

through the granite world

Text and photos by Filippo Brancoli

Località di partenza:

Regione Toscana, Provincia di Livorno, Portoferraio

Tipo di itinerario:

a piedi

Fondo stradale:

Misto

Difficoltà a piedi:

Turistica

Dislivello in salita (m):

165 m

Dislivello in discesa (m):

165 m

Tempo (hh:mm):

2:30

Periodo consigliato:

All seasons

Cartografia:

"Sentieri nell'Elba di sud ovest", an excellent guide published by Associazione albergatori Costa del sole.

Or, Multigraphic, Carta turistica e dei sentieri, Isola d'Elba, 1:25000

Segnavia:

red and white

Uffici informazioni:

For further informations on Costa Toscana:

www.toscanacosta.it Tuscan Archipelago

Tourist Agency, Calata Italia 26 - 57037

Portoferraio - Isle of Elba

Tel. 0565 914671

Fax 0565 914672

www.arcipelago.turismo.toscana.it

info@aptelba.it

Accesso al percorso e note:

Departure and arrival place: the village of San Piero in Campo which you reach from Portoferraio taking the provincial highways nos. 24, 25 and 29 as far as the village centre. Or from Marina di Campo following the state highways nos. 25 and 29

From piazzale Belvedere, near the church of San Niccolò and the Spanish-style fortress, in a bastion where the granite museum will be opened, we take via Vittorio Emanuele II in the direction of the bell tower, at the base of which we find via San Rocco which we



We are going to take you to explore an area that is rich in the most ancient traditions of Elba. In the blissful surroundings that this island offers, with views of the beaches and islands of the Archipelago, we will wander among the remains of the ancient granite quarries used first by the Romans and then, during the late Middle Ages, by the inhabitants of Pisa. Starting from the village of San Piero, which, not surprisingly, has many granite decorations, we will take you along a route that is a perfect combination of the harshness of the mountains, the beauty of the sea and the glorious granite tradition.



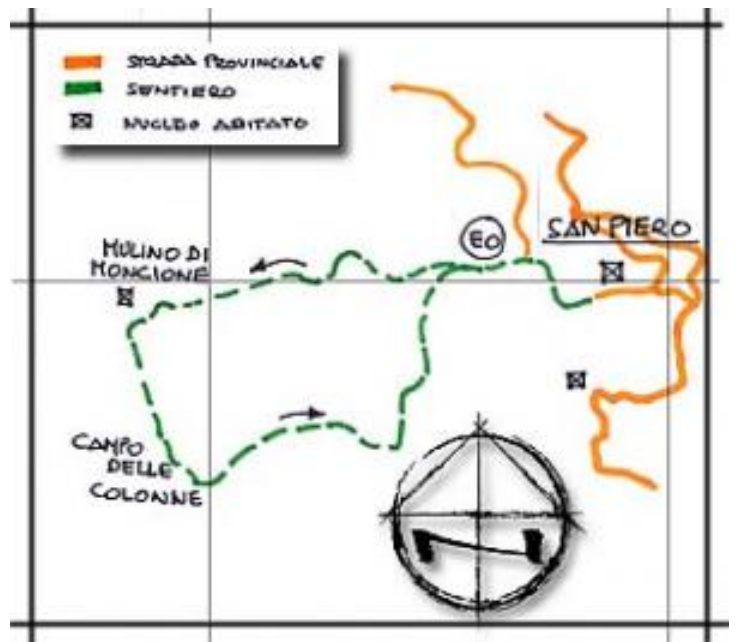
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follow as far as the cemetery. Here we take via delle cave, leaving the village of San Piero behind us. We continue climbing as far as the sports field and just after this we arrive at a junction with signs for paths 7 and 35; we turn right and, after turning left at the next junction, face the climb that takes us to the area of the modern quarries, now almost all abandoned. We follow a path that passes over the granite and which we leave for a less steep earthen one. We go in the direction of a shoulder that we pass, keeping the headland of Fetovaia that sticks out into the sea as our reference. We are in an open area where we can see in front of us Corsica and to the south the islands of Montecristo and Pianosa.

We continue as far as the Moncione Mill, turning left at a sharp bend after the small

purification tank: beyond this we see the collection tank that used to supply water to the mill. After ten minutes we arrive at a turn-off to the left where we leave the path and descend towards the first quarry with the remains of numerous pieces of industrial equipment. The signs we see on the granite were made by the wedges used to carve out the chunks of granite to be processed. Here we find a beautiful column that is an excellent example of the finished centring process. Generally, the processes were not finished in order to avoid breakage when the granite was transported down hill. Then we go on to the second quarry which we can already see from here, and where we pass literally right through the middle of the great hunk of rock from which the blocks were cut. We descend, with a view of the beach at Cavoli below us, until we reach an enormous granite rock completely excavated by erosion, creating an inner corridor and one of the most unusual cattle sheds in the area. We continue our descent diagonally to the right and find ourselves in the third quarry with its numerous ruins; in particular, below this, we find the "field of columns" given this name because of the great variety of excellent visible works. From here we return to the cattle shed we saw before and descend below it, walking over large granite rocks. We cut across the mountain in the direction of the warehouses on the opposite hill and come to the stream coming from the mill. We follow it as far as the path that we take to ford it. We climb up the east slope in the direction of San Piero until we reach the area of the active quarries (only two are still in operation) and we come in sight of the sports field. Here we keep to the left, entering the village of San Piero from the north west and crossing it to reach our departure point.



This itinerary is part of a collection that the magazine "Trekking", together with the APT (Provincial Tourist Authority) of the Tuscan Coast, has dedicated to the most beautiful trekking routes in this area. A series of itineraries that will help you discover lovely places and will introduce you to a district that has great environmental and cultural appeal.