

CUNEO MOUNTAIN

Hiking

along the alpine paths of the
province of Cuneo

HIKING TOURS FOR EVERYBODY



*Piemonte.
Land of passion.



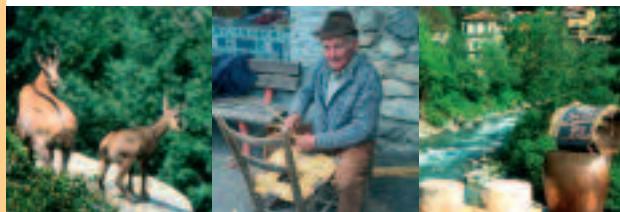
ATL
Azienda Turistica
Locale del Cuneese



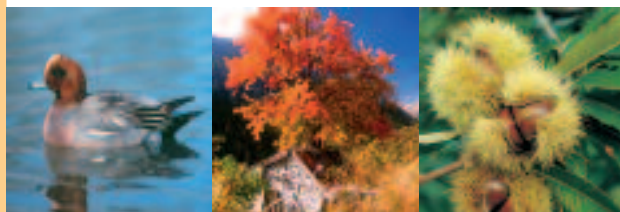
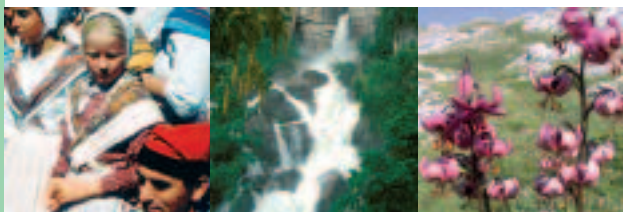
REGIONE
PIEMONTE

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Welcome to the alps



A land with an extraordinary variety of landscape, culture, art, gastronomy and folklore welcomes visitors with great pride. This is the "Granda" province – the biggest in Piemonte – crossed by twenty or so valleys that spread towards the borders of Liguria and France.

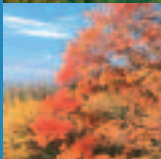
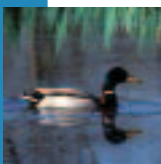
The geological history of the Alps, the radial position of the valleys, the climate influenced by the Ligurian Sea are just some factors that have contributed to the birth of a never ending variety of environments, from "dolomitic" of the Marguareis Massif to the crystalline rocks of Argentera and Monviso.



From Cuneo, the eye embraces the extraordinary amphitheatre of the Ligurian, Maritime and Southern Cottian Alps and stops at Monviso which, with its 3841 m altitude, represents a great summer and winter tourist attraction.

Who comes to discover this extreme south-western strip of the Alps will take home the memory of walking along paths of matchless beauty. A protected, sheltered, silent and quiet corner, rich with stretches of flowers and wild animals, woods and forests, fields and pastures crowned by mountains from the Tanaro to the Po valley. We suggest over the next pages some high and low valley routes (also suitable for all the family) that represent only a little bit of what there is to offer in our mountains. We are waiting for you...bring your rucksacks!

The proposed routes have been suggested by the Comunità Montane (Mountain Communities) and Park Authorities.



of the Province of Cuneo

Journey Notebook

The journey

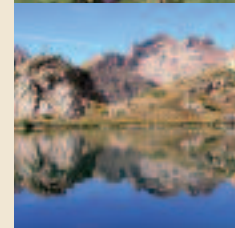
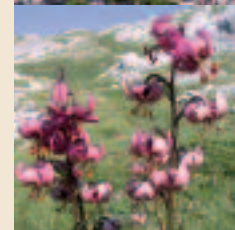
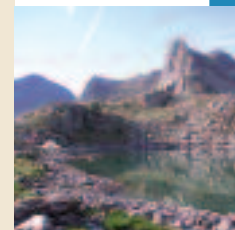
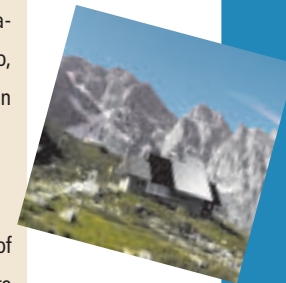
The Province of Cuneo can be reached by car on the Turin-Savona A6 motorway (exit Marene, Fossano, Mondovì and Ceva). It can also be reached by train with the Turin-Cuneo-Ventimiglia and Turin-Cuneo-Ceva-Savona lines. Buses also leave from Cuneo, Mondovì and Saluzzo for the major mountain regions.

Where to sleep and eat

All the valleys are equipped with a vast range of accommodation made of Hotels, B&B, rooms to rent, inns, stopping off places, managed refuges and camps. There are numerous restaurants and trattorias where the typical local cuisine can be tasted.

Information

Information can be requested at the
Local Tourist Company A.T.L. del CUNEESE
 Via Vittorio Amedeo II, 8 A - 12100 CUNEO
 tel. +39.0171.690217 - fax +39.0171.602773
 info@cuneoholiday.com
 www.cuneoholiday.com
 www.autunnocongusto.com





The province of Cuneo

This guide deals with the mountain and plain territory of the province, which is marked by the green border.



Comunità Montana VALLI PO, BRONDA E INFERNOTTO

The territory of the Comunità Montana* Valli Po, Bronda e Infernotto is dominated by the unmistakable pyramid of the Monviso. This is the Queen mountain of the Cottian Alps which, with its height of 3841 m, makes it a great summer and winter tourist attraction and a classic destination that every mountaineer must reach sooner or later... especially because the Italian Alpine Club was founded here in 1863, following Quintino Sella's will. The Po, the longest Italian river, originates from Monviso, so giving its name to the valley.

The Po Valley has numerous paths that have been used since ancient times for exchanging trade with the French territory or for armies passing. Just under the Colle delle Traversette in 1480, the Marquis of Saluzzo, Ludovico II had the first alpine tunnel built exactly to facilitate the trafficking of goods, and also for the commodity between Marquisate and Dauphiné: the tunnel – which is still in use - is called "Buco del Viso" and is situated along the ancient "Via del Sale" (Salt Road). Legend has it that Hannibal, with his army and elephants crossed the Alps exactly at Traversette.

Nowadays the same paths are used by heedful hikers searching for uncontaminated green areas, fascinating landscapes, still intact alpine villages, testimonies of the mountain people's work, culture, art, language and local cuisine. At the sides of the main valley, the less known Bronda and Infernotto offer to the hiker relaxing and unusual paths through green woods.

*(consortium of communes in mountain areas)

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

Comunità Montana Valli Po, Bronda e Infernotto Tourist Board
Via S. Croce, 4 - 12034 Paesana (CN)
Tel. +39.0175.94273 - fax +39.0175.987082
www.vallipo.cn.it - e-mail: info@vallipo.cn.it

Monte Bracco: Leonardo Da Vinci's Mountain



Description:

Leonardo da Vinci wrote about Monte Bracco in a letter in 1511, maybe following a trip there, searching for appropriate material for his sculptures. Today - after five hundred years - the same suggestions, and others make Monte Bracco (1306 m) a unique mountain: a balcony facing Monviso and the Po and also a great geological, botanical, faunal and historical laboratory.

A great "book" where marks left by man can be read: from the fascinating rocky incisions (most important sites are indicated), to the gneiss and quartzite caves, to the thick, network of rural pathways. The housing settlements (*barme* or *balme*) are attractive, real villages built under the shelter of prominent rocks.

History of art lovers will find surely interesting the Trappa convent (in the community area of Envie and Barge), the Balma Boves Village Museum (Sanfront), the Devesio Sanctuary and the restored female Monastery (Rifreddo), the circuit of ancient walls and the historical centre of Revello. The rock gym in Sanfront and the ethnographic museum "La Brunetta" in Barge must also be noted.

The pathway is well indicated and notice boards with historical, botanical, geological and literary notes can be found. A complete map is available at the "Comunità Montana Tourist Board" in Paesana and at the Town Halls.

Place of departure / arrival: it is a ring of about 18 km practicable on foot, but also by mountain-bike or on horseback (in some places). It can be started in different places (from the areas of the towns of Paesana, Sanfront, Rifreddo, Revello, Envie and Barge) for the whole length, or single stretches.

Gradient: about 1500 m uphill

Time required: 8 hours

(18 km ring)

Degree of difficulty: medium

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano-Saluzzo and then along the Po Valley provincial road as far as the towns included in the itinerary.
- from Cuneo: take the SP 589 Laghi di Avigliana road as far as Saluzzo. Follow like above.



San Leonardo - Monte Bracco



Le vie d'Oustano (The Oustano Roads)

These roads join together the various hamlets and villages of the commune of Oстана. Other than just enjoying the matchless beauty, the hiker who travels along these roads can discover a mountain man's life and the way of putting to good use the area, making a profit, while keeping it intact. Wooden notice boards, with original place names used by the people, have been made and positioned along the pathways and, in the most characteristic points of the places to be crossed through.

A map of the pathways is available at the "Comunità Montana Tourist Board" in Paesana and at the Town Hall of Oстана.

Beside the following excursions we suggest a trip to the Ethnographical Civic Museum "Oстана – Alta Valle Po" set up in the old Palazzo Comunale "Town Hall", where four rooms show the everyday domestic and working life of mountain people.

The Villages

Villa, Ciampagna, Serre, Bernardi, San Bernardo, Villa

Departure point/arrival:

Oстана, Borgata Villa

Gradient: 250 m

Time required: not less than 4 h

Degree of difficulty: easy. Attention must be paid (especially in winter) crossing streams where there are anyway fixed ropes.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; go along the SP 662 road to Savigliano-Saluzzo and then along the Po Valley provincial road as far as Oстана.
- from Cuneo: take the SP 589 road of the Laghi di Avigliana to Saluzzo. Follow like above.

Description:

An itinerary discovering rural architecture: houses and community furnaces, fountains and wash-houses, dry-stone walls retaining the earth, boundaries of big stone slabs, cobbled roads, chapels and votive pillars.

Ostana-Serre Hamlet



The "Mèire"

S. Antonio, Serre Inferiore and Superiore, *The Durandin*, *The Mèire da Croçç*, *Sarlichart*, Bernardi, *Sèrét*, the Bernardi communal road, S. Antonio.

Departure point/arrival:

Ostana, Fraz. S. Antonio

Gradient: 300 m

Time required: not less than 3 h

Degree of difficulty: easy

Access:

see previous route

Description:

An itinerary to discover the *mèire*, seasonal mountain structures necessary for pasture. An itinerary set between breathtaking cliffs and deep-set gorges.

Le vie d'Oustano



The Pastures

Pion da Charm (1635 m) *Combo Frino*, *l'Arp*, P. Sellassa (2036 m), Colle Bernardo (2245 m), watershed crest Bagnolo-Ostana, Punta Ostanetta (2375 m), Colle del Vallone (2247 m), *Pion des Fountane*, *Rocho dè l'Aio*, *Draio des Case*, *Draio dè Pèiro Grosso*, *Pèiro Grosso*, *la Gravèllo*, *Pion da Charm*.

Departure point/arrival:

Ostana, *Pion da Charm*

Gradient: 740 m

Time required: 6 h

A whole day is needed to go through the entire area.

Degree of difficulty: characteristic of altitude hiking, over cliff crests and slippery rocks.

Access:

see previous route

Description:

Here you can cross the *draie*, sheep-tracks used by animals to reach the pastures. The itinerary unwinds between pastures, rocks, *barne* and spectacular panoramic places.

Monviso



The “Salt Road” along the Po Valley

Exciting hike that crosses through towns, villages and different natural environments from the valley floor to a high altitude. The ancient Via del Sale “Salt Road” from Paesana to the Colle delle Traversette was used in medieval times for exchanging trade between the ancient Marquisate of Saluzzo and France.

Departure point:

Paesana (614 m)

Arrival point:

Colle delle Traversette (2950 m)

Gradient: 2236 m

Suggested time required: 3 days

It is possible to stay in Crissolo and Pian del Re. Other accommodation like Bed & Breakfast and Refuges are available in the Calcinere hamlet in Paesana, Oncino and Ostanta. GTA stop-over place at Pian Melzè.

