

Best of Corsica's GR20

Trip Code: CBG

Version: CBG The Best of Corsica's GR20 Trek



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



CHALLENGING



HIGHLIGHTS

- Fully guided trekking holiday on the GR20 in Corsica
- Vehicle support and access to bags wherever possible
- Great value holiday with all meals included
- World class hiking and scrambling in Corsica's Mediterranean sunshine

AT A GLANCE

- 6 days trekking
- Max altitude - 2225m
- Join at Bastia

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- All meals included
- 3 nights Camping
- 3 nights Hotel
- 1 nights Gite / Hostel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

Experience all the highlights of the northern section of Corsica's GR20 haute route, one of the finest and most challenging mountain walking routes in the whole of Europe, on this fully guided, week long trekking holiday! Stretching from Calenzana in the south, to Conca in the north, it takes 2 weeks to trek the entire GR20. However, on this new trekking holiday, unique to KE, you can now experience the challenge and achievement of walking the best sections of the GR20, without the need for continuously difficult or overly protracted walking days. Though the entire GR20 stretches over 180km, the most enjoyable sections are conveniently clustered together in the north-west corner of this beautiful island and so we can walk them all in just 6 days!

Our journey begins in Canglia, at the very heart of this rugged and mountainous island. From here we walk up the stunning Manganello Valley before ascending to Punta Mezzella (2206m) from where we follow the GR20 to the Breche de Captello. Over the course of the next 4 days we will hike the classic ridge walk from Lac de Nino to Castel di Vergio, cross one of the ridges of Monte Cinto (Corsica's highest peak) and climb to cross the Col a Muvrella, whilst still enjoying time to relax in the sun and take our picnic lunches beside blue mountain rivers and lakes. An overnight stay and celebratory meal in the charming seaside town of Calvi, the rumoured birthplace of Christopher Columbus, brings our holiday to a close. Using a mix of characterful small hotels and camping at the national park refuges; our itinerary is specially designed to be partially baggage supported, so whilst staying in hotels we will also have access to our main luggage. Corsica is an island famous for its dramatic coastline and pretty mountain villages, but, as we'll discover during the course of this holiday, its hidden treasures are revealed only to those prepared to explore it on foot.

Is this holiday for you?

The Corsica GR20 is a trekking route for walkers who are in good shape, have good stamina and the ability to move confidently and safely over rocky rugged mountainous terrain. Though well-established and well-marked, the paths on the Corsican GR20 are often very rocky with numerous steep ascents and descents that are rough under foot, and can be exposed and there will be scrambling sections and high ridge walks on some of days. Our 'highlights' itinerary allows us access to all the best sections of the northern GR20. Though the itinerary is shorter, the days are still long, testing and they certainly retain that element of challenge that makes the GR20 so special. The beautiful and remote nature of this trek means that the route cannot always be vehicle supported, therefore it will be necessary for you to carry your sleeping bag, rain gear and a packed lunch, along with essential overnight items on 5 of the walking days, though the trek is baggage supported wherever possible. Two trekking poles are highly

recommended and you should be adept at using them before you come. The reputation of this GR comes from the nature of the terrain. It is very technical, you need to be sure footed, have agility and plenty of mountain experience.

More information and FAQs can be found in our handy [GR20 - Is It For You](#) guide.

Itinerary

Version: CBG The Best of Corsica's GR20 Trek

DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Vizzavona. A single timed transfer from Bastia Airport is provided.

Today there is a single timed transfer from Bastia Airport to Vizzavona (if you are arriving into Calvi it is possible to get to Vizzavona by train - information on this can be found in the Joining Arrangements and transfers section), a small hamlet situated amongst dense pine forest and located at the half-way point of the GR20 long-distance walk where the skyline is dominated by the Monte d'Oro Massif. After tonight, we won't have access to our baggage again until day 4, so we will want to take the opportunity to pack our rucksacs with everything we will need for the following 3 days.

A single timed transfer is provided from Bastia Airport to the group hotel in Vizzavona where your holiday starts.

Meals: **D**



Accommodation

Gite / Hostel

DAY 2

Trek to the refuge of Petra Piana (1840m), via Canaglia.

After breakfast, we have a short transfer to the hamlet of Canaglia, where we start walking in the Manganello Valley. This is a pretty morning's walk to ease us in to our trekking week. Our path leads us beside a colourful green torrents of water, with tumbling waterfalls and deep pools. The lariccio pine trees that surround our route give way gradually to fragrant alder bushes as we start to gain altitude. We will reach the refuge of Petra Piana (1840m) in the early afternoon. This small refuge is nestled on the lower planks of the Monte Renoso; we will camp here for the night.

No access to main baggage.

