

Val Lesina Wild enchantment

From the valley bottom to its highest peak, Monte Legnone 2610m, looking out on Lake Como, this valley gains 2400m altitude.

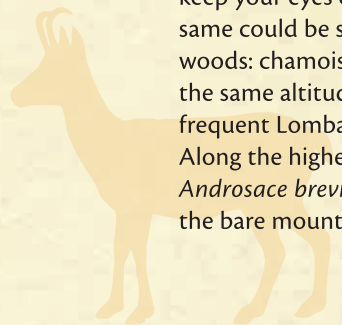
While it is full of forests enclosed by mountain ridges that isolate them from the rest of the world, from its outer slopes you can admire breathtaking views of Valtellina, Valchiavenna and the top of Lake Como.

It is the westernmost valley in the Orobian Alps and, due to its strategic position in the early decades of 1900 many military works were built, the ruins of which can still be seen and in some cases have been restored. As you climb, the cool and shady beech woods found at low altitudes give way to extended conifer woods. Within the borders of

the Park there can also be found one of the regional state forests of Lombardy, the Foresta Val Lesina: around 1000ha including forests, fallows, pastures, alpine meadows and various rocky environments.

You can easily see the majestic flight of the eagle if you keep your eyes open and your binoculars at hand. The same could be said for the many animals that inhabit the woods: chamois, ibex, deer and roe deer, which all share the same altitudinal zones; even one of the bears that frequent Lombardy has passed by here.

Along the higher crests, the *Androsace vandellii* and the *Androsace brevis* inhabit the cracks in the rocks, dotting the bare mountain with white and pink.



Bitto cheese

Val Lesina is one of the traditional areas for the production of Bitto cheese: symbol of the agro-pastoral produce of the western Orobian. It is produced in mountain pastures at altitudes between 1400 and 2000 meters, in full respect of the traditions that give it its worth. It is a fat cheese made with milk fresh from the cow and often includes goat's milk. The grass of these pastures and the traditional cheese making techniques, that allow for over five years seasoning, make this a unique and highly valued product.



MILITARY MULE TRACK

In these mountains, as for all other mountains from Val d'Aosta to Passo di Aprica, there can still be found remain of roads, mule tracks, trenches, tunnels, artillery platforms and other buildings all part of the Linea Cadorna, also called Occupazione Avanzata Frontiera Nord. This was composed of a series of defensive military lines built between 1911 and 1917 under order of chief of staff general Luigi Cadorna, to protect Italy and the industrial areas of Milan and Bergamo from a potential attack through Switzerland. All these defenses proved to be useless, no shot was ever fired on this front and in 1919 the entire line was completely abandoned.

These days many of the old military roads have become easy paths in the network of trails. In Val Lesina the best preserved and partially restored examples are a military road located just beyond Alpe Legnone and some trenches situated in a strategic and panoramic position around Alpe Scoggione.



Mule track on Alpe Legnone - ABOVE Monte Legnone seen from Lago di Mezzola

View over Lake Como from the area of Alpe Legnone



Val Lesina Regional Forest

Situated entirely within the Park's borders, this Regional State Forest extends in altitude from 800m to 2610m on Monte Legnone.

As you climb, the deciduous forests at the foot of the mountains give way to thick beech woods, that further up blend with the conifer woods, comprising silver fir and spruce. At a higher altitude zone the firs form a vast and uninterrupted forest of evergreens, that in its highest points includes an abundance of larches and green alder, as well as a dense growth of ferruginous rhododendrons.

This vegetation then gives way to fields and pasturelands that stretch as far as the highest mountain areas.

The Val Lesina Forest, that extends for about 1000ha, protects wild and scarcely anthropized environments and a rich mountain fauna which includes the ibex, a species that was reintroduced in 1989.

The State Forest is managed by the Regional Body for Agriculture and Forests – ERSAF.

For further information: www.ersaf.lombardia.it

Ermine: Stoat in his winter coat



Mustelids

Stoat, weasel, beech marten and pine marten are amongst the most elusive animals that inhabit the Alps. Often the only way we can detect their presence is by the traces that they leave at the sides of the road; we generally only ever catch a fleeting glimpse of them. The importance of their presence for the environment, as regulators of ecological balances, is irreplaceable due to their constant predation on the more prolific species of micromammals such as voles, mice, shrews, dormouse and smaller passerines.

