Home
Grande Traversata delle Langhe in mountain bike - Leg 13A: Pavaglione - San Donato di Mango
Utilization
Cycle touring
Official itinerary
No

Lenght
13.70 km

Tempo
1 hour 33 minutes

Stage
13

Ascent elevation gain
786 m

Descent elevation loss
777 m

Difficulty
Very challenging (experts only)

Informazioni

Region
Piemonte

Country
Italy

Address

Pavaglione
Località San Bovo
12050 Castino CN
Italy

Coordinates

POINT (8.138122 44.644186)
Altitude
640 m
Arrival address

Frazione San Donato
Strada Provinciale 270
12056 San Donato di Mango CN

Italy

Arrival coordinates
POINT (8.154556 44.662583)
Arrival altitude
630 m
Access

By car, motorways:
A6 – Torino Savona, Marene or Carmagnola exit
A21 – Torino Piacenza, Asti Est exit
A33 – Asti Cuneo, Alba exit

By plane:
Milano Malpensa and Linate – www.sea-aeroportimilano.it
Torino Caselle – www.aeroportoditorino.it
Cuneo Levaldigi – www.aeroporto.cuneo.it

By train:
Ferrovie dello Stato: www.trenitalia.com

Descrizione

A variation of the GTL hillcrest route, this section leads to San Donato di Mango. It is extremely difficult and not recommended for beginner cyclists, given that it includes sections of difficult downhill cycling. It will be a special thrill for history buffs, but could leave you with some bad memories if you're not careful. You may even want to get off the bike for a few hours and enjoy a more leisurely stroll.

This section starts in **Pavaglione**, a village featured in the novel "Ruin" by Beppe Fenoglio and now the site of a cultural centre for conferences, readings, and other events dedicated to the great Italian author. The Pavaglione hill is also one of the settings of the civil war of 1943-45 and so is featured in Fenoglio's "Johnny the Partisan", a story of the resistance that was published incomplete after the author's death. This route that runs from Pavaglione to San Donato follows in the footsteps of the protagonist of that tale on one of his many escapes from the Fascists. Past the entrance to Pavaglione, follow along the flat until you reach the nearby farmhouse, then head into the pine forest down through the gorges. In essence, you are reenacting one of the greatest lines from Fenoglio's works, which reads (from "Johnny the Partisan", English edition), "He left for the highest hills, the ancestral land which he would help in its unmoving potential, in the vortex of the black wind, feeling how great a man he is when he is in his normal human dimension."

At a fork in the road after a few dozen metres, continue down to the right through the vegetation, then, before you reach a clearing, continue down to the right through the woods. The dirt road continues down until you reach a crossroads in the dense chestnut woods. Continue to the right here (the road to the left would take you to Pilone del Chiarle) to a final clearing, yet another abandoned field once cultivated by the farmhouses of Serra dei Pini (the salmon-colored one to the left) and Serra (down and to the right). Continue along the edge of the clearing to the right along a faint trail and head back into the woods. Follow this long, slightly uphill section along the hillside, featuring a grouping of chestnut trees, until you reach the Baracchi farmhouse, which, despite being in ruins, still conveys much of the hardship that was once suffered here.

Continue alongside the stone buildings, then, after a brief section of path made muddy by a number of springs, the trail will again become more evident. You will soon reach a curve and the dirt road that descends from the village of San Bovo. Follow this road down to the left along the fence of an old sheep farm, then up to the right at the first fork. Then at the next fork, marked by an electrical pole, head down to the left. Continue down a steep section and stay on the most evident trail until you come out into a vast clearing, where you will see the church of Sant'Elena on a hilltop across from you.

To reach the church, head to the left towards the nearby Cascina farmhouse. Cross the ample courtyard and turn right just after the first house. Follow an evident trail down through the poplar grove, then continue to the left along the flat. Head down again through the dense vegetation to the base of the valley. After a final, steep and muddy section that will require some caution, you will reach an evident rock formation and the Rio di Sant'Elena. Cross this stream and head back up the opposite side of the valley along the trail that rises sheer above the stream and is exposed in a couple of spots.

