

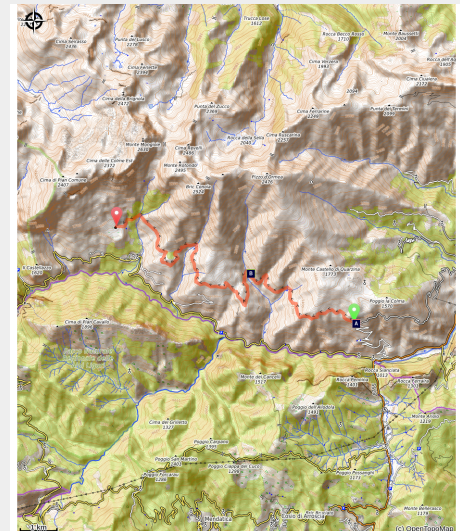


# Alto Tanaro Tour, stage 3: from Quarzina to Rifugio Mongioie

Ormea



Pilone votivo a Merea, particolare dell'affresco (Roberto Pockaj)



*Long stretches on tracks, dirt roads, and mule tracks in the first part. The latter part on narrow paths, that are not always easy.*

Charming hamlets, although some are in ruins, dense woods ranging from beech to pine, spruce, larch, beautiful views over the upper Tanaro valley. These are the main features of interest on this stage, which could be considered too long, not overall but with long stretches on tracks or dirt roads or winding through woodland, which is pleasant for half an hour but can be monotonous over long stretches.

## Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 4 h 30

Length : 13.5 km

Trek ascent : 801 m

Difficulty : Medium

Type : Walking breaks

Themes : Archeology and history, Architecture, Fauna, Flora, Geology, Refuge

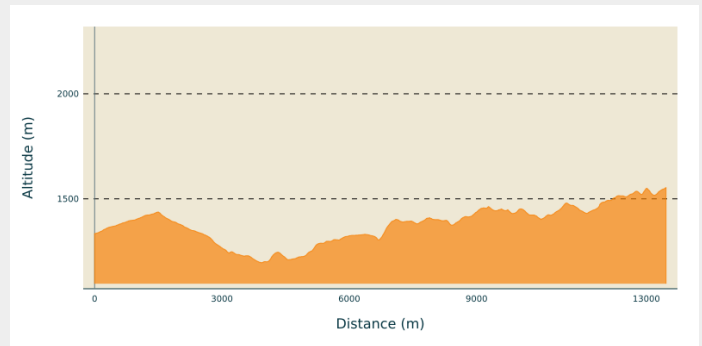
# Trek

**Departure** : Quarzina (1326 m)

**Arrival** : Rifugio Mongioie (1550 m)

**Cities** : 1. Ormea

## Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1196 m Max elevation 1553 m

From the Quarzina Refuge (about 1319 m), go up towards the center of Quarzina (1326 m) and then turn left (west) on the asphalt road leading to La Colma and covered in the previous stage.

At the first bend (to the right) go straight ahead on the dirt road. When the road turns right and forks, stay to the left, crossing slightly uphill to Biranco (1437 m, 0:35 mins from Quarzina).

At the entrance to the village leave the dirt road and continue on the mule track that leads off to the left.

The mule track enters the wood, crosses a dirt track and continues as a path to Merea (1222 m, 0:30 mins from Biranco, fountain).

Drop down to the dirt road below and follow it to the right, to Fasce (1235 m).

Stay on the road, cross the Rio Borgosozzo and its tributary, then you reach a fork, where you take a right uphill.

At the first junction leave the dirt road and turn right, along the Costa del Baraccone. Shortly after, take the path that comes off to the left, returns to the woods and reaches a clearing, Pian della Madonna, home to a tiny little chapel.

Now, on a wide mule track, you climb again through the pine forest to a logging track. Go left, to meet a dirt road, where you go to the right rising to Celle di Pian del Fo (1412 m, 1:25 hours from Merea).

