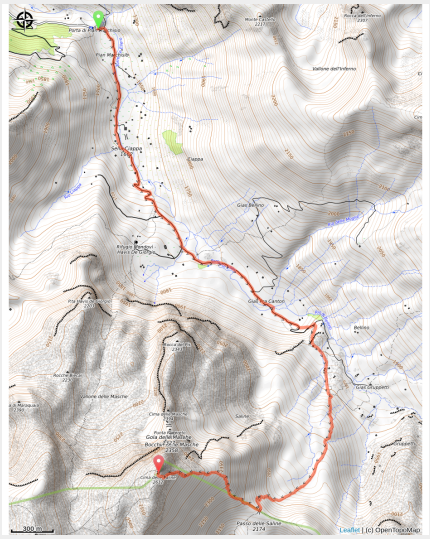
Il Passo e la Cima delle Saline

Panorama su Pian Marchisio, Cima delle Saline e Cima delle Masche (Roberto Pockaj)



The trail remains easy all the way to Passo delle Saline, although sudden fog (which is not uncommon in the summer) can make it difficult to find your way. The climb to Cima delle Saline is more challenging, not so much because of technical difficulties as because of its very steep and consistent gradient.

This trail winds through alpine pastures and meadows all the way to Passo delle Saline. It passes through one of the areas that displays the most evident and characteristic signs of karst phenomena, from erosion caused by runoff water on limestone rocks to the various sinkholes that can be seen along the way. The view from Cima delle Saline is also excellent.

Useful information

Practice : Hiking

Duration : 3 h 19

Length : 6.3 km

Trek ascent : 994 m

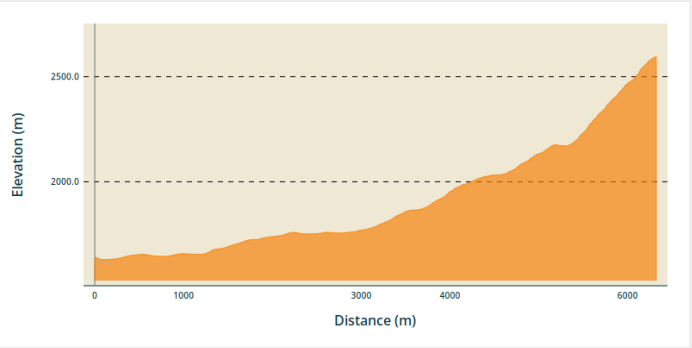
Difficulty : Hard

Type : Round trip

Trek

Departure : Pian Marchisio (1634 m)
Arrival : Cima delle Saline
Cities : 1. Briga Alta

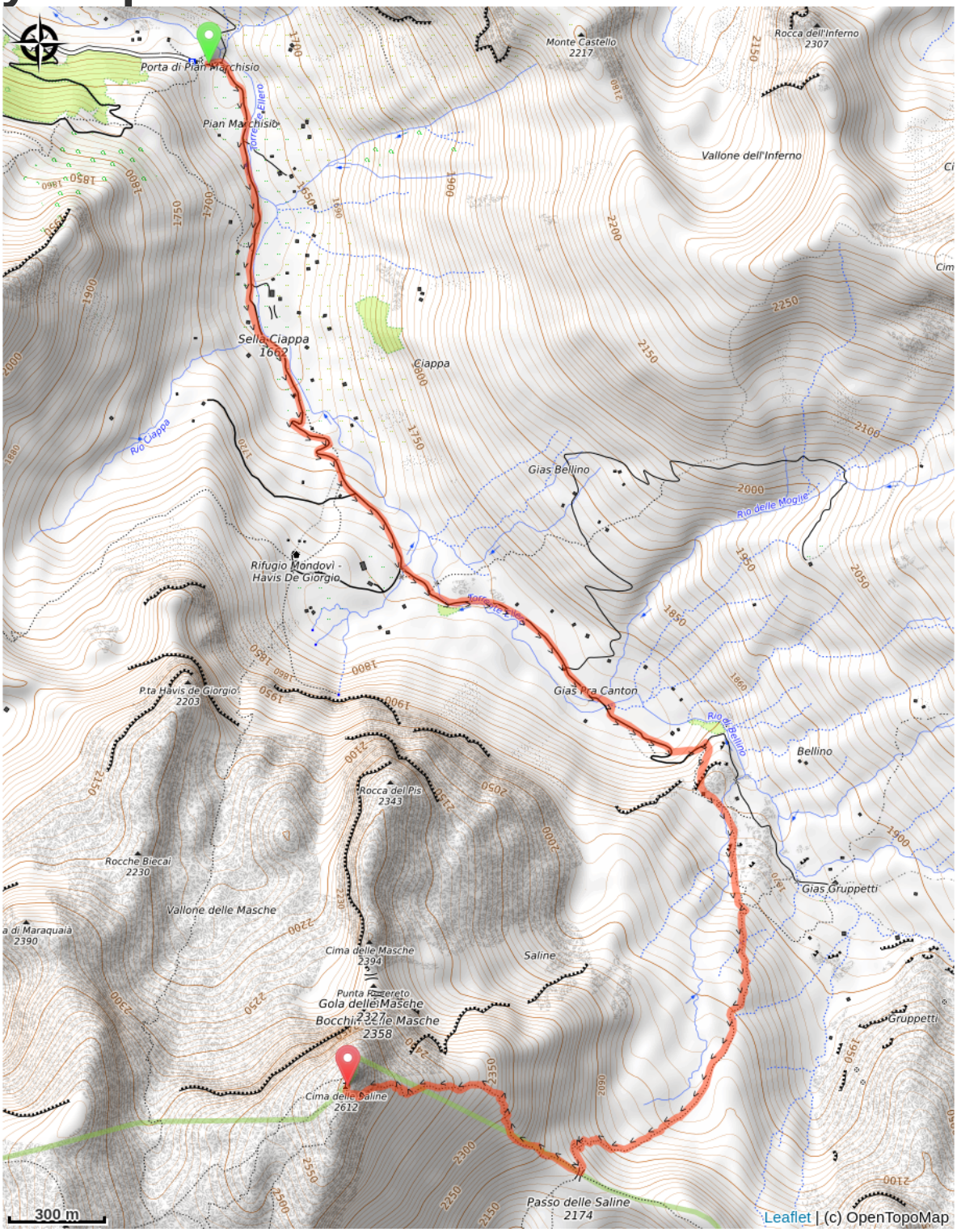
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 1629 m Max elevation 2594 m

From Porta di Pian Marchisio (or Pian Marchisa, 1634 m), follow the dirt road that descends into the wide pasture plain of Pian Marchisio and continues for a long stretch on level ground alongside the Ellero Stream.
With two hairpin turns (bypassed on the left by short shortcuts), the dirt road gains elevation, passes the trail on the right that leads directly to the mountain hut and a farm-pastoral track, and then forks.
Take the left fork, crossing the stream over a concrete bridge.
The dirt road continues on level ground and then fords the stream flowing at the bottom of the valley twice.
Just past Gias Pra Canton, the dirt road climbs a rocky outcrop with a couple of turns and reaches the junction on the right with the trail to Passo delle Saline.
Take the trail that continues up the rocky outcrop through a sort of gully and emerges onto the plateau above, near the ruins of a mountain pasture and the Inghiottitoio del Tumpi.
A trail through the meadows (marked by trail markers) runs alongside a long, nearly straight rocky outcrop; after keeping it on your left, you climb up it until you return to wide alpine meadows (the effects of limestone erosion on the exposed rocks are clearly visible along this section of the trail).
The trail (still marked by trail markers) turns to the right and climbs the slope, first with a few switchbacks, then with a steep traverse. A flat section leads further to the right (southwest), crossing a wide grassy basin to the foot of the Passo delle Saline.
The start of the final slope is steep, partly due to ill-advised shortcuts; only in the final part of the ascent do easier switchbacks reappear, leading up to the Passo delle Saline (2177 m, 2 hours and 15 minutes from the Porta di Pian Marchisio).
At the pass, take the trail that branches off to the right. Soon, the trail becomes a narrow path that climbs extremely steeply with very tight switchbacks, staying fairly close to the watershed at all times. The path, which is almost always visible, climbs for a long stretch up the slope through fine debris and small rocks until it reaches the base of a clearly visible rocky outcrop that seems to block the way. Instead, by veering slightly to the left, you can follow a sort of wide ledge that allows you to climb the final few dozen meters of elevation gain separating you from the summit of Cima delle Saline (2613 m, 1 hour and 05 minutes from Passo delle Saline).

On your path...


Porta di Pian Marchisio
Pian Marchisio
Monte Castello
2217
Rocca dell'Inferno
2307
Vallone dell'Inferno
Sella Ciappa
1662
Ciappa
Rio Ciappa
Gias Bellino
Rio delle Moglie
Rifugio Mondovì -
Havis De Giorgio
P.ta Havis de Giorgio
2203
Gias Pra Canton
Rio di Bellino
Bellino
Rocca del Pis
2343
Rocche Biecai
2230
Vallone delle Masche
Gias Gruppetti
Cima delle Masche
2394
Saline
Punta Pozzereto
Gola delle Masche
2327
Bocchin delle Masche
2358
Gruppetti
Cima delle Saline
2612
Passo delle Saline
2174
300 m
Leaflet | (c) OpenTopoMap

All useful information

How to come ?

Access

From Villanova Mondovì, drive up the Ellero Valley to Roccaforte Mondovì. Then turn left toward Rastello, where you'll take the "Pian Marchisio forest road." The road climbs for over 4 km, partly paved and partly unpaved (vehicles with high ground clearance are recommended), until you reach the Porta di Pian Marchisio.