

32 Via ferrata de la Tête aux Chamois, 2525m

Airy route high above the Col du Pillon

Starting point: Col du Pillon (1546m), car park at the valley station for the 'Glacier 3000' gondola, approach from Diablerets (1151m) or Gsteig (1184m) on the road to the Col du Pillon.

Climbing times: midway station – Cabane des Diablerets – start of the via ferrata 10 mins., via ferrata 2½ hrs., exit – midway station 10 mins.; in total 2¼–3 hrs.

Grade: KS5-0, length 900m, demanding sport via ferrata with some overhanging parts of the wall, an exit in the first third of the route.

Waymarking: white-blue-white, signs.

Height difference: 100m.

Approach: 'Glacier 3000' cable car, service July – Aug. 8.00–17.00, from Sept. 8.40–16.30, www.glacier3000.ch

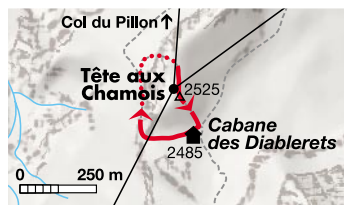
Accommodation: Cabane des Diablerets, middle July – middle Oct., ☎ 024/492 21 02.

Worth seeing: thrilling views far below; the exposure; atmospheric evening in front of the hut.

Tip: hire of via ferrata set from Cabane des Diablerets.

Map: MPA Editions, 1:25,000, Les Diablerets; LKS 1285 Les Diablerets or 272T St-Maurice.

Info: Bertrand Lador, mountain guide, builder and warden of the Cabane des Diablerets, ☎ 024/492 21 02 or 495 37 28.



There's lots going on when it's sunny on the Col du Pillon. Skiers and cross-country skiers, walkers and mountaineers all want to climb up high into the very different world of perpetual ice. The ride up in the big modern gondolas is an experience in itself.

The Cabane des Diablerets in the last of the sunlight.



On the start of the climb of the Tête aux Chamois via ferrata.

News has quickly spread of a via ferrata running across the steep rock face just before the midway station and most passengers can be seen pressing their noses against the large panoramic windows in search of the tiny worms wriggling up the huge rock wall. Many a via ferratist's heart has sunk into his/her boots in the cable car crush before being spat out again at the midway station to go and brave the exceedingly airy and demanding diagonal route below the Tête aux Chamois.

Approach: from the midway station (2525m) ascend steeply eastwards across a gravel slope onto the small col with the Cabane des Diablerets (2485m). From the Swiss Alpine Club hut turn right along a white-blue-white marked path to the start of the via ferrata (2400m) with an information board on the western face of the Tête aux Chamois.

Via ferrata: go along the narrow rock ledge protected with cables round the corner onto the northwest face. After a slightly overhanging traverse there's an overhanging descent to the next rock ledge. Crawl through a small cave, then descend once more to a rock ledge where you will find the only possible intermediate exit (short descent to the foot of the wall). Continue with increasing exposure of inclines to traverses. The crux point is the traverse on the Rocher Jaune just before the end (2420m) where the via ferrata finishes on a small platform of the Krete des Rocher Jaune. Now ascend south-eastwards and back to the midway station.