

# HIKING THE TRAILS OF THE MAIRA VALLEY

## The undiscovered beauty of the Western Italian Alps

Our journey starts in Turin, the capital of Piedmont region and first capital of Italy, a vibrant city with remarkable architectural attractions and wonderful cuisine. Once arrived, we will be transferred to our destination, the Maira Valley. Situated in south western Piedmont on the border to France, it is a hiker's paradise: its remote location and yet to be explored wonders make it the perfect place to experience the true beauty of the Alps, with their traditions and endless paths.

### **28 July: arrival**

We start off in Acceglio, a small and once prosperous town at the bottom of the valley, right on the border to France. Surrounding it are vast pastures and small hamlets crowned by several 3000m peaks.



*A panoramic view of Acceglio*

Our guest house is located in Saretto, a small village 10 minutes away from Acceglio, right at the start of many trails. Today you may want to relax or come with me to discover the upper valley.

### **Chiappera circular walk**

We start our trekking week with a simple but scenic hike around the valley to ease our legs into what will be a tough hiking week! Starting from Saretto, we will ascend towards a small but well-marked path that leads us to Chiappera, a picturesque village popular with the local mountain lovers for its perfect location as a base for many summer treks and winter sports.

Walking through forests, lavender bushes and scenic spots, we will then return to our guest house via the beautiful trail that goes along the Saretto Lake and reaches the nearby village. For the last stretch, we'll be following a gravel road through the pines directly to Saretto.

Walking distance: approx. 8km

Walking time: 4 hours

Difficulty: 7/10

Elevation gain: 250m



### **29 July: Monte Maniglia summit, 3177m**

Today we will attempt to summit one of the many 3000m peaks in the area, the Monte Maniglia. We will be transferred to Chiappera by the local Sherpa Bus, and will start the hike right at the bottom of the emblematic Rocca Provenzale. Walking toward the French border, we will gently ascend the Maurin Valley and soon see the majestic Brec de Chambeyron (3389m) on our left. We will approach the peak via a stoney, scenic path, and reach the summit to have a wonderful view over both the Italian and the French sides.



Walking Distance: approx. 15km

Walking time: 7 hours

Difficulty: 10/10

Elevation gain: 1300m



### **30 July: sightseeing day**

Today we dedicate some time to exploring some local museums, historical churches and hidden away villages, going through breath-taking hand carved tunnels and overlooking massive ravines. If you don't feel like joining, you have the option to stay at the guest house and sunbathe, go for a short hike or head to the lake to have a refreshing swim.

### **31 July: Cavalla Pass, Lake Apsoi and Lake Visaisa circular hike**

On our fourth day, we start our hike from the campsite located at the springs of the river Maira (1628m), just above Saretto. From there, we walk through pines on a big gravel road that was built by soldiers during the second world war, and head left towards the Cavalla (mare in English) Pass at 2535m and the Munie Lakes, the Apsoi Lake and, after lunch, the Visaisa Lake. This makes for a very scenic hike, with plenty of photo opportunities! For the more intrepid hikers, there is the option to summit the Mount Soubeyran at 2701m and walk to the French side to admire more beautiful valleys and lakes. We come back to the same campsite, walk down to Saretto and relax.



Walking distance: approx. 15km

Walking time: 7 hours

Difficulty: 9/10

Elevation gain: 907m

### **1 August: Stropo and Mount Bettone circular hike**

Today we go down to lower altitudes to admire a different kind of landscape, still incredibly rewarding for our eyes. We drive to Stropo and start our walk from the first of the many villages we'll see today. Crossing streams, bridges and cols, we can admire the traditions and architecture of the valley, as well as some of the most beautiful panoramic views of the week.

Walking distance: anywhere between 10 and 15km

Walking time: between 3 and 5 hours

Difficulty: 8/10

Elevation gain: max. 900m



### **2 August: Punta della Madonnina**

Today we finish our hiking week with a hike to a beautiful mountain that looks over Acceglio and the mountains surrounding it. Starting in Saretto, we walk along easy paths, through old hamlets and over powerful rivers to finally reach the top of this mountain and enjoy the stunning views it offers.

Distance: 14km

Time: 5 hours

Elevation gain: 450m

Difficulty: 7/10

### **3 August: leaving day**

It is time to say goodbye to the mountain and go back to civilisation! We have breakfast at our guest house and relax until, around 12:30pm, our Sherpa bus will take us back to the airport.



*View over Turin and its Mole Antonelliana*

### **DATES:**

28<sup>th</sup> July – 3<sup>rd</sup> August

### **COSTS:**

Total cost (including accomodation, transfers, breakfast, dinner and all guided hikes): £650

Packed lunches can be purchased at the hotel.

Please make sure you purchase your travel insurance before the trip (including helicopter rescue).

**RECOMMENDED FLIGHTS:**

28 July:

06:45 Ryanair flight from London Stansted to Turin

3<sup>rd</sup> August:

17:00 British Airways flight from Turin to London Gatwick

I will be waiting at arrivals and leaving with the minivan at 10:30am. Making your own way to our guesthouse would be rather lengthy and expensive.

**NOTE:**

The hiking on this trip is very tough and requires an excellent physical condition and level of fitness. Please contact me if you would like more info!