

# THE GR20 SOUTH



Exceptionally green island, Unspoiled natural landscapes

From the Mountains of Bavella to the Forest of Vizzavona

Carry your day sack only, luggage assistance by Mules



Departures from Ajaccio

Every Saturday from early May to the end of September

Accessible to walkers that are fit and are out in the hills regularly

Guided walk

Mixed Groups

7 days, 6 nights

*The reputation of the GR20 is well earned, it is a hard, tough and beautiful trail. It offers great trekking and an insight into rural Corsican mountain life. This version of the trek is accessible to walkers who are fit and are out in the hills regularly. It is assisted by mules who carry your gear, each night you will find your main luggage waiting for you, you carry your day sack only. The group size is limited to 12 walkers maximum, a guide and a mule man. The groups are of mixed ages and backgrounds, it's a popular holiday with our French walkers, so don't be surprised if you find yourself testing your language skills, as well as your stamina!*

*This holiday starts in Bavella, situated in the south of the island and progresses in a northerly direction to the island's centre, in the heart of a large forest at the midway point, Vizzavona. The trail is particularly exposed in the south and you will spend a lot of time following high exposed ridges. It is not because the mules carry the gear that this trek is an easy way. The terrain is very, it is technical walking, you need to be sure footed and confident on rough ground. There are plenty of steep uphill and descents. The days are sometimes long and require plenty of determination and stamina.*

## Program

### *D1 - Ajaccio to Bavella*

This holiday starts on a Saturday in Ajaccio, the first transfer will take us directly up to Bavella where we check into our first accommodation. The region is known as the Alta Rocca and Bavella is one of the most famous parts of the island, known for its high mountain pass and mystical summits. Introductory briefing and first evening meal.



### *D2 - Bavella to Asinau*

From the high mountain pass, the Col de Bavella we take the trail that is called the Alpine variant. It leads steeply up hill before passing at the base of several granite pinnacles, such as the Acellu, the

Ariettu, or the Vacca. It really is a superb ridge walk. The trail is rough under foot and equipped over a few metres with a chain that helps stability across the granite rocks. We plunge down into the valley before following an easy trail through the woods. After an easy river crossing we pull up hill for a last half an hour up to Asinau refuge. Distance : 6km, duration : 5h00, altitude gain : +750m, descent : -550m.

### *D3 - Asinau to Basetta*

From the refuge we head up to the magnificent summit of Monte Alcludina at 2134m alt. There are fantastic views and on a clear day we can pick out our route and see where we are heading. We can enjoy for a short while a good ridge walk, before heading down through a wood to a swing bridge. Once across the bridge we are on the famous Cuscione plateau. This is the largest plateau on the island and spreads some 50 square kilometres. This large space is a mix of forests and open spongy green land full of runnels of water, a great grazing land in the summer months. Our night stop is a shepherd's cabin situated on the edge of the plateau. Distance : 12km, duration : 6h00, altitude gain : +750m, descent : -1000m.

### *D4 - Basetta to Usciolu*

Today we pick up the trail on the plateau and cross the wide open green pasture with its streams and little water holes. We make our way up hill through an age old forest of dwarf oak trees up to the Col de l'Agnone. From here we start possibly one of the best ridge walks, it is very open exposed, the trail is ambitious, it's hard to imagine that there is a way through. The granite has been wonderfully sculpted by the elements and the décor is awesome. The trail topples back and forth of the ridge, to one side then the other. Usciolu refuge occupies a sheltered position a little lower down, it is a hive of

mountain activity. Distance : 7km, duration : 4h30, altitude gain : +600m, descent : -200m.



#### **D5 - Usciolu to Prati refuge**

Back up on the ridge we have some great views of the Taravo valley, once again, our trail is high and exposed, we pass through some narrow granite passes and incredulously airy alpine spots. We arrive at the col de Laparo, situated at 1525m, a great spot for a rest and bite to eat. The views offer a continuous spectacle of small far off villages and at times, the distant coastline. We drop down from the mountain side onto a green flat pasture, an easy stroll across the grass to end the day's walk will take us to our nightstop, Prati refuge. Distance : 10km, duration : 6h00, altitude gain : -900m, descent : -800m.

