



ON THE THEME OF
WATER, THIS SUMMER
WE INVITE YOU TO
(RE)DISCOVER
THE VAL D'HERENS

FOLLOWING THE RIVER,
FROM THE GLACIERS TO THE RHÔNE





The foot of the Dent Blanche (4357m.)



The hot water springs of Combioula, Borgne valley



Ferpècle, where Africa meets Europe



THIS PROGRAMME CAN BE PERSONALISED TO YOUR OWN TASTES AND REQUIREMENTS

Arrival in the Val d'Hérens, a welcome by Pascal Charlet (Tourism Delegate of the Association of Communes of the Val d'Hérens)

→ THE FERPÈCLE GLACIER: A SAFARI IN THE VAL D'HÉRENS WITH PIERRE KUNZ, GEOLOGIST AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA WORKING ON SEVERAL PROJECTS IN THE VAL D'HÉRENS

« The Val d'Hérens offers a striking summary of Alpine geology. To the north of Evolène are signs of the continental origins of the area. This is Europe, the Mont Fort sheet. In Les Haudères we reach the ocean. Softer sedimentary rocks, produced by underwater volcanoes, show the subsea origins of the Tsaté sheet. «There are pastures, the morphology is softer» explains the geologist. Further up the valley we find ourselves in «Africa»! The Dent Blanche sheet has a more continental hardness: it consists mainly of granite and gneiss.

→ STROLL ALONG THE FLOODPLAINS OF LA BORGNE BETWEEN LES HAUDÈRES AND EVOLÈNE

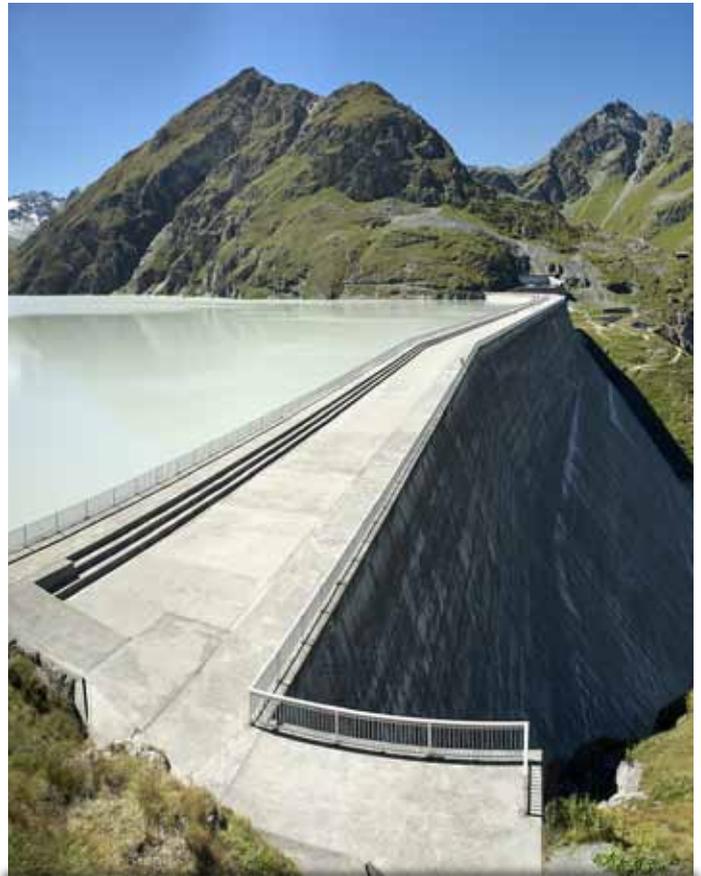
6 floodplains have been identified and listed. The particular topography and microclimate means these areas are very rich in wildlife, especially in the areas of flatland, and the dry and humid woodlands.

→ VISIT THE VILLAGE OF EVOLÈNE

The village name comes from the stream issuing from the spring at the entrance to the village; «Olèinna» means «easy water» in the local dialect. The locals still speak the dialect every day, the old houses are conserved with pride and care, and there are small groups of barns typical of the Valais and its ongoing traditional farming practices. Evolène also has many restaurants offering traditional regional cuisine. Unspoilt and traditional, Evolène is definitely one of the most authentic Swiss mountain villages.



The famous Euseigne pyramids



Grande Dixence, the world's highest gravity dam



➔ **REGIONAL SPECIALITY DINING IN EVOLÈNE**

➔ **A NIGHT IN A HISTORIC HOTEL, LA SAGE**

Tourism in the Evolène region dates back over 150 years to the first attempts by British mountaineers to climb the Dent Blanche. As the emblem of the valley the Dent Blanche is to Evolène what the Matterhorn is to Zermatt.

