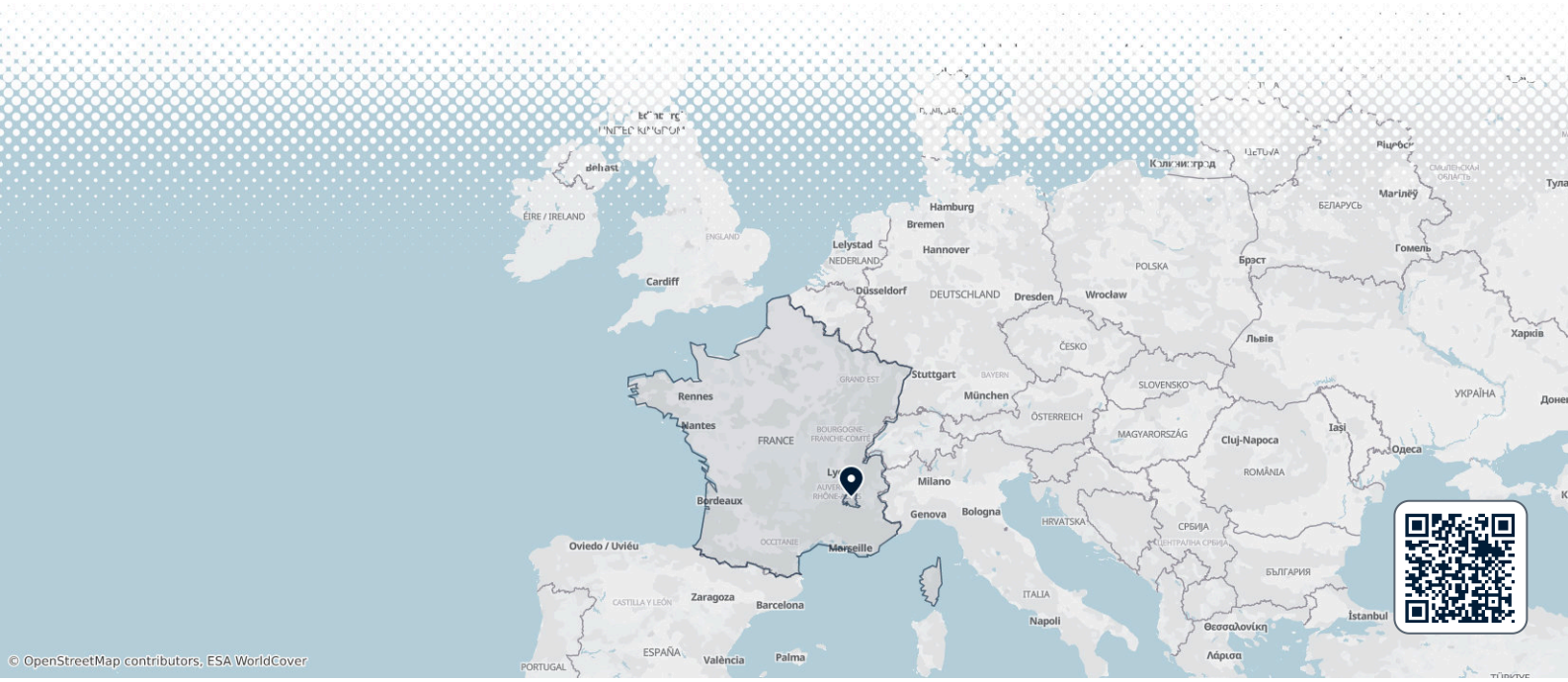


Vercors Regional Natural Park

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

The Vercors is a high limestone plateau south-west of Grenoble, in the French Alps. Cliffs, deep gorges and forests surround it. The regional park was created in 1970 and covers parts of the Isère and Drôme departments. The highest point is Grand Veymont at 2,341 m.