#### **D6 - Prati to Capanelle**

From the refuge we pick up the GR that heads quickly down to Col de Verde, one of the places where the trail crosses a road. From here we walk on the lower flanks of the majestic Renoso mountain. The trail follows a long easy undulating path all the way to an old ski station called Capanelle. Distance : 15km, duration : 7h00, altitude gain : -1000m, descent : -1200m.

#### **D7 - From Capanelle to Vizzavona**

This is the last stage of the GR20 southern section, the walk makes for a leisurely day. You leave Capanelle (1568m) taking a path that is more or less on the level and along easy terrain. You pass through some idyllic spots, past remote traditional stone cabins and a luxuriant vegetation. You continue to Bocca Palmente 1640m, from where on a clear day the views are exceptional, the looming massifs of the Monte d'Oro and the Rotondu tower above. You drop down into a thick forest of pine and beech trees for a relaxing descent, the trail loops back and forth lacing down to Vizzavona (920m) the midway point of the GR20.

Distance : 15km, duration : 6h00, altitude gain : +250m, descent : -900m.

*This programme is an example of the itinerary we aim to adhere to. It may be possible, if situations arise that are beyond our control, for the itinerary to be modified. On the terrain our guides are the best judges, they may be required to modify the itinerary due to weather conditions for the security of the group.*



## TRIP DETAILS

### DATES

DEPARTURES EVERY SATURDAY FROM MAY 5TH 2010 TO SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> 2010.

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

THE GR20 IS A ROUTE FOR WALKERS WHO ARE IN GOOD SHAPE, IT IS A TOUGH, RUGGED MOUNTAIN ITINERARY. THOUGH WELL-ESTABLISHED AND WELL-MARKED, THE PATHS ARE OFTEN VERY ROCKY WITH NUMEROUS STEEP UPHILL SECTIONS AND DESCENTS THAT ARE ROUGH UNDER FOOT. ONE PART OF THE WALK IS ASSISTED WITH A HAND CHAIN AT BAVELLA. WE ENCOURAGE WALKERS TO USE TWO WALKING STICKS.

### Group Size and Trip Status

For each of our group adventures, there is a minimum number of participants required (6) to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Run'. You can check the trip status by accessing our website, or by calling our office. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your flight booking and other travel arrangements. If you are unsure about the trip status, please call our office.

### Starting point and finish

The starting point is at the Bus station in Ajaccio (inside the Ferry Terminal) at 2 pm on Saturdays. Finish around 6.30pm at Ajaccio's SNCF trains station.



### Luggage Moving and Day Sack

You will need to carry a day sack only, with your water bottle, camera, picnic and gortex jacket. Our bag-moving service means you can travel light during your walks, just taking with you what you need for the day. Your main luggage will be transported by vehicle or mules between the different night stops by a variety of different people. This ranges from local taxis, hotel owners and our own staff. We ask you to please limit your main luggage to around 15kg per bag to facilitate the driver loading it in and out of the vehicle.

It is important to consider that it may be necessary to carry your bags short distances at the start and towards the end of your holiday. You will need the appropriate luggage.



### SERVICES INCLUDES

Full board accommodation, local transfers, luggage transfers and guide.

### SERVICES NOT INCLUDED

Holiday insurance, drinks, picnic on day 1, evening meal on day 7, additional activities, transfers to the bus station on day 1, personal expenses, souvenirs and Travel.

### ACCOMMODATION

Depending on availabilities you will spend the night in Dormitories in gites, refuges or occasionally in tents near shepherd's cabins. We'd like to stress that the accommodations along the GR20 are Basics. Hot showers are not guaranteed in the refuges. In campings, there are basic comforts, either a converted shower or a river. Group members will put up their own tents which are held in storage at each of these places. Sleeping bag are NECESSARY.

### MEALS

All food, is included in the package. Breakfasts usually consist of a hot drink and bread and jam. Dinner is a 3 course affair, with normally soup or cold meats as a starter, a wholesome carbohydrate-rich main course and usually cheeses and fruit for desert. Lunch is usually a pre cooked pasta/rice/lentil salad, with extra bread, cheese, meat and fruit. For this you will need a plastic Tupperware box (about 0.6 litre), and a fork or spoon. A penknife is a very useful piece of kit for lunches as well. In some places your lunch box will be filled for you overnight and in others you will get a sandwich type lunch. TRAIL FOOD – Most walkers have their favourite high energy bars, or sweet snacks. As you have access to your main luggage regularly, don't hesitate to bring along a stock of your preferred high energy snacks that will follow on in your main bag.

