



Parc national  
de la Vanoise



*Very easy (return)*



*4 h*



*9.1 km*

*+ 618 m*



*Fauna. History.  
Pastoralism*

# Vallon de Bessans

Haute-Maurienne  
Bessans


**A hike open to all up to the prestigious glacial cirque of the valley where culture and nature come together for curious souls**

If I like to roam through the valley of Bessans, it is first and foremost because this place knows how to satisfy an insatiable love for nature. It is the delicate whistling of the wind in the feathers of the bearded vulture, the powerful scent of the plants on the adrets that accompany you as you climb, and the touching sight of the young ibex, the future of a species at one time almost extinct, that rewards you when you reach the valley. But much richer still is the path which recounts the long history of those bygone men who lived on the mountain, and the more recent account of those who try to preserve it... A valley nestled between culture and nature, well known as home to the Haute-Maurienne. Benoit Deffrennes, Vanoise National Park ranger



# Trek

- From the car park, cross the Arc river over the bridge and take the road leading to the hamlet. At the wash house, follow the lane on the right which leads to a dirt track. Follow this track over three bends, then take the trail on the left. Towards an altitude of 1,950 m at the locality of «Le Cloton» the trail joins the GR5.
- Continue on the trail that crosses the bends of the agricultural track. Towards an altitude of 2,200 m, the trail joins the track again at the level of a single mountain pasture chalet.
- From this point, follow the track which forms two small bends before levelling out, until descending slightly to the level of the valley. Pass the torrent by the bridge and then go back down into the valley on the left, still on the agricultural track, until the last mountain chalet.
- The return journey follows the same path.

- **Departure** : Villaron car park (Bessans)
- **Arrival** : Villaron car park (Bessans)
- **Markings** : GR 



Min elevation : 1752 m

Max elevation : 2278 m

# On your path...

## *Saxifraga valdensis*

«Try to find this rare flower under the shelter of a large rock. This well-named plant, which «breaks up rock,» is lodged in the rock crevices. And not just any! This very rare protected plant can only be found in France in some localities of the Hautes-Alpes, and only in Bessans in the department of Savoy. So come and admire the rarity of these grey-blue lanceolate leaves grouped into flattened pads.

If you are here in July, a panicle of beautiful and immaculate delicate flowers will spring up for you.»



## *Engraved stones*

The summer days are long, so they sometimes became bored. Deprived of the sacrosanct smartphone», they used their imagination to mark the rock with names, dates and small drawings. As you descend, you can stop in front of the first bend in the track after the barrier of Cloton. This was the moor of the shepherds, a meeting place, and you will see beautiful drawings of cows, hunters and of mountains...



## *Birds of prey*

Stop awhile to gaze upon the cliffs of the Pis and the face of the Croix de Dom Jean Maurice that stands above you. This is the place to see the magnificent birds of prey cruising through the skies, finding rising air currents to help them soar. The griffon vultures are plentiful here and like you, come to Bessans for their summer holiday, choosing this site as their night-time gîte.



## *The hay cable*

In front of you, a metal hoop planted at the top of the slope briefly draws your attention. Félix Grosset, a Bessans native and former ranger of the National park knows how to revive this innocuous frame... Bright-eyed, he tells us how, together with his father, he lowered the bales of hay down to the valley, thanks to the cable which stretches from this hoop to the bottom. Mere child's play thanks to this technique imported from neighbouring Italy in the 1920s.



## *The Alpage du Vallon d'en Haut*

Here you are at the end of your walk! Here to greet you will be Sébastien, Chantal, Julien or Floriane who will tell you about their passion and their work. This chalet is indeed where the production of Beaufort begins in the summer alpine pasture, so you will actually get to listen to the people who manage the valley's alpine pasture and watch them making the cheese in the mountains, showcasing the modern heritage of an ancient culture.





## To go there...

### Access and transport



*Pass by the village of Bessans by the D 902 towards Bonneval-sur-Arc. After the bridge and the "La Bessanaise" holiday centre, stop in the car park on the left.*



*Rail connection to Modane.*



*Then transport by coach to Bessans.*



*Suggested hitchhiking organised in the Haute-Maurienne valley : [www.rezopouce.fr](http://www.rezopouce.fr)*

### Information desks

- ✓ Office de tourisme - Bessans  
Rue de la Maison Morte 73480 Bessans (04 79 05 99 06)
- ✓ Point Information Vanoise - Maison de la Vanoise  
Place Vanoise - Termignon 73500 Val-Cenis (04 79 20 54 54)

### Useful information

This hike is in the core of the national park. The national park is an unrestricted natural area but subjected to regulations which must be known by all visitors ([www.vanoise-parcnational.fr](http://www.vanoise-parcnational.fr)).

*More hikes on [rando.vanoise.com](http://rando.vanoise.com)*