You will soon reach the cultivated fields beneath Casa Signognia and a paved road. Follow this paved road to the left for a few metres until the crossroads for Sant'Elena. Turn right and continue along the paved road to the village. Continue along the dirt road through the terraced vineyards and up a final climb to the church on the hilltop overlooking the Belbo Valley and the village of Castino below.

Leave the church behind you and follow the road that winds along the ample vineyard and the crest of the hill, then climbs steeply to the summit. Head down at the next saddle in the hillcrest and descend to the right along a dirt road until you reach an intersection with a gravel road. Turn right again and continue down to Braida. Keep following the gravel road slightly downhill through a long section of woods. You will need to find a faint dirt road to the left, the first section of which looks as if it heads back up to the start of the valley, but it will actually run gradually downhill. You will then leave this road and take a trail to the right that will take you down to the base of the valley. The final section will need to be done with caution as the surface is slippery and the trail narrow.

After crossing the stream known as Rio dell'Annunziata, you will be just a few metres from the Rocca Croera cliff face on a dirt road. (If you were to head down to the right, you would reach the village of Rocchetta Belbo.) Head up the opposite side of the valley along a steep section of trail through the dense vegetation until you find an older, more evident road that heads up through the pine trees to the right.

When you reach another spectacular rock outcropping, head up around it to the left, along a few exposed steps in the layers of rock until you have passed a materials depot and reached a paved road. Follow this paved road to the left until you reach a crossroads. Head up to the right along the road that will take you to Cascina Rocchetta and along a panoramic section of road to Cascina Croce. At the gate to this farmhouse, head up through the headland trails of the vineyard to the left, until you reach the hillcrest. Continue up to the left along the wide dirt road, that follows the crest of the hill and the edge of the vineyard for a very panoramic section of road. Follow along the dirt road as it climbs gradually just below the crest (ignoring the trails that head up to the right) and continue along a splendid natural amphitheater.

After a curve, leave the road at the entry to a farmhouse courtyard and head down to the left along a trail that will take you past a row of grapevines to a paved road. You will need to follow this paved road to the right trough a couple of panoramic switchbacks, alongside vineyards and hazelnut groves to the crest of the hill and to Località Pian. Continue along the crest of the hill to the slopes of Bric di Badin. If you have time, leave the paved road (that would take you to San Donato anyway) in a curve just after a crossroads. You will find a steep dirt road to the right that runs alongside a fence to the top of the hill. You will be rewarded for your efforts by a spectacular view that stretches out endlessly on a clear day.

To reach the hamlet of San Donato, you will need to follow along the false flat of the crest to the right on a trail that runs along a vineyard and enters a wood of pine trees and junipers. A winding descent and final flat

section will take you to Cappella degli Alpini, where there is a spectacular view of the Bassa Langa and the Alps. **San Donato di Mango** is about a kilometre away down a narrow road to the right and then along a paved road. One last line from Fenoglio's works, this time from "A Private Affair", perfectly encapsulates the regret and resignation that fate had handed down to a generation of young men in these hills nearly eight decades ago: "He had always thought of these hills as the natural theatre for his love […] and yet he'd ended up doing the last thing he could have imagined: fighting in a war."

N.B. You may return from San Donato along the main highway in the direction of Benevello. About a kilometre after a road to the left to Riondino, you will find a trail to the left that is part of the Bar to Bar itinerary to Cascina della Langa. Take this trail through the woods, and you will soon reach Pavaglione.

Public transport access
Yes

Http://Www.grandabus.it/

Recommended period

Spring
Summer
Fall
March - November

Accessible to people with disabilities

No

Interest points

Itineraries inspired by Beppe Fenoglio's works
Mango : Castle of Marchesi di Busca , Enoteca Regionale delle Colline del Moscato.
San Donato di Mango : Casa delle Memorie .

Devotional relevance
Sì

Historical relevance
Yes

Dettagli

Local Tourist Agency (LTA) reference
ATL Langhe Monferrato Roero

Code
GTN

Classification

Provincial

Province
Cuneo

GTL_Variante_Pavaglione_SanDonatodiMango.pdf

Ultima data di aggiornamento
15/12/2023

Altre info
Accommodation facilities
Casa branzele
Cascina bricchetto
Cascina LANGA
Cascina roreto
Finestre di LANGA
Tenuta barone
Tappe
Variant
A

Itinerary index
No

Province names
Cuneo