Home
Bar To Bar on a mountain bike - Tappa 3: San Bovo - Niella Belbo
Utilization
Cycle touring
Official itinerary
No

Lenght
29.00 km

Tempo
2 hours 30 minutes

Stage
3

Max altitude
810 m

Ascent elevation gain
1156 m

Descent elevation loss
1014 m

Difficulty
Challenging

Informazioni

Region
Piemonte

Country
Italy

Address

San Bovo
Località San Bovo
12050 Castino CN
Italy

Coordinates

POINT (8.140103 44.642331)
Altitude
630 m
Arrival address

Niella Belbo
Strada Provinciale 31
12050 Niella Belbo CN
Italy

Arrival coordinates
POINT (8.079106 44.504761)
Arrival altitude
810 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

In aereo:
Milano Malpensa e Linate – www.sea-aeropoertimilano.it/Torino Caselle – www.aeroportoditorino.it/Cuneo Levaldigi – www.aeroporto.cuneo.it/In treno: Ferrovie dello Stato: www.trenitalia.com

Descrizione

This long leg through the most untamed part of the Langhe features the old salt roads once traveled by wayfaring merchants, the peace and tranquility of the woods, and isolated villages that, together, make for some breathtaking panoramas. This is the realm of the hazelnut, another of the delicacies of the Langhe region. This leg is also part of the Grande Traversata delle Langhe itinerary, so watch out for the signposts and enjoy an intriguing detour or two through a side of the Langhe you may not have expected.

From the end of the main square in San Bovo, take the dirt road (S2) that heads steeply to Rio Grazie (the last bit is paved, keep to the left). Across from you, an old Castino Nunnery can still be seen, although it is now a private farmhouse, and up to the right, on the crest of the hill, you can also see the San Martino Monastery (now a farm for livestock). A Benedictine Monastery also awaits in town. Cross the river in a U-shaped curve (with a sign for San Bovo) and follow the dirt road to the left into the Belbo Valley. Cross the state highway onto Via Molina and cross the bridge over the Belbo river. Head up the paved road (S2) for about a kilometre to an old fortified house, complete with sentry box and medieval archway with a coat of arms. From here, take the steep, paved mule track to the right (S2-3) to the village of Castino, passing through fields and hazelnut groves. (The track will cross the asphalt a couple of times, but runs as straight as you would expect from a mule track.)
The historic centre of Castino reflects the wealth brought to the area by the two monasteries and the nunnery and features a curious church with two facades. The castle and the remains of the tower tell about a glorious

past as a crossing point between Bormida, Belbo and Bassa Langa. In more recent times, the town was the target of Nazi and Fascist retaliation in 1944. After a pleasant stretch through the flowery roads of the ancient village of Castino, follow the signs for Municipio (town hall) and then keep left on Via San Rocco (if you continue on, take a look at the quaint rural church of heads steeply up to the crest (partially asphalted) in the direction of the Alta Valle Belbo.

These mule tracks, that run along the crests of the valleys and then run steep and narrow from one crest to another, are the hidden, but perhaps most significant, signs of the nearly one thousand years of merchants coming and going along the old salt roads from the sea to the Po Valley, which made these now-remote areas the centre of the world. In this regard, the Belbo Valley (like the Bormida Valleys and Uzzone Valley) provides endless opportunity to discover the glorious past and fading memories of a romantic age that would have made poets like Foscolo, Petöfi and Byron very happy. Take a moment to enjoy the view out across the wildest parts of the Langhe where isolated houses are rare and villages wind around the hilltops, closed within stone walls and forbidding fortalices. All around you are fragrant woods full of chestnut, linden, acacia and elm trees, and with willows along the valleys and oaks on the hilltops, which, as legend has it, await the thunderbolts from the gods that are what make the magical white truffles here.

