



Grande traversée Alpi Marittime

Parco Naturale Alpi Liguri - Airole



Monte Vecchio du Colle Arpiola (Fabrice Henon)



Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 19 days

Length : 284.4 km

Difficulty : Hard

Type : Longer treks

A great itinerary of discovery with an exceptional variety of environments and scenery. From big walls and lakes of the Argentera massif to the pastures and karst plateaus of Marguareis and the mediterranean scrub and ancient villages of the Riviera dei Fiori. A nineteen day walk from the Colle della Maddalena, the gateway to Provence to the caves at Balzi Rossi, a prehistoric site overlooking one of the most picturesque stretches of the Ligurian coast.

Trek

Departure : Madeleine pass

Arrival : Grimaldi - Balzi Rossi

Cities : 1. Airole

2. Apricale

3. Argentera

4. Breil-sur-Roya

5. Briga Alta

6. Canosio

7. Chiusa di Pesio

8. Dolceacqua

9. Entracque

10. Isola

11. La Brigue

12. Larche

13. Limone Piemonte

14. Menton

15. Pigna

16. Rocchetta Nervina

17. Sambuco

18. Saorge

19. Tende

20. Triora

21. Val-d'Oronaye

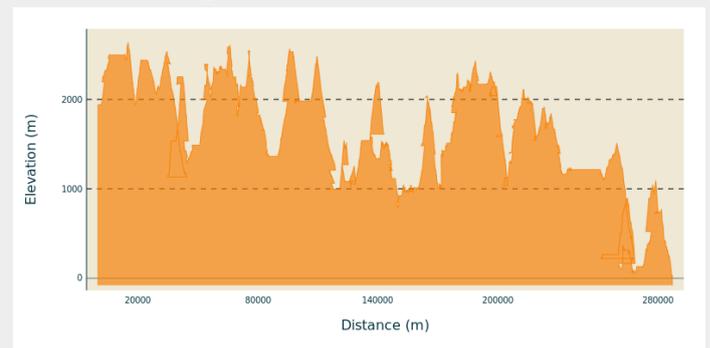
22. Valdieri

23. Ventimiglia

24. Vernante

25. Vinadio

Altimetric profile

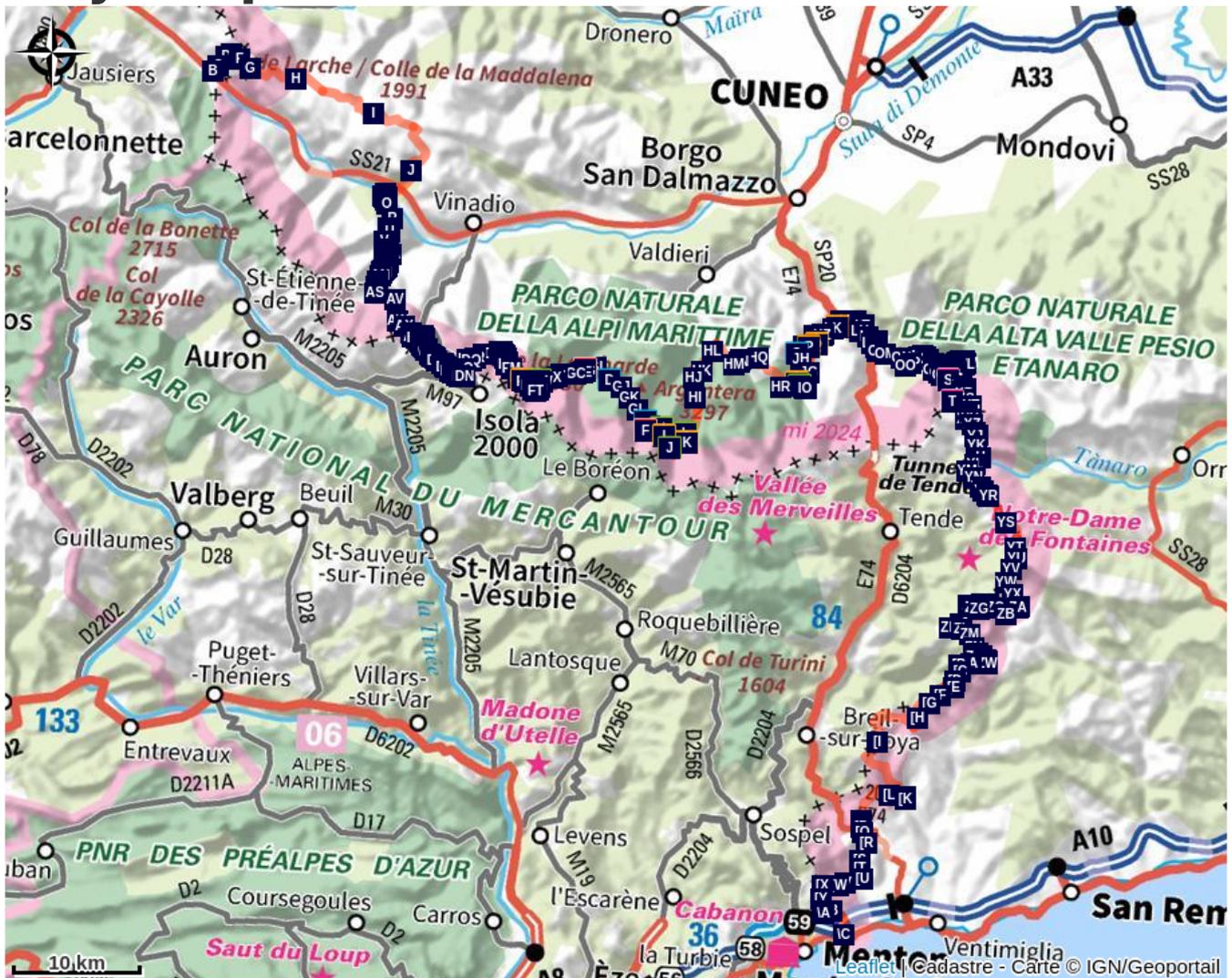


Min elevation 0 m Max elevation 0 m

Stages :

