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Discovering  
Rural Europe

# SUMMARY ROADBOOK

## DISCOVERING THE APENNINES

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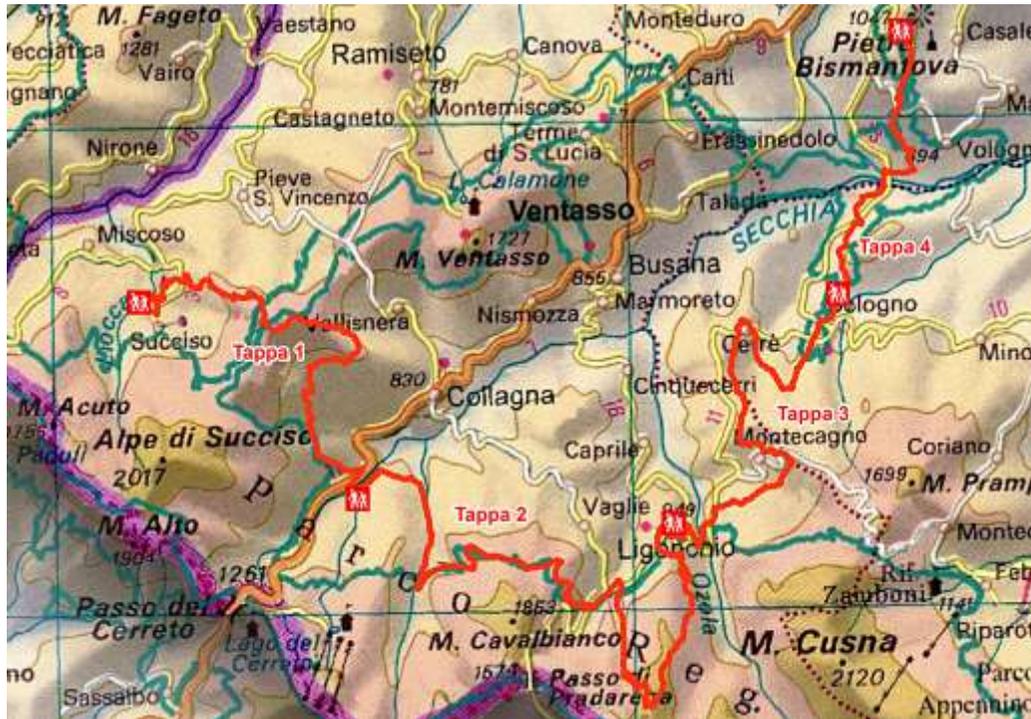
## TOPIC OF THE ROUTE:

Discovering the Apennines

## ONE HIGHLIGHT TITLE OF THE ROUTE:

*The Alta Via dei Parchi and the Villages of the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park*

## SCHEMATIC TRAIL MAP WITH NUMBER OF STAGES:



## SMALL ARTICLE ABOUT THE HIGHLIGHTS:

The trail begins in the village of Succiso and connects with Cerreto Alpi along the “ancient shepherds’ way”: these village communities are still thriving and very enterprising, breathing life back into these areas and contrasting the phenomenon of depopulation.

In Cerreto Alpi, visitors and excursionists can see for themselves the cultural impact left by the cultivation of chestnuts, an important food source for the Apennine populations from the Middle Ages through to the end of the Second World War. A hut where chestnuts were once dried has been renovated and now produces chestnut flour and guests can even spend the night in this old mill. Numerous dry-stone walls can be seen here, as well as cobblestone paths. The path continues deep into the forest surrounding Rio Re refuge, then to Ligonchio, where a Liberty-style hydroelectric power station dating from 1922 has been converted into an educational centre for activities on the themes of water and energy. Then, after passing through the villages of Casalino, Montecagno and Sologno, the itinerary descends into the Valle dei Gessi, which dates from the Triassic period, before climbing to Pietra di Bismantova, helping visitors appreciate the geological treasures and peculiarities that are the key feature of this itinerary.

## **NAME OF THE ROUTE: Discovering the Apennines**

**INTRODUCTORY TEXT:** A fascinating itinerary that accompanies visitors on a journey to discover breathtaking views, as well as old Apennines villages and other historical treasures such as churches, ancient buildings, old mule tracks and cobbled paths.

### **DESCRIPTION OF EACH STAGE / DAY**

**DAY 1 – From Succiso to Cerreto Alpi:** we begin at Succiso Nuovo National Park Visitor Centre from where we climb, enjoying panoramic views of the upper Enza Valley, dominated by the massif of Alpe di Succiso, as far as Mount Ledo, which overlooks Mount Ventasso and Alpe glacial cirque. From here we continue towards Scalucchia Pass from where, the opposite slope affords views of the upper Secchia Valley, which is dominated by the pyramid of Mount Cusna. From there, we follow the road as far as Valbona that is situated in the center of the large pastoral basin that affords spectacular views of Mount Casarola. Continuing, we reach Cerreto Alpi, one of the most charming villages in the upper Apennines surrounding Reggio Emilia.

