

## Mare e Monti

### A multi-day walking tour of Northwest Corsica

On the ferry between Marseille and Ajaccio you have a good chance that you have already met him. Once in the port of this capital of Corsica, you can hardly avoid him. A life-size statue on the place Foche, porcelain busts in windowsill-sized format and hand-in-the-coat figurines, with the well-known stitch on, in souvenir shops, in restaurants and in other occasions: Napoleon Bonaparte. Reportedly, the child already loved soldier playing and leading. Or better: take charge. Was sent to France at the age of nine to learn French and then to start a military career. The latter training led him to become a dictator of stature. But also on the islands of Elba, as an exile, and on Saint Helena, as a condemned loser. While Corsica is really by far the most beautiful island of these three. I had never left this place.



Forêt de Bonifatu (Google )

### Île de beauté

Island of beauty. The Parc Naturel Régional de Corse. A French island in the Mediterranean Sea with fantastic, capricious nature, old villages, the ever-present azure blue sea with fabulous beaches and through the heart of the island the mountains with its many dozens of peaks above 2000 meters. In Corsica you can sunbathe on a soft white sandy beach and have a view of the frozen and snowy peaks of, for example, Monte Cinto of 2706 meters.

Over such a mountain top runs the world famous - and heavy - GR 20, 200 km long, from Calenzana to Conca. This route alone attracts thousands of runners to the island every year. But there are more routes. We previously described the Mare a Mare Sud on this website.

Following are some experiences with the Mare and Monti: sea and mountains.



**View of the GR 20**

**The Mare e Monti is a signposted path**, it winds through the northwest of the island. A route full of climbs and descents, but the aforementioned GR 20 is heavier ("everyone" say....)

The route runs between Calenzana and Cargèse and is a total of 135 kilometers long. To walk the entire route you have to count on 10 days. And then you see something! Rugged mountains, deep gorges, ancient villages, the famous maquis (shrub), sometimes dense chestnut forests, strawberry trees and frequent sea views.

The large stone-paved mule path through the Gorges de Spelunca, partly along the Porto River, partly through forest and partly along steep rock walls. The result of a process of erosion lasting millions of years, during which the river has drilled through the granite landscape. At the Genoese bridges - worth it in itself - there are swimming pools where you can swim.

The Scandola peninsula, a Reserve Naturelle, with its mighty "red" rocks in a deep blue sea, of an indescribable beauty. This peninsula is on the World Heritage List of the United Nations. If you are at Bocca a Croce you have a view of it. Bet you're struggling to walk any further? You rarely see such a view again. Via *the variant* you can continue to Girolata, for example for a place to sleep in a kind of *bunkhouse*. Only accessible by boat or on foot. The Forêt de Bonifatu with hundred-year-old trees surrounded by mountain ranges, an oasis of shade, colors, freshness and splashing rivers. Have you always wanted to feel at one with nature?

Give it a try here.



## Scandola

In the village of Tuarelli, coming from the south, you walk over ponte Vecchiu (the old bridge over the Fango) into the valley of the same name. Together with the Forêt de Falasorma, the valley of the Fango forms a UNESCO biosphere reserve. The river that has managed to wear its way into the rocks over the centuries. Wonderful! In the evergreen valley you can admire the mouflon, the bearded vulture and the golden eagle.



Bocca a Croce

## General route tips

- The route is marked with orange stripes.
- An excellent guide with two long-distance hiking trails in Corsica: *the Mare a Mare ende Mare e Monti, incl. the Mare e Monti Nord*. 176 pp. Scale hiking maps: 1:75.000. Publisher: Rother Verlag.
- The route is not flat for a moment. And the loose pebbles and pebbles on the path are numerous!
- 10-15 kilometers per day is a great achievement.
- Accommodation: gîtes, sometimes a hotel. Or a campsite. Free camping is not allowed. You can ask the manager of a gîte if you can stand on his property. Or get permission from the local police.
- Try to arrange your accommodation in advance. Indicated opening hours of a gîte on a website often do not correspond to reality. This is also France where, among other things, the service to hikers and tourists decreases considerably.
- Finding onward transport from the port of Ajaccio to your starting point can be tricky. With some luck we met the mail deliverer who was kind enough to take us. If you fly to Calvi, transport to Calenzana is easier and more frequent.
- In summer it can get quite hot on the island. Spring and autumn are good times for hiking.
- Most of the pigs you encounter along the way are tame.....walking chops.
- Between Serriera and Tuarelli there is a *variant*, with which you shorten the route considerably.

- *Tripe* on a menu is a dish with the edible muscle wall of the stomach of farm animals, such as cows, pigs and sheep. Has recently also been touted as a power food. We have warned you!
- Possible stage layout and my best estimates of distances:

Calenzana – Bonifatu	(5.0 hours)	10.0 km
Bonifatu - Tuarelli	(6.5 hours)	14.0 km
Tuarelli – Galeria	(5,0 hours)	10,5 km
Galeria – Girolata	(6,0 hours)	12,5 km
Girolata - Curzu	(6,5 hours)	11,0 km
Curzu - Serriera	(approx.5 hours)	06-8 km
Serriera – Ota	(6.5 hours)	12,0 km
Ota - Marignana	(5,0 hours)	11,0 km
Marignana - É Case	(6.5 hours)	17,0 km
Alternative: walk to Revinda		
É Case – Cargese	(5,0 hours)	11,5 km

