




Alpe Parpinasca

 BC (MEDIUM)

Pedaling through vineyards and mills, it is the classic out-of-town trip. This is how we can define our route from **Domodossola** to **Alpe Parpinasca**, where the **refuge** of the same name owned by the **Val Grande National Park** is located.

The **Mizzoccola bridge** over the **Toce River** at **Croppo di Trontano**, right on the border with the municipality of Domodossola, is our reference for both the start and finish.

Just after the bridge you go down the dirt road that runs along the Toce River.

Continue north on a flat dirt road for about three kilometers until the junction with the SS 337 **Valle Vigezzo Road**, where due care must be taken when crossing and getting into the right lane.

After 700 m of state road, turn right onto **via Pello**, where a tough uphill section begins. After the 4th hairpin bend, having reached **Pello**, instead of following the ring road you enter the small village and, near a washhouse, turn left to take **via Tassera** and continue on the road to Trontano.

This is where "**Prunent**," a grape variety typical of this area, already mentioned in a **1309** written record of one such **Dominio di Pello di Trontano**, finds its optimal habitat.

Start climbing again toward the main town along the paved road. After three hairpin bends (800 m) you take the path that actually cuts off the center of **Trontano** on the right, and comes out on **via Togano**. After 500 m you leave the asphalt road and, along a short path, take **via Cocco**, from where you continue along the off-road that will take you to your destination. Here we suggest the detour to **Verigo**, with a destination of the ancient **Rio Graglia Mills**: six small stone mills lined up along the watercourse and once used for grinding cereals and grains.

Continuing along the mule track, complete with an old stone bridge over the railroad tracks, you arrive to rejoin the paved road near the Valegia chapel. From here you return to the vicinity of the previous descent, anticipating the path on the left that leads to the Cocco locality.

Another 6 km of dirt road awaits you - the first section about 3.5 km well put in and the second a little less.

If you are looking for peace and meditation, this route is ideal-just pedal along and be careful not to pick up any errant stones.

Fatigue (because it is always sweat) is eventually repaid by a unique environment and panorama; it is no coincidence that a refuge was built here under the auspices of the Val Grande National Park.

For those who want to enter even more into symbiosis with alpine nature, a walk to **Alpe di Campo**, about thirty minutes from the hut, is recommended. Arriving almost at the foot of **Tignolino**, whose altitude is exactly 1,000 meters higher than that of Parpinasca, you will enjoy a truly unique environment, with a beautiful fountain and some very well-maintained huts. Taking the return route, those unfamiliar with their vehicles are advised to **return by the same route as the ascent**.

The first 1,700 meters are common along the forest track, then experienced bikers leave the dirt road for a challenging, yet at the same time adrenaline-pumping and rewarding single track, passing through the southern part of Trontano and thus closing a unique loop.

At the end of this itinerary, the village of Trontano and its beautiful hamlets deserve a brief historical excursion, in which folk architecture stands out, which, thanks to a skillful use of beola and serizzo, fits perfectly with its surroundings.

Creggio's 13th-century tower represents a unicum of military and religious history; it is here that **Friar Dolcino**, the famous heretic also mentioned by Dante in his Inferno, apparently found refuge.

In the hamlet of **Verigo** is the lintel of a **building dating from the late Middle Ages**, with engravings of a symbolic character and against the evil eye; an empowered cross (with equal arms) enclosed in a circle, a kind of human form, two snakes and a balestriform (double cross) are recognizable.

Finally, the parish church of **Santa Maria** with its Romanesque facade, rich in decorations of various geometric shapes, plants, and religious symbols. It is flanked by the imposing bell tower, which was apparently built on the remains of an ancient watchtower.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Physically demanding climb, but with little difficulty on the technical side.

For the descent, the same route is recommended for those who are not very familiar with their vehicles.

CRITICAL POINTS

1. Descent to the Rio Graglia Mills, with crossing of Vigezzina tracks and subsequent mule track.
2. First part of the descent along the proposed trail: not very visible and with some obstacles do on foot.

TECHNICAL DATA.

Relevant geographical area:	Ossola
Place of departure and arrival:	Near the bridge over the Mizzoccola
Number of legs:	1
Length:	25.2 km
Height difference:	952 m
Total ascent:	1014 m indicative
Total descent:	990 m indicative
Difficulty:	BC (MEDIUM)
Average duration:	2 hours 30 minutes
Minimum elevation:	258 m.a.s.l.
Highest altitude reached:	1210 m.a.s.l.
Degree of cyclability:	good
Recommended period:	June-October
Presence of dedicated signage:	yes
Target Audience:	mtb lover / cyclo-hiker

VANTAGE POINTS

First hairpin bends toward Trontano, Parpinasca Refuge yard.

EATERIES

Stores in Masera and Trontano. Rifugio Alpe Parpinasca if manned (check with Val Grande National Park offices).

