



CLOUD 9 ADVENTURE



Emma Jack
Trip Planner
Cloud 9 Adventure

+44 208 144 8102
info@cloud9adventure.com
<https://www.cloud9adventure.com>



GR20 - The Comfortable Way

£2995 per person

- The hardest trek in Europe, the comfortable way
- Trek from Calenzana to Conca via the historic town of Corte
- Swim in natural rock pools
- Challenging hiking & scrambling
- Climb Monte Renoso, a little-climbed gem
- Take the stunning alpine variant to Bavella
- Visit the seaside town of Porto Vecchio

We will spend 6 nights in good quality hotels, 1 night in a mountain refuge (or camping outside if you chose this), 1 night camping & 6 nights in private gîtes (4 of which have dormitories).

Trip Summary

Day 1 – Arrive in Bastia. Transfer to Calvi

Arrival in Bastia

Transfer from Bastia Airport to Calvi

Day 2 – Transfer to Calenzana. Walk to Bonifatu.

9:45 AM

Transfer from Calvi to Calenzana

Trek from Calenzana to Bonifatu - Calenzana

Day 3 – Trek from Bonifatu to Haut Asco

Trek from Bonifatu to Haut Asco

Day 4 – Haut Asco to the Bergerie de Ballone

Trek from Haut Asco to the Bergerie de Ballone

Bergerie de Ballone - Bergerie de Ballone

Day 5 – Trek from Ballone to Col de Vergio

Ballone to the Col de Vergio

Hotel Castel de Vergio - Hôtel Castel de Vergio

Day 6 – Trek from Vergio to Refuge de Sega

Trek from Vergio to the Refuge de Sega

Refuge de Sega - Refuge de Sega

Day 7 – Trek from Refuge A. Sega to Corte

Trek from Refuge de Sega to Corte

Day 8 – Transfer to Vizzavona. Trek to Capanelle

Transfer from Corte to Vizzavona

Trek from Vizzavona to Capanelle

Gite U Fugone, Capanelle - Gite U Fugone, Capanelle

Day 9 – Ascent of Monte Renoso and trek to Col de Verde

Trek from Capanelle to the Col de Verde via Monte Renoso summit

Relais San Petru, Col de Verde - Relais San Petru, Col de Verde

Day 10 – Trek from Col de Verde to Cozzano

Trek from the Col de Verde to Cozzano

Gîte Bella Vista, Cozzano - Gîte Bella Vista, Cozzano

Day 11 – Trek from Cozzano to Il Croce

Trek from Cozzano to Il Croce

Bergerie de Croce - Bergerie de Croci

Day 12 – Trek from Il Croce to Bavella

Trek from Il Croce to Bavella

Auberge du Col de Bavella - Auberge du Col de Bavella

Day 13 – Trek to from Bavella to Conca. Transfer to Bonifacio.

Trek from Bavella to Conca

Transfer from Conca to Bonifacio

Day 14 – Rest day in Bonifacio

Free day in Bonifacio - Bonifacio

Day 15 – Transfer to Bastia airport

Transfer to Bastia airport

Day 1 – Arrive in Bastia. Transfer to Calvi



Arrival in Bastia

Our trip begins at Bastia airport, and is designed to tie in with the Easy Jet flights from Stansted (arriving at 09:40) and Manchester (arriving 10:35) – but you can take any flight arriving before 11:00. Note that these timings are for 2019. Summer 2020 timings will be updated when new flight schedules are released.



Transfer from Bastia Airport to Calvi

We take a group transfer from Bastia airport to the seaside town of Calvi (takes about 1.5 - 2 hours). For those who have opted to arrive on the Saturday and stay the night in Bastia, the meeting point is at Bastia airport – we'll confirm the precise time when we know which flights everyone will be taking: it is likely to be around 09:30 - 11:00 (summer 2019).



Day 2 – Transfer to Calenzana. Walk to Bonifatu.



9:45 AM - Central European Time

Transfer from Calvi to Calenzana

We begin with a short taxi journey (approx 20 mins) to the village of Calenzana, the official starting point of the GR20.



Trek from Calenzana to Bonifatu

Today is an excellent warm-up for the GR20 and gives fantastic views of the coast and the surrounding villages. It is a relatively short day in order to start gently, and to allow some time for bathing in rock pools before tackling the final climb to Bonifatu.

Accommodation: Gîte (private rooms available)

Luggage access

Walking: approx. 5 hours

Distance: 11 km / 6.8 miles

Altitude gain / loss: +800m / -540m



Calenzana

Calenzana, FR, 20214

Day 3 – Trek from Bonifatu to Haut Asco



Trek from Bonifatu to Haut Asco

An early start today for a long, difficult but spectacular day of trekking. We climb up into the Cirque de Bonifatu, protected from the sun by forests, until we reach the Carrozzu refuge. Here we can have a quick break before tackling the famous Spasimata footbridge, a 30m long bridge hanging 20m above a beautiful waterfall – probably the most photographed spot on the GR20!

We then use fixed cables and chains to work our way up the Spasimata slabs, to arrive at the Muvrella valley. Muvrella is the Corsican for mouflon (a type of wild sheep), and if we are lucky we might see some. After the Lac de Muvrella, we have a steep climb up to the Bocca di a Muvrella (2000m), followed by a short but difficult section to our 2nd pass, the Bocca di Stagnu (2010m). The views from here are fantastic – we can see the western coastline, along with the mountains that guard the entrance to the Cirque de la Solitude (the old GR20 route). Next up is a very steep, partly scrambly descent down to the old ski station of Haut Asco (1422m).

Accommodation: Hotel

Luggage access

Walking – approx. 8½-9 hrs

Distance 12 km / 7.5 miles

Altitude gain / loss: +1480m / -600m



Day 4 – Haut Asco to the Bergerie de Ballone



Trek from Haut Asco to the Bergerie de Ballone

Following a huge landslide in June 2015, today's route no longer takes the Cirque de la Solitude. It has been closed by the park authorities, and will not reopen until it is considered to be safe.

We now take an alternative route through spectacular terrain. The new route makes what used to be a long, tough day into a longer, tougher day, as we head towards Monte Cinto, the highest peak in Corsica.

