

Walk number: Five

Route: Montagnola to Morcote

Brief description: This walk puts together some elements of the Lugano to Morcote and the Carabietta to Montagnola routes to make another linear walk to Morcote. An important addition here is the visit to Barbengo and an opportunity to visit one of Hesse's favourite grotti at Posomente.

Grade: Easy, except for the section from Figino to Torello which is a steep 30 minutes climb.

Distance: About 7 miles.

Time: about 3hrs 30mins.

Start: Montagnola.

Finish: Morcote Information Centre.

How to get there: Postbus to Montagnola Bellevue or Paese (Square).

How to get back: Postbus or ferry back to Lugano.

Map: Locarno - Lugano Composizione no. 5007; Lugano Excursion Map from Lugano Tourist Office. Routes 20 and 22 cover parts of this walk.

Refreshments: Montagnola, Agra, Casoro, Morcote.

Route:

1. Take the bus from the PostBus station in central Lugano (Via Balerna) or from behind the main railway station at Via Sorengo. Alight at the Bellevue Hotel and stroll down Via Camuzzi to the Herman Hesse Museum. If you haven't visited the house this is an opportunity to do so, otherwise see Walk Seven which describes the Herman Hesse Trail in detail.
2. From the Casa Camuzzi head for the main village square and then thread your way through to the Via Herman Hesse by following a path to the left of the large white secondary school. When you seem to come to a dead-end look out for two barriers on your right where a path leads round the old pink washed elementary school. Once at the front of this building you are on Via Herman Hesse next turn left along it.
3. You soon pass a park on your left and within a few metres the memorial celebrating 100 years of Herman Hesse's birth. Follow the path uphill again until you reach the Casa Rosa, which is quite hidden on your right and not open to the public (20 mins).

4. At the edge of a chestnut wood follow the path to Agra and Bigogno. It's a wide woodland track with a sandy base underfoot.

5. The path starts to climb (22 mins) and soon reaches a concrete road where you turn right (25 mins). Before long you are into open country, follow track round to a sign on the main road. Here there is a sign pointing down to the Herman Hesse Trail and Al Guasto in the direction you have come. Cross the road and climb some steps. The path winds between a stone wall on one side and a concrete wall on the other.

6. At the top of this path you turn left (at a wooden post in the middle of the path) (29 mins).

7. Stroll past Bigogno church on your left and a closed Osteria on your right. Your route is a metalled road which climbs steadily to Agra cemetery on your right then descends into Agra past St. Thomas Church (wonderful sundial) (50 mins).

On your right, halfway between Bigogno and Agra is a sign to Grotto Posomente, a favourite retreat of Hesse's.

Agra, though off the beaten track, is serviced by a Postbus and has two nice cafes and a restaurant.

8. After a car parking area you pass a group of buildings on both sides (55 mins) then a shrine (right at 57 mins) and a derelict villa (right). Turn then left down by an electricity sub station, ignoring a sign pointing to Figino and Barbengo.

9. Cross the main road and head down a path through woodland signposted Figino, Barbengo and Casoro (1.01).

10. Soon there is a stream on your right (1.04) and eventually you come down onto a road, follow it to your right. This road runs amongst vineyards and ends at a barrier to a main road (1.13).

11. Left down the main road then right down a set of steps 150 metres on your right (no sign). At the bottom of the steps the road passes through some old farm buildings either side. Soon you reach a main road from Agra turn right. Before long (50 metres) you see a footpath sign pointing to Casoro and Figino down the Via alla Chiesa (paved road). Head down amongst some lovely old buildings.

12. This becomes a road with metal lamps by the side. After 10/12 minutes you come to the cemetery on your right (the church – San Ambrogio) is to your left along a road). Past the cemetery head down Sentiero de Sasei ("No Through Road" sign) and skirt around the barrier across the road (1.33).

13. Pale green building, shrine and water fountain are reached after six minutes (1.39).

14. Just past a red bench bear right down a well made stone and cement path to Casoro which takes 8/10 minutes (1.47).

15. Cross the bridge to Figino (near the Youth Hostel), following the sign to Lugano (1.51). In front of you are steps that lead up the path to Torello and Morcote (1.52). The path is steep and long but well made with lots of steps. It veers left, then right, then goes straight up. After about 26 minutes you reach the remains of farm building (2.18).

16. At a footpath sign turn right to Morcote (2.23). To reach Torello you need to continue upwards for another 10 minutes.

17. The path soon begins to descend (2.26) and within six minutes (2.32) you cross a stream over a wooden bridge at the Val di Soresello (475m). The path now gently descends towards Morcote the centre of which it reaches in 50/60 minutes.

Gazetteer:

Barbengo

A large village, formerly known as Premona, has an interesting village centre with vernacular buildings and frescoes on walls. The church is dedicated to San Ambrogio. The parish has many small and medium business and has expanded considerably due to the growth of commercial Lugano.