

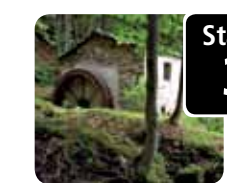









A circular route facing the King of Stone, the highest peak of the Cottian Alps (Piedmont)
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 605m ca 1005m ca 430m ca 2h T
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 - 
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Tour of the Rocca Bianca Valley
 1490m ca 1545m ca 450m ca (+285m from connection with O.M.) 3h 30' E



www.vallitemonviso.gov.it

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Parco del Po Cuneese
Comunità Montana

Legend

- Main artery roads
- Secondary roads
- Unpaved roads, field roads etc.
- Roads closed to unauthorized traffic
- Marked itineraries
- Itineraries, in some cases not marked
- Precarious, exposed, difficult, sometimes equipped stretches
- Mountain hut
- Bivouac
- Meire, grange (alpine houses)
- Place of historic or artistic interest
- Church, chapel, pilgrimage church
- Abbey, monastery
- Castle or historic palace
- Pass
- Quarry or mine
- Archaeological site, petroglyphs etc.
- Biotope

Parco del Po Cuneese www.parcodelpocn.it

The tourist information given on this map is intended to be merely indicative, thus the Parco del Po Cuneese as well as the authors of the texts decline any responsibility. It is incumbent upon the user to take all necessary precautions according to the local conditions and to follow the regulations of the authorities concerned. In case of discrepancy between an itinerary showed on the map and the markings on-site it is generally recommended to follow the latter.

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Representation not true to scale.

orizzontemonviso

A circular route facing the King of Stone, the highest peak of the Cottian Alps (Piedmont)

Orizzonte Monviso is a circular route rich in variety and of incomparable beauty that culminates at the horizon: Monviso, which appears and vanishes, and that after a short ascent or seen from the opposite slope shows a completely new face, an unknown facet, an unusual colour and is always magical. On a fine-meshed trail net the hiker is introduced to the world of the upper Po Valley and crosses secluded hamlets and places far from the well-trodden paths.

The circular route Orizzonte Monviso (O.M.) starts in the municipality of Paesana at an elevation of 605m. It then runs 54km through the upper Po Valley on the territory of the municipalities Crissolo, Oncino and Ostana and surmounts a total altitude difference of about 2000m in ascent.

The circular route is marked throughout and divided into 6 stages that differ in difficulty level and length, but they are all practicable for every good hiker. Everyone can approach this circular route according to one's own physical abilities knowing that at the end of each stage it is possible to stay overnight. Information about accommodation is available from the valley's tourist office at the Comunità Montana in Paesana (0175 94273 – info@vallippo.cni.it).

Please note: In the route descriptions the Italian terms Località (Loc.), Borgata (B.ta) and Frazione (Fraz.) are, for simplicity's sake, translated as "district" which stands for a small part of a municipality, mostly in the form of a few houses grouped together.

Photos by
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LEGEND

- Elevation at start** expressed in metres
- Elevation at arrival** expressed in metres
- Altitude difference** expressed in metres
- Duration** hiking time
- Difficulty level** expressed according to the classical valuation

Stage 1 PAESANA – Fork to District Fantoni (PAESANA)

605m ca 1005m ca 430m ca 2h T

From the square in front of the church Santa Margherita we head in a south-westerly direction until we get to the provincial road that leads to the upper valley. We cross it and turn into the narrow street in the direction of the districts Macari, Oca and Rossetti. After a straight stretch we get to a distinct fork to the left onto an unpaved road which we ignore (Alternative route of



stage 1: The original circular route led along this unpaved road, which follows the provincial road beyond the village of Paesana into the Crosio Valley and finally joins the road leading to Pratoguglielmo shortly before the district Fantoni). We follow the paved road to the right that ascends markedly in a narrow switchback and leads to a fork (ca. 640m). We continue straight ahead (ignoring the road to Macari on the right) on the by now unpaved road that first ascends in several long switchbacks and then leads into open terrain in the vicinity of a fork. The route is now easy, proceeding over wide, unpaved ground and is surrounded by dense but by no means constrictive vegetation. Having reached a fork (ca. 715m) we continue to the right (the left branch leads to the districts Oca and Rossetti) on the main

