



Lago Fossi

Valle Scappuccia

“Where nature speaks and remembers”

Sentiero del Papa (Path of the Pope)

“A short walk through history and the environment”

VALLE SCAPPUCCIA

Scappuccia is a hidden gem: a tiny valley, almost lost among the mountains, yet easy to reach from the paved road. It is reached through an impressive passageway: the Valle Scappuccia Ravine, a crevice carved by the namesake creek. It is surrounded by Monte Picco (676 m), Monte Termine (802 m), and Monte Piano (628 m). The soil, climate, stream bed, and elevation make this valley a place teeming with biodiversity. The absence of human activity has preserved its pristine condition. The left side (i.e. the south face of Monte Picco), sheltered from wind and bathed in sunshine, hosts heat-loving plants, typical of Mediterranean-an-mountain vegetation. These include *Quercus ilex*, *Phillyrea*, *Viburnum*, *Rubia*, *Terebinth*, and *Arbutus unedo*. The north face of Monte Termine, with its cooler climate, provides ideal conditions for coppice and montane forests including oak, hornbeam and ash. Beech forests thrive at lower elevations, benefiting from a “temperature inversion” that creates a more favourable microclimate.



Shrubs and herbaceous plants line the limestone ridges, while willows and poplars grow sporadically along the waterways. The valley boasts splendid seasonal blooms of cyclamen, orchids, and *Rosa canina*, highlighting its botanical significance, underscored by the presence of species like such as *Ephedra major* from the tertiary period and *Carpinus orientalis*, quite rare in the inland areas of the Marche region. The diverse geographical features - valley, stream, cave, mountain, and hill, along with scientific elements - flora, fauna, and micro-climate - lend this valley high environmental value. For this reason, the town of Genga established the “Integral Natural Reserve of Scappuccia” through council resolution no. 50, dated 1 October 1975, creating an ideal spot for environmental education and nature walks.

GENGA

The origins of the Genga Castle are shrouded in mystery and legend. Several poetic legends suggest it dates back to the time of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus. One legend has it that a certain Lucio Sentinate, after fighting first for the King and then for the Romans, acquired Monte Gingune where he then built the Genga castle. Another legend has it that a girl named Genga fell in love and married a German named Gallo: and that’s how the Counts of Genga, a noble Italian family, came to be. Regardless of its true origins, it is likely that people from the Sentino valley settled the area. Later, the Umbrians, joining forces with the Picenes, occupied the entire Piceno Annonario region.



ITINERARY

Sentiero del Papa (Path of the Pope)

Walking time: 4 H  
Level of difficulty: Easy/Moderate  
Distance: approx. 10 km  
Elevation change: 287 m  
Trail type: Loop  
Trail marker: 107 - AG



The itinerary begins in Genga, a captivating medieval village nestled in nature. After parking your car in front of the castle, take the “Sentiero del Papa” (*Path of the Pope*), which is part of trail 107. Head down the stone steps and veer right along a picturesque flat trail that soon reaches a curve in the paved road. From there, head up the road towards the village of Monticelli.

After passing the village, beyond the church and the last houses, take the fairly uneven dirt track heading uphill. Continue for a long stretch until reaching a coniferous forest and a pass dividing Colle Bertone from Monte Piano at the junction of trail 142. Continue following trail 107 markers, first along a fairly level dirt track and then down to the junction with trail 107D. Then take a sharp left, continuing on trail 107. Walk down the winding path through a dense forest to the bottom of the valley. Here, due to a temperature inversion, you’ll find a beech forest; on the south-facing slope, enjoy typical Mediterranean scrub with *Quercus ilex*, *Viburnum*, *Terebinth*, and *Phillyrea*.

From here, the trail runs alongside and occasionally crosses the creek in the short yet renowned Valle Scappuccia, until arriving at a spectacular natural portal, the Valle Scappuccia ravine. Exit this tiny, enchanted valley to return to the paved road. Head right and follow the road uphill. At the intersection, continue left along trail 107 to reach Case Fossi, then proceed on the paved road to Lago Fossi, and continue for another 3 kilometres to return to the Genga castle.



Sentiero dell'Aquila (Path of the Eagle)

Vallemania - Belvedere S. Angelo - Rosenga  
Piano di Serra - Vallemania

Santuario Madonna di Frasassi

Sanctuary of Madonna di Frasassi

Il Sentiero dell'Aquila (Path of the Eagle)

Vallemania - Belvedere S. Angelo - Rosenga -  
Piano di Serra - Vallemania

Walking time: 2 h  
Level of difficulty: Easy  
Distance: 7.194 km  
Trail type: Loop  
Trail marker: 121, 139, 121b, 121

The Sentiero dell'Aquila (the “Path of the Eagle”) is a regional treasure that re-connects people with nature. It is a precious gift to be enjoyed and preserved. This trail (approx. 7 km) loops around the peaks of the northern side of the Frasassi gorge. It has 10 informational panels posted at the six rest areas along the trail, providing details on the local flora, fauna, geology, history and architecture. The shorter loop connects the four quaint villages of Pierosara and Cerqueto on the north, and Rosenga and Vallemania on the south slopes of Monte La Croce (782 meters) and Monte Ginguno (735 meters). Since the 10th century, part of the trail - passing through Rosenga and Vallemania - served as link between San Vittore delle Chiusi and the *gastald* (a royally appointed official for judicial and other administrative tasks) of Castel Petroso (now Pierosara) en route to Castle of Genga. The road that cuts through the Frasassi Gorge was built in 1912.



Il Santuario Madonna di Frasassi (The Sanctuary of Madonna di Frasassi)

On the road from the Frasassi Caves to the charming village of Genga, a sign for “Santuario Madonna di Frasassi e Presepio Vivente” (Sanctuary of Madonna di Frasassi and Live Nativity scene) marks the spot to stop and park. Tickets are required to go to the Sanctuary. The rather steep ascent of approximately 700 meters is well worth the breathtaking views at the top. The temple, nestled into a cave atop the path is absolutely stunning. The Tempio di Valadier temple is both impressive and elegant, yet also silent and unique. The cave embracing the temple make this a very special place. The Tempio del Valadier, constructed in 1828, is an octagonal temple crafted from white travertine blocks. It was commissioned by Pope Leo XII, born in Genga. Inside the temple, on the alabaster alter, stands a Carrara marble statue of the Virgin Mary with Jesus, sculpted in the Canova style. Standing in the cave behind it will give you an amazing view of the rock embracing the temple enhanced by natural light. Be sure to admire it from the