We reach the remote Lac de Cinto, and then continue up to a high pass, the Bocca Crucetta at 2450m. From here we have a long descent to the Refuge Tighettu, from where there is a short descent to the Bergerie de Ballone, our idyllic camping spot next to rockpools and a shepherd's hut.

We will ask anyone who struggled with the terrain yesterday to sit out for this day, and as it is not possible to drive to Vallone, you will have to miss 2 days (and therefore take transport to Verghio and meet us there).

Accommodation: Camping (tent provided)

No Luggage access

Distance 13 km (do not be fooled by the short distance!)

Total Ascent 1600m

Total Descent 1600m

Approx walking time 9-10 hours



Bergerie de Ballone

The bergerie is in an amazing location next to some rockpools. Whilst it's a very basic place (it has 1 shower and 1 toilet to serve all who stay), I do love staying here as the views are fantastic and there's a great atmosphere. We camp in tents outside (tents and mattresses provided).



Bergerie de Ballone

+33 612 03 44 65

Day 5 – Trek from Ballone to Col de Vergio



Ballone to the Col de Vergio

Today starts with a very welcome easy stretch of walking through the laricio pine forest, before becoming a bit more scrambly to reach the Bocca di Foggiale, not far from the Ciotulu I Mori refuge and at the foot of the impressive Paglia Orba peak. There are great views from here, both behind to the Calacuccia lake, and in front to the Golo valley. From here we wind our way down to the river Golo, perfect for a dip in some fantastic rock pools. There is still a fair way to go and we follow the river for a while, before traversing the forest to reach Castel de Verghio, an old ski station, where we stay in a hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel

Luggage access

Walking – approx. 6 - 6½ hours

Distance: 15km / 9.5 miles

Altitude gain / loss: +970m / -1020m



Hotel Castel de Vergio



Hôtel Castel de Vergio

D84, Vergio, Corse, FR, 20224

+33 495 48 00 01

Day 6 – Trek from Vergio to Refuge de Sega



Trek from Vergio to the Refuge de Sega

Today's route is beautiful. It is still a long day, but the scenery starts to change, and we climb up to the Col St Pierre (1452m), and make our way to the spectacular Lac de Nino (1743m). Surrounded by pozzines (little ponds surrounded by grassy meadows), it's an ideal grazing area for horses, cattle and wild pigs.

After the Lac de Nino, we stop at the working goat farm of Vaccaja (1621m) before diverting from the GR20 to make our way to the Refuge de Sega – stunning rock pools make this a delightful location, and being off-the-beaten track we avoid the crowds.

Accommodation: Refuge. Food is not provided here so we have to carry our own food for tonight. Your leader will co-ordinate this.

No luggage access

Walking – approx. 8 - 8½ hours

Distance – 23km / 14.3 miles

Altitude gain / loss: +965m / -1200m



Refuge de Sega



Refuge de Sega

Corte, Corsica, FR, 20250

+33 495 51 79 00

Day 7 – Trek from Refuge A. Sega to Corte



Trek from Refuge de Sega to Corte

A shorter day today enables us to take our time as we make our way down the beautiful Tavignanu gorge, with some great swimming spots, to the historic town of Corte. We should arrive with a little bit of time to explore the town, and we have a free evening tonight to eat out in a local restaurant.

Accommodation: 3*hotel, dinner not included

Luggage access

Walking – approx. 5-5½ hours

Distance – 13km / 8.1 miles

Altitude gain / loss: +720m / -1400m



Day 8 – Transfer to Vizzavona. Trek to Capanelle



Transfer from Corte to Vizzavona

The journey takes around 45 mins - 1 hour.



Trek from Vizzavona to Capannelle

We have now reached the southern section of the GR20! The walking becomes a bit easier as there is less scrambling, and more opportunity to look at the views. Unfortunately from this point the accommodation does become a bit more basic for a few days!

At Vizzavona we rejoin the GR20, and climb up through shady beech and pine forests to the high point of the day, the Bocca Palmente (1640 m). From here we are greeted with fantastic views both to the coast and behind us to Monte d'Oro, looming above Vizzavona.

We descend from the pass and make our way to the Alzeta shepherds' huts, then after a few stream crossing we reach the U Cardu ridge where a spectacular view is unveiled: including Monte Renoso, tomorrow's objective.

Distance: 16 km / 10 miles

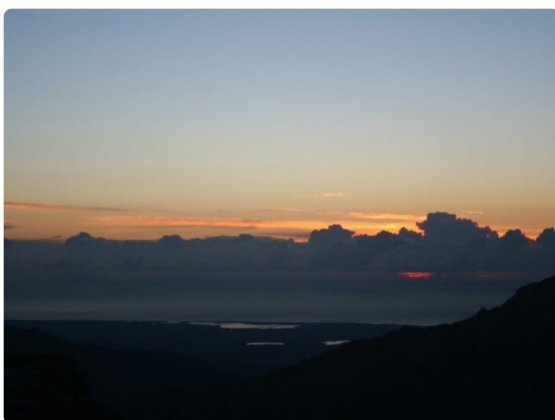
Ascent: 950 m / 3115 ft

Descent: 335 m / 1099 ft

Approx walking time: 6 hours

Accommodation: Gite (mixed dorms)

Luggage access: Yes



Gite U Fugone, Capannelle

Dorm beds, hot showers and a fairly basic place to stay, but with a friendly atmosphere and fantastic views from the terrace down towards Aleria.



Gite U Fugone, Capannelle

+33 4 95 57 01 81

Day 9 – Ascent of Monte Renoso and trek to Col de Verde



Trek from Capanelle to the Col de Verde via Monte Renoso summit

Today we climb Monte Renoso (2352m), the 3rd highest mountain in Corsica. It is a gem of a peak, with most people on the GR20 missing it out in favour of gaining more mileage and bypassing the Col de Verde. The view from the summit is one of my favourite views of the trip, as you can see both coasts and there are great views over to the northern part of Corsica (and Monte Cinto, its highest peak), and to where you're going next (Incudine & Bavella). It is a scenic climb and not too technical (mainly walking rather than scrambling), with a steep descent down to the spectacular pozzine (pools) in the valley of I Pozzi (again, missed by most people on the GR20).

