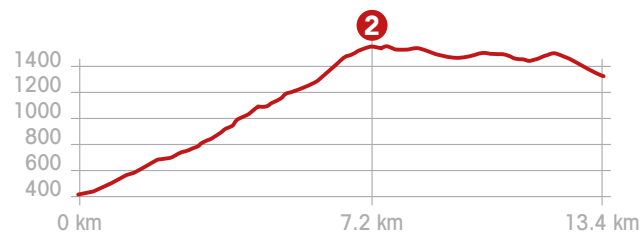
This walking tour joins a panoply of famous alpine tours that crisscross our region, including the Tour des Dents du Midi, the Tour des Dents Blanches, and the Tour du Ruan, as well as the famous GR5 (Grande Traversée des Alpes).

Each stage offers its own unique opportunity to discover a different aspect of our region and is adaptable for walkers of all levels. The itineraries all offer less challenging alternative variations or public transportation itineraries via the TPC (Transports Publics du Chablais) trains and busses.

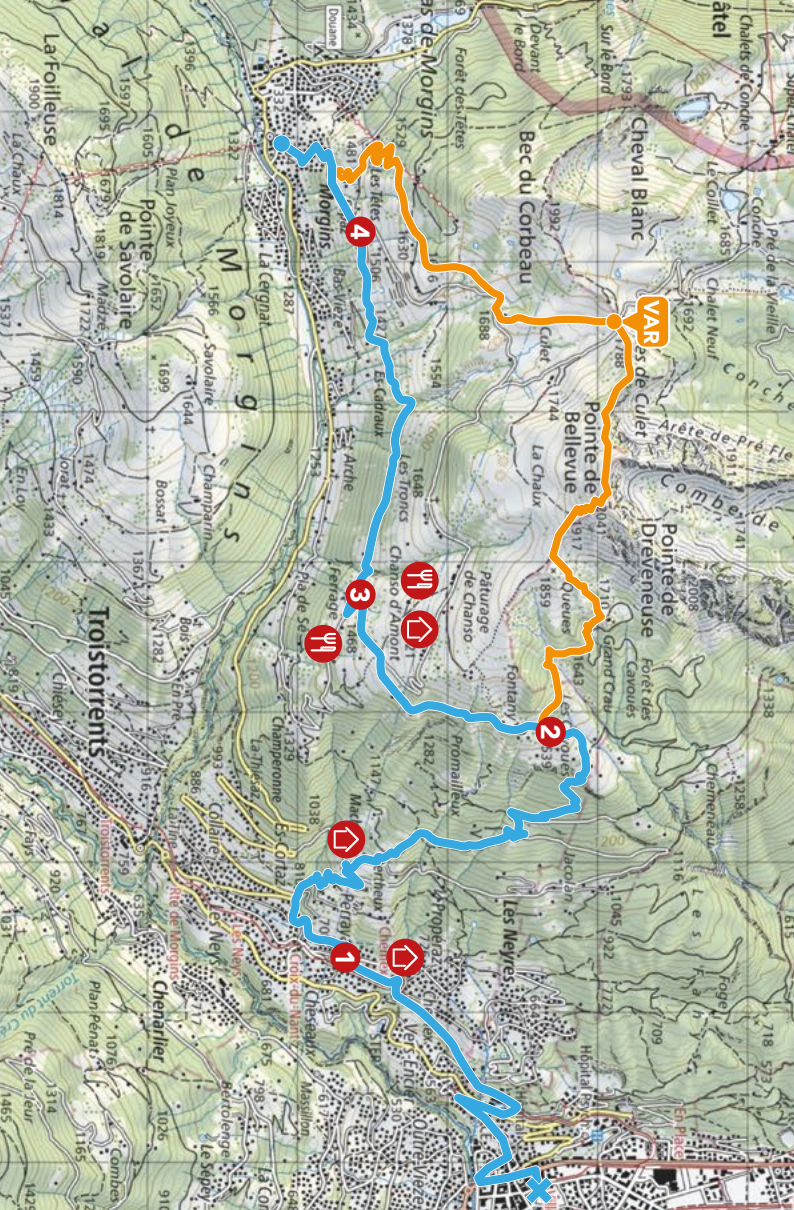
<b>Difficulty</b>	medium
<b>Perfect for</b>	Active families & walkers of all levels
<b>Recommended hiking period</b>	June to November, depending on weather conditions
<b>Departure point</b>	The official starting point is the TPC train station in Monthey, but the TVI can be joined from any of the municipalities along the route.
<b>Hiking direction</b>	The TVI is best when hiked in a counterclockwise direction.
<b>Accommodation</b>	The route is dotted with a variety of campgrounds, hotels, mountain huts, and B&B's. (See the list of hosts at the end of this booklet or check with a local tourist office.)
<b>Food &amp; Drink</b>	Alpine restaurants (called <i>cantines</i> ), restaurants, bakeries, and grocery stores can be found along nearly the entire length of the tour.