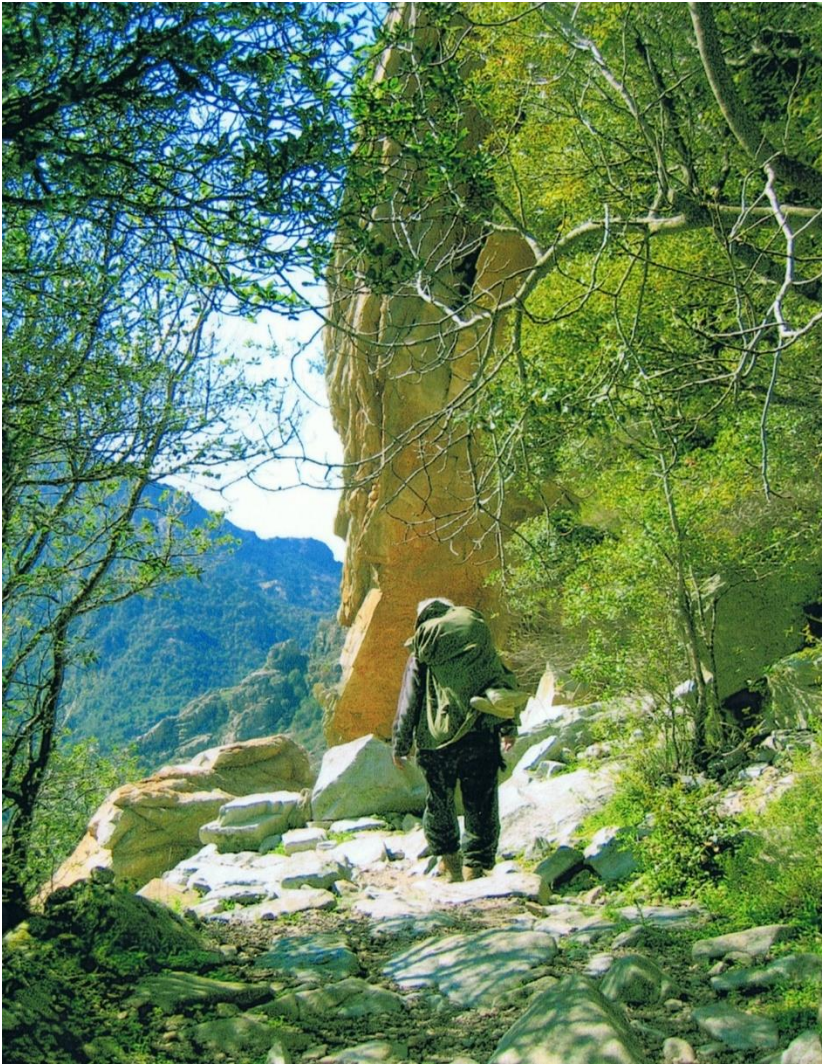


**Valley of the Fango River**





**Evisa**



**Gorge de Spelunca**





**Strawberry fruit tree**



**You will often walk such a path.....**

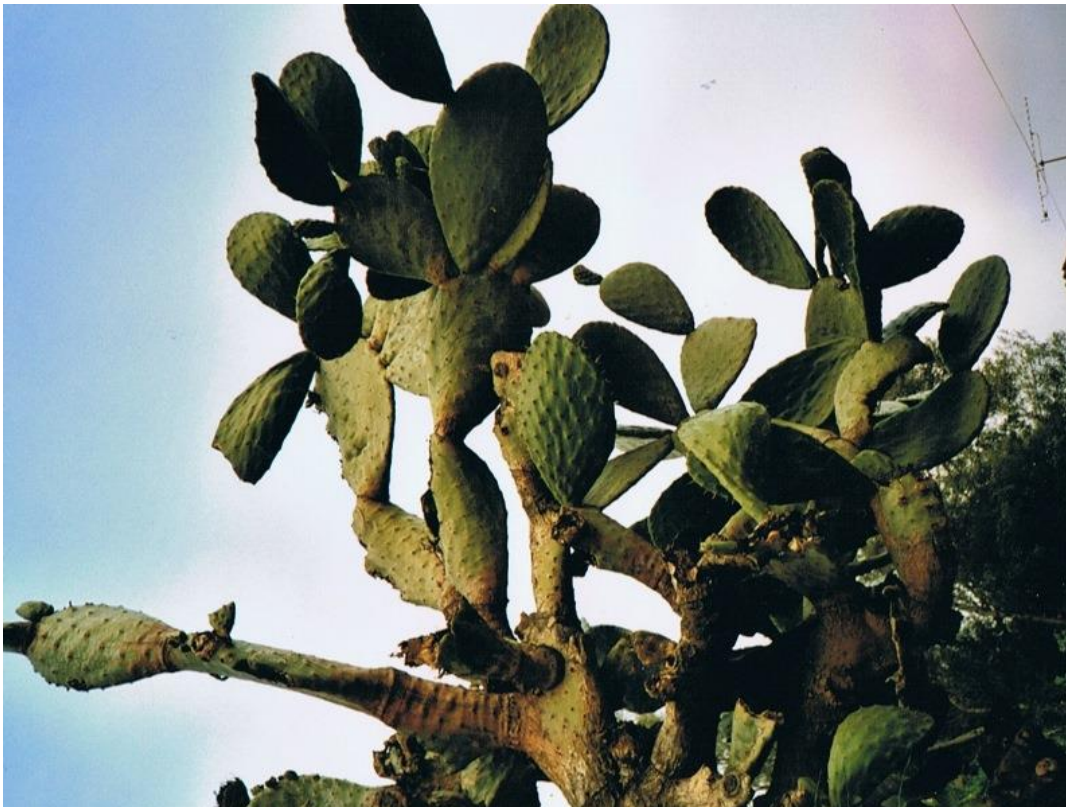


**Scandola, why walk any further?**



### Gorge de Spelunca

Photo: William Mackesy [Walkopedia](#)



Cacte on Corse

