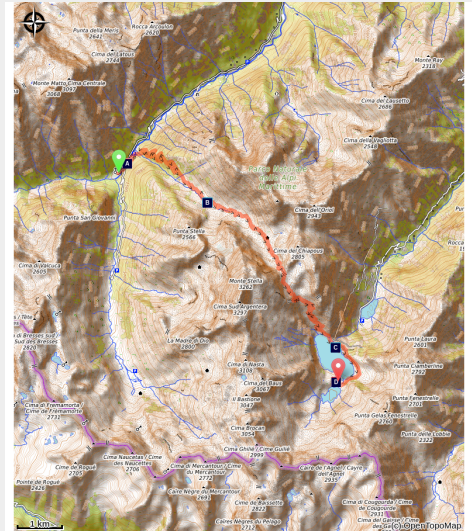




Grand Tour of Argentera and Vallée des Merveilles - Stage 1

Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime - Valdieri



Randonnée Argentera. Le lac Chiotas en début d'été, nombreux névés en arrière plan, temps nuageux. (Francesco Tomasinelli - PNM)

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 6 h

Length : 15.3 km

Trek ascent : 1363 m

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Walking breaks

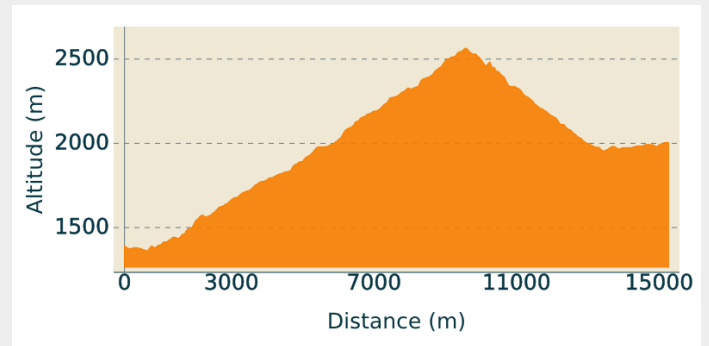
Trek

Departure : Terme di Valdieri

Arrival : Genova Figari refuge

Cities : 1. Valdieri
2. Entracque

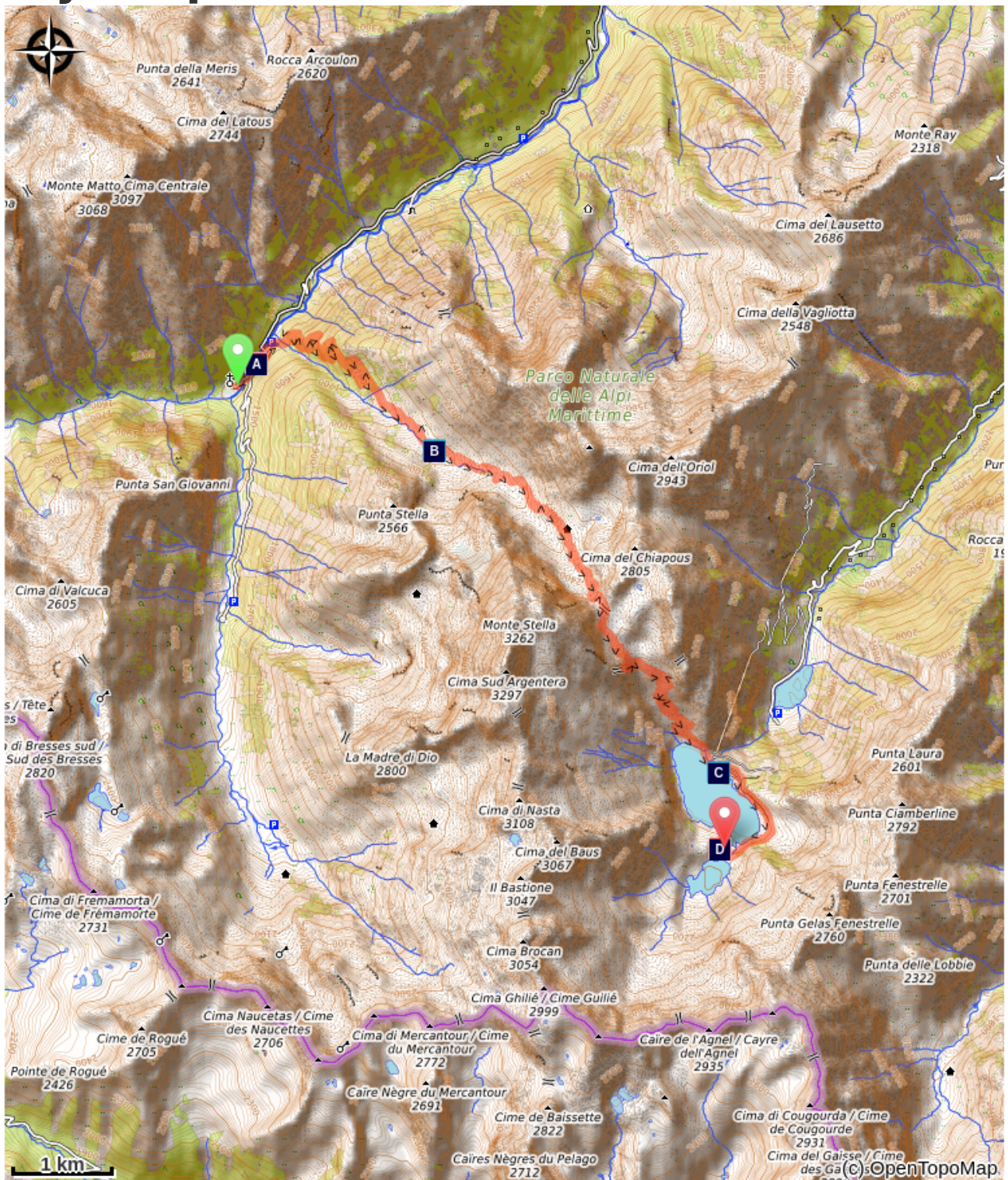
Altimetric profile







Min elevation 1362 m Max elevation 2565 m

Head towards the entrance to the terme di Valdieri. You will find the first marker opposite the entrance gate to the spas where you will initially head downhill for a few metres to the left, heading north-east on the tarmacked road until you reach a carpark. Follow the sign for Colle Chiapous along the N8 GTA path with white and red markers which begins on your right. Cross a footbridge (Via Alpina plaque) and then head up a long series of hairpin bends along the slope of the right bank of Vallone di Lourousa (white and red markers). Continue through the hairpins reaching an altitude of 1855 metres, heading up by 600 metres spread over 4 kilometres. You will then reach a flatter section at 2200 metres altitude close to a mountain stream (with a commemorative cross nearby), at the foot of Canale Lourousa. You will head slightly downhill until you reach a marker at 1970 metres altitude and then continue left along the GTA N8 path with white and red markers. At an altitude of 2042 metres, head horizontally across a scree for 40 metres. Head uphill through the screes to reach the Morelli Buzzi refuge which is perched on a promontory. At altitude 2342 metres altitude, close to the refuge, bear right following the N8 path with white and red markers, which are supplemented with orange markers, and you will reach an altitude of 2526 metres at Colle Chiapous. From there, following the direction indicated on the marker, turn right onto the M9 path. At 2497 metres, do not take the path towards Passo del Porco to your right and instead bear left and continue the descent along some comfortable hairpin bends (white and red markers). Close to the shores of the lake, head towards the dam. Turn left after the dam and head down the tarmacked road route. Go through a short tunnel and then head right up the track which can be used by vehicles, following the markers. Head around the north-eastern and south-eastern shores and you will quickly reach the Genova refuge.

On your path...



-  The Valdieri Royal Hot Springs (A)
-  The Chiotas Reservoir, the Della Piastra dam and the Lake della Rovina (C)