trail that ascends gently on the right side of a squat crest until it reaches the settlement Airetta (ca. 745m). We continue straight ahead and ignore the branch-offs to the right and to the left until we reach the paved road after about 200m. We cross it and turn onto the unpaved road Via Bosco Lay that runs parallel to the main road. Having reached a renovated house we ignore the branch-off to the right, which is closed by a bar, and we continue around the woody slope on an enchanting trail that leads through a high forest of edible chestnut trees and other species. We stick to the main axis of the forest road and ignore the branch-offs to the right and to the left until we reach the paved road again (ca. 835m). Here we turn sharply to the right and ascend for about 30m. Then we turn left onto a forest road

that leads again through wooded area. After some switchbacks we pass Comba Fantoni (ignoring the branch-offs to the right and to the left in direction of the ascent) and we pass above the houses of the district Bertoni, where the road becomes paved and leads again through a more open terrain. The road ascends slightly but steadily and passes below the district Bonetti. Shortly before a distinct switchback it meets the unpaved road coming up from the Crosio Valley on the left (Alternative route of stage 1). After the switchback we pass above the houses of Bonetti until we reach the paved road again that leads with a slight descent of about 500m to a signpost on the left, where we can resume the circular route Orizzonte Monviso (O.M.) (slightly ascending forest road – ca. 1005m).

Stage 3 District Serre (ONCINO) - CRISSOLO

1225m ca 1315m ca 300m 4h 30' E

We leave the church of the district Serre di Oncino (ca. 1225m) behind and descend the paved road for about 30m. After a bend to the left we walk almost levelly for about 250m. Having reached a fork we ignore the left branch-off and follow the unpaved road that leads for the most part on the level to the district Magalun (ca. 1235m). While proceeding, the vegetation becomes denser and the road narrower but it is always easy walk. It crosses the slope at mid-hill and leads over a small creek where a water catchment is situated (ca. 1250m). We continue below this channel, cross the bridge and shortly after we ignore the branch-off on the left that ascends to the district Arlongo.



mid-hill along the woody slope until it exits into more open terrain below the district S. Ilario (ca. 1260m).

The path widens progressively and, remaining always above the channel, crosses almost levelly an enchanting beech grove, surmounts a crest below the settlement Serre Guglielmo, crosses the Daina Creek and finally reaches the houses of the



Stage 4 CRISSOLO – S. Nicolao (OSTANA)

1315m ca 1410m ca 420m ca 3h 45' T



From the town hall square (ca. 1315m) we ascend about 100m on the main street and then follow the indications on the right to Pian del Re. We traverse a narrow passage between the houses and soon afterwards we turn left onto a mule track. The track ascends towards the district Serre and arrives on the left side of the church. On a level stretch we cross the settlement. At a branch-off next to a fountain we turn sharply to the right and proceed until we reach the provincial road (ca. 1390m). We cross it and follow the mule track on the other side. First we walk for a short while through the forest, then over open, grassy slopes. We reach the first houses of the district Borgo and then a branch-off. We walk to the left through narrow alleys, which are partially paved with slabs, and arrive in the vicinity of the church in view of a wash trough (ca. 1510m). We pass the church and descend slightly on the right for about 100m until we leave the paved road that leads in the direction of the district Ciampagna. We take the mule track on the right that descends gradually through the forest. After several switchbacks the track becomes level and we reach the typical stone

bridge across the Rio Toussié (ca. 1400m). After a short ascent and an almost level stretch we soon afterwards reach the lovely, small chapel Madonna degli Angeli (ca. 1430m) in the district Bertolini. On grassy ground we continue for about 200m until we come again to the paved road shortly after the branch-off on the left in the direction of the district Brich (ca. 1440m). With a beautiful view of Monviso we descend the road ignoring first the branch-off on the left to the district Fenogli, then the one to the district Sagne and finally the one to the district Martino and thus we directly reach the houses of Ciampagna (ca. 1360m). We stay on the road and admire the church Madonna del Buon Consiglio that is situated above us. Then we descend on the left until we reach the Rio Combe. After about 100m we leave the paved road and on the left follow an old, and in the beginning very narrow road (ca. 1310m - indication *la Villo* – marking of the paved road that leads in the direction of the district Ciampagna. We take the mule track on the right that descends gradually through the forest. After several switchbacks the track becomes level and we reach the typical stone

