

Itinerari culturali e naturalistici Ecomuseo Valle dei Laghi

Hiking through
mountain pastures
and bivouacs





Ecomuseo Valle dei Laghi

Ecomuseo della Valle dei Laghi aims to enhance the value of the territory promoting its culture, its history, its traditions and also protecting the environment. It also aims to attract the interest of young people in order to activate many cultural projects and activities.

One valley, two ridges

Monte Gazza is located in Trentino, in the suggestive Valle dei Laghi, south-west of Trento.

Monte Gazza and the surrounding area are part of the Gardesane Prealps, a mountainous segment of the southern Alps.

The prevalent rocks in the ridge are dolomites and limestones, dating back to the Middle Triassic (about 230 million years ago).

Their origin is marine: sedimentary deposits of ancient ocean floors. The ridge of Monte Gazza reaches its maximum height with the peak Monte Gazza, which stands at 1,985 meters above sea level. The ridge develops parallel to the course of the Sarca river, a tributary of Lake Garda, and extends south of the famous Brenta Group. From a naturalistic point of view, thanks to

its transition position between the Alpine and sub-Mediterranean climates, the ridge hosts a vast range of natural habitats, from low-altitude deciduous forests to alpine meadows and high-altitude prairies.

Vegetation: up to 800-1000 meters, prevail deciduous woods, in particular oak, beech and hornbeam, which benefit from the mild climate of the Valle dei Laghi.

In the shadier woods you can also find maples typical of temperate zones. At these altitudes you can also observe thermophilic species, such as holm oaks and other tree species that are normally found in warmer areas, thanks to the Mediterranean influence that comes from Lake Garda.



Monte Bondone, on its side overlooking the Valle dei Laghi, is an area of great geological, geographical and naturalistic interest, located between Valle dell'Adige and Valle dei Laghi.

On the side that descends towards the Valle dei Laghi, the ridge is characterized by a notable diversity of environments, thanks to its altitudinal extension and its particular exposure.

Monte Bondone, reaches its maximum altitude with Cima Cornetto (2,180 m), extends south-west towards the Valle dei Laghi. This slope is steeper than the northern one which slopes towards the city of Trento and offers spectacular views of the lakes and valleys below.

Geologically, Monte Bondone, like Monte Gazza, is mainly composed of limestone and dolomite rocks, which date back to the Triassic period (about 250-200 million years ago).

Vegetation: up to 800-1000 m, on the lower slopes, there are mixed broad-leaved forests, with the presence of hornbeams (*Ostrya carpinifolia*), oaks (*Quercus pubescens*), and beeches (*Fagus sylvatica*).

In some areas more exposed to the sun, junipers can be found. The experience of "Hiking through malghe and bivouacs to get to know the alpine pastures in Valle dei Laghi"



Discover the routes here!



The experience of "Hiking through malghe and bivouacs to get to know the alpine pastures in Valle dei Laghi"

The territory of Valle dei Laghi is very articulated, rich in water in all its forms, from springs to streams, from "rogge" to lakes, forming communication routes and interconnections not only for human benefit but also for animals and plants.

Water, the basic tenet of the area, carved the rocks, allowed the cultivation of apples and grapes, guaranteed the life of local peo-

ple in the past and in the present. The knowledge of this territory and its landscape, multifaceted and sculpted by man over the centuries, leads us to discover the millennial interweaving between the culture of a people and the nature that hosts it.

Ecomuseo has created 3 main walking experiences that were traveled with children and adolescents to search for those places partly forgotten, which our ancestors frequented assiduously, participating in an economy of subsistence from the delicate balance. Children and young people were the protagonists of these paths to learn to observe and dialogue with the territory, with fellow trekkers, with people who have lived in and with the mountains for years. We reached the peaks and ridges through ancient paths, conquering the peaks with sweat and joy, we admired the landscapes of the valley floor, so finely carved in a perfect mosaic of nature and human activities, we met refugees, breeders, farmers who told us their experience of life, we spent the "nights in the mountain" with the noise and silence that the mountains offers, we finally looked for the traces of our past to learn to walk more safely in the future.