Degree of difficulty:

EE - three-day hiking with relevant gradient.

Indications: VdS signposts (Via del Sale - Salt Road), horizontal signs with white/red notches.

Recommended time:

from July to September

Public transport: a mini bus service connects Paesana and Crissolo everyday (stopping at Oncino and Ostanta), Paesana and Oncino (Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday), other destinations can be booked for groups.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway exit Marene; follow the SP 662 road to Savigliano-Saluzzo and then along the Valley Po provincial road to Paesana.
- from Cuneo: take the SP 589 Laghi di Avigliana road as far as Saluzzo. Follow like above.

Description:

1st stage

Paesana – Calcinere – Oncino - Crissolo / Uphill gradient 730 m / Travelling time 4h 30 min

From Piazza Vittorio Veneto the itinerary crosses through Paesana along via Roma and via Po, then crosses the river to get on the orographic right. After the sports field, carry on along a lane that comes out on the provincial road 26 and shortly after reaches Erasca (637 m), where you cross a bridge. Near the little church a mule track leads to the dirt road towards Guardiola (774 m), then follows a path towards Succa (847) and Sanghione (835 m), afterwards passing the electric power station in Calcinere down towards the Po.

Through fields and woods the pathway leads to Ponte della Cousignà (774 m) and then reaches the point where the Lenta stream runs into the Po (827 m); from here an old mule track steeply rises to the Santuario Madonna del Bel Fò (1077 m). An uphill lane passes Oncino, then the village of Saret (1281 m) along an asphalt road to San Giacomo (1349 m), a characteristic place with the ruins of the church of the same name. The itinerary drops down into the beech wood towards Crissolo (1320 m).



Buco di Viso

2nd stage

Crissolo – Pian della Regina – Pian del Re / Uphill gradient 710 m / Travelling time 2h 30 min

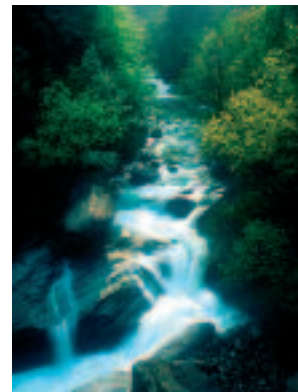
From Piazza Duca degli Abruzzi to Crissolo Villa flanking the Po and after passing a car park there is a pathway that leads to La Spiaggia (1384 m). Keeping on the orographic right follow a forestal path as far as a sharp left bend where you take another path leading to Pian Giasset and the Quintino Sella refuge. Turning right you can reach Ponte Riondino (1539 m) and just after you can admire the larchwood of Crissolo. Then follow the Po to the Pian Melzè plain (1715 m). From here, without following directions to the Quarti Gorge or the Chiaretto Lake, take the ancient mule track going over Pian Fiorenza and follow a series of hairpin bends as far as Pian del Re (2020 m), where there is an alpine Hotel of the same name.

3rd stage

Pian del Re – Buco di Viso – Colle delle Traversette / Uphill gradient 930 m / Travelling time 3h (outward trip)

From Pian del Re (2020 m) following to the tip of the main valley, the mule track reveals the ability and wisdom of the ancient builders. Coming to the centre of the valley, without taking other directions, take a splendid pathway crossing the brook again next

to a pathway that goes up the Coluoir del Porco towards the V. Giacoletti refuge and leads to the grassy pasture slopes that drop down from Pian Armoine. With wide hairpin bends the pathway rises in altitude reaching Colle Armoine then, halfway up goes back towards the centre of the main valley reaching the “Sentiero del Postino” (Postman’s Path) made during wartime so that there was a means of communication between the military barracks that were spread out over the area. The pathway, equipped with chains in the most exposed parts, reaches Pian Mait up a steep hill, which is surrounded by the Rocce Fourioun, Monte Granero and Monte Meidassa stone bastions. When you have crossed the plain, a steep path with narrow hairpin bends climbs up to the Traversette barracks and then from here a narrow path leads to the entrance of Buco del Viso and afterwards, with some exposed pathways (pay attention when there is snow) reaches the narrow Colle delle Traversette (2950 m) pass.



The Po River near the Salt Road





Comunità Montana
VALLE VARAITA

The road which crosses the area of the Comunità Montana Valle Varaita winds for 60 km along the valley and leads to Colle dell'Agnello (2748 m). In the summertime it allows access to the Queyras French region.

This land, full of tourist attractions, has been able to preserve its cultural patrimony. A good example is the Bahio di Sampeyre, a thousand year old ancient festival, which remembers the banishment of the Saracen pillagers from the alpine valleys and is celebrated every 5 years (years ending in 2 and 7) during the Carnival period. It is also the home of wood craftsmen, Rore ceramics and the world famous Piasco harps. Not to mention its gastronomy specialities like *ravioles* (long gnocchi) or *tumin* (fresh cheese) from Melle.

The alpine villages built with stone and slate roofs, like Chianale and Bellino, are silent evidence of the border history. In the Bellino villages, the passing of time is marked by the meridiane "sundials" on the façades of many buildings together with sculptured stone figures and carved wooden balconies.

Anyone who loves nature will be bewitched by the Alevé wood, the vastest swiss stone pine woodland in Europe (817 hectares), and by several opportunities of hikes offered by the valley where breathtaking panoramas on Monviso and on the "three thousand metres high" Cottian Alps can be enjoyed.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

Comunità Montana Valle Varaita Tourist Board

Piazza della Vittoria, 40

12020 Sampeyre (CN)

tel. +39.0175.977152 - fax +39.0175.977448

www.vallevaraita.cn.it - e-mail: info@vallevaraita.cn.it



The Old Mine Tour

Departure point:

Bellino - Ponte Pelvo

Arrival point:

Bellino - S. Anna

Gradient: 900 m

Time required: only uphill 2 h 30 min; round trip 5 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty:

medium length hike

Links to other routes:

Bric Rutund and Colle della Bicocca - Camosciera Lake and Pelvo d'Elva - Colle di Sagneres - Rocca la Marchisa.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; go along the SP 662 road towards Savigliano-Saluzzo and then along the Valle Varaita provincial road to Casteldelfino. Turn left in the Bellino valley and after the village of Chiazale find a stone bridge on the left named Ponte Pelvo.
- from Cuneo: SP 589 Laghi di Avigliana road to Costigliole Saluzzo; go along the Valle Varaita provincial road to Casteldelfino. Follow like above.

Description:

Crossing the Pelvo bridge, take the path that begins on the right of the dirt road. Not long after turn left and follow directions to the "Antica Miniera" (old mine) and the Camosciera Lake. After crossing the Reou stream and a plain, the path leads up very steeply to the Camosciera Lake: follow on, keeping right. When you arrive under the stony gully of the Colle di Sagneres the path leads to the right, under the rocks, where a little track leads to the Antica Miniera, just under the Costa Sturana hill. From here you go down keeping to the panoramic crest until the path turns left and goes down on the Traversagn plain. Keeping to the path you pass near a mountain hut at the bottom of the plain, then keep going down the path until it joins the dirt road that leads to Sant'Anna. From here there is a 700 m asphalt road leading back to Ponte Pelvo.

Pian Traversagn



The Alevè, the Bagnour Lake and Refuge

Description:

The climb begins next to two notice boards. About half way up, a path begins next to a mountain hut, leading to the Secco Lake. Just after, at the bottom of a plain called Pian Caval, a path, which leads to the Vallanta Gorge, can be seen on the left. After the last stretch you reach the Bagnour Lake with a new refuge next to it. The refuge can also be reached by passing by the Secco Lake and going down the hill which leads to the Vallanta Gorge, where the Alevè wood can be admired.

Departure point/arrival:

Castello

Gradient: 410 m

Time required: uphill only 1h; round trip 2h

Degree of difficulty: short hike

Links to other routes: Ranco

pass - Colle dei Duc - Vallanta valley

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; go along the SP 662 road towards Savigliano-Saluzzo and then on the Valle Varaita provincial road to a village called Castello, after Casteldelfino. The path begins just before the Castello built-up area and the dam of the artificial lake, on the right near a ruin of a barracks.
- from Cuneo: SP 589 Laghi di Avigliana road to Costigliole Saluzzo; go along the Valle Varaita provincial road to a village called Castello, after Casteldelfino. Follow like above.

Bagnour Refuge



The Losetta Circuit

Departure point:

Grange del Rio

Arrival point: Castello

Gradient: 1000 m

Time required: uphill only 3 h 30 min; round trip 7 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty: long hike

Links to other routes:

Colle di Vallanta - Bivacco Berardo - Bivacco delle Forciolline - Bivacco Bertoglio, S.Chiaffredo pass, Gallarino pass, Q. Sella refuge - Bagnour Lake and refuge.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; go along the SP 662 road towards Savigliano-Saluzzo and then along the Valle Varaita provincial road to Chianale, after Casteldelfino. Pass the old customs point and go up as far as a left hairpin bend next to a few mountain huts named Grange del Rio. It's a good idea to leave a second car in Castello, because the downhill trek ends there.
- from Cuneo: SP 589 Laghi di Avigliana road to Costigliole Saluzzo; go along the Valle Varaita provincial road to Chianale, after Casteldelfino. Follow like above.

Description:

Take the pathway that goes up the Soustra valley. After a long plain where there are mountain huts, the path climbs up very steeply. Once you reach the Losetta Pass, climb towards the left for a 150 m gradient, reaching the top of the Losetta, where you can enjoy a fabulous view of Monviso. On the way down, go towards the Vallanta refuge, passing next to a barracks just under the hill, and then down a path that leads to Castello.

The Losetta Pass



The Blue Lake

Departure point/arrival:

Chianale

Gradient: 700 m

Time required: uphill only 2 h; round trip 4 h

Degree of difficulty: medium length hike

Links to other routes: Col Longet - Colle Biancetta - Colle del Lupo - Nero Lake, Tour Real

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road towards Savigliano and then along the Valle Varaita provincial road to Chianale. On the left, just before the old customs point, there is a bridge over a torrent. It is advisable to leave the car near it.
- from Cuneo: SP 589 Laghi di Avigliana road to Costigliole Saluzzo; go along the Valle Varaita provincial road passing the Chianale village. Follow like above.

Description:

Leaving the bridge, take the road that goes through the pinewood and turn left just before another bridge. Keeping to the well indicated road, go up to a height of 2523 m where you will find the Blue Lake. When you arrive at the lake, it could be interesting to make a little detour to the Nero Lake or the Bes Lake. The road down is the same as the road up.

Blue Lake



Rocca Senghi

Departure point/arrival:

Bellino - S. Anna

Gradient: 650 m

Time required: uphill only 1 h 45 min; round trip 4 h

Degree of difficulty: medium length hike

Links to other routes: Pion Cheol - Vallone di Rui, Mongioia, Colle Fiufrusa

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway exit Marene; go along the SP 662 towards Savigliano-Saluzzo and then along the Valle Varaita provincial road to Casteldelfino. Turn left in the Bellino valley. The asphalt road ends in front of the chapel of S. Anna. You can leave your car here.
- from Cuneo: SP 589 Laghi di Avigliana to Costigliole Saluzzo; go along the Valle Varaita provincial road to Casteldelfino. Follow like above.

Description:

From S. Anna walk along the dirt road towards Pian Cheol and Mongioia. Leave the road to turn right towards Mongioia. At Grange Crouset (2020 m) turn right passing in front of a mountain hut with a sundial and take the path which leads to the top of Rocca Senghi. On the way down, it is advisable to follow the directions of the via "ferrata" and to go down the tunnel which is equipped with ropes and steps, with a torch. This was once the powder magazine of the barracks that was on the hill. The road down is the same as the road up. Equipped and prepared hikers can go up the via "ferrata" and down the path.





Comunità Montana VALLE MAIRA

The territory of the Comunità Montana Valle Maira offers the opportunity to take part in a splendid nature trip. It takes the visitor from the narrow valley floor – characteristic for its gorges and narrow passages – as far as the chestnut, larch and fir woods, to ample green pastures and to the top of the Cottian Alps, with some “three thousand metres high mountains” like the Pelvo d’Elva, the Chersogno and the Brec de Chambeyron.

