

La Cretaz – Baraccon Snowshoe Hike

- **Arrival:** Cretaz-Baraccon 1864 m
- **Departure:** Villaret 1490 m
- **Elevation Gain (one-way):** 380 m
- **Distance (one-way):** 4 km
- **Hiking Time (one-way, without breaks):** 2 hours
- **Difficulty:** Medium
- **Signage:** Snowshoes 5-green “Cretaz”; 2B “La Cretaz”
- **How to get there:** From SR39 toward Colle San Carlo, take the first roundabout in town straight toward Villaret. Park at the Villaret 31 sports field.

For whom: Suitable for all, depending on fitness level. Up to Cretaz, the trail follows a snow-groomed dirt road; beyond that, follow existing tracks through the forest.

Why go: Easy-to-moderate hike to the Cretaz hamlet, with educational panels along a steady forest climb and stunning views over La Thuile. Beyond Cretaz, the path to the Baraccon ruin becomes more intimate and scenic. An optional short loop through the trees offers a slightly more challenging but rewarding route.

Description:

From the parking lot (1490 m), follow the asphalt briefly. After passing a playground, take the left fork uphill, following summer trail 2B. Soon the snow requires snowshoes. The trail winds up a dirt road through a larch and fir forest, with occasional snowshoe signs, opening intermittent views of Mont Blanc de Courmayeur. Educational panels along the switchbacks provide natural insights.

The trail reaches the Cretaz hamlet (1736 m), where a short detour left offers panoramic views of La Thuile. To the right, the Dente del Gigante and Grandes Jorasses are visible. Beyond Cretaz, the path becomes less groomed but remains manageable, passing one of the old mine entrances. Look for the pink “Percorso Granier” sign on the left for the optional loop.

Continue straight along the snow-covered road to a ruin (1864 m) with breathtaking views. Return the same way, or take the optional loop: just before the ruin, descend left following snowshoe signs through the larch forest. This segment corresponds to the Granier route, crossing another old mine entrance before reconnecting with the main road above Cretaz. Follow the trail back to Villaret.