

# Trekking

*"Beauty is continuous and constantly changing; it tells us at every step: "Stop"!*  
Milan Kundera

The Ligurian hinterland offers many itineraries for trekking among natural beauties and stunning sceneries. It is one of those landscapes known but still much to discover, to live fully with all the senses.

Loano is the perfect starting point for hiking lovers or simply for a brief trip with the family, to enjoy the magnificence that Ligurian nature has to offer.

## Hut "Pian delle Basse"

Journey Length: 7,5 km  
Highest altitude: 841 m  
Category: **FAMILY**  
Journey suitable for the whole family

The hut is located in a particularly pleasant environment for botany lovers. From Loano by car you reach Verzi and, following the indications for the hut, after few kilometers the asphalt road becomes a dirt road up to a large square, Castagnabanca, used as a parking lot; from the parking lot you go up walking along the path until you reach a small stream with a wooden bridge (the bridge of Martinetto). From there, after a quick climb, you will reach the refuge in 20 minutes.

With children the walking time is 40 minutes.

Once arrived there, by booking in advance with our assistance, you will have the chance to taste typical genuine Ligurian dishes that will make your stay in our land even more authentic.

## "Dry stone walls"

"Muretti a secco"

Journey Length: 7,5 km  
Highest altitude: 139 m  
Category: **FAMILY**  
Journey suitable for the whole family

A dry stone wall will be next to you as a journey mate for the entire path. It is a typical and secular Ligurian symbol of the rural civilization. The walls were built by hand with rough and unequal stones to delimit the terrace cultivations of olive groves and vineyards, as the land wasn't flat enough.

The construction's technique is still considered a real art and they have been declared intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO. In addition to the dry stone walls, you can also discover Borgo Castello, so called because below the stately Doria Castle, currently a private residence, which can be visited only during the FAI days.

## *Between thyme, broom and rosemary*

Journey Length: 14,5 km  
Highest altitude: 346 m  
Category: **EASY**  
Journey suitable for beginner hikers

During this itinerary you will be surrounded by the nature and you will have the opportunity to be inebriated with the scents of thyme and rosemary, two aromatic herbs typical of the Ligurian cuisine, that will follow you along the way. From the locality of Morteo, going up towards the right along a wide slope, you will enter a Mediterranean scrub forest walking among cyst and broom bushes, reaching the tiny Verzi's church and, after crossing it, the ground becomes stony and surrounded by maritime pines. Continuing along the dirt road on the ridge that leads to Ranzi we find a vegetation rich in chestnut trees and oaks that leads to the village of Santa Liberata, (where you can find a fountain with drinking water), and then return through the path CAI to the pretty little church of San Damiano. Along the itinerary there are several panoramic points from which you can admire the coast and the Ligurian hinterland.

## *San Pietrina da Verzi*

Journey Length: 11,4 km  
Highest altitude: 505 m  
Category: **EASY**  
Journey suitable for beginner hikers

The walk starts from Verzi (m. 180 above sea level) and skirting the countryside and olive groves you reach first the area of Morteo and then the village of Losano. From the village of Boissano you take an ancient mule track, passing next to an animals' fence, it's easy in fact to meet some cows or goats. In the first stretch the path is quite shady but later it becomes open with an intrusive Mediterranean scrub, and finally leads to the green areas of the meadows of the small church of San Pietrino, the perfect place for spring outings and picnics. After a picturesque clearing, the path is a continuous up and down that in the final part of the excursion, leads to the small country church of Santa Libera: from its churchyard you will have a view that goes down from the hills to the coast.

## *Monte Piccaro*

The "Piccaro" mount

Journey Length: 2,9 km  
Highest altitude: 300 m  
Category: **EASY**  
Journey suitable for beginner hikers

From Borghetto, along the Aurelia road in the direction of Ceriale, just after the last buildings, there is the new stairway which is the starting point of the itinerary. The walk to Piccaro is a brief excursion, but quite technical and steep since the summit of the mountain is reached in a short time. The route is absorbed in the Mediterranean stain, between olive groves, maritime pines, corbezzoli plants and the scent of the thyme and the brooms in flower. You can enjoy a wonderful 180° panoramic view of the coast, from Capo Noli to the Gallinara Island and the lowlands of Borghetto and Albenga. The path climbs halfway up the east side of the mountain and with a turn reaches the saddle just below the summit.

A few steps and you arrive at the panoramic point where there is a beautiful chapel with the Madonnina and the top of Monte Piccaro is not far away.

