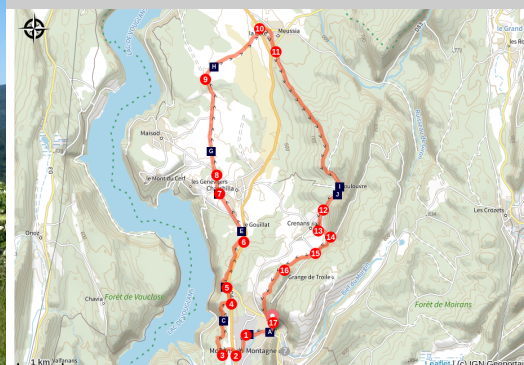


# The Roman road from Moirans

Terre d'Emeraude - Moirans-En-Montagne



Lac de Vouglans depuis Le Regardoir (PNRHJ / G.PROST)

From Moirans-en-Montagne, the circuit - which is quite technical in the forest sections at the beginning and the end of the trail and which is hilly along the old Roman road - heads through the Sapey plateau, also nicknamed "The Desert" due to the dryness of its soil.

Boxwood forests, belvederes over the Vouglans lake, an ancient road and bouquets of flowers on the Sapey plateau.

## Useful information

Practice : MTB eMTB

Duration : 2 h 30

Length : 20.5 km

Trek ascent : 380 m

Difficulty : Difficult

Type : Circular

Themes : History & heritage,  
Lakes, rivers and waterfalls


# Trek

Departure : Moirans-en-Montagne, in front of the Pierre Vernotte high school

Arrival : Moirans-en-Montagne, in front of the Pierre Vernotte high school

Markings : ⚡ Red eMTB 🏠 Red MTB



From the **MOIRANS-EN-MONTAGNE** signpost, (  ), follow “route de Saint-Laurent” to the left in front of the high school (red MTB waymarking no. 108). Head past the cemetery and turn left in the industrial area. Head past the water treatment plant and continue right on the path that heads under the D 470 towards **Sous le Pont**.

Reach **En Var** to your right via the white path and then take the muddy trail bordered by trees to your left to reach **Champ Piernet**.

Follow the grassy trail to your left that soon becomes stony and heads through the Bois de la Réfrèche with its two viewpoints over the Vouglans lake, before exiting at **Les Araignées**.

Follow the road that runs alongside the départementale road and ascend the bank to the **Regardoir** parking lot.

Soak up the view over the lake, head along the left of the parking lot and find the **LE REGARDOIR** crossroads; a trail burrows into the forest to your left.

Follow the path that is stony in places and that brushes along the départementale road, then take an abandoned road to reach an inn. Take the D 301 to your left for 40 m and turn right onto the white path parallel to the road. This straight path heads down below the church towards the **Voie Romaine** crossroads (a rather complicated crossroads, pay attention to the waymarking).

Head straight across the crossroads to follow the old roman road (red MTB waymarking no. 107) without really changing direction, crossing a road and coming to **Sapey pasture** (which fell victim to a fire in 2018 which deeply affected its landscape).

Turn right onto a white path through dry grasslands (cattle grids), head past **En Sapoy** and reach **La Croix de Sac**.

Take the underground road to your right that crosses under the D 470. Follow the road into the village to reach the **MEUSSIA** crossroads.

Take the first road on your right to the D 27 and follow the D 27 to **La Guille**.

Cross the road and take the shaded white path opposite you that gradually ascends

into the forest. After a short descend into the pastures, reach the village of Coulouvre through **Côte de Guy**.

Head through the village, past **COULOUVRE** and **En Chaspereille**, and continue on the D 296 to a hamlet. Descend to your left on exiting the hamlet, using a path to the centre of the village of **CRENANS** (fountain). Taking the road to your left (Red MTB waymarking no. 108), head to Sous la Crochère.

Take the stony and earthy path to your right into the forest. Head past a sand pit and join up with a small road. Quickly turn left (discovery trail: The soaring lake) and follow a path that is very stony in places along a wetland, called l'Etang. Exit at **La Bessoule** onto a cement road.