It suits active trips: hiking, cross-country and downhill skiing, caving and scenic drives. It is also a place of memory. In 1944 the plateau was a Resistance stronghold, and memorials and museums tell that story today.

When to visit

Late spring to early autumn is best for hiking, caves and mountain roads. Summer days are warm, and the high plateaus stay cooler than the valleys. Snow can remain on the highest ground into spring.

Winter is the ski season, with downhill and cross-country skiing around Villard-de-Lans and Autrans. Snow cover varies from year to year. The Foulée Blanche cross-country ski event is usually held in Autrans-Méaudre-en-Vercors in late January, depending on snow.

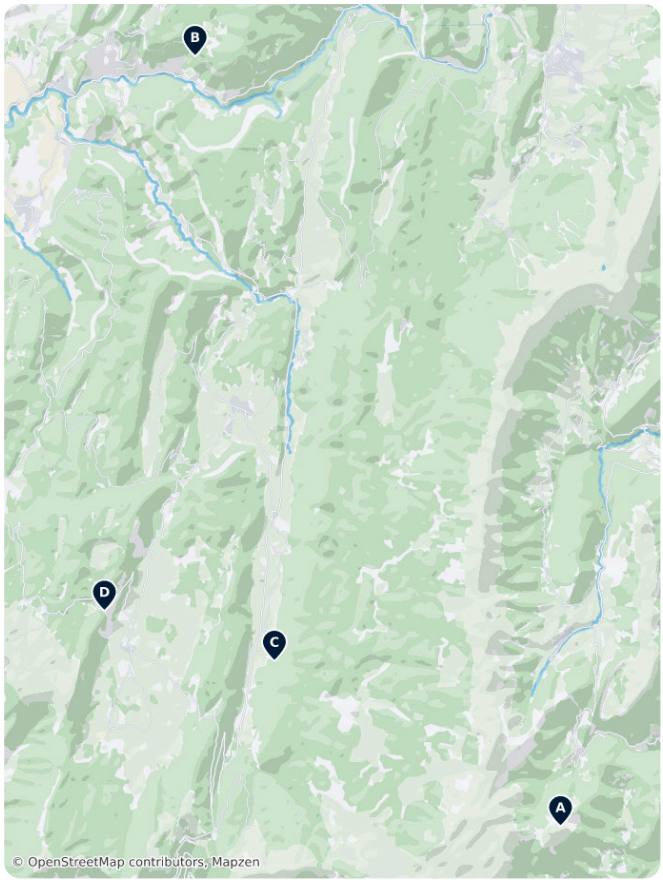
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Good Good for skiing	5° / 11° Feels like 1°	-3° / -10°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Good Good for skiing	6° / 14° Feels like 2°	-3° / -12°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Fair Fair for skiing	10° / 17° Feels like 7°	-1° / -6°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for hiking	13° / 20° Feels like 10°	2° / -4°	Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	17° / 24°	6° / 1°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 29°	11° / 5°	Dry air · Calm winds
July	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 31°	12° / 7°	Dry air · Calm winds
August	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 32°	12° / 7°	Dry air · Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 27°	9° / 3°	Dry air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for hiking	16° / 23°	6° / -1°	Dry air · Calm winds
November	Fair Fair for skiing	9° / 17° Feels like 6°	1° / -6°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Good Good for skiing	5° / 12° Feels like 2°	-2° / -10°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: June, July, August, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Mont Aiguille is a flat-topped limestone block with sheer cliffs on all sides. It was first climbed in 1492 and is often called the birthplace of mountaineering. You can see it from many viewpoints in the south-east of the park.
- B Grottes de Choranche are a large show cave with an underground river and long, thin stalactites. They lie near Pont-en-Royans, at the western edge of the park.
- C Grotte de la Luire has a huge entrance porch. In 1944 it served as a field hospital for Resistance fighters, and it is now a memorial site with guided visits.
- D Mémorial de la Résistance stands on the Col de la Chau near Vassieux-en-Vercors. This museum tells the story of the Vercors Resistance with recordings, testimonies and models.
- **Combe Laval** is a deep cliff-walled valley above Saint-Jean-en-Royans. A narrow road runs along its rock face and gives long views down into the gorge.
- **Grands Goulets** is a narrow gorge on the road between Pont-en-Royans and Die. A long tunnel now carries the main road. The old cliff road is closed to all traffic.
- **Pont-en-Royans** is a village known for its colourful houses built out over the river.