Here are the main tracks of the project "Hiking through mountain pastures and bivouacs" realized by Ecomuseo Valle dei Laghi and the two medium mountain guides Daniele Martini and Paola Barducci.

1 MONTE BONDONE

A journey among historic rocks,
ancient lakes
and dizzying ridges

2 THE RIDGE OF MONTE GAZZA

Walking through fields
and pastures

3 BONDONE DI MEZZO

On mule tracks,
amongst lakes and pastures



MONTE BONDONE

A journey among historic rocks, ancient lakes and dizzying ridges

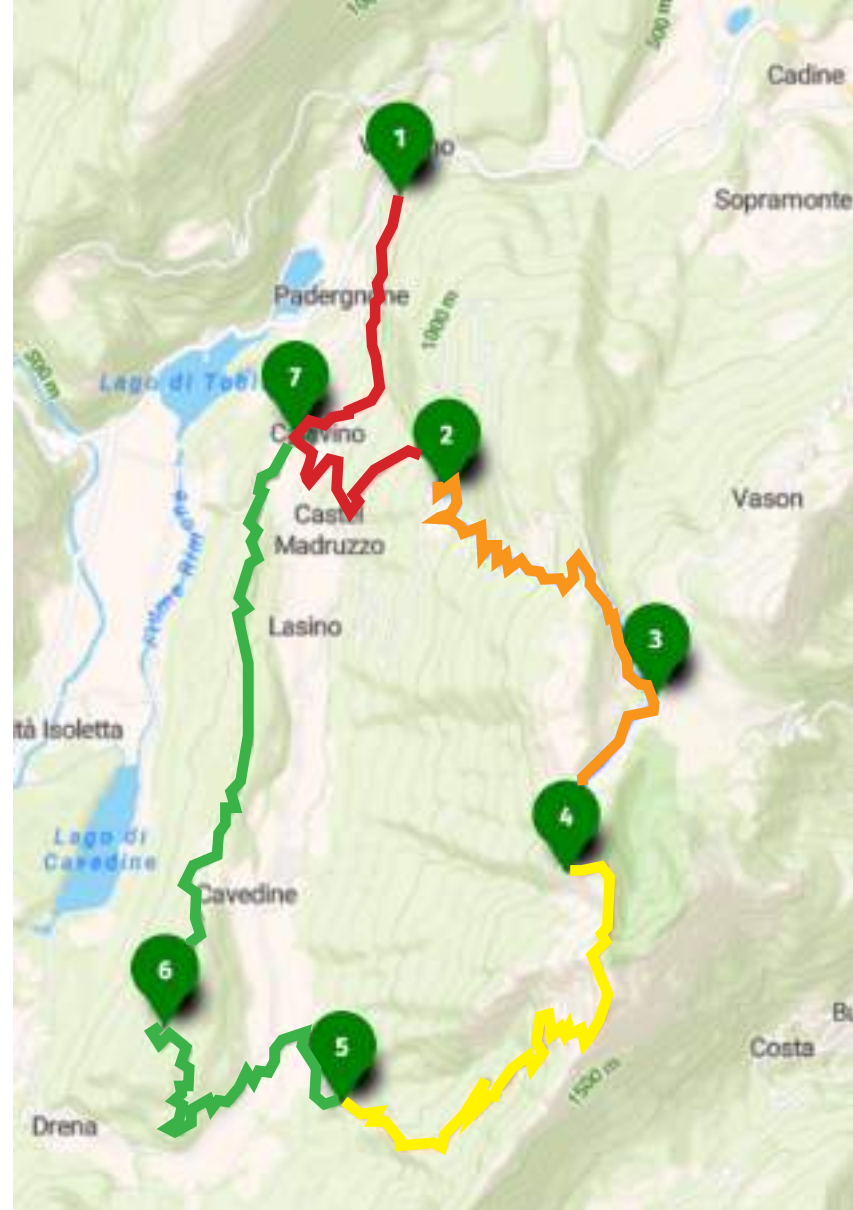
Day 1: We started our walk with the Stoppani geological trail, which is stretching from Vezzano to Calavino. That allowed us to talk about geology and water, an important resource for craft activities in the past. In the afternoon we went up to Lagolo, our first stop, where we finally had time to relax along its lake, which origin is glacial. That gave us the right relaxation after a day of walking. We set up our campsite.

