



ADVENTURE TRAVEL

VOLUNTEER-LED EXCURSIONS WORLDWIDE

Day Hiking in Provence's Ecrins National Park

June 3-11, 2017

AT# 1709

Join us as we explore an area of Provence not frequented by most casual tourists. We will be on the fringe of the French Alps utilizing ski lifts on some days to help us gain elevation. The Ecrins National Park is a protected area of soaring mountain peaks, lush meadows, rushing streams, mirror lakes and beautiful scenery in the heart of the French Alps.

Ecrins National Park is a mountainous region to the south-east of Grenoble, west of [Briançon](#) and north of Gap and Embrun, on the border between the Rhone-Alps and Provence-Alps-Cote d'Azur regions. Écrins National Park (in French Parc National des Écrins) is one of eight regions in France designated as [French national parks](#).

Ecrins National Park is visited by approximately 850,000 people each year, with many of these pursuing various outdoor activities, in particular hikers and climbers.

It is of course the scenery that is the main attraction, and Ecrins contains more than 100 mountain peaks over 9800 feet in altitude, with the Barre des Ecrins at 13458 feet being the highest point. It is also well known for the extensive number of glaciers it contains.

Also, there are some designated natural reserves within the borders of the park such as Pics du Combeynot, Vallée du Béranger, Vallée de Saint-Pierre, Vallée de la Séveraisse, Vallée du Vénéon, Cirque du Lac des Estaris.

Although there are no major towns within the borders of the park itself there are several villages which we will



come across as we explore the region. The village of [La Grave](#) to the north of the park is classified as one of the most beautiful villages in France. La Grave is high in the mountains 25 miles north-west of Briancon. It is listed as one of the '[most beautiful villages of France](#)'. Because of the mountains opposite the village it is also known as La Grave - La Meije, and it is these imposing mountains around the village that also make it so scenic. Because of the altitude of the village there are no wooden chalets to be found, because there are no trees (and because earlier fires in the town further discouraged the idea). The buildings are therefore made of stone, with stone roofs. The houses are constructed largely with volcanic rock, held together by a mortar made from earth. The village itself sits on a slope nestled into the mountainside with a myriad of narrow streets winding between the sturdy houses, and a small roman style church built in the 12th century in La Grave center. The village is proud, and rightly so, that it has managed to avoid the visual impact of tourism on the town, and the facilities that are here are well integrated into the rest of the village. The views from the village, and in the surrounding countryside, are magnificent.

Briancon is a fortified mountain town at 4429 feet above sea level in the Hautes-Alpes department of



Provence, close to the French border with Italy and surrounded by alpine mountains, including the spectacular mountain scenery of the Parc National des Ecrins and the Vallée de la Clarée which is one of the 'Grand Sites of France'. The highest city in Europe, Briancon falls at the end of several important valleys through the mountains - hence its historical importance for both defence and trade. Although the fortifications that now dominate Briancon were added in the 17th-18th centuries to protect the important routes between France, Italy and Austria the town has had an important defensive role to play in the region dating back to roman times.

It is the old town, known as the Ville Haute, of Briancon which is of most interest to visitors (and the reason why Briancon is now a protected [French Historic Town](#) and is listed as an official [Town of Art and History in France](#)) and much of this remains unchanged since it was redesigned and rebuilt by Vauban in the 18th century following the destruction of much of the original town in 1692 by the duc de Savoie.

There are some notable monuments to discover (as well as the ever present military defences). Enter the town through the large stone gateway called the Porte de Pignerol and the main street of the town, Grande Rue, runs steeply down the hillside from here and is lined with attractive old buildings. The



street is also known as the 'grande gargouille' after the drain that runs down the middle of the street to prevent flooding. The 'drain' was in fact originally designed by Vauban to ensure a constant source of water (the water runs from the hills above) to fight any fires as much of the 17th century destruction of the town was due to fire.

Our Adventure Travel trip will have us flying in and out of Turin, Italy and transferring by bus to La Grave for a 3

night stay during which time we will go on daily hikes in the surrounding mountains. We will then transfer to Briancon for one night, giving us time to explore the town before leaving the next day for our last destination, Ailefroide for the last three nights of our adventure.

