

The GR20 : access, refuges, gîtes d'étapes and other accommodation



Fire extinguishes life.

This poster was designed by class CE2 of Calinzana, my village.

Forest and maquis fires are a great danger in Corsica, as I can testify personally. Please follow the rules and advice offered. Do not light fires anywhere between the end of June and September, do not leave rubbish in the countryside and do not throw cigarette butts from car windows or in nature. Remember the telephone number for the fire service and don't hesitate to call them: 18. Severe fires in Calinzana/Bonifatu closed all access from the north to the GR20 for a period in 2004.

There are far too frequent accidents in the mountains of Corsica, hence The Ten Commandments of the PGHM (the mountain rescue gendarmes):

1. Study your route carefully and take local advice;
2. Choose a walk at your own level; know your own abilities;
3. Take appropriate equipment and know how to use it;
4. The weather changes fast, make sure you have a good forecast (phone 08 92 68 02 20);
5. Going alone increases risk;
6. Tell someone your route and your approximate return/arrival time;
7. Don't hesitate to use a professional to advise you;
8. Follow way marks;
9. Be prepared to turn around in the face of difficulty or poor weather conditions;
10. If you witness an accident, be sure to 'protect, alert & help' - PGHM 04 95 61 13 95 or call 18 (fire brigade), 17 (gendarmes), 15 (emergency doctor service), 112 (the euro mobile help number).

Introduction

I have only walked sections of the GR20 and thus cannot vouch for the accommodations and I have refrained from comment except where I do have experience. Thus it will be up to you and the guide books that you use, to take what ever steps you need to assure yourself that your sleeping arrangements will suit your pocket and your taste.

Access

Access to either end of the GR20 is not easy (if you don't want to walk), except by taxi or your own transport.

For bus timetables, try [the Corsicabus website](#) – it's run by long-time Corsica resident and friend of mine Ros Fiamma; it's in English as well as French.

However, in season there are buses from *la Porteuse d'Eau* (the little roundabout by the station) in Calvi to Calinzana leaving at 14.30 and 19.00 and from the church square in Calinzana to Calvi leaving at 15.00 and 19.30. They are run by Les Beaux Voyages (email: info@lesbeauxvoyages.com in Calvi and you can consult them for winter times (04 95 65 11 35). Calvi taxis: 04 95 65 30 36 or 04 95 65 03 10.

At the other end there is a *navette* between Conca (the gîte d'étape) and St Lucie de Porto Vecchio (contact M Folacci on 04 95 71 46 55). Porto Vecchio taxis: 04 95 70 08 49 or 04 95 72 10 34. Jacques Mosconi, based in PV lists himself in the Conca phone book, so try his mobile – 06 72 94 73 76.

Refuges

The accommodation on the GR20 is in the Refuges of the Parc Naturel Régional de Corse (www.parc-naturel-corse.com), gîtes d'étapes and hotels. The Maison du GR20 at the Gîte du GR20 in Calinzana is run by the PNRC and this is the place for information about the GR and all aspects of the Parc; you can get daily weather forecasts by phone (tel 04 95 62 87 78).

Camping is also available at the refuges. The refuges are open all year, but with guardians only between June and October. There is no reservations system and accommodation is on a first come, first serve basis. Camping is strictly forbidden en route except at the refuges.

Each refuge has beds, but you'll need a sleeping bag, there is wood burner heating and kitchen facilities (including pans), radio security and small supplies; of course the welcome at each one is different. Asco gets very high marks. Usciolo gets good reports too, especially for the high quality supplies (local sheep cheese for example).

Here is a listing, though you'll need to check availability, especially in season.

