



HEDONISTIC HIKING

The Island of Corsica – 8 Days

A Mountain in the Sea

This brand new 7-night tour for 2020 explores the intriguing and endlessly fascinating island of Corsica. Turquoise seas, towering green pines and red granite rocks make this a landscape full of contradictions. We start in the colourful port of Bonifacio on the island's southern tip before heading up the west coast to Piana and the beautiful Gulf of Porto. Our final stop is the former capital, Corte, an historic town lying at the geographical heart of the island and encircled by a backdrop of monumental granite mountains. With an age-old determination to keep their island pristine and unspoiled, the Corsicans have maintained an environment which offers a true paradise for hikers.

What is included?

- **7 nights' accommodation** in three wonderful hotels
- **Two experienced and knowledgeable guides** who will look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals** including excellent wines
- **Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as much or as little as you please
- **Transport** in air-conditioned minibus
- **All museum entries and cultural visits** as per the itinerary
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information**

Tour Highlights

Hike in the pristine scenery of Corsica's granite landscape

Enjoy the island's bounty – goat and sheep cheeses, cured meats, chestnuts and wild boar stews

Follow a section of the famous GR20 long distance route across the island

Accommodation

Hotel Santa Teresa: A comfortable hotel in the old part of Bonifacio, with views across to Sardinia.

Hotel Capo Rosso: Situated on the edge of Piana, this hotel has spectacular views across the Gulf of Porto and its rugged coastline. There is an outdoor pool.

Hotel Dominique Colonna: Deep in the Restonica Gorge, this hotel is built on the banks of the river and has an outdoor pool.

Surprising as it may seem, the easiest way to join this tour is to fly to Olbia in the north of Sardinia. Olbia is well served with flights from across Europe and the UK and the airport is just a 15 minute journey from the town itself. We will meet the group with our vans at the airport and a short ferry crossing will bring us to Bonifacio on the southern tip of Corsica. Guests could opt to travel to Corsica ahead of the tour (the airports at Ajaccio and Bastia are the largest) but neither are close to our starting point in Bonifacio so would entail a long drive to the south of the island. The small airport at Figari in the south has connections to several French airports and a couple of routes to the UK, although these flights are weekly and not daily. The tour finishes at Bastia airport on the north east coast of Corsica.

Itinerary

Day 1

We meet at Olbia airport in Sardinia at 10.30 am before a short drive takes us to Santa Teresa Gallura on the northernmost point of the island. After time for lunch in the town we take the short ferry ride across to Bonifacio in Corsica, where we stay for two nights. After a welcome drink in the hotel we have dinner in a lively restaurant in the port.

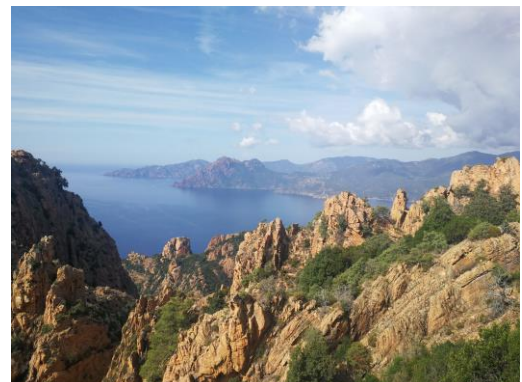


Day 2

We leave the hotel on foot and walk through the old citadel to join a coastal path with magnificent views back to Bonifacio. There is time for a dip in the sea before our picnic lunch. We return to hotel by van with free time to visit the formidable fortifications of Bonifacio and explore its many shops and cafes. Dinner tonight is in a restaurant in the old town. **(5km/3.1miles)**

Day 3

Today we leave Bonifacio and make our way up to the west coast of the island. We stop for coffee in the hilltop town of Sartène, in the heart of one of Corsica's flourishing wine regions, before continuing our drive along the coast with increasingly stunning views. We stop in a small village for lunch before arriving at our hotel near Piana, officially voted one of the most beautiful villages in France. As the sun is starting to set, we take a short hike through the UNESCO World Heritage Calanques de Piana to explore the area's dramatic granite rock formations. We walk to dinner in a delightful restaurant in the village. **(6km/3.8miles)**



