



Corsica – Coast to coast

Ref. number: -

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Introduction:

"Island of Beauty" – true to the name given to Corsica by the Greeks, the island combines dramatic coastline and sandy beaches with snow-capped mountains and forests of chestnut and laricio pine. Being the third largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily and Sardinia, Corsica breaks through the waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea just southeast of mainland France. There are five classic walks in Corsica that snake around the foot of the massifs. Leading through forests and villages, they offer breath-taking views over the mountain tops and out to sea. As you discover stunning landscapes, you will walk through a series of villages that are a joy to discover. The "Mare a Mare South" path is a distinct favourite, allowing you to enjoy all the contrasts and colours of the island. Starting from the gulf of Porto Vecchio on the East coast overgrown with fragrant Mediterranean vegetation and a scrubby mix of heather bushes, the trail rises up through the mountains of the Alta Rocca and the famous pink granite pinnacles of Bavella before arriving in Propriano on the West coast. En-route you will encounter ancient chapels and churches, archaeological sites, traditional shepherds cabins, old granite houses, olive mills, thermal springs and not the least the house of Napoleon. This holiday would appeal to anyone that is used to walking regularly and is in good shape.

With six days of easy to moderate walking, you will discover the extreme south of Corsica and all its treasures.

Special highlights:

Carbini village - famous for its 11th century church decorated with pisan art;
The archeological site - Bronze Age fortified Torreen of Cucuruzzu and Capula prehistoric fort, used until medieval times, in the heart of massive Alta Rocca.

Itinerary:

Day 1: Porto-Vecchio

Transfer to Porto Vecchio (bus at 4 pm, tickets not included). Arrival around 6.30 pm. Time to check into your hotel.

Day 2: Porto-Vecchio to Cartalavonu

Your first day's walk will lead you from sea level up into the mountains. You will pass through Alzu di Gallina and the Ospedale to the village of Cartalavonu situated at 1020m altitude. The Mediterranean vegetation is fragrant, a scrubby mix of heather bushes, strawberry trees and wild herbs. The views back across the gulf of Porto Vecchio are breathtaking. The walk takes you through traditional villages before arriving at the plateau of Ospedale. The last stretch of the trail leads through the forest and on to Cartalavonu.

Distance : 14km, duration : 7h00;
uphill/downhill walk: +1000m.

/breakfast, dinner/

Day 3: Cartalavonu to Levie

The path leads swiftly up away from the hamlet of Cartalavonu to the high mountain pass of Foce Alta (1171m). From there you will catch magnificent views over the Lake of Ospedale. A multitude of sleepy perched villages of Alta Rocca and the famous pink granite pinnacles of Bavella are stretched out before you. The trail winds its way through a chestnut forest, the village of Carbini (famous for its 11th century church decorated with pisan art) and the Fiumiccioli river. Passing through olive groves and its old mill, you arrive at the outskirts of Levie.

Distance : 11km, duration : 5h00,
uphill/downhill walk: +510m; -920m.

/breakfast, dinner/

Day 4: Levie to Serra di Scopamena

The path heads up through an oak forest dotted with large blocks of granite to the St Laurent chapel. This area is well known for its archaeological sites, two of the most famous, Cucuruzzu and Capula, are nearby. You arrive at the Quenza deer enclosure and shortly afterwards, the village itself. Be sure to go and see the Pisan church that dates from the year 1000. You pass

the hamlet of Ghjallicu an old chestnut mill and the shepherds cabins Lavu Donacu before arriving at the village of Serra di Scopamena.

Distance : 17km, duration : 5h30, uphill/downhill walk: +760m; -520m. /breakfast, dinner/

Day 5: Serra di Scopamena to Ste Lucie de Tallano

As the path snakes through a chestnuts forest, you will notice an old mill that has been restored by the Corsican Natural Park. You will pass the River Rizzanese, the Col de Tavara, the village of Altagène, then through the hamlet of Saint Andrea di Talla before arriving at today's destination: Santa Lucia de Tallano. This village is really inviting and full of interests. Such as a 15th century convent, tall granite houses, a restored olive mill and the possibility to purchase a wide variety of oils.