-  The Lagarot di Lourousa (B)
-  The Genova Figari Refuge (D)

All useful information

On your path...



The Valdieri Royal Hot Springs (A)

First cited in the mid sixteenth century. When King Carlo Emanuele III decided to valorize the Valdieri hot springs, in 1755, a building and other appurtenances were quickly built in order to create a spa around the sulfurous waters. Cavour called Valdieri "the richest in health-preserving waters in all the nation, and perhaps in all of Europe as well". Vittorio Emanuele II, who first visited Val Gesso in 1855, became a frequent guest at the spa, and it was at his behest that, on 10 July 1857, the first stone was laid for the structure that was to become the Hotel Royal.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj



The Lagarot di Lourousa (B)

Springwater, welling up among meadows and larches, forms numerous limpid pools and streams; the water is at times turquoise, at times milky and at others perfectly transparent, making this a particularly striking location, perfect for a contemplative rest. The Canalone di Lourousa, bordered by Monte Stella and the Corno Stella and scoured by the Gelas di Lourousa, lies beyond the plateau of the same name, and a look over one's shoulder yields a view of the imposing outline of Monte Matto.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj



The Chiotas Reservoir, the Della Piastra dam and the Lake della Rovina (C)

The Chiotas Reservoir is closed off by two dams: the Chiotas dam and the Colle di Laura dam. The Chiotas dam, an arch-gravity structure, is 130 meters high and stretches for a length of 230 meters. Its thickness varies from 37.5 meters at its base to 5 meters at the top. The mass gravity Colle di Laura dam is smaller, rectilinear and only 30 meters at its maximum height. Its length is 70 meters. The Chiotas Reservoir has a carrying capacity of 27.3 million cubic meters of water.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj



The Genova Figari Refuge (D)

To valorize the hiking trails along the Argentera Massif, in the last years of the nineteenth century the Liguria chapter of CAI decided to build a refuge near the upper Gias del Monighet, in the Vallone della Rovina. The Genova Refuge, as it was named, was inaugurated on 15 August 1898.

But the fate of the first refuge in the Maritime Alps was definitively sealed in 1968: the reservoir of the new Chiotas dam would submerge it permanently. ENEL assumed the task of building another refuge, which was inaugurated in 1981.

The refuge is named for Bartolomeo Figari, who as Secretary General of CAI saw both the successful conquest of K2 and the birth of the National Alpine Rescue Corps, to which he bequeathed all his worldly goods.

Attribution : Archivio EAM