

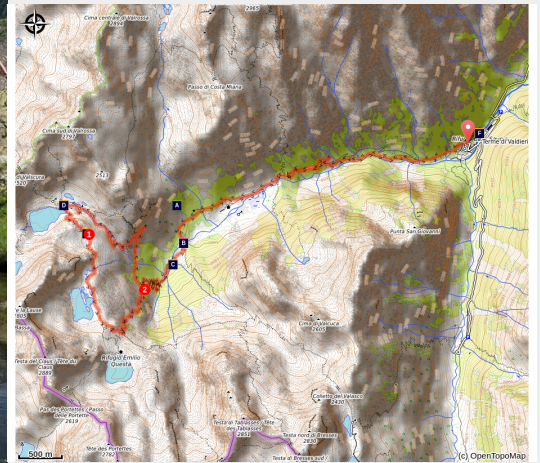


# The Questa Refuge and the Valscura circle

Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime - Valdieri



Il Lago del Claus (Roberto Pockaj)



*One of the most classic excursions in the Park, very popular with hikers, who can visit several extremely interesting and picturesque locations in just one day.*

The hike begins in the splendid environs of the Pian del Valasco plateau, with its two waterfalls, and then climbs up through the ice-streaked rocks to the Questa Refuge, at an altitude of nearly 2,400 meters, facing Lake Portette; the return route follows an incredible former military mule track, portions of which are perfectly paved with flagstones, and two more glittering blue gems: Lake Claus and Lower Lake Valscura.

## Useful information

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Practice : Hiking

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Duration : 6 h 35

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Length : 19.0 km

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Trek ascent : 1163 m

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Difficulty : Medium

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Type : Round trip

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Themes : Fauna, Geology, Lake, Refuge, Viewpoint

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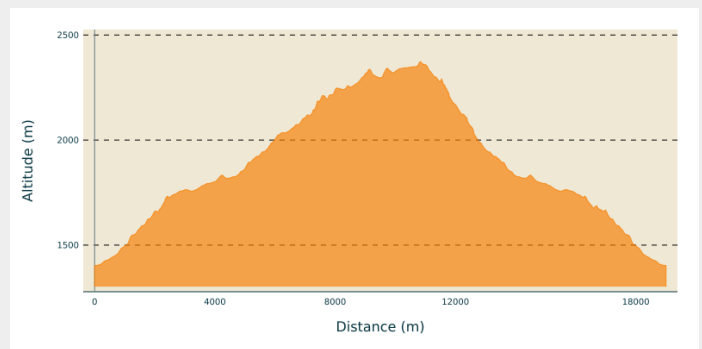
# Trek

**Departure** : Terme di Valdieri (1385 m)

**Arrival** : Questa Refuge (2389 m)

**Cities** : 1. Valdieri

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1402 m Max elevation 2373 m

The route begins beside the entrance to the parking lot above Terme di Valdieri (1385 m) and follows the unpaved former military road that leads up to Pian del Valasco, similarly to the "Pian del Valasco and the Valasco Refuge" itinerary {->09}. When the dirt road forks (1763 m, 1 hour and 10 minutes from Terme), instead of taking the left fork for the Valasco Refuge, the route continues to the right.

The road reaches the upper Pian del Valasco, passes the turnoff on the left for Colletto del Valasco and climbs uphill, with switchbacks that wind through a sparse patch of larches. Near an enormous larch, the path leaves the road on the left, heading for the Questa Refuge.

The trail rises steeply for a long tract and reaches a wider ex military mule track; after following it for a few meters, the trail leads off to the left.

Passing by the turnoff for Lake Claus on the right, the trail comes to the Questa Refuge (2388 m, 2 hours and 10 minutes from Pian del Valasco).

Returning to the nearest fork, hikers take the left turnoff for Lake Claus. After an up and down portion, the trail again links up with the ex military mule track seen before; following it to the left, hikers walk along the banks of Lake Claus (2339 m) and then cross a wide detritic valley on an incredible flagstoned tract and follow the path downhill to Lower Lake Valscura (2265 m, 50 minutes from the Questa Refuge).