Head up this steep road towards the left. Take the path to your left, just before a farm, through a clearing for 100 m (two agricultural gates to open and close) to head back down to **La Montée de la Bessoule** in Moirans-en-Montagne.

Cross the road and continue towards the Pierre Vernotte high school to the parking lot you started in.

# On your path...



- The toy industry (A)
- Viewpoint from Bois de la Refrèche (C)
- The Roman Road (E)
- Around the Roman road (G)
- Coulouvre (I)
- Industrial landscape (B)
- Viewpoint over Vouglans lake (D)
- Stepped gable (F)
- Dry grasslands (H)
- Coulouvre, the hamlet of Crenans (J)

# All useful information

## **Advices**

For an MTB outing, wear a helmet and bring enough water.

Paths are shared with pedestrians and horse riders, who have priority, therefore, please adapt and control your speed.

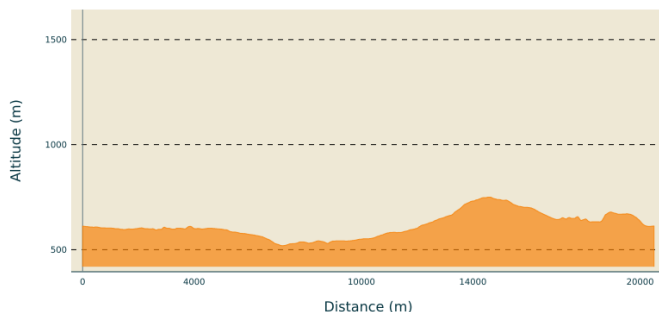
To use MTB paths, do not hesitate to get down from your bike.

This trail passes through pastures and forest paths. To respect the owners and farmers granting you passage, and for the security of livestock and wild fauna, we ask that you remain on the waymarked paths and close gates behind you where there are no MTB paths.

Wild flowers are beautiful, they may be rare and protected and often wilt quickly. Do not pick them! They will delight the next admirers.

In case of forest works (felling, skidding, etc.), for your safety, know when to stop and turn around.

## **Altimetric profile**



Min elevation 519 m  
Max elevation 750 m

## **Transports**

To visit and get about in the High-Jura, visit [www.reshaut-jura.fr](http://www.reshaut-jura.fr), the eco-mobility portal listing all means of transport within the Park.

## **Access**

20 km from Saint-Claude via the D 436 and the D 470, and 40 km from Lons-le-Saunier via the D 52 and the D 470 through Orgelet. In Moirans, follow signs for Pierre Vernotte high school, north of the town centre.

## **Advised parking**

departure parking lot for hikes towards the high school.

## **i** Information desks

Tourist information centre - Jura Sud  
3 bis rue du Murgin, 39260 Moirans-  
en-Montagne  
Tel : +33 (0)3 84 42 31 57  
<http://www.jurasud.net/>





# On your path...

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## The toy industry (A)

Toys are testaments to the transition from a domestic economy to a market economy. During the mid-19th century, toys were just one of the many wood-turning products. The toy industry was in full expansion with the development of machinery, energy sources and commercial networks. During the 20th century, while the hand-crafted production method was still widely used, the industrialisation of toys truly started in the period between the wars, particularly with the specialisation and autonomisation of businesses. The toy sector came to reflect the transformation of industrial and commercial rationales: the generalisation of plastic materials, the acceleration of technological innovation, strong marketing growth, etc.

Attribution : PNRHJ / F.JEANPARIS

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## Industrial landscape (B)

The transition from a “family” economy to a market economy has led to a nuanced industrial landscape in which workshop farms, crafts buildings, cooperative factories and large modern production sites that are increasingly disconnected from local specificities are all present.

Attribution : PNRHJ / F.JEANPARIS Ancien atelier

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## Viewpoint from Bois de la Refrèche (C)

Surrounded by the boxwood and bushes of Bois de la Refrèche, the landscape looks out over the waters of the Voglans lake.

