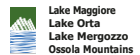




Mountain bike



Gravel



Toce Cycleway Cycling among the flowers

○ TC (VERY EASY)

The route starts from Ornavasso and reaches the Fondotoce reedbed and the Verbania Pallanza station, crossing the production areas of "Typical Flowers of Lake Maggiore": between April and May, during the blooming period, azaleas, rhododendrons, and camellias reveal endless shades of color and hues.

From the center of **Ornavasso**, we reach the road bridge over **Rio San Carlo** and descend toward the sports field. From here, a beautiful bicycle/pedestrian **footbridge** crosses the Toce River and then turns right with a nice stretch of bicycle path on the left bank of the Toce. The environment is very picturesque: the banks of the river have lush vegetation, and in places, clearings open up where flowers typical of Lake Maggiore are grown. In summer, numerous wild rabbits escape as you pass by.

We pass the junction for the **Mergozzo** sports field (a visit to the village of Mergozzo is recommended), and finally, the bike path ends near the former incinerator. From here, you turn left to join the provincial road coming from Mergozzo. Turn right and, paying attention to traffic, follow the asphalt road for about 500 m and then turn right to take a wide path (signposted fork) that leads under the freeway bridge where the network of natural-bottomed (dirt) bicycle and pedestrian paths of the **Fondotoce Special Nature Reserve** (www.parcoticinomaggiore.it), a European-level protection area, begins. The bike path continues along the left bank of the Toce River until it reaches the **Fondotoce campground** area. The trail then continues flanking the reedbed (the observatory is worth getting) and the canal that connects Lake Mergozzo with Lake Maggiore and finally reaches the **Fondotoce traffic** circle and the Casa della Resistenza. From here, a roadside bike path leads to the Verbania Pallanza **train station**.



TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The route is overall easy and flat. There are a few muddy sections. It is not recommended after periods of heavy rainfall.

POINTS OF ATTENTION

A short section of provincial road in the former incinerator area.

TECHNICAL DATA.

Relevant geographical area:	Verbano Cusio Ossola / Ossola Valley / Toce Plain
Place of departure:	Ornavasso
Place of arrival:	Fondotoce Verbania Pallanza train station
Number of legs:	1
Length:	14.0 km
Total ascent:	20 m indicative
Total descent:	30 m indicative
Difficulty:	TC (very easy)
Average duration:	1 hour 00 minutes
Minimum altitude:	194 masl Fondotoce
Maximum altitude reached:	215 masl (Ornavasso)
Degree of cyclability:	Total
Recommended period:	year-round
Presence of dedicated signage:	Yes
Target Audience:	For families

SCENIC POINTS

Bicycle and pedestrian walkway to Candoglia

Small beach at the confluence of the River Toce and Lake Maggiore

REFRESHMENT POINTS

Ornavasso, Mergozzo, Fondotoce



TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

MERGOZZO - Corso Rome, 20 28802 Mergozzo (VB) Phone: +39 0323 800935,
turismo@comune.mergozzo.vb.it

VERBANIA INTRA - Piazza Ranzoni, 40 - 28921 Verbania Intra (VB), Tel. +39 0323
503249/+39 0323 556669, turismo@comune.verbania.it

VERBANIA PALLANZA - Viale delle Magnolie, 1 - 28922 Verbania Pallanza (VB), Tel. +39
0323 557676, proloco@comune.verbania.it

BIKE SERVICE

Dadebike, **Sales-Repair shop**, Via Vittorio Veneto, 75 - 28877 Ornavasso (VB), Tel. +39 342
7271804, dadebike@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/dadebike

Ciclomania Barale, **Sale-Repair shop-Rental**, Corso Benedetto Cairoli, 63 - 28921
VERBANIA (VB), Tel. +39 0323519516, info@ciclomania.com, www.ciclomania.com

Ver-Bike, **Sale-Repair shop**, Corso Europa, 64/F - 28922 VERBANIA PALLANZA (VB), Tel.
+39 0323 501475, info@verbike.it, www.verbike.it

Autocaravan Vagamondo, **Rental**, Corso Europa, 64 - 28922 VERBANIA PALLANZA (VB), Tel.
+39 0323 504419, info@vagamondo.com, www.vagamondo.com