Distance: 10 km
Elevation gain: 600 m

Day 2: From Lagolo we walked until reaching the Torbiera delle Viote, one of the most famous wetlands in the Province of Trento, originated from an ancient glacial lake, and full of natural evidences. We then continued to Bocca Vaiona and to Malga Roncher di Cavedine, where we had our second stop.

Distance: 12 km
Elevation gain: 800 m

Day 3: From Malga Roncher di Cavedine, we continued the climb up to Mount Cornetto and from there down along the ridge of



Campo Fiorito and Malga Pian. This hike offers numerous interesting natural attractions and landscape views. Along the path we had the chance to talk about the importance of the traditional activities of the territory, such as grazing, cutting of the forests, mowing.

Distance: 10 km
Elevation gain: 400 m

Day 4: From Malga Pian we reached Vigo Cavedine, and then climbed up to Gaggio and San Siro. All these places are rich in history with military trenches, archaeological sites and rock paintings. In the afternoon we arrived at Calavino, our final stop.

Distance: 13 km
Elevation gain: 250 m

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During the experience, I discovered new places, met new people and had a lot of fun. I spent some beautiful days and a night in tent. I recommend this activity to those who are curious, as I am, and to those who do not give up in front of obstacles, as the climbs can be, managing to admire the things that surround him.