From Castino, the hilltop trail heads to Cravanzana overlooking Bosia about halfway down the hill. At the crossroads for Lodola (another setting for a work by Fenoglio, where partisans Poli and Mauri met after the winter of ‘44: a brief detour here is also recommended), where the grassy trail meets up for a few hundred metres with a strip of asphalt, then splits off again to the right and heads into the woods. Here, every fork in the road is marked either by a stake or other red-and-white markings on the trees. The trail (D2) then bends into a couple of switchbacks and comes out onto the Viarascio road, which heads down through spectacular woods and meadows to Cortemilia.

Turn right and head back up to Cravanzana along the same paved road through hazelnut groves, that are cared for like rose gardens, until you get to the intersection outside of town. Go through this intersection into this medieval village with its Viale dei Caduti and the majestic silhouette of the castle dominating from above. Cravanzana is considered one of the hazelnut capitals of the world and is specialized in the “Tonda e Gentile delle Langhe” (now officially protected as the Nocciola Piemonte IGP), one of the best in the world. Around here, you will certainly have no trouble finding this local treat in pastries and other artisan delicacies. Wander through the narrow roadways of the village and then come out to the south on Via Ferrera. Continue to the right along the road from before. At the first crossroads, head uphill into the woods to the left (S2) until you get to a farmhouse. Keep to the right, and at the next farmhouse cross the farmyard and continue along the cart track that crosses a paved road and continues on up to the crest of the hill to Case Codin. Here, head to the left on the paved road briefly until Cascina Cattivo. From here, continue again on the dirt road along the Bricco del Sole crest until just about the roundabout of the village of Feisoglio, the third of the Alta Valle Belbo and famous for its mushrooms, where the Church of San Lorenzo is definitely worth a visit.

Across from the town are the fortified villages on the other side of the Belbo Valley: Arguello (facing Cravanzana), Cerretto Langhe (straight across from you) and Villa di Serravalle (where a partisan command post may be found). Go past the town along the paved road and then head left at the first (marked) crossroads. This road will soon turn to unpaved and head to the right. Continue uphill (S1) into the woods a bit further and then come out into the open onto the watershed. The breeze coming in from the sea (that locals actually call in Piedmont dialect “marin”), will rustle through your hair and fill your nostrils with Mediterranean fragrances.

After about 2 km of paved road, turn left. After a brief descent, turn immediately to the right, nearly in a U-shape, to return to the stone track. Continue through the fields to the panoramic crest of the hill. Keep going until the next paved section and continue straight to the “Spianata dell’Amore” (Clearing of Love), which isn’t a place for young lovers to park, but rather refers to a medieval legend of the brave knight Leone (you’re actually standing on Monte Leone), who fell in love with the local farm girl, and this was the place where their love blossomed. Of course, this does point to the talent of medieval explores to find beauty! This clearing is open to the elements on all sides and features a giant bench designed by Chris Bangle, where you can take in the full 360° of this marvelous landscape. The Church of San Giovanni, made of austere Langhe

stone, awaits you at the next crossroads. From here, head down the slight incline to the village of Niella Belbo.

Public transport access
Yes

Http://Www.grandabus.it/Orari/

Recommended period

Spring
Summer
Fall
March - November

Accessible to people with disabilities

No

Interest points

Castino: Cascina Pavaglione (luoghi Fenogliani);
Feisoglio: Parrish Church of San Lorenzo;
Niella Belbo: Medieval Tower, French Tower, French Arch, Chris Bangle's Big Bench, Santuary of the Madonna dei Monti.

Devotional relevance
No

Historical relevance
No

Dettagli

Local Tourist Agency (LTA) reference
ATL Langhe Monferrato Roero

Code
BTM

Classification
Provincial

Province
Cuneo

BarToBar_Tappa_3.pdf

Ultima data di aggiornamento
15/12/2023

Altre info
Accommodation facilities
Ca' pavaglione
La casa dei ricordi
Cascina prato
Da pinina
Del mercato da maurizio
Locanda degli sfizi
Cascina KNEC
Bella niella
Ca' d' tistu
Casa camilla
Cascina belbo
I fornelli

Itinerary index
No

Province names
Cuneo