After a beautiful walk through the pozzine, we make our way over to the plateau de Gialgone to rejoin the GR20, where it's a further 1½-2 hours to the Col de Verde.

For those who are feeling tired and who don't want to climb Monte Renoso, you can opt to follow the easier GR20 today. If you choose this option then you would be unguided and would have to be happy to make your own decisions regarding route-finding and safety. This is also the route that we take in bad weather.

Monte Renoso route

Distance: 14.4 km / 8.9 miles

Ascent: 841 m / 2760 ft

Descent: 1164 m / 3818 ft

Approx walking time: 9 hours

GR20 route

Distance: 14 km / 8.7 miles

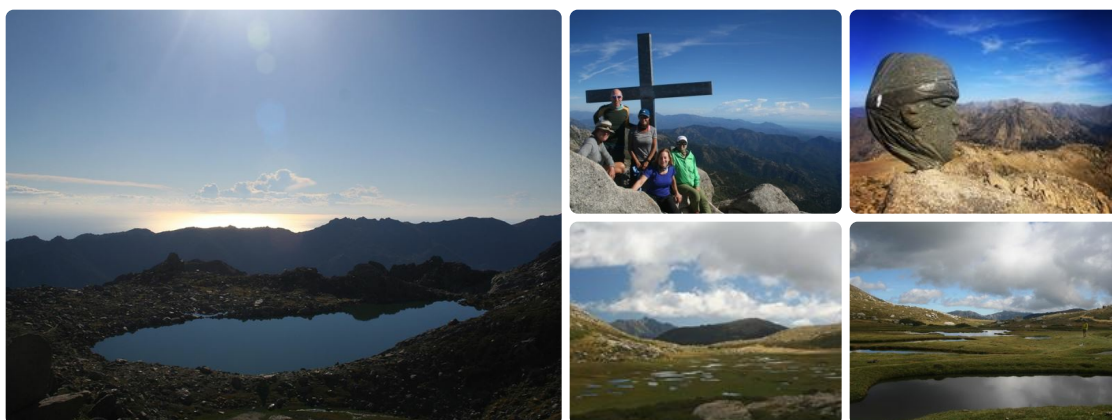
Ascent: 350 m / 1148 ft

Descent: 620 m / 2034 ft

Approx walking time: 5 hours

Accommodation: Private Gite (dorm beds in little chalets). Basic facilities.

Luggage access: Yes



Relais San Petru, Col de Verde

The Relais San Petru is fairly basic accommodation (usually dorm beds in the little chalets that are dotted around the grounds), but is set in a natural environment surrounded by a forest of laricio pine and beech trees. The evening meal is cooked on an open wood fire, and there is usually a lively and cosy atmosphere here!



Relais San Petru, Col de Verde

Ghisoni, Corse, FR, 20227

+33 495 24 46 82

Day 10 – Trek from Col de Verde to Cozzano



Trek from the Col de Verde to Cozzano

We start the day with a steep climb up to a high ridge en-route to the refuge de Prati. The views from the ridge are stunning, we can often see both coasts, and on a clear day we can see across the Ligurian sea as far as the island of Elba. Next we have a section of scrambling, with some exposed sections, until the Col de Laparo. Here we divert from the GR20 in order to avoid staying in overcrowded and uncomfortable mountain huts, and we stop at a privately run gîte in the typical Corsican village of Cozzano.

We will eat our evening meal in a local restaurant tonight.

Distance: 22.2 km / 13.7 miles

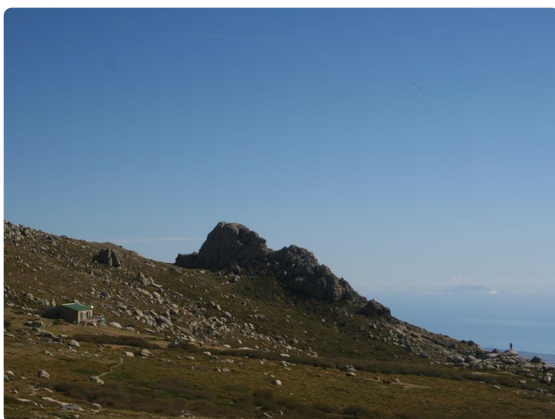
Ascent: 987 m / 3238 ft

Descent: 1500 m / 4921 ft

Approx walking time: 8-9 hours

Accommodation: Private gîte (dormitory)

Luggage access: Yes



Gîte Bella Vista, Cozzano

A simple establishment in the pretty, quiet village of Cozzano, with dormitories. Run by Baptiste - he will do picnics and breakfasts, but not the evening meal so we go out to eat tonight.



Gîte Bella Vista, Cozzano

Cozzano, Corsica, FR, 20148

+33 4 95 24 41 59

Day 11 – Trek from Cozzano to Il Croce



Trek from Cozzano to Il Croce

We climb up through macquis and chestnut trees to rejoin the GR20, where we reach the Arête a Mondì, which we follow to the Punta d'Usciolu (1815m), the Punta di a Scaddatta (1834m) and finally to the Bocca di L'Agnonu (1570m). The route criss-crosses through exciting notches along the ridge, and consists of around 2 hours of sometimes exposed but straightforward scrambling, offering wonderful views.

After this we start our descent towards the sheepfolds of Basseta, and continue up to our gîte at Il Croce. It's quite a long day, but continuing to Il Croce instead of staying at Basseta makes our day a bit easier tomorrow. We sometimes stay at Basseta when Il Croce is full, and at Il Croce we may have the opportunity to camp if you prefer (in which case tents are provided).

In the case of bad weather we travel on a lower route via the village of Zicavo.

Distance: 17 km / 10.5 miles

Ascent: approx 1400 m / 4590 ft

Descent: approx 650 m / 2132 ft

Approx walking time: 8-9 hours

Accommodation: basic dormitories (or camping), but spectacular location

Luggage access: Yes



Bergerie de Croce

This is a private gite in a spectacular location. Whilst it's a basic place to stay (there are either dorms, or sometimes you camp outside), the atmosphere created by Jean-Louis and Ludo is warm and friendly, and we love staying here.