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

DOMODOSSOLA - Piazza Matteotti c/o Bus Terminal - 28845 Domodossola (VB), Tel. +39 0324 248265, infopoint@visitossola.it

BIKE SERVICE

BikeMotion, **Sale-Shop-Hire**, Corso Colonnello Attilio Moneta, 57 - 28845 DOMODOSSOLA (VB) Tel. +39 349 2562899 info@bikemotionshop.com, www.bikemotionshop.com

Ciclomania Barale, **Sale-Shop-Hire**, Via Papa Giovanni XXIII, 64 - 28845 DOMODOSSOLA (VB), Tel. +39 0324 241203, Info@ciclomania.com, www.ciclomania.com

Il Ciclista di Calvetti Fabio & Brusco Stefano, **Sale-Shop-Hire**, Corso, Via Ferdinando Disegna, 10 - 28845 DOMODOSSOLA (VB), Tel. +39 0324 227400, ilciclista.snc@tiscali.it, www.ilciclista.com

PLACES OF INTEREST

Along the route

Rio Graglia mills.

Nearby

DOMODOSSOLA

Civic Museum of Natural Sciences "G.G. Galletti," Mattarella Hill Archaeological Museum, "Mellerio Rosmini" Museum of Natural Sciences, Civic Museum of Palazzo San Francesco, Civic Museum Sempioniano, Civic Museum Palazzo Silva, Sacro Monte Calvario Special Reserve.

MASERA

Spallone Museum, various Oratories 11th-16th centuries, Oratory of San Giulio 15th century with fresco attributed to Giuseppe Mattia Borgnis (hamlet of Rivoria).

TRONTANO

Museum the Beola and the Chisel, 13th-century tower in Creggio, late medieval lintel in Verigo, Rio Graglia mills.

Standards of behavior

1. Stay on the trails

Respect the trail and any prohibitions on access. Respect private property.

2. Leave no trace

Respect the land. Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable than dry trails. Stay on existing trails and do not create new ones. Don't take shortcuts by cutting corners. Take any litter with you.

3. Drive carefully

A moment's distraction can endanger both yourself and others. Abide by speed limits and ride in such a way that you are always in control of your bicycle. Always wear a helmet.

4. Don't scare the animals

Animals are easily startled by an abrupt approach, a sudden movement or a loud noise. Allow them enough space and time to adjust to your presence.

5. Give right of way properly

These trails are not for bicycle use only but are also shared by hikers on foot. So, especially downhill, speed should be moderated: around a bend there may be someone coming up. Let other trail users know that you are about to overtake them through a friendly greeting or the use of a bell. Bicyclists must give way to all non-motorized trail users. Bicyclists proceeding downhill should give right of way to those going uphill. Make any overtaking as safe and polite as possible.



REMINDER:

BIKERS MUST ALWAYS GIVE WAY TO OTHER USERS

RULES OF CONDUCT FOR BIKERS

Since the appearance of the first mountain bikes, the N.O.R.B.A. (National Off Road Bicycle Association) drew up a code of conduct intended to regulate off-road activity with full respect for nature and other frequenters of the mountains and trails.

The N.O.R.B.A. Code has been adopted by many clubs, organizations, associations and schools throughout Italy. It consists of a series of general tips that, if followed carefully, can help make this sporting and hiking practice so much in vogue today more enjoyable for everyone.

N.O.R.B.A. Code.

1. Always give right of way to hikers on foot.
2. Slow down and use caution when approaching and overtaking hikers on foot or other cycle walkers, always making sure to signal your arrival well in advance; avoid cackling or shouting, rather apologize and greet politely.
3. Keep mountain bike speed under control at all times and approach turns with extreme caution, anticipating sudden obstacles. The pace should be commensurate with the type of terrain, the type of trail and each person's experience.
4. Always stay within the marked route, thus minimizing environmental impact (permanent damage to surrounding vegetation and subsequent soil erosion).
5. Do not disturb or frighten animals, whether domestic or wild; give them time to move away and off the path.
6. Do not, for any reason, leave garbage as a result of your passage; you should collect your own and, when possible, also those abandoned by other "distracted" hikers.
7. Always respect private and public property, leaving gates, moving barriers or bars as they are found. In any case, if possible, go directly to the landowners to ask for permission to pass. "No trespassing" often just means "Please ask permission if you want to pass."
8. During cycle hiking it is always advisable to be self-sufficient. The destination to be reached and the speed at which one moves should be proportionate to the psychophysical fitness and ability of the driver, the equipment, the environment, the terrain and, above all, the weather conditions.
9. Never undertake a bicycle excursion alone, except in cases of force majeure. Do not pass through isolated areas far from major roads and always leave clear directions regarding the route to be taken and the estimated time of return.



10. Minimize impact with nature: steal only images and memories, and leave, at most, the barely perceptible imprint of the wheels of your vehicle.