Refuge	Altitude	Beds	Nearest Access	Supplies
Ortu di Pobbju	1 520m	30	Calinzana	On site, Bonifatu
Carozzu	1 270m	24	Bonifatu	On site
Asco Stagnu	1 422m	32	Ascu village	On site
Tighjettu	1 683	39	Albertacce, Calasima, Lozzi	On site, Calacuccia, Albertacce, Ballone
Ciottulu di I Mori	1 991	24	Albertacce, Col de Verghio, Evisa	On site, Castel di Verghio,

				Evisa
Manganu	1 601	31	Soccia, Corte by Crena	On site, Soccia, Bergeries de Vaccaghja
Petra Piana	1 842	28	Tattone, Guagno, Vivario	On site, Vivario, Canaglia
L'Onda	1 430	12	Pastricciola, Tattone	On site, Tattone, Vizzavona, Canaglia
Capanelle	1 586	15	Ghisoni, Vizzavona	On site, Vizzavona
Prati	1 820	28	Isulacciu, Col de Verde	On site, Cozzano, Col de Verde
Usciolu	1 750	29	Zicavo, Cozzano, Catastaghju	On site
Asinau	1 530	29	Quenza, Zicavu, Bavella	On site
<i>Paliri</i>	1 055	20	Bavella, Conca	On site, Bavella, Conca

If you'd like to see what each refuge looks like then take a trip to Arnaud Troël's site: http://www.troel.net/gr20/photos/gites_refuges/.

Gites and refuges (www.gites-refuges.com) covers the whole of France, but if you look under *Corse*, you'll find more than 80 listed in Corsica, with contact details. So if you are combining a walk on the GR20 with other paths, then this may be useful.

Gîtes d'étapes & ruraux

Calinzana has a municipal gîte d'étape (just at the beginning of the village from Calvi direction) with 30 beds in small dormitories and with all facilities, including camping.

It is based at the Gîte d'étape communal that has inexpensive accommodation and camping facilities. It's open from April-October. You can email (gite-calenzana@wanadoo.fr) or telephone your booking - 04 95 62 77 13, or fax it - 04 95 62 70 08.

Calinzana is well supplied with shops and restaurants, as well as hotel accommodation for those who want a bit more comfort at the beginning or end of their walk. The village also has doctors and a chemist.

Bonifatu has an *Auberge (de la Forêt)* and *gîte d'étape* (Mme Baron on 04 95 6509 98).

On the way up to Bonifatu is La Bergerie de Frassigna (04 95 60 71 79 & 06 15 20 74 25). Here's a campsite you'll not find in any guide book: don't imagine shower blocks, groceries, cafés... If you are a serious camper/hiker and are on your way to the GR20, via

the Forest of Bonifatu at the northern end, then try Jean-Louis Guidoni, a Calinzana shepherd (goats) who has opened the bergerie of Frassigna on the road from Calvi to Bonifatu as a 'bivouac' site; he and his wife Sandrine not only have goats and make Calinzana cheese, but have pigs, chickens, geese, turkeys, horses... in a wonderful site near the river. You can buy organic produce. Jean-Louis speaks English having lived in Australia for five years; he's also set up an archery trail with imitation wild animal targets. Tell him I sent you!

Albertacce has a gîte d'étape (M Albertini on 04 95 48 05 60).

Corti has a gîte d'étape, with camping (M Gambini on 04 95 46 16 85) or camping on the farm *Albatu* (Jean Pulciani on 04 95 46 24 55).

Tattone – camping (M Filippi on 04 95 47 22 14).

Vizzavona – *Bar Restaurant de la Gare/Le Refuge du GR20* (04 95 47 22 20).

Ghisoni – *U Fugone* (04 95 57 01 81).

Col de Vergio has a gîte d'étape, with camping facilities and small supplies that is open from April-October (04 95 48 10 55).

Capanelle has walkers accommodation (62 beds) and a chalet that is open from May till the end of September (04 95 57 01 81 or 04 95 56 39 34) or at Valle Longa (04 95 57 07 67).

Col de Verde has two private refuges – *Relais San Petru di Verde* - (18 and 8 beds), with camp site, restaurant and supplies that is open from mid-May until mid-October (04 95 24 46 82).

Zicavu - *Refuge Bassetto* (04 95 25 74 20).