Bergerie de Croci

Zicavo, Corsica, FR, 20132

+33 9 82 12 33 10

Day 12 – Trek from Il Croce to Bavella



Trek from Il Croce to Bavella

Today is a long but absolutely spectacular day. We climb up to the Col d'Incudine, from where we have wonderful views back towards Monte Cinto, and also towards Sardinia in front of us, along with the Aiguilles de Bavella where we are heading. From the col it's a very steep descent across slabs to the refuge d'Asinau. Then a short easy section through the woods, before we make a diversion to tackle the Alpine variant of the GR20, through the heart of the Aiguilles de Bavella: a truly fantastic journey assisted by the occasional chain. This day is unsuitable in really bad weather, in which case we would need to take a transfer & do a shorter walk around Bavella.

Distance: 15 km / 9.3 miles

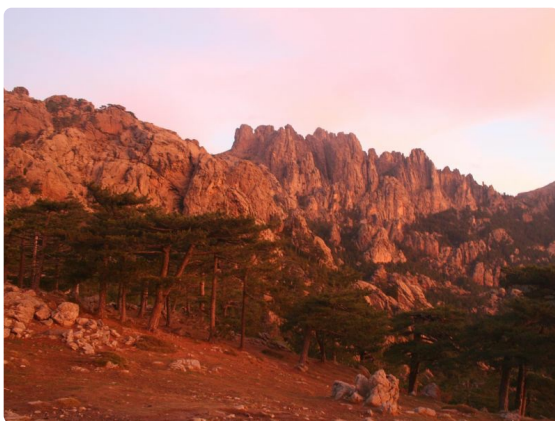
Ascent: 1066 m / 3500 ft

Descent: 1395 m / 4575 ft

Approx. walking time: 10 hours

Accommodation: Gite (rooms if available, dorms if not)

Luggage access: Yes



Auberge du Col de Bavella

The auberge du col de Bavella has been newly renovated and now offers private rooms as well as dorms, so we book these wherever possible and offer them to those who booked first.



Auberge du Col de Bavella

Place de la Fontaine, Bavella, Corse, FR, 20124

+33 4 95 72 09 87

Day 13 – Trek to from Bavella to Conca. Transfer to Bonifacio.



Trek from Bavella to Conca

The final day is a lovely way to end the GR20, with wonderful views across the granite peaks before we go enter the pine forest. We reach the refuge de Paliri fairly early on, and the scenery remains rugged all the way to the little village of Conca, where we will have a celebratory drink to congratulate ourselves on our success at finishing the hardest trek in Europe.

Distance: 18 km / 11.1 miles

Ascent: 655 m / 2150 ft

Descent: 1595 m / 5232 ft

Approx. walking time: 8 hours

Accommodation: 3* hotel

Luggage access: Yes



Transfer from Conca to Bonifacio

We take a short transfer to Bonifacio – one of the most spectacular towns in Corsica.

Day 14 – Rest day in Bonifacio



Free day in Bonifacio

A free day to explore our favourite town in Corsica. Take a boat trip, explore the historic alleyways and cobbled street, or go for a cliff-top walk

Accommodation: Hotel



Bonifacio

Bonifacio, FR

Day 15 – Transfer to Bastia airport



Transfer to Bastia airport

An early start this morning for the transfer (approx. 3 hours) back to Bastia airport, where the trip finishes. The trip is designed to tie in with the Easy Jet flight from Bastia to Gatwick departing at 10:05, along with the Manchester flight departing at 10:35.

Trip Information & Documents



What's included

- All accommodation as detailed in the notes (including tent when required)
- All breakfasts
- All lunches on the trekking days
- All evening meals (apart from in Calvi on day 1 and in Corte on day 7, and Bonifacio on days 13 & 14)
- All transport in the itinerary including fixed time airport transfers (see notes on arrival & departure flights)
- Luggage transfers on all but 2 days
- A qualified and expert International Mountain Leader



Not included in the price

- Flights
- Travel insurance
- Evening meals in Calvi, Corte & Bonifacio
- Lunch in Calvi (arrival day) and Bonifacio (rest day)
- Personal drinks & snacks
- Transport, accommodation or expenses if you cannot complete the trekking itinerary
- Tips



The GR20 - Is It The Right Trip For Me?

Please read this section carefully: it is important. The GR20 is a very tough trek with long walking days in succession. We think it deserves its reputation as the hardest trek in Europe. You must be fit and accustomed to walking in the mountains. There is a lot of scrambling and on occasions you need to use fixed equipment such as ladders and chains – as such, it is not a suitable trip for those who suffer from vertigo, nor is it a trip for those who are not sure-footed and confident, as there is more technical terrain than you might think for what is essentially a walking path. There are a number of places where there are large drops, and you have to be sure that you are not going to make a clumsy slip.

The GR20 is quite a remote trek, and as the days are long, we can't afford to go too slowly (as you may be used to doing on other easier treks). On the GR20 we have an average of 8 hours' walking each day. Some days are 9-10 hours and others are a bit shorter – but it does mean that we don't have the option to wait too long. We are not going to go too fast, we just walk at a slow, steady pace without too many stops. Some of the ascents are long, and the descents steep, and these can be problematic for those with sore knees. In Corsica all our leaders are experienced and qualified IML guides. We work to strict safety standards and if our guide feels that your physical condition or performance is hindering the progress of the group, they will ask you to leave the trip. We can help with making alternative travel and accommodation arrangements, but you would need to cover any expenses involved. It is sometimes possible to travel with the luggage if you needed to have a break from the trip. There is usually a charge for this (approx. 80 euros per person), and it would be at your cost.

Accommodation on the GR20 is notoriously bad. We have chosen hotels and privately-run gîtes which make our trip extremely comfortable in comparison with other companies – but please do not expect luxury! The accommodation is basic, simple and clean. We don't want to put you off, but we do want to make sure that you will enjoy your holiday, and it is important to be sure you can cope with this trip before you book – so if in doubt, please ask!



