GEOLOGICAL PARK OF CHIAREGGIO

Also known as the "Valmalenco Geological Park", it was opened in 2000 in Chiareggio, a village that offers a complete and didactic picture of the geology of the Alps.
The Geological Park is located in La Corte. Just before entering the village, on the right a road bordered by dry stone walls between beautiful pastures leads directly to the entrance canopy of the Park.
The visit to the Geological Park takes place on an easily accessible and relatively short itinerary, sufficient to fill a few hours or even a whole day, offering a very long path in terms of geological time and space.
The itinerary offers the possibility to retrace some hundreds of millions of years of history of the Earth through the observation of samples of rocks and the reading of the illustrative panels, and to realize that some of these rocks have had to travel a remarkable journey to reach the surface, where we now see them. The rock samples well represent the variability of the Earth's crust and of a portion of the upper mantle, which normally lies at over 30-35 km of depth and which instead is observable here.
The extraordinary geological interest lies in the peculiar nature of the types of rock (lithotypes) that emerge, in which you can spot traces of the oceanic crust of the Alpine Tetide, a stretch of sea that opened between Africa and Europe during the Jurassic period (about 170 million years ago) and that starting from the Eocene (about 50 million years ago) has been closing, thus giving rise to the Alps.
Therefore the visitor is dragged with his imagination to a time very distant from his daily experience, to approach geological processes concerning ocean floors and sectors of the Earth even deeper below; through these processes the types of rocks present in Valmalenco were formed and have reached their current position in the Alps, certainly one of the most important mountain ranges on our planet.
The layout of the Geological Park is mostly open-air and is divided into three parts: 1) a canopy houses the Illustrative Introduction, with some panels that provide the visitor with the tools necessary for understanding some notions of general geology and some specific aspects of the geology of the Alps and Valmalenco; 2) a Petrographic Itinerary, consisting of about 60 large samples of rocks that significantly represent the geological units of Valmalenco; and 3) two Geological Panoramas, placed on a small terrace, which reproduce in a geological key two natural panoramas visible directly in front of the two tables.