

# **Surroundings**

Giovannis Diary

## Doss Trento

Here I am up Doss Trento, the closest elevation from the city center. You may recognize this doss by the proud white monument of Cesare Battisti looking over the valley. The doss feels smaller than expected from up here, there are two main grass areas: one next to the monument and another one next to a war museum. I visited the museum a while ago, displayed were uniforms, weapons and tools used by the people of this lands during world war 1. The purpose of this entire doss seems to be to hold the memory of such a terrible past. Some scary weapons lay on the outside, with some people standing over them as if It were a bench. Other people come here to walk ther dogs or just to take a breath.



Figure 1: View of northern Trento



Figure 2: View of southern Trento

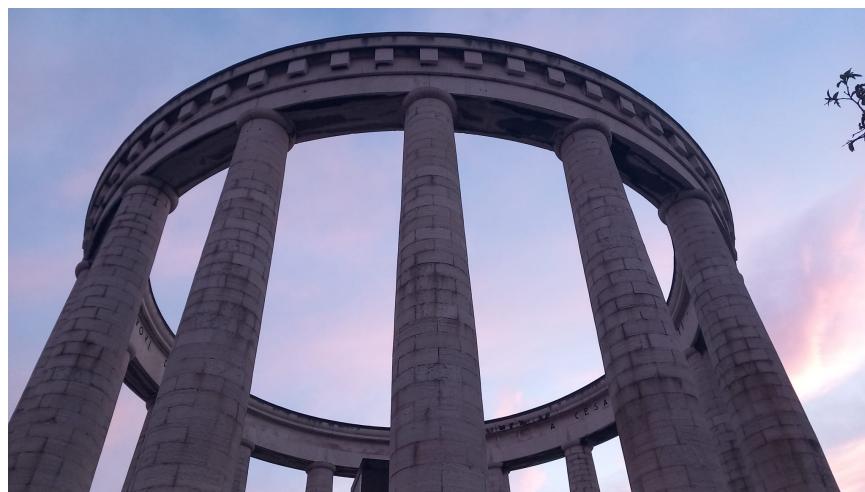


Figure 3: Monument to Cesare Battisti



Figure 4: Map of the area

## Mount Celva

Today I decided to take a walk to Mount Celva. It is easily reachable from the city by foot in about two and a half hours and It is only 998 meters high. Despite not being in the same status as the bigger mountains, It has been a strategic place during world war I because of Its position halfway across the Val Sugana and the Val d'Adige. From Its top, one can see the entier Val Sugana and possibly any enemy's army marching north. For this reason, the Austrians heavily invested into fortifying the mountain with kilometers of barbed wires and fortresses protected inside the mountain. All this effort can still be witnessed to this day, making for an enjoyable walk through the testimony of the great war.

Starting from Trento, we head to Mesiano and then to Povo, Oltrecastello and finally Cimirlo. From this locality, one can choose various paths, we are going to take the SAT's 411. You should know that there are two parts of the mountain, the former being the actual top and the latter being a lower area usually referred to "Basso Celva". We will see both.

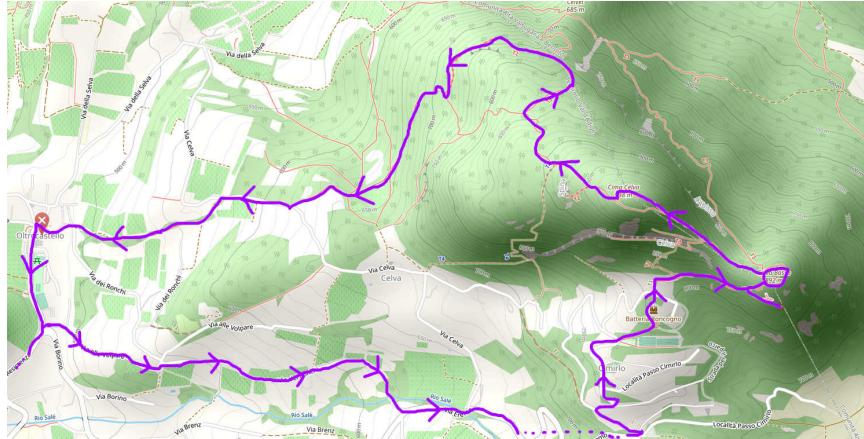


Figure 5: Section of the path from Oltrecastello

Taking the 411, we start going up. The difficulty is easily accessible to everyone, except maybe the last 20 minutes where the path is steeper and rocky, with iron ropes to help the less capable ones. We meet a park and from there we reach a