## STAGE 1

# MONTHEY — MORGINS

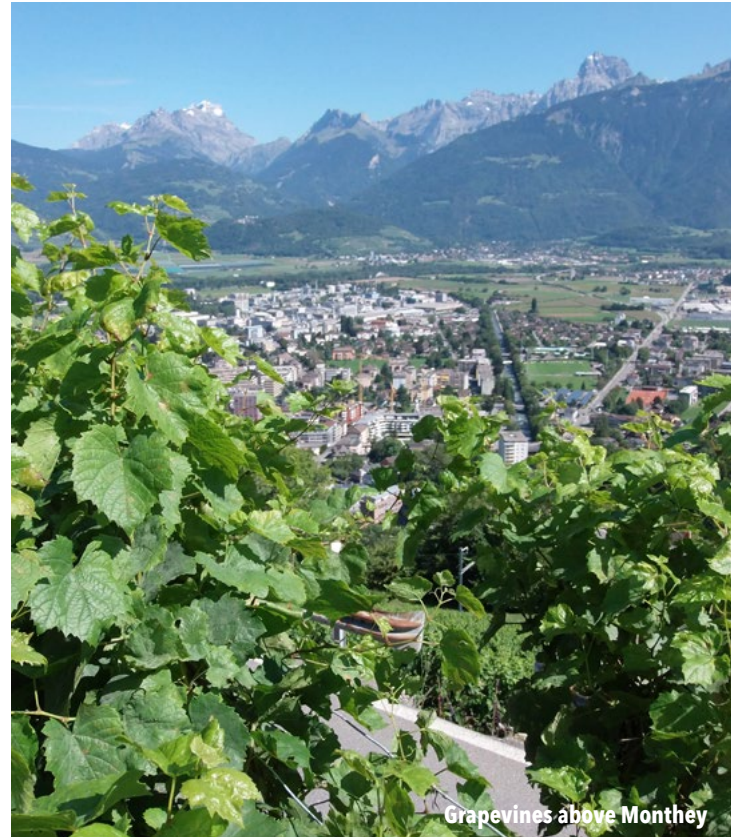


 **13.4 km · 1,320 m D+ · 420 m D- · 5h15**  
**Highest point : Les Cavoues 1,556 m**



The Tour de la Vallée d'Illiez leaves from the regional AOMC train station in the centre of Monthey, to facilitate the use of public transportation. Drivers will find spaces available in the Cotterg car park or at a reduced price in the Place d'Armes car park.

From the train station, walk in the direction of the Place Centrale, then take the Rue du Château. You'll see the statue of Gros-Bellet, an emblematic historical figure of



Monthey and the Illiez Valley who, in 1790, instigated a rebellion against the despised Governor Schiner, ultimately paving the way for Lower Valais' independence from the oppressive rule of Upper Valais in 1798.

After passing by the Monthey Château and the statue of Gros-Bellet, take the Chemin de l'Hôpital on your right. At the Chemin des Fontaines, climb the stairs to the main road, where you will cross at the pedestrian crossing. Go around the hospital and cross the railway tracks to take the path to Chemex. The view, overlooking chestnut groves and lush terraced vineyards, is a reminder of Monthey's importance as a winemaking region before the devastating arrival of Phylloxera at the end of the 19th century.



*One of the unique features of the TVI : magnificent larch benches, created by the Val-d'Illiez - Champéry forestry management company.*



After passing by the tiny Chapel of Chemex, follow the road on the left, which passes under the railway bridge and leads to the Perraya Cross. **1** From here, cross the road to Propéraz and take the path to the left of the cross, as indicated by the yellow pedestrian sign, to the Route des Revers. Heading in the direction of Gonflon, you will pass through La Crottaz on a steep path. This will lead to Les Cavoues **2** and a sudden, surprising viewpoint over the entire Rhône Plain and Lake Geneva.