district Fantone below the main road (ca. 1265m). We follow the paved road (ignoring the branch-off on the left that ascends to the district Le Bigorie) which winds downhill for about 1km. Having passed the parish church (ca. 1220m) we reach the town hall square of the municipality Oncino. The main road descends in south-westerly direction; whereas the circular route O.M. continues on the left between the houses of the village on the small, narrow road that ascends to the district Saret where it becomes unpaved (ca. 1280m). From here we enjoy an interesting view of the valley's south facing slope where the second part of the circular route O.M. winds along. On a wide unpaved road, which runs almost levelly in the direction of S. Giacomo, we traverse the slope at mid-hill until we cross a small creek bed coming down from Mount Cialancie (1635m). The unpaved road ascends slightly and soon we reach a grassy mountain saddle and the ruins of the church S. Giacomo (ca. 1345m). The route now becomes a wide mule track, surmounts a crest and descends slightly before becoming almost level.

soon joins the wide mule track coming from Crissolo (ca. 1440m). We turn right and walk on easy and level ground along a beautiful beech grove, pass the Padre Picco Fountain and shortly afterwards we reach a branch-off at a switchback (ca. 1420m). The left branch-off ascends to Mount Tivoli (also called Bric Arpiol, 1792m), but we descend on the right in the direction of Crissolo. With a series of narrow switchbacks we rapidly loose height until we exit the forest belt and



With a few short ascents we finally reach the creek bed Combale Brusà and cross it. After about 80m we reach a fork (ca. 1325m), where the right branch-off descends to the district of the same name. But we ignore this branch-off and continue through the high forest until we enter a terrain with very dense vegetation, where the trail proceeds in switchbacks over uneven ground. It leads to the branch-off to the alp *Meire Marco* (ca. 1425m) on the left. A last short stretch passes below the alpine houses and

reach the bridge over the Rio Sbarne (ca. 1340m). We walk roughly 150m to the village Crissolo, where at a switchback above several blocks of flats the unpaved road joins the paved road. We descend between the houses and pass the lower terminus of the chairlift. Soon we reach the bridge over the Po River that connects the municipality's right and left river bank. Having crossed the bridge we keep to the left and ascend slightly to the main square of Crissolo (ca. 1315m).

Ènrune (ca. 1295m). We ignore the branch-off on the left and descend steadily on the narrow and uneven path. The route becomes level again shortly before we reach the paved road in the district Marchetti that leads to the village centre of Ostana (ca. 1225m). We follow the main street for about 400m, passing the first houses and the new, municipal market hall until we reach the switchback to the left that leads to the upper districts. We walk into the village's centre and in front of the town hall turn left onto a flight of stone stairs that exits above the buildings. We walk for about 100m straight ahead to the next switchback that is bypassed by ascending on the



Stage 5 S. Nicolao (OSTANA) – Wayside Shrine Fornace (District Ferrere)

1410m ca 655m ca 120m ca 3h 15' T

Starting from the large square below the chapel S. Nicolao (ca. 1410m) we follow the old road on the left that has just been renewed. Soon we reach a fork at a lookout named *Iou Béc dh'Acasét*. We ignore the left path that leads to the alp *Meire da Crouç*. Instead we ascend directly and in the final part very steeply until we reach the mountain saddle named *Sarlichart* (ca. 1470m) in the forest. We ignore the branch-off on the left to the alp *Meire da Crouç* and descend on the narrow path at mid-hill gradually in the direction of *l'Oscho* until *Iou Pont* (ca. 1435m). We cross the small creek and continue almost levelly through the forest until we reach a second creek running between slabs of rock. Then the terrain becomes more open while we surmount a ridge and walking along it we quickly reach a narrow mountain saddle from where the castle *Castel d'la Soma* (ca. 1400m) can be seen and one has a beautiful view of the valley bottom. On grassy ground we descend on the left in a series of narrow switchbacks

