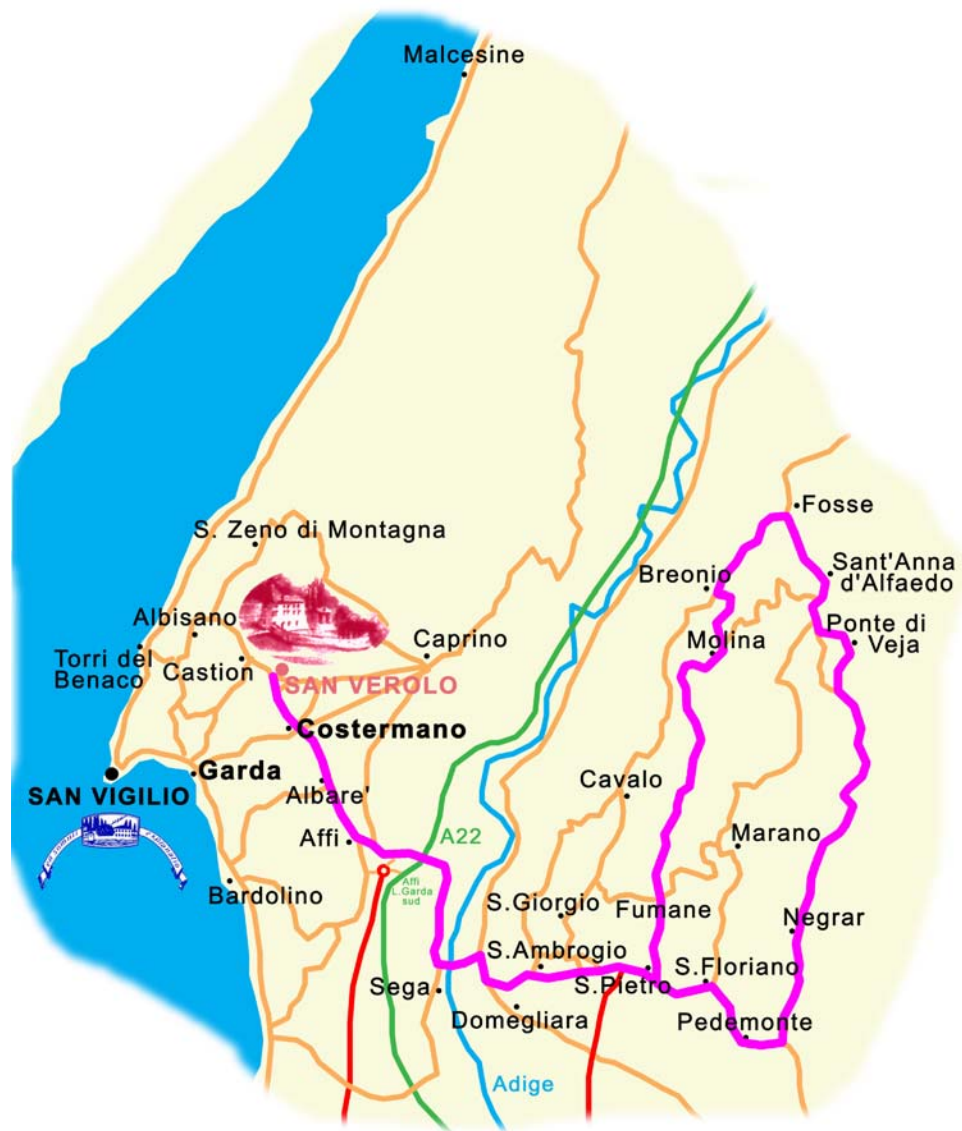


VALPOLICELLA, Nature



itinerary of approximately 102 km altogether

Places to visit:

- ⇒ MOLINA
- ⇒ SANT'ANNA D'ALFAEDO
- ⇒ PONTE DI VEJA

We suggest you start by discovering [Molina](#), a small medieval borough that still protects and treasures its abundant water supply, the main source of well-being in the past. The water power was used by a large number of mills but now the thundering waters of the Prognò torrent are enclosed in the spectacular [Parco delle Cascate](#), a naturalistic oasis covering about 150 thousand m². You cannot miss a tour of this park to admire its breathtaking cascades - the *Cascata verde*, the *Cascata del pozzo dell'orso*, the *Cascata del marmittone*, the *Cascata spolverona* -, the crystal-clear water in the lakes, the extraordinary vegetation so thick in some parts that sunlight only filters through. To reach the park entrance, walk down the narrow paved road leading from the main square. Inside the park the path continues towards the middle of the gorge, following the course of the torrent. There are various signs indicating the way for visitors wishing to take the long way round the park or only the short route. If you are walking enthusiasts, the panoramic path takes you to the top of the narrow gully through which the torrent flows.



