



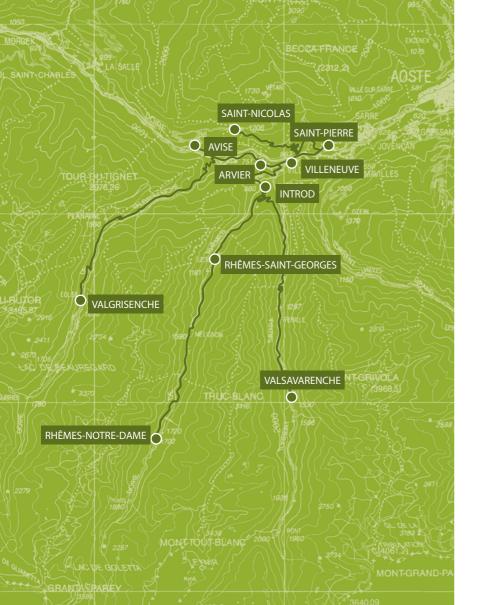


PURE ESSENCE
OF THE MOUNTAINS

Splendid valleys dominated by one single lady – Nature – open up at the heart of unspoilt Gran Paradiso National Park amidst snowy peaks, perennial glaciers, lush forests.

This vast expanse of rugged beauty is where bygone traditions, medieval villages, ancient castles and chapels hewn out of the rock prevail. It's a paradise of extreme sports and traditional food where the joyful music of village festivals mingles with the lapping of frothy streams, whistling of marmots among the grass and the delicate fragrance of flowers blooming in sunny meadows...

Find full updated information on sites of interest (opening times, details, initiatives...) by visiting www.lovevda.it





### **DAMSELS AND GIANTS**

Once upon a time there was a huge granite castle surmounted by ice towers and rock pinnacles. It was called "Gran Paradiso" and within its spacious chambers lived giants with skin of stone and eyes of iron.

Four sisters loved to play at their feet and, wherever they set eyes, the earth flourished, waters roared wildly and trees filled with fruit.

The girls soon grew into young maidens and in autumn their hair turned scarlet, pure white like diamonds in winter, the colour of wheat in summer and shiny emerald green in spring.

Captivated by such beauty, the giants began to compete for the hand of these young damsels. And so it came to pass that on Gran Paradiso blizzards, floods, earthquakes and storms were unleashed; the mountainsides crumbled and streams burst their banks, the population fled in fear and animals sought refuge in caves and bushes, but alas, nobody could escape the fury of the giants.

So, the sisters decided to put an end to this quarrelling and, with a heavy heart, chose to leave. For the last time they hugged each other, and left weeping. From the first, who had violet eyes the colour of ripe grapes and red hair the colour of apples, were conceived the basins of Fallère and Vertosan, and her tears gave rise to the badlands, while from her fingers bloomed orchards and vines.

The second, who was wild and fearless and had the solemn expression of an ibex and the brisk pace of a chamois, sought refuge in the heart of the countryside, and from her hands rose larch and spruce woods, from her rain-soaked hair appeared the waters of Eaux Rousses in the valley that took the name of Valsavarenche.

The third sister settled a little beyond where eagles and hawks, bearded vultures and goshawks followed her in full flight. She kissed the land that accepted her – the Valley of Rhêmes – and from her lips rose the walls of Granta Parey, her warm breath melted the snows, creating the turquoise waters of Lake Pellaud.

Finally, the last sister ventured farther than all the others, leaving behind her a pure white blanket of snow. With her she carried a loom and, hidden among the mountains and impervious glaciers, began weaving the first drap of Valgrisenche...

## Bonjour, V m Margot, your guide!

Psst... Yes, I'm talking to you! Come over here, quietly without making a sound...

Yes, like that. Look down there, on that boulder? It's a female chamois with her young. Aren't they wonderful?

Oh, how forgetful of me: I'm Margot, a ranger and along with my colleagues I take care of Gran Paradiso National Park. From dawn to dusk we keep watch over the flora and fauna. And I mean just that... I often spend the night out in rangers' huts but I willingly do that... and much more for my love of nature!

Let me come with you to the next hut. Who could be better than me to show you around this land of overwhelming charm?