Catastaghju has a gîte d'étape (Mme Paoli on 04 95 56 70 14).

Cozzano has a gîtes d'étape (M Pantalacci on 04 95 24 41 59 or Jacques Renucci on 04 95 24 44 57).

Quenza has the *Centre de Montagne et de Loisirs* with a gîte d'étape and camp site – *I Muntagnoli* (04 95 78 64 05).

Col de Bavella has the *Gîtes Les Aiguilles* (24 beds) and it is open from April to the beginning of November (M Mannarini on 04 95 72 01 88) and the gîte d'étape and *Auberge de Bavella* (M Grimaldi on 04 95 57 43 87). Another possibility here is the Hameau de Cavanello (chambres d'hôtes & flats) near Zonza – someone will collect you by car at Bavella (call J-B Bornéa on 06 09 50 05 01) and then on down to their [Auberge du Sanglier](#) in the village to eat.

Conca has a gîte d'étape that is open year-round (30 beds and 30 camping places) and it is from there that there is a shuttle to Sainte Lucie de Porto Vecchio (M Folacci on 04 95 71 46 55).

Sainte Lucie de Porto Vecchio – gîte rural (Jean Millet à 04 95 71 60 47).

Hotels

There are few hotels that are what you might call ‘on the GR20’, but there are hotels that are accessible.

Before you start or after you have finished there are the hotels of Calvi or Porto Vecchio at your disposal. You could consider Corte as being roughly half way and the town also has many hotels. Vizzavona is perhaps better described as a half way mark and has the advantage of the railway with its connections to Ajaccio, Bastia and Calvi. In between here is a partial listing.

Calinzana – see Calinzana’s Hotels page (www.calinzana.corsica-isula.com/hotels.htm) for details.

Asco – *Hôtel Restaurant Le Chalet* that is open from May-September (04 95 47 81 08).

Calacuccia – *Auberge Casa Balduina* (04 95 48 08 57); *Hôtel l’Aqua Viva* (04 95 48 06 90); *Hôtel des Touristes* (04 95 48 00 04).

Col de Vergio – *Hotel Restaurant Castel di Verghju* (M Luciani on 04 95 48 00 01).

Soccia – *Hôtel U Paese* (04 95 28 31 92).

Vizzavona – *Hôtel Restaurant I Laricci* (M Roure on 04 95 47 21 12); *Hotel Restaurant Monte d’Oro* (www.monte-oro.com - the Sicurani family since generations on 04 95 47 21 06) – the hotel is well known to Corsicans and Fredericka (Dorothy) Carrington used to spend time up there in the summer to get away from the heat of Ajaccio where she lived. This amazing place probably hasn't changed a lot since the first visit in 1933 of my table neighbour the other day. For a half-way house on the GR20, it might be a welcome relief to weary walkers.

Vivario – *Hôtel Restaurant Macchie Monte* (04 95 47 22 00).

Ghisoni – *Hôtel Restaurant Le Kyrie* (04 95 57 60 33).

Zicavu - [*Hôtel Restaurant du Tourisme* \(M Scaglia on 04 95 24 40 06\).](#)

Quenza – *Hôtel Restaurant Soli Monti* (M Balesi on 04 95 78 62 53).

Zonza – *Hôtel de la Terrasse* (04 95 78 67 69); *Hôtel l’Aiglon* (04 95 78 67 79) ; *Hôtel le Mouflon d’Or* (04 95 78 72 72) ; *Hôtel Restaurant l’Incidine* (04 95 78 67 71).

Conca – *Hôtel San Pasquale* (04 95 71 56 13).

Sainte Lucie de Porto Vecchio – *Hôtel du Golfe* (04 95 71 40 70) ; *Hôtel Résidence du Tourisme A Suarticcia* (04 95 71 44 51).

Endpiece

I would be very grateful if you let me know of your own personal experiences and preferences, so that I can pass the information on to those who may come after you. Also of course, please do let me know of any inaccuracies that you spot.

William Keyser

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