Meals: **B L D**



Accommodation

Camping



Ascent

1000M



Time

5hrs walking



Distance

12KM

DAY 3

Ascend to Punta Mezzella (2206m), join the Breche de Capitello and descend to the refuge at Manangu.

From the refuge at Petra Piana we follow a path that overlooks the beautiful lakes of Melo and Capitello and the Restonica Valley, well known for its rock climbing. The GR20 continues along an airy ridge that forms the east/west watershed of Corsica, before joining the rocky pass at the Breche de Capitello. From here, a steep, rocky descent leads to the refuge of Manganu and the Campotile Plateau. The views over the Campotile Plateau, which is used as a grazing ground, are stunning. No access to main baggage.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Camping		Ascent 600M		Descent 800M		Time 7hrs walking		Distance 12KM
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DAY 4

Trek via Lac de Nino (1743m) and Col St Pierre (1452m) to Castel di Vergio.

An hour's walk takes us across the plateau to the shepherd's cabin of Vaccaja (1621m). The GR20 continues behind Vaccaja and is well marked, leading uphill through beech woods, then across pozzines (grassy meadow) areas to arrive at Lac de Nino. At 1743 metres, this glacial lake is in a lovely, sheltered location, surrounded by a spongy peat, with runnels of water and bubbling springs, making it an ideal summer grazing ground for ponies and for other animals including the elusive Corsican wild boar (they stay away from humans, there are pigs on the plateau though) and wild goats. From the lake, the path heads uphill with fine views of Paglia Orba and Monte Cinto, before we reach the Col A Reta. Here, we are effectively walking over the watershed of Corsica. Everything to the east flows to the east coast, and rivers to the west flow to the west coast. From the col, descend and gain a ridge, which the trail follows, toppling over to the north side and then descending to Col St. Pierre (1452m) where there is a small statue. We lose altitude gradually and join a reasonably flat horseshoe-shaped trail to Castel di Vergio, the island's small ski station.

Access to main baggage.

Meals: **B L D**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 600M		Descent 800M		Time 7hrs walking		Distance 17KM
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DAY 5

Trek up to the Ciotulu di Mori refuge (1991m) and descend to Bergerie de Vallo.

From the hotel we traverse a birch and pine forest which emerges into a harsh environment of granite

rock formations to Bergerie Radule, a huddle of stone cabins well camouflaged against the mountainside. We then follow the torrential Golu stream (actually Corsica's longest river) upwards towards its source. Midway up the valley, our route crosses the stream, a welcome opportunity to take a break on the smooth sun-baked rocks and to cool our feet in the chilly water. The trail now leaves the floor of the valley and heads up to the ridge-line. From here, there are clear views of a number of coastal villages to the west and of the many inlets and promontories of the west coastline. We reach the Ciotulu di Mori refuge (1991m), and then from here the GR20 plunges steeply down, a stunning descent through a chaos of granite rock and giant old pine trees. Eventually, we reach the Viru stream and make our approach to the Bergerie de Vallone, where Kati, Dom Pierre and their family provide a warm welcome. The bergerie sits in a valley surrounded on all sides by the high granite cliffs of the 'Grande Barriere,' the ridge that contains most of the high summits of Corsica. We set up our camp nearby and dine in the cabin restaurant. It is possible to bathe in the pools of a nearby river. No access to main baggage.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Camping	 Ascent 950M	 Descent 900M	 Time 6hrs walking	 Distance 15KM
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DAY 6

Vallone to Haute Asco .

From Bergerie de Vallone we take a trail which ascends up to the Refuge Tighhiettu. Then we head north westwards into the wild Crucetta valley and ascend to the high pass of Bocca Crucetta 2450m. From this pass we descend for a short distance, to then traverse and re-ascend north to cross a ridge of Monte Cinto, close to Pointe des Eboulis at 2600m. From here it is a long descent to the old ski station of Haut Asco. Access to main baggage.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 1300M	 Descent 1300M	 Time 9 - 10hrs walking	 Distance 13KM
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DAY 7

Trek across the Col a'Muvrella, via the Refuge Carrozzu, to Bonifatu. Transfer to Calvi.

Today we have a long walk across some rugged and rocky terrain. We start out on a steep trail through forest and over rocky slabs to reach the pass at Bocca di Stagnu (2010m / 6594ft). Here, on a rocky ridge, there is a great viewpoint, looking over to Monte Cinto (2706m / 8878ft), Corsica's highest peak. We then continue, beneath the peak of Muvrella, to reach another small col. There is a fantastic viewpoint of Calvi, from a nearby summit, before we descend steeply to reach the small Muvrella Lake. More descent

eventually takes us by way of the left (western) side of a steep valley gorge on a rocky path, with fixed chains in places, then across the river on an exciting suspension bridge. A short climb takes us to the Refuge de Carozzu (1270m / 4167ft). From here we leave the main GR20 and descend west through the Bonifatu forest to the road head at the Bonifatu gite 550m. A short transfer will take us to the pretty coastal town of Calvi.