Unlike other Italian protected reserves, Gran Paradiso National Park is the only one to have its own historical vigilance service, set up in 1947. Rangers' duties include monitoring and scientific research, in addition to supervisory activities and alpine rescue, which keeps them busy at all times throughout the year.















## NOT TO BE MISSED

GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK, ASCENT TO GRAN PARADISO, SARRIOD DE LA TOUR CASTLE, ALTA VIA 2, CAMMINO BALTEO





### **GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK**

SUPREME BEAUTY OF THE ALPS

Get ready to admire the soft grassy expanses studded with white lilies that entwine gurgling streams and woods where tousled trees tower high.

Prepare to be left speechless in wonder before the crystal-clear water of lakes that reflect a limpid sky crossed by soaring eagles, or to listen to the infinite chanting of nature spread over 70,000 hectares of pure wonder.

Here chamois nimbly climb sheer rock faces and solemn ibex graze in silent, rugged pastures...



Valsavarenche





### **ASCENT TO GRAN PARADISO**

ALONG THE BACK OF THE SCALY DRAGON



Once upon a time there was a mountain range that resembled a granite cathedral with slender spires and walls scattered with pearly glaciers. It was crowned by the Gran Paradiso - the only 4,000 metre peak standing entirely within Italian territory.

This is a sought-after mountain which many have aspired to scale over the centuries, ascending amongst crevasses and jagged rocks. Aided by alpine guides, even non-experts like you can nowadays attempt the ascent, which can be reached from Valsavarenche in two days with an overnight stay at either Federico Chabod or Vittorio Fmanuele II mountain but.

The summit » Gran Paradiso





MERMAIDS AND UNICORNS

This imposing donjon with crossed windows surrounded by defensive towers and a solid curtain wall, sits on a rocky spur overlooking the River Dora.

Despite its threatening appearance, this enchanting castle in actual fact harbours an artistic and dreamy nature, which is evident in the old chapel frescoes and in the "Hall of Heads", whose ceiling is a multitude of corbels carved into intriguing characters, grotesque monsters and mythological creatures

inspired by medieval bestiaries.

« The castle at dusk Saint-Pierre





### **ALTA VIA 2**

### THE INFINITE TRAIL

A mountain trail winding amongst sunny hills, sparkling lakes and meadows of fleeting splendour. It's an itinerary marked across flourishing countryside where you can stroll in the company of agile chamois, solemn ibex and bold marmots, stare at the clear blue where noble birds of prey hover above rock spires that reach up to the sky.



This extraordinary adventure from Courmayeur to Donnas takes you across all three Gran Paradiso valleys and to two of the most important nature parks in the Aosta Valley, at the same time offering you the chance to explore pleasant, quaint villages.

Lake Nero » Valsavarenche





## CAMMINO BALTEO HIKING ITINERARY

ALONG THE BANKS OF THE RIVER DORA

This circular hiking route measuring nearly 350 km and split into 23 stages allows you to live mountain life

to the full, savouring the wonders of both nature and culture.

So, get ready to stroll among woods and meadows, vines and mule tracks, to lose yourself in the ancestral charm of archaeological sites with an extraordinary past, to discover local traditions and the pastoral joys of the rural scenery you encounter along this unforgettable hiking trail. In this area the itinerary

passes through Saint-Pierre, Saint-Nicolas, Avise, Arvier, Introd and Villeneuve.

« Excursion to Vens Saint-Nicolas







## A DAY, A WEEKEND, A WEEK

**HOW TO ORGANISE YOUR VISIT** 

With so much to see and do in Gran Paradiso Area the temptation to stay a few days longer is almost irresistible.

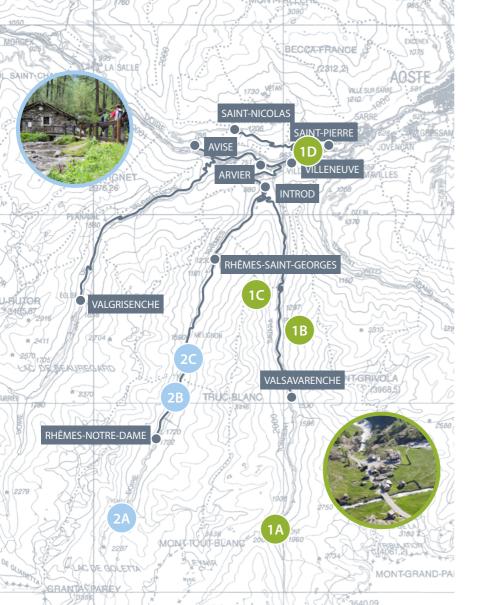
Where to go? What to see? Here's some advice on how to get the most out of your holiday and turn it into a genuine travel itinerary. You can customize the recommended itineraries - feel free to include or remove any visits according to your time schedule, interests and spur-of-the-moment decisions!