ACCOMMODATIONS, MEALS AND ACTIVITIES:

In each village we will stay in 2-3 Star hiker friendly chalets. We will be accommodated in double rooms (a European double room usually features two twin mattresses in a single frame bed. Each bed is made up individually, but they are side by side) with accompanying bathroom.

Breakfasts will vary from continental buffet to hearty European selections with cheese, meat, yogurt and fruit. All lunches will be on our daily outings and are not included in the trip price. Dinners will feature one or two selections from the menu at our 2- 3 Star hotel/chalet, and we will be eating together as a group. Beverages other than tap water are not included in the trip price at dinner, but coffee/tea are included at breakfast. Our day hikes will range from 4 to 6 hours in length, with elevation change (ups and downs) varying from 1,000' up to 3,300' per day.

Itinerary:

The itinerary may change depending on the trail and weather conditions!!

Day 1-Saturday, 3 June: Leave USA on overnight flight to Turin, Italy

Day 2 – Sunday, 4 June: Arrive in Turin / Transfer to La Grave, France

Meals included: Welcome Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel TBD

Activities: Your journey will start in Turin airport where you'll be met in the afternoon by your AMC guides. We will transfer for about 2 hours bus ride a hotel in La Grave, our hiking base in the La Grave in Ecrins National Park. Depending on our arrival time in La Grave, we may do a short hike.

Day 3 – Monday, 5 June:

La Grave(4859' – Puy Vachier (6175')– Chal Vachere (6050') - La Grave

Vertical rise and loss 1316'

About 6 - 7 hours (6 miles)

Activities: Our hike to Chalet de Chal Vachere will start from south of La Grave. We will climb through the woodland and across sloping pastures with plenty of visual highlights.

Or

La Grave – Hameau de Valfroide – Lac du Goleon La Grave

Vertical rise and loss 3196'

About 6 - 7 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel TBD

Activities: Our hike will start from the highest point in La Grave. We will climb through the flower filled meadows and have views onto the rooftops of La Grave. Our hike will take us to Lac du Goleon which is trapped by a glacial sill in the hanging valley northeast of La Grave.

Day 4 – Tuesday, 6 June:

Villar d'Arene(5522') – Sources de la Romanche (7054') - Villar d'Arene (5522')

Vertical rise and loss 1532'

About 6 - 7 hours (12 miles)

Activities: A truly splendid walk in magnificent surroundings, this fairly undemanding route leads to the headwaters of the Romanche below the Glacier de la Plate des Agneaux.

Or

La Grave – Lac De Puy Vachier –Refuge Evariste Chancel– La Grave

Vertical rise and loss 3362'

About 6 - 7 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel TBD

Activities: From our hotel we will walk to the western end of La Grave's main street where we will start our hike. Rising at an easy angle at first, the path then steepens, before contouring with the view across the valley to La Grave. The path will lead us to a little Lac de Puy Vachier which is lodged in a glacial cirque bounded by dark crags.

Day 5 – Wednesday, 7 June 7, 2017 Transfer to Briancon

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel TBD

Activities: Transfer by private charter bus in morning to hotel in historic Briancon. City tour of the historic UNESCO section of Briancon in the afternoon.

Day 6 – Thursday, 8 June Transfer to Ailefroide .

Late morning – Ailefroide – St. Antoine - Vallouise - Ailefroide

Vertical rise and loss 1119'

About 4-5 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel TBD

Activities Transfer by private charter bus to Ailefroide. Once in Ailefroide, we will have half day outing to Vallouise and back. The distance/duration of this hike will depend on how much time we have left after our arrival in Ailefroide.

Day 7 – Friday, 9 June Ailefroide – Tete de la Draye - Ailefroide

Vertical rise and loss 1870'

About 4-5 hours

Accommodation: Hotel TBD

Activities : Our hike begins on the north side of Ailefroide. Once we cross the bridge we will start climbing through tight switchbacks to a hillside. There we will have bird's eye view of the village we just have left. Once we reach Tete de la Draye we will be rewarded with panoramic view not only of the Vallon de la Sele and associated Vallon de Clapouse but also with Vallee de la Vallouiseach, while upvalley to the northwest Glacier Blanc can be seen draining towards Pre de Madame Carle.

