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Discovering
Rural Europe

SUMMARY ROADBOOK

HIKER'S PARADISE

www.hikingeurope.net

TOPIC OF THE ROUTE:

Hiker's Paradise

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:

This is one of the most exciting stretches of the Alta Via dei Parchi trail. The itinerary, which is fairly demanding given that it features considerable differences in altitude along the way, begins at Berceto Cathedral, one of the most important religious buildings in the northern Apennines and, following a stretch of the modern-day Pilgrims' Way, leads to the ridge path, by way of the pastures on Mount Valoria and the limestone outcrops of Groppo del Vescovo, a geological site of regional importance. Crossing fields, some enclosed for use as pastureland for livestock, beechwoods and areas of reforestation, climbing and descending continuously, enjoying magnificent views of the Lunigiana region and the Apennines around Parma, we reach Lake Santo and the historical Italian Alpine Club Mariotti Refuge. On the second day, our focus is the ridge-top environment and upland meadows, which are dotted here and there with small lakes and ponds that fill the depressions left behind by ancient glaciers; Lake Bicchiere, Lake Scuro and Lagoni, Sillara and Compione lakes, all the way to Lake Verde and then Lake Ballano. From an environmental point of view, the third day is one of the most fascinating parts of the entire itinerary: Lake Verdarola, Lake Scuro and Lake Squincio, Ghiaccioni Plain and then Pietra Tagliata Pass and finally, the source of the Secchia River, just before reaching Cerreto Pass.

NAME OF THE ROUTE: Hiker's Paradise

INTRODUCTORY TEXT: An extremely beautiful yet demanding itinerary, with considerable differences in altitude along the way.

From Berceto Cathedral to Lake Santo Parmense and small lakes and ponds that fill the dips left by ancient glaciers and after Ghiaccioni Plain and then Pietra Tagliata Pass; finally, the source of the Secchia River, just before reaching Cerreto Pass.

DESCRIPTION OF EACH STAGE / DAY:

DAY 1 – From Berceto to Lake Santo Parmense: from Berceto Cathedral we follow the ancient Pilgrims' Way as far as Tugo. From there, we climb the woody ridge to reach Mount Valoria. We follow the ridge path, climbing and descending continuously across fields, some enclosed for livestock, and through small beechwoods and areas of reforestation, circling the gypsum rocks of Groppo del Vescovo before descending to Cirone Pass. We begin to climb again, through woods and over rocky outcrops, to the splendid pastures on Mount Tavola and then we tackle to climb of Mount Orsaro. We then descend to Braiola Hut before climbing again on the slope that descends from Mount Marmagna. This steep descent through a beechwood leads, through a reforested fir wood, to the banks of Lake Santo.

DAY 2 – From Lake Santo Parmense to Pratospilla: this is a beautiful, but very demanding stretch that offers

spectacular views and endlessly rises and falls through the heart of the western section of the park. The ridge environment and upland pastures are isolated and magnificent, dotted here and there with small lakes and ponds that fill the depressions left behind by ancient glaciers. A counterpoint to the extremely steep slopes that plummet towards the Lunigiana region are the gentler slopes of Emilia, with glacial basins separated by stratified spurs and vast fields of rocks smoothed by glacial abrasion, in which numerous small lakes nestle. This section ends in Prato Spilla, a tourist and ski resort, but before we get there we come across "Parco 100 Avventure", a forest adventure theme park

DAY 3 – From Pratospilla to Cerreto Pass:

from Prato Spilla we cross the ridge that descends from Cima Canuti, entering the basin of Lake Verdarola and from there, we continue through the wood to Lake Scuro. Soon after, we come across the path that descends to Lake Squincio and we reach Lake Paduli and just beyond it the Town of Sarzana Refuge, which stands close to the banks of Mount Acuto lake. We continue for a while at altitude and then descend steeply to Ghiaccioni, at the head of the valley of the Liocca Torrent, one of the most beautiful examples of a glacial cirque. From the valley bottom we once again begin to climb the wide valley dominated by the massif of Alpe di Succiso and from the ridge of the watershed, we cross fields and walk over large boulders, as far Pietra Tagliata Pass. A steep descent leads quickly to the source of the Secchia River. At the end of Prataccio Plain we head towards Ospedalaccio Pass.

Here we once again meet the ridge path that leads us to Cerreto Pass on an easy and panoramic walk.

PACKAGES RELATED TO THE ROUTE: The package's duration is 3 days and 2 nights.

The fee of the package includes: double room accommodation and full board, with jug of water at mealtimes and packed lunches included; environmental/excursion guide services as given in the itinerary; porter services for baggage; free gift to all participants; medical/baggage insurance for the duration of the itinerary and public liability insurance; VAT, taxes and services.

The package does not include: tips, any single room supplements; transfers to and from train stations or airports to reach the itinerary departure point; extras in general and anything not shown under "price includes".

Additional services with price: quotes for tastings of typical products, entrance fees and various types of customizations are available on request.



GENERAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

Difficulty Level: EE– skilled hikers

Situation: Berceto can be reached by train from Parma: the station located in Ghiare is connected to Berceto by bus; From Passo del Cerreto you can return to Reggio Emilia by bus passing through Castelnuovo ne' Monti; From Reggio Emilia you can reach several Italian cities by train.

Number of stages / days: 3 stages

Total Distance: 55 km

Total estimated time: 24,5 h

Cumulative elevation gain: +4760 m

Cumulative elevation loss: -4140 m

Maximum altitude (m): 1859 m (Monte Sillara)

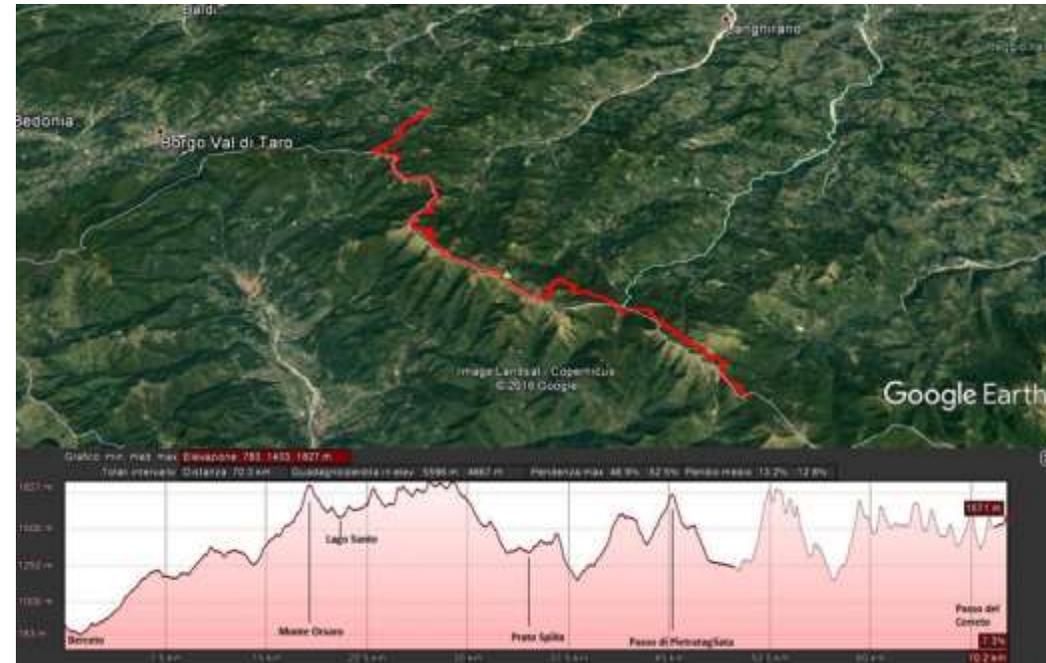
Minimum altitude (m): 808 m (Berceto)

Signposting: red and white markings CAI (Club Alpino Italiano) and logo Alta Via dei Parchi

Additional information or advice: We recommend tackling this itinerary in Alta Via only if you have a good

level of training; some parts of the ridge require a good deal of confidence as the terrain is rocky and fairly steep.

General Topographic Profile:



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