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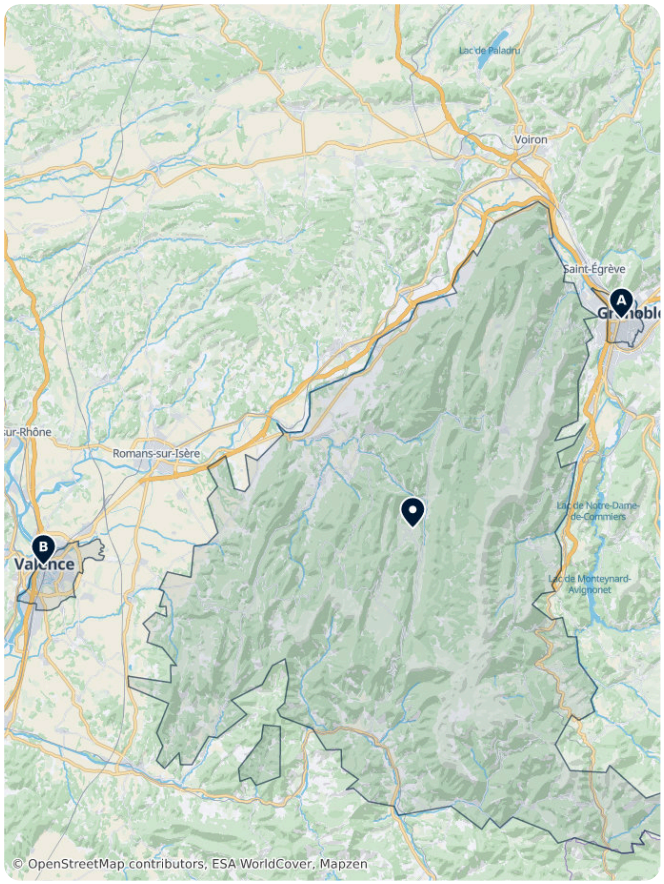
What to experience

- Ski on the cross-country trails of the Haut Vercors plateau. Villard-de-Lans and Autrans are the main nordic areas.
- Ski downhill at Villard-de-Lans and Corrençon-en-Vercors in winter.
- Join a guided visit inside a cave. Caving is a signature activity of the massif.
- Drive the cliff roads through the Combe Laval and the Grands Goulets in daylight, with stops at the viewpoints.
- Hike on the high plateaus in summer. The southern part of the park is a protected nature reserve with rules for visitors.
- Attend the commemorations and guided talks held at Resistance sites such as the Mémorial de la Résistance, where events are announced locally.

Day trips

The park is large, so most visitors stay inside it. These nearby places also work for a day out.

- Ⓐ Grenoble is the main city at the edge of the massif. It is about 40 minutes by road from Villard-de-Lans. It has museums, old streets and cable-car views.
- **Chartreuse massif** lies north of Grenoble. It has forests, cliffs and the Grande Chartreuse monastery area. Allow about 1 hour by car from Grenoble.
- **Die** is a small town on the south side of the Vercors. It is the centre of Clairette de Die sparkling wine. The drive from Vassieux-en-Vercors over the Col de Rousset takes about 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- Ⓑ Valence is a Rhône valley city west of the park. It is about 1 hour by car from Pont-en-Royans.



