



Parc national  
de la Vanoise



*Challenging (loop)*



*6 h 30*



*14.5 km*



*+ 952 m*



*Flora, Geology, Lake  
and glacier*

# Lac du Génèpy

Haute-Maurienne

Aussois

**From the cembra pine forest to the glacial cirque, a journey  
of 3,000 km to the north over a 3 hour walk**

The date on the calendar indicated the 14th July on this morning... There is not a ripple of water on the Génèpy lake despite the gusting northerly winds. This is because a thick layer of ice covers the lake. The varying colours of the mineral world around me transect the swirls of fresh snow. This is where you go up to the Lac du Génèpy, starting out from the forest in your short sleeves until you end up thinking you're crossing the rocky stretches of Iceland, where the plants have adapted in mad-cap fashion to cling to these rocky mounds. Here the birds no longer sing, only the ringing sounds of the alpine coughts and the guttural sounds of the ptarmigan resonate.

*Mathieu Beurier – National Park Ranger*





- **Departure** : Dam site (Aussois)
- **Arrival** : Dam site (Aussois)
- **Markings** : Parc 



# On your path...

## *Lakes of the Aussois dam*

Downhill behind you, you will be able to see the lakes of the Aussois dams. The Plan d'Amont is remarkable for its turquoise colour, fed only by the melting snows and clear streams. Downstream, the Vanoise glaciers feed the lake thanks to 19 km of underground tunnels originating from the Doron de Termignon. The water is loaded with glacial "flour", fine mineral particles torn from the mountains. This is what gives the Plan d'Aval its grey, milky colour.



## *The lilium martagon*

In June to July when you leave the forest and set foot on the mountain pastures, you may find a large plant with purple flowers. The lilium martagon, a rare species, colonises the clearings of the forest boundary. It favours so-called mesophilic meadows that are neither too dry or too moist. This plant, once picked, was threatened. It is now out of danger but will require, like other species, much respect on your part.

## *The Silene acaulis*

This cushion, punctuated by bright pink flowers, is not a moss. The silene acaulis is one of the champions of adapting to the worst. The cushion-like form allows it to reduce day-time and night-time temperature variations that can be significant at these altitudes. Moisture will also be trapped in this hairy, small-leaved stem. The ancient decomposed leaves of the silene acaulis contain nutrients that will allow it to grow and to bloom. A taproot in the cushion's core will allow it to cling to the steepest terrain.



## *The rock ptarmigan*

The Rock ptarmigan, known simply as the ptarmigan is an arctic-alpine bird. Indeed, its area of presence has followed the thawing prehistoric glaciers towards northern Europe and at altitude. In the Alps, it is found only above 2,300 m altitude. In order to escape from its predators, the ptarmigan becomes white in winter and in summer its plumage takes on the colours of the rocky ground and shallow grasses that it favours.

## *The Lac du Génèpy and its moraine*

The Lac du Génèpy is a glacial lake. At the end of the little ice age (1550-1850) the Labby glacier left a moraine on the right bank of the lake. A moraine is an accumulation of stones transported along the front of the glacier and left in place during its retreat. The glacier gouges out the rock in front of the moraine. The glacial meltwater occurs in this basin, creating the Lac du Génèpy. The very fine mineral particles that you can touch on the shores of the lake fill it gradually and give it its milky colour.





## To go there...

### Access and transport



*In Modane, take the D 215 towards Aussois. Once you've arrived in Aussois, go to the top of the village and take the small road that rises towards the dams. Leave a panoramic viewpoint on the left and take a steep road on the right for 100 m to reach the car park.*



*Rail connection to Modane.*



*Then transport by coach to the administrative centre of Aussois.*



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

### Information desks

- ✓ Office de tourisme - Maison d'Aussois  
43 route des Barrages 73500 Aussois (04 79 05 99 06)
- ✓ Point Information Vanoise - Maison cantonale  
9 Place Sommeiller 73500 Modane (04 79 05 57 94)

### 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)).

High mountain route to be prepared in advance. Make sure you have the appropriate equipment and footwear and an IGN map for navigating.

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

