



ORFENTO  
VALLEY

HERMITAGES

# HIKES ON THE MAIELLA RANGE



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosrl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosrl@gmail.com)



The Maiella range presents completely different scenarios from the Gran Sasso, which are worth knowing. Depending on the starting point chosen for

the excursion, from Caporciano it is approximately an hour, an hour and a half by car. As for the Gran Sasso, we limit ourselves to mentioning

a couple of possible itineraries, referring you to the numerous paper and online guides.



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com)



## Orfento Valley

Near Caramanico Terme lies the Orfento Valley which boasts a rich heritage of biodiversity, so much so that it was recommended by the magazine "Nature". The Orfento Valley offers routes for all levels and all ages, lasting from 2 to 8 hours.

## SCALELLE PATH

One of the most famous excursions in the entire Majella National Park. The Orfento Gorges present wonderful natural environments that are absolutely worth seeing, but also very particular places of historical interest.

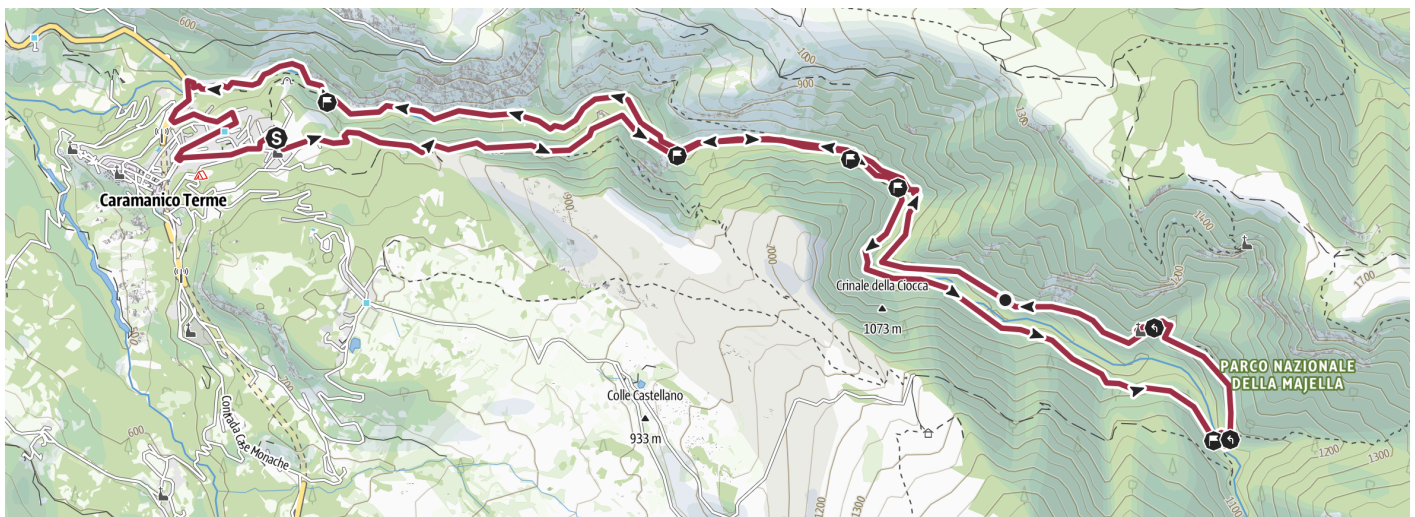
It is a rather long route but can be divided into 2 variants: a shorter one, up to the Ponte del Vallone, the other, longer, up to the Ponte delle Pietre.

The trail is always clear and signposted, with easy terrain and plenty of shade.

The route explores the deep gorge carved by the watercourse over millions of years.

We start from the Park Visitor Center, following the clear and obvious directions. Initial part, up to the Vallone bridge, is on a fairly monotonous route, first uphill then semi-flat. From the Ponte del Vallone we continue towards the Ponte delle Pietre, first on a common stretch with the path we will take on the return, then turning right onto the Ponte di San Benedetto. The most beautiful part of the excursion begins here, through a splendid, fresh and silent beech forest that runs along the Orfento creating spectacular gorges and waterfalls. You pass through the Cave of San Nicola, where you will need to help yourself with a steel cable (a simple passage, but which could create some problems for those who suffer from vertigo) and continue to climb into the woods on terrain that is

sometimes rough but always rather easy. , up to the Stone Bridge. Here you cross the Orfento overlooking a spectacular, deep crack where at the bottom you can perceive the flow of the stream. Continue after the bridge, climbing for a few dozen metres, then turning left onto a small path that goes up in the opposite direction. You continue to climb between beech trees and rocks in an enchanted scenario, until you reach the crossroads for the ruins of the hermitage of Sant'Onofrio. Continue descending and rejoining the stretch of path already traveled on the outward journey, Until you reach Ponte del Vallone.