Getting there

- **By air**: Lyon-Saint-Exupéry (LYS) is the main international airport. Allow about 1.5 to 2 hours by car to Villard-de-Lans. By public transport, go to Grenoble first, then take the bus. This takes longer. Grenoble-Alpes-Isère airport has seasonal flights, mainly in winter.
- **By train**: TGV trains from Paris reach Grenoble in about 3 hours. Valence has a TGV station on the Paris to Marseille line. Both are good starting points.
- **By bus**: Regional buses run from Grenoble to Villard-de-Lans, the main resort on the plateau. Service to smaller villages is limited, especially off-season.
- **Park information**: Plan routes with the Vercors Regional Natural Park website.

Getting around

- **Car**: A car is the practical way to see the park. Villages, caves and viewpoints are spread over a large area, and public transport is sparse.
- **Buses**: Local buses link the main resorts around Villard-de-Lans. They are less useful for gorges, caves and remote trailheads.
- **On foot**: Hiking is the best way to see the high plateaus. Distances are long, so plan trails that start where your car or bus stops.
- **Cycling**: Road and mountain biking are popular. Climbs are long and steep, and the gorge roads are narrow.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Yes. It is the best tool for exploring the park, as buses reach only the main resorts.
- **Mountain roads**: The Combe Laval and Grands Goulets roads are narrow and cut into rock. The Combe Laval road is closed to vehicles over 3.5 t. Drive slowly and use the pull-outs.
- **Winter**: Some high passes close for the winter season. Snow tyres or chains are required in the mountains at certain times. Check road conditions before you leave.
- **Fuel**: Fill up in larger villages before heading to remote plateaus.

Food & drink

The plateau is dairy country. Look for Bleu du Vercors-Sassenage, a mild blue cheese with protected status. It is made from cow's milk in villages across the massif. On the western foothills, walnuts are a local crop. In the south, around Die, lavender and sparkling Clairette de Die wine are typical.

For meals, head to the main villages such as Villard-de-Lans, Autrans, La Chapelle-en-Vercors and Pont-en-Royans. They have the widest choice of mountain restaurants and local-produce shops.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Croissant
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

LUNCH

Ratatouille
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

DINNER

Coq au Vin
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Baguette
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

Cheese · Fromage
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Crepes · Crêpes
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

Macarons
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

DRINKS

Wine · Vin
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

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Safety & health

The Vercors is very safe for visitors. The main risks come from the mountains.

- Weather can change quickly on the high plateaus. Carry water, warm layers and a map on any long hike.
- Cliff roads and gorges have rockfall risk. Follow signs and closures.
- Do not enter caves without a guide or proper equipment. Use only developed show caves for casual visits.
- For mountain rescue, call 112.

History

In 1944 the Vercors became a base for the French Resistance. In July of that year, fighters proclaimed a free zone on the plateau. German forces answered with a large attack, including a glider landing near Vassieux-en-Vercors on 21 July. The Resistance was defeated, and many fighters and civilians were killed.

Today the story is told at several sites. The Mémorial de la Résistance stands on the Col de la Chau above Vassieux-en-Vercors. A national cemetery lies at the village entrance. Grotte de la Luire marks the place where wounded fighters were sheltered, and where 17 of them were killed.

Earlier history is also visible. The Musée de la Préhistoire in Vassieux sits on a Neolithic flint workshop site.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Parc naturel régional du Vercors Essentials

The Parc naturel régional du Vercors is defined by its dramatic limestone landscape, characterized by sheer cliffs, deep gorges, and expansive plateaus. This list features the engineering marvel of the Combe Laval balcony road and the prehistoric depths of the Choranche and Gouffre Berger caves. Cultural highlights include the 17th-century Château de Sassenage and the medieval ruins of Rochechinard. High-altitude mountain passes like Col de Menée and Col de la Machine provide essential links through this rugged terrain, while historic churches and cathedrals reflect the region's long-standing human heritage.