Travel Arrangements Corsica GR20

IMPORTANT - PLEASE DO NOT BOOK FLIGHTS UNTIL WE HAVE CONFIRMED TO YOU VIA EMAIL THAT THE TRIP IS GUARANTEED AND THAT WE HAVE BOOKED ALL OF YOUR ACCOMMODATION

Arrival at Bastia Airport

We have included a single-timed transfer from Bastia Airport to Calvi on Day 1 of the trip. We designed the trip around meeting the Easy Jet flight from Stansted, arriving in Bastia at 09:40, and the Easy Jet flight from Manchester, arriving in Bastia at 10:35.

We will be able to meet other flights that arrive before 11:00.

For those joining us at the airport, you'll meet the group around 09:30 - 11:00 depending on people's flight times. We will communicate the precise meeting time once we know everyone's flight details. If everyone arrives on an early flight, we'll depart early, and if flights don't arrive until 11:00, then we'll meet then - we usually decide this around 2 - 4 weeks before the trip.

There's a fairly large choice of airports from which to fly to Bastia: if the UK flights don't work for you, then you can look at arriving from Paris, Nice, Marseille, Toulouse, Lyon, Lille, Vienna and Basel - all of which arrive before 11:00.

[Skyscanner](#) is a great website to look at flight options.

If you can't find a flight arriving in Bastia in time, then we recommend staying in Bastia the evening beforehand.

The airport is 17 km from the town centre, so decide whether you want to stay near the airport (and therefore near the beach), or in a town-centre hotel. If you're staying near the airport, then we recommend Hotel Poretta, Hotel La Lagune, Hotel Le Lido or Chez Walter. Or for a treat, then the lovely Hotel Pineto in Biguglia, next to the sea (9km from Poretta airport).

If you're going to stay in the town centre, then the Hotel Best Western is reasonably priced and is not too far from the bus stop, or if you'd like to be nearer the old town (recommended) then Hotel Les Gouverneurs is an excellent 4* hotel, and the Hotel Central Bastia an excellent 3* hotel.

Buses run (infrequently) from the airport to Bastia centre and cost around 9€. Taxis cost around 50-60 euros.

Note that the meeting point is the airport - our group transfer can't pick you up from Bastia centre as it's not en-route to Calvi!

Arrival at Calvi

It is also an option to fly to Calvi and make your own way to the group hotel. We will either hold a briefing around lunch time, once everyone has arrived, or our leader can do this before dinner if your flight is later to arrive. The briefing will be flexible around people's arrival times. Note that Calvi is only suitable for the arrival at the beginning of the trip - your departure airport will need to be Bastia or Figari.

Departure from Bastia Airport

At the end of the trip, we include an early single-timed transfer to take us to **Bastia Airport** for the Stansted and Manchester flights (departing at 10:10 and 11:10 respectively), but you can take any flight departing after 10:00.

Departure from Figari Airport

We would also recommend looking at flights from Figari airport at the end of the trip. It's a lot nearer to Bonifacio (20 minute drive instead of 3 hour transfer). The only reason we don't offer it for our group departure is because there are far fewer flights from Figari, so Bastia offers much more choice for connecting flights. A taxi from Bonifacio to Figari costs around 40€ - 55€. We can help co-ordinate taxi shares for those who would like to take this option.

Travel in / to Corsica - General

We have designed our trip around flights from the UK that arrive on Sundays. Bastia airport offers the largest choice, so we tend to use this instead of Ajaccio. If you are doing anything different from our itinerary, such as extending your holiday and staying on in Corsica, it is worth noting that the public transport system isn't as frequent as one might hope, and that taxis are very expensive.

A good resource for onward travel is the [Corsica bus](#) website.

If anyone would prefer a private transfer from Bastia Airport (or town centre) to Calvi, just let us know and we will arrange this for you. The approximate cost is £300.

Note that if your flight is significantly delayed and you miss the group transfer, you may need to take a private transfer: it is worth ensuring your travel insurance covers this.



Corsica GR20 - What to Expect

The Trekking

As we've said earlier, it's strenuous! Please arrive fit and ready to take on a challenge with stamina and endurance. You should be used to your hiking kit – happy with your rucksack, used to carrying this amount of gear, wearing boots/shoes that you know are comfortable and worn in, and bring walking poles that you're used to using.

Accommodation

We spend 6 nights in good hotels with en-suite facilities (twin or double rooms, very occasionally a triple), 6 nights in privately-run gîtes in mixed dormitory accommodation (with showers & WCs), 1 night in a spectacularly-located mountain refuge with 6-8 people per room (with showers & WC), and 1 night at a shepherds hut where we camp, and there are simple toilet facilities including 1 shower.

Please be aware that accommodation in Corsica is generally quite basic. We have chosen the accommodation with comfort in mind – the official refuges on the GR20 can vary from quite bad to very bad, and as a result we have adjusted the route to stay in private gîtes wherever we can and therefore avoid the official park refuges, but you should not expect the same standard of accommodation as you might be used to on our other European trips. We have also chosen hotel accommodation wherever possible, as they offer a nice break from the dormitory accommodation. We've looked at every option we can to make the accommodation as nice as possible, and we are confident that we are offering the best quality GR20 trip on the market.

In our experience, the gîtes & refuges all have hot showers – in many years of doing trips we have had to have 1 or 2 cold showers so this should not come as a surprise for the occasional night. For the 2 places that are the most likely culprits not to have hot water (Ballone & Sega), they are next to fantastic rock pools, so most people prefer to swim in the pools at the end of the day.

On the 6 nights that we spend in hotels, you will be in a twin/double room (sometimes a triple), and if you booked as an individual then we will pair you up with someone else of the same sex. Please let us know if you would like to pay a single supplement for those nights – it isn't always possible but we will do our best to accommodate you, and is usually around £300 per person for the 6 hotel nights.

The refuges along the GR20 are, unfortunately, renowned for bed bugs, and this is one of the main reasons we avoid the huts. We do not stay in any establishment where they have been reported (unlike other operators): we are either in hotels or private gîtes, so we are not so likely to encounter them. However, it is worth noting that at the end of each trip, I personally wash all of my clothes at quite a high temperature, just on the off-chance that my things have come into contact with these horrid mites – and because of this, I don't tend to bring any kit that can't be washed or tumble dried at a high temperature.