 24 HOURS
 48 HOURS
 72 HOURS
 96 HOURS
 120 HOURS
 144 HOURS

 1 day
 2 days
 3 days
 4 days
 5 days
 6 days

Grape harvest » Introd





### **RECOMMENDED VISITS**



## GRAN PARADISO AREA IN A WEEK

**DAYS ONE AND TWO** 



and ibex.

Valsavarenche

Spend your first day exploring Valsavarenche: set out early on an easy excursion to Pont (1A) at an altitude of 2,000 metres in the heart of Gran Paradiso National Park, among chamois

Continue with a walk around the characteristic villages of Nex and Tignet (1B), then spend the rest of the afternoon at either Dégioz or Rovenaud Park Visitor Centre (1C), and finally treat yourself to a tour of Sarriod de la Tour Castle in Saint-Pierre (1D).

2

Valley of Rhêmes

After Valsavarenche, it's time to explore the Valley of Rhêmes: don your backpack and climb to Benevolo Hut (2A) – on foot or by bike – where you can enjoy a delicious lunch based on local specialities.

On the return trip, stop at small, enchanting Lake Pellaud (2B), then round off the day at Gran Paradiso National Park Visitor Centre at Chanavey hamlet (2C), where you can learn more about the bearded vulture and local birdlife in general.



### **RECOMMENDED VISITS**



## GRAN PARADISO AREA IN A WEEK

**DAYS THREE AND FOUR** 

3

Valgrisenche

Enjoy a pleasant early morning walk along the footpath that flanks sparkling Lake Beauregard (3A). On reaching Valgrisenche, visit "Les Tisserands" artisanal co-operative (3B) to learn the ancient art of drap weaving, then drop into the Fontina

While returning, don't forget to take a short stop at evocative Châtel Argent Castle in Villeneuve (3D).

ageing storehouse (3C) to taste

this delicious cheese.

4

Saint-Nicolas and Fallère

Reach the village of Vetan (4A) where the hike to Fallère Hut begins (4B). Along the route you'll come across a large number of amusing sculptures by Siro Viérin – an open-air museum where forest creatures, stern animals and comical characters thrive. Back in Vetan, go down to Saint-Nicolas (4C) and take a look around the village.

Round off the day with a visit to "Cofruits" in Saint-Pierre (4D), where you can stock up on local products.



### **RECOMMENDED VISITS**

## GRAN PARADISO AREA IN A WEEK

**DAYS FIVE AND SIX** 

5

Panoramic spots, lakes and wine

6 Intro

Introd and Les Combes

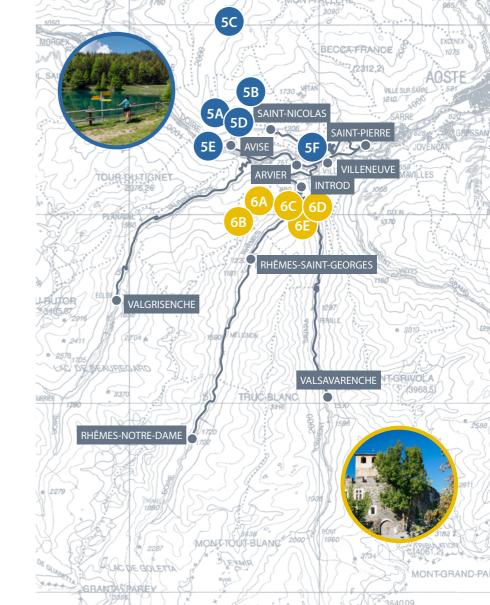
Start the day with a visit to the village of Vens (**5A**), which affords superb views of Mount Grivola and the valleys of Gran Paradiso National Park.