Who crosses this valley can discover the occitan traditions and dialect, Merens horses stud farms, craftsmen shops, inns that propose a gastronomy with poor ingredients but rich in imagination and taste. It is a community that has lived isolated for many decades, silent and reserved and that offers uncontaminated alpine tourism with a thick network of pathways, mule tracks and army roads, numerous sporting opportunities and good accommodation.

It could also be the occasion to be told the old stories connected with the *acciugai* (anchovy traders) and the curious travelling *cavié* (hair traders) who went around the valley looking for women who were willing to sacrifice their hair (purposely grown long and plaited) to help maintain the family, and sold it to wig makers in a special market in Saluzzo.

If you want to have a rest between one hike and another, we suggest visiting the numerous medieval art jewels that are found all over the valley, like the spectacular Roman church of S. Peyre in Stroppo and the Elva parish church, with sixteenth century frescoes by the Flemish painter Hans Clemer.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

Comunità Montana Valle Maira

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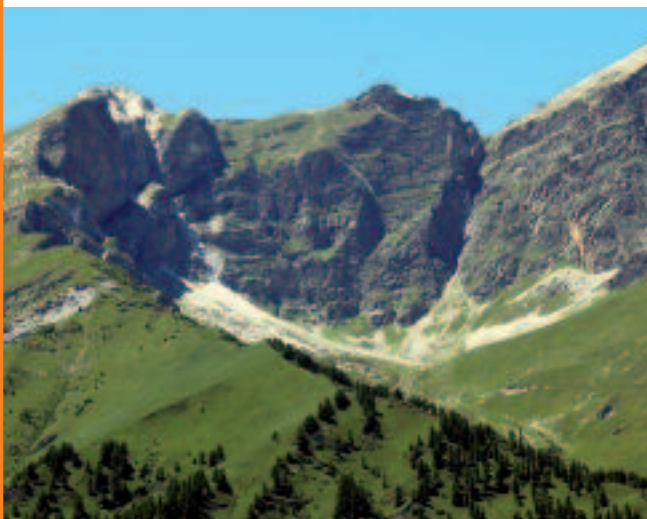
Dronero Tourist Board

Piazza XX Settembre

12025 Dronero (CN)

tel. +39.0171.917080 - fax +39.0171.909784

e-mail: iatvallemaira@virgilio.it



The Occitan Pathways

Departure point/arrival:

the ring shaped route can be started from different places in the valley and crossed in both directions.

Gradient: each stage varies

Time required: 15 stages from 2 h 30 min to 9 h

Degree of difficulty: challenging

Links to other routes: numerous secondary paths and connections with the neighbouring Varaita and Grana valleys.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road towards Savigliano and follow directions to Costigliole Saluzzo and Busca. From here you can reach different places in the valley where the routes start.
- from Cuneo: SP 422 road to Caraglio and Dronero. From here you can reach different places in the valley where the routes start.

Description:

It is a ring shaped route marked with yellow notches and wooden road signs, so that you can visit all of the Maira Valley on foot, by mountain bike or on horseback in 15 stages, staying in typical local inns and stopping off places.

Leaving Villar San Costanzo the path forks off in Macra and then reaches the towns and alpine villages positioned on both orographic sides leading to the “three thousand metres high mountains” of the valley.

These routes have seen traders and travellers, preachers and soldiers, troubadours and pilgrims pass along them over the decades. Today the hiker can look back in time discovering alpine villages, small churches, mountain people's life and breathtaking landscape in this beautiful, secluded and difficult to reach valley.

It is advisable to book the stopping off places: for information contact the Dronero Tourist Board.

The Meja



The “Ciciu” del Villar Natural Reserve

Departure point/arrival:

Villar San Costanzo - Natural Reserve Visiting Centre

Gradient: 446 m

Time required: uphill only 1 h; round trip about 2 h

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes: the Occitan Pathways, the ring shaped route that joins Villar S. Costanzo with the higher valley, starts from the entrance to the Reserve.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; go along the SP 662 road towards Savigliano and follow directions to Costigliole Saluzzo and Busca. You can find Villar San Costanzo on the provincial road to Dronero.
- from Cuneo: SP 422 road to Caraglio and Dronero. You can find Villar San Costanzo 5 km from Dronero on the provincial road to Busca.



Ciciu del Villar

Description:

The route runs into the heart of the Natural Reserve of the *Ciciu d'pera* (stone figures), a natural geological phenomenon. In time erosion has created curious mushroom shaped figures, with clay columns surmounted by masses of dark stone. The ring shaped route joins the lower part of the Reserve to the Colle della Liretta (1116 m), a natural balcony that looks over the plain of Cuneo. Crossing through the wood, you can admire numerous *Ciciu* and then follow the road to the starting point. There is also a gymnastic course equipped with 16 posts and picnic areas with barbecues.



Elva: a Spas per Lou Viol

Departure point/arrival:

Elva - Serre hamlet

Gradient: never over 400 m

Time required: 8 h (about 30 km total). The route can be interrupted in numerous places from where you can go back to Elva. You must calculate an average of 2 h for each route. There are signposts displaying "Elva 1", while "E1" is written on signs on trees and rocks.

Degree of difficulty: easy if you only do part of the route. Difficult if you do it all.

Links to other routes: at Chiosso Superiore, you intersect the T5 path that goes up to Fontana Nera. In different places you can intersect the G.T.A. paths and the Occitan Pathways.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and follow directions to Costigliole Saluzzo and Busca. From here you can reach Dronero and after about 23 km you reach Bassura di Stroppo. From here it is possible to take the panoramic road (on the right) that goes to Elva (17 km) or carry on along the main road for another 4 km and go up to Elva going along the steep gorge of the same name (10 km).
- from Cuneo: SP 422 road to Caraglio and Dronero. Follow like above.

Description:

From the Serre village (1637 m) you can reach the villages called Gorìa (1661 m) and Isaia (1703 m - 15 min). Crossing a big larch wood you reach the Arsisa Fountain (1778 m - 15 min) where you can fill waterflasks. Carrying on you can reach the circular S. Giovanni church (1872 m - 15 min). Then you reach the provincial road that ascends from Stroppo (10 min) and going along it towards Elva (5 min), after the crossroads to Colle di Sampyre, there is a dirt road on the right. **Here you can interrupt the route and go back to Elva Serre along the provincial road.** If you carry on along the path, you come across Chiotti (1864 m - 15 m) and from here the base of the Ripalta rocks (1900 m - 20 min) and the Martini village (1726 m - 35 min). **From here you can go back to Elva Serre.**

Instead, if you go along the municipal road, turning right you reach a crossroads (10 min) where there is a dirt road (on the right): it takes you to the Grangie village (1830 m



Hans Clemer's frescoes in Elva

- 1 h 05). The route divides an enormous crag called Barsaie. Further on you reach the Grange Viani, Laurenti and Garneri villages. From here, crossing through the Ortili wood, you reach the Chiosso Superiore village (1670 m - 1 h) and going along the asphalt road descend towards Chiosso Inferiore (15 min) and to the Alberg bridge (5 min). **From here you can go back to Elva Serre following the asphalt road.**

If you follow the pathway, follow the stream and in 20 min you reach the Molini Allioni village (1437 m) named in this way for its mills. From here, taking the path on the right in front of the church you come to the Brione village (40 min). Then the path rises to the panoramic Rocca

Castello (1577 m). In 15 min you come to the Lischia village (1359 m) and in another 25 min to the provincial road of the Gorge (1400 m). **From here you can go back to Elva Serre.**

If you go to the right, you can find a signpost for the pathway that reaches the Molinas bridge (1h 15 min) and from here the starting off place (5 min).



The Cyclamen Didactic Pathway



Departure point/arrival: Macra

Gradient: 100 m

Time required: 2 h

Degree of difficulty: easy

Access:

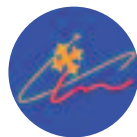
- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; go along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and follow directions to Costigliole Saluzzo and Busca. From here you can reach Dronero and after about 18 km you reach Macra.
- from Cuneo: SP 422 road to Caraglio, Dronero and Macra.

Description :

Along this route which is suitable for everyone, there are a mill and the remains of a farrier's forge, votive pillars and chapels with frescoes: here the Cyclamen purpurascens and the rare endemic Euphorbia valiniana, typical of the Maira valley, are in bloom.

From the small square in Macra (850 m), go towards the bridge, take the path that is at the side of the brook and reach the villages of Langra and Caricatori. Afterwards you take the path that goes to the right, cross a wild area and with a long, level path you can reach the village of Camoglieres, a group of alpine houses. Here you can see some paintings by Giors Boneto, a painter from Paesana who worked in the valley in the 800's.

Follow on by taking the old medieval road that goes to Macra in between old vine terraces and breathtaking views. The route continues under the pronaos of the medieval chapel of San Peyre. Following on, you can reach the San Marcellino Parish Church and then down a short descent the path leads back to the starting point.



Comunità Montana

VALLE GRANA

The territory of the Comunità Montana Valle Grana is wedged between the Stura and Maira valleys, and spreads out towards east and the Cuneo plain for just 24 km. The beginning of the route is distinguished by gentle slopes with ample chestnut, beech and conifer woods; the middle part is boxed in but higher up it opens out to extensive pastures and Monte Tibert, Cima Tempesta and Punta Test make up the background.

In Castelmagno the valley opens out in a fascinating alpine way. The many hamlets of the village reach the Sanctuary situated at 1760 m and dedicated to San Magno, a soldier of the legendary Thebaic legion and herd protector, who was martyred here. The oldest part of the building is the Allemandi chapel frescoed by Pietro da Saluzzo in the 15th century.

Castelmagno is also the name of the king of the P.D.O.cheeses - produced only in this area - and which is used to season the delicious potato gnocchi. It is a cheese made from alpine vaccine milk of old origin (first documents about its existence go back to 13th century) and nowadays it is appreciated by connoisseurs all over the world.

The age-old labour by the shepherds and farmers of the valley has left an architectural and landscape patrimony of great value made up of small villages, old paths and mule tracks that nowadays can come back to life thanks to hiking, cycling, mountain-bike and equitation lovers.

Besides, you can discover the Provençal cultural movement and visit an interesting ethnographic museum in Sancto Lucio di Coumboscuro, situated in a lateral gorge.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

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From the Colletto di Castelmagno Village to Colle della Margherita (R10)



Departure point:

Colletto di Castelmagno

Arrival point:

Colle della Margherita

Gradient: 707 m

Time required: 2 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes:

road R9 Colletto - Narbona and road S3 Colle della Margherita - Paglieres (Valle Maira)

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and on the SR 20 follow directions to Levaldigi and Centallo. Take the provincial road to Caraglio and from here take the SP 23 to Pradleves and the SP 112 to Castelmagno.
- from Cuneo: SP 422 road to Caraglio. Follow like above.

Description:

The R10 mule track leaves the centre of the little village next to the first house (directions "Croce"). Shortly after it reaches a votive pillar dedicated to Sant'Antonio and then goes on, on the orographic right of Rio Valliera, passes another votive pillar and comes to a wooden bridge (1300 m). The pathway passes near to Borgata Sarià (1346 m) and reaches the ridge of Valliera-Cauri where you can find the uninhabited Albre, Campofei and Grange hamlets. From Grange (1496 m) the path carries on to the left towards Fonte La Costa (1620 m). From here it goes right and passes at the base of a thick larch wood reaching the side of Rio Cauri. Coming back on the Rio Valliera side the path follows the higher part of the larch wood, near on the Valliera-Cauri watershed.

Coming out of the wood you reach Grange Sarià (1750 m) and from here the path goes toward the head of the charming Rio Cauri gorge nearing the rocky falls named Bars la Chiaus. Then it climbs up on the rocky ramparts crossing a small pass called Passetto (1613 m) and comes to the ruins of a barn. From here it reaches the Grana-Maira watershed and the Colle della Margherita (1979 m).