Day 8 – Saturday, 10 June Ailefroide – Refuge du Pelvoux – Ailefroide

Vertical rise and loss 3927'

About 6-7 hours

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel TBD

Activities: Our hike will start at the upper end of Ailefroide's single street. Once we cross the bridge, the terrain becomes open with the views up valley. Our destination, Refuge du Pelvoux, a stone built hut, is located on a rock shelf high above the Vallon de la Sele, on the south slopes of Mont Pelvoux.

Day 9 – Sunday, 11 June: Departure / Transfer back to Turin

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: None provided / Departure day

Activities: Today after breakfast we have a return transfer to Turin/Torino airport organized for the group. From there you are free to travel to other destinations in the region or onward travel home. Please note, this is a group transfer in private coach and departure time depends on the final group logistics. Individual transfers must be arranged separately and at a cost external to the tour price.

COSTS COVERED:

All accommodations at double occupancy.

Group chartered bus travel from Turin, Italy airport to our hotel in La Grave and return to Turin, Italy airport from Ailefroide, France.

All breakfasts and 6 dinners, excluding dinner beverages other than tap water

Medical evacuation and repatriation insurance

Services of two AMC leaders

Two roundtrip group ski lift tickets in La Grave

Group chartered bus travel from La Grave hotel to Briancon, and from Briancon to hotel in Ailefroide

COSTS NOT COVERED:

Airfare from USA to Europe and return to U.S.A.

Lunches and snacks

Dinner in Briancon

Alcoholic beverages, and dinner drinks other than plain tap water.

Individual (non-group) excursions and additional lifts, bus, rail, taxis, or car rentals.

Optional day trips.

Passport

Trip insurance.

SAFETY, RISKS AND HAZARDS:

As participant safety is a high priority for all AMC-sponsored events, procedures and policies have been developed to attempt to limit participant risk. Participants are expected to work with the leaders to reduce risks and make the experience successful for all. Participants should be aware that there are risks associated with outdoor adventure activities, including but not limited to adverse weather and environmental conditions, remote locations of our trips, and transportation in vehicles, on foot, or by boat. Aside from any personal medical problems, participants should be aware of the possibilities of hypothermia, hyperthermia, insect bites, altitude sickness, dehydration, sun burn and other hot and cold related problems. You should regularly use sun screen and insect repellent, wear long sleeves and pants, take care to be adequately hydrated and bring water on all day trips as well as wind/rain gear, warm hat and gloves, sun protection, snacks and personal first aid kit. Please carefully read and sign the *AMC Participant Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks and Release and Indemnity Agreement* and contact us if you have any questions. Participants' understanding of these risks and adherence to our policies and procedures can contribute to making this experience rewarding.

RESERVING A PLACE AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

The land cost of the trip is \$1500, plus estimated airfare of \$1,650-1850. To reserve your place, please contact the trip leader or co leader for an application, the Confidential Medical Form and the Acknowledgment & Assumption of Risks & Release and Indemnity Agreement, then send to the leader

these forms along with deposit of **\$1,000.00** made out to: **Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC)**. \$100.00 of this initial \$1,000.00 deposit is a non-refundable administration fee. Once we receive your application and other forms and have approved you for the trip, we'll send you additional information on the trip, including planned hikes, equipment lists, and travel tips. The maximum number of participants is 18, so apply early to reserve your place.

PAYMENTS DUE:

2nd Payment of \$500 due by January 1st, 2017

Single supplement: TBD

EQUIPMENT LIST

Below is a list of the required and recommended gear for the trip.

Required and Essential Gear

- Passport, at least six months from expiration
- Daypack, at least 1000-2000 cubic inches
- Waterproof pack liner or both a liner AND a pack cover (a pack cover will not keep water out in very high wind, but can keep the outside of the pack dryer)
- Sturdy, comfortable, waterproof hiking boots with extra shoelaces
- Synthetic hiking clothing (tops and bottoms)
- Waterproof rain gear (tops and bottoms)
- Sweater/jacket, wool or fleece
- Long pants, wool or fleece
- Nalgene bottles/Camelback (at least 2 liters total capacity)
- Sun hat or bandanna
- Warm hat, neckband or balaclava
- Gloves/mittens
- 3 pairs of hiking socks with liners
- Tevas, Crocs or other similar footwear (to wear around our lodging)
- Headlamp/flashlight with fresh batteries
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Personal blister kit, first aid kit and personal medications
- High-energy trail snacks
- Whistle and knife (knife not in carry-on)

Recommended and Optional Gear

- Small daypack/lumbar pack for sightseeing (or adaptation of full pack)
- Gaiters (for rain and debris)
- Hiking poles (not in carry-on), highly recommended for stream crossings, in rain and high winds
- Casual clothing

- Camera and spare batteries/charger and voltage converter or adapter as required.