Your next point of passage will take you to the Chanso and Ferrage regions near Morgins, where you will find accommodations and refreshments **3**. From here, continue along the hillside on the Route des Troncs, which crosses the Torrent des Tovares via a covered bridge. Take the Route de Sépaz **4** to Morgins. This is the welcome end to the first stage, with a variety of lodgings, restaurants, and the famous Carillon de la Paix. Built in 2000, with 23 bells outside and 2 in the bell tower, this iconic landmark thrones in the center of Morgins as a beacon of peace for humankind.



## POINTE DE BELLEVUE

7 km · 540 m D+ · 640 m D-



The story of Gros-Bellet



Chestnuts

At Les Cavoues, a two-hour detour will take you to a well-earned viewpoint at the summit of the Pointe de Bellevue. The trail passes through Grand Crau and Les Queues, then heads to Morgins, skimming the border with France at the Portes de Culet Pass and continuing along the Culet and Têtes roads.



## STAGE 2

### MORGINS — LES CROSETS



**12.4 km · 910 m D+ · 385 m D- · 4h20**  
**Highest point : Portes de l'Hiver 2,095 m**



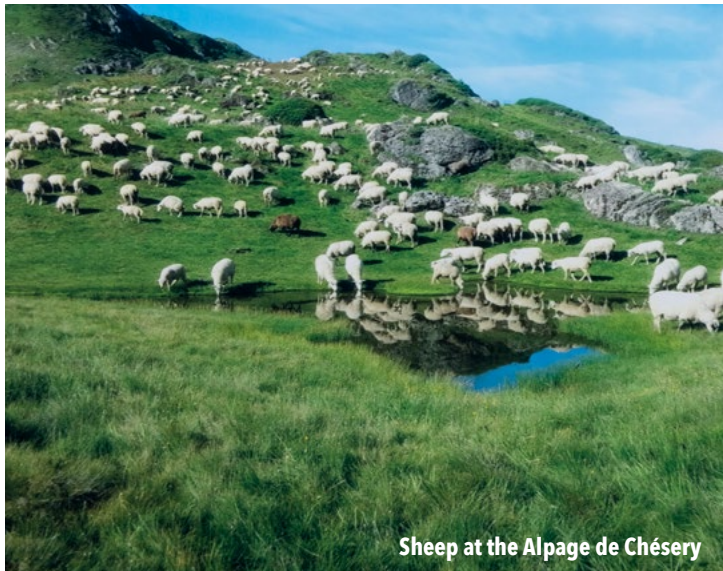
The Bridges Trail

After yesterday's challenging first stage, this second stage starts gently on the sweet Chemin des Ponts, or Bridges Trail, through the verdant Vallon de They. The 3 km stroll along Morgins' Vièze River offers charming interpretive trails, including the fascinating Couleurs de l'Eau, or Multicoloured Waters Trail.



Nine informational panels along this surprising trail highlight a unique phenomenon which makes the various lakes, rivers, and waterfalls in and around Morgins appear successively red, blue, yellow, white, and green. Along the way, you'll find a series of ponds in a protected biotope and the famous ferruginous spring which drew the first tourists to Morgins in 1820, to 'take the waters'.

Before reaching the They Cantine **5** hikers can also take the interpretive Bee Trail, with 23 honeycomb-shaped informational panels that lead to the Sassey mountain pasture **6**. From the Alpage de Sassey, you first pass by the path to the Fontaines Blanches Waterfalls, then the interpretive trail sign, and further on, La Tovassière **7**. From here, a mountain road takes you 550 meters further on to a hillside trail that will lead you to the Fontaines Blanches **8**.



Sheep at the Alpage de Chésery



The Lac de Chésery

After these interpretive trails, the walk continues towards the Lac de Chésery and Lac Vert, where you will find the quaint Refuge de Chésery **9**. This marks the start of the last major climb of the day to the Col des Portes de l'Hiver Pass **10**. From here, you will head downhill to the Col des Portes du Soleil **11**, the famous pass to which the ski area owes its name.