Attribution : G.PROST



## Viewpoint over Vouglans lake (D)

Built on the Ain, at 130 metres high, the Vouglans dam is the French dam with the 3rd highest storage capacity: it is capable of holding around 600 million cubic metres of water, and with 1600 hectares of water surface, it makes the Vouglans lake one of the largest artificial lakes in France. It took a year and a half to fill with water and it deeply changed the physiognomy of the Ain's embankments, swallowing up several hamlets as well as the Chartreuse de Vacluse, the first Carthusian monastery in the Jura (12th century).

Attribution : PNRHJ - Nina Verjus

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## The Roman Road (E)

We don't know much about this straight "Roman" path.

From Villard D'Héria, a village to the south of Moirans-en-Montagne, where the remains of a temple and of a cult and thermal complex can be found in one of the most remarkable Gallo-Roman sites of southern Franche-Comté, since the 2nd century, the main axis of this path runs from the Le Gouillat hamlet in the municipality of Charchilla, to the Sous la Razée hamlet in the municipality of Maisod.

From there, a path branches off towards a set of inhabited areas, around and on Mont River, another Gallo-Roman site near Champagnole. A second path crosses over the Ain and joins up with the other North-South roads towards Salins, Besançon or Lons-le-Saunier. This ford was replaced by a bridge during the 13th century, which was often destroyed but always rebuilt up until the Pont de la Pyle which currently bridges the gap over the Vouglans lake.

Attribution : PNRHJ - F. Jeanparis





## Stepped gable (F)

Called a “crow-stepped gable” or a “corbie gable”, stepped gables were used to prevent a fire spreading from one attached house to another. Positioning slates flat prevented the infiltration of water (with water being sent away from the facade).

In the countryside, this roof specificity is also typical in Bugey and Vercors (PNRHJ - Collection patrimoine, “Heritage collection”).

Attribution : PNRHJ - F. Jeanparis

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## Around the Roman road (G)

Here, on either side of the Roman road, there are still several characteristic stones. They appear to have served as foundations for crosses or stone gallows.

Used by pilgrims and traders headed to Saint-Claude during the Middle Ages up until 1845, this road was also used by famous figures such as Philip the Bold, Charles the Bold, Louis XI, Anne of Brittany, Francis de Sales, Jeanne de Cantal and Lamartine. Saint-Claude's body was found intact in 1181, several centuries after his death, and ostentation processions took this path towards Lons-le-Saunier and Arbois.

The history of the road and of the Pont de Pyle bridge are discussed in the book “Histoire de Maisod et des territoires voisins” (The History of Maisod and neighbouring regions) written by J.M VUILLEMOT.

Attribution : J.M VUILLEMOT

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## Dry grasslands (H)

Thin soil, good sun exposure, low water-retention capacities and the almost complete absence of soil additives. Yet, dry grasslands are full of biodiversity: Mountain germander, Breckland thyme, laserwort and the military orchid are just some of the flower species that you may glimpse if you take the time to look. But please only use your eyes; over a quarter of protected species in France are from this environment. Drylands are disappearing due to the expansion of bushlands, caused by the abandonment of these lands that are more difficult to farm.

Attribution : PNRHJ - F. Jeanparis



## Coulouvre (I)

This place owes its name to the many vipers (“couleuvres” in French) that inhabit the now dry marshland close to the hamlet of Coulouvre. Three wood turning companies continue the tradition of manufacturing animal call instruments out of boxwood using traditional methods.

Attribution : PNRHJ / Gilles Prost

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## Coulouvre, the hamlet of Crenans (J)

In the village, buildings are organised in “spans”, mainly due to constraints relating to adjoining houses. Thus, each span tied the building to a specific purpose: stables, barns or housing. Wind-break walls (or the advanced position of gable walls, on the main facade) are characteristic of rural houses in the High-Jura. Balconies, which provide a gallery on the main facade and serve to dry wood and crops, are fairly common architectural elements in this area. Rural buildings also demonstrate the strong relation between agricultural activities and craft activities.

Attribution : PNRHJ / Gilles Prost