While the ermine is the best known through its curiosity, the smaller weasel is one of the most difficult species to observe in nature. Amongst the larger species, pine martens are found in forest environments, whilst beech martens are the most ubiquitous: they can be found from the valley bottom to the alpine pastures.

The smaller and larger species differ very little: the stoat differs from the weasel for its black tail tip, the pine marten differs from the beech marten for its choice of habitat and its yellow-coloured bib, which tends to whiten in the latter.

Weasel



Botanical rarities

Whilst the center section of the Orobian is home to the endemic *Sanguisorba dodecandra* and *Viola comollia*, amongst the higher rocky ridges of the western side can be found the *Androsace brevis*, another rare botanical entity. This endemic species that can only be found in a fairly small distribution area: outside of this corner of the Orobian, it only grows beyond Lake Como in a confined area of the Lepontine Alps and on a few peaks of the southern side of Valchiavenna.

The *Androsace brevis* forms small pulvino in high altitude rocky or grassy environments, usually sunlit and windy.

On rock faces, locally, you can find the uncommon *Androsace vandellii*, a similar species that has white flowers which sometime form pretty cushions that can become quite large.

Androsace brevis



Androsace vandellii



Lago di Scoggione



RECOMMENDED ROUTES

1 - Osiccio di Sopra - Alpe Legnone - Alpe Scoggione

DIFFICULTY Average	STARTING POINT Osiccio di Sopra, 923 m
ALTITUDE GAIN 767 m	RECOMMENDED SEASON June - October
TEMPO SALITA 2,30 h	

A trek through a panoramic corner of the Park, overlooking Lake Como. After paying the access fee to the agro-silvo-pastoral roads at one of Delebio's bars, you can reach Osiccio di Sopra (preferably with a 4x4). You then proceed on foot along an easy road that climbs in the shadow of the forest. Once you reach Panzone, you carry on towards the pastures as far as rifugio Alpe Legnone. Follow the old military road for about half an hour, until you get to the Bivacco Baita al Lago, next to Lago Scoggione. After a short descent you reach Rifugio Scoggione. Thereabout, as well as the ancient road, you can see the well preserved trenches and strategically placed military posts.

2 - Sentiero militare Linea Cadorna

DIFFICULTY Easy	STARTING POINT Alpe Legnone, 1690 m
ALTITUDE GAIN Not surveyed	RECOMMENDED SEASON June - October
TIME OF ASCENT To taste	

The paths that start from Alpe Legnone or Alpe Scoggione allow you to walk along the old military roads built during World War I and see many of the trenches, military posts, channels and tunnels. For expert hikers, these locations are also a good starting points to reach the summit of Monte Legnone.



GYO Gran Via delle Orobie, some sections only for mountaineering experts

- 1 Recommended routes
- Main routes
- Routes for expert mountaineers
- Main roads
- Secondary roads/byroads

MOUNTAIN HUTS/BIVOUACS

- Capanna Sociale Baitone di Legnone** (ERSAF, gestore Pro Loco Delebio) loc. Alpe Legnone cell 334 5736108 - 348 8660424
- Rifugio Scoggione** (CAI Colico) Alpe Scoggione tel 0341 940 576 - cell 347 824 7458 e-mail: scoggione@caicolico.it
- Bivacco Baita del Lago** (Comune di Colico) left open - 7 beds
- Bivacco Alpe Dosso** (ERSAF) - loc. Alpe Dosso 35 beds, shelter/bivouac is always open with 6 beds laid out tel 335 5456867
- Bivacco Barch dei Manzoo** (ERSAF) - left open 8 beds
- Bivacco Alpe Piazza** (Comune di Rogolo) left open
- Rifugio della Corte** loc. La Corte - cell 340 3433090
- Rifugio Alpe Stavello** loc. Alpe Stavello - cell 334 7652242 info@alpestavello.it
- Rifugio Trona Soliva** (Comune di Gerola Alta) loc. Alpe Trona Soliva cell 351 5907013
- Rifugio F.A.L.C.** (CAI Milano) località Bocchetta del Varrone (LC) cell 331 7884452 - cell 328 3432751

RECOMMENDED ROUTES

3 - Piazza - Casera Stavello - Alpe Dosso

DIFFICULTY Average	STARTING POINT Piazza, 466 m
ALTITUDE GAIN 1046 m	RECOMMENDED SEASON May - October
TEMPO SALITA 2,30 h	