Continue along the road on your right for about 450 m before taking a path on your left—a straight 1km gravel road to the Relais Panoramique, located in Crettet-Bornex, just above the resort of Les Crosets.



VAR



Les Portes du Soleil

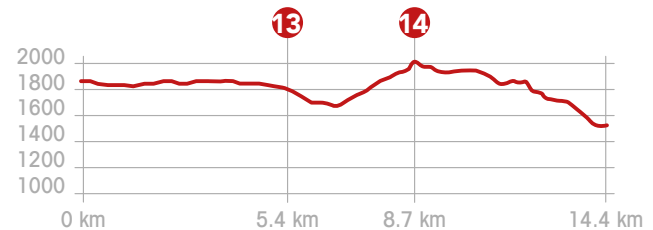
## FOILLEUSE

11 km · 950 m D+ · 430 m D-

This variant adds a bird's-eye view by following the ridges overlooking Morgins, Champoussin and Les Crosets. Instead of taking the They Valley interpretive trails, from your departure point in Morgins you'll head directly towards Madzé and turn right to climb up to La Foilleuse. From here, you'll follow the ridgeline to the Pointe de l'Au, then rejoin the itinerary at the Col des Portes du Soleil.

## STAGE 3

### LES CROSETS — BARME



**14.4 km · 580 m D+ · 920 m D- · 4h30**  
**Highest point : Col de Cou 1,931 m**



View of the Dents Blanches massif



From Crettet-Bornex, the route follows a gravel road towards a place called Vaillime. This is the renowned Route du Lait, or Milk Road, originally constructed to facilitate the dairy farmers' daily journey, transporting their precious elixir down from the alpine pastures to the Illiez Valley. The many ski lifts we encounter today serve as a testament to the region's other principal industry, here in the heart of the iconic Franco-Swiss Portes du Soleil ski area.

As you follow this road, you will pass by the legendary Swiss Wall 🚫—less intimidating in summer than in winter, when it is a mogul-covered black ski slope! When you come to the Lapisa alpine dairy 🏠, you'll want to take time for a refreshing stop and a cool drink or a delicious meal of

homemade alpine specialities. Near the restaurant, at an observatory equipped with binoculars, you might be lucky enough to spy some of the wild deer, roe deer, or chamois that make their home in the Dents Blanches mountains. The TVI founders thank you for respecting the installation and its surroundings.



From Lapisa, a small descending path allows you to bypass the road and reach the La Poya alpine pasture, where you can connect to the switchback trail that winds its way up to the Col de Cou Pass **14**. As you climb this sunny hillside, you may see marmots at play, trundling between the many boulders that pepper the slope.

The pass, on the border with France, was previously manned by an old customs outpost. This building was purchased in 2020 by the Municipalities of Champéry, Samoëns, and Morzine to be transformed into a welcoming mountain refuge.



Ringling a Robin

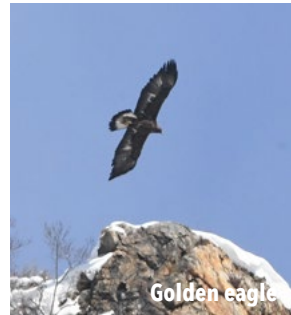


The old Col de Cou customs outpost

### A smuggler's tale...

Once there was a herd of ten 'Tarinnes' (Savoyard cows), that had to be transported over the border because they had been bought by a savvy Illiez Valley merchant the previous Sunday. The border, as always, was guarded by watchful customs agents, but Séraphin Noé, a local hunter, poacher, and smuggler, had a cunning plan. He dispatched a 'creusse', a scrawny old cow with no milk left, ahead of him down the trail. Predictably, the customs agents fell right into the trap! Struggling to handle the recalcitrant old bovine, it took all three agents to manoeuvre her into the barn. Meanwhile, the coast was clear, and the smuggler and his French cows strolled into Switzerland without a care in the world.

In autumn, you may want to make a detour farther along to the Col du Bretolet Pass **15**, where a bird observation and ringing station marks one of Europe's most important migratory bird passages through the Alps. From the border outpost, you'll change direction and head due east on the magnificent Berroi ridge, which marks the divide between the Barme Valley on your right and the Vièze Valley on your left. This is a spectacular path through a nature preserve, where butterflies forage in alpine blueberry bushes.