Food

The breakfasts on this trip are continental style and usually consist of a hot drink along with bread and jam. Some people find they prefer to supplement their breakfasts with other snacks. The picnic lunches are usually fantastic, and plentiful, varying from sandwiches to local meats & cheeses to pasta or lentil salad and a piece of fruit. The dinners are usually excellent – hearty, but basic, 3-course meals, perfect for hard days in the mountains.

Vegetarians – a love of omelettes will help see you through this trip: Corsican mountain gîtes have not fully grasped the concept of vegetarian food, and you will almost always be served an omelette, with varying accompaniments. Sometimes they will try to give you fish, so please remember to tell us whether that is okay for you or not. We do try to ask for different dishes such as pasta and tomato sauce when the omelettes are wearing a bit thin, but this is occasionally met with reluctance. It could be a good idea to bring along some nuts and extra snacks. This trip is not suitable for vegans or those with other more specific dietary requirements. Gluten-free would be okay for the evening meals but you'd need to bring along some gluten-free snacks for your breakfasts and lunches.

Luggage delivery

We deliver your luggage on all nights apart from 2 (there are 2 places that are not accessible by vehicle). Effectively this means that you have to carry your overnight kit (including sleeping bag) for 4 days. Please just bring one bag for transportation, and a rucksack (35-40 litre) to carry. If you need 2 bags (it is not possible to leave a bag in Bastia, unless you are having an extra night there at the beginning and at the end of the trip), then just let us know - there is usually a supplement of around £100 per bag.

Money and Tipping

You will need money for lunch in Calvi, and dinners in Calvi, Corte & Bonifacio (usually 25-30 euros per dinner is sufficient). Then 10-15 euros per day for drinks / snacks. Around 300-400 euros should be enough for the 2 week trip. Bottled water, wine, beer and soft drinks are available at almost all of the refuges, and you might find that the hot weather makes you consume more cans of soft drink than you might normally. You should bring your spending money in cash in euros – there are cashpoints at Bastia airport, at Calvi, Corte and Bonifacio, so facilities to obtain more cash are possible but sporadic. Cards are not accepted in the refuges, and there will be no money-changing facilities throughout the trip so please do not bring cash in another currency, nor travellers cheques, as you will not be able to use them (arriving on a Sunday, the banks will be closed).

When we eat in restaurants we normally round up the amount to leave a tip, but only if the service has been good!

Tipping your guide is the accepted way of saying thank you for good service. But do remember that tipping is voluntary and should only be done if you were pleased or delighted with the service. The amount is entirely up to you. Our staff are all paid fairly.

Weather

In general you can expect it to be pretty hot. The weather during the summer months is normally clear and warm. The snow should have melted by around late June, and July is the hottest month with the least amount of rainfall, with June, August & September being relatively dry as well. The temperature can range from around 5°C to around 30°C (although in July 2013 & 2015 it did reach 36°C). It is generally hot and dry, but due to the mountainous nature of the terrain it is not uncommon to have sudden thunder storms, harsh wind, heavy rain, hail and sometimes even snow, so it is important to be prepared for every eventuality.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking this holiday that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (this must include helicopter rescue and repatriation costs). You may find that your annual multi-trip insurance covers this trip, but you should check that you are covered for trekking up to 3000m. We would also recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance, as your deposit is non-refundable. We recommend The BMC www.thebmc.co.uk or Snowcard www.snowcard.co.uk for UK residents, or Travelex www.travelexinsurance.com for US citizens or residents. In addition to travel insurance, UK citizens should also obtain or renew the EHIC card from www.ehic.uk.com. This is not a replacement for insurance but it allows you to be treated on the same basis as a resident of the country you are visiting, and unlike insurance it includes treatment of a pre-existing condition. You would normally have to pay for treatment at the time and then make a claim on return to the UK.

Recommended Reading and Maps

GR20 – Corsica by Paddy Dillon (A Cicerone Guide)

Corsica Trekking GR20 by David Abram (Trailblazer Guide)

Rough Guide or Lonely Planet Guide to Corsica

Your leader will carry the correct maps and you are not expected to navigate, but if you wanted to have some maps of the route then the 1:60,000 Didier Richard maps are good and cover the whole route on 2 maps – Haute Corse and Corse du Sud. If you prefer to have the route in more detail, then you need 6 of the 1:25,000 IGN maps:

4149 OT Calvi

4250 OT Corte and Monte Cinto

4251 OT Monte d'Oro and Monte Rotondo

4252 OT Monte Renoso

4253 OT Petreto-Bicchiasano and Zicavo

4253 ET Aiguilles de Bavella and Solenzara

If you would like to order any of these maps in advance then please let us know and we can add them to your order – we can either post them to you in advance, or give them to you at the start of the trip. The price is £15 each for the IGN maps, and £14 each for the Didier Richard 1:60,000 maps, plus postage if applicable.

Electric plugs

In Corsica the European style plugs are used, the sockets being round with 2 pins (230V). In the dorm accommodation there are often several people per available plug socket, so if you are going to be doing a lot of battery charging then it could be a good idea to bring a multiple plug adaptor. If you are only going to be charging a phone / camera from time to time then it is not necessary to bring this.

Extra tips and preparation

We cannot stress enough that the GR20 is a tougher walk than most people expect. It is rugged, there are long days, and it is tough under foot. It is very important that you arrive on this trip fit and fully prepared, rather than arriving and hoping that the GR20 will make you fit (although it will certainly help!) If you do not arrive fit and accustomed to your equipment, you will not only be jeopardising your chances of completing the route, you will be also be affecting the enjoyment of other people on the trip and could be putting their safety at risk – if you are not fit enough to walk briskly to avoid a storm, for example. We find that a person who is too slow can add several hours on to a day – and whilst we can accommodate this on many of our trips, this is not possible on the GR20 as the days are already long. If you cannot cope with a steady pace, we will ask you to take transport for the longer days, at your own cost. For people who are ill this is normally covered by insurance, but for people who are unfit this is not the case.

