

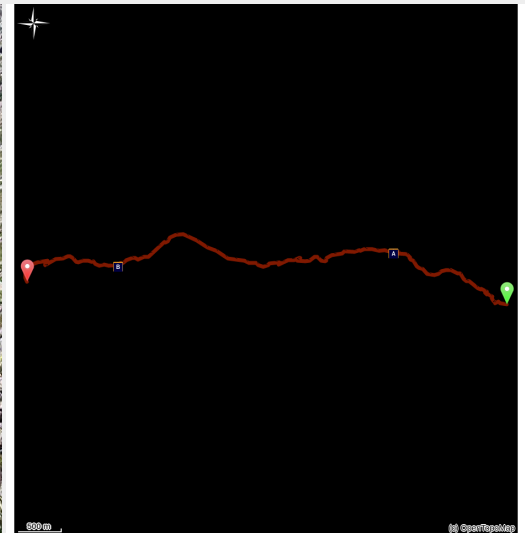


Alta Via dei Re, stage 1 : from Sant'Anna di Valdieri to the Livio Bianco Refuge

Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime - Valdieri



Il Lago sottano della Sella (Roberto Pockaj)



A fairly long excursion, but not difficult and a bit taxing only on the steep initial climb. Lower Lake Sella, on whose shore stands the Livio Bianco Refuge, is a picturesque sight.

An initial tract in the woods is followed by a series of warm and sunny grassy slopes. The path goes by many gias, testifying to the activities related to bringing the livestock to the high pastures in the warm months, and the buildings at Chiot della Sella, once used by the Savoyas as hunting lodges.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 3 h

Length : 7.4 km

Trek ascent : 896 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Walking breaks

Themes : Fauna, Flora, Geology, Lake, Pastoralism, Refuge

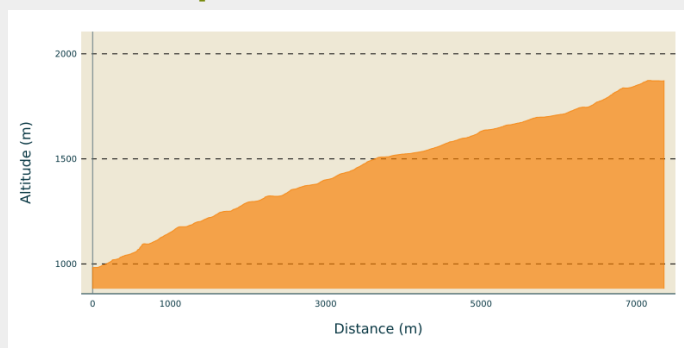
Trek

Departure : Sant'Anna di Valdieri (980 m)

Arrival : Dante Livio Bianco Refuge (1890 m)