**DAY 2 – From Cerreto Alpi to Ligonchio:** from Cerreto Alpi we descend to Riarbero Torrent, beyond which we climb again to the hamlet of Ospitaletto; from here we continue to Rio Re Refuge, where we can stop for lunch. The refuge was built in the 1920s as a forest barracks at the foot of Mount Sillano and stands in the heart of a

delightful fir wood. From the refuge, we climb to Lama di Rio Re and continuing via the mountain and Il Piano encampment we descend to the village of Ligonchio, where it is possible to book a visit to the Atelier of Water and Energy.

**DAY 3 – From Ligonchio to Sologno:** from Ligonchio we continue towards the tiny hamlets of Casalino and Montecagno. Once in Casalino, we head onto the SSP path (a trail dedicated to the Italian scientist Lazzaro Spallanzani) and in Montecagno, we continue, still following the Spallanzani path, to Cerrè, where we find prestigious architectural features (sandstone portals dating from the 15th-16th centuries). From there we reach Sologno.

**DAY 4 – From Sologno to Castelnovo nè Monti:** from Sologno, we take the path that descends to the Secchia River. Just before coming across the Secchia, we find the rural nucleus that was once part of Gacciola Mill. From here, we head into the spectacular Secchia Valley and its meandering river. Looming over the valley are steep slopes of Mount Rosso, where Triassic gypsum outcrops - some of the oldest rocks in the Apennines - emerge. Once across Pianello bridge, we continue on the SSP path as far as Pietra di Bismantova, where it is possible to take an excursion on the peak.



## GENERAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

**Difficulty Level:** E-hikers

**Situation:** -

**Number of stages / days:** 4 stages

**Total Distance:** 62,6 km

**Total estimated time:** 28,5 h

**Cumulative elevation gains:** +5048 m

**Cumulative elevation loss:** -5160 m

**Maximum altitude (m):** 1670 m (Il Monte)

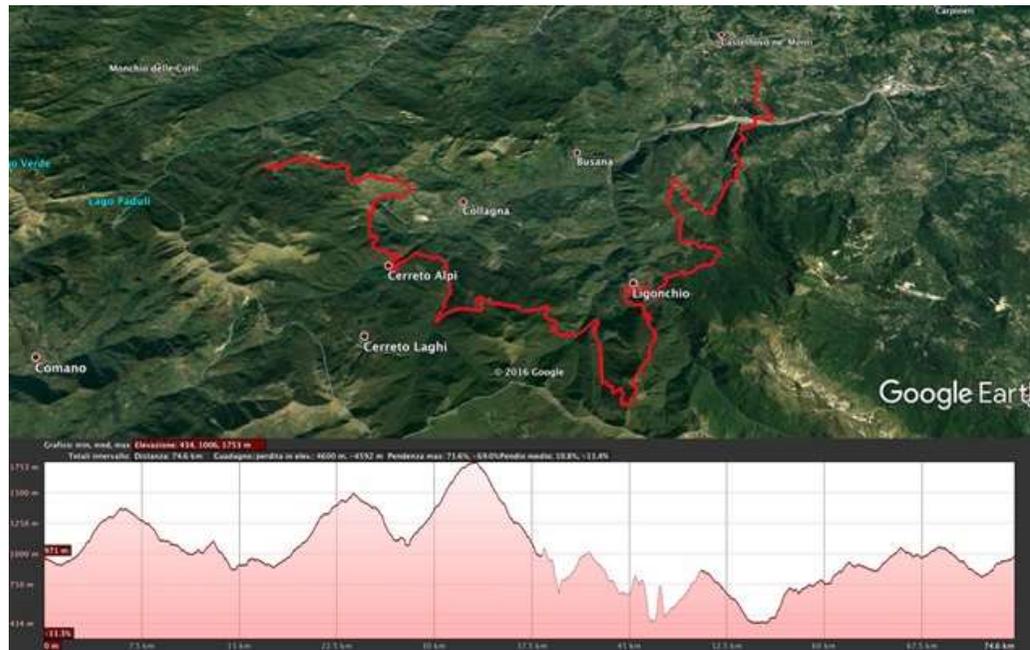
**Minimum altitude (m):** 432 (Fiume Secchia)

**Signposting:** red and white markings CAI (Club Alpino Italiano)

### **Additional information or advice:**

Although it does not have any particularly difficult stretches, we recommend tackling this itinerary only if you have a good level of training.

## General Topographic Profile:



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