A couple of other points – the GR20 is rugged under foot, and if your walking boots are showing signs of wear, the GR20 will almost certainly finish them off. Please make sure that your boots are in good condition before embarking, as there are no gear shops on the way round (apart from a small shop in Corte in the middle of the trip) so buying new kit will be difficult. If you have any new equipment such as rucksack & walking boots, it is a good idea to have used them a few times in advance in order to avoid blisters / sore spots.

One last point – many people already use camelbaks and walking poles, and these are 2 items that people seem to either love or hate. For the purposes of this trip, we would certainly recommend both. Walking poles will really help your knees, and if you haven't used them before, it could be a good idea to get a bit of practice in beforehand so that they are not a hindrance. And with a camelbak / platypus, we are on the go for so much of the day that it can be difficult to take in enough water if you have to remove your pack to access your water bottles, so even if you dislike camelbaks, you might find one useful for this trip. Having witnessed various disasters over the years with camelbaks (ie your entire supply of water for the day disappearing due to a leak, whilst saturating everything in your pack), we recommend using both a camelbak and water bottles in order to avoid this situation. There are not always places to fill up water during the day, so on some days we have to carry all of our water for that day, which can be 4 litres or more.



General Information - Guided Group Trips

Insurance

It is a condition of booking this holiday that you must be insured against medical and personal accident risks (this must include helicopter rescue and repatriation costs). You may find that your annual multi-trip insurance covers this trip, but you should check that you are covered for trekking up to 3000m. We would also recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance: your deposit is non-refundable once you have booked, and the full balance is usually non-refundable (see our Terms and Conditions for further details).

We recommend The BMC www.thebmc.co.uk or Snowcard www.snowcard.co.uk for UK residents, or Travelex www.travelexinsurance.com for US citizens or residents.

We can organise mountain rescue insurance for EU residents for £4.90 per day, or £8.95 per day for US and the rest of the world. You can book it online here: <https://www.cloud9adventure.com/online-store/Mountain-rescue-insurance-p101294506>

In addition to travel insurance, UK citizens should also obtain or renew the EHIC card from www.ehic.uk.com. This is not a replacement for insurance but it does mean you are entitled to the same treatment as any EU citizen, and unlike insurance it includes treatment of a pre-existing condition. You would normally have to pay for treatment at the time and then make a claim on return to the UK.

Please remember to bring a credit card with you on the trip: in the event of a medical problem or injury, you may be unable to complete the trek. You would normally need to pay for treatment, and would often have additional transport and accommodation costs. Although you can claim this back on your insurance, you usually have to pay at the time and make the insurance claim afterwards, so you must have a means of paying for this if necessary.

Responsible Travel

We care about the places we visit, and our philosophy is simple: that each and every one of our trips has a positive impact on the local community and environment. We use family-run hotels, gîtes and restaurants in order to support the local communities. And it's a small step but we also recommend carbon off-setting. Visit www.climatecare.org.

Adventure Travel

Please note that we specialise in Adventure Travel, the nature of which means that we cannot always follow our itinerary for a variety of reasons. All of our holidays can be subject to unexpected changes and you should be prepared to be flexible to accommodate these where necessary.

We update our itineraries on a regular basis to take into account such things as changes to trekking routes and the conditions of footpaths, but it is not always possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the proposed itinerary. If during your holiday the itinerary is affected by immediate or local circumstances, the leader will make any changes that are necessary.

As a reputable tour operator, Cloud 9 Adventure supports the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office "Know Before You Go" campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas, and we recommend that all our clients take a look at the FCO Travel Advice for their chosen destination on the official FCO website www.fco.gov.uk. North Americans can also check out the US Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

Cloud 9 Adventure 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 FCO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss alternatives. We have a local office in Chamonix, and our expert team monitor the conditions regularly to ensure that our trips are run safely, and are on hand to help if we need to change arrangements.

Group Size and Holiday Status

For each of our group adventures, there is a minimum number of participants required in order for the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from "Available" to "Guaranteed". In order to achieve minimum numbers, we run the trips in conjunction with several other small companies. We find that this means almost all of our trips become "Guaranteed". We are a small company with a high level of customer service, and we make sure that we only run trips in conjunction with companies who share our ethos. We know them well and have worked with them for years, and only use leaders who we know and trust to do an excellent job. We steer clear of large groups and cap our group size at 10 people for summer hiking trips, and 8 people for winter snowshoe or cross country ski trips, whilst many of the larger operators take up to 16 people.

Preparing for your holiday

We have tried to grade the holiday as accurately as we can, with the intention of attracting people of similar abilities to each trip. As a general guideline, if we have described a trek as being tough or challenging, then you need to be fit and capable of the challenge. If you don't arrive in good shape for your trip, then you could be putting yourself and others in danger: if you're taking too long each day, at best it cuts into the time you have to relax and shower before dinner, and at worst, it can be the difference between the whole group being caught in an afternoon storm. As we are as accurate as we can be writing our trip notes, we do tend to be pretty good at making sure that the right people book each trip, but we do require a certain amount of personal responsibility for arriving fit and ready for your trip. We're not on a route-march so we are never expecting to be going too fast - we try to walk at a slow, steady pace, without the need to stop too frequently for rests. If you're worried about this, then please start with one of our easier trips graded Easy or Moderate, and you can build up to a Challenging trip. If you've booked an Extremely Tough trip, then you definitely need to be an experienced and fit hiker, used to long days in the hills.

Rather than hoping your trek will make you fitter (it will definitely help!), it makes a lot of sense to spend some time before your trip getting some additional exercise and preparing properly. The fitter you are, the more enjoyable your trip will be. The best preparation is long day hikes in the run-up to your trip.

We would also recommend that you adopt a weekly exercise regime leading up to your trip. Jogging, circuit training, squash and swimming are good for developing better stamina. Before departure, we also suggest that you try to fit in a number of long hikes in hilly terrain.



Why Is Our Corsica GR20 Trip Different From The Rest?

