

SCERSCEN VALLEY

Welcome to the Grand Canyon of Valmalenco! This is how the Scerscen valley was defined as a spectacular example of a ravine carved and shaped by fluvial and glacial erosion. Its dimensions are obviously much smaller than the real Grand Canyon, but it exerts an extraordinary suggestion, especially in its initial stretch, and then it widens into a large basin of alluvial sediments, overlooked by the highest peaks of the Bernina massif, such as the Roseg (3936 m), the Scerscen (3971 m) and the Italian side of the Bernina (4020 m). The landscape observed during the itinerary represents a perfect example of the overlapping of fluvial shapes on glacial shapes. In the narrowest part of the valley, that is a gorge totally engraved in the brown serpentinites, sometimes with reddish streaks, you can spot important phenomena of fluvial erosion, real "giant's kettles", deep well-shaped depressions produced by the erosion of subglacial and glacier melt water. Towards the head of the valley, where the gorge widens, the landscape becomes more open and you can see entire walls of "montonate rocks", suspended valleys, glacial cirques, imposing moraine banks of the Little Ice Age, which mark the former size of the still visible, although very small and fragmented, Upper and Lower Scerscen glaciers. The recession of the glaciers, which today cover a total area of almost 10 km², has made the limestone-dolomite marbles, which rest and interleave with the darker serpentinites, even more visible, especially for the Lower Scerscen.

Traces of asbestos mines abandoned for decades, such as dilapidated buildings, remains of machinery and landfills, are still visible in this valley. In the rocky blocks on the riverbed and in the moraine debris there are also manganese minerals of great scientific and collecting interest (such as tiragalloite, rhodonite, spessartine); the scientific names are complicated, but in some cases, like the orange-red crystals of the tiragalloite, the most valuable specimens in the world have been found in this area.

The Scerscen Valley is included within the site of Community importance (pSIC) in accordance with Directive 92/43 / EEC "Monte di Scerscen, ghiacciai di Scerscen e Monte Motta".