Golden eagle

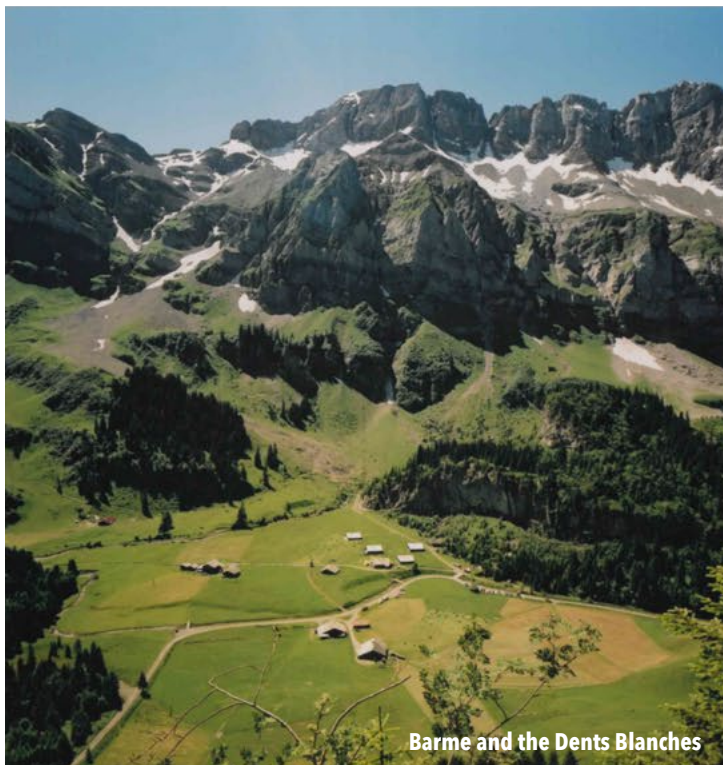


Swallowtail butterfly



The Berroi Ridge

From the Incrène Cross **16**, continue to the Col de Barme where a small oratory was built in honour of woodcutters who were killed doing forestry work following a terrible hurricane that hit the area in 1962. A steep descent from here leads to the picturesque Barme Valley, and the end of today's hike.



