

## Torrente Vinadia

### Description

This is, without doubt, the most impressive and best known canyon in the whole region. This river forms a deep gorge with a remarkable length and morphological uniformity when linked with the nearby canyon of Rio Chiantone.

From the confluence with the Rio Chiantone, the Torrente Vinadia offers the most spectacular and interesting section, characterized by high walls and numerous narrow passages. Unfortunately, this part is much less aquatic than the upstream section due to water uptake by the energy company ENEL that, suddenly, removes virtually all of the water from the canyon. Although it is possible to descend this canyon using the route described here, we suggest that it is linked with the descent of the Rio Pichions that allows, among other things, an easier and more logical access to the canyon.

### Zone

Friuli Venezia Giulia - Lauco (UD)

### Elevation and length

Entrance	800 m
Exit	350 m
Height difference	450 m
Length	4500 m
Highest pitch	29 m

### Advised decent period

From May to October

### Exposure

South

### Timings

Approach	10 mins
Descent	5 h 30 mins (start to confluence with Chiantone: 2 h 30 mins; confluence Chiantone to water uptake: 30 mins; water uptake to exit: 2 h 30 mins)
Return	5 mins

### Shuttle

14 km

### Anchors

Sufficient (upper section)  
Very good (lower section)

### Advised ropes

1 of 60 m + 1 of 30 m + emergency rope

### Gear

Full wetsuit, bolting kit

### Escapes

Shortly after the confluence with the Rio Chiantone, there is a water uptake dam for ENEL with a long inspection tunnel that could, in case of necessity, be used to exit easily from the canyon. To use this emergency exit, climb the stairs of the dam on the right bank up to a terrace with a trap door, lift the trapdoor and climb down, via a staircase, into the inspection gallery and follow it downhill (requires a torch!).

The end of the tunnel is closed by a heavy gate, but usually one of the bars is missing and therefore it is possible to get through.

This is about 5 km from the valley parking, if you decide to use this exit it is advisable to check in advance that the gate can be crossed. To do so, you must first return to the SS52 and continue towards Forni/Sappada/P.so Mauria. After about 1.7 km, just before the house on the right, a track branches off (WGS84 coordinates: 46° 24' 44.5" N 12° 56' 13.2" E) that leads to the dam inspection tunnel (about 3 km).

## Map

Carta Tabacco 1:25000 foglio n° 013 - Prealpi Carniche Val Tagliamento

## Interest

National

## Difficulty

V3 a3 V

## Coordinates for downstream (valley) parking

46° 24' 37,4" N            12° 58' 1" E

## Coordinates for upstream (mountain) parking

46° 26' 22,9" N            12° 56' 44,4" E

## Approach to the valley (lower car park)

From Tolmezzo take the SS52 towards Forni/Sappada/P.so Mauria. Cross the bridge over the River But and after 500 m leave the highway onto the ramp on the right (towards Caneva). At the crossroads, turn right and then take the left at the T-junction onto road SP125 ("Via Tre Croci").

Continue for about 2 km and park in a clearing on the left next to a commercial site ("Legnolandia") and about 300 m from the gravel pit located at the exit of the gorge.

Avoid parking at the exit of the quarry (theft risk).

## Approach to the mountain (upper car park)

Resume SS52 and continue towards Villa Santina. Where the SS52 curves to the left, towards the end of the town, take the road on the right leading to Lauco. Pass through Lauco and continue following the signs for Vintner (Vinaio) where, shortly before the village and the bridge on Vinadia, you can park the car in a large open space (bus stop).

## Description and technical notes

Walk up the asphalt road for a few tens of meters towards and electricity cabin showing tourist signs for "La forra del Vinadia". Take the path downhill, cross over a small tributary that is usually dry, and quickly you reach the riverbed of Torrente Vinadia.

In the first section it is not recommended to wear the wetsuits but to follow the red marks of the tourist route until you reach the canyon itself. A little further on you reach the confluence with the Rio Pichions. If you decide to start the canyon following the Rio Pichions, joining the two canyon routes as recommended, the description of the Torrente Vinadia section commences here. The canyon starts with an easy progression for about 200 m and then enters the first dark and atmospheric section; an easy passage of about 50 m. Continue for about 300 m, until you reach the part where the river starts to descend rapidly and you must pass some large rocks on the left.

The first obstacles (in the past bolted) are easily passed using the iron cables (solid but badly positioned) along the first part on the gorge. These cables suddenly stop above the 20 metre pitch, leaving a (fortunately) poorly planned tourist route.

At the end of the iron cables, the section requiring true canyoning techniques commences.

01 - P 20 + 2 DEV R

Continue for 200 m

02 - P 8 L

Continue for 200 m (attention that a siphon can form under high water flow!)

Confluence with the Rio Chiantone

Continue for 500 m. Here, the ENEL water uptake removes almost all of the water from the canyon

03 - metal steps R

04 - MC + P 10 L

Continue for 100 m

05 - P 7 L (downclimbable R)

Continue for 100 m

06 - P 7 R

Continue for 100 m

07 - MC + P 29 L

08 - P 6 R (downclimbable)

09 - P 6 R (downclimbable)

Continue for 100 m

10 - P 4 R (downclimbable)

11 - P 12 L (downclimbable)

Continue for 100 m

12 - P 6 L (downclimbable)

13 - P 8 R (downclimbable)

From here, continue in an open environment, and soon you reach the gravel pit and the SS52

### Exit

Exit onto the road SP125 at the gravel pit and turn left to reach the car in a 5 minute walk.

### Notes

The first descent was made by Cirillo Floreanini and companions in the 1960's. Given that this is the most well known canyon in the region, it is highly frequented by canyoneers.