From the Sanctuary "Santuario di San Magno" to Bassa di Narbona (R13)

Departure point: Santuario di San Magno - Castelmagno

Arrival point: Bassa di Narbona

Gradient: 442 m

Time required: 2 h

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes: after the mountain pass the S22 path goes down to Castellaro di Celle Macra.

Access:

- from Turin:
see previous route.
- from Cuneo:
see previous route.

Description:

From the Santuario di San Magno (1763 m) the dirt road to Colle d'Esischie turns right and comes to two constructions. It carries on up the pastured slopes towards the north with hairpin bends. At 1920 m parallel to a hollow, the old R13 path appears on the left and reaches the Sibolet-Narbona ridge where the Crosetta Pass (2175 m) opens out: in this place there are numerous little crosses left by pilgrims.

Diagonally left (north-west) the R13 path descends between alder and rhododendron bushes, towards the head of Comba di Narbona. Then at an altitude of 2138 m, it crosses the mountainous ridge of the ruined Grange Perolet.

The pathway, that is mixed with grassy tracks where herds and flocks pass, goes diagonally north east on grassy slopes to the Grana-Maira watershed. Here the ample Bassa di Narbona (2220 m) opens up with its numerous stone constructions (Grange Serra 2232 m).



From the Chiappi di Castelmagno hamlet to the Viridio Pass (R16)

Departure point: Borgata Chiappi di Castelmagno

Arrival point: Passo Viridio

Gradient: 690 m

Time required: 2 h

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes: from Viridio pass turning east along the watershed you can reach the panoramic Cima Viribianc (2477 m).

Access:

- from Turin:
see previous route.
- from Cuneo:
see previous route.

Description:

Leaving the Chiappi di Castelmagno hamlet (1661 m) follow the dirt track that, after the Sibolet and Grana streams, reaches the Inciastar Gorge and then a short way towards east enters into the gorge and ends at about an altitude of 1700 m.

From here the R16 path begins and goes across the bottom of the valley southwards. At 2202 m you reach a basin that is distinguished by a pool. After a couple of steeper tracks, the pathway turns left along the Grana-Arma watershed between Cima Viribianc (2477 m) and Monte Viridio (2498 m), in the point where the pass of the same name opens up (2390 m). The valley path named "Curnis Auta" runs along the ridge and it is indicated by clearly visible red-white notches.





Comunità Montana VALLE STURA

The whole territory of the Comunità Montana Valle Stura di Demonte is marked by the river of the same name which flows from the Maddalena Lake, at nearly 2000 m altitude, runs between the Olla Gorges and divides the Maritime Alps from the Cottian Alps.

The valley, which is about 60 km long, is very wide and has gentle slopes at the beginning, narrowing at Vinadio and Gola delle Barricate and widening out again towards Bersezio with conifer woods and green fields. There are numerous lateral gorges and peaks that almost reach three thousand metres altitude. Only two of these are higher: the Tenibres (3031 m) and the Corborant (3010 m).

The fascination of the valley is in its intact nature, its complex network of pathways, mule tracks and army roads and in its stone houses built to last through time: the roofs in the lower valley are made from *lose* (slate), whereas higher up, they were made from thatch or shingles of wood. Typical examples are in the villages called San Bernolfo, Ferriere and Neraissa.

Other peculiarities to take note of, are the sulphurous Spa in the Bagni di Vinadio gorge, the imposing nineteenth-century Forte Albertino "fort" of Vinadio, one of the most significant examples of military architecture, the Santuario di Sant'Anna (at 2010 m, the highest in Europe) situated at the top of the valley of the same name that leads to Colle della Lombarda (2351 m), and the Ecomuseo della Pastorizia "Sheep-Farming Museum" (in Pontebernardo, hamlet of Pietraporzio) that celebrates the sheep of the Sambuco breed, which is a symbol of the valley, named for its tasty meat.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

Comunità Montana Valle Stura

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Cappella dell'Assunta di Moiola

Departure point: Moiola

Arrival point:

Cappella dell'Assunta di Moiola

Gradient: about 300 m

Time required: uphill only 1h

Degree of difficulty:

typical hiking route

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and on the SR 20 road towards Cuneo. From Cuneo follow directions to Borgo San Dalmazzo and from here take the SR 21 road of the Colle della Maddalena as far as Moiola.
- from Cuneo: SR 20 road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.

Description:

The Assunta Chapel is situated on a panoramic knoll and dominates a good part of the Stura valley. The trip leading there is simple and a good part is along an asphalt road. The route is also practicable in winter, but it would nearly always be in the shade so it is advisable to do it in autumn or spring.

From Moiola (685 m) walk along the road that flanks the left side of the brook Rio dei Colli. The road is asphalted as far as Tetto Spada (912 m). From here you go right on another asphalt road that ends in Tetto Veglia. The path goes to a watershed and then turns left to the church (1017 m).

Cappella dell'Assunta di Moiola



Ascending Monte Tenibres (P48 e P49)

Departure point:

Pian della Regina, Pietraporzio

Arrival point: Monte Tenibres

Gradient: about 1600 m

Time required: uphill 5 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty: for expert hikers, advised from end of July to the middle of October.

Links to other routes: P27 road from the Canotti refuge (2144 m) to the Migliorero refuge (2094 m) and to the Lago inf. dell'Ischiator (Lower Lake); P30 road from the Zanotti refuge (2144 m) downhill towards the Talarico refuge (1720 m).

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and on the SR 20 road towards Cuneo. From Cuneo follow directions to Borgo San Dalmazzo and from here take the SR 21 Colle della Maddalena road as far as Pietraporzio.
- from Cuneo: SR 20 road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.



Zanotti Refuge

Description:

Monte Tenibres is the highest peak in the Stura valley: the itinerary that reaches the top does not present any particular degree of difficulty. The main problem is the length of the route that can be divided over two days by stopping off in the Zanotti refuge. The view from the peak is vast and fulfilling.

Main route: Pian della Regina (1468 m), dirt road P48 of the Piz Gorge, Lausarel (1920 m), Gias del Piz (2042 m), crossroads (on the left Zanotti refuge, 2144 m; 3 h from the start). From the crossroads carry on down path P29 towards south-west, basin of the Mongioie Lake (2472 m), Tenibres pass (2940 m), Monte Tenibres (3031 m).



Around the Sant'Anna Lakes (P18)

Departure point/arrival:

Sant'Anna di Vinadio

Gradient: about 600 m

Time required:

2 h 30 min in total

Degree of difficulty: hike, advised from July to October.

Links to other routes: P17 from Sant'Anna to the Bravaria pass (2311 m); P19 from Sant'Anna downhill towards the Callieri village (1455 m); P57 from the Colle di Sant'Anna Lake (2156 m) to Colle della Lombarda (2351 m).

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and on the SR 20 road towards Cuneo. From Cuneo follow directions to Borgo San Dalmazzo and from here take the SR 21 road of the Colle della Maddalena as far as Vinadio. Turning left not far after the village, you'll see the Sant'Anna Valley leading to the Sanctuary.
- from Cuneo: SR 20 road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.

Description:

A hike for the family, with limited gradients and nice views. The ring comes across numerous little lakes, some in Italy and some on the other side of the border. The route is mainly along dirt roads that go back to World War times: barracks in ruins and parts with barbed wire are the witnesses of that era.

Main route: Sant'Anna di Vinadio Sanctuary (2010 m), uphill to the lake "Lago Grande di Sant'Anna" (2184 m), then to the Tesina pass (2400 m).

Route in altitude to Colle Saboulé (2460 m), then left towards the Lausfer lakes, in French territory. Go up to Colle Lausfer (2378 m) then go along a good panoramic dirt road to Colle di Sant'Anna (2308 m) from here you go back to the Sanctuary.



Colle della Maddalena

Lago Superiore di Roburent

Departure point: Colle della Maddalena, Rifugio della Pace

Arrival point: Lago Superiore di Roburent

Gradient: about 500 m

Time required: uphill only 2 h

Degree of difficulty: hiking, advisable from May to October; in winter with snow shoes.

Links to other routes:

P41 road descending towards Argentera passing by the lakes "Lago Mediano e Inferiore di Roburent".

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and along the SR 20 towards Cuneo. From Cuneo follow directions to Borgo San Dalmazzo and from here take the SR 21 road of the Colle della Maddalena as far as the pass.
- from Cuneo: take the SR 20 road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.



Description:

This tour is also suitable for anyone who isn't used to steep gradients. The gentle gorges where the route spreads out are closed laterally by bold mountains with sheer calcareous walls. The view is particularly splendid on Monte Oronaye, a peak of 3100 m with a definitely "dolomitic" look. The great quantity of lakes makes the trip suitable for all the family.

Main route: from the Colle della Maddalena (1996 m) go down for a few metres along the French side of the Oronaye Gorge, the Oronaye Lake (2411 m), the Colle di Roburent (2496 m) finally go down towards the Lago Superiore di Roburent (2426 m).





PARCO NATURALE ALPI MARITTIME

(The Maritime Alps Natural Park)

The Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime, situated in the Gesso, Stura and Vermenagna valleys, is the largest protected area in Piedmont (27,945 hectares). In 1857 all of the area was declared a Royal Hunting Reserve and a network of paths and mule tracks were made over the next years in order to make hunting easier for the Kings of Savoy. The path network, object of permanent maintenance, and a good number of guarded alpine refuges (normally open from 15/6 to 15/9) have contributed the continuous development of hiking excursions.

In a few kilometres you can start from 800 m on the valley floor and reach the Argentera peak that stands at 3297 m. The core of the park is formed from crystalline rocks, surrounded in lower altitudes by a sedimentary covering of sandstone and limestone. On the Argentera and Gelàs massifs, there are traces of ancient glaciers that form the southernmost parts of the alpine glaciers. The park offers about 80 lakes (nearly all of glacial origin) and precious hot springs that gush at the foot of Monte Matto, in Terme di Valdieri, at about 70° C.

All local animals belong to the typical alpine fauna (chamois, ibex, roe deer, marmots, eagles, caws...). The wolf has reappeared again while the lammergeyer has been re-introduced. Do not miss a visit to the Giardino Botanico Valderia "Botanic garden" at Terme di Valdieri (open 15/6 -15/9) that gathers numerous plants. In the adjacent Grande valley (ramification of Vermenagna valley) secular beeches form the Palanfrè wood.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

Direzione Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime

Piazza Regina Elena, 30

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www.parcocalpimarittime.it - e-mail: parcalma@tin.it



The Pathway of the Rye Ecomuseum

Departure point / arrival:

Sant'Anna di Valdieri

Gradient: 200 m

Time required: uphill 1h 50 min; downhill 45 min

Degree of difficulty: hike

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and then the SR 20 road to Cuneo. From Cuneo follow directions to Borgo San Dalmazzo and from here take the SP 22 road of the Gesso valley as far as Valdieri and (after about 8,5 km) to the Sant'Anna hamlet.
- from Cuneo: the SR 20 road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.

Description:

A ring shaped walk along the "Ecomuseo della Segale" pathway that reaches the old Tetti Bertola and Bariau villages, where the Park has recently reconstructed the typical rye thatched coverings of some of the habitations. From the Ecomuseum Shop "I Bateur", in the centre of the village (1011 m), go down the main road for about one hundred metres and then take the road on the left that goes to the cemetery. A signpost indicates the start of the path that crosses the wood and leads to Tetti Bartola (1054 m). The route proceeds half way up the hill and crosses a brook. Straight after there is a steep climb that ends at some rocks that offer an excellent sight. Following the path you reach Tetti Bariau (1190 m) from where you go down to the mule track of the Meris Gorge. Along this, go back downhill reaching the starting point again.



Through History and Nature

Description:

Hike to the Soria-Ellena refuge that is situated at the foot of the Monte Gelàs glacier and on the tracks of the old Via del Sale ("Salt Road") that joined Provence to Piedmont. It is easy to come across marmots, roe deer and ibex along the route, and with a bit of luck the lammergeyer, a bird of prey recently re-introduced.

From the car park (1215 m) you go up to the little group of buildings where the Park Lodge, a useful information point, is open in the summer. Follow the dirt road that goes across the beech wood and reaches Gias Isterpis (1381 m). Keep on the main path that goes round a hairpin bend after the crossroads for Gias della Siula.