**Barme and the Dents Blanches**



**VAR**

## **POINTE DE RIPAILLE**

**2 km · 160 m D+ · 190 m D-**



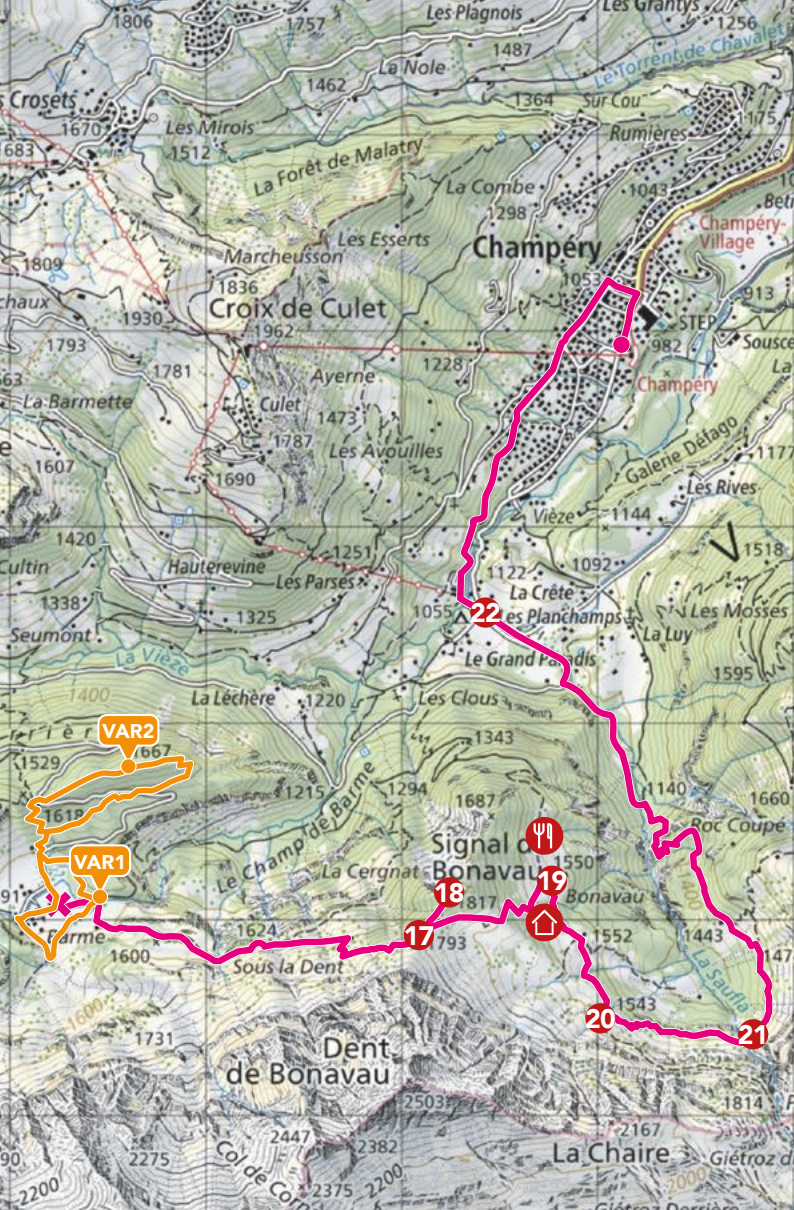
Geology



The Col de Bretolet Pass

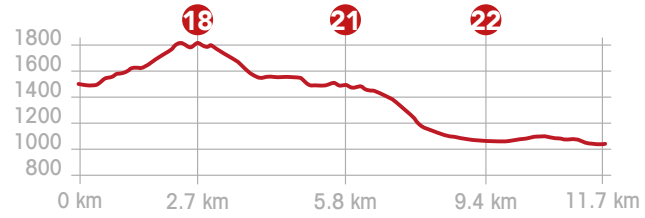
200 m after passing under the cables of a ski lift (closed in summer), take the path on your left that climbs to the Pointe de Ripaille. You will find a beautiful cross and an interesting panorama of the Swiss Portes du Soleil ski area, with a focus on the Planachaux–Croix de Culet sector. From the summit, take a second path, on your left, to rejoin the main route at the Lapisa alpine dairy.





**STAGE 4**

**BARME - CHAMPÉRY**



😊 **14.4 km · 520 m D+ · 980 m D- · 4h**  
**Highest point : Signal de Bonnavau 1,811 m**



The Barme Valley

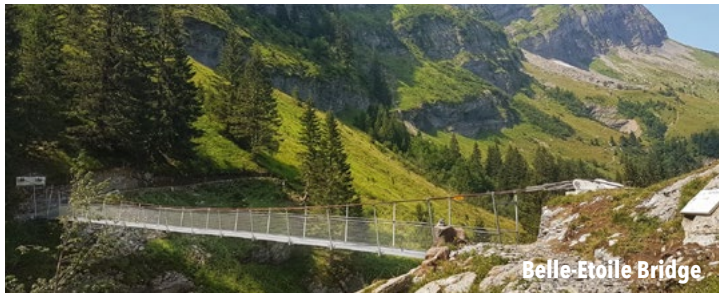
There's nothing like an early morning in Barme, waking to birdsong and the melodious ringing of cowbells after a night spent nestled comfortably in a centuries-old chalet.

Home to two quaint *cantines*, as we call our traditional mountain restaurants, a picturesque oratory, and a few snug farms, this protected natural site is the perfect embodiment of rustic alpine life, almost untouched by the passage of time. The Champérolains appreciate the rarity of such a place, and accordingly banned any new construction here decades ago.



When you've filled up on a delicious alpine breakfast, you'll set out on the path towards the aptly named place called Sous la Dent, at the foot of the Dent de Bonnavau. At the Bonnavau Pass **17**, a short, ten-minute detour will take you to the Signal de Bonnavau **18** for a panoramic view over the Illiez Valley.

Making your way back, you'll continue downhill to the Refuge de Bonaveau **19**, then follow the path on your right, which eventually leads to the Cabane de Susanfe. When the trail splits off **20** for Susanfe, you'll continue straight to the Belle-Etoile Bridge **21**, built in 2016 to span the spectacular cascading torrents in the Sauflaz Gorge.