### SPENDING MONEY

Bring sufficient to cover your personal expenses including snacks and drinks. Bottled water, soft drinks, beer and wine, milky coffee are all expensive. It is impossible to change money here and trying to find a working cash machine can be problematic. We recommend bringing all the euros you need with you in cash.

#### Extra nights in Ajaccio

Hotel\*\* Le Kallisté: 04 95 51 34 45

Hotel\*\*\* Albion: 04 95 21 66 70

Hotel\*\*\* San Carlu: 04 95 21 13 84

Chambre d'hôtes chez Madame Battini: 0495218304

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### LANGUAGE

Most people in this area of France speak French and know little English. In the villages you can still here Corsican being spoken. We recommend you try to learn some simple French phrases and greetings as this is always appreciated.

### CLIMATE

You can expect to encounter some very wide ranging temperatures. During the walks you should be ready for everything, take powerful sun protection, as well as, warm fleeces and a gortex wind jacket.

Corsica is known for its micro climates, each valley can be different. The weather can change quickly and the mountains generate some stormy, often unpredictable weather.

**UK residents** should obtain a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) before travelling. The EHIC is normally valid for three to five years and covers any medical treatment that becomes necessary during your trip, because of either illness or an accident. The card gives access to state-provided medical treatment only and you'll be treated on the same basis as an 'insured' person living in the country you're visiting. This might not cover all the things you'd expect to get free of charge from the NHS in the UK. You may have to make a contribution to the cost of your care. You can obtain an EHIC from the Department of Health by phone, online, or at the post office.



### FIRST AID

We recommend that you bring your own personal first aid kit consisting of: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Immodium) painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, re-hydration (Dioralite). Glucose tablets or Kendal Mint cake, and multi-vitamin tablets are a good idea.

#### **Preparing for your trip**

It is a good idea to get fit for this trip. The more time you put in before you leave, the more you will get out of the walking. You should do regular aerobic exercise in preparation for the hills. Walking regularly with a rucksack is the best way to make sure you are fit enough for the Corsican hills and enjoy the trip to the fullest.

## WHAT TO BRING AND PACK

### Bags

- A small day pack for your water bottle, camera, picnic and waterproof.
- A rucksack or suitcase for your main luggage 15kg maximum per person

### For Walking

- Good walking shoes or boots with a good grip sole
- Walking socks.
- Warm fleece
- Shorts and T shirts.
- Swimming costume or trunks
- Towel
- 2 Walking poles (optional)
- Water bottle (one litre minimum)
- Personal first aid kit with good blister protection

**For your picnics**

- A good cutting knife, fork, spoon, plastic cup and plate some plastic bags

**Sun and rain protection**

- Sunglasses and sun cream
- Sun hat
- Wind and waterproof jacket (Gore-tex stlye)

**Relaxing time**

- Trainers or open sandals
- Warm Fleece and casual wear

**WHY CORSICA WITH TOUR AVENTURE**

The team of Tour Aventure staff is amongst the most experienced in Corsica, with the proven ability to set up and operate a wide programme of different walking and activity holidays. This company is based in Ajaccio, we have a whole team of guides, drivers and logistics staff on the ground as well as a team of people at the office in Ajaccio ready to help in any eventuality. When you contact us, by phone or e-mail, or visit our office, you will find the help and advice you need, from someone who has actually done the trip and can give you the benefit of their first-hand experience. We take it in turns to have the emergency mobile phone, you can contact us during your holiday 24 hours.

**RESERVING YOUR PLACE**

Having read this dossier, if you require further information, please don't hesitate to contact Fred, ([fred@tour-aventure.com](mailto:fred@tour-aventure.com) ). The next step is to check the availability of your trip either by e-mailing or telephoning us.

**To Book Your Trip:** The easiest way to make your booking and our preferred method, is online through the Tour Aventure website. It is also possible to reserve your place over the telephone (note that you will also need to complete a booking form and forward this to us with your deposit of 30%. We cannot confirm any booking until we receive this).



We hope that this dossier has answered most of your questions, however, please feel free to call and speak to one of us: +0033-495-50-72-75.

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