Access to main baggage.

Meals: **B L D**

 Accommodation Hotel	 Ascent 700M	 Descent 1700M	 Time 7 - 8 walking	 Distance 15KM
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DAY 8

Departure day. A single timed transfer to Bastia Airport is provided.

Our last morning on the island. There will be a single timed transfer to the airport in the late afternoon.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- An experienced and qualified tour leader
- A single timed group transfer from Bastia Airport to Vizzavona on Day 1
- A single timed group transfer from Calvi to Bastia on day 8
- All road transfers detailed in the itinerary
- All meals included
- All accommodation as described
- During the trek a full service - including food and all camping equipment (excluding personal equipment)
- A closed cell foam camping mat
- Baggage transfers

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers (other than the single group transfer to Vizzavona on Day 1 & to Bastia on Day 8)
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks etc
- Any costs incurred should you depart the trip early

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

Day 1

A single timed group transfer from the airport at Bastia to the group's accommodation in Vizzavona.

It is also possible to reach Bastia or Calvi by high speed ferry from Nice or Toulon. If you are arriving into Calvi airport it is possible to get to Vizzavona by train. You can view the latest timetables here:

http://www.corsicabus.org/Train_services/Train6ClyAja.html

Day 8

A single timed transfer from the hotel in Calvi, back to the airport in Bastia is provided.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 8.

Food & Water

Many places on this holiday have drinkable water from the tap to fill your personal water bottles. Please check with the leader at the various locations. Please take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) for days when drinking water out of the tap is not available. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Breakfasts will be continental style and usually consist of a hot drink and bread and jam. If you are used to a large breakfast, it may be a good idea to bring some supplements such as cereal bars. Dinner will be a simple meal of home cooked food. At most of the places we stay this will consist of a starter of soup or cold meats followed by a wholesome and carbohydrate-rich main course such as pasta. Cheese and bread is also a large portion of the diet here. In most cases this is a set meal though it is normally possible to ask the hut guardian for more. Lunch is usually a pre cooked pasta/rice/lentil salad, with extra bread, cheese, meat and fruit. For this you will need a plastic Tupperware box (about 0.6 litre), and a fork or spoon. A penknife is a very useful piece of kit for lunches as well. In some places your lunch box will be filled for you overnight and in others you will be given a sandwich type lunch. A trail snack is also provided each day and you can purchase these at some of the huts and gites, but you may wish to supplement this with additional snacks brought from home.

Please note that it can be difficult (but not impossible) to cater for vegetarians on the GR20. The refuges are isolated and depend upon local produce so if you are a vegetarian you should be prepared for a more restricted choice and a repetitive menu. Your lunch choices will be limited and often only omelettes or basic pasta dishes will be available in the evening. We recommend that you bring your own supply of protein (eg nuts and seeds) to ensure you can keep up your energy levels, as this may not be provided in the quantities you require otherwise. It may also be able to purchase nuts etc... en route at some of the accommodations.

Unfortunately it will not be possible to cater for any other dietary requirements.

Accommodation

During this trip the group will have 3 hotel nights. The other nights during the trek we make use of park refuges, or small privately owned gites, either staying in the non-segregated (mixed female/male) dormitory-style sleeping arrangements or camping outside. Camping is often a better option to staying in the busy dormitories. On camping days group members will put up their own tents, which are held in storage at each of the gites/refuges. Whilst camping outside the refuges, we will still have use of the toilet and washing facilities. Please note that washing facilities at some of the refuges are simple and the water can be cold. Our evening meals will be also provided by the refuges and these will be taken in the basic dining area provided. It is not possible to provide Single rooms or tents on this holiday. In the hotels the rooming is generally on a twin share basis, though at very busy times it is occasionally necessary to use triple or quad rooms. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with other travellers of the same sex. Additional hotels nights in Bastia are available, please contact the KE office for prices.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by an experienced and qualified tour leader.

Altitude

The altitudes on this holiday are not extreme and the maximum altitude attained is no more than the equivalent of a pressurised cabin on an international flight. You may 'feel' the altitude the first time you trek above 2000 metres but all that is required is a slower pace to compensate. You should pay particular attention to your hydration levels while trekking above 2000 metres.

Spending Money

Approximately €200 should be sufficient to cover your personal expenses including snacks, drinks and tips. Bottled water, soft drinks, beer and wine are available at many of the refuges on the route, but can sometimes be expensive. If you are intending to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly. You should bring this money with you in cash Euros as there will be no opportunity to change money once the trek starts.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and should be dependent on good service. How much to tip your guide and local staff is entirely up to you, but we do recommend that you give any tips together as a group.