A Col de la Machine

A mountain pass at 1,011 meters elevation serving as the gateway to the Combe Laval balcony road. It offers panoramic views over the karst landscape of the Royans region.

D76, 26190, France (44.97474, 5.33477)

B Combe laval

A historic 4-kilometer balcony road carved directly into limestone cliffs. Built in the late 19th century, it features a series of tunnels and sheer drops overlooking the Cholet valley.

(44.97996, 5.33268)



C Choranche cave

The cave of Choranche, also called cave of Coufin-Chevaline, is located in the department of Isère, near Choranche in the Vercors Regional...

2863 Route des Grottes, 38680, France (45.07253, 5.39769)

visites-nature-vercors.com/en/grotte-d... , +33 4 76 36 09 88



D Château de Rochechinard

Ruins of a 15th-century fortress perched on a rocky spur. The site historically guarded the western foothills of the Vercors and now houses a local history museum.

26190, France (45.03055, 5.23996)

chateau.rochechinard.free.fr



E Champollion Museum

The Champollion Museum is a French historical museum located in Vif in the family home of the Champollion brothers.

45 (45.05335, 5.66922)

musees.isere.fr/musee/musee-champ... , +33 4 57 58 88 50



F Die Cathedral

Die Cathedral is a Roman Catholic church located in Die, Drôme, France. The former cathedral is a national monument.

3 Rue Notre-Dame, Die 26150, France (44.75216, 5.37100)



G Château de Sassenage

A 17th-century classical chateau featuring original period furnishings, a grand staircase, and landscaped gardens. It served as the ancestral home of the Bérenger-Sassenage family.

1 Allée du Château, Sassenage 38360, France (45.21071, 5.65937)



H Gouffre Berger Cave

The Gouffre Berger is a cave in the French alps within the commune of Engins high on the Vercors Plateau.

38360, France (45.21926, 5.60485)



I Col de Grimone

A mountain pass at 1,318 meters connecting the Bès and Bochaine valleys. It serves as a scenic transit point between the Diois and Trièves regions.

Route du Col de Grimone, 26620, France (44.69142, 5.65402)

J Col de Menée

A 1,457-meter pass featuring a tunnel that links the Drôme and Isère departments. It marks a geographic transition between the northern and southern Alps.

D7, 38930, France (44.75776, 5.60377)

K Col des Limouches

A road pass at 1,086 meters elevation on the western edge of the Vercors massif, linking the Rhône valley with the high limestone plateaus.

194 Route de Léoncel, 26120, France (44.88680, 5.15851)

L Château de la Sône

A 14th-century fortified castle overlooking the Isère river. The structure features architecture from various periods and is surrounded by notable terraced gardens.

(Unnamed Road), 38840, France (45.11343, 5.28347)

Église Saint-Barthélemy

A Catholic church in Lans-en-Vercors known for its 16th-century bell tower. The building is a significant example of the region's religious architectural heritage.

685 Avenue Léopold Fabre, Lans-en-Vercors 38250, France
(45.12796, 5.58942)

Natural Wonders of Vercors

The Vercors Massif is defined by dramatic limestone geology, characterized by deep karst caves and high-altitude plateaus. This list features the Grand Veymont, the massif's highest peak at 2,341 meters, and the Gouffre Berger, the first cave in the world explored to a depth of 1,000 meters. These sites highlight the region's unique topography, including the Cuves de Sassenage—one of the Seven Wonders of Dauphiné—and historic mountain passes like Col de la Machine, located at the edge of the Combe Laval circus.



A Col de la Machine

Situated at the edge of the Combe Laval karst recess, this pass marks the start of a historic balcony road carved into limestone cliffs overlooking a 600-meter drop.

D76, 26190, France (44.97474, 5.33477)



B Col de Grimone

A mountain pass at 1,318 meters connecting the Bès and Bochaine valleys between the Diois and Vercors massifs.