THE RIDGE OF MONTE GAZZA

Walking through fields and pastures

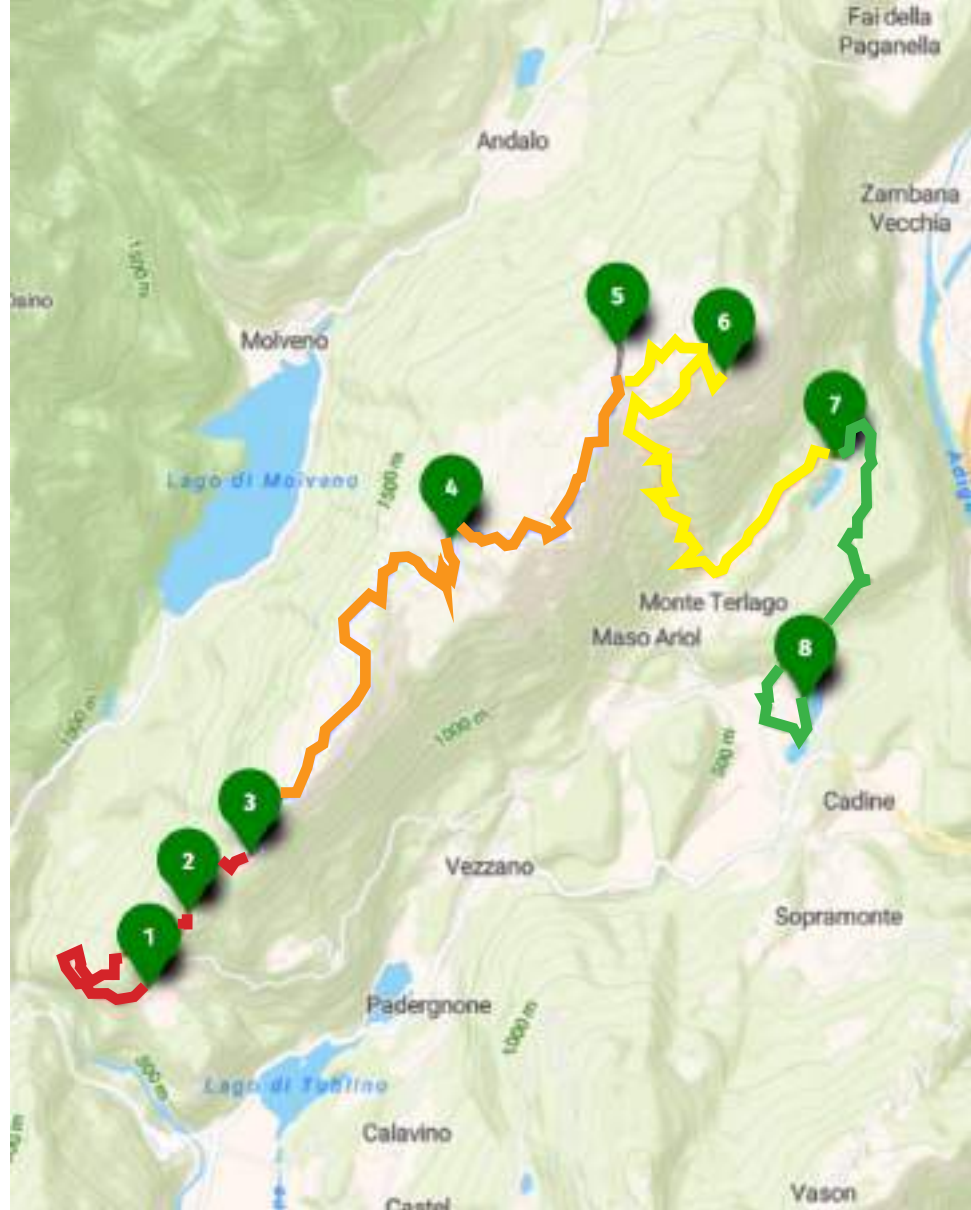
Day 1: We started our walk from Ranzo, following the dirt road through the forest, and then we took the path towards Malga Bael. From there we climbed the mule track arriving at Malga Gaggia.

Distance: 13 km
Elevation gain: 250 m

Day 2: This second day is fulfilling in terms of nature and landscapes: from Malga Gaggia we crossed the whole ridge of Monte Gazza, passing by Covelo, San Giacomo pass, S. Antonio pass and Malga Terlago, where we stopped for the night.

The trekking allowed us to talk about harvests and water resources, which are so scarce in this limestone ground.

Distance: 12 km
Elevation gain: 650 m



Day 3: From Malga Terlago we went up to Sant'Antonio pass, and we reach the top of Mount Paganella. We crossed the fields of Prada and reached the lakes of Lamar and malga Terlago, where we stopped to rest and sleep.

Distance: 7 km
Elevation gain: 130 m

Day 4: On the last day, we walked from the lakes of Lamar toward the ridge of Faeda, until we reached the locality called Le Vallene. The trekking ended at Lake Terlago, with a refreshing afternoon of relax.

Distance: 8 km
Elevation gain: 150 m



It was an immersive experience that made us meet new people and new friends. We discovered new things, such as animal species, plants and rocks. I had a wonderful time.