Walking half way uphill and after a couple of bends you go over the Peirastretta Pass (1630 m). After crossing a modest plain go up to Piano del Praiet, from where you can catch sight of the refuge (1840 m) that by now is near. It can be reached easily in 10 minutes, keeping to the path.

Departure point:

San Giacomo di Entracque

Arrival point:

Soria Ellena refuge (1840 m)

Gradient: 650 m

Time required: uphill 2 h 30 min; downhill 1h 45 min

Degree of difficulty: hike

Links to other routes: M10 path from the Soria Ellena refuge (1840 m) to the Genova Fogari refuge (2010 m) and to the Brocan Lake; M11 path from the Soria Ellena refuge (1840 m) to Colle di Finestra (2471 m).

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and proceed to Cuneo on the SR 20 road. From Cuneo follow directions to Borgo San Dalmazzo and then take the SP 22 road to the Gesso valley and enter in the Entracque valley. From here follow directions to San Giacomo hamlet.
- from Cuneo: take the SR 20 road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.





Departure point / arrival: Terme di Valdieri

Gradient: about 1100 m

Time required: uphill 3 h 30 min / 4h; downhill 2 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty: hike

Links to other routes: N23 path from the Lake Inferiore di Valscura (2274 m) to the Colletto di Valscura (2520 m) to the Malinvern-Città di Ceva refuge (1839 m) in the Stura valley; N24 path from the Lake Inferiore di Valscura to the Bassa del Druos (2628 m) and (on French territory) as far as Isola 2000; N27 path from the Lake Inferiore di Valscura to the Costa Miana pass (2620 m) as far as the N17 path that going left leads to Lake Soprano della Sella (2329 m) and going right goes back to Piano del Valasco.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 to Savigliano and proceed towards Cuneo on the SR 20 road. From Cuneo follow directions to Borgo San Dalmazzo and from here take the SP 22 road of the Gesso valley to Terme di Valdieri.
- from Cuneo: take the SR 20 road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.



Through Lakes and Waterfalls (N21-N22-N23)



Description:

The route follows the thick network of army roadways of the Valasco Gorge. It's a ring through lakes and waterfalls along which it is possible to come across marmots and roe deer.

From Terme (1368 m) follow the road that rises on the orographic left of the Valasco Gorge reaching Piano del Valasco (1763 m). Cross over the plain, passing the hunting houses built for King Vittorio Emanuele II and then up to Piano Superiore del Valasco (1814 m) where you cross the stream. The mule track follows the stream and then climbs up to the crossroads leading to the Valscura Lakes and the Questa refuge.

Proceeding right towards the lakes the path passes the foot of a water-

fall and through a tunnel in the rock that comes out in Valscura. From there, go up around a couple of bends as far as the lower Valscura Lake (2274 m).

From the lake turn left and walk along a beautiful paved road offering a wonderful sight of Argentera and Monte Matto. Reaching the Claus Lake proceed downhill as far as the crossroads from which, going right the path climbs up to the Questa refuge (2388 m) and to the Portette Lake. From the refuge go back on your tracks to the last crossroads and going right, you reach Val Morta ("dead valley") along a panoramic road. Going down you reach Piano Superiore del Valasco and from where you can go back to the starting point.





Comunità Montana VALLI GESSO E VERMENAGNA

All these valleys, which are close to Cuneo, are similar from a naturalistic point of view: huge spaces with urban and industrial settlements in the lower valley, basins and extensive woodlands in the higher part.

The Gesso Valley starts in Borgo S. Dalmazzo - Pedo the old Roman village – and it proceeds towards Valdieri where it bifurcates into the Entracque and Terme di Valdieri gorges. Here you enter the natural park called Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime (see the previous chapter) that has its heart in the Argentera group (3297 m).

The Vermenagna Valley, a conventional dividing point between the Maritime and Ligurian Alps, goes up towards Limone Piemonte – an international ski resort – and the Colle di Tenda. It presents one single, relevant ramification consisting of Val Grande di Vernante, of which the higher part – called Riserva Naturale del Bosco e dei Laghi di Palanfré – belongs to the Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime area. The highest peak in the valley is Rocca dell'Abisso (2755 m). In the mountain area of Limone Piemonte there is a thick network of mule tracks and army roads which were built starting from the second half of the nineteenth century connecting the chain of forts built with a defensive aim. There are thousands of ways to have an active holiday, starting from the splendid nature trails, maybe along the salt road already crossed by the Romans, or amongst the age-old Palanfré beechwoods. Vernante, Pinocchio's village, invites you to admire over one hundred murals on the drawings of Mussino, the first illustrator of Collodi's book.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

Comunità Montana Valli Gesso e Vermenagna

Piazza Regina Margherita, 27 - 12017 Robilante (CN)

tel. +39.0171.78240 / 78457 - fax +39.0171.78604

www.cmgvp.org - e-mail: cmgvp@reteunitaria.piemonte.it

Limone Piemonte Tourist Board

Via Roma, 30 - 12015 Limone Piemonte (CN)

tel. +39.0171.925280 - fax +39.0171.925289

www.limonepiemonte.it - e-mail iat@limonepiemonte.it

Vernante Tourist Board

Via Umberto I, 19-12019 Vernante (CN) - tel. / fax +39.0171.920550

e-mail: pro.vernante@tiscalinet.it

Entracque Tourist Board

Piazza Giustizia e Libertà, 3 - 12010 Entracque (CN)

tel. +39.0171.978616 - fax +39.0171.978637

e-mail: gesam-srl@tiscalinet.it



Via dei Teit (The Roofs Road)

Departure point:

Vernante - Bec Moler picnic area

Arrival point: Palanfrè hamlet

Gradient: 800 m

Time required: round trip from 4h 30 min to 5 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes: with Monte Sape, La Maddalena and Bussaia

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and then on the road SR 20 towards Cuneo. From Cuneo follow the road SR 20 of the Colle di Tenda to Borgo San Dalmazzo and Vernante. At the traffic-light, turn right and follow the Valle Grande road as far as an picnic area (park signpost).
- from Cuneo: SR 20 Colle di Tenda road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.

Description:

The route covers numerous villages (téit =tetto=roof), once permanently inhabited and now reduced in ruins.

Going along the "Via di Téit" the hiker really goes back in time.

After 200 m from the Bec Moler picnic area leave the road and turn right onto a dirt track. After a deviation to the right follow to the end of the track and then follow a pathway reaching Tetti Colletta (1226 m – from here an indicated path goes down to the provincial road, where you can go back to the starting point). The route goes beyond the Bercia (1231 m) and reaches Tetti David and then Tetti Bertaina.

Cross over the Cornàle Gorge and after the watershed enter in the Pioccia Gorge, where you find Tetti Doni (1482 m). At a crossroads leave the right deviation and proceed as far as the Saut Fountain (1410 m). Just after it, you find the second variant which interrupts the route. Instead, carrying on, you go past the Franco Gorge and the Gialina Fountain. When you come to Tetti Cucet (1505 m), descend on the provincial road that you can reach in the Ruina locality and then follow as far as the Palanfrè houses.



Via Romana (The Roman Road) (L14)

Departure point: Limonetto

Arrival point: Colle di Tenda

Gradient: 590 m

Time required: 2 h

Degree of difficulty: hiking route

Links to other routes:

Via Alpina, G.T.A., Fort tour

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and then on the SR 20 towards Cuneo. From Cuneo follow the SR 20 Colle di Tenda road to Borgo San Dalmazzo, Limone Piemonte and Limonetto.
- from Cuneo: SR 20 Colle di Tenda road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.

Description:

At the beginning of the Limonetto built-up area (1280 m), leave the provincial road and proceed on the left on the wide mule track called "Via Romana" that passes behind some apartment blocks and then onto the western woody side of Serra Conche. Further on the mule track bifurcates leaving a path on the left that leads to the gorge where there are the Quota 1400 skillifts and then bends towards the south in the Prati di San Lorenzo basin where you will find the Limonetto skillifts. The hike carries on south-east with a series of hairpin bends, on the orographic right of the San Lorenzo Gorge: it leaves a deviation to the left and passes, towards the right, a final steep slope reaching Colle di Tenda (1871 m) which marks the watershed between the Vermenagna and Roya valleys, and also the border of France between the peaks of Salaute (2176 m) and Becco Rosso (2207 m).

S. Pietro in Vincoli - Limone Piemonte



Tour of the Nineteenth Century Forts

Departure point/arrival:

Colle di Tenda

Degree of difficulty:

Hiking route

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Marene; follow along the SP 662 road to Savigliano and then on the SR 20 road towards Cuneo. From Cuneo follow the SR 20 road to Borgo San Dalmazzo, Limone Piemonte and Colle di Tenda.
- from Cuneo: SR 20 Colle di Tenda road to Borgo San Dalmazzo. Follow like above.

Description:

Between 1880 and 1890 there was a lot of work done to fortify Colle di Tenda. Today all of the forts are on French territory after the border changed position.

1. Forte Alto (Fort Central)

Time required: a few minutes.

Leaving Colle di Tenda (1871 m) follow the road ramification that from the pillar goes east and in a few minutes rises to the big barracks which is partially in ruin at the foot of Forte Alto. From the main portal of the barracks a small road breaks away and rises rapidly to the solid building of Forte Alto (1908 m) ending in the ample clearing north of the building. The deep moat is very notable. Under the fort, nearly perpendicular, there are two (road and railway) tunnels of Colle di Tenda.

2. Forte Taburda (Fort Tabourde)

Time required: 1 h

From Colle di Tenda follow the cart track that runs inside the barracks at the foot of Forte Alto and then descends to join the roadway coming from Quota 1400 leading to Colletto Campanin.

Going round the Limone mountain-side you reach a crossroads.



Leaving the main road go over a second pass and then on to French territory along a cart track that goes south cutting through the western slopes of Cima Becco Rosso. Passing the small Begin and Fripon valleys, the roadway reaches the Forte Taburda clearing (1982 m) protected by a wide and deep moat.

On the return journey you can follow a longer route that offers a beautiful sight on the Alps from Monte Bego to Rocca dell'Abisso.

3. Forte Pepino (Fort de Pépin)

Time required: 2 h

The previous route is used to get to this fort, but on reaching the second pass, leave the ramification towards Forte Taburda and proceed left, cutting through the steep northern slopes of Cima Becco Rosso. After walking for about forty five minutes cross over Rio Cabanaira over a small bridge reaching the "Cabanaira" chair lift station (1978 m). Proceed right above the skillifts reaching Colletto Campanin (2142 m). Once on the path, leave

the roadway to go up, on the right along a mule track. Reaching a col after a few minutes, turn left cutting through stony ground at the head of the Cabanaira gorge up to a second grassy col (2189 m), where you'll find the boundary stone n. 205.

Here you enter the road that connects Forte Taburda with Forte Pepino and follow it towards the left. At an altitude of 2240 m it bifurcates and you proceed right up a light slope. After a rocky ridge the roadway reaches Forte Pepino (2263 m). This fort is also surrounded by a deep moat and is camouflaged by grass and soil.

4. Forte Margheria (Fort de la Marguerie)

Time required: 30 min

From Colle di Tenda follow the road that goes west and slopes up with some bends along the ridge towards Rocca dell'Abisso. At the first crossroads (la Colletta – 1907 m) follow the roadway that towards left leads to Bassa di Peirafica. Rounding a small valley where the Irene Fountain gushes (1882 m) the road goes down to the nearby Forte Margheria (1842 m), situated on a cape which dominates the whole Caramagna gorge. The fort is surrounded by a moat. Crossing over some gravel paths you can enter in the fort. There are still some traces of an aqueduct visible on the outside. A ruined path rises along this ridge and reaches the above Forte Pernante.



5. Forte Pernante (Fort Pernante)

Time required: 40 min

The previous route is used to get to this fort and at the first crossroads (la Colletta - 1907 m) follow the path that branches off to the right and goes up on the northern side of the ridge. This part of the road consists of borderlines between Italy and France. Towards an altitude of 2070 m a ramification leaves the road and reaches a rounded peak, where – well camouflaged – the pentagonally planned Forte Pernante (2117 m) is positioned. An exceptional view can be enjoyed from this dominant point.

