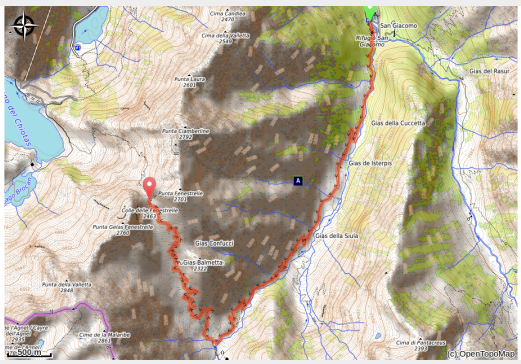
The Colle di Fenestrelle from San Giacomo di Entracque

Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime - Entracque

Le prime luci sul Colle di Fenestrelle, seminascosto al centro della foto (Roberto Pockaj)



A long ascent, with its least tiring part upstream of Piano del Praiet, with a good bottom of the path and an always incredibly constant slope.

In a rocky and wild environment like Valle Gesso, it is almost surprising to be able to climb up to Colle di Fenestrelle often surrounded by gentle grassy slopes. The area around the hill is often frequented by ibexes and chamois. The pass is an excellent observation point on Monte del Gelas, which houses the southernmost glacier in the Alps.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 4 h

Length : 10.3 km

Trek ascent : 1259 m

Difficulty : Medium

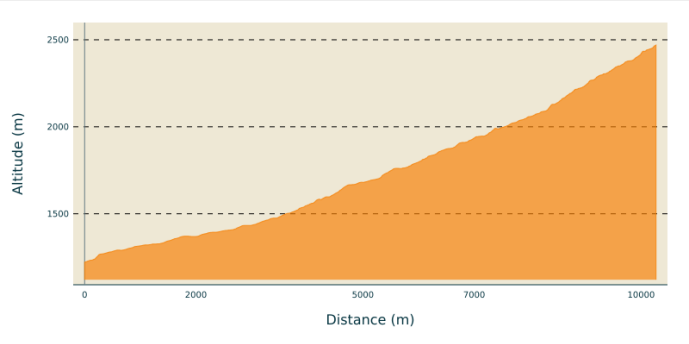
Type : Round trip

Themes : Archeology and history, Fauna

Trek

Departure : San Giacomo di Entracque (1226 m)
Arrival : Colle di Fenestrelle (2462 m)
Markings : GR
Cities : 1. Entracque

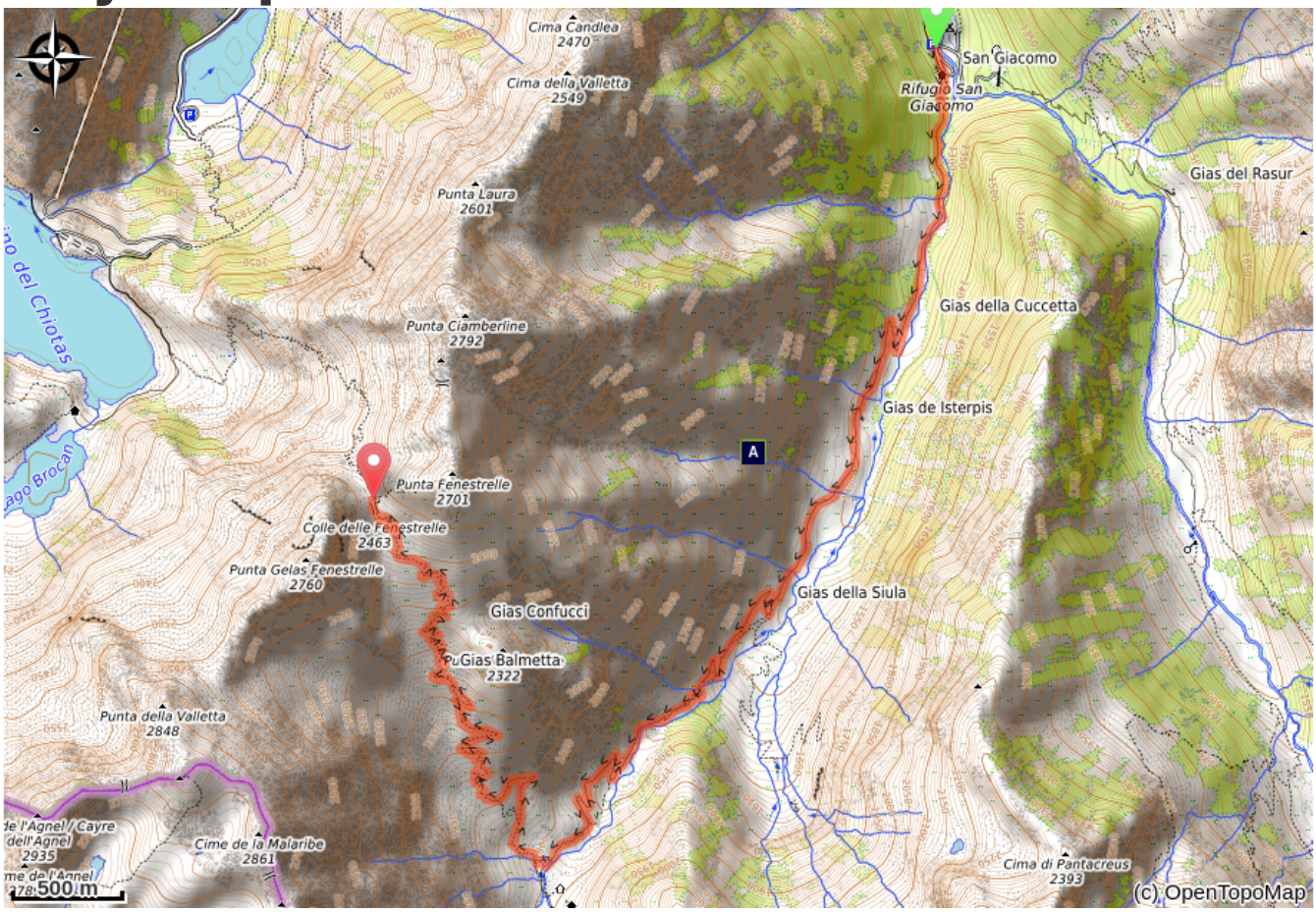
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1221 m Max elevation 2470 m