Day 4



A short drive takes us to the start of our walk out to Capu Rossu, a spectacular headland jutting out to sea and the most westerly point of the whole island. We follow a path through the maquis before climbing steadily on a rocky trail to a 15th century Genoese watchtower, perched 450 metres above the sea, affording fabulous views in all directions. We descend by the same route and, after our picnic lunch, return to Piana by van. There is free time to explore the village or relax by the pool before dinner in the wonderful restaurant at the hotel. **(10km/6.2miles)**

Day 5

We leave Piana after breakfast and head for the impressive granite interior of the island, where we are more likely to see grazing pigs and goats on the road than any other cars. Our hike starts at the Col di Vergio (1478m) and we follow a section of the famous GR20 long distance route up a beautiful valley with stunning rock pools. We climb 800 metres to a high ridge before descending back into the valley, perhaps dipping our toes in the water en route. There is no van access at lunchtime today so both guides will hike in the picnic. After the hike, our drive to Corte takes us through magnificent red granite gorges and ancient pine forests. We stay the final 3 nights of the tour in our hotel in the Restonica Gorge. Dinner is in a fabulous Auberge close to the hotel. **(16km/9.9miles)**



Day 6

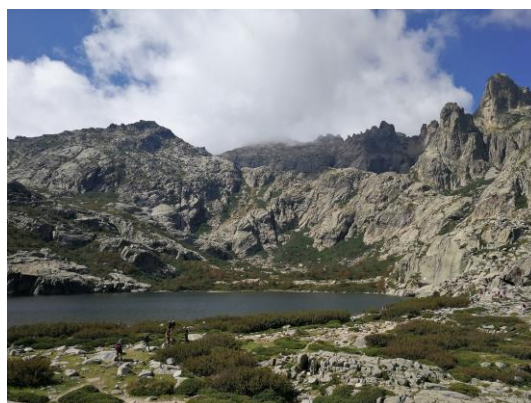


Today's hike explores another of the great valleys close to Corte, the Tavignano Gorge. Shepherd's huts, fountains and chestnut forests make up the scenery as we follow a cobbled mule track which climbs steadily along the banks of the river. Later in the afternoon we have time to explore Corte, a fortified town which was once the capital of an independent Corsica, and which today is home to the fascinating Musée de la Corse. We eat tonight in a characteristic restaurant in the centre of Corte. **(12km/7.6miles)**

Day 7

A short drive up the Restonica Gorge takes us to the start of our hike. We climb through spectacular alpine scenery to reach a glacial lake, Lac Melu, at 1710m. On some sections of the route we use ladders and chains to help with the ascent. Weather and time permitting, there is an opportunity to climb further to reach the beautiful Lac di Capitello at 1930m before descending back to the valley. Total ascent/descent 600m. There is no van access at lunchtime today so both guides will hike in the picnic. Our final dinner is in the Auberge close to our hotel.

(8.5km/5.2miles)



Day 8

We return to Bastia airport or ferry port for 11.00 am.

Walking

Shortest day: 5km/3.1miles

Longest day: 16km/9.9miles

There are 6 days of walking on the trip. We walk on coastal paths, rocky trails and mountain tracks with significant ascents and descents (especially on Days 5 and 7). The walking is rugged, so sturdy walking boots, with good ankle support, are essential. Walking poles are highly recommended, especially on steeper sections. Whilst the climate is generally good at this time of year, we are walking in the mountains so need to be prepared for changes in conditions.

Weather

In September in Corsica average temperatures drop to 19°C, but often still reach into the mid-twenties during the day. Rainfall is low at this time of year, with an average of just 6 showery days in the month. See today's weather in [Corte](#).

Max 20°-22° Min 10°-15° Average rainfall 44mm

See all our [Tour Dates](#) for this and other tours

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