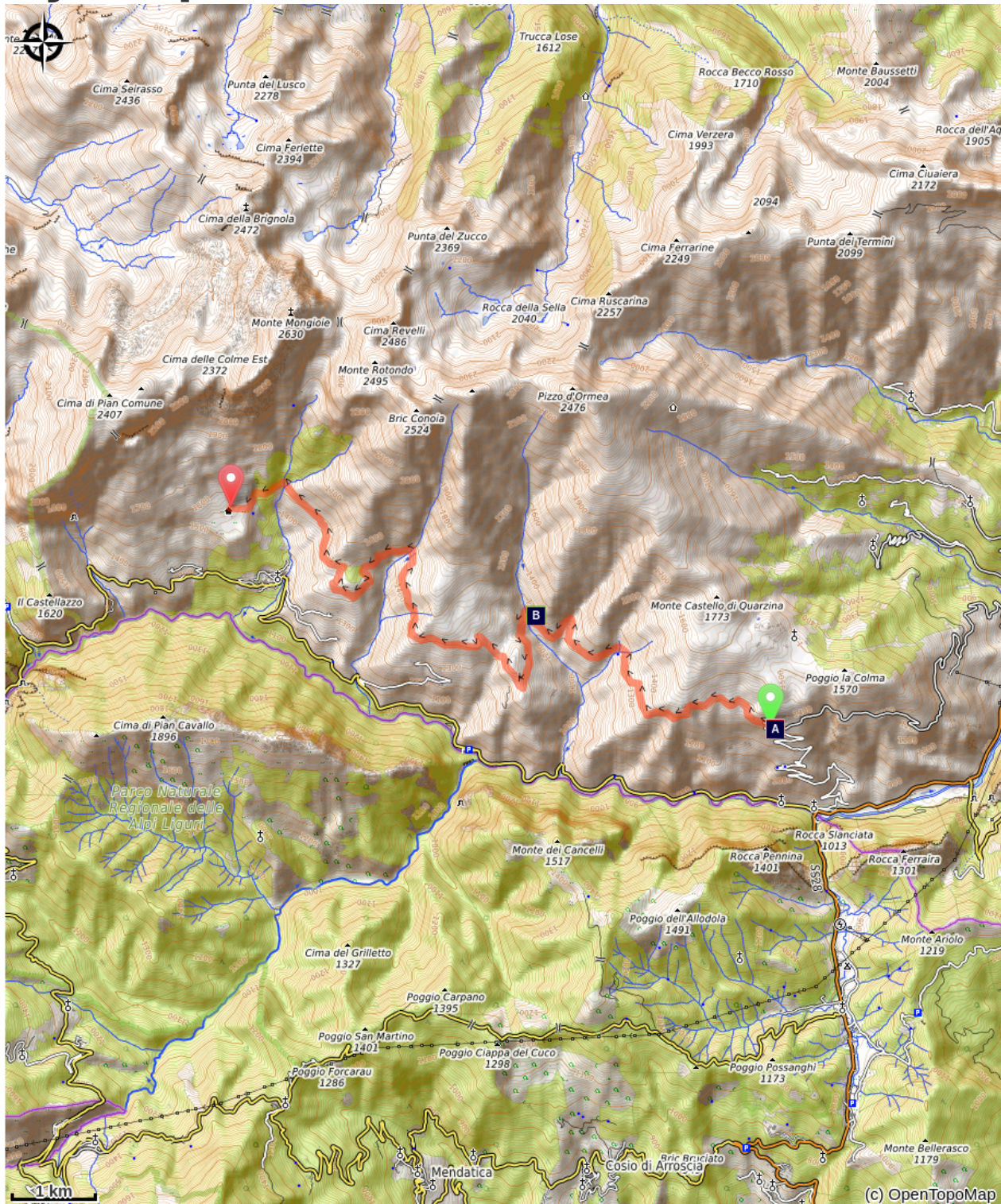
Continue on a mule track to a junction, where you go left. The path crosses a tributary of the Rio Bianco on a concrete weir, then enters the beech forest. Follow the waymarking on the tree trunks going up to another junction: here you follow the path to the left that, after an undulating traverse leads you to ford the Rio Bianco. Past the narrow gully, you are now on a mule track that after a long traverse passes a ridge.

You reach some ruins among terraced meadows where, at a fork, you keep on the muletrack to the right. Cut across the gentler slopes of Pian dell'Arma, then follow the path to another junction, where you turn left.


The path becomes narrower, climbs and then crosses steep slopes again to Pian Rosso. Shortly you enter the well-trodden path that rises from Viozene: heading slightly to the right you arrive at the nearby Rifugio Mongioie (1550 m, 2:00 hours from Celle di Pian del Fo).



# On your path...



 J Aboi (A)

 The short toed eagle (B)

# All useful information

## How to come ?

### Access

From Ceva you go up the Tanaro Valley up to Ormea. Continue towards Imperia and just outside Ormea, turn right towards Aimoni. A winding road leads to Aimoni and then to Quarzina. There are very few parking spaces here.



# On your path...

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## J Aboi (A)

On Monday of Carnival week, groups of young people from the hamlets of Chionea and Chioraira, wearing a black hat with coloured ribbons sewn on, or disguised as women, wandered around playing music, singing and begging through the various hamlets of Ormea. They collected food from the residents, transporting everything by donkey. The Abois, as they were called, were hosted by the local inhabitants and on Sunday they organised a banquet with what they had collected in the previous days. This ancient tradition fell into disuse in the 1950s, following the abandonment of the villages. It was revived in 2005 and continues thanks to research carried out by the local CAI section.

[Piemonte Parchi n.163 febbraio 2007, pp.36-37]

Attribution : Archivio EAM

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## The short toed eagle (B)

The short-toed eagle, *Circaetus gallicus* (from the Greek "kirkos" = falcon and "aëtos" = eagle, the adjective "gallicus" refers to that area of France called Gaul), is a very special eagle. In fact, it nourishes only of reptiles and in particular of serpents, which it searches for on the sunny slopes of the Mediterranean regions and of the Alpine valleys. His hunting technique is also particular for an eagle, because it consists in hovering motionless in mid-air, in the so-called "holy spirit" flight. Long-range migrant, it is a species native to Africa.