The waterworks for this fort were assured by an aqueduct which was a few kilometres long and of which remain some traces today along the path that cuts through the southern slopes of Cima Salaute (2176 m - west of the fort) and at the side of the road that reaches the Abisso valley, at the shoulders of Forte Giaura.

6. Forte Giaura (Fort de Giaure) **Time required:** 1 h 40

The previous route is used to get to this fort and without going up to Forte Pernante, follow the roadway that goes round from the north the Cima Salaute and then bends south-west to the Abisso valley.

This long route can be shortened by climbing over the first col after Forte Giaura rises on the summit. The road bends west and after only one hairpin bend reaches Forte Giaura (2253 m). The pentagonally planned fort is surrounded by a deep moat. A long slope (Pra' Giordano) begins on its western side and after crossing it you gently rise towards the peak of Rocca dell'Abisso where you can find the remains of an aqueduct.

Forte Giaura



Forte Alto





Comunità Montana BISALTA

Cuneo is surrounded by a series of rocky spurs, the most imposing of which is that of the Bisalta, a splendid irregular trapezoid shaped mountain outline that forms the backdrop to the town and features two nearby peaks of 2018 and 2231 m respectively. Legend has it that the origin of this double summit is attributable to the devil himself, as on the request of a drunk local farmer, who was unable to find his way home, he cut away the portion of rock from the mountain that obscured the moon, in exchange for the poor man's soul. However the farmer succeeded in saving himself by signing the contract with a cross which caused the devil to flee in terror.

The area that forms the Comunità Montana Bisalta is in fact situated at the foot of this mountain, and on one side extends to the fertile Cuneo plain, and towards the Colla and Pesio valleys on the other. The area includes the local Beinette, Boves, Chiusa di Pesio, Peveragno and Pianfei villages and a part of the area also forms part of the Parco Naturale Alta Valle Pesio e Tanaro (see the following chapter).

The area boasts a host of interesting aspects such as its strawberry and berry cultivations in Peveragno and the chestnut forests which yield the delicious and highly prized chestnuts that are celebrated in numerous Autumn festivals. The chestnut which has been a staple food for centuries in the local Cuneo valleys also has a special Chestnut Museum dedicated to it in Boves at the Marquet farmhouse.

Nature-lovers will appreciate the wonderfully relaxing walks, while there is no lack of interesting features for the art-lover: some examples are the Carthusian Monastery of Pesio (see next chapter), the Madonna della Pieve Sanctuary in Beinette and the ancient ecclesiastical complex of Madonna dei Boschi in Boves, of particular note due to its primitive Romanesque architecture. Another outstanding feature is the fresco of the Universal Judgement dating back to the mid 16th century and showing a host of elements reminiscent of the Sistine Chapel in Rome.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

Comunità Montana Bisalta

Località Madonna dei Boschi, 76 - 12016 Peveragno (CN)
tel. +39.0171.339957 - fax +39.0171.338229
e-mail: cmbisalta@ruparpiemonte.it

Chiusa Pesio Tourist Board

Piazza Cavour, 15 - 12013 Chiusa Pesio (CN)
tel. +39.0171.734990 - fax +39.0171.735339
e-mail: info@vallepesio.it

Peveragno Tourist Board

Via Ambrosino, 13 - 12016 Peveragno (CN)
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e-mail: andreis.d@libero.it



Starting point:

Pianfei Lake - Mussi locality

Arrival point:

Pesio Carthusian monastery

Gradient: 1030 m

Time necessary to complete the route: uphill only 3 h; round trip 5 h

Degree of difficulty:

easy, although the walk is quite long (approx. 20 km).

Links to other routes: Castello Mirabello, Caporale - Villanova

Access:

- from Turin:
A6 motorway, exit Mondovi; proceed in the direction of Mondovi and on the road SP 564 as far as Pianfei.
- from Cuneo:
SP 564 del Monregalese road as far as Pianfei.



From the Pianfei lake to the Carthusian Monastery of Pesio

Description:

From the Pianfei Lake (560 m) continue, for about 2 km, along the asphalt road which takes you into the woods and leads to the Rolando hamlet located on an extensive plain. When you reach the end of the hamlet take the first dirt road.

Proceed uphill through chestnut and "pinus strobes" forests as far as Bricco Barello. From here you proceed until you come to the dirt road coming from the Garavagna hamlet and indicated with white and red signs. Following the route signs you come to Schiavaira, here the road becomes more panoramic and it reaches the Murte Pass (710 m).

Follow the signs along this fine path, which takes you to the Olocco shrine, and features a series of sometimes steep climbs. From here you will reach the village of Fuggin and you will subsequently pass through a series of other abandoned hamlets (following the route of the old villages) until you reach the knoll of Tetto Baudinet. From here you reach the Borgata Colletto village that offers a splendid view over the valley.

You then continue downhill - we recommend that you ignore the sign for the village of S. Paolo, unless you are very fit - until you reach the crossroads just above the S. Bartolomeo hamlet, that indicates a nature trail that leads to the Carthusian monastery of Pesio (859 m), with no further climbs.

Tour of Fontana Cappa

Departure point:

San Giacomo di Boves hamlet

Arrival point:

Pradeboni hamlet. You will need to leave a car there to return to San Giacomo di Boves.

Gradient: 900 m

Time required: uphill only 2 h 30 min; round trip 5 h

Degree of difficulty: challenging

Links to other routes: Truma village (in the direction of Vigna in the Pesio valley)

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Fossano; proceed along the SP 214 main road towards Trinità and Sant'Albano Stura. Take the Boves SP 3 road to Cuneo and without entering the town itself proceed on the SP 21 road to Spinetta and Boves. From Boves follow the signs to the San Giacomo hamlet.
- From Cuneo: SP 21 road for Spinetta and Boves. Follow like above.

Description:

This lengthy itinerary takes you along the slopes of the Bisalta mountain and through the Boves, Peveragno and Chiusa Pesio municipalities.

From the San Giacomo di Boves hamlet (800 m) take the dirt road in the direction of Tetto Rosso (965 m) and proceed along the dirt road which offers a wonderful view of the entire alpine chain.

You reach the Bercia pass (1403 m) followed by the Fontana Cappa village (1400 m). From here you proceed uphill until you reach a house at the foot of a conifer forest, from which a route branches out and takes you to Sella, which offers a spectacular panoramic view. From here you descend downhill to the Artoundù animal barns (1608 m), which provide a fine example of the typical mountain architecture, and then take the road that enters the forest and extends to the Pusin alpine pastures. Then you cross the Rio Grosso which brings you onto the road that leads to Gias Pravinè.

You will then come to Gias Morteis (1482 m) which affords a splendid view and continue down the path until you reach the Meschie hamlet (1123 m). When you get here cross the bridge on the right which takes you to Truna village (1018 m) and continuing on the path you reach the Pradeboni hamlet (868 m).



Via dei Morti (The Dead Road)

Departure/arrival point:

Montefallonio

Gradient: 525 m

Time required: 2 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes: from Borgata Truma to Gias Morteis

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Mondovi; proceed in the direction of Mondovi and on the SP 564 del Monregalese road to Beinette. Take the SP 42 road in the direction of Chiusa Pesio and follow the signs for Montefallonio.
- from Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road to Beinette. Follow like above.

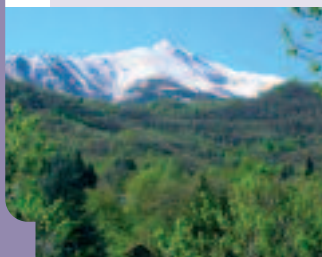
Description:

This itinerary (also recommended for mountain-bike enthusiasts), takes its name from the road used for funeral processions transporting the inhabitants of Pradeboni to the cemetery in Peveragno.

The starting point is Montefallonio (570 m) from where you take the asphalt road to Regione Ciarma. After a few hundred metres you turn left into a dirt road that climbs through the woodland. Following the main road and the white and red signs, continue until you reach a crossroads, near an old house. From here turn right and then left until you reach the "Crocetta" road on the pass between Pradeboni and Peveragno.

Follow the road as far as Tetto Gallina and continue to Località Meschie (1123 m). Here, cross the bridge and you come to the Truna village (1018 m) and always on the path you will reach the Pradeboni hamlet (868 m).

Here take the road at the top of the cemetery which leads to Tetti Tancia. In Borgata Sottana turn left onto an asphalt road and at the subsequent crossroads take a right turn and carry on down to Regione Valcuca. Following the asphalt road you return to the point of departure.





PARCO NATURALE ALTA VALLE PESIO E TANARO

THE UPPER PESIO AND TANARO VALLEYS
NATURAL PARK

This is the most southern protected area of Piedmont: it was set up in 1978 and extends for 6770 hectares. It is located around the Marguareis Massif, which is the highest peak of the Ligurian Alps (2651 m). The presence of calcareous rock hides the presence of a whole network of karst caves. These hydrogeological features are present almost throughout the entire protected area. There are no less than 700 caves over a total area of over 150 km extending from Mirauda to Fascia, from Carsene to Marguareis, from Piaggia Bella to Fascette.

The area is characterised by a variety of Alpine and Mediterranean flora species making it unique in the world as it boasts no less than 1492 different species, some of which are very rare, as well as 8 endemic species. The damp and cool climate has favoured the development of magnificent woodland, and the Carthusian friars were in fact amongst the first to make rational use of the precious wood resources that it offers. Of particular note being the silver fir forest in the Pesio valley, while the Larzelle "pinus uncinata" forest is on the Tanaro river side as well as the splendid Navette forest (with its Larch and Silver pine trees).

The area is also the ideal habitat for all the typical mountain wildlife species, which the Park has helped to re-populate with the integration of new species (deer and roe) or by monitoring species, which are naturally multiplying in numbers (wolf, black woodpecker).

In terms of architectural attraction, the imposing and somewhat austere Carthusian monastery, founded by St. Brunone in 1173, is of particular note; while in the Tanaro valley the traditional hamlets of Carnino are of particular interest with their characteristic "tetti racchiusi" local architectural roofing features.

There is a whole network of paths and equipped routes and high-altitude refuges, to enable the visitor to tour both sides of the massif, with a variety of excursions either in one or more days. The "Centro Aldo Viglione", which hosts a Photography Museum and a meeting room for conventions and exhibitions, has been set up at the Park headquarters in Chiusa di Pesio.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

Parco Naturale Alta Valle Pesio e Tanaro

Via Sant'Anna, 34 - 12013 Chiusa di Pesio (CN)

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www.parks.it/parchi.cuneesi - e-mail: p.valpesio@mtrade.com



In the Lower Valley Woodland

Departure point: Pian delle Gorre

Arrival point:

Gias Sottano di Sestrera

Gradient: 300 m

Time required: 2 h

Degree of difficulty:

short and easy hike

Links to other routes: proceeding further it is possible to reach Cima Cars or the Garelli mountain refuge.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Mondovi; proceed in the direction of Mondovi and on the SP 564 del Monregalese road as far as Beinette. Take the SP 42 towards Chiusa Pesio, and climb the valley up to the Carthusian monastery, from which you reach Pian delle Gorre by car on an asphalt road (3 km).
- from Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road as far as Beinette. Then follow like above.

Description:

A short and easy circuit in the vicinity of Pian delle Gorre. The refuge was used during the winter of 1943/44 to house a group of Partisans, and there is a cemetery in the Carthusian monastery that commemorates the war heroes.

From Pian delle Gorre (1032 m) follow the dirt road and in a few minutes you will reach the bridge over Rio Serpentera with its characteristic waterfall. Immediately after this you take a mule track on the left that leads into a beech and fir tree forest. The visitor will immediately be struck by the pungent smell of garlic. After negotiating a few bends you will be afforded a magnificent view of the grassy plain of Pian del Creus, with the Villa Soche refuge on the right (1293 m, 45 min), a privately owned hostel also known as Rifugio Cacciatori "hunting refuge". The route continues and in about 3 hours you will reach Cima del Cars (2204 m).