Distance : 10 km, duration : 5h00, uphill/downhill walk: +400m; -800m. /breakfast, dinner/

Day 6: Ste Lucie de Tallano to Propriano

Passing the 12th century Roman chapel St-Jean-Baptiste, the path crosses the River Rizzanese. The following stop on our itinerary is Loreto di Tallano. This village was the setting of a famous novel written by Prosper Mérimée: the legendary Colomba, based on a true vendetta story. Impatience will mount as you get closer to the beckoning Mediterranean sea. You make your way towards the thermal spa of Baracci; the benefits of its waters have been known since antiquity. A great spot to have a soak and relax. At the end of today's walk a short transfer from Borgo to Propriano, a small coastal resort buzzing with atmosphere, street cafes and plenty of fish restaurants. **NOTE: You have to be on time for your transfer, after the hike to the hotel in Propriano, it is scheduled at 3 pm.**

Distance : 12km, duration : 6h00, uphill/downhill walk: +680m; -940m. /breakfast/

Day 7: Ajaccio

Transfer to Ajaccio, time to settle into your hotel before exploring. Ajaccio is the capital of Southern Corsica, the ambience is very vibrant and Mediterranean. It is great to just sit in one of the cafés opposite the harbour and soak up the atmosphere. The old streets and houses are often dwarfed by the large ferries that arrive from Italy or mainland France. Visit the shops, museums, cathedral and Napoleon's house or simply relax on the beach. Opportunity to visit the îles Sanguinaires by boat.

Optional: Les Crêtes-Mountain ridge walk

You can choose to do this walk upon arrival or before you leave Ajaccio the following day. You are given the option of two walks along the mountain ridge 'les Crêtes' that dominates the city and Gulf of Ajaccio. The aerial views of the town, over the sea and the mountains are stunning.

Distance : from 6km to 11km, duration : from 2h00 to 4h00 , uphill/downhill walk: +140m t+340m, -140m -340m.

/breakfast/

Day 8: End of holiday in Ajaccio after breakfast.*

* If you wish you can spend day 7 in Propriano and catch the morning bus back to Ajaccio (10.15 am arrival 10.30 am).

/breakfast/

DETAILED ROAD BOOK AND MAP WILL BE PROVIDED UPON ARRIVAL

Accommodation & luggage transportation:

- 3/2 stars Hotels in Ajaccio and Propriano
 - 2 stars in Porto Vecchio
 - shower and ensuite facilities
- Except in Aullène where the rest rooms are outside the rooms.

There is organized transport of the luggage for each of the days with changes in the overnight places.

Tour type: IT

Difficulty grade: B

Best period: April-October

Weather:

Corsica has a Mediterranean climate with hot summers and moderate, dry, clear winters. Climate varies with altitude and mountain forms though. It's rather alpine than Mediterranean in the mountains. The main mountain range divides the island roughly in half -- the North is hotter than the South, while the East is wetter than the West. Frost is not usual in the coastal areas, but it can appear between November and April. It freezes and snows more often in the mountains -- for instance the famous GR20 path is open only between mid-July to the end of October. Camping is possible between May and October in lower altitudes. Average sea temperatures range from about 19 °C in June and October to 23 °C in August. The sea is usually too cold to swim in between November and May.

<http://corsica.forhikers.com/weather>

General remarks:

-The walks are on good footpaths and trails, the terrain is varied but often rocky.

-The daily walks range between 10 and 17km with uphill/downhill walks up to 1000m.

-Your main luggage - will be transported by vehicle between the different night stops. We ask you to please limit your main luggage to between 10-15kg to facilitate the transportation and carrying for the taxis. It is also important to consider that it may be necessary to carry your bags short distances around Ajaccio at the start or end of your holiday.

Equipment and clothing:

Nothing compulsory. For the full list with recommended items see "General".

Group size: Min. 2 persons

The price includes: accommodation in 2-3 star hotels with en-suite facilities on bed & breakfast basis (shared facilities on day 4 only); dinners on days 2, 3, 4 and 5; luggage transfers; map and detailed roadbook in English; 24 hrs phone assistance

The price does not include:

transfers to Porto Vecchio and from Propriano, unforeseen additional transfers, evening meal on the day 1-6-7, drinks, picnics, extra activities, holiday insurance, travel.

Transportation:

Buses:

Bus route Ajaccio, Propriano, Porto - Vecchio :

Bus Eurocorse voyages tel : 0033 (0)4.95.21.06.30. Departures from 16/09 to 30/06 from Monday to Saturday except Sundays and bank holidays and from 1/07 to 15/09 every day.

Duration of journey Ajaccio Propriano 1h50 ; Ajaccio Porto - Vecchio 3h30.

Train companies in Corsica:

Direction Bastia, Ponte Leccia, Corté, Vizzavona, Ajaccio

Direction Bastia, Ponte Leccia, Ile Rousse, Calvi

Ajaccio train station:
0033 (0)4 95 23 11 03
Bastia train station :
0033 (0)4 95 32 80 61
Calvi train station :
0033 (0)4 95 65 00 61
Corte train station :
0033 (0)4 95 46 00 97

GENERAL

TOUR TYPES & GRADES

We provide different varieties of tours as regards to their types and difficulty grades! Whether you will choose individual and group tours with a guide or combined tours with a guide for some part of the trip depends on you. We emphasize on using local experienced guides with knowledge of the local language, culture, history, art, etc. The tours are conducted in the English language. Guides in other languages are available upon request.

