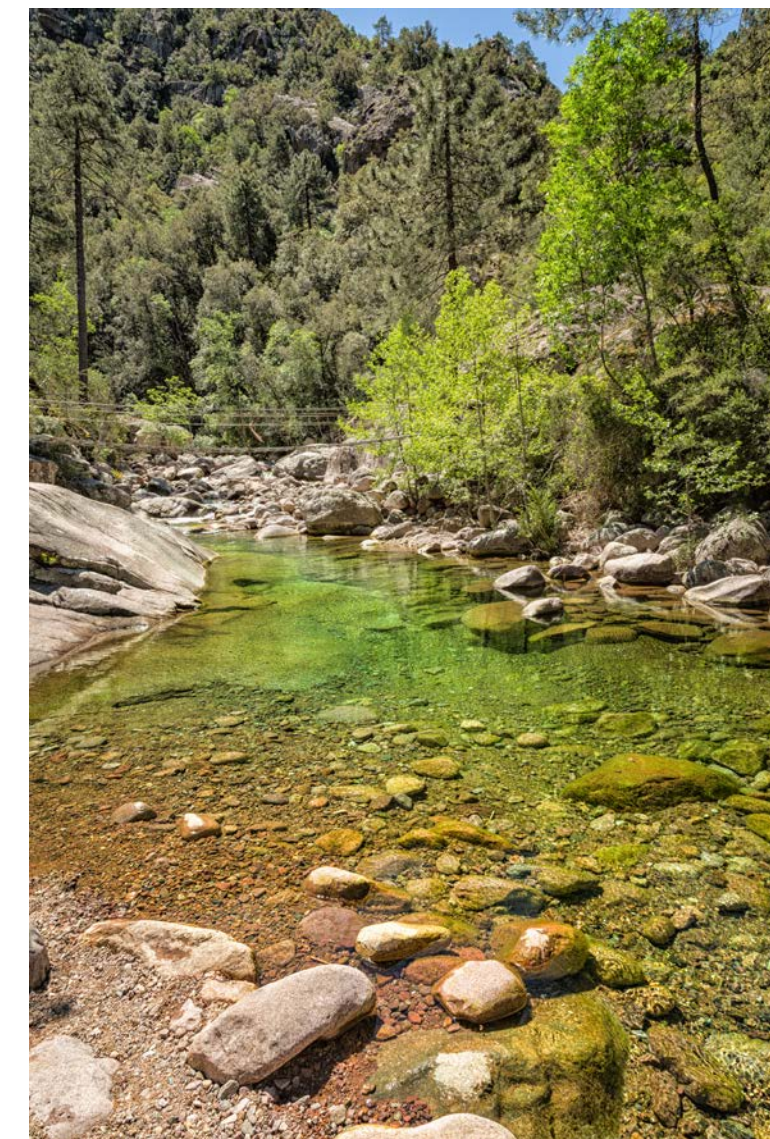


During its 180-km course, the trail passes through ancient oak forests, alpine meadows, boulder fields, and, most notably, the exposed and jagged rocky terrain for which it is best known.



← Snowtopped ridgelines and sun-soaked valleys mark Corsica's mountainous interior.
↓ Crystal clear streams and pristine swimming holes are synonymous with the GR20.



ABOUT THE TRAIL

→ **DISTANCE** 180 km (112 mi)

→ **DURATION** 12 to 14 days

→ **TOTAL ELEVATION GAIN** 14,206 m (46,608 ft)

→ **LEVEL** Challenging

France's network of *sentiers de grande randonnée* (long-distance trails) consists of more than 60,000km (37,282mi) of marked pathways. It encompasses a diverse array of options, from the rugged GR5 of the French Alps and the dramatic sea cliffs of Brittany's GR34 to the historically themed Way of St. James (GR65), a pilgrimage route through the country's southwest. Among the many varied and beautiful treks in the

GR system, the most celebrated of them all is the GR20 on the Mediterranean island of Corsica.

Stretching from Calenzana in the north to Conca in the south, the GR20 follows a sinuous route along the spine of Corsica's mountainous center. During its 180-km (112-mi) course, the trail passes through ancient oak forests, alpine meadows, boulder fields, and, most notably, the exposed and jagged rocky terrain for which it is best known. Well delineated with informational signposts and the classic red-and-white blazes of the GR network, the GR20 consists of 16 stages and takes an average of 12 to 14 days to complete. During their journeys, hikers can either stay in mountain huts or camp, in addition to spending the occasional night at *gîtes* and hotels in the villages.

The GR20 is commonly split into two parts—north and south. The former section measures 100 km (62.1 mi) and is a

knee-busting, heart-pumping stretch in which lengthy flat sections are as rare as hen's teeth. Extending between Calenzana and Vizzavona, during its rollercoaster course, hikers will negotiate steep passes and vertiginous ridges while soaking in some of the most jaw-dropping scenery the Mediterranean has to offer. Standout highlights of the GR20 North include Lac de Nino and its accompanying *pozzines* (small water holes in moss-colored meadows); the Lac de Melu and Lac de Capitellu with their dramatic rocky surrounds; and the scenic traverse over Monte Cinto (2,706 m/8,878 ft), Corsica's highest peak. Speaking of venturing above tree line, while on the GR20, it's essential to regularly check the weather forecast before setting out on each stage. During much of the trekking season, afternoon thunderstorms are a common occurrence, and when visibility is low, rocks are slippery, and it's windier than an All You Can Eat bean buffet, the >