Calculate about three hours of easy walking if you want to visit the whole park and stop in some wonderful spots to enjoy the view.

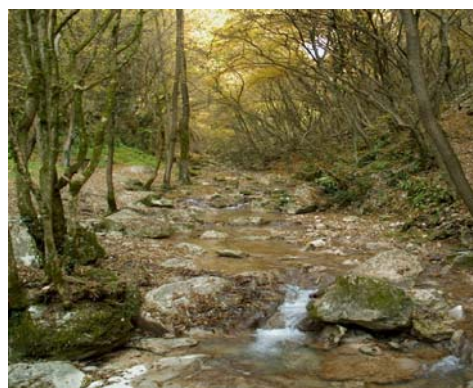
(from April to September, open every day, h. 9.00-19.30; from October to March, only pre-festive days and weekends, h. 9.30-16.00)

The Park is a heritage of flowers and plants. If you want to know more, visit the [Museo Botanico](#), behind the church, where you can also learn how Lessinia and its protected park area originated, and all about the naturalistic areas.

After your tour of the park, the route takes you northwards to [Sant'Anna d'Alfaedo](#), the most northerly town in Valpolicella, an essential place to visit in your quest to discover the naturalistic aspects of this area and become acquainted with its ancient historical origins.

Sant'Anna d'Alfaedo lies within the boundaries of the Parco Naturale Regionale della Lessinia, a protected area created in 1990 to conserve its Nature and millenniums of history, starting 50 million years ago. It seems incredible, but instead of this splendid mountain region, there was once a huge warm sea full of fish and tropical plants.

No special archaeological digs were needed to discover the past. When a large number of stone quarries were opened in Lessinia, hundreds of splendid fossils were brought to the surface. The Museo



Paleontologico e Preistorico in Sant'Anna boasts a wide selection of finds that witness primordial nature: ammonites, sea urchins, rays and rudistids are on show alongside fossils of enormous scientific value such as a 3m-long shark and 2m-long sea turtle. There are also various flints found nearby showing that Palaeolithic man already inhabited the many caves in Lessinia: one of the main sites is at Ponte di Veja ...

(the museum is open: June/September h. 9.30/12.30 – 15.30/18.30 every day except Mondays; October/May h. 10.00/12.00 – 15.00/17.00 Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays; for information and bookings, call: 045 7532656)

Now the route takes you down towards [Ponte di Veja](#) which we have just mentioned.

First of all, Lessinia is a Karstic region and abounds in caves.

Ponte di Veja appears as a bridge but in effect is the remaining entrance to an enormous grotto. This majestic stone arch is 9 metres thick and 50 metres long, and formed of red ammonitic rock and grey oolite creating a singular contrast in colours. The site is a favourite with visitors, not only because it is an exceptional geological monument, but because there are so many beautiful walks through the luxurious greenery here in Lessinia.

Going back to history, as we said, this area was already inhabited during the Palaeolithic era, and after visiting the museum in Sant'Anna with its collection of finds witnessing human presence, you will now be particularly fascinated by the didactic trail created around the site where they were discovered. The path leading to Ponte di Veja has been lined with notice boards explaining the geological formation of this area and the progression of human settlements attracted by the abundance of water.



ENOTECA DELLA VALPOLICELLA

Via Osan, 45 - FUMANE / tel. 045 6839146

(average price, wine excluded: € 26/30.00; closed Sunday evenings and Mondays)

This wine bar was originally a 15th century barn. Superbly restored, these accurately decorated rustic and homely settings offer traditional Valpolicella cuisine. As well as the excellent dishes prepared by the chef, as its name suggests, this locale can boast an enormous choice of wines! More than 70 Valpolicella labels and 200 among Italy's best, ready to accompany your meal or to take away with you.

Trattoria DU SCALINI

Via B. Bacilieri, 9 - MOLINA / tel. 045 7720039

(average price, including house wine: € 15/18.00; closed Monday evenings and Tuesdays)

This rustic trattoria was an inn in ancient times and little has changed. The menu includes dishes based on game and the *pastisada de caval*, a typical dish in Veronese traditions, as well as the decidedly *exotic* ostrich, bison and kangaroo steaks which in Valpolicella are certainly a rarity.

To round off your meal, try Caffè alla Valdostana, a blend of coffee and liqueur served in the characteristic *Grola*, from which the whole company drinks ... and exquisite home-baked biscuits.



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