Route du Col de Grimone, 26620, France (44.69142, 5.65402)

C Col de Menée

Reaching 1,457 meters, this pass connects the Drôme and Isère departments via a tunnel and serves as a transition point between the Vercors and Diois landscapes.

D7, 38930, France (44.75776, 5.60377)

D Col des Limouches

A road pass at an elevation of 1,086 meters providing access to the western edge of the Vercors plateau from the Rhône Valley.

194 Route de Léoncel, 26120, France (44.88680, 5.15851)



E Gouffre Berger Cave

The Gouffre Berger is a cave in the French alps within the commune of Engins high on the Vercors Plateau.

38360, France (45.21926, 5.60485)



F Cuves de Sassenage

One of the Seven Wonders of Dauphiné, this karst cave system features an underground river formed by the Furon stream.

Chemin des Cuves, 38360, France (45.20835, 5.65154)

G Col de la Croix Haute

Col de la Croix-Haute is a high mountain pass in the French Dauphiné Alps on the border of the Isère and Drôme departments, linking the...

Route de Grenoble, 38930, France (44.72379, 5.67741)



H Grand Veymont

The highest peak in the Vercors Massif at 2,341 meters, offering panoramic views of Mont Aiguille and the Hauts Plateaux Nature Reserve.

38650, France (44.86974, 5.52670)