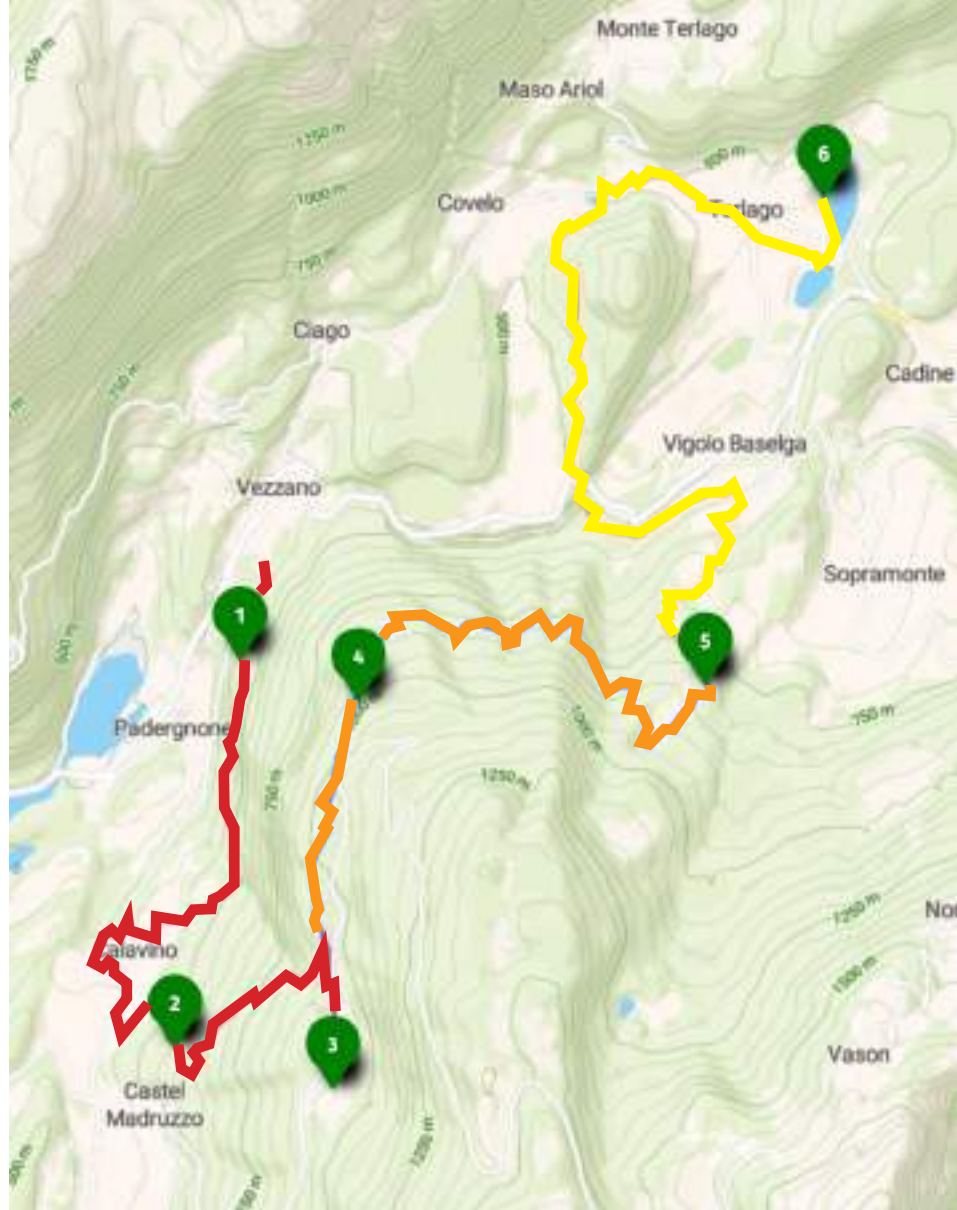
BONDONE DI MEZZO

On mule tracks, amongst lakes and pastures

Day 1: On this first day, we started along the Stoppani geological trail from Vezzano to Calavino. The geological path allowed us to talk about the geological features of this area: glaciers, glacial wells (giant's pots), karst features and erratic rocks. When we reached Calavino, we got here the chance to talk about water, an important resource for craft activities in the past. In the afternoon we went up to Lagolo, which with its lake of glacial origin gave us the right relax after a day of walking. We set the campsite here.