Tour types

Our tours are divided in different tour types, regardless of being guided or not or if someone travels alone or in a group. We have prepared your vacation so that you can concentrate on new impressions and experiences, awaiting you all the time. Here is a description of the various tours:

IT: Individual tours

There is no guide on this tour. You travel individually and we are responsible for the hotel overnights and /some/ transfers. Sometimes you will travel together with other people. If you wish a guide can be arranged, if ordered. We take it for granted that you can read maps, provided by us upon arrival.

Difficulty grades

To prepare yourself for the best of your vacation we recommend that you start planning it in an advance. Good physical condition is required. In order to achieve it we advise you to start walking, jogging or cycling everyday. Swimming a couple of times a week is also highly recommended. You do not need much to get yourself in shape. And don't forget that the most important tip for an unforgettable active holiday is to choose a trip which corresponds to your physical condition!

B: Moderate

Most of you, who are used to walking during a long weekend, will be in condition to cope with a tour of this level. You should be in good health condition and not too bad physical condition. We have successive days of longer and more difficult walking and days of lighter walking. Some parts of the day routes are done at a higher altitude. The paths are in good condition. We walk for 5-7h a day. You are free to skip some walks and have a rest.

Equipment and clothing:

You should always remember that you must try to keep the weight of your clothing equipment down to a minimum. Your packed rucksack should weigh no more than 10-15 kilograms.

Recommended items: waterproof rucksack (60 l) & daypack (35 l); walking waterproof boots with suitable ankle

support; light casual shoes for walking and/or for travelling; gaiters; loose, casual trousers for trekking; waterproof trousers; fleece windstopper jacket; windproof, waterproof outer shell garment (breathable if possible!); hat for sun protection; sunglasses with UV protection; sunscreen lotion and lip balm; torch (headlamp), water bottle, trekking sticks.

Vaccination

Immunisation against Hepatitis A is recommended two weeks prior departure. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure.

Money and personal expenses:

You will need some extra money to cover meals, drinks and extra trips not included in the tour price. The Euro is France's official currency. Money can be changed in any bank, and at most travel agencies, major hotels and airports. Generally, banks are open from 8:30am - 12pm and from 1:30 - 5pm. Credit cards are now fairly widely accepted although you may still find that you'll need to pay cash in some of the smaller shops and restaurants, so it's best to check before eating. Supermarkets will accept most credit cards and some debit cards, but you will need to know your pin number. Before you travel, it's a good idea to make a note of your card details and the emergency number for the issuing bank just in case they are lost (or stolen). Below are some examples of costs in Corsica (NB: prices in mid-range restaurants!):

- Coffee – 1.5 €
- Tea – 1.5 €
- Beer – 2.50 € /for a local beer/
- Soft drink – 1€
- Bottle of water - 0.5 €
- Bottle of good quality local red wine (0,75 l) –10-15 €
- Three-course lunch – 20 €
- Lunch pack – 5-10 €

Cell phone coverage:

As mobile phone coverage is very good in Corsica with the exception of some more remote or mountainous areas, most properties no longer require a landline.

It is however, important to check with your network provider before you travel to make sure that your mobile is usable overseas, and to check any change in your call or text charges whilst abroad.

Electricity

The electricity system on Corsica uses the European style **230 volts 50 hertz AC** current. The sockets are round hollows in the wall with two holes and a

protuding pin (for protective earth), no notches, no contact springs, as they are in France. These flat European plugs as found on radio cords and such fit well. Non-Europeans lose.

Brief about Corsica:

Territory: 8,682 sq km - the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean Sea (after Sicily, Sardinia, and Cyprus)

Location: It is located west of Italy, southeast of the French mainland, and north of the island of Sardinia.

Coastline: 1,000 km

Terrain: Mountains comprise $\frac{2}{3}$ of the island, forming a single chain.

Elevation extremes: *lowest point:* Mediterranean Sea 0 m, *highest point:* Monte Cinto 2,706 m

Longest river: Golo 82 km

Population – 281,000 (as of 2007)

Capital city - Ajaccio (52,880)

Major Cities: Bastia (39 016), Bonifacio (3000);

Religion - Corsica is predominantly Roman Catholic but like much of France, church attendance is fairly low with only about 8% attending regularly.

Major resources – Tourism plays a major role in the Corsican economy.

Languages: French is the official language of Corsica, but a large number of Corsicans speak Corsican - *Corsu*.

Protected areas: Approximately 3,500 sq km are dedicated to nature reserves.