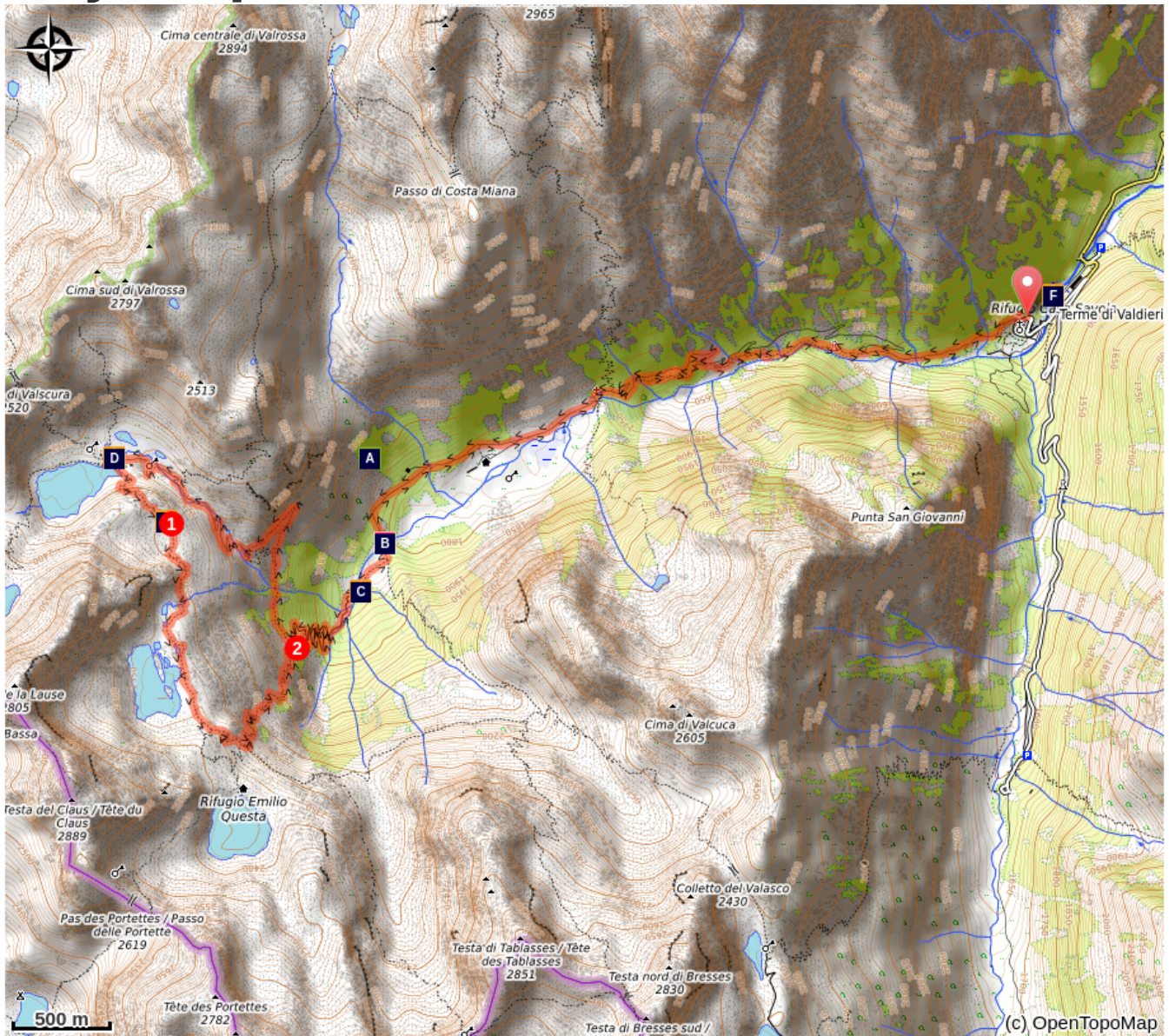
Near the lake, the trail joins an ex military road, following it to the right. Passing the turnoff on the left for Colle di Valmiana, the road proceeds along the bottom of a small, narrow valley and runs through a spectacular tunnel dug in the rock.







The road continues downhill, passing by the foot of a waterfall, and reaches the turnoff for the Questa Refuge, taken on the way up.

Following the same route as at the start, the road returns to Pian del Valasco and then to Terme di Valdieri (1385 m, 2 hours and 25 minutes from Lower Lake Valscura).