Ciprian Enrico, **Sales-Repair shop**, Via Giuseppe Castelli, 7 - 28922 VERBANIA
PALLANZA (VB), Tel. +39 0323 502401, cicli@ciprian.it, www.ciprian.it

Ebike Lago Maggiore (Inside Space), **Rental**, Via 42 Martiri, 165 (FS Station production area) -
28924 VERBANIA FONDOTOCE (VB), Tel. +39 351 9115572 / +39 339 6741662,
info@ebikelagomaggiore.com, www.ebikelagomaggiore.it



PLACES OF INTEREST

Along the route

Cadorna Line: this system of military fortifications was intended to defend the northern border of Italy close to Switzerland. It was named after the then Chief of Staff of the Army, General Luigi Cadorna of Pallanza, who was its promoter. The Ossola and Verbano valleys cover an elevation difference of 2,000 m between the Toce plain and Mount Massone and between Lake Maggiore and Mount Zeda.

The system of fortifications was built along the Italo-Swiss border between the summer of 1915 and the spring of 1918, during the First World War, at a time when there were fears that, penetrating from the Alpine passes of the Swiss Central Alps, Austro-German troops could quickly reach and occupy the industrial and economic nerve centers of our country.

The "Cadorna Line" was never used and was abandoned. Today, these military mule tracks make it possible to walk the mountains, and the fortifications, from which not a single cannon was ever fired, provide an opportunity to learn about a tragic moment in the history of the 20th century.

Ornavasso, "Enrico Bianchetti" archaeological Museum: the archaeological collection owned by the Museo del Paesaggio (Landscape Museum) -known internationally since the late 19th century- located in the Ornavasso branch location and can be visited by appointment. The visit to the "Enrico Bianchetti" Archaeological Section involves using an audio guide, which can be activated on-site via QR code. Visitors will have the opportunity to be accompanied on a tour of the Museum by the narrating voices of the ancient owners of the exhibits, who will tell their own stories and those of the preserved objects.

Ornavasso, Parish Museum of Sacred Art: The collection houses valuable works of sacred art (sculptures and paintings) once scattered in the village churches and dating from the 14th to the 18th century.

Ornavasso, House Museum of the Partisan "Alfredo Di Dio": the Museum preserves documents, manuscripts, photographs, and artifacts that testify to the life of the "Valtoce," a partisan division that made a solid contribution to the liberation and defense of the territory. Alfredo Di Dio, with Dionigi Superti, commander of the "Valdossola," signed the surrender of Domodossola, from which the splendid experience of the forty days of freedom of the Ossola Republic was born.

The village of **Mergozzo** is a small municipality awarded the Orange Flag by the Italian Touring Club (www.bandierearancioni.it). The main town overlooks the lake's western shore of the same name, with its houses arranged in an amphitheater (the "Riva" district). Other houses, clinging to the granite slopes of Montorfano, huddle around a municipal-era building, the "Castle," and make up the old village called "Sasso."

The village and the lake are surrounded by mountains: on one side, the Montorfano and its ca. 800 meters of altitude separate it from the Toce Valley. On the other rise, the first reliefs of the Val Grande, which reach 1,500 meters in height, such as the jagged ridges of the Corni di Nibbio.

Lake Mergozzo was formerly part of the Borromean Gulf of Lake Maggiore. Constant overflows and flooding of the Toce River over the centuries have helped create a strip of land that led to



the separation of the two bodies of water and, thus, the formation of Lake Mergozzo.

This small lake is one of the cleanest on the peninsula: in fact, thanks to a lack of industrial activity, a ban on the use of motor boats, and an efficient sewage system, its waters are among the clearest in Italy.

Granite Eco museum

Mergozzo is a land of stone with its landscape combining the transparency of lake waters with the imposing presence of Montorfano, to which the Granite Eco museum is dedicated, and it is a land of thousands of years, with archaeological traces dating back to the Stone Age and preserved in the Civic Archaeological Museum.

The Granite Eco museum, recognized by the Piedmont Region in 2007, involves the entire Mergozzo and surrounding areas, encompassing the quarrying areas of the pink Candoglia marble and the white Montorfano, green Mergozzo, and pink Baveno granites. The territory of the Ecomuseum, included in the Sesia Val Grande UNESCO Geopark, is an extraordinary open-air laboratory to observe the craft of today's quarrymen, the traces of ancient workings in disused quarries, and the countless uses of local stones in traditional architecture, terracing, and old and recent art monuments.