Informational panels on glaciers and the water cycle dot this section of the path, as it continues towards the Rossétan mountain pasture and heads downhill to Roc Coupé, a passage carved into the cliff and equipped with chains for safety—impressive but not technically difficult.

Further down, a bridge crosses the river and leads to the La Trappe sector before joining the paved Barme Road. Walk past the Grand Paradis picnic shelter **22** and through the lift company car park to take the bucolic Chemin des Poussettes, or Baby Buggy Trail, to Champéry's magnificent main street.



Champéry welcomes you with flowering balconies and a postcard-perfect village street. Lined with traditional chalets bearing the typical 'bellows' rooflines and a variety of shops and restaurants, the village's main street converges on an landmark bell tower built in 1725. At the church, you can stop to rest in peaceful coolness and watch a 14-minute audio-visual presentation on the church and the history of Champéry.



VAR



The Belle-Etoile Bridge  
over the Sauflaz River



Architectural heritage  
and 'bellows' rooflines

## INTERPRETIVE TRAILS

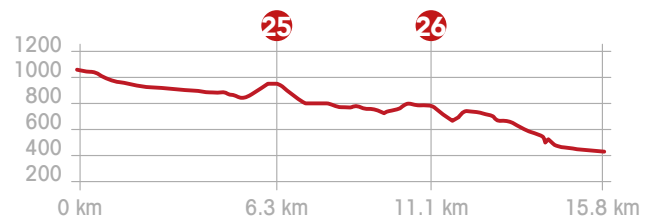
2 km · 160 m D+ · 190 m D-

Before heading towards the Dent de Bonavau on today's route, why not take a little warm-up detour to learn about local forests or life in the old days? The Sentier Forestier and the Sentier Rural are easy walks with informational panels (in French) that take 30 – 40 minutes each to complete.



**STAGE 5**

**CHAMPÉRY - MONTHÉY**






😊 **15.8 km · 450 m D+ · 1,070 m D- · 4h50**  
**Highest point : Champéry 1,033 m**



The Val d'Illeiez church and rectory



From the Champéry cable car, follow the Route de la Fin in the direction of Grand Paradis. About 300 m past the cable car, the pedestrian trail crosses under the Mourgue Bridge to descend towards the Vièze River, crossing the rushing waters over a charming wooden bridge at a place called Le Progrès . From here, the path follows the river through the shady forest, across sunny clearings, and past tranquil ponds. Along the way, you might want to make a stop at Chalet Rosalie for a little trout fishing.

The trail crosses back over the river on a lovely stone bridge and continues along the riverbank through the Bêtre pastures. Continue towards the area called Draversat , on the right bank of the Vièze, turning left onto the Route du Stand. Just past the oratory, take the Champs Path that climbs through the fields towards the village centre. Tip your hat to the statue of Gros-Bellet  in the town square, then head down the Chemin de la Creuse, threading your way between the church, the cemetery, and the rectory, heading once again towards the banks of the Vièze. Cross the Fayot River near the football fields, then descend to cross a small footbridge over the Vièze, before arriving at the old Pas Sawmill.



Communal bread oven



The Old Mill on the Tine - Troistorrents

From here, you'll begin the climb to the village of Troistorrents, taking the Chemin de la Revenettaz to the train crossing on the cantonal road. If you have time, you may want to visit the magnificent Saint Marie-Madeleine church, or the ancient Moulins de la Tine <sup>26</sup>, perched higgledy-piggledy in the Tine Gorge. The Old Mill, painstakingly rebuilt down to the last, hand-forged nail, bears witness to the importance of hydraulic power and agricultural trades here over the centuries.

Your walk continues across a new alpine footbridge, which connects Troistorrents to the hamlet of Chenarlier. Hikers with vertigo beware—this graceful construction spans the entire valley and is 75 m high. If you are afraid of heights, you might want to cross the river over the intriguingly named Pont du Diable <sup>27</sup>. According to legend, this bridge was built by the Devil himself, in exchange for the soul of the first passer-by to cross it once it was built.