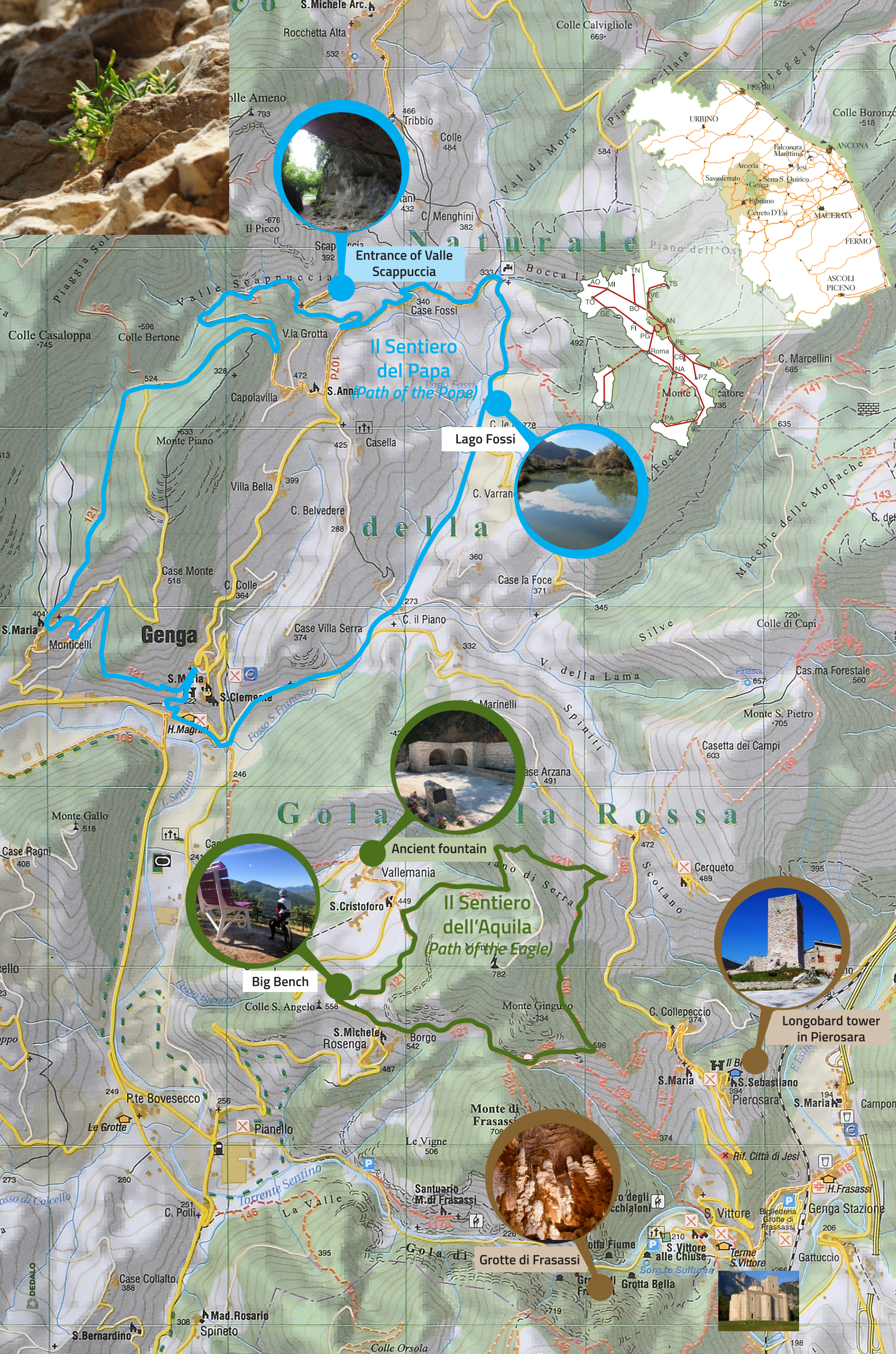


side, then simply turn your head to soak in the stunning views of the surrounding nature and the Frasassi Gorge. Looking over from the temple you will see a small stone sanctuary called Santa Maria Infra Saxa (Sanctuary of Holy Mary inside the rocks). Built at the entrance

to a large cave, this humble place of worship once housed a treasured wooden image, crafted by an inexperienced hand. The date of its creation is unknown. This image was accidentally burned by a candle in 1947; it has since been replaced with a white stone image. Venturing here transports you to a world filled with emotion, natural sounds, and deep contemplation. Here, magnificent man-made structures blend seamlessly with the surrounding nature. Legend has it that around the 10th century, the local community sought refuge here from rampant raids, attacks and looting. Each Christmas, this magical site transforms into a breathtaking live nativity scene, making it one of Marche’s most beautiful holiday spectacles. You should definitely visit this place at least once in your lifetime.







# Il Sentiero dell'Aquila (Path of the Eagle)

Vallemanina - Belvedere  
S. Angelo - Rosenga  
Piano di Serra - Vallemanina

Walking time: 2 h  
Level of difficulty: Easy  
Distance: 7.194 km  
Trail type: Loop  
Trail marker: 121, 139, 121b, 121

This rather easy trail offers a chance to explore and appreciate the Natural Regional Park of Gola della Rossa and Frasassi. You'll have the chance to admire both the Frasassi Gorge, carved by the Sentino River, and the Red Gorge, shaped by the Esino River. On clear days, views extend to Monte Cucco and Monte Catria. Starting from the church in the village of Vallemanina, head left on the small street and then turn right onto the dirt road that goes up the west slope of Monte La Croce. This path leads to the Valico di Colle S. Angelo pass where you will find a rest area called "Belvedere S. Angelo", equipped with wooden benches, picnic tables and bird-watching spots. When you come out of the woods, go left on the paved road towards the first houses of Rosenga. From here do not go down towards the village by continue walking straight onto the dirt road which leads to the pass between Monte Frasassi and Monte Gunguno. From the pass, keep left on the trail that will bring you to the next rest area called "Belvedere dell'Aquila". You will come to a junction with a sign posted for trail 121C which goes to the village Pierosara. Keep left on trail 139AG at the junction to continue the loop; this takes you to the Italian Forestry Corps mountain hut. Continue along the trail through the pine forest that spans the eastern slopes of Monte Gunguno and Monte La Croce. Stay on this trail until you reach the junction with trail 121B. Head right on trail 139 AG to reach the village of Cerqueto. Follow trail 121B that goes along the northern slope of Mount La Croce through the shrubby woods until you reach the pass between Monte La Croce and Monte Castellaro. Continue on the dirt road and go down to the right on the opposite side and through the thick forest to reach the last rest area; follow the little road on the right to return to the loop's starting point at the church in Vallemanina. Just a few steps ahead, on the right of the paved road, you'll find a recently restored beautiful fountain where you can cool off.