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com)



From here you continue on the same side, without crossing the stream, on a route that makes you miss the previous environments a little.

Fortunately, you soon arrive in the "Scalelle" area, where the Orfento returns to create spectacular environments with waterfalls, rocky gorges and various crossings on beautiful wooden bridges.

A crossroads allows us to turn left to return to the Visitor Center, or continue up to the Caramanico Bridge. I

recommend this second choice: the route is a little longer but you will be able to visit the most characteristic environments.

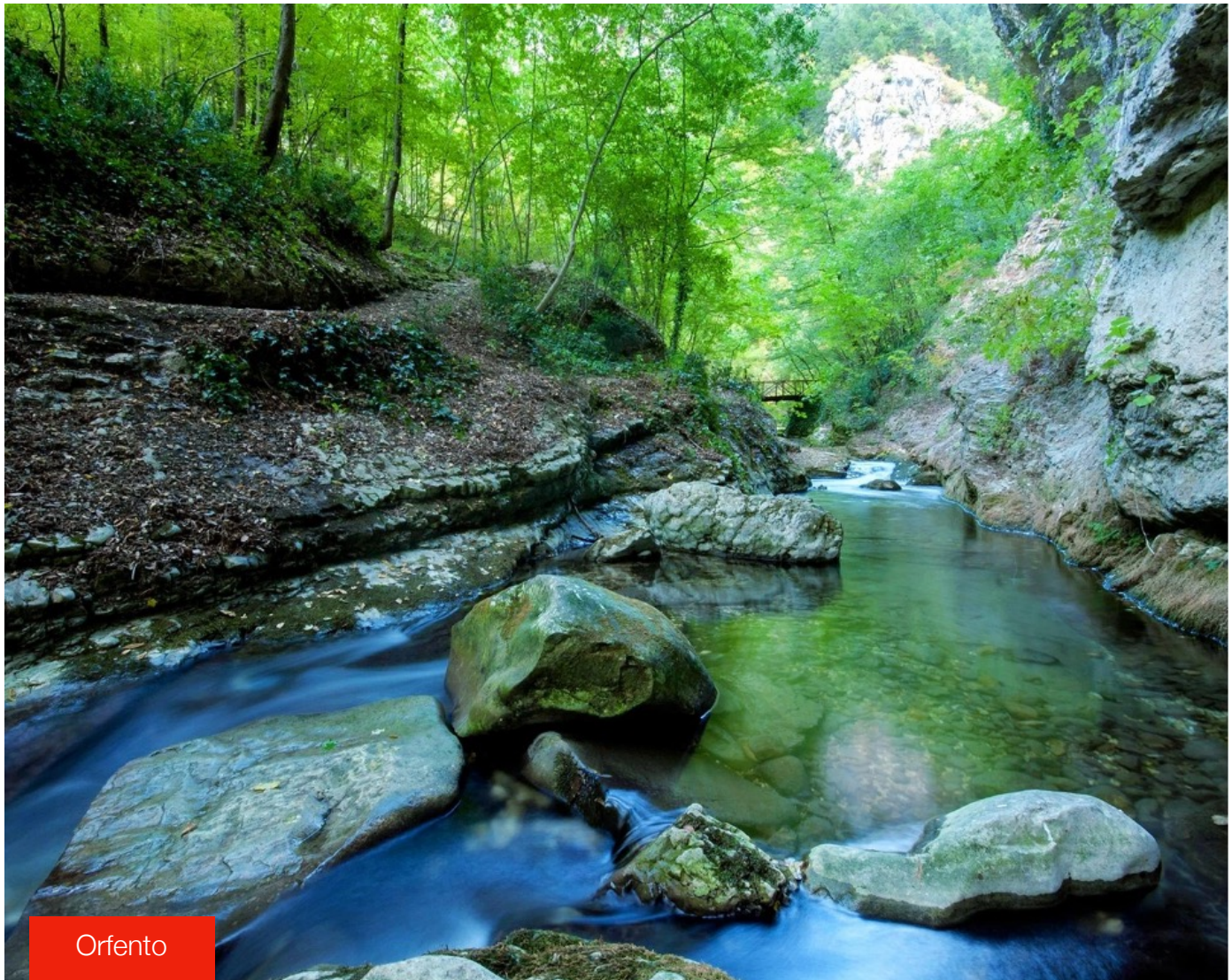
We will understand that we have reached the end when, looking up, we see the Caramanico Bridge above us. From here a long and tiring staircase will take us back to the asphalt road, from which it will (unfortunately) be necessary to turn left to return to the town center and reach the starting point.

Overall length: approximately 18 km (full version; half for the "short" version)

Maximum altitude: 1092 m

Difference in altitude: approximately 500 meters (full version; 150 for the "short" version)

Cumulative height difference: approximately 1000 meters (full version; 350 for the "short" version)



Orfento



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com)



## Hermitage of San Giovanni

The hermitage was inhabited by Pietro da Morrone, future Pope Celestine V, and his disciples between 1284 and 1293.

Beautiful excursion that allows us to admire the various landscapes of the Majella,

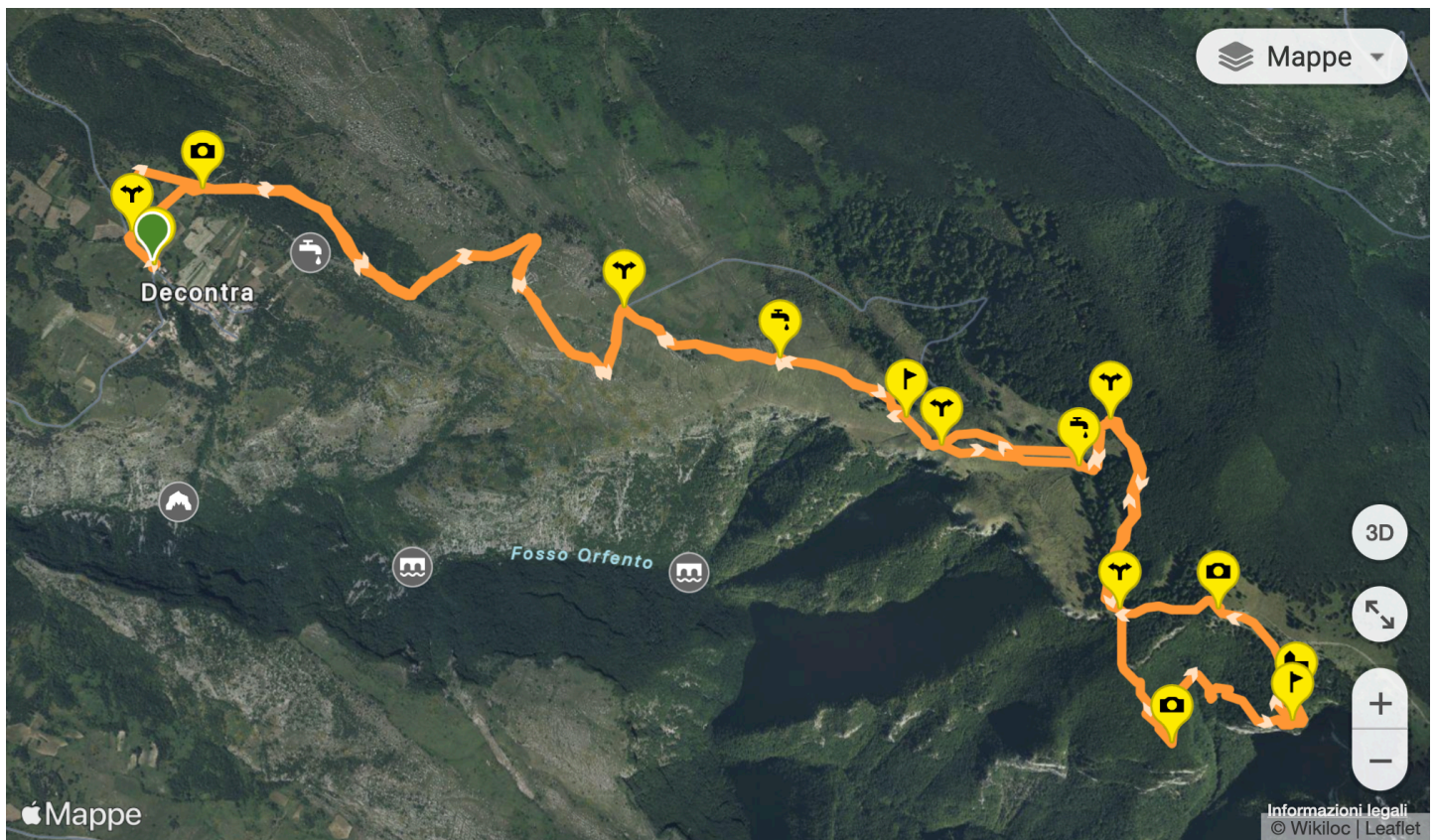
Simple route in terms of technical difficulty, difficult only for a few reasons: 1) the heat, if you do this route on hot summer days (even if there are several fountains along the route) 2) the presence of flies

and horseflies on the hottest days; 3) and for a very exposed passage on the outward turn on the S path, advisable for those who have no problems with heights and have experience. The entrance to the hermitage is not the easiest, but the problem is more psychological... you pass on an exposed ledge with a height of 5-6m. For those who do not want to follow the exposed section, we recommend following the route backwards, i.e. from waypoint 9, which goes beyond the barrier and goes up towards Rifugio di Marco, then following path B1,

and then following the path that goes again towards the hermitage of San Giovanni

## Hermitage of San Giovanni.

The only uncomfortable section of the B1 path is the one close to the hermitage, as there is an exposed staircase carved into the rock, the passage is simple and there are also several grips for your hands, but it is not recommended in case of rain



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosrl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosrl@gmail.com)



The departure is from Decontra, not far from Caramanico, the center of the Maiella park, following path B1 which, after passing two fountains, climbs onto the track and enters the beech forest, reaching a barrier. From the bar you have two possibilities:

1- take the Sentiero dello Spirito, indicated with S, immediately on the right and walk for about 40 minutes before reaching the hermitage. Attention! This stretch of path, at a certain point, is very exposed on a precipice, so it is not recommended for those who are not used to the void,

suffer from vertigo or for children who are too young; 2- pass the barrier, continue for a very short stretch on the B1 and then turn right, always on the path marked as S. This second possibility allows you to reach the hermitage in about twenty minutes, avoiding the most exposed stretch. However, you must be careful in the last stretch, when you will have to go down some steep steps carved into the rock.

If you don't have training or vertigo problems you can follow both circular paths.

The entrance to the hermitage involves a belly-down passage on a narrow rock ledge several meters from the ground, after crossing a stone staircase and a narrow passage. The internal rooms were all carved out of the rock. The chisel work that allowed the rooms, altar and stairs to emerge from the stone is surprising. Above all, the system of channels and tanks for collecting rainwater is ingenious.

The total distance is 14 km for approximately 8 hours, with 900 meters of altitude difference



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com)





San Giovanni's Hermitage



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com)





Along the trail to the hermitage



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosrl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosrl@gmail.com)



## GOOD TO KNOW

---

- a) The trail indications here are purely indicative, to give an idea of the type of excursion. Don't venture out without the necessary equipment which includes a detailed trail map
- b) The path along the Orfento is to be avoided in high season, ESPECIALLY on weekends, if you don't want to remain in queues behind cheerful families on a trip
- c) At the visitor center you can:
  - a) Register your access for excursions within the Valle dell'Orfento Nature Reserve
  - b) Go on guided tours and excursions on foot and by e-bike (by reservation)
  - c) Take advantage of environmental education workshops
  - d) Purchase books, trail maps, gadgets and information material on the Parks of Abruzzo
  - e) Rent mountain backpacks for children
  - f) Rent trekking poles

## CONTACTS

---

Visitors Center Valle dell'Orfento  
Via del Vivaio,  
65023 Caramanico Terme PE  
Everyday 9.00-13.00 From June 15 to  
September 15 9.00-13.00 | 15.00-19.00  
Tel. +39 085 922343



Palazzo D'Alessandro Wunderkammern & Suites

Tel. +39 335 5994204

E-mail: [palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com](mailto:palazzodalessandrosl@gmail.com)