and loose height rapidly until the way becomes level and gradually runs towards the east. We continue in an enchanting landscape with beautiful views, cross several small creeks and after a hollow we ascend until we reach the unpaved road near the alp *Meire Manitoja* (ca. 1300m). We ignore the ascending branch-off that leads to the chapel S. Lucia della Vardetta and instead descend on the comfortable and wide, unpaved road. We pass an alpine house and walk around the slope until we reach a fork at a switchback at the alp *Meire dal Bric* (ca. 1225m). We ignore the right branch-off that descends to the district Grange (Calcinere) and instead follow on the left the wide, even mule track that passes an alpine house with a typical stone arch. The almost level track surmounts a ridge shortly below the Croce delle Grange, crosses a creek and ascends again to a further fork (ca. 1265m). We leave the unpaved road that leads on the left to a water catchment and follow the initially narrow path that descends on the right, gradually loses height and runs



at mid-hill. The path becomes even and the terrain more open until we reach the first alpine houses of *Meire di Ciaramolin* (ca. 1200m). Here we turn sharply to the right and with a series of narrow switchbacks reach the unpaved road that, ascending from the district Ferrere, passes shortly below a switchback. From here

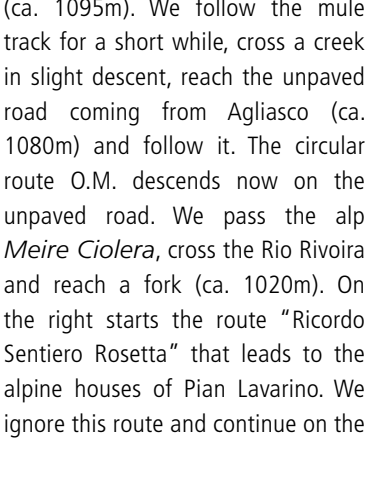
for quite a while the circular route O.M. follows the unpaved road that descends easily towards the valley. Tree-covered stretches alternate with expansive pastures and offer beautiful and interesting views of the landscape. We reach a distinctive switchback to the right (ca. 1100m) above the alp *Cazé 'd Pera*. Here we have the opportunity to shortcut part of the unpaved road by descending directly on a cattle track in the direction of the aforementioned alpine houses. Then we proceed to the alp *Cazé di Gerp*, where we meet the unpaved road again. Or else we stay the whole time on the unpaved road that, passing the alp *Meire Rouchasot*, leads to the alp *Cazé di Gerp* (ca. 1060m). Without any further alternatives we now descend rapidly on the unpaved road until we reach the wayside shrine Fornace that is situated at a beautiful lookout at a switchback just above the district Ferrere (ca. 955m).

Stage 6 Wayside Shrine Fornace (District Ferrere) - District Colletta (PAESANA)

955m ca 610m ca 170m ca 4h 15' E

At the wayside shrine Fornace (ca. 955m) starts an unpaved road that leads in a northerly direction to the district I Vardin. We follow this mule track into the forest, cross several small creek beds and reach the first houses of the district Pian Lavarino (ca. 955m). Here we pass a wayside shrine and ignore the path that descends between the houses to the district Ghisola di Paesana as well as the one straight ahead that shortly afterwards leads between the houses. We follow the left branch-off that leads above the houses back into the beech grove, passes below a rock spur, and over a short ramp reaches the Rio Balangers (ca. 1000m) and crosses it. The route becomes a path leading through dense vegetation and passing below several decayed alpine houses. Then we descend on the right close to the creek to ascend again along the creek bed until we cross it shortly after the confluence of two tributaries (Rio Comba Agliasco – ca. 1070m).

The path gradually leaves the narrow gorge, becomes wider and less steep. On both sides it is now flanked by dry stone walls until we reach the decayed alpine houses of *Poitetta* (ca. 1095m). We follow the mule track for a short while, cross a creek in slight descent, reach the unpaved road coming from Agliasco (ca. 1080m) and follow it. The circular route O.M. descends now on the unpaved road. We pass the alp *Meire Ciolera*, cross the Rio Rivoira and reach a fork (ca. 1020m). On the right starts the route "Ricordo Sentiero Rosetta" that leads to the alpine houses of Pian Lavarino. We ignore this route and continue on the