From San Giacomo di Entracque (1226 m), in common with the "Il Rifugio Soria Ellena" itinerary {->22}, climb up to the junction for Colle di Fenestrelle, located right at the entrance to Piano del Praiet (1970 m approximately, 2:05 hours from San Giacomo).
Here you leave the dirt road and take the path to the right which faithfully follows the route of an old mule track, which has now almost completely disappeared, and goes up the entire Fenestrelle valley. Incredibly maintaining the same slope along the entire climb, the path, between wide pastures below and alpine meadows at high altitudes, first passes the ruins of Gias Alvè, then of Gias Balmetta.
The ascent continues without excessive effort with numerous switchbacks, sometimes cut by shortcuts, keeping to the orographic left side of the valley.
Turning briefly west, the path takes you to a pleasant grassy saddle, then resumes its tortuous gait towards the north. Just before the hill you reach the tiny Lagarot di Fenestrelle and then, with a few hairpin bends between thin grass and stones, the ruins of a nineteenth-century shelter on a
panoramic grassy knoll.
A very short descent precedes the last ascent, between stones, which leads to Colle di Fenestrelle (2462 m, 2:05 hours from Piano del Praiet). The panorama that can be enjoyed from the hill is splendid: behind it is Monte Gelas and the homonymous glaciers; in front, descending a little beyond the pass, the Argentera Massif (slightly on the left) and the Chiotas Basin below.

On your path...



The bearded vulture (A)
The Ibex of the Alps (C)
The Piazzale dei Cannoni (B)
The Fenestrelle shelter (D)

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

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

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

Access

From Borgo San Dalmazzo go up the Valle Gesso. After Valdieri, turn left for Entracque. Before the village, turn right for San Giacomo and then right again for San Giacomo. Paid parking in the summer season.

Advised parking

San Giacomo di Entracque (1226 m)

On your path...

The bearded vulture (A)

The bearded vulture (Gypaetus barbatus), also known as the lamb vulture, has a wingspan that can reach 285cm and can weigh more than 6 kilos. An accomplished glider, it can exploit even the mildest ascending thermals. It is a carrion eater, feeding exclusively on carcasses of dead animals, ungulates for the most part, both wild and domestic. It consumes bones, cartilage and ligaments, and is known to drop bones from great heights in order to break them into manageable pieces. Monogamous and long-lived, the bearded vulture nests on rocky cliff faces at altitudes beween 1,000 and 3,000 meters.

Attribution : Michelangelo Giordano

The Piazzale dei Cannoni (B)

The name Piazzale dei Cannoni, or better still, Piana dei Cannoni, is due to the presence there of the 181st Artillery Battery, armed with 210/8 mortars, during the Second World War. The mortar emplacements are just south of the dirt road, along the slope, but they are not easy to spot. On the opposite side of the valley, across the torrent, there are the remains of probable logistical outposts and even an open-air kitchen.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj

The Ibex of the Alps (C)

Colle di Fenestrelle, as well as the surrounding area, is very popular with the ibex.
The Alpine ibex (Capra ibex), frequents alpine meadows and rock faces even above 3000 m, reaching the valley floor (provided it is not wooded) only in early spring, to be able to refresh itself after the long winter. Both sexes have annual growth horns, but much larger in males. The coat, light beige in summer, darkens to dark brown in winter.
Sedentary, grazing, it essentially feeds on grass, integrated with mosses, lichens and leaves of mountain shrubs, especially in winter.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj

🕒 The Fenestrelle shelter (D)

The ruins near the pass mark the site of the Fenestrelle shelter, named for Lieutenant Angelo Bertolotti. Built in 1888 and in use until the Second World War, it could house a garrison of 10 on straw pallets. In their guidebook, entitled "La Valle Gesso", the Boggias indicate the shelter as being instead dedicated "to the memory of Angelo Bortolo, of the 1∞ Reg. of the Alpine Corps, who was killed on the Ortigara during the First World War".

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj