

GOLA DI LAGO

We now find ourselves in one of the richest peat bogs in Ticino, at 972 metres above sea level. Four carnivorous plants grow here, small seedlings that capture tiny insects to compensate for the scarcity of mineral salts in the extremely acidic environment of the bog. From extreme conditions, these high-altitude bogs have a habitat where an infinite number of plant species live.

The peat bogs, ponds, carnivorous plants and mountain rocks bear witness to the passage of a tongue of the Ticino glacier during the last ice age. A thick sea of ice covered the region and reached an altitude of 1200 metres. Numerous erratic boulders, different stones from Sopraceneri and smooth pebbles, abandoned by the glacier, can be seen. In the middle of winter, in the snow, thousands of glacier fleas can still be observed that confirm that distant past as a precious relic. At Alpe di Davrosio, which can be reached by following the path north-west for about one km, at an altitude of 1200 metres, the stones are no longer smooth, but crumbled by atmospheric agents. These gneisses and mica schists belong to the oldest rocks in Switzerland.

Along the cycle path, we find the ideally located Alpe Zalto farmhouse. The farm holiday season extends from 15 May to 30 September. Products can be bought directly here. The restaurant service offers drinks, cold food and, upon reservation, hot food. Company features: mountain pasture and milk production. Typical products: various cow and goat cheeses. Animals on the farm: cattle, goats, pigs, farmyard and domestic animals. Overnight "Adventure in the straw".

Nearby is Alpe Santa Maria, working the mountain pastures and the production of typical dairy products. Basic catering service with local products.

For lovers of climbing, a small cliff immersed in a birch forest located on the left slope of the peat bog offers single pitches up to 30 metres high with medium to low grades, ideal for spending a couple of hours of climbing without being too demanding.

The military fortifications of the region deserve a separate chapter, which we encounter as we continue along the path in a north-west direction. The southern part of the region has no clear geographical boundaries while the chain formed by Monte Ceneri and the Medeglia mountain ridge was naturally suitable for fortification. Furthermore, the construction of the cantonal road that crossed Monte Ceneri made it necessary to defend this area to prevent the possible advance of enemy troops towards the north.

Due to their historical and architectural qualities and the characteristics of their military equipment, these fortifications are of national importance. The proposed routes allow you to stop in privileged observation points, to pass through ancient mountain pastures and to admire glimpses of Lake Ceresio.

The barricade of Gola di Lago began in earnest in 1939, when the war broke out. The defensive belt set up during the First World War had to be revised according to the new military operations called to defend the Swiss territory from its borders, also taking into account the performance of the new range of weapons (greater range). A new defensive line was thus planned, also exploiting the morphology of the region.