## Rocca dell'Aia

Journey Length: 5,2 km  
 Highest altitude: 772 m  
 Category: **MEDIUM**  
 Journey suitable for habitual hikers

The starting and arrival point of this ring-route is the parking lot of Castagnabanca reachable from Verzi. It is a path in the green where you walk among the bushes of arboreal heather and, after only 10 minutes of walking, appears almost from nowhere a stately quartzite tower: the "Rocca dell'Aia", also known as "Rocca dell'Avio"; from there it will seem inaccessible, but once you reach its base, you will realize that there are many climbing routes with nice fanciful names like: the way "of the chimneys", the way of the "flying goats" or even that "of the guardian of the fauns". Along the way back there are several panoramic points to admire and photograph from above the city of Loano.

## Maremontana K25

Journey Length: 19,2 km  
 Highest altitude: 844 m  
 Category: **MEDIUM**  
 Journey suitable for habitual hikers

This itinerary is the "easy" route of the Maremontana trail race. After passing at the base of the awesome Convent of Monte Carmelo, you will pass in front of the Church of Nostra Signora della Mercede, known locally as the Church of Rolandette, to take the mule track, lined with olive trees, which leads to the panoramic point of the churchyard of San Damiano. Surrounded by the Mediterranean scrub we reach a water supply point in the Borgata Santa Libera in Ranzi, after which the path goes on through a thicker vegetation of mainly pines, oaks but also holm oaks, beeches, chestnuts and hazelnuts and in the right seasons it is also likely to collect some mushrooms. After the so called "Colle delle Pere" (Hill of the Pears) you can still see the ruins of trenches used in various periods up to the last war and then reach the hilly area of San Martino (m. 450), considered since ancient times, a sacred place as a Paleo-Christian necropolis.

## Gira del Monte Carmo

Journey Length: 15,4 km  
 Highest altitude: 1380 m  
 Category: **MEDIUM+**  
 Journey suitable for habitual hikers

The itinerary is remarkably gratifying, it is the right journey for hikers who are not afraid to make a little extra effort to explore the area to the fullest. Starting from an altitude of a few hundred meters above sea level, from Verzi, you can reach the first real "alpine" summit of the Ligurian Alps overlooked by a large cross overlooking the sea of Loano. From the top you can enjoy a naturalistic view of inestimable beauty that on a sunny day can range from Corsica to Monte Rosa. By using an orientation table, you can climb down from the wooded north side of Monte Carmo until we reach a dirt road at "Giogo di Giustenice". From here an easy path allows you to reach in a short time the Hut "Pian delle Bosse" (m. 841), in the meantime you will be able to stepping back in time along ancient snowfields still well preserved. After a providential refreshment, you can come back to the starting point by a steep slope.

# *Il Sentiero delle Terre Alte*

"The highlands trail"

The "Sentiero delle Terre Alte" ("Highlands Trail") is a tribute to the beauty of the locations in the hinterland of western Savona, a long and scenic route that connects the entire arc of the territory from Toirano to Spotorno.

Along the way, you will cross wonderful natural landscapes with various characteristics: woods, pinewoods, Mediterranean scrub, barren and rocky areas accessible by Via Ferrata (rock route facilitated by the presence of wire ropes, iron steps) and wide expanses of lush, green fields that offer wonderful blooms.

Following the stages of this network of paths you can admire the characteristic Ligurian buildings: perched villages, dry stone walls, medieval bridges, stone houses used as shelters by shepherds and travelers, fortresses, remains of mills and lime kilns and amazing views of the sea. The area is scattered with several testimonies of practices, uses and customs of a recent world, but unfortunately now lost.

The itinerary is divided into six stages, each one has different characteristics, and it is possible to do them at different times and stages as they have an easy access from the coast.

## **First stage: The ring of Toirano**

Degree of difficulty: excursionist

Loop path of about 9 km - 3.5 hours of walking from Toirano to Balestrino (539 m) and back.

## **Second stage: Toirano - Pian delle Bosse**

Degree of difficulty: excursionistic

Walk around 9.8 km - 4.5 hours, up to the hut of Pian delle Bosse (841 m).

Possibility of overnight stay at the hut, during the opening period.

## **Third stage: Pian delle Bosse - Colle del Melogno**

Degree of difficulty: excursionist

Route around 15.75 km - 7 hours of walking up to Colle del Melogno.

## **Fourth stage: Colle del Melogno - Pian dei Corsi**

Level of difficulty: tourist

Route from Colle del Melogno to Pian dei Corsi - about 2.5 hours walking.

## **Fifth stage: Pian dei Corsi - Colla San Giacomo**

Level of difficulty: excursionist

Route from Pian dei Corsi to Colla San Giacomo - about 2 hours and 15 minutes of walking.

## **Sixth stage: Colla San Giacomo - Spotorno**

Level of difficulty: excursionist

Last route that connects the Colla di San Giacomo to Spotorno seaside resort – walking time 5 hours and 30 minutes.