We use the best accommodation available to us, and when comparing prices with other companies please bear in mind that this trip is a much higher standard of accommodation than our rivals. We only use fully-qualified IML guides or Accompagnateurs. We have done many trips in Corsica and have tried and tested a huge number of routes, itineraries, accommodation and restaurants, and so we know that we're offering the best trip that we can at a reasonable price. We go to some little-visited places along the way, and make sure that despite starting in Calenzana and finishing in Conca (most companies miss out the last day), we still tackle a couple of peaks along the way, whilst fitting the trip into a Sunday-Sunday to take advantage of the flights from the UK. We are only without luggage for 2 nights – many other companies are without it for 5-6 nights. And rather than having a rest day in the middle of the trip (with not much to do), we've added the opportunity to see a bit more of Corsica and spend 2 nights in Bonfaccio – a fantastic way to end the trip.

We're a small company, more interested in the enjoyment of our clients than making huge profits, and as a result we tend to have small groups, experienced leaders and happy clients.



GR20 Equipment List

Essential items :

- **Rucksack** – approx. 35 – 45 litre – any bigger and it will be too heavy. Please check before you arrive that you can fit everything you need for an overnight stay including your sleeping bag.
- **Kit bag** – for main luggage which is transported – please try to keep the weight to 15kg or below if possible.
- **Dry bags / plastic bags** – to keep kit dry. Sometimes our kit bags are left outside and might poke out of porches. It rarely rains but when it does it is enough to saturate a kit bag. I make sure absolutely everything is in a waterproof bag and do the same to the kit in my rucksack.
- **Hiking boots** – these need to be in good condition, waterproof, breathable and comfortable. It is important not to bring boots that are showing signs of wear, as the GR20 will finish them off and there is nowhere en-route to buy new kit. Lightweight boots will be fine for this trip. Most important is that your boots are comfortable.
- **Waterproof jacket and trousers** – both essential items, should be as light as possible (not insulated: your other layers should provide the insulation).
- **Socks**
- **Underwear**
- **Trekking trousers** – bring something lightweight - you might find it's too hot for trousers but they can offer some protection on a couple of days when we walk through the macquis (the sharp bushes)
- **Shorts**
- **T-shirts** – wicking t-shirts are better than cotton as they are lighter and dry faster.
- **Mid layer** - fleece jacket is good
- **Warm hat** (lightweight woolly hat is fine)

- **Gloves** (a light pair of gloves is fine)
- **Sun Hat**
- **Sunglasses**
- **Suncream** (small bottle to save weight)
- **Lip protection** (with sun protection)
- **Swim suit** – Corsica is famous for natural rock pools, so we will swim in these whenever we can
- **Travel towel** – towels are only provided in the hotels, not the gites, so you'll need to bring a travel towel
- **Water bottles / camelbak** – you should have the capacity to carry at least 4 litres of water – I normally take a 3L camelbak plus a 1L Nalgene. Those who don't normally use camelbak might consider it, as it can be difficult to take on enough water if you have to take your rucksack off each time you need to drink. For some of the days, 2L will be sufficient, but sometimes we can't fill up during the day.
- **Flip flops / crocs** – these are perfect for wearing in the evenings to give your feet a break from your walking boots. As light as possible, then you can bring them on the days that we don't have our luggage delivered.
- **Sleeping bag** – you will need this for the nights spent in dorm accommodation, and will need to carry it on several consecutive days, so a lightweight sleeping bag is a good idea. It can get relatively cool at night, but a 3 season bag with a comfort rating of around 3-5°C should be fine. A lightweight one weighs around 1kg or less.
- **Sleeping bag liner** – good idea for those warm nights where a sleeping bag is just too hot. Also good for the refuge where blankets are provided.
- **Tupperware box** – for lunches. Approx 0.6 – 0.8 litres. This is essential as some refuges provide a pasta or lentil salad so you need a receptacle for it. Label it with your name and if you are a vegetarian or have dietary requirements, make this obvious.
- **Fork / spoon / spork**
- **Wash kit**
- **Head torch** – just a lightweight torch, such as a Petzl Tikka / Zipka is fine for this trip.
- **Passport** – I always carry this with me rather than in my kit bag so make sure it is in a waterproof wallet
- **Insurance documents**
- **Cash – approx. 300 – 400 euros**
- **Toilet paper** - some of the gites do not have this as standard, so it's a good idea to bring a small amount
- **Basic first aid kit** (the leader will carry a large first aid kit, but this is intended for emergencies) – you should bring: painkillers, blister treatment & plasters, rehydration salts (dioralite), diarrhoea treatment (immodium), antiseptic cream and antihistamine cream / tablets – plus any personal medication that you normally take.

Optional items:

- **Earplugs** – staying in dorms, these are indispensable
- **Penknife** – we are often given a hunk of cheese / meat for a group lunch, so it is helpful if a couple of people bring penknives
- **Snacks** – we are quite well fed on this trek – dinners & lunches are plentiful – but the breakfasts in the more basic places are standard French refuge issue ie. dry bread & jam. As a result I do bring extra snacks such as dried fruit and nuts, energy bars etc. Vegetarians & other dietary

requirements: we would suggest that bringing nuts & extra snacks is essential for the enjoyment of your trip.

- **Walking poles x 2** – highly recommended. There are some very long & steep descents on the GR20.
- **Walking trainers** – there are a few days where you might prefer to wear walking trainers in order to give your feet a break from walking boots – this is entirely up to you and is a personal choice.
- **Travel pillow** - not all of the gites provide a pillow, so you might find it a good idea to bring a travel pillow
- **Pillow case** – can be nice to bring this for the mountain hut and some gîte nights
- **Thermarest** – mattresses are provided on the 1 night that we camp, so it is not worth going out to buy a thermarest especially for this trip. However, if you have a light one and want to use it, by all means bring it along.
- **Water purifying tablets** – some of the water at refuges is sourced from springs. I personally don't purify my water but others may wish to.
- **Antibacterial handwash**
- **Insect repellent** – there aren't huge numbers of insects but there are certainly a few mosquitos at lower elevations.
- **Buff** – can be useful for extra warmth if the weather changes, or sun protection for your neck on a hot day
- **Camera**
- **Book**
- **Mobile phone** – there is phone reception for a large part of the trip. It is a good idea to have a phone in case of emergency or if you need to leave the group for any reason.
- **Travel kettle / tea bags** – most hotels do not provide tea and coffee-making facilities in the rooms
- **Multi plug adaptor** – in case you have a lot of charging to do