

# Viewpoint over Fort l'Écluse

Pays de Gex



Attribution : Vue sur Fort l'Écluse (PNRH) - F. Jeanparis)



*From the Vierge de Léaz belvedere, an open 360° panorama offers views over a unique natural environment and a wealth of history. The Défilé de l'Écluse, which was carved out by the Rhône and links the Geneva area to France, has been a strategic natural passageway since the Antiquity. A military structure with a wealth of history, the Fort de l'Écluse has proudly guarded this passageway since the 13th century.*

## Useful information

Category : Laid-out site

Type : Cultural & historical site

Themes : History & heritage,  
Landscapes

# Description

## **A strategic passageway with an ingenious construction:**

The first military constructions in the Défilé de l'Écluse were built during the 1st century B.C., under Julius Caesar's orders. The first fortified house was later built by the Lord of Gex during the 13th century. The site became fortified and developed over time in response to attacks, particularly against the Austrians, Bernese and Genevans. After a clash and significant damage in 1815, the fort was rebuilt, strengthened and extended with a second fortification 200 metres higher up. Many tunnels and passageways link the two structures together. Its position on an abrupt cliff allowed for long-distance views and shooting in order to defend the Défilé both upstream and downstream.

From the **Vierge de Léaz belvedere parking lot**, head up “**rue Saint Armand**” on your right, and take “**Chemin des Moulins**” after the washhouse and the school. When you reach a first belvedere with a sign on the Château de Léaz, take the rocky trail to your right to reach the **Vierge de Léaz belvedere**. Return the same way.

# Geographical location



# All useful information

## Practical info

**Recommendations:** If the Vierge de Léaz belvedere parking lot is full, a second parking lot can be found 100 metres to the north, near the village's cemetery. Fort de l'Écluse is open to the public. To find out about opening times and prices, and for any other information, contact the Terre Valserine Tourist Office.

**Road access:** 5 km from Bellegarde-sur-Valserine and Collonges, Léaz is accessible via the D 1206 which links these two towns. From the village, access to the Vierge de Léaz belvedere and to the parking lot is signposted.

**Suggested parking:** Vierge de Léaz belvedere parking lot.

**Departure point:** Vierge de Léaz belvedere parking lot.

## Contact

Office de Tourisme Terre Valserine  
13 rue de la République, 01200  
Bellegarde-sur-Valserine  
<http://www.terrevalserine.fr/>  
[+33 \(0\)4 50 48 48 68](tel:+330450484868)

Communauté de communes du Pays de  
Gex  
135 rue de Genève - 01170 GEX  
<https://www.cc-pays-de-gex.fr>  
04 50 42 65 00

[http://www.meteociel.fr/previsions/191/  
leaz.htm](http://www.meteociel.fr/previsions/191/leaz.htm)