Continue to Lake Joux (5B) and, if you wish to hike a little further, continue along the valley of Vertosan (5C) on an e-bike.

Return via the road to Cerellaz (5D), from which you can admire Mont Blanc, stop off at the village of Avise (5E) and lastly enjoy a wine tasting at one of the Torrette area's wine farms (5F).

Depart from the village of Les Combes in Introd (6A) and head towards Croix de Bouque (6B) via a meandering footpath that retraces the Popes' footsteps.

On reaching the cross and stone altar, stop to observe the magnificent view and valley below. Back in Les Combes, visit Maison Musée Jean Paul II (6C), then have a look around picturesque Introd Castle (6D) and finally bring the afternoon to a close at Parc Animalier (6E) in the company of local fauna.





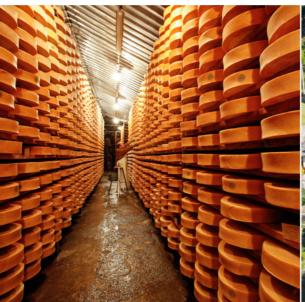


# THEMATIC FOCUS

NATURE, OUTDOOR, FOOD AND WINE, CULTURE AND TRADITIONS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES













# UNSPOILT SITES

**HEART OF PULSING LIFE** 

Welcome to the realm of boundless wonders, to a calm and pleasant spot where unspoilt nature reigns supreme.

Each breath of air you inhale abounds in the rich aroma of undergrowth, every glance you throw will be filled with the proudness of stone, each sound you hear will belong to the sylvan tongue of galloping herds. It's here in Italy's oldest national park, amongst shady forests and gurgling streams that you'll encounter wild animals in their natural habitat, boulders sculpted over thousands of years and flowers with the fragrance of extreme heights.

And, for the first time ever, you'll realise you truly belong to this world.

Lake Pellaud » Rhêmes-Notre-Dame



### **LOLAIR NATURE RESERVE**

An enchanting lake surrounded by supple reedbeds and verdant fields where plants of uncommon beauty bloom to the melodious chant of amphibians and birds.

ARVIER











### **BADLANDS**

SAINT-NICOLAS

Are these the result of water erosion or the work of a skilled sculptor's imagination? This is what you'll wonder on seeing these bizarre rock formations in Saint-Nicolas.

### **GRANTA PAREY MOUNTAIN**

This symbol of the Valley of Rhêmes is a colossal mountain of ice and stone rising to a height of 3,387 metres, and has been an induction into mountaineering for many excursionists.

HÊMES-NOTRE-D

### GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK NATURE TRAILS

GRAN PARADISO

Three trails guide you to discover the valley floor of Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, Savara mountain stream in Valsavarenche and Eaux Rousses ferruginous springs.

### **LAKE PELLAUD**

A small liquid gem of emerald reflections set in a woodland of trees with flaming canopies, watched over by an old mill.

RHÊMES-NOTRE-DAN

### **VERTOSAN VALLEY**

AVISE

An unspoilt basin immersed in green sun-kissed meadows, where you'll learn what nature truly is in the company of cows, roe deer and marmots.





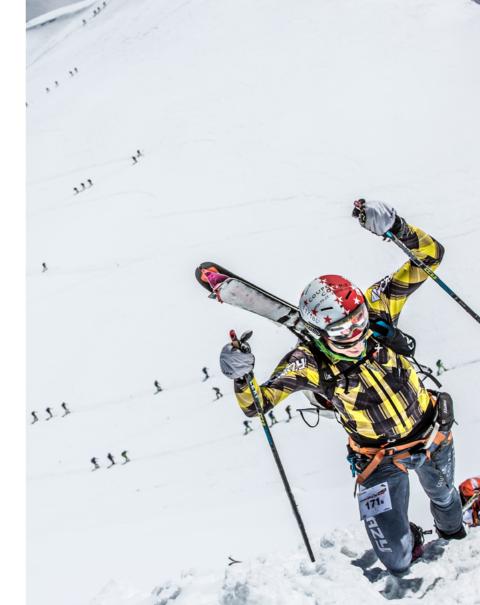
## PURE ENERGY

**ADRENALINE PEAKS** 

There are few places in the world as wild as the Gran Paradiso valleys. Here, where nature is at its most extreme, doing sport is a chance to put yourself to the test.