unpaved road downwards until we reach a wider place with a fountain. Here a branch-off ascends on the left of a grassy ridge to the Pian del Lupo but we remain on the road, now paved, and, passing the groups of houses *Bossa* and *Raina* of the district Agliasco, we reach a crossing (ca. 990m). The right branch-off leads to Paesana but we ascend on the left, then turn to the right and follow a level unpaved road that leads into the forest. On this wide mule track we pass a wash trough. We always stay on the main track and cross a small creek bed. Soon afterwards we reach a fork just below the Rio Balangers (ca. 985m). We ignore the ascending trail that passes the ruins. Instead we descend on the right along the ridge. Then we turn left and continue through a forest of edible chestnut trees. Passing another decayed alpine house we reach a crossing (ca. 960m). We ignore the two ascending branch-offs on the left and descend on the right on the unpaved road that leads to the chapel S. Grato d'Agliasco (ca. 940m) with its adjacent picnic area. The circular route O.M. continues

on the unpaved road, for the major part on the ridge, and passes several branch-offs that we ignore. After a steeper descent we reach the unpaved road again farther below at another crossing (ca. 795m). We ignore the branch-offs on both sides, walk straight ahead along the ridge and descend rapidly to *Brich del Serre* (ca. 730m). Less than 100m ahead we leave the main unpaved road that leads to the district Croce (Alternative route of stage 6: The original circular route at this point descended to the district Croce, crossed the unpaved road and on a small, paved road through the pastures led to the village centre of Paesana). We follow the forest road that turns immediately to the left and descends into the forest. We ignore the path that ascends slightly on the left and continue to the next crossing (ca. 660m). We stay on the main track until we reach a creek bed where there is a decayed wayside shrine located at a crossing. We take the right branch-off and descend to another wayside shrine at a crossing with the paved road (ca. 625m). We ignore the left branch-offs (to the district Montescotto) as well as the one straight ahead and follow the road on the right that crosses the road from Paesana to Barge in the district Colletta (ca. 610m).



Stage 2 Fork to District Fantoni (PAESANA) - District Serre (ONCINO)

1005m ca 1225m ca 560m ca 5h 30' T

Above the paved road and the district Fantoni we turn onto the forest road (ca. 1005m) and then proceed on the trail that to the left leads into the forest. Having passed an alpine house we walk along the entire slope at mid-hill until we mount a crest in the vicinity of scattered rocks in the forest (ca. 1080m). The crossing continues through a stretch with first sparse and then denser vegetation until we exit the forest and enjoy the increasing openness of the panorama. The trail, now a wide, grassy mule track, continues to ascend gently and extends into the tributary valley until we reach a fork. We ignore the right branch-off to further alps (*Meire Pra l'Erasca*) and we follow the unpaved road that soon leads to the former forest nursery (ca. 1254m); (Alternative route of stage 2: The original circular route led from here downwards into the gorge of the Erasca and then up the opposite slope to the road to Tournour). We proceed to the switchback and after it turn right onto an unpaved road that leads to the branch-off to the old stone houses further down (ca. 1280m). We ignore this branch-off, and instead follow the unpaved



road to the left and reach the lower terminus of the ski lift "Vivaio" (ski resort Pian Muné). We ascend the grassy slope following the masts of the ski lift. When the gradient increases we take a zigzag course up the ski slope until we cross the unpaved road that connects the main road with the upper valley. We continue to the right. Having passed a pond for fire suppression the road leads along the entire slope, passing a series of hollows and a reservoir. The road surmounts a small ridge and then runs through more open terrain, offering a nice view of

the just previously walked stretch. Shortly afterwards we ignore another unpaved road that leads downwards into the narrow valley bottom above the district Erasca di Paesana, passing small groups of alpine houses (*Gias Chiabré, Meire Preina, Saret*, etc.) scattered over the ridge. We remain on the almost level route until we reach Croce Tournour (ca. 1555m – trigonometrical point), where a 360° panoramic view of the Monviso Massif, the valley bottom and the plain around Saluzzo opens up. We continue on the unpaved road until we reach the part of the circular route O.M. on the hillside opposite the village of Oncino. We reach Rocca delle Formiche (ca. 1560m) and a fork. We ignore the left branch-off that ends under a wall of rock that supports the amphitheatre in which the Lauset Lakes are nestled in enchanting scenery. We stay on the unpaved road and descend along grassy slopes. After a narrow switchback to the right the descent continues. We pass slightly above the alp *Meire del Giaset* (ca. 1460m) and proceed to the next switchback to the left. After about