well maintained Austrian fortress, which can be seen in the picture below. There was a scout group when I passed, the more experienced people were explaining some stuff about the backpack to the young kids. They were talking a lot, I could feel the kids being bored, It bored me for the 1 minute I was there.



Figure 6: Austrian Fortress

We proceed through the path and we see the first entrance inside the mountain. It is a scary one, you don't know what is inside but you are curious. Some voices inside me were saying "Forget about It, keep following the path, It is dangerous" while another voice was saying "I really want to see the inside and how far the hole goes". This time, curiosity won so I entered. The ceiling was low, the temperature dropped quickly and the air was humid. Some holes on the left or right were completely dark so I grabbed a torch, other places were openings to see the path beneath.



Figure 7: View from the cavern

Peeking from holes, you could see the entire path I was going to take, and I felt totally invisible. This reminded me that this place was designed for war and for death, there was no way you could go through the path without being noticed or shot at.



Figure 8: Peeking from a hole

I went back to the entrance and kept going through the

path I was supposed to follow. After some time, the street splits: one part going up and the other going down with the sign "Sentiero dei 100 Scalini" which translated means "Path of 100 Step". This one goes to another fortress inside the mountain, this time deeper and scarier.



Figure 9: Sign at the intersection

The name is not misleading, there is a tunnel of 100 steps going upwards in total darkness, which is really scary especially when being alone. I started going up with my phone's flashlight, performing each step as carefully as possible. The ceiling was really low, and It felt like the steps were endless. Behind me I could hear two people taking the same path as me, but decided not to go up the stairs. I really hope I did not scared them by making noises, I surely would have been incredibly scared in the total darkness, what an horror movie that would have been.



Figure 10: The start of the 100 steps

But there was light at the end of the tunnel, with a big hole opening from at least 10 meters above. This could have been used to transport materials, weapons or people from one base to the other, but Its just me wondering now.



Figure 11: The big hole at the end of the 100 steps

Going abck downstairs, the view opens up for the first time, revealing a good view of the Valsugana.



Figure 12: View of the Valsugana

Back to the original path, the 411, we reach the Bassa Celva where a big area welcomes the hikers (or the soldiers). From here the entire valley is visible with great clarity, with fortifications all around it. The path keeps going upwards towards the top, crossing the remains of the fortress.



Figure 13: Bassa Celva

After resting some time and taking a bite of chocolate,

I headed downward taking the west route. Just beneath the top there is another entrance to some dark corridors, I tried getting in but the corridors were really long and disorienting. I got scared and retreated. The rest of the walk back was smooth, arriving at Oltrecastello in about one hour.

I sat on a bench in Povo Sale' to write this text. There is a public shelf for books where everybody can take or leave a book, I always stop by to check what books have changed. This time, I see a bunch of kids ripping off pages from the books and throwing them to the trees, that made me really sad. While I was in the bus I could barely breathe as at least 30 people were talking loudly at their phone, each one of them trying to be louder than the others so that they could be heard well.

## Mount San Martino

Mount San Martino (~1400m) is located west of Bleggio Superiore and east from Val Rendena, in a beautiful place called Giudicarie. The whole area of Bleggio is a place rich with history and legends. Once upon a time, in the medieval age, merchants and popes would travel through those lands to go north, villages developed, churches were built. Even to this day, this place still holds the memory of a great and prosperous time. In modern times, due to industrialization, the valley of Adige began developing and became the main road to the north and an important industrial center. Still, this place gained something else, It is now a peaceful, wonderful place, respectful of nature and life itself.

We begin our hike on the location of Larido, south of Rango (as a sidenote, Rango is famous for christmas shops) where there are places to park. The path forward is not certain at the start, since there are no signs mentioning the mountain top, so with a bit of trust we follow the only path west going upward.

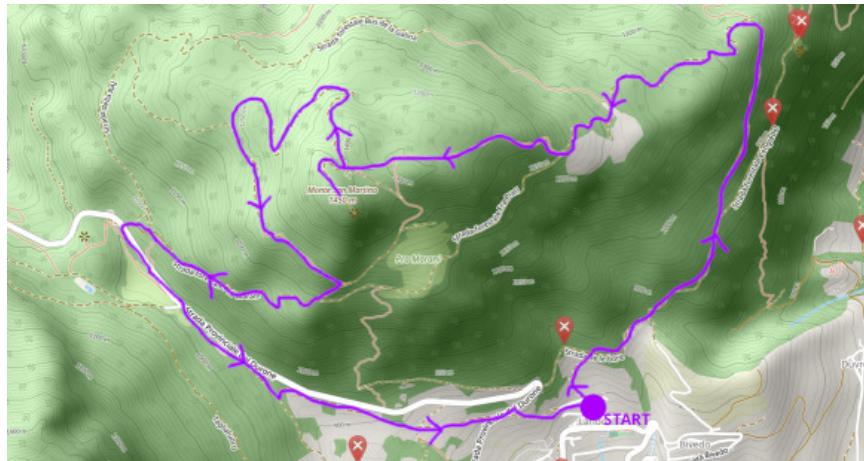


Figure 14: Map of the hike

The hike is a safe one, the overall height difference is 670m but the rate of change in elevation is smooth across the whole hike, without any difficult sections. We choose this

hike because there is still snow over 1500m so we planned to stay low (spoiler, we still found some snow in unilluminated areas). After some time, the view opens to the valley below, looking east. The tops of Bondone and Stivo are very recognisable, dominating over the other mountains.



Figure 15: View of the town of Fiave from the mountain



Figure 16: View of the mount Stivo

Midway to the top, a grass area opens up. A few tiny,

little one-room houses are scattered here and there, one high up, one far down the edge. The view here is wonderful, the sun shines, no car noises can be heard. We spot a young couple enjoying their breakfast in the garden, we say hello to them and shared a smile, as everyone does with strangers.



14

Figure 17: A beautiful and peaceful house

All of a sudden we reach the top, where a radio tower replaces the usual cross we find in mountain tops. We stop for a break and to have launch and some laughs.



Figure 18: Group photo after reaching the top

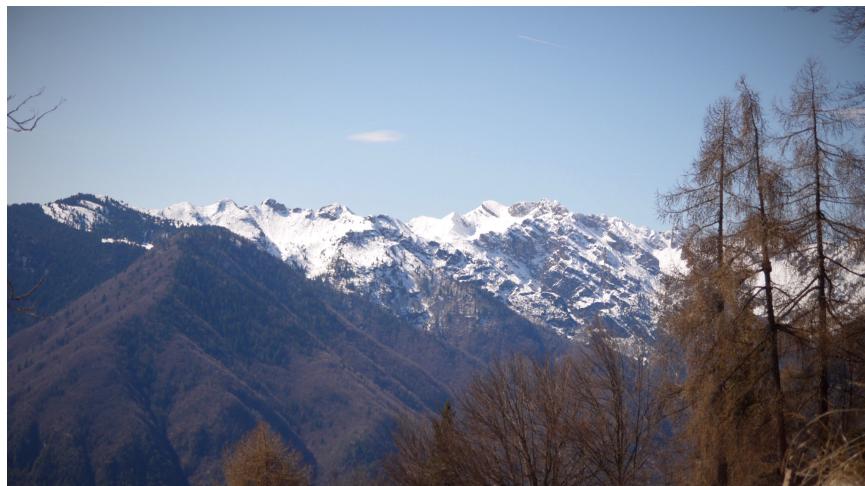


Figure 19: South view

Descending here is easy, we take the well made forestale path, and then we switch to an abandoned one which is barely visible. It had a magical feel, as if we were in a forgotten

forest with witches and monsters, with dead trees left and right to disorient us. We came out alive towards the strada provinciale before taking another path back to Larido, where everything started. Before that, we took some time to play with a horse.



Figure 20: Picture of a horse

## San Marco Garden

I find myself in the San Marco Garden. The garden is situated in the center of the city of Trento, in the oldest part. The park is an odd but beautiful place, a drop of green in the middle of buildings and busyness. Surrounded by medieval walls, It feels like this place is outside our times. The first brave daisies paint the grass, announcing the start of this year's spring, together with many other colorful flowers on display, with their descriptions on metal plates. Pigeons are everywhere, to remind me the reality of the situation: the nature here is human-made, those plants and shiny flowers have no reasons to be here other than for show, being artificially kept alive by us humans for our own delight.

Being situated in the city center, the park is a busy place, often used to move from one place of the city to another. Lots of people are passing by. Sometimes some people stop to take pictures of the colorful flowers. I believe there is a kindergarten nearby so a few kids with their families join the others in the garden, bringing laughs and tears, emotions.



Figure 21: My view of the garden

On my right there is a fountain delivering fresh water. On top of it, a bird is drinking the water. There are a few bird houses scattered on the sides of the trees, I can see just

one from my position but I believe there are more since I can hear birds singing all over the garden. A few ants and flies are moving around silently. A bigger fountain sits in the middle of the garden, but with a much weaker water throughput and it is difficult to reach, just for display.



Figure 22: The fountain on my right

Looking closely at the ground, one can find many used cigarettes, bottle caps, straws and pieces of plastic envelopes. Overall, the garden is decently clean, unless you start paying attention to the details. There are those automatic irrigation systems spreaded in the park, I hope they don't turn on right now (It happened once in another place).



Figure 23: Cigarettes and bottle caps

The colorful houses that surround the park completely block the view from the mountains. Maybe a glimpse of the Marzola mountain could be seen from here on a nicer day without clouds. A flag of peace is displayed from a window of one of the buildings. The clouds have moved and there is no trace of the Marzola, sadly.

A dog and the owner are joining the park, playing with a ball. Although the dog is more interested in biting the ball, with much focus. Some drops of water are falling from the sky, the sun is slowly setting and It is becoming colder.

It is the 25 of March 2025, 5:53pm, the spring season started a few days ago.

## **Sant Agata Church**

Sitting in front of me is Sant'Agata church, or what remains of it. Despite It's age, being born in the 16th century, the church stands strong from the ground, challenging time itself. We rest together on a "Doss" which is a tall hill or bump from the ground, but too modest to be considered a mountain, laying between Povo and Oltrecastello. Everything is quiet here except the birds and the noise of the cars from the city beneath.

Reaching the top of the Doss is simple. From Povo, more specifically Piazza Manci, one can follow the street going east towards Cimirlo. At the first opportunity, turn left when you see a SAT sign advertising a walk reaching Oltrecastello. The trail quickly goes up for the first 10 minutes, and slows down for the remaining 15. Despite the first half, the path is generous with many benches to let the explorer catch some breath. Overall, the walk is easily accessible even for elderly people, I even met two elderly women while I was going up. An alternative route would be from Oltrecastello, following the street towards Povo and turning right just after the main piazza of the town. The path here is shorter but steeper. Obviously, you could go down from either of the two ways.



Figure 24: Map of the path

From up here one can enjoy a good view of Adige's valley, with Its urban areas and urban noises, especially the southern parts of Trento. Instead, the small fraction of Borino and Cimirlo are perfectly visible in their entirety, a rare sight since they are often hidden by this same doss. Surrounding the hill stand the mount of Marzola on the South-East, mount Celva from east, mount Calisio on the northern side and the valley on the west. The snow on top of Paganella and Bondone can be appreciated even during the spring, although this year the snow has been very shy.