Cities : 1. Valdieri

Altimetric profile



Min elevation 982 m Max elevation 1873 m

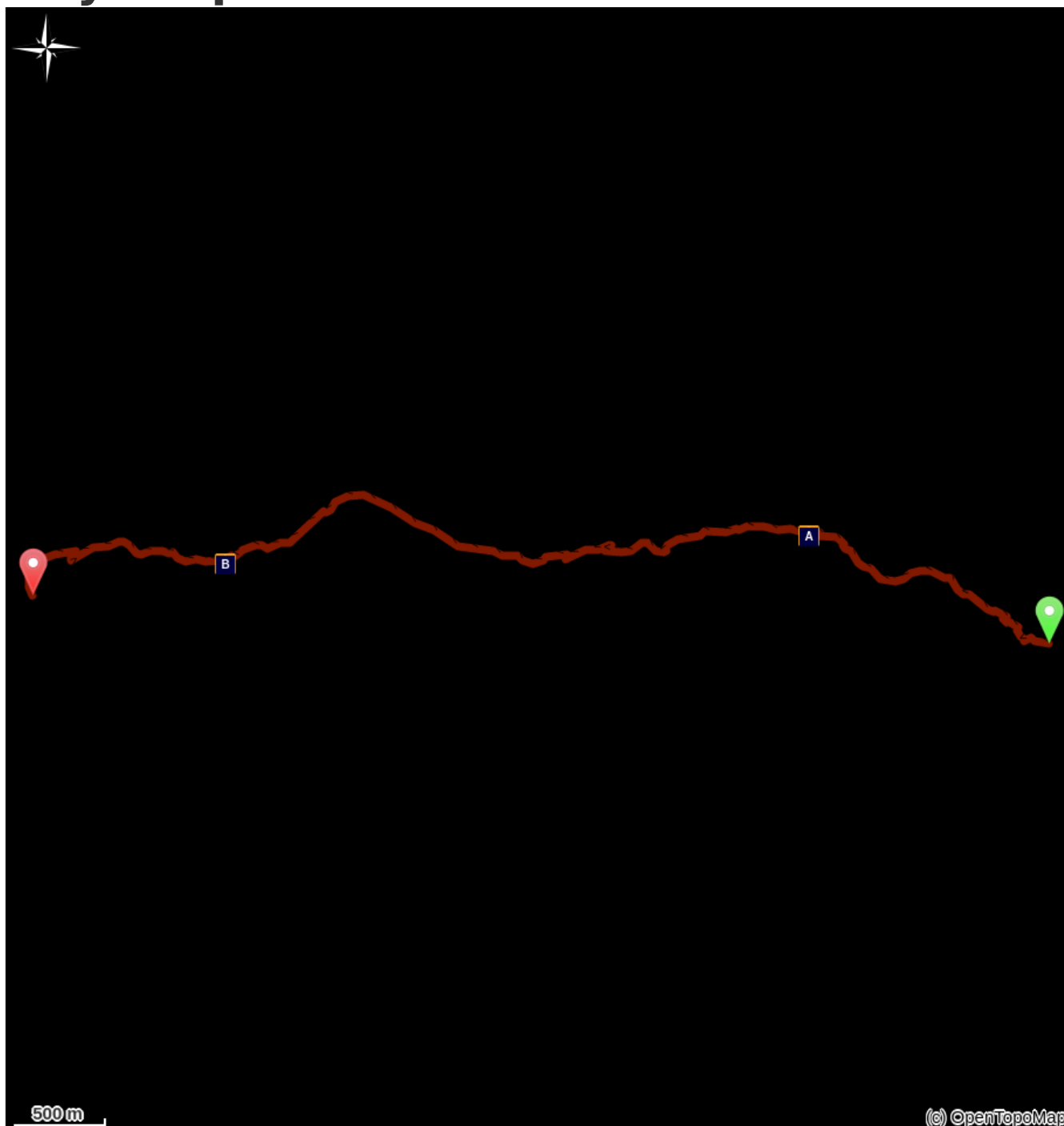
From the uphill end of the village of Sant'Anna di Valdieri (980 m), a paved path rises rapidly among the houses, passing beside the Locanda Alpina Balma Meris. A steep mule track climbs into the woods of mixed deciduous trees: proceeding past the fork leading to Tetti Bariau ("Lo Viol di Tàit"), the trail veers westward for a brief tract, and rises less steeply. It passes by the ruins of Tetti Bàisa and continues to climb, with overhead views of the Rio della Meris, which forms crystal-clear pools in this area. A few switchbacks and long traverses lead to a cool beech forest and the few remaining traces of Tetti Paladin.


Less steeply now, the path continues on out of the woods; at an altitude of ca. 1380 m the path passes a shortcut on the left, which joins back up with the mule track not far ahead, and a not very well marked trail on the right leading to Monte Merqua. The path continues monotonously upward, with a long crossing at midslope on the orographic left side of the valley, until it reaches a large flat pasture, with the ruins of Gias del Prato (1513 m, 1 hour and 35 minutes from Sant'Anna di Valdieri) and, a few hundred meters further on, the new Gias del Prato (fountain).


The mule track winds along the bottom of the valley, among pastures and detritus, flanked a few meters below by a small path which it joins farther on. After another long tract the valley narrows where the Rio della Meris has cut most deeply into the valley floor. Passing by a mule track on the left that descends to a ford in the river, the path enters the pasture meadow of the Gias del Chiot della Sella, where a Park Service station is situated.

Beyond the Gias, the mule track climbs more steeply, and after passing a brook there is a view of the lovely waterfall formed by the runoff from Upper Lake Sella. The trail forks when it reaches the Gias del Lago: the route abandons the mule track, which continues on to Lake Sella, and crosses over Rio della Meris on a wooden bridge. A good path runs around the shore of Lower Lake Sella (1862 m, 1 hour and 15 minutes from the Gias del Prato), which in just a few minutes leads to the Livio Bianco Refuge (1890 m, 5 minutes from Lake Sella), located in a perfect spot beside the water.

On your path...



 The place name "Vallone della Meris" (A)

 The place name "Chiot de la Sela" (B)

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

Drive up the Valle Gesso from Borgo San Dalmazzo. After passing Valdieri,
continue on towards Terme until you reach Sant'Anna.

Parking: Parking de Sant Anna di Valdieri

Advised parking

Sant'Anna di Valdieri (980 m)

On your path...



The place name "Vallone della Meris" (A)

The Vallone della Meris (or, in the masculine, the Vallone del Meris, pronounced with an accent on the 'i', differently from the normal pronunciation) owes its name to its favorable exposure, "a meriggio", at the meridian, which provides warmth and light.

Attribution : Giorgio Bernardi



The place name "Chiot de la Sela" (B)

This place, known as Chiot de la Sela, probably derived its name from the past presence of a small "sella", a stone structure with a barrel vault, usually partially underground, which was used to store food). Chiot de la Sela was the location of the Royal Hunting Lodges, used by the Savoyes when they hosted hunting parties in the Vallone della Meris.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj