

Change of scenery guaranteed for this immersion in one of the best preserved Piedmontese valleys: the Val Maira.

Nestled on the Italian foothills of Queyras and Ubaye, the handful of villages that make up this secret valley will enchant you with the authenticity of its architecture, gastronomy and inhabitants. Also known as the Perle Occitane, Val Maira offers a wide range of hikes, in green pasture, on the edge of enchanting lakes or on a ridge with striking panoramas. From the guest houses of hamlets or typical villages, you will enjoy an incomparable welcome under the generous sun of the Southern Alps. The exceptional gastronomy of this little piece of Piedmont will enchant you! Tasty dishes with good smells of Antipasti will delight the taste buds of young and old.

Two hosting ranges for your stages will satisfy the desires of each!

PROGRAMME

Day 1: Chiappera - Tour of the Rocca Provencale.

Meet in Chiappera, one of the villages nestling at the foot of the border, where you can park your vehicle and leave your luggage at your hostel (rooms available from 4.30pm). From this charming village, you'll head up to the bottom of the Maurin valley, dominated by the very distinctive Rocca Provençale... This impressive peak is well worth a visit! It's a beautiful walk between lush green mountain pastures and views over the upper Maïra valley, and you'll appreciate the warmth and hospitality of our Locanda Occitane from the very first evening.

HIKING TIME: 5h00

ASCENT: + 620 m

DESCENT: - 620 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a locanda or refuge depending on the option chosen

Day 2: The balconies of Saretto and the sources of the Maïra

Along with Chiappera and Ponté Maira, Saretto is one of the 3 villages in the upper Maurin valley, dominated by prestigious border mountains. This village, bordered by its hydroelectric reservoir, was also the scene of the signing of agreements between the French and Italian maquisards in the fight against the Nazis in May 1944.

Leaving from Chiappera, the easy loop we are proposing today, on a balcony overlooking the Upper Maira Valley, will give you the opportunity to appreciate the beautiful panoramas of these villages as well as the vibrant flora of this massif. Sometimes in the forest, sometimes in the mountain pastures, the green horizons of the Val Maïra are enchanting. A short diversion to the Sorgente del Maïra (Maïra springs), a veritable resurgence in the middle of the forest, is a refreshing break.

HIKING TIME: 5 hours

ASCENT: + 480 m

DESCENT: - 480 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a locanda or refuge depending on the option chosen

TRANSFER AT THE START OF YOUR HIKE: you leave on foot directly from your accommodation.

Day 3: Elva and the San Giovanni Pass

Elva is a village "in a class of its own"! Nestling in the foothills of the Sampeyre Pass, on the border between the Val Varaita and the Val Maïra, Elva's south-facing position makes it one of the best villages in the world in which to live! The road up to the village is spectacular, with a string of small hamlets on the adret, dominated by the imposing Pelvo (3,064 m), offering preserved architecture typical of the valley. Today's short loop around Elva will allow you to take the time to discover this rich heritage; the church of Santa Maria Assunta, a veritable jewel of Romanesque art, is a must-see. Here you can admire 15th-century frescoes attributed to Hans Clemer, long known as "the Master of Elva".

HIKING TIME: 3h00

ASCENT: + 380 m

DESCENT: - 380 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a locanda or refuge depending on the option chosen

TRANSFER AT THE START OF YOUR HIKE: 35-minute transfer with your vehicle to get to Elva.

Day 4: Preit valley and Canoisio, Lago Nero

The Preit valley below Monte Oserto and the sculptural Rocca Maja form the backdrop to your walk to Lago Nero. This is an enchanting valley, with its peaceful mills nestling in the torrents and its clusters of hamlets, which you'll come across again and again as you make your way to the start of your hike or along your itinerary.

Lac Noir is one of the jewels of the Val Maira. It's a beautiful glacial lake with turquoise reflections, surrounded by blueberries, larches and rhododendrons. Stretch out on the edge of the lake and admire the magnificent panorama...

HIKING TIME: 4h30

ASCENT: + 650 m

DESCENT: - 650 m

ACCOMMODATION : in a locanda or refuge depending on the option chosen

TRANSFER AT THE START OF YOUR HIKE: 30-minute transfer with your vehicle to the Preit valley.

Day 5: The hamlets of Marmora

Stroll through the history of the villages, rediscover the wisdom of the ancients and with it the balance of a unique nature, source of life... such is the programme for this day's walk between the magnificent hamlets of Marmora.

As you can see, today's itinerary won't take you to the wide open spaces at altitude, but rather to the heart of an exceptional heritage. We invite you to experience this little corner of the world at its own pace: to appreciate the love of art and beauty that the inhabitants of these valleys have wanted to share with you today.

HIKING TIME: 4h00

ASCENT: + 450 m

DESCENT: - 450 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a locanda or refuge depending on the option chosen

TRANSFER AT THE START OF YOUR HIKE: you leave on foot directly from your accommodation.

Day 6: Macra, the Cyclamen Trail

On your way home, we suggest an easy route through one of the villages on the banks of the Maira: Macra. Here, at an altitude of 875m, vines were abundantly cultivated on the sunny hillsides, producing a sparkling white wine that was much appreciated in the valley. It's on these same hillsides that we propose this relaxing walk in the form of a botanical trail, with the cyclamen bursting into bloom at the end of July. The chapel of St. Peter and the pretty viewpoints along the way will bring your stay in the Val Maira to a beautiful close.

HIKING TIME: 3h30

ASCENT: + 350 m

DESCENT: - 350 m

ACCOMMODATION: in a locanda or refuge depending on the option chosen

TRANSFER AT THE START OF YOUR HIKE: 15-minute transfer with your vehicle to get to Macra.

FICHE PRATIQUE

ACCUEIL

The start of your trek is in the village of Chiappera, 12021 Acceglio (province of Cuneo, Italy).
GPS coordinates: 44.49254N 6.92294E.

You can leave your luggage at your accommodation, the details of which will be sent to you with the travel pack that you will receive by post.

Access

By car :

Four main access points: Fréjus tunnel, Montgenèvre pass, Agnel pass or Larche pass.

By plane:

Turin airport (Italy) + car hire.

By train:

Turin railway station (Italy) or Briançon SNCF railway station (France) + car hire.

DISPERSION

In Macra in the early afternoon.

NIVEAU

Medium level (2/3 boots)

Altitude of accommodation: 1500m

Length of stages: 3h30 to 5h per day

Average height gain: 500m per day

Maximum ascent: 650m

Maximum altitude: 2400m

Type of terrain: easy, varied mid-mountain trails and terrain.

You carry only your gear for the day.

Variations: other, more difficult hikes will be offered on each of your days in the Val Maira. So you can "do more" on any given day.

Access to the walks: a semi-itinerant circuit with access to the starting points of the itineraries either directly on foot from your accommodation, or with a limited transfer (15 to 35 minutes) to reach the main villages of the Val Maira.

HEBERGEMENT

Your stops will be spread over the main valleys that make up the Val Maira. We will select for you two or three places to stay that we feel best represent the welcome and culture of this exceptional valley. These establishments are a little different from our traditional hotels, with a limited number of rooms, a personalised welcome and a location more in the hamlets. As capacity is limited, we may have to change the order of the stages in order to be able to reserve the "best" accommodation for you, depending on availability.

Chiappera : Locanda la Scuola chez Stéfano or Locanda Provençale

Ponte Maira: Locanda Mistral

Marmora: Locanda Lou Pitavin at Marco's or Locanda Ceaglio at Fulvia's

Elva: La Locanda d'Elva

Two types of accommodation are available (in fact, each of the above structures offers 2 types of accommodation):

- A "Locanda" section (hotel service with typical, refined rooms, private bathrooms, linen provided)
- A 'refugio' section (shared rooms in a gite or refuge, with bed linen and towels not provided).

Meals are provided in the same way for both types of accommodation.

Food

Half-board from dinner on D1 to breakfast on D6.

Dinner and breakfast are taken at the accommodation.

The cuisine is meticulous, hearty and typical of this valley. Most meals are prepared with produce from the valley's farms, and breakfasts are full, often savoury and sweet.

On your itinerary, you will find few local grocery shops for your picnic supplies.

Accommodation can provide picnics, but remember to order them the day before.

Picnics can be booked by La Vie Sauvage at the accommodation if you take the option, otherwise you will find the shops you need in the villages. You can also book them with the accommodation providers on arrival for the following day.

TRANSFERTS INTERNES

With your vehicle.

PORTAGE DES BAGAGES

Without luggage transport: You carry your personal belongings for the duration of your stay in your vehicle.

GROUPE

Tour available for two or more participants...

ENCADREMENT

There is no guide on this trip.

Before your departure, we will provide you with a road book specially designed for this tour, containing precise instructions that will allow you to explore and hike in complete freedom.

To fully enjoy and appreciate your hiking trip, you must be able to ensure your autonomy in the field with the documents provided.

MATERIEL FOURNI

EQUIPEMENT INDIVIDUEL A PREVOIR

Clothing :

- 1 sun hat or cap
- 1 scarf
- 1 hat and/or headband

- T-shirts (1 for 2 or 3 days' walking). Avoid cotton, which takes a long time to dry; prefer short-sleeved t-shirts (breathable material) in Capilene (Patagonia), Dryflo (Lowe Alpine), Light Effect (Odlo), etc.
 - 1 undershirt (notes as above) or long-sleeved shirt
 - 1 fleece jacket
 - 1 pair of shorts
 - 1 pair of trekking trousers
 - 1 pair of comfortable evening trousers
 - 1 light, simple Gore-tex jacket
 - 1 rain cape
 - 1 pair of waterproof overtrousers (optional)
 - 1 swimming costume
 - Underwear
 - Walking socks (1 pair for 2 to 3 days' walking). Avoid tennis socks (cotton), which take a long time to dry and carry a high risk of blisters; prefer Coolmax socks, for example.
 - 1 pair of hiking boots with good ankle support (Vibram-type soles)
 - 1 pair of sandals or casual shoes for the evening.
- The list of clothing should be adapted to suit the season.

Equipment :

- 1 pair of high quality sunglasses
- 1 pair of telescopic poles (optional): make ascents and descents easier, and are very useful on uneven or slippery terrain
- 1 water bottle (minimum 1.5 litres)
- 1 headlamp (optional)
- 1 pocket knife (to be packed in checked baggage)
- 1 small money pouch (preferably waterproof)
- Toiletries: preferably biodegradable products (CAO biodegradable liquid soap is available)
- 1 towel: there are some that dry quickly: Packtowl brand
- Earplugs (optional)
- Toilet paper
- Sun cream + lip balm
- 1 sheet if you are on the Refuge package

Personal pharmacy :

- Your usual medicines
- Vitamin C or polyvitamin
- Painkillers: preferably paracetamol
- Elastic adhesive tape (Elastoplast type, 6 cm wide)
- Sets of adhesive dressings + disinfectant pads
- Double skin (SOS Ampoules by Spenco, available in sports shops, chemists, drugstores, etc.)
- Mosquito repellent. (optional)

LE PRIX COMPREND

- Travel documents
- Half-board accommodation
- Registration and organisation fees
- Local taxes.

LE PRIX NE COMPREND PAS

- Insurance
- Return transport to the departure point
- Drinks and personal expenses
- Picnics.