Figure 25: View of the valley from the top

Up here there is a flat grass area where you can enjoy the view and some fresh air, with plenty of benches and space to rest. Most of the area is now inaccessible because of some excavations beneath the ground. A long long time ago there was a fortress here meant to protect the city from attacks coming from Valsugana. When the fortress was not necessary anymore, It got dismantled but the foundations still remains.



Figure 26: Archeological site

Dominating the area stands a modest church made of stone and concrete. The look of the church is very simple, with only some framing around the two windows on the side of the wooden door at the front of the house facing west. The walls lack any kind of decoration, displaying all ruthlessness of time like an old person. A hollow structure on the roof hints of a bell lost to time. Despite its size, the church catches the attention and the imagination of the people coming up here, wondering of the devoted and hard working people who created it in a past era.



Figure 27: The church view from west

Peeking at the windows, the interior looks as abandoned as the exterior. A wooden floor with some benches fills the empty space, hidden by a layer of dust and the lack of sunlight. On the back sleeps what used to be an altar, retired from its important job, now discredited and disrespected.



Figure 28: Peeking at the window

A good variety of flowers and plants surround the church, keeping spring alive. The green grass is painted with colors of violet, yellow and white.



Figure 29: Some bright flowers

It is the 26 of March 2025, 6:11pm.



Figure 30: The church from the back

## Sant'Apollinare Church

Walking next to the Adige river close to Trento, one cannot miss the church of Sant'Apollinare because of Its height and Its oddity. The story of this church dates back to the first paleocristiani, in the 6th century, and It evolved and reshaped over the centuries. Its surroundings have changed too, perhaps more violently, leaving this place as a monument to a past time.

The church is situated in a busy road just west to the city, on the other side of the river. Cars and busses pass through here in waves, briefly glimpsing the back of the church. Instead, if you approach It from west or north-west, you would appreciate Its front face and dimensions. The church has a rectangular floor with the shorter edge at the front and back. It develops in height by at least double Its width, with an even higher bell tower. The exterior is plain and simple, with the remainings of paint suggesting some lost pictures decorating the front. Up the main door there is a rosone, common to many churches, and above It there are 8 windows placed symmetrically on the left and on the right. The tower is attached in the corner between the front and the southern edge.



Figure 31: View of the church

As you get closer to the church, you feel smaller and tinier, as if the balance of importance and power slowly changes, making you humble just before reaching the main entrance.



Figure 32: Looking up

The door looks as old as the church, made with wood and metal plates with figures places between the gaps. There is a description of the changes to the church throughout history right next to it. Briefly, It was created round the 10-11 century where different groups would stay here throughout the years. The bell tower still comes from this period. Then, in 1250-1300 It was demolished and the current church was built. Some decorations on the outside were added but were lost in time, some inner paintings have been restored, as well as the floor which was raised by 1.7 meters because of floods. The church is still used for christian ceremonies to this day, and It maskes Its own parrocchia, together with other churches nearby.



30

Figure 33: Front entrance

Beneath the church lies a grass area, now flourishing with daisies, and a park with various toys and benches and a board with upcoming events. We are in the area of Piedicastello, one of the oldest places in Trento. Next to the park is a museum called "Le Gallerie" where two old galleries are now used to display historical testimonies and other events. The content often changes a couple of times each year so It is worth checking this place from time to time, the show is very different from a conventional museum as they use sound and light effects.

Watching over us is the mount of Bondone and the Doss Trento, which can both be reached from here. You can reach Sardagna in about 40 minutes but Its not an interesting walk, from there you can go higher towards Vaneze or go west where there is a really nice walk towards Vigolo Baselga. It is about 3-4 hours between agriculture land and towns in the valley, It is simpler if you go from Vigolo Baselga to Trento since It is mostly downhill and there is a public bus to Baselga. This path is part of a bigger one that goes from Madonna di Campiglio to Trento and lasts something like 5 days.



Figure 34: Walks starting from the church