# On your path...



-  The larch (A)
-  Former military road 452 (C)
-  The former military mule track "Valscura Barracks - Fremamorta Shelters" (E)
-  The Pian del Valasco waterfall (B)
-  The Valscura Barracks (D)
-  The 'Bela Rosin' and the Terme chalets (F)

# All useful information

## **Is in the midst of the park**

The national park is an unrestricted natural area but subjected to regulations which must be known by all visitors.

## **How to come ?**

### Transports

Nuova Benese service company - Regular line Cuneo, Valdieri, Entracque -  
Telephone: 00 39 (0) 171 69 29 29 - [www.benese.it](http://www.benese.it)

SNCF line TER Provence Alpes-Côte d'Azur For travel in the PACA region and  
towards Cuneo [www.ter-sncf.com/pac](http://www.ter-sncf.com/pac)

Trenitalia for travel in the Piedmont region <https://www.trenitalia.com/it.html>

### Access

From Borgo San Dalmazzo, drive up the Valle Gesso. After passing Valdieri,  
continue on until you reach Terme. There is a parking fee during the summer  
season.

### Advised parking

Terme di Valdieri (1385 m)

# On your path...

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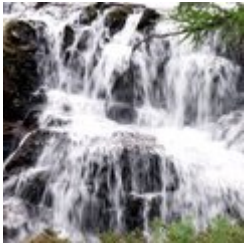


## 🌲 The larch (A)

This type of forest is rather localized in the Maritime Alps, which notoriously represent the realm of the beech forest. It covers the slopes at the heads of the valleys with sparse and luminous populations, sometimes grazed by the herds that have climbed the mountain pastures. Most of the time their purity is not natural, but induced by man: in fact, over the centuries, man has favored this tree species to the detriment of others, such as the stone pine, for example, because they are less favorable for exercising the grazing due to the increased shading of the soil.

Attribution : Cati Caballo

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## 🏞️ The Pian del Valasco waterfall (B)

The mass of rocks over which the water falls is a typical example of a glacial rock step. During the glaciations it formed the lower limit of the lake at the foot of the glacier. A tongue of the glacier extended beyond the step.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj

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## 🕒 Former military road 452 (C)

Starting at the fork near the Valasco Refuge, the route follows former military road 452 "Pian del Valasco - Lower Lake Valscura", built in the early thirties to serve the Valscura defense system. In order to make it possible to drive transport vehicles on the road, which was not much more than a wide mule track, much of the 1909 military road had to be expanded, being too narrow to meet the new needs.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj





## 🕒 The Valscura Barracks (D)

Since the end of the eighteenth century (an inscription on the remains of a shelter reads "3° Compagnia Alpini, 1888") Lower Lake Valscura was chosen as the site where troops were garrisoned to defend the strategic pass of Bassa del Druos. Beginning in 1888, when barracks were erected to house 140 soldiers and two officers, for almost fifty years buildings were constructed on this site, until the entire complex was finally transformed into an armory, officially known as A131, containing munitions, explosives and artillery pieces.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj



## 🕒 The former military mule track "Valscura Barracks - Fremamorta Shelters" (E)

The portion of the route that runs from Lower Lake Valscura to Lake Claus follows the former military mule track that linked Valscura and Fremamorta. The mule track is one of the best-preserved examples of the old military roads that ran through the Valle Gesso, as well as a true masterpiece of engineering. Realized sometime around the very first years of the nineteenth century, a decade prior to the start of the second world war, in 1929, it was preventively upgraded by the Dronero Battalion and maintained in perfect condition. Over 10 km long, it never dips below an altitude of 2,000 meters and has a maximum incline of 18%. Portions of the road were skillfully paved with flagstones, still in place today.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj



## 🕒 The 'Bela Rosin' and the Terme chalets (F)

Near the Hotel Royal one can admire two of the four Swiss-style chalets built in Terme in the XIX century and recently restored. Under the roof of one of them, known as the 'Bela Rosin' chalet, there is a date carved - 1857 - corresponding to the year of the institution of the Royal Hunting Reserve of Entracque and Valdieri.

Rosa Vercellana, or 'Bela Rosin', married Vittorio Emanuele II according to morganatic ritual in 1869, and the couple was married by secular authorities in Rome, in 1877, a few months before the King's death. She never held the title of Queen.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj