



Rifugio Branca 2493 m - ORTLES-CEVEDALE GROUP

CLASSIC ALPINE MOUNTAINEERING ROUTES – Val Rosole - Stelvio National Park - Valfurva (SO)

Gran Zebrù 3851 m

This pyramid-shaped attractive and fascinating mountain is the most beautiful of the area. It is one of the most yearned-for destinations amongst mountaineers. The wide views from the north and the south fill the heart of every mountaineer who reaches the summit of this majestic mountain with joy. It was first climbed by E.H. and E.N. Buxton and F.F. Tuckett with Franz Biener and Christian Michel on the 3rd August 1864 from the Valle di Cedec through the shoulder and the south-east ridge. The first winter ascent was done by Robert von Lendenfeld and Carl Blodig with Peter Dangl and A. Pinggera on the 2nd January 1880. The first descent with skis was performed by Stefano Sertorelli – Alpine Guide and Ski instructor from Bormio – sometimes in the October 1940. Stefano, part of the military patrol team at the 1936 Garmisch-Partenkirchen Winter Olympics, descended the face of the mountain from top to bottom in 3 minutes, with 230 cm in length skis, with bone edges and Kandahar bindings. He had an ice axe in his right hand and a pole in his left hand.

Difficulty: Gran Zebrù top skier – Medium skier if you leave the skis under the south small couloir. Medium skier for the Roccione del Gran Zebrù.

Period: from the beginning of March until the middle of May

Starting Altitude: 2493 m Rifugio Branca -2180 Ponticello Cedec

Arrival altitude: 3851 m Gran Zebrù 3248 m Roccione del Gran Zebrù

Vertical Height gain: 1671 m Gran Zebrù – demanding descent 600 m – 1068 m Roccione del Gran Zebrù.

Orientation: Gran Zebrù S-SE-E/I Roccione del Gran Zebrù S-W-N

Where to stay: Rifugio Branca – near the Lago di Rosole – It can be reached in about one hour following the Forni mountaineering itinerary – Open from the beginning of March Phone / Fax +39 0342.935501 – info@rifugiobranca.it

Time of ascent: Gran Zebrù 3/5 h - 2,30/3 h Il Roccione -depending on the weather conditions and the physical preparation.

Maps: Kompass 072 Parco Nazionale dello Stelvio 1:50 000 – Tabacco 08 Ortles-Cevedale 1:25.000

Important Note: Always carefully check the weather and snow forecast here: ARPA Lombardia – www.arpalombardia.it/meteo – www.aineva.it

Equipment: basic mountaineering equipment and Self Rescue Kit(ARTVA avalanche transceivers),shovel and probe

Beware: part of the itinerary goes through a glacier or through difficult terrains. For this reason, please make sure that you have the suitable equipment and a first-aid kit with you.

Gran Zebrù – Classic itinerary

From the Rifugio Branca follow the easy road and descend to the plateau below in proximity of the Lago di Rosole. Continue on the usually well-trodden road on the plain at 2300 m. Descend on the right of the stream "Frodolfo" up to the small bridge on the stream "Cedec"(2180 m). From here start climbing in a northerly direction to the Forni hut (Itinerary **1a.**). Continue on the well-trodden slope and then descend for a short section to the Ponte della Girella. Now ascend on the opposite side to connect with the mule track that leads to the Rifugio Pizzini. Follow it to easily get to the Rifugio. Continue to the north with no obligatory itinerary, towards the evident rocky part which can be found at the base of the southern face of the Gran Zebrù. Go around it on the left. Turning to the right you reach the base of the evident small couloir which leads to the ridge. Normally this couloir can be done with the skis till where it narrows near the first rocks. Once you arrive to the shoulder of the south-east ridge, move diagonally to the right along the very steep section to reach a slight slope at the base of the final steep part. Continue slightly to the right and go round the small rocks in the steep area. From here move straight on the last section of the ridge. Moving to the south of the ridge you shortly arrive close to the metal summit cross.

Gran Zebrù – From the Canalino delle Pale Rosse: 1b. Once you are on rocky part below the southern face of the Gran Zebrù turn left towards the Colle delle Pale Rosse and – once there – continue in a north-westerly direction for about seventy meters. Then enter the evident couloir and move along it preferably keeping on the left till its end to reach the sharp north-west ridge which shortly leads you to the summit. The average gradient of the couloir is 45°, so a good mountaineering equipment is necessary.

Descent

The descent with skis from the summit of the Gran Zebrù along the normal route is only for expert skiers and mountaineers. Anyway, also when skis are left at the base of the small couloir or just above it, the descent to the valley floor is always satisfying. The descent from the small Canalino delle Pale Rosse, in its higher part, is not always possible because of rocks sticking out.

Alternative descents

From the south-east face – south-east couloir: d1.

This is the most demanding descent of the whole Forni area, also because of the majestic mountain environment in which it is settled. From just below the summit descend towards the evident south-east couloir till its end on the Vedretta del Gran Zebrù. Sections 50°steep.

The Roccione del Gran Zebrù 3248 m

The basal Roccione del Gran Zebrù has always been a great reference point for the ascent along the normal route. In the period between the two World Wars, a building (now ruined) was built on the summit rocks to enable the search of iron minerals. Because of the thinning and withdrawal of the glacier, this has now become a very interesting small summit to ascend.**1c.** Following the itinerary that leads to the Gran Zebrù, once you get to the plateau at the base of the small southern couloir move towards the right to ascend along the short section that easily leads to the summit.

Descent

Follow the ascent itineraries or descend on the opposite side of the Roccione.

GRAN ZEBRU' 3851 m - **IL ROCCIONE DEL GRAN ZEBRU'** 3248 m