Additional Information

Costs for early departure

This is a very challenging trek, which is reflected in the grading. In Corsica we work with qualified IML mountain guides who work to strict safety standards and you should note that if they feel that your physical condition or performance is detrimental to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the group as a whole, or if they feel that your general wellbeing is put at risk by continuing, you will be asked to leave the tour. You will only be asked to leave at points where there is close road access to return to Calvi or Bastia and you will be reunited with your baggage at the earliest opportunity. From the point of your evacuation you will be expected to cover all of your expenses, although our local agent will offer assistance with making alternative travel and accommodation arrangements either to remain in Corsica or travel home early. You may be able to claim for any additional expenses incurred due to your evacuation through your travel insurance.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft bag such as the KE kit bag, and one 45 litre rucksack. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline. During the trek your main baggage will remain in the support vehicle and you will have access to this on a total of 4 nights. There will be 3 nights where you do not have access to your main baggage. Effectively, this means that on 5 days you will be carrying your sleeping bag and any overnight essentials.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Currency

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

Preparing for your Holiday

It is essential that you spend time getting relevant exercise. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience. You should be getting out and doing a challenging cardiovascular fitness regime leading right up to your trip. You need to develop considerable stamina and endurance. You should be used to your hiking gear, which means that you are comfortable with your rucksack and used to carrying a certain weight. You need to have walking shoes/boots with excellent grip soles that you are used to, two poles that you know how to walk with and a camel bag (both of which we strongly recommend).

Climate

Corsica has a Mediterranean climate with hot summers and moderate, dry, clear winters. The climate varies with altitude of course. The temperatures that you can expect to encounter on this trip can be far ranging with anything from freezing to 30°C, so you need to be prepared and equipped for this. The micro climates in Corsica make the weather very unpredictable and fast changing. You will need to be prepared for hot sunshine but also for storms, wind, rain, hail and even snow, which cannot be ruled out even in the summer months. It is possible to experience a whole range of conditions in the same day from minus temperatures through to high temperatures and sunshine.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- GR 20 Corsica. Paddy Dillon (Cicerone Press).
- Corsica Walking Guide. Bergverlag Rother GMBH. Corsica. Insight Guide.

Maps

GR20 2 map set 1:60,000 Libris

2 large scale maps showing the entire GR20, a useful guide Derived from IGNs with contour interval of 50m. and relief shading and spot heights. GR and other trails are shown. Though not at the detailed scale of the IGN, these are probably the better option for following the route without having to bring lots of maps.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

You must bring the following items:

- Hiking boots

- Socks

- Trekking trousers

- Waterproof overtrousers

- Shorts

- Underwear

- Baselayer shirts (1 short sleeve, 1 long sleeve)
- T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Windproof/waterproof jacket
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Lightweight thermal gloves
- Sleeping bag (comfort rating 0°C)
- Daypack c. 45 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including for lips)

Water bottles x 2 (1 Litre) or 2 litre Camelbak/Platypus style drinking system. We highly recommend
■ camelback/platypus system for this trek. (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)

- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Small towel
- Toilet paper
- Antibacterial handwash

- Tupperware lunch box (0.6 litre)
- Fork & spoon
- Penknife
- Small padlock (to lock trek bag)
- Insect repellent

Basic first aid kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Immodium)

- painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, antihistamine cream/tablets (in case you get bitten!) and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are a good idea.

◆ **The following items are optional:**

- Sleeping bag liner
- Thermarest (note that closed cell foam mats are provided)
- 2 trekking poles - highly recommended
- Waterproof daypack cover - recommended
- Gaiters
- Trainers or sandals
- Spare laces
- Earplugs (particularly if you are not the one snoring!)
- Swimwear
- Travel clothes
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)

- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Note

You will not have access to your main trek bags on 3 nights. Effectively, this means that on 5 days you will be carrying your sleeping bag and any overnight essentials.

In recent years some of the national park refuges have suffered from outbreaks of bed bugs. We minimise this risk by only staying at national park refuges on 3 nights of the trip and using tents where possible when staying at the refuges. However to be extra safe we would recommend taking a bed bug proof under sheet and spraying your sleeping bag and liner with an insect repellent such as Lifesystems EX4 spray. (be careful using DEET based insect repellents as they can melt plastics)

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers. [>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Bastia. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Bastia Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from Heathrow to Bastia. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the afternoon, arriving into Bastia in the early evening of the same day (day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart in the evening of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later that same evening.. Regional departures and/or alternative carriers maybe available on request.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Experience the unique challenge of the GR20, Europe's most famous long distance trekking trail, in just one week on KE's exclusive 'Best of' holiday. All the best (and most challenging!) sections are included and this holiday is also fantastic value, with all meals included in the price.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 27/07/2024 and the trip is subject to change