Note about foreign currency: The best exchange rates euros are at ATMs in each country (Italy, France). In-country banks and money exchanges away from airports are probably next best. Traveler's checks are not recommended.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

If you cancel after being accepted for the trip, \$100 is non-refundable. But if you cancel after Feb 1st, 2017, minimally \$200 is nonrefundable; if (and only if) another person takes your place. We will establish a waiting list. However, your cancellation shall not raise the cost of the trip to any of the participants or the leaders. Thus, if you cancel and are not replaced, you will forfeit the \$200 plus the per capita expenses already incurred and any other unpaid expenses for which the trip cannot obtain a refund. You may forfeit the entire trip fee. Flight tickets once purchased become your property and are generally non-refundable. We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance. Information on a company recommended by the AMC will be sent to you.

PLEASE NOTE: The price of the AMC Adventure Travel trip is given in good faith based on current tariffs and rates and is subject to change. ***Any tariff, exchange rate increases will be passed on to participants.***

Conversely if the minimum number of participants does not sign up, the leaders reserve the right to cancel the trip and refund the amounts paid. If the trip is full, we can put your name on a waiting list, or return your deposit.

AIR COSTS (ESTIMATED \$1,650-1850):

Leaders will explore the best possible options for air travel – most likely on Alitalia or Lufthansa , since they usually offer good connections. You will receive notification when we are aware of a good fare. For this trip we estimate a range of \$1,650-1850. We will assist you in any way to make your reservations, but you should not make any booking on your own without consulting the leaders. We will notify you with a list of acceptable flights once we know that we have a confirmed trip. Once you purchase tickets, they are wholly owned by you.

FLIGHTS:

Your flight should leave the USA on June 3rd, 2017 for arrival in Turin, Italy on June 4th, 2017 no later than 11 AM. The return flights should leave Turin, Italy on June 11th no earlier than 3 PM to allow time for the charter bus transfer to the airport. If you schedule flights outside of these times, you will be responsible for your own transport to/from the Turin airport.

Trip insurance is highly recommended, since an illness, accident or death in the family can interfere with your plans. Trip insurance can be obtained through your travel agent or the leaders will provide you with information about an AMC recommended/approved trip insurance company.

TRIP LEADERS:

LEADER: GINETTE BEAUDOIN

Ginette has been a member of the AMC since 1988 and has led several day and weekend trips in the White Mountains of NH, as well as various parts of Maine. She has led adventure trip in July 2014, July of 2011, August 2012 and July/August to Austrian Alps. She has also lead Adventure travel trips to Yosemite National Park, Azores Archipelago, Tuscany and Superior Hiking Trail in Minnesota for the AMC. She has participated in numerous AMC Major Excursions to Switzerland and Austria, involving hiking and cross country skiing. She has hiked in the Stubai valley as part of a 2006 Major Excursion and hiked to 26 of the high Alpine Huts throughout Austria, Germany and Switzerland. She has hiked all of the NH 4000 footers. Her interests include hiking, photography, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, travel, information volunteer for AMC and introducing others to outdoor activities.

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CO-LEADER: ANNA PANSZCZYK



on previous years.
leader backpacked the

Switzerland. This is in addition to trips that she takes to all corners of the world! Anna has completed SOLO Advanced Wilderness First Aid course as well as CPR training.



Anna is a Boston Chapter INTRO (AMC) Leader. Anna has co lead AMC Adventure Travel trips to Austria, Azores, Yosemite National Park, Minnesota and Morocco. Anna leads hiking trips in the White Mountains and most recently led an excursion to Waterville Valley and Craftsbury Vermont for snowshoeing and cross country skiing. She has also co led the Claybrook ski trip During the summer of 2014, she and the trip Haute Route from Chamonix France to Zermatt

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