- 1.** GTAM - Stage 1: Col de Larche - Refuge Gardetta
16.8 km / 1236 m D+ / 6 h
- 2.** GTAM - Stage 2: Gardetta refuge - Sambuco
19.3 km / 571 m D+ / 6 h
- 3.** GTAM - Stage 3: Sambuco - Bagni di Vinadio
10.5 km / 1160 m D+ / 6 h
- 4.** GTAM - Stage 4: Bagni di Vinadio - Sant'Anna di Vinadio
12.1 km / 1136 m D+ / 6 h
- 5.** GTAM - Stage 5: Sant'Anna di Vinadio - Malinvern refuge
14.0 km / 886 m D+ / 5 h 30
- 6.** GTAM - Stage 6: Malinvern refuge - Valdieri spa
15.0 km / 872 m D+ / 6 h
- 7.** GTAM - Stage 7: Terme di Valdieri - Genova refuge
15.3 km / 1368 m D+ / 6 h
- 8.** GTAM - Stage 8: Genova refuge - San Giacomo d'Entracque
13.9 km / 545 m D+ / 5 h
- 9.** GTAM - Stage 9: San Giacomo d'Entracque - Trinità d'Entracque
13.7 km / 959 m D+ / 4 h 30
- 10.** GTAM - Stage 10: Trinità d'Entracque - Palanfrè
11.4 km / 1210 m D+ / 5 h
- 11.** GTAM - Stage 11 : Palanfrè - Agriturismo l'Agrifoglio
18.5 km / 1088 m D+ / 6 h 30
- 12.** GTAM - Stage 12 : Agriturismo l'Agrifoglio - Refuge Pian delle Gorre
14.4 km / 1273 m D+ / 6 h
- 13.** GTAM - Stage 13: Pian delle Gorre refuge - Don Barbera refuge
13.1 km / 1565 m D+ / 6 h
- 14.** GTAM - Stage 14: Refuge Don Barbera - Realdo
17.1 km / 881 m D+ / 6 h 30
- 15.** GTAM - Stage 15: Realdo - Allavena refuge
13.0 km / 1108 m D+ / 6 h
- 16.** GTAM - Stage 16: Allavena refuge - Gola di Gouta refuge
16.4 km / 861 m D+ / 5 h
- 17.** GTAM - Stage 17: Gola di Gouta refuge - Rochetta Nervina
17.2 km / 502 m D+ / 6 h
- 18.** GTAM - Stage 18: Rochetta Nervina - Torri
15.1 km / 1094 m D+ / 5 h
- 19.** GTAM - Stage 19: Torri - Grimaldi
18.0 km / 1318 m D+ / 6 h

On your path...



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|  The Valscura Barracks (A) |  The larch (B) |
|  The Valdieri Royal Hot Springs (C) |  The Lagarot di Lourousa (D) |
|  The Chiotas Reservoir, the Della Piastra dam and the Lake della Rovina (E) |  The Genova Figari Refuge (F) |
|  The cleared meadows (G) |  Le bouquetin des Alpes (H) |
|  The Fenestrelle shelter (I) |  The Ibex of the Alps (J) |
|  The Piazzale dei Cannoni (K) |  The bearded vulture (L) |
|  The Banned Wood of Palanfrè (M) |  The Beech (N) |

All useful information

On your path...



The Valscura Barracks (A)

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 Druso. 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 larch (B)

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



The Valdieri Royal Hot Springs (C)

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 (D)

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 (E)

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 (F)

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



✿ The cleared meadows (G)

At the highest altitudes there are cleared meadows, the typical alpine pastures; they are composed of herbaceous species capable of covering soils normally closed to woody species, which, due to the very short vegetative period, cannot find suitable conditions for their development. Grazing by wild ungulates and, sometimes, by domestic sheep affects their composition, even if the most severe factor for species selection is represented by the climate.

Attribution : Cati Caballo



🐐 Le bouquetin des Alpes (H)

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 (I)

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 1st Reg. of the Alpine Corps, who was killed on the Ortigara during the First World War".

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj



The Ibex of the Alps (J)

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Attribution : Roberto Pockaj



The Piazzale dei Cannoni (K)

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 bearded vulture (L)

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 between 1,000 and 3,000 meters.

Attribution : Michelangelo Giordano



🕒 The Banned Wood of Palanfrè (M)

The town of Palanfrè is located at the foot of the steep pasture slopes of Costa Pianard, in a very risky position due to the fall of avalanches. To protect the town, since the early 18th century but probably also earlier, the cutting of the beech forest upstream of the houses had been banned (the "Bandi Campestri" in the archives of the municipality of Vernante, dated 1741, are the first written testimony of the state of protection of the forest). Since 1979, the beech forest has been part of the Palanfrè Woods and Lakes Nature Reserve and was then merged, in 1995, into the Maritime Alps Natural Park. The forest, of over 20 hectares, is only touched by the path: despite this, it is possible to admire the majesty of some of its trees.

Attribution : gianluca.giordano



🌿 The Beech (N)

The beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), a splendid tree with a gray and smooth bark and oval, intense green leaves, is often present in popular narratives as a magical tree inhabited by gnomes. It prefers shady slopes, up to 1800m above sea level, and can live over 300 years. It produces excellent wood, used for making barrels, tool handles and as fuel. The fruits, the beechnuts, are used as fodder for the pigs.

Attribution : Roberto Pockaj