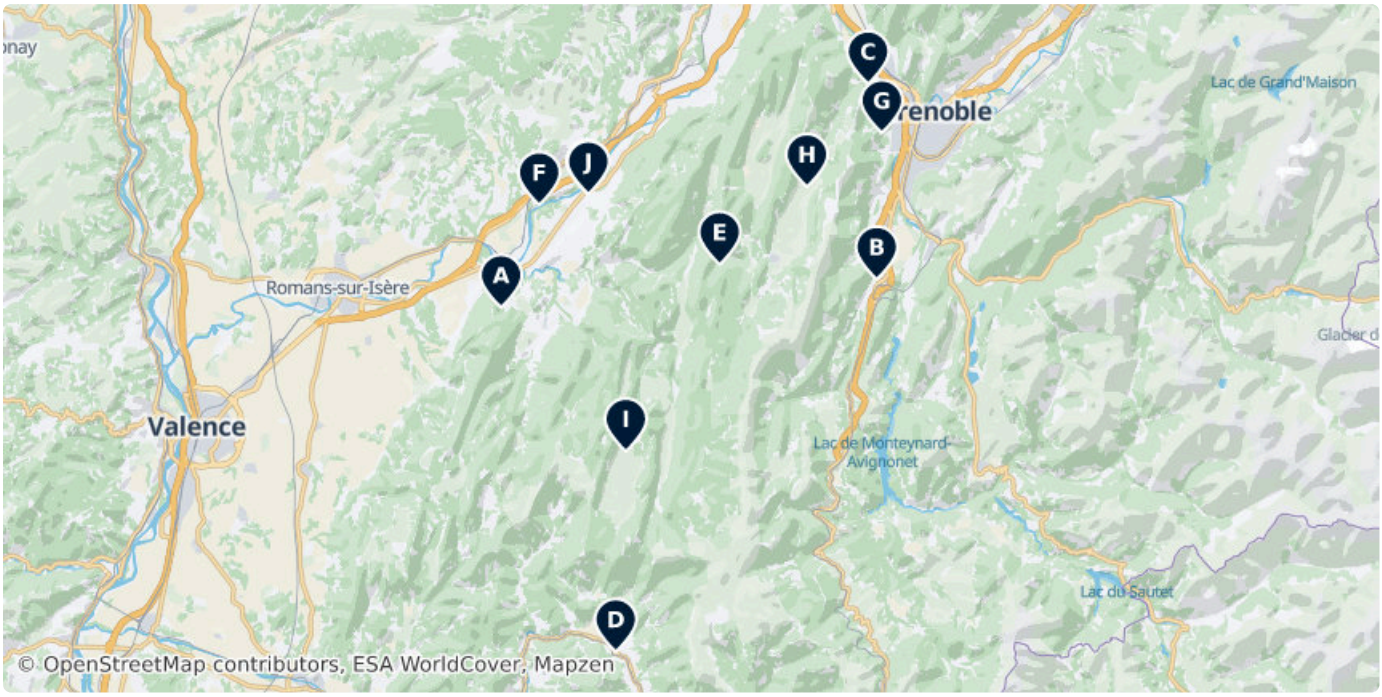
Col de la Bataille

Situated at 1,313 meters, this pass links the Léoncel and Bouvante valleys and is characterized by its tunnel and steep rock walls.

D199, 26400, France (44.89779, 5.23379)

Regional Heritage Sites

Explore the architectural and historical evolution of the Vercors region through this collection of medieval ruins, elegant châteaus, and religious monuments. The list spans centuries of history, from the 13th-century defensive structures of Château de Beauvoir to the 17th-century classical design of Château de Sassenage. It also includes poignant sites like the ruins of Valchevrière, preserved as a memorial to the French Resistance, and the Romanesque foundations of the Die Cathedral.





A Château de Rochechinard

Medieval castle ruins perched on a rocky outcrop on the western foothills of the Vercors massif. This strategic site offers insight into regional defensive architecture from the Middle Ages.

26190, France (45.03055, 5.23996)

chateau.rochechinard.free.fr



B Champollion Museum

The Champollion Museum is a French historical museum located in Vif in the family home of the Champollion brothers.

45 (45.05335, 5.66922)

musees.isere.fr/musee/musee-champ... , +33 4 57 58 88 50



C Château de Sassenage

A 17th-century classical château featuring period furnishings and landscaped gardens. It is recognized as a significant historical monument near Grenoble, showcasing the residential heritage of the Isère department.

1 Allée du Château, Sassenage 38360, France (45.21071, 5.65937)



D Die Cathedral

Die Cathedral is a Roman Catholic church located in Die, Drôme, France. The former cathedral is a national monument.

3 Rue Notre-Dame, Die 26150, France (44.75216, 5.37100)



E Valchevrière

A former hamlet destroyed during World War II, now preserved as a memorial site. The ruins and the remaining chapel serve as a tribute to the local Resistance fighters of the Vercors.

38250, France (45.06526, 5.48961)

+33476951731

F Château de la Sône

A 14th-century fortified castle overlooking the Isère river. The structure has undergone several architectural modifications over the centuries and remains a prominent landmark in the village of La Sône.

(Unnamed Road), 38840, France (45.11343, 5.28347)

G Château de Beauregard

The Château de Beauregard is an historic château in Seyssinet-Pariset, Isère, France. It was built in the 18th century.

(45.17131, 5.67498)

H Église Saint-Barthélemy

A Catholic church in Lans-en-Vercors featuring traditional regional architecture and a prominent bell tower. It serves as a central religious and heritage site for the mountain community.

685 Avenue Léopold Fabre, Lans-en-Vercors 38250, France (45.12796, 5.58942)

I Moulins à vent de la Mure

The ruins of historical windmills that represent the agricultural and industrial past of the region, located near the commune of La Mure.

(44.91448, 5.38247)

J Château de Beauvoir - Grande chapelle

The ruins of the large chapel belonging to the medieval Château de Beauvoir, which was once the primary residence of the Dauphins of Viennois.

(Unnamed Road), 38160, France (45.12220, 5.33966)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

K Château de Beauvoir - Mur d'enceinte

The surviving sections of the defensive enclosure walls that once protected the medieval fortress of Beauvoir.

(45.12226, 5.33857)

L Château de Beauvoir - Donjon

The ruins of the main keep or donjon of the 13th-century Château de Beauvoir, reflecting its former military importance.

189 Route de Beauvoir, 38160, France (45.12294, 5.33896)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

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