That's why you'll find yourself scaling dizzying heights and conquering river rapids, or cycling wildly along dusty tracks or cantering across dancing pastures with the wind in your hair. You can spend time in adventurous outings into the heart of Italy's first Espace trail, in addition to hurtling down snowy slopes - maybe after arriving by helicopter. And, believe me, this is nothing compared to what actually awaits you...

Tour du Rutor » Gran Paradiso Area



### **ASCENTS, ROCK CLIMBS, VIA FERRATAS**

If you love the bare rock, adrenalinboosting climbs, the thrill of planting an ice-pick in the ice, then you've found what you're looking for here in the Gran Paradiso valleys, with their natural and artificial walls, via ferratas and epic ascents.







### **MOUNTAIN BIKING AND E-BIKING**

Arm yourself with a MTB or, if want a softer life, a power-assisted bike, then have fun on the suggestive dirt tracks and footpaths weaving up to mountain huts.

### **HORSE-RIDING**

When again will you ever get the chance of galloping across pasturelands? Or riding through woodlands? Or across the snow? Gran Paradiso riding centre is expecting you!

### **TREKKING**

Hundreds of kilometres of trails. endless footpaths and no less than four huts to conquer: fasten your boots because there's plenty of ground to cover in these valleys!

### **SNOWKITING**

The fun of flying a kite and the thrill of surfing on the snow combined. If you've never tried snowkiting, now's your chance - riders from Vetan snowkiting school give both private and group lessons!

### WHITE WATER RAFTING

Avise and Villeneuve guides are ready to lead you on intrepid journeys over tumultuous rapids on the River Dora amongst frothy waves and breath-taking drops.

**SRAN PARADIS** 

### **DOWNHILL SKIING**

Do you prefer to ski in Valgrisenche, one of the snowiest valleys of the region or at Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, a stone's throw from the unbounded nature of Gran Paradiso National Park?

### **SKITOURING**

Arm yourself with skins and poles and enjoy some of the Aosta Valley's most popular itineraries through snowy forests, powdery expanses and spectacular glaciers.

# GRAN PARADISO AREA









### **CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING**

RAN PARADISO AREA

At Rhêmes-Notre-Dame, Valsavarenche and Valgrisenche, nordic ski trails circle pure white woods and enchanted lakes and encounter chamois and ibex footprints, while in Saint-Nicolas they afford magnificent vistas...

### **SNOWSHOEING**

SAN PARADISO AREA

Put on your snowshoes and plunge into the delightful Gran Paradiso valleys, or head to the hillsides of Saint-Pierre, Saint-Nicolas and Avise, among ethereal bodies of water, muffled trees and limpid mountain streams.

### **HELI SKIING**

ALGRISENCHE

If heli skiing is your passion then you can let yourself go at Valgrisenche, where there are over 30 km of snowy expanses and descents with an elevation loss of over 2,000 metres.



# **DELICIOUS INSPIRATION**

**DESIRE FOR FLAVOUR** 

How did people survive in the mountains in the past? How were foodstuffs conserved?

If you are curious, don't miss Maison Bruil ethnographic exhibition in Introd where you'll discover the charm of traditional skills and taste some excellent traditional products. Staying on the topic of food, then a stop at "fiha di Barmé" in Villeneuve is a must. Taking place in August, this event is one of the best places to try the chief local delicacies and some of the territory's top wine labels. Lastly, don't forget to stop by at the Fontina warehouse in Valgrisenche, where the fragrance of fresh milk and strong flavour of Aosta Valley's queen cheese reign supreme.

Maison Bruil » Introd





## HISTORY ROLLS ON

POPES AND CASTLES

Not only fresh air but also glorious history: this is what you inhale in the Gran Paradiso area. Now undeniably ruled by nature, this land was once dominated by noble families who have left to undying memory refined fortified houses, impenetrable fortresses and mysterious manor houses.

Here, where time has spared small gems of the past - medieval villages, traditional communities, and suggestive hamlets - the fate of popes, politicians, artists and intellectuals have become entwined. It's a place that will surprise you for the riches it holds and for the veil of majestic beauty the past has cast over it.