A full-immersion in the Val Lesina Regional Forest to enjoy its wilder side. After paying the access fee to the agro-silvo-pastoral roads at one of the bars in Andalo or Delebio, you can reach the area of Piazza. After leaving your car, you proceed on foot taking the old military mule tracks that runs through the valley and reaches Revoldo. The path goes on climbing up valley for over 500m in altitude, as far as Casera di Mezzana. As you turn right, you enter the vast conifer woods to get to Casera di Stavello. Keep a level altitude and carry on towards Alpe Dosso, where you'll find its namesake bivouac. On your way back down take path n.125 and, after you have left Baita di Mezzo behind, you will rejoin the track you took on your way up.

HOLIDAY FARMS

- Agriturismo L'Eco.** - Cosio Valtellino - località Dossa tel 346 0045546
- Agriturismo Volpe Golosa.** - Cosio Valtellino - località Dossa tel 349 8384498 - cell 329 6621831
- Agriturismo Bar Bianco.** - (ERSAF) - Rasura - località Alpe Culino tel 329 4019065 - tel 320 0833373

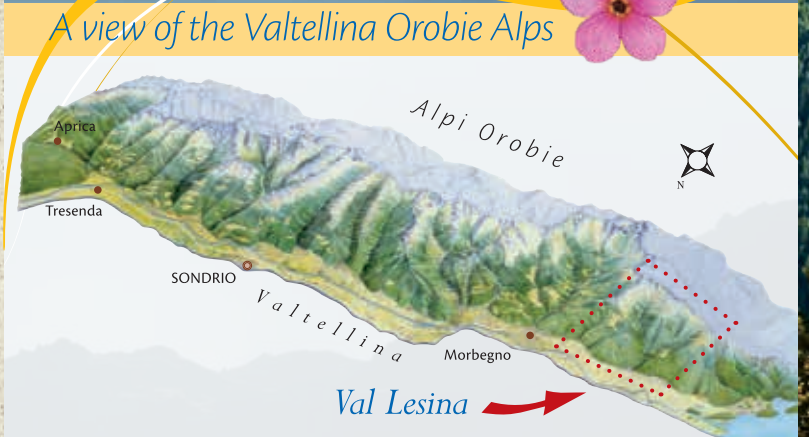
Useful contacts

- Consorzio Turistico Porte di Valtellina** - piazza Bossi 7/8 - Morbegno tel 0342 601140 - infopoint@porteditavaltellina.it - www.porteditavaltellina.it
- ERSAF Morbegno** - via B. Castagna 19 - tel 0342 605580 - 02 67404581 www.ersaf.lombardia.it - info@ersaf.lombardia.it
- Museo civico di Storia naturale di Morbegno** - via Cortivacci 2 Morbegno - tel 0342 612451 - www.comune.morbegno.so.it/museo
- Ecomuseo della Valgerola e Centro visitatori Casa del Tempo** via Nazionale 31 - Gerola Alta - (Comune di Gerola Alta, tel 0342 690024). For educational activities tel 329 2318302 info@ecomuseovalgerola.it - www.ecomuseovalgerola.it

For further and more detailed information we recommend you read "Guida al Parco Regionale delle Orobie Valtellinesi" by Mario Vannuccini, Lysis publishers; "Alpi Orobie Valtellinesi", curated by Guido Combi, Fondazione L. Bombardieri (books only in Italian); Parco delle Orobie Valtellinesi, coffee-table book curated by Elio Della Ferrera, Bonazzi Grafica (Italian/English).

GUIDED TOURS WITHIN THE PARK

Alpine guides and medium mountain Guides are official Guides of the Parco delle Orobie Valtellinesi. Groups and individuals wishing for guided tours and hikes may contact the Park Center at 0342 211236. Web page: www.parcorobievalt.com



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Agriturismo

- Restaurant or rest stop
- Rooms

Visitors center

- Museum
- Restaurant or rest stop
- Rooms
- Parking
- Only authorized parking*

* Access to all roads closed to regular traffic is regulated/controlled by local authorities. For further information/Further updates: Comune di Delebio 0342 685110 Comune di Cosio Valtellino 0342 634111 Com. di Andalo Valtellino 0342 685183 Comune di Piantedo 0342 683361

* These roads are generally dirt tracks and a 4x4 vehicle is recommended.