

## MONTE GENEROSO

We are facing a 1704 m high mountain whose summit, called Punta Càdola, is shared between the Italian municipality of Centro Valle Intelvi and the Swiss municipality of Rovio. Also, part of the massif is a slightly lower peak, only 1701 meters high, called Baraghetto and located just north of the main one. The name of the mountain is debated, as well as Generoso the locals also call it Calvagione or Casgnon or Calvigion in local dialect.

The border between Italy and Switzerland is located on the eastern and northern sides of the relief, so the south and west sides belong to Switzerland while the north-east side belongs to Italy; however, the area of the Swiss part is predominant.

The view from the summit of Monte Generoso is truly 360°! In fact, you can observe the Vallesane and Urane Alps, Grigne, Monte San Primo, Resegone, Sasso Gordona, the Lake of Lugano and in conditions of visibility and absence of clouds you can also see Milan!

The summit can be reached easily through a pleasant excursion from both Italy and Switzerland. But for those who don't want to struggle, it is also possible to get there by cogwheel train from Monte Generoso! The train leaves from the Capolago-Riva San Vitale station in Switzerland (at 274 m) and reaches the summit of Monte Generoso in 40 minutes. It should be noted that on occasions the Rhaetian Railways travel the route with a steam train from 1890 which makes passengers relive the atmosphere of the Belle Époque!

Near the summit since 2017 there is also an accommodation facility called "fiore di pietra", conceived and designed by the Ticino architect Mario Botta. Its creator describes the work as the bud of a flower clinging to the rock that overlooks a difference in height of over 400 m and which was built taking up the colors of the surrounding rocks. Its shape is octagonal, in reinforced concrete covered with gray stone masonry from the Londrino quarries with alternating smooth or split strips. In the upper part of the structure there is a panoramic terrace for a 360° view of the area.

On the eastern side of Monte Generoso, in Italian territory, a cave was discovered a few decades ago, called Generosa Cave, but known by the locals as Bear Cave or in Italian "Grotta dell'Orso" since the fossil remains of numerous specimens of cave bear -*Ursus spelaeus*- dating back to a period between 50,000 and 30,000 years ago were found. This now extinct animal was really of considerable size and could weigh up to 1000 kg.

In addition to bear fossils, paleontologists have also found fossil remains of wolves (*Canis lupus*), brown bears (*Ursus arctos*), ibex (*Capra ibex*), and moose (*Alces alces*) as well as numerous finds attributable to man from Neanderthals, dating back to between 50,000 and 60,000 years ago. Monte Generoso has many caves in addition to that of the bear, so far 92 have been recorded for a total length of 13 kilometers.

Since 2019 the Generosa Cave can be visited with a specialized guide by reserving the visit on the website [www.mendrisiottoturismo.ch](http://www.mendrisiottoturismo.ch)