### SAINT PIFRRE CASTLE

SAINT-PIERRE

It wouldn't surprise you to see a princess with long plaits or a scaly-snouted dragon at the windows: with its graceful towers and slender, elegant silhouette, this castle, which is one of the oldest castles in the region, seems to come straight out of a fairytale. It is presently closed for restoration.

### "LES TISSERANDS" HAND WEAVING **WORKSHOP**

If you want to plunge back into the past, then you must visit the Tisserands hand weaving workshop in Valgrisenche - the land of weavers. With immense talent and entrepreneurship, this cooperative has upheld the secular tradition of loomworking, producing the characteristic local "drap".











### **BEAUREGARD RESERVOIR**

VALGRISENCHE

Enjoy a stroll beside the sparkling turquoise waters of this spectacular reservoir cloaked in bright green woodlands and crowned by snowcapped peaks.

### THE POPES'WALK AT LES COMBES AND MUSÉE JEAN PAUL II

A panoramic excursion following the footsteps of Popes who have stayed here at Les Combes, in addition to a museum dedicated to the life of John Paul and his successor Benedict XVI.

### **INTROD CASTLE**



An enchanted castle surrounded by a marvellous wooded park. Inside you will find frescoes, refined tapestries and valuable documents.



### **MEDIEVAL VILLAGE** OF LEVEROGNE AND HOSPICE

A picturesque village at the entrance to Valgrisenche sprinkled with historical buildings and medieval constructions. of particular note is the old frescoed hospice.





## **VISITOR CENTRE** VALSAVARENCHE

AT DÉGIOZ

VALSAVARENCHE

**PNGP ROVENAUD** 

Prepare to discover the secrets and curiosities behind aquatic ecosystems and wonder at the irresistible otters residing here.

There was once the lynx which,

came back: if you want to learn

more about them and other predators, this is the right place!

after disappearing from the Park,

"WATER AND BIODIVERSITY"

The valleys are dotted with churches and chapels, some clinging to rocky spurs while others silently guard works of art, museums and secular crypts...

**GRAN PARADISO AREA** 

**GRAN PARADISO** 



### **CHURCHES AND SHRINES**

CASTLES: MONTMAYEUR. LA MOTHE, PLANAVAL FORTIFIED **HOUSE, THREE CASTLES OF AVISE** 

Castles dominate the land of Gran Paradiso: from Montmayeur, La Mothe and Planaval fortresses to the manor houses of Avise (no less than three), you truly are spoilt for... photos!

## **PNGP VISITOR CENTRE**

**PNGP VISITOR CENTRE** 

Have you ever heard of the lammergeyer? It's Europe's largest vulture and at Rhêmes visitor centre you can finally learn all about it.





## **AT CHANAVEY**

RHÊMES-NOTRE-DAME

### MUSEUMS: CERLOGNE AND GERBORE

The former is dedicated to dialect poetry and its leading Valdostan representative, while the latter provides a fascinating insight into rural life.

SAINT-NICOLAS







### VILLAGES OF NEX AND TIGNET

**PLANT** 

VILLENEUVE

VALSAVARENCHE

Two enchanting villages encircled by mountains and green-streaked meadows where you can admire characteristic historical architecture.

CHAMPAGNE HYDROELECTRIC

How do you create electricity from

water? Discover how at Villeneuve

plant which stands so elegant

and grandiose that you'll be

left speechless.

### **CHÂTEL ARGENT**

This graceful castle with a proud bearing and mysterious air resembles a stone eagle overlooking Villeneuve from its nest of history built high above.

### **ENTRE FOURS ET MOULINS**

RHÊMES-SAINT-GEORGES

Three itineraries that wind among traditional bread ovens and renovated mills. It's advisable to stop in the various villages where, on special occasions, you can savour delicious rye-based snacks.



### CENTRE D'ETUDES FRANCO PROVENÇALES RENÉ WILLIEN

SAINT-NICOLAS

The most authentic soul of the Aosta Valley rests here in Saint-Nicolas, where a resource centre focuses on the leading figures of local history and promotes research into the Franco-Provencal language.



## NO ADULTS ALLOWED

**HOW MANY PARKS ARE THERE?** 

Be prepared because in the Gran Paradiso area you'll see countless animals such as fox, owls and ibex. If you're lucky you'll encounter them in their wild state in flesh and blood (or in feather and beak!) along Gran Paradiso National Park footpaths, or in their dens at Introd, Aosta Valley's first animal park.

