



## VAL CUSINA BIG LOOP

The path to the GREEN trail winds around toward the valley of the CUSINA river, passing on the hills that surround it and going down to the bed of the watercourse, with a succession of touching natural spectacles really exciting: from the overall view of the majestic Alps mountains, to the freshest and mysterious gorges of the river and surrounding woods.

We start at the APPOINTMENT STONE (PIETRA DELL'APPUNTAMENTO) (at km 2.3 of the SP352 CN, in the municipality of Torresina (44 ° 26 '22.60" N - 8 ° 01' 14.97" E), just follow the signs in GREEN that show the message "Deserta Langarum - SENTIERI ", without any danger of getting lost, on a stretch almost flat along a beautiful chestnut wood. This is the old road that until the '60s has connected Igliano and Torresina. The road descends for a hundred meters until you reach the church of San Sebastiano (XVI) [690 m m.s.l.].

Take the SP 352 through the hamlet of LANGA. The sight on the crown of the Alps is breathtaking; in the clear mornings the gaze sweeps from the foothills of the Apennines to the Monte Rosa! We take the SP 115 Igliano - T. Castellino the height of the shrine [650 m m.s.l.] and follow for 400 meters. In view of a small pine forest, leave the asphalt and wander on the right: in front of us, at the top of the hill, you see the "Ginepreto Hill", surmounted by an old shrine.

We go down instead, to go into a copse that skirts around the hill (we are exactly at the 8th parallel East!) and after a few hundred meters we came out the other side, looking in the southerly direction the church of "Madonna della Neve".

Turning at right onto the municipal road, we descend leaving on the left fork to "Coste Soprane". In this part of the path we look, on the right hill, the village of MARSAGLIA, with its sixteenth-century castle.

Once in the vicinity of the COSTE SOTTANE [570 m m.s.l.] forget the asphalt and take the road that leads to the right after a few meters to the "Fountain of thirteen hills", where you can quench your thirst at small source.

We take the path on the right that crosses a field uphill and soon enters in a dense forest. We're going down abruptly, the trail turns left and then right (*always follow the green arrows!*). At some point we begin to feel bubbling the CUSINA RIVER: at km 5,330 – 440 m m.s.l. we finally arrive to ford and easily cross it, bringing us on the right bank.

Just waded in the "river", turn right and go up the dirt track that runs along the valley floor of the bed of the watercourse. Let us pause from time to time to take a look and take some pictures impressive: there are corners of quiet hidden among the vegetation where the crystal clear water gently flowing between the notes "LANGA STONES". For millennia, this river was the place that supplied the building material for the construction of the buildings across the valley. On our left there are the marl formations typical of the Alta Langa and some impressive gullies.

At 8<sup>th</sup> km of our journey, we recommend that you take a little detour from the route, crossing a bridge rebuilt after the terrible flood of 1994; a path to the right leads to the ruins of the old mill of Igliano. Here, until the 50's of the last century, the inhabitants of a wide surrounding area led to grind grain, since there are no other mills in the valley. It's hidden by dense vegetation, but if you can find it, you can still see the old millstones partially submerged by the collapsed walls.

Back on our path laid out, we approach the village of the CUSINA hamlet and after passing it, we come to a crossroads. 50 meters to the right is the old bridge which legend says was built in Roman times; give him a look, but do not proceed in that direction.

Now we can choose to walk the **long path** to or **short path**.

In the first case (**short path**), go up again throughout the course of the river on a slight slope, up to rejoin the path along, then proceed straight along the paved road in the valley, to the cemetery of Igliano. We cross the SP 115 and proceed to the farm CASTELLO. On the left is the "SCAU," the last chestnut-drying house of the valley that survived in the years, and recently has been restored and used as a small accommodation, to spend a holiday in complete tranquility.

We continue to walk along the river to the village of the GIULIANI hamlet (on some cards erroneously reported as "Giuttoni") and finish to trample on the asphalt.

Beyond the village, follow the path through fields and meadows, leading to two farms abandoned from years, TANE (right on the bank of the river) and GARASSINI just ahead on the left.

We're abandoning the protagonist of our walk, the CUSINA river. In fact, a little further on, the road bends to the left and begins to climb up to 610 m m.s.l., where we find the "**long path**".

If, instead of short path, we have chosen the **long path**, after after the built-up area of the Cusina hamlet at the junction turn left, climbing up along the route of the old road Igliano-Murazzano. After crossing the SP 115 continue to admire the sun-drenched terraces, watching the old arches in stone "a secco", stunning vestiges of a old time when the cultivation of the vine in this hill was his best accomplishment. Arrived at the shrine [550 m m.s.l.] turn left along the flat trail.

On our left, right at the edge of the path, stands a majestic tree impressive erect, a specimen of *Quercus crenata* (or pseudosughera), in Italian "cerrosughera". It is a plant that has only thirty specimens in the Piedmont and many experts say it is an anomaly botany, being a cross between the oak and cork. Its characteristic is to preserve, only hardwood in this area, the green foliage during the winter; if you happen to pass on the trail during this season, you will recognize at first glance. For this particular characteristic, it is called the "magic tree of the Alta Langa" and many legends are told about it.

Continuing on the path to get to the SAN LUIGI hamlet [580 m m.s.l.]. When we meet the asphalt road we turn right, but we recommend you take a look at the beautiful church of SAN LUDOVICO OF FRENCH (XVI Century), which is located 50 meters to the left.

After crossing the SP 115, we continue uphill on 150 meters of asphalt, then the road becomes "CREUSA", i.e. that goes in the trenches going up the ridge of the hill, until you get to the top of the hill near the village named CORNATI; look back to admire the spectacle of Alps [705 m m.s.l.]. Turn right and walk a short section of the SP 115 that we leave early to take a dirt road on the left that goes through the old houses of the village.

We go down in the woods until you cross the small RIO BOSCAZZI (which gives rise to the Cusina creek) and rejoin, shortly after, with the **short path** [610 m m.s.l.].

We turn left and continue to climbing up inside a wild wood which takes its name COSTALUNGA. The climb is tough, but the shadow of the chestnut grove there repays the effort!

As you ascend the slope of the path decreases and we finally reach the summit, called CIMA DI COSTALUNGA [790 m m.s.l.]. The sight of the Alps back to excite; MONVISO mountain seems so close, that you can touch it!

We are one step from PEDAGGERA, where the brutality of the Civil War [1943-1945] has manifested themselves in all its violence. At about 50 meters from the path, through the woods, there is the cross that commemorates the place where the 1944.03.03. was slain the partisan TENENTE BIONDO (Lieutenant Blonde) Giorgio Ghibaudò, character widely quoted by Beppe Fenoglio in the book "Il Partigiano Johnny".

We go down now to reach the SP 32, along a grove of pine trees. We take the SP 352 walking on top of the hill to the CROSS [km 14.350 - 750 m m.s.l.] which commemorates the battle of April 16, 1796 between the Piedmontese troops and those Napoleonic.

We turn to the right towards the path down and after a while we come to SETTE VIE [710 m m.s.l.]. Passed a shrine, we are coming upon arrival, but the GREEN path invites us to climb right on top of the hill called MONTEROTONDO [745 m m.s.l.] for a last glance at our beautiful mountains, before descending to the APPOINTMENT STONE.