From the Villa Soche refuge, take a right turn along an easy route that takes you to Gias Sottano di Sestrera (1331 m, 30 min). From here you can return to Pian delle Gorre in about 30 minutes. In this part of the route it is also possible to admire the two Saut waterfalls.



The Marguareis Gorge

Descrizione:

From Pian delle Gorre you take the dirt road for about 2.5 km until you reach a clearing, where you take a mule track on the left as far as Gias Sottano di Sestrera (1331 m, 1 h). From here take the path on the right which takes you into the deep Marguareis gorge; cross a small bridge and continue through woodland and pastures as far as Gias Sottano del Marguareis (1519 m). You will come to the detour for Passo del Duca and then proceed through the principal gorge beneath the imposing north-east slope of Scarason. You reach Gias Soprano del Marguareis (1721 m, 2 h) and the delightful small Marguareis Lake (1923 m) near the "Danilo Re" Alpine Botanical centre, at the foot of the Genovesi gully. The path continues to the left and takes you to the Garelli refuge in Pian del Lupo (1965 m, 2 h 45 min).

To complete the round trip, on return it is possible to descend directly along the sign posted route that goes through Gias Soprano and Gias Sottano di Sestrera right up to Pian delle Gorre.

Departure point: Pian delle Gorre

Arrival point: Garelli refuge in Pian del Lupo

Gradient: 1000 m

Time required: uphill only 2 h 45 min; round trip 5 h

Degree of difficulty:

the itinerary is of medium length and is fairly easy

Links to other routes: detour for Passo del Duca

Access:

- from Turin: see previous route
- from Cuneo: see previous route



Cima Marguareis (2651 m) The Ligurian Alps Peak



Departure point: Carnino Superiore

Arrival point: Marguareis peak

Gradient: 1254 m

Time required: only uphill:

4 h; round trip 7 h

Degree of difficulty:

the route covers a long distance and is of medium difficulty

Links to other routes: detour for Passo delle Mastrelle, Piaggia Bella, Colle del Pas

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway exit Ceva; proceed along the main road 28 in the direction of Garessio, Ormea as far as the Ponte di Nava village. From here proceed along the SP 154 to Viozene-Upega until you reach the detour for Carnino.
- from Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road and then take the A6 motorway in Mondovi. Exit at Ceva and follow like above.

Descrizione:

It is an easy, yet memorable itinerary. Cross the village of Carnino (1397 m) and then after the bridge, continue through the terraced fields, climbing uphill until you reach a fountain. From here in a leftward direction the mule track enters the Gola delle Chiusette (1815 m). Proceeding past the ravine you reach Gias delle Selle di Carnino (1913 m) and the St. Domenico Chapel.

Proceeding through fields and pasturelands you will reach the renovated Don Barbera refuge (2079 m) in the vicinity of the Signori Pass on the Italian-French border. The former Limone-Monesi military road crosses the pass (known as Via Marenga). A sign posted path leads from the pass, and takes you through a typical Karst environment up to the Col de la Galine (2358 m). From here follow the sign posted path on the right until you come to the cross on the peak (2651 m). Follow the same path for the descent.





Comunità Montana
VALLI MONREGALESI

The Comunità Montana Valli Monregalesi consists of 5 valleys originated by the respective streams of the same name: Casotto, Roburentello, Corsaglia, Maudagna and Ellero. The area features a host of karstic landforms and there are currently three caves open to the public: those of Bossea, Caudano and Dossi.

Other than typical mountain vegetative species, the area is distinguished by the chestnut tree which has played an important role in the local economy since old times, and in fact is known locally as the "bread tree". At higher altitudes it is possible to see birds such as the harrier eagle, buzzard, sparrow hawk, kestrel and golden eagle.

Various hikes are possible at both medium and high altitude, and there are also a host of sporting opportunities, including winter sports, as these valleys boast a variety of modern facilities for Alpine and Nordic skiing and ice-skating (Mondolé Ski and Frabosa Ski).

The area also bears testimony to its prehistoric roots, and there are sites in both Montaldo and Villanova Mondovi, where a burial ground probably existed in the vicinity of the present day Santa Lucia Sanctuary. The art lover is spoilt for choice thanks to a host of different historic churches (The Sanctuary - Basilica Regina Montis Regalis in Vicoforte being particularly worthy of a visit), as well as quaint hamlets and ethnographic museums.

The area also offers a rich programme of local festivals and events, whose themes are often based on the local history, culture, gastronomy and craftsmanship. Not to mention the mineral water springs, such as the Liset source in San Giacomo di Roburent, the "Waters" of Vicoforte and the Lursia springs in Roccaforte Mondovi.

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At the Sources of the Ellero Stream

Departure point: Roccaforte Mondovi - Ponte Murato

Arrival point: Mondovi refuge - Havis de Giorgio

Gradient: 540 m

Time required: 2 h

Degree of difficulty: easy

Links to other routes:

G.T.A route (Porta Sestrera and Garelli and Mongioie refuges)

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Mondovi. From Mondovi proceed in the direction of Villanova Mondovi until you reach Roccaforte Mondovi. Proceed uphill as far as Borgata Rastello and then crossing the bridge over the Ellero stream, proceed along the asphalt road for a few kilometres. You will firstly come to the Casa del Sale hamlet, and proceeding along the winding road you come to Ponte Murato (1242 m), where you can park your car in the clearing on the left before the bridge.
- from Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road as far as Pianfei and SP 37 road to Villanova and Roccaforte Mondovi. Follow like above.

Description:

The route from Ponte Murato (1242 m) proceeds along the asphalt road, an hour's walk approximately, followed by a part on a dirt road. Skirting the Ellero stream, you come to Ponte Ciappa (1624 m) and the extensive Piano della Marchisa (1631 m) which is crossed, always keeping to the main road. The road is carriageable up to this point, but after this it is sometimes rough and therefore not suitable for normal cars. This extensive plain provides a view of the Mondovi refuge (1761 m), at the source of the Ellero stream, against the imposing backdrop of the rocky slopes of Cima delle Saline and Cima Pian Ballaur.

The refuge acts as a starting point for a host of different hikes and climbs (Cima delle Saline, Mongioie, Havis De Giorgio, Pian Ballaur, Mongioie). This route takes you along the old "Via del Sale", which was in past times used as a trading link between the Piedmont mountain zones and the Ligurian coast. The Romans already built this road known as Via Pompea, in the 1st century B.C.

The Brignola and Raschera Lakes

Description:

Starting from the Balma plateau (1883 m) take the mule track that winds through fields and bushes, until you reach the base of the calcareous rock known as "Dente del Seirasso". Following the route alongside the Brignola stream, you come to the homonymous Sella (1930 m). After two hairpin bends the track becomes a path and crosses the basin of the Brignola Lakes. The main lake (2131 m) is partially covered by lake vegetation and surrounded by fields and rhododendron bushes.

Continue along the path that climbs in a south-easterly direction and arrive at Bocchino della Brignola (2256 m) from where it is possible to see "Punta dello Zucco" and Monte Antoroto looking eastwards. From here you then descend towards a green basin, down gentle hairpin bends. After negotiating a ridge, you can see the northern slope of Monte Mongioie and, by continuing the descent by means of the sign posted track, you will reach the Raschera Lake (2108 m), from which the delicious locally produced P.D.O. cheese takes its name.

Departure point: Frabosa Sottana - Prato Nevoso - La Balma refuge

Arrival point: Raschera Lake

Gradient: see "description"

Time required: uphill only 3 h, round trip 5 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes: climb to Bocchino dell'Aseo, to Monte Mongioie, link with Val Corsaglia

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Mondovi. From Mondovi proceed in the direction of Villanova Mondovi until you reach Frabosa Sottana. Proceed uphill towards Prato Nevoso and then continue by car to the La Balma refuge (1883 m). It is possible to park your car on the clearing surrounding the refuge and the chapel.
- from Cuneo: take the SP 564 del Monregalese road as far as Pianfei and then SP 37 road to Frabosa Sottana. Then follow like above.



Tour of the Community Ovens

Departure / arrival point:

Pra di Roburent

Gradient: +/- 450 m

Time required: 3 h 45 min

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes:

it is possible to climb to Monte Alpet from Prà di Roburent.

Access:

- From Turin: A6 motorway, exit Niella Tanaro. Proceed in the direction of San Michele Mondovì on the SP 60 road and then take the crossroads to Corsaglia valley. 3 km after Corsaglia turn left and you reach Prà di Roburent, leaving your car in the local parish church square.
- From Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road as far as Mondovì and then the SS 28 road to San Michele Mondovì. Follow like above.

Description:

This route combines both features of scenic interest and those of historic-architectural importance. The ovens were in fact owned by the entire community and used for baking bread, and are distinguished by the local architectural roofing feature called "a tetto racchiuso".

From the square of the Pra parish church (1014 m) take the asphalt road in an easterly direction, and when you reach a crossroads, turn left onto a dirt track and proceed on until you reach the next crossroads. Take the road on the right, and going round some hairpin bends go up to Case Barberis (1st oven - 1300 m). Proceed midway up the slope as far as Case Ferrere (2nd oven - 1261 m) and then on to Case Gore (3rd oven - 1259 m). After a further 150 m the road slopes back across a hairpin bend in a northerly direction and descends to Case Roarin (4th oven - 1177 m). Continuing in the same direction and leaving the hairpin bend that turns to the left, you reach Case Bertolotti (5th oven - 1149 m). From here you descend to the first crossroads, and always keeping to the right, you will come to the main dirt road that leads to Prà di Roburent.

If you take a left turn at this crossroads you will reach Case Funde (6th oven - 1091 m) and proceeding on the dirt road you come to Case Potitta (7th oven - 1218 m). From here you return to Case Funde. After leaving the crossroads on the right take again the road to Pra.





Comunità Montana VALLI MONGIA, CEVETTA E LANGA CEBANA

The area of the Comunità Montana Valli Mongia, Cevetta e Langa Cebana is situated in the south-eastern part of the province. It borders with the upper Tanaro valley and Liguria to the south, while the extensive hilly tract extends in the northern area, which follows the course of the Tanaro river and reaches Alba. The area also features the presence of a further two streams that give their names to the respective valleys: Mongia and Cevetta.

Ceva, the main town of the area is situated at the valley bottom, and it is particularly famed for its local mushrooms which are celebrated each September with a greedy regional festival. The area was also mentioned way back at the time of Pliny by virtue of the delicious local cheese production. At one time Ceva boasted an imposing Savoy fortress, which was however destroyed in the era of the Napoleonic domination. The old town centre, with its quaint arcade-covered streets, is dominated by the 14th century Guelph tower of Brolio.

Other areas of particular interest include the castles of Lesegno, Mombasiglio (which houses a museum dedicated to Napoleon), Sale S. Giovanni and the Medieval tower of Priero. In the Mongia valley, the town of Viola is a summer and winter resort. While in Montezemolo - in the upper Cevetta valley, where the Regional Honey Festival is held every July – you can find the tourist centre of the Belbo Sources Natural Reserve. This splendid protected area is also a rare example of a mid-mountain altitude marsh area, and offers a host of delightful itineraries both on foot, by mountain-bike or on horseback, amongst the wood covered hillside and marshy zones. An area of special natural interest is the Prandi Arboretum, in the Schioda locality, near Sale S. Giovanni, consisting of approximately 12 hectares of land cultivated with both trees and grass varieties of particular botanical and environmental interest.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

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Prato Rotondo Pass

Departure / arrival point: Viola

Gradient: 300 m

Time required: 1 h

Degree of difficulty: challenging, both due to its length and gradient.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Niella Tanaro. Proceed along the SP 60 in the direction of Prato and take the SP 28 to Mombasiglio. Proceed along the SP 34 road that leads to Viola.
- From Cuneo: take the SP 564 del Monregalese road and enter the A6 motorway in Mondovi. Exit at Niella Tanaro and follow like above.