Distance: 10 km
Elevation gain: 600 m

Day 2: On the second day, we walked from Lagolo to Sant'Anna, passing through the localities of Monpiana and the Piociosa path. This path was easy, with no significant elevation gain, so we had plenty of time to talk



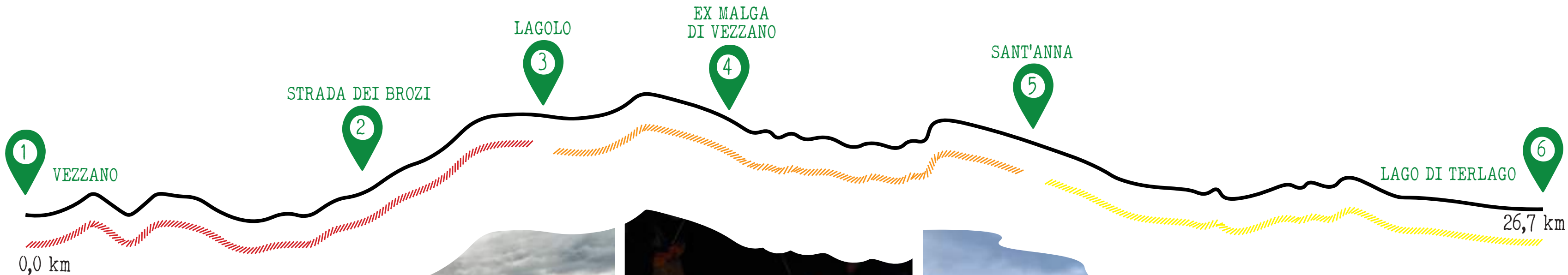
about trees, climate change and the typical fauna of the area.
Distance: 6,5 km
Elevation gain: 250 m

Day 3: On the last day, we went from Sant'Anna down to Baselga del Bondone through a locality called Omalga. We then followed the Mont Mezzana path that, from the locality of Gaidoss, brought us to Terlagio. From the village of Terlagio, we followed the "Acquaviva" path until we reached the parking spot called "bunker", our final destination. We ended the day relaxing along the lake's shores.
Distance: 10 km
Elevation gain: 180 m



They were beautiful days in the middle of nature.
I made new friends and hiked through the woods.
I liked everything very much.
I've embarked on a sensational journey.







The hay harvest

Once upon a time, almost all the families in Valle dei Laghi had a stable with one or more heads of cattle: ows, oxen, goats, sheep etc. and were involved in the haying, essential to ensure the nutrition of their animals during winter.

In the valley floor his practice could be repeated two or three times a year from May onwards, whereas in the mountains it could only be done once, between July and August.

Mountain hay, rich in medicinal herbs, was particularly valuable.

Whole families, or parts of them, moved up into the mountains, even for several weeks, where they sheltered in stone huts or tents. The grass used to be cut and dried in the sun.

When the grass was dry, it used to be raked and transported with the cart to the barn on the valley floor.

When the hay was in arduous places it had to be put in large sheets of jute and carried on the shoulders.



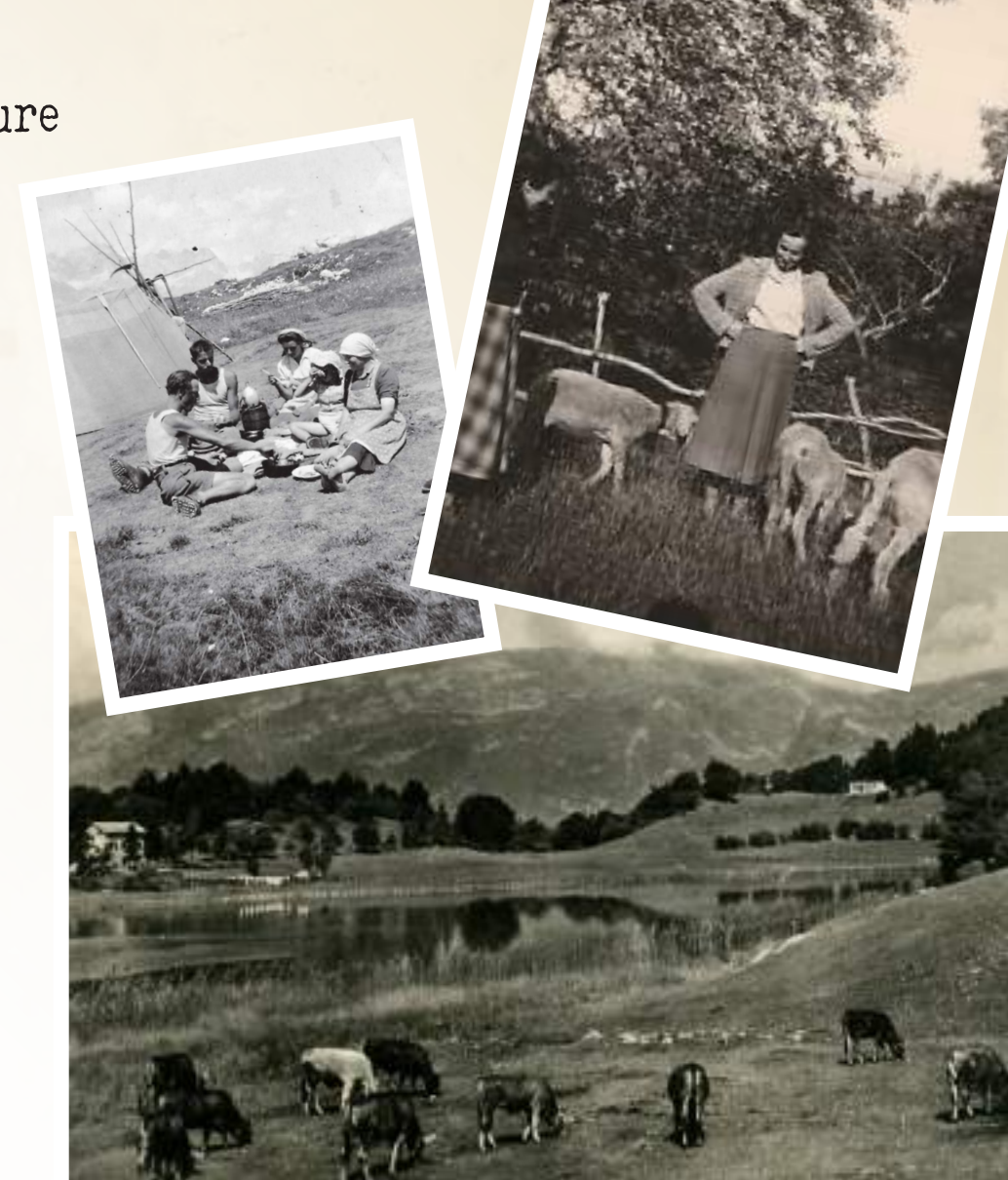
Grazing and mountain pasture

Grazing was once an integral part of everyday lives. After school, children and kids brought sheep, goats and cows into the woods and meadows around the village.

In some places the animals were given to a shepherd, who would gather them by playing the horn, take them to pasture and bring them back at night.

Grazing and mountain pasture have historically been key activities for the agricultural economy of the area. During the summer months, farmers used to move their livestock - mainly cattle but also goats and sheep - to the alpine and high altitude mountain pastures, where they found fresh and abundant grass. This temporary migration allowed the valley floor to be left free, which was cultivated with cereals, potatoes or other crops, taking full advantage of the resources of the territory. It also gave farmers the opportunity to take care of hay harvest.

The pasture was a time of hard work, but also of sharing and community. The families worked together to manage the mountain huts and, with long and slow walks, the transhumance. Each pasture was a small organized microcosm, where the cheese maker played a key role, producing butter, cheeses and ricotta, which represented a valuable resource for both self-consumption and local trade.



The forest

You have to go back many years to see the tree-filled mountains as today. The memories of the elderly and the photographs that have reached us, show how once the forest was widely exploited: it was necessary as wood for heating and cooking, to build important parts of houses, barns, stairs, furniture, wagons, barrels, tools... , to produce coal and lime.

The sale of timber and its derivatives was also an important supplement to the meagre incomes of many families. The ash wood was also cut to make baskets and to support vines and beans.

In addition to the wood, dry foliage was also collected and used as bedding for animals in the stables.

The richness and diversity of tree species has remained constant over time: ash trees, hornbeams, beech trees, oak trees, holm oaks and hazelnuts, as well as pine, larch, fir and pine trees populate the mountain at different altitudes.

The ancient mountain roads

The ancient mountain roads of Valle dei Laghi, built of stone, were essential communication routes that connected the villages of the valley with the alpine pastures. They were steep and often arduous paths that served for multiple activities.

They were cobbled paths, in which even today you can recognize the deep furrows dug by wagons pulled by oxen; curvy mule tracks where only pack animals could help man in his labours; A dense network of narrow paths, where only the sled, carried shoulder-mounted uphill, could be loaded for the dangerous descent in the name of fatigue and prudence. These paths were paved with flat stones and pebbles, mainly made of local stones, carefully positioned to ensure stability and resistance to the passage of people, animals and sleds. In many sections, especially on the steeper slopes, stones were embedded into the ground to create natural stairways that facilitated the ascent and descent.



Recreational use of the mountain

Bondone, par excellence the mountain of the city of Trento, provided with roads and services, has long been used also at the tourist level; on the other hand, Gazza, more isolated than Bondone, began to be a destination for holidays or weekends from the second twentieth century and only by families who own huts, made over time "habitable".

Among the sports related to the mountain, the oldest is undoubtedly hunting, which was once an important source of livelihood. Ski slopes are present on Paganella and on Bondone, where in 1934 was built the first ski lift in Europe, which operated as a toboggan. Climbing has also evolved over time; several equipped walls have been built, including the most famous, "Rino Pisetta" dating back to 1982. There are many speleologists who visit the caves, among them we remember the "Grotta 1100 ai Gaggi" which was accidentally intercepted in 1947 while they were building the forced pipelines for the Hydroelectric Power Plant of S. Massenza. The first edition of the motor and motorcycle race Trento-Bondone took place on 5 July 1925 and since then it has been repeated every year, while in the 1970s motorbike races were organized on Gazza.

And then trekking, snowshoeing, hang gliding and paragliding, bicycles... The mountains offer many possibilities, invigorates, relaxes and restores.



The transformation of the alpine pasture

With industrialisation and the socio-economic changes of the 20th century, the alpine pasture has also suffered a slow decline in the Valle dei Laghi. Many of the old mountain huts went out of use and pastures have been abandoned. In recent decades, some mountain pastures have been rediscovered and restored. On the one hand, the owners have become aware of the importance of preserving the biodiversity that these environments contain and that depends entirely on grazing and mowing activities; On the other hand, there is a growing interest in rural and nature tourism so that the mountain huts have become points of interest for visitors, attracted by the beauty of the places and the authenticity of the experiences. Today, some of the mountain huts in Valle dei Laghi continue to play an active role in protecting the mountain area and try to keep alive the traditions of the past by practicing the cattle mowing: Malga Bael, Malga Gazza and malga Covela located on Gazza; malga Roncher on Bondone.

Malga Pian, above Vigo Cavedine, owned by the Vicinia Donego, an ancient institution for collective management of the territory, is still used as a rustic available to the neighbors who cultivate the relative fund. Malga Terlaga on Gazza has a receptive use, malga Terlaga bassa near Lamar lakes and Malga Casèra near Lagolo lake are available for social use, on request to the respective municipalities. Malga Ciago is almost abandoned and malga Vezzano is reduced to ruins.




Per ulteriori approfondimenti storici
vi invitiamo a consultare
l'Archivio della Memoria
della Valle dei Laghi





Ecomuseo
Valle dei Laghi



 www.ecomuseovalledeilaghi.it
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