Speaking of parks, there are so many here that it's difficult to choose one: some are full of slides and swings, others are designed especially for having fun on the snow, not to mention adventure parks where you can sail through the air on zip lines or scale the walls of canyons...

Snowpark » Rhêmes-Notre-Dame

### LO BERLÒ: THE PARK **OF SECRETS**

What sound does an eagle make? Which flowers do bees prefer? To discover thousands of curiosities about Gran Paradiso National Park and mountain life, spend an afternoon at Rhêmes-Saint-Georges playground!











### **BABY SNOW PARK**

A million adventures on the snow: magic carpets, inflatable castles and trampolines: discover Rhêmes-Notre-Dame and Valgrisenche snowparks!

### TREE ADVENTURE PARKS

Hanging walkways and wobbly tree trunks, not to mention rope bridges spanning stream-filled canyons: will you be brave enough to challenge Villeneuve and Valsavarenche adventure parks?

### **OPEN-AIR MUSEUM: WORKS BY SIRO VIÉRIN**

Have you ever played treasure hunt where you have to find comical wooden sculptures instead of clues? Walk up to Mont Fallère mountain hut to find out more!

### Wouldn't it be fun to see how a hedgehog spends its day? Or peek

PARC ANIMALIER IN INTROD

into a squirrel's burrow? Watch chamois, ibex and roe deer while they eat? Numerous furry friends are waiting for you at Introd, come and meet them!



## IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

Get ready to make an extraordinary holiday even more out of the ordinary...



### **TOUR DU RUITOR**

A spectacular ski mountaineering race that takes place every two years. Teams of two compete in stages reaching a height of 3,000 metres to conquer Rutor glacier.

MARCH

### RENCONTRE DES ARTISANS

Sculptures, objects and works of art are on display in Rhêmes-Notre-Dame during the fair dedicated to traditional handicraft and its historical craft skills.

JULY





### BATAILLE DES REINES AND VERTOSAN DESARPA

Two traditional appointments celebrating mountain life: a pacific battle between cows, and a folk festival greeting the herds as they descend from their summer alpine pastures.

**AUGUST - SEPTEMBER** 

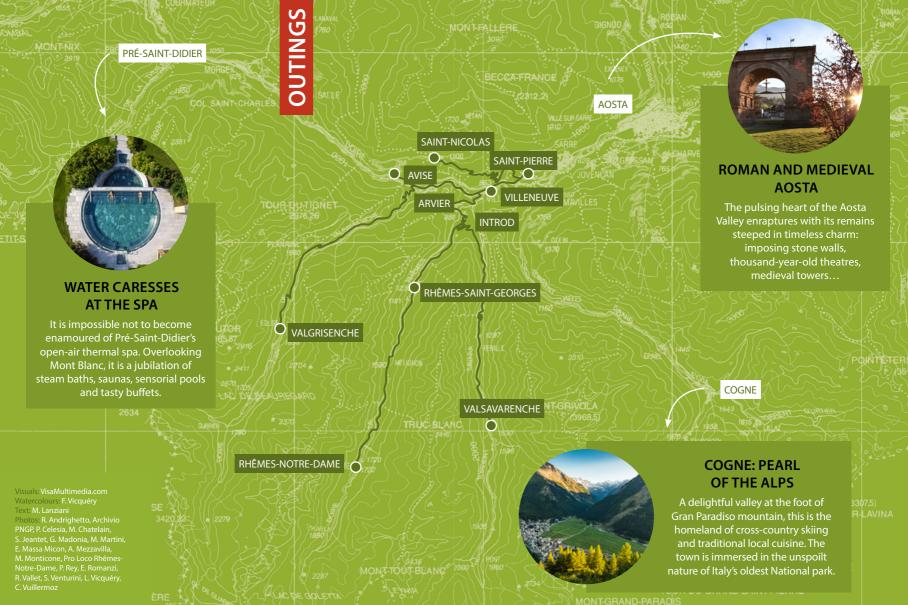




### MO'DELAINE: THE TRADITION OF THE TISSERANDS

This is Aosta Valley's first festival focussing on wool; it includes entertainment, workshops and meetings held by Valgrisenche's master weavers.

SEPTEMBER

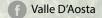




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