Tunnel in the Vièze Gorge

The last part of this stage and the end of the Tour de la Vallée d'Illiez crosses another footbridge before plunging into the spectacularly wild Vièze Gorge, following an educational path that highlights the region's geological, biological, and historical heritage, while taking you on a thrilling detour through a tunnel carved right into the gorge's rocky walls. Lighting on a timer provides just enough illumination to see your way in the nearly pitch-black darkness. Back in the warm sunshine, the final jaunt to Monthey passes by the hydroelectric plant, the Rue Reconfière, and the emblematic covered wooden bridge 🚶, built in 1809.



The Old Bridge



VAR

## LES GALERIES DÉFAGO

5.5 km · 320 m D+ · 400 m D-

Follow the main itinerary to the place named Progrès, then take a steep path on your right up to the Organic Adventure Park. From here, take the trail that leads to the Galerie Défago, a magnificent path carved into a natural ledge that bisects the sheer limestone cliff facing Champéry. At the end of the Galerie, you will arrive at the charming Cantine des Rives restaurant, on a paved alpine road. Follow the road to the place called Tière, near the Frassenaye Waterfall. Just past a hydroelectrical facility, take the narrow path that heads steeply downhill in the direction of the Vièze River to the place called Draversat.



From grain to bread



Forests



## RESTAURANTS / CANTINES OUTSIDE THE VILLAGES

<b>STAGE 1</b>	Monthey	montheytourisme.ch
	Chanso	+41 79 963 75 82
	Le Ferrage	+41 24 477 12 21
	Morgins	regiondentsdumidi.ch
<b>STAGE 2</b>	Alpage La Chaux Restaurant des Bochasses	+41 79 899 15 74
	Cantine de They	+41 79 399 62 21
	Cantine de Tovassière	+41 24 477 46 57
	Refuge de Chésery	+41 79 725 68 20
	Restaurant La Ô	+41 24 476 83 24
	Buvette de Savolaire	+41 24 477 11 14
	Restaurant Le Relais	+41 24 479 34 12
	Les Crosets / Champoussin	regiondentsdumidi.ch
<b>STAGE 3</b>	Cantine Lapisa	+41 79 516 45 33
	Cantines des Dents Blanches	+41 24 479 12 12
	Cantine de Barme	+41 24 479 11 63
<b>STAGE 4</b>	Buvette de Bonavau	+41 79 205 50 23
	Guest House Grand-Paradis	+41 24 479 11 67
	Champéry	regiondentsdumidi.ch
<b>STAGE 5</b>	Cantine des Rives	+41 24 479 11 71
	Buvette Organic Adventure Park	+41 79 757 56 28
	Val-d'Illicz	regiondentsdumidi.ch
	Restaurant Les Thermes	+41 24 476 80 40
	Troistorrents	regiondentsdumidi.ch
Monthey	montheytourisme.ch	

## RESTAURANTS / ACOMMODATION OUTSIDE THE VILLAGES

<b>STAGE 1</b>	Monthey	montheytourisme.ch
	Camping de Morgins	+41 (0)24 477 19 92
	Chanso	+41 79 963 75 82
	Chalet Ingas	+41 76 430 36 46
	Morgins	regiondentsdumidi.ch
<b>STAGE 2</b>	Refuge de Chésery	+41 79 725 68 20
	Relais panoramique	+41 24 479 34 12
	Les Crosets / Champoussin	regiondentsdumidi.ch
<b>STAGE 3</b>	Cantine Lapisa	+41 79 516 45 33
	Cantines des Dents Blanches	+41 24 479 12 12
	Cantine de Barme	+41 24 479 11 63
<b>STAGE 4</b>	Buvette de Bonavau	+41 79 205 50 23
	Guest House Grand-Paradis	+41 24 479 11 67
	Camping Grand-Paradis	+41 24 479 19 90
	Champéry	regiondentsdumidi.ch
<b>STAGE 5</b>	Val-d'Illicz	regiondentsdumidi.ch
	Troistorrents	regiondentsdumidi.ch
	Le Grenier	+41 79 440 34 61
	Monthey	montheytourisme.ch

## USEFUL NUMBERS

Monthey tourist office	+41 24 475 79 63		
Morgins tourist office	+41 24 477 23 61		
Champéry tourist office	+41 24 479 05 50		
Emergency	144		
Fire	118	Police	117
Emergency in Europe	112	Trains/Bus	tpc.ch



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January 2024

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BEAUTIFUL WALKS IN THE ILLIEZ VALLEY