

*Spring & Summer walk. Fatigue level: comfortable. Distance: 6.8Km (round trip). Duration: approx 2 hrs.*

### **Fontane to Alpe Soi, Alpe Soi to Alpe Bocchetto (1022m)**

Although this walk takes you all the way up to Alpe Bocchetto at 1022m, it is relatively easy, gentle walking as it follows the made-up road all the way. It's an excellent after lunch 'stroll', with the added incentive that if you start out before lunch, you could take time to sample the delights of food and/or drink at Rosa's restaurant at Alpe Soi (Ristoro *Alpe Soi* "da Rosy"), and the small church at Alpe Soi is beautiful any time of year but takes your breath away if you are fortunate to see it set amongst the remnants of the Spring snow.



Some parts of the climb are a little steep, even by road, but this is a very easy route to follow and therefore you can relax and enjoy the scenery and mountain air. Start by taking the path from our apartments down to the road, then turn left and up the road. If you are staying or visiting Bannio then you can walk or drive up from Bannio, through Parcineto to Fontane. There are two parking areas just below Fontane, each accommodating 4-5 cars. There is usually space - in the lower one if not the upper one - apart from the one week in August (Ferragosto) when you may have to continue up and park at the side of the wide bend in the road. This bend

is a relatively good place to turn round (with care!) if you carried on up and found no space in the 'Piazza' car park.

This is a very easy route to follow - simply keep to the one and only road all the way to Alpe Soi. Traffic is usually very light apart from that week in Ferragosto and August in general. I won't forget the time my wife and I were walking back down from Soi when a new style Fiat 500, with Italian plates, coming up the road stopped. The driver paused, clearly wanting to ask directions, then saw my polo shirt advertising a certain English beer and asked us if this was the right way to Rosy's restaurant - they were English!



Incidentally, the road up to Alpe Soi is certainly driveable in a standard saloon car, at least in the summer and usually in the Spring, but I wouldn't recommend it if you're not reasonably confident on mountain roads. Imagine the typical English country lanes of Devon or Norfolk, then imagine them a little more twisty, a few hundred metres up and with a barrier on the open side only in places. To be fair it's really quite a good road, considering how off the beaten track it is, and has been improved over recent years with some safety barriers in places, but it's not the A1!

As mentioned, the church is a 'must visit' - there's something special about it, and its location will offer you some beautiful photos.

The restaurant/bar *Ristoro Alpe Soi* is signposted from the parking place next to the church - just follow the path down. It looks just as you'd expect a restaurant in the mountains to look and has a uniqueness that will long leave a pleasant smile and fond memory, just don't expect the finest cuisine.



That isn't meant as a put-down at all - Rosy cooks typical mountain dishes, often simple but delicious and always in keeping with the surroundings. And talking of dishes, it's rare to see two of the same design on the table - but we love it for that too! If you want posh food then this isn't the place, but for a memorable experience, I'd say so!

How long Rosy will keep going is difficult to say - she must be well in her eighties (but seems to look younger every time we see her!). At busy times she has family helping with the cooking and waiter service but she always does a round of the tables and chats with everyone.

You'll need to book at busy times if you want to be sure of a table (you guessed it, Ferragosto, and also Easter), but often you can turn up and Rosy will cook you something - and of course there's the bar for drinks, ice cream etc.



At the top of the hill, the stone wall and the wooden building are the main features of the landscape. The stone wall is made of large, dark stones and the wooden building is made of dark wood. The white flag is flying from a pole in the center of the courtyard.