➔ **VISIT THE GRANDE-DIXANCE DAM, THE HIGHEST GRAVITY DAM IN THE WORLD**

A unique, beautiful design with breathtaking measurements : a wall 285 meters high, 195m thick at its base and with 32km of tunnels. A masterpiece of its kind.

At first glance, the 285m of concrete is stunning, but the view from the top is equally breathtaking. The top of the dam forms a huge panoramic terrace, 15m wide and nearly 700m long at 2,365m altitude.

Take a guided tour inside the dam and then walk along the crown and along the Dix Lake with views to the Cheillon glacier.

www.grande-dixence.ch

➔ **EUSEIGNE PYRAMIDS, A UNIQUE GEOLOGICAL FORMATION**

This spectacular natural phenomenon is unmissable as you travel up the road to the Val d'Hérens. It was listed in the national inventory of landscapes and natural monuments in 1983. These «fairy chimneys» as they are called, were formed over thousands of years following the last ice age. There is a 30 minute signed-posted walk around the site.



An historic hotel and 150 years of tourism in the region



The Ossona plateau, agritourism site and a confederation pilot project



→ AGRITOURISM SITE AT OSSONA

To revive land abandoned for almost 40 years, the Saint Martin Commune, in partnership with the Valais Canton, and the Confederacy, renovated an ancient village site for agritourism. Situated on a plateau (950m), Ossona now offers tourist activities, work on the farm for guests, and the chance to spend the night in restored 18th and 19th century mayens. Of course, the food prepared by Maria and Daniel uses many products from the farm.

Walk along the Ossona Bisse, which has been rebuilt with traditional techniques following the original route, and still fulfills its agricultural role in irrigating the plateau – an essential task in this very dry, provençal climate – although nowadays the water flow is remotely controlled.

→ VALLON DE LA BORGNE, DOWNHILL FROM OSSONA TO THE VINEYARDS

The wildlife and landscape of the Vallon de la Borgne has enjoyed Cantonal protection since 1984. Walkers will enjoy the great variety of habitats; the West bank of the Borgne is home to luxuriant, shady forests. In contrast the sunny, west facing slopes are arid, and home to pine forests, grasslands and succulents. The path leads from dense and humid forest to an arid, Mediterranean type forest. Along the way one discovers the hot springs of Combioula, and Our Lady of Longeborgne, a Valais pilgrimage site nestled in the cliffs of the Borgne gorge.

→ ERBIO VINEYARD IN THE COMMUNE OF MONT-NOBLE

On the lower slopes of Mont-Noble, overlooking the Borgne gorge and the entrance to the Val d'Hérens, the Mont-Noble vineyards enjoy an exceptional position. The sheltered, south-facing slopes allow the grapes to grow at up to almost 1000m altitude.

The immediate surroundings of the vineyards betray the privileged microclimate and unusual dryness of the area, where fig trees and downy oaks and the chirping of crickets reinforce the provençal atmosphere.

Wine-tasting and vineyard tours enable you to discover the incredible diversity of grapes grown here, and of the wines produced, with 31 crus. Augusto Magallanes, head of the vineyard, is well known for the number of medals his wines have won. www.caveduparadou.ch

→ VISIT SION

The oldest city in Switzerland with its incredible charm, mediterranean air, squares and the castles overlooking the medieval town.



The Hérens breed, at the inalpe or on a walk through the alpages



Other good reasons to visit the Val d'Hérens :

➔ **COW FIGHTING AND THE INALPES.**

The reputation of the Val d'Hérens is closely linked to this breed of swarthy, black cows. The cows naturally fight each other to become queen of the herd – a unique behaviour not found anywhere else. These fights are organised into lively festivals, as are the « inalpes » and « desalpes » which mark the beginning and end of the summer season.

In mid-June (from the second to fourth Saturday in June) the herding of cattle up to summer pastures gives rise to colourful festivals, with the cows fighting to become queen of the pasture.

➔ **WALKING FROM FARM TO FARM.**

With a new mobile phone application, visitors can discover the Val d'Hérens while walking from one farm to another. Go through stunning scenery, from the steppes of the valley floor to alpine meadows and glaciers. The application suggests stages and stops for users to discover farm work, taste farm produce or do other tourist activities. This application is user friendly, and makes it easy to organise a short refreshing break.

This programme can be personalised to your own tastes and requirements.

Valid from 15 May to 30 September 2012

➔ **YOUR CONTACT**

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The day of the inalpe at Chemeuille (Evolène-Région)



The real Val d'Hérens, Bréona mayens





PHOTOGRAPHY
LAYOUT
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Valais Tourisme | Val d'Hérens |
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VAL D'HÉRENS

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