Fondo Toce Nature Reserve: established in 1990, includes the last stretch of the Toce River and part of its floodplain. It also consists of a large reedbed area in the coastal zone, a relict wetland that is an ideal nesting and wintering site for many bird species (over 130 species surveyed). The Migration Study Center, with a catching and ringing station, has also been built to better study the avifauna. The reedbed also serves as a necessary natural cleaner for the waters of Lake Maggiore and is essential for the reproduction of many fish species.

The management of the protected area is entrusted to the Ticino and Lake Maggiore Protected Area Management Authority.

In the vicinity:

Sanctuary of Our Lady of Boden (Boden = plain in the Walser language of Ornavasso): it is one of the major centers of Marian worship in Verbano Cusio Ossola and has been the destination of participatory pilgrimages for five centuries. The shrine commemorates the apparition of Our Lady to the shepherdess Maria Della Torre on September 7, 1528. It was built beginning in 1530, expanding a pre-existing chapel, and took on its present appearance in the 1930s. The iconography of the Virgin of the Boden is that of a Madonna "of the chair": the Mother, with crowned head, is seated on a throne, the Child is blessing with her left hand, while with her right hand, she holds the crusader globe, symbolizing Jesus' reign in heaven and on earth. The sanctuary preserves an essential collection of ex-voto tablets that allow us to read centuries of popular devotion.

The location on which the shrine was built makes this place especially popular with cyclists. Since 2009, the B.V. del Boden has been identified as the patron saint of those who practice the sport, and since 2011, she has twinned with the Ghisallo Sanctuary.

Ornavasso, Ancient Marble Quarry: Ornavasso marble, already used in ancient times, gained importance in the late 14th century for erecting Milan Cathedral and other Lombard monuments. The "Casino" quarry was active in the first half of the twentieth century (52 workers in 1939); a



192-m-long tunnel provides access to a large 16-m-high final hall in which the pink marble lode that is a continuation of that of Candoglia, on the opposite side of the Toce valley, is put to live. The quarry can be visited and is intended for educational use and events.

Ornavasso, Della Guardia Church and Tower: The church is located above the village of Ornavasso, about 200 meters from the parish church of S. Nicolao, along the road to the Boden Sanctuary. The Sanctuary "Della Guardia" takes its name from the promontory of the same name on which it stands, so named still today because of the presence of an ancient signal tower dating back to the early 14th century, which was part of a defensive watchtower system composed of towers visually communicating with each other.

Romanesque Church of San Giovanni in Montorfano: represents one of the most exciting and best-preserved Romanesque churches in the entire Ossola Valley.



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 so that you can always control 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

These trails are not only for bicycle use but also shared by hikers on foot. So, especially downhill, speed should be moderated: around a bend, someone may be coming up. Let other trail users know you will overtake them through a friendly greeting or a bell. Bikers must give way to all non-motorized trail users. Cyclists proceeding downhill should give the 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 first mountain bikes appeared, 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.

Many clubs, organizations, associations, and schools throughout Italy have adopted the N.O.R.B.A. Code. 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 priority 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 instead, apologize, and greet politely.
3. Always keep the speed of the mountain bike under control 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 path, thus minimizing environmental impact (permanent damage to surrounding vegetation and subsequent soil erosion).
5. Do not disturb or frighten domestic or wild animals; 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 pick up your own and, when possible, also those abandoned by other "distracted" hikers.
7. Always respect private and public property, leaving gates, mobile barriers, or bars as they are found. In any case, go directly to the landowners to ask for permission to pass. "No trespassing" often means "Please ask permission if you want to pass."
8. During cycle hiking, it is always advisable to be self-sufficient. The goal to be reached and the speed at which one moves should be proportionate to the psychophysical fitness and skill of the driver, the equipment, the environment, the terrain, and, above all, the weather conditions.



9. Never undertake a cycle tour alone, except in cases of force majeure. Stay away from isolated areas distant from major roads, and always leave clear directions regarding the route to be taken and the estimated return time.

10. Minimizing the impact with nature: stealing only images and memories and leaving, at most, the barely perceptible imprint of the wheels of one's vehicle.