Description:

The starting point of this route is indicated near the chapel of St. Caterina (in via Crivella). Take the dirt track on your right and proceed into the woodland. Go past the Crivella stream and after about 1.8 km, you get onto a forest path and you continue climbing the north-eastern slope of Piano Stope (1738 m). On reaching the zone known as "Acquafredda", the route branches off to the south, it skirts the peak of Bric Muceretti and reaches the eastern ridge of the same, also providing a formidable scenic view (at a height of 1560 m, which is the maximum altitude reached in the present itinerary): you will have a magnificent view of Bric del Prato Rotondo and to the south, on the horizon you can see the Bric Mindino peak, with its characteristic cross.

Proceeding towards the valley you go past a building used by the "Margari" (local shepherds) and go past the Mongia stream. Just ahead of the bridge there is a famous spring. Following the cart road you come to the Prato Rotondo pass, which branches off into various directions: it is necessary to proceed north in the direction of the woodland. You will skirt the Mongia for a few hundred centimetres, then the path turns in a north-eastern direction and climbs slightly.

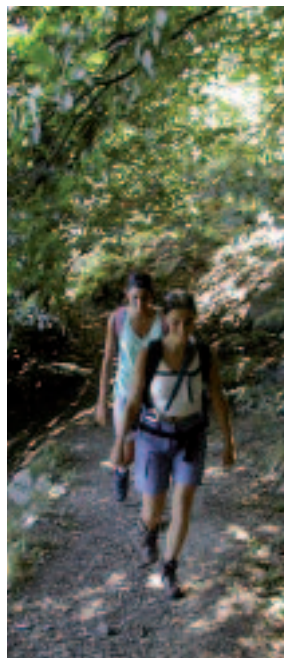
After passing a rocky spur the path begins to descend in an easterly direc-

tion. Ignore the first uphill turning on the right and turn left a little further on: at the end of the short downhill descent you will see an aqueduct collection tank.

Proceed walking under the water storage tank, keeping to the left of the Farinasso stream. A further ten minutes, and you will reach the Mongia river bed, cross it and then proceed in a northward direction on a dirt road. You will skirt a drying shed on your left and come out onto a clearing of beaten earth. There is a signpost indicating a naturalist route that takes you to the Rocca dei Corvi, along the path you will see a series of explanatory panels providing details of the trees and minerals present in the area.

You will descend into dense woodland, until you reach a clearing where a white boulder offers a wonderful panoramic view over the valley and the Rocca dei Corvi which rises from the stream water. Proceed downhill and when the path enters a cart road, proceed to the right and return onto the asphalt road of Crivella, near St. Caterina chapel.

However we advise you to make a short detour continuing into the woodland on the left. You will thereby reach a clearing where you can see the remains of an old coal bunker. The path leading towards the valley reaches the Mongia river bed, from where it is possible to see a series of small lakes, waterfalls and the imposing Rocca dei Corvi. This is the start of a Via Ferrata (fixed rope route), accessible only if you are provided with sling, helmet and crampon (equipment which may, if necessary, be hired from the Bar Sporting in Viola S. Giorgio) and which links up with the path further up.



The Belbo Sources

Departure point/arrival:

Montezemolo

Gradient: 100 m

Time required: 1 h

Degree of difficulty: easy

Links to other routes:

path to the Colle della Madonna

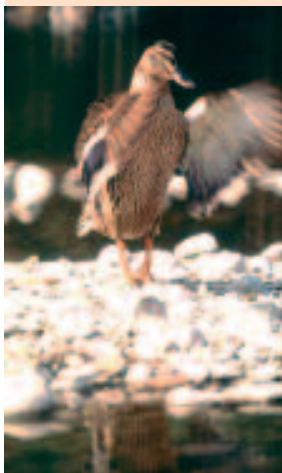
Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Ceva. Take the SP 460 that leads to Montezemolo.
- from Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road and then take the A6 motorway in Mondovì. Exit at Ceva and follow like above.

Description:

The Belbo sources naturalist route, unwinds for a distance of about three kilometres, and begins from the Bucciardina hamlet, along the road that descends from Montezemolo to Camerana. Take the path that takes you, through cultivated fields, to an extensive woodland stretch, featuring many of the tree and shrub varieties present in the Reserve.

The walk ends at the Pilone del Foresto where you come out of the wood at a point that offers a wonderful scenic view over the Bormida valley on one side and over the Belbo valley on the other.



Nature Trail

Description:

The route unwinds through the woods that cover the Ceva Langa zone between the Torresina and Igliano villages. This walk is gentle and therefore suitable for the whole family.

The "pietra dell'Appuntamento" (meeting stone in the woods) - on the road that links Igliano to Torresina - is considered the starting point of this pleasant walk, ideal for those who appreciate uncontaminated nature and enjoy a relaxing walk at the same time. A refreshing walk in a landscape that reconciles with nature and gives you a chance to appreciate its complex structure in its simplest expression.

The Monasterola Fountain and the Bosco Grande Fountain may be taken as the mid-way point of this delightful route that can be easily covered in under 1 hour and with no particular gradients.

The Nature Trail is also a good opportunity to link up with other routes in the area that interconnect and extend over the surrounding hillside.

Departure point/arrival:

Igliano

Gradient: 100 m

Time required: 1 h

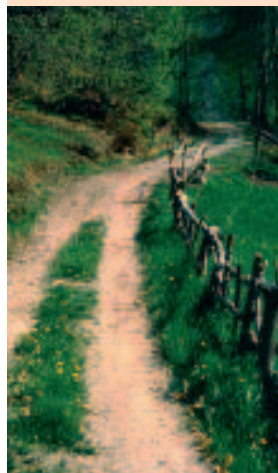
Degree of difficulty: easy

Link to other routes:

the 3 routes called "Art", "Culture", "History" that extend over the entire local area.

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Niella Tanaro. Take the SP 314 road to Castellino Tanaro and proceed along the SP 115 road that leads to Igliano.
- from Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road, then take motorway A6 in Mondovì. Exit at Niella Tanaro and follow like above.





Comunità Montana ALTA VAL TANARO

The area of the Comunità Montana Alta Val Tanaro is dominated by the Ligurian Alps which, despite their name, mostly belong to Piedmont. The Alpine chain features typical flora varieties, which include both Alpine and Mediterranean species.

The main mountains in the area are the Marguareis (which at a height of 2651 m is the highest in the area), the Cima delle Saline, the Mongioie and the Pizzo d'Ormea: from these peaks it is possible to see the sea on the horizon on clear days. These mountains have a particular dolomitic shape, and are highly popular among speleologists, because of their impressive network of underground caves, many of which, still remain to be explored.

It is possible to enjoy hiking at all levels, and enjoy magnificent views which in some places open out onto glimpses of the sea. It is possible to make your way slowly through a series of old villages such as Briga Alta, Viozene and Upega – with their rich authentic alpine history, tradition, culture and unique atmosphere.

Between one walk and another you should not miss a visit to the Royal Castle in Val Casotto which was first founded in the 12th century as a Carthusian monastery and subsequently passed into the hands of the Savoy family in 1837 becoming a courtly summer residence. The old town centre of Ormea features the so-called "trevis" (typical Ligurian alleys) and it is today renowned for the presence of highly original modern statues throughout the town made from the local black marble. The old town entrance is to be found in the bell-tower of the Parrocchiale di S. Martino, dating back to the 11th century. Whether you visit Nucetto, Perlo, Priola or Ormea you will see old castle remains together with the remains of ancient Saracen towers. The local restaurants offer such dishes as Saracen polenta, mountain potatoes and excellent cheeses such as the Sora, the Ormea and the alpine pasture Raschera.

For further information about other itineraries, nature trails, mountaineering programmes, summer and winter excursions please contact:

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The Ormea Balcony (First stage)

Departure point:

Eca (Ormea hamlet)

Arrival point:

Albra (Ormea hamlet)

Gradient: 410 m

Time required: round trip 3 h 45 min

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes:

Albra - Villaro

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Ceva. Proceed on the main road 28 for Nucetto, Garessio and Ormea until you come to Nasagò hamlet. Follow the municipal road to Eca and go past the S. Libera hamlet, when you reach the second hairpin bend, turn left towards the San Giacomo village. You may park near the San Giacomo church, the starting point of the itinerary.
- from Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road and then take the motorway A6 in Mondovì. Exit at Ceva and follow like above.

Description:

The "Balcony" route for which we are describing the first stage is a naturalist and ethnographic route of 40 km that links the 8 hamlets of Ormea starting from Eca and arriving in Viozene. The route is marked with white and red painted notches, with the initials B.O. (Balconata Ormea).

From the San Giacomo church the route climbs westerly and enters the heart of the woodland. When you reach a crossroads, turn right and you will reach a dirt track. Turn left, go past a small brook and on the right, always uphill, you will reach the houses of Vacieu. The road continues, it skirts a fountain with pond and then turns to the left and enters a small wood, going past a small spring (do not turn off either to the right or left).

You ford two small brooks and reach Borgata Cariò. Proceed uphill until you reach the dirt road which from Albra climbs to the Zotto dei Girini farmhouses. Turn left and continue downhill until you come to a hairpin bend and enter the wood towards the small hamlet cemetery. You come to a bridge and a paved mule track that descends towards the Albra houses. Return back along the outward route.



The Saracen Tower of Barchi

Description:

The Saracen Tower of Barchi dates back to the 11th century. It is unclear whether it was actually erected by the Saracen invaders or whether it was built as an anti-Saracen watchtower.

From Ormea (739 m) you reach the bridge called Ponte dei Sospiri that crosses the Tanaro river, proceed past it and turn left to reach the Ponte S. Pietro. From here you proceed along a dirt road and go past the Ormea paper mill until you reach the San Bernardo mineral water factory. Once again, on asphalt road you come to Barchi. When you enter the village centre you reach the brook and then continue uphill following the road on the right of the brook (which turns into a dirt road after the cemetery) to a bridge that takes you to the opposite bank. Turn left and you come to the Zitta village, continue downhill until you come to a drying oven and then turn right. You then cover a short wooded section before you come to the rocky outcrop featuring the Tower (893 m).

For the return we advise you to follow the path that descends right at the last deviation. After a few bends you will come to the Barchi houses and from here you return to Ormea on the same route as the outward journey.

Starting point: Ormea

Arrival point: Saracen tower

Gradient: 300 m

Time required: 3 h 30 min

Degree of difficulty: medium

Links to other routes:

from Barchi to Garessio

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Ceva. Proceed along the SS 28 to Nucetto, Garessio and Ormea.
- from Cuneo: take the SP 564 del Monregalese and then take the motorway A6 in Mondovì. Exit at Ceva and follow like above.



The Grotta delle Vene Path

Arrival point: Mongioie refuge

Gradient: 360 m

Time required: round trip 3 h

Degree of difficulty: easy

Links to other routes:

from the Mongioie refuge to Monte Mongioie and Viozene (Ormea hamlet).

Access:

- from Turin: A6 motorway, exit Ceva. Proceed along the SS 28 road to Nucetto, Garessio and Pornassino. Proceed along the SP 154 road until you reach Carnino Inferiore (part of the Briga Alta hamlet).
- from Cuneo: SP 564 del Monregalese road and then take the A6 motorway in Mondovì. Exit at Ceva and follow like above.

Description:

The itinerary extends over the territory of the Parco Naturale Alta Valle Pesio e Tanaro and the route features a series of illustrative information panels (naturalist and ethnographic). The cave called Grotta delle Vene forms part of the imposing karst systems, which is in fact one of the largest in Europe. The Mongioie refuge is open continuously from May to September and at weekends during other periods of the year. From the S. Rocco church in Carnino Inferiore (1387 m) take a paved mule track which ascends amongst the houses (G.T.A. trail sign). Continue through the woods until you reach Tetti delle Donzelle (1540 m). From here in a south-easterly direction turn right until you reach the Carnino Pass (1597 m). The route now turns north beneath the Rocce del Manco and then turning east, crosses the Rio delle Vene, with its delightful Tibetan bridge, that emerges from the cave of the same name. A lengthy diagonal section on a grassy slope brings you to the Mongioie Refuge (1550 m). Return along the same outward route.



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