

Walk number: Two

Route: Carabietta to Lugano. Alternatively drop back down to Carabietta from Montagnola (see below).

Brief description: A great walk from one side of the Lugano Peninsula to the other including Montagnola and the Herman Hesse Trail. Not a great deal of shade.

Grade: Easy/Moderate

Distance: About 8 miles.

Time: 3 hrs 45 mins.

Start: Carabietta Post Office.

Finish: Lugano or Lugano Paradiso (or earlier if a bus is taken).

How to get there: Postalbus to Carabietta Post Office. This can be boarded in Lugano or at Lugano Paradiso Railway station.

How to get back: Walk or take the bus from St Abbondio back to Lugano or Paradiso.

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

Refreshments: Casoro, Agra, Montagnola

Notes:

This route takes you through many places that Hesse walked and painted in the 1920s and 1930s.

Route:

1. From the Post Office, walk uphill to the village centre (301 metres above sea level) where you will find a water trough and some attractive old buildings. Follow the path in the direction of Casoro and Barbengo. The church is reached after 30 seconds as you gently climb. There are stunning views of the lake on your right.
2. You reach a metalled track after two minutes, then a gentle terraced path two minutes later.
3. Housing appears on your left (8 mins) and soon you are on a stony drive, the Via Roncone (9 mins).
4. Tarmac road reached (12 minutes) and two minutes later the main road (14 mins). Turn left and walk along road until you reach the next La Posta bus stop then head left up an unmarked metalled track. The track turns to grass then tarmac again and rejoins the main road (21 mins). Turn left.

5. Walk along the busy main road which in places has no path so beware of traffic.
 6. Soon you reach a pretty marina on the lake on the outskirts of Casoro (24 mins) and seven minutes later you enter Casoro (31 mins). There are toilets here and a park by the lake.
 7. Just past the Osteria degli Amici on your left take the path inland. This is easy to miss but has a little yellow sign to Barbengo.
 8. Within 50 metres steps on the left lead steeply upwards. Keep heading upwards and where there is a choice of paths head upwards, left, by a red seat. You need to stick to the steep path.
 9. The path zigzags up steeply to a pale green building (on your right), a water fountain and a shrine. Pick up the path with yellow sign marked Sentiero, (it also mentions the Commune of Barbengo.)
 10. Keep following steep steps up (51 mins). Where there is a choice of paths keep going upwards (54 mins); don't veer to the left or the right.
 11. You reach the top at two red benches and have a great view over the lake and over your route up (1.07).
 12. From the red benches the path now gently climbs. In four minutes you are in a wooded area (1.11).
 13. You meet a road on a hairpin bend coming up from Barbengo (1.12). Turn left. This quiet road climbs steadily with good views on the right to Monte San Salvatore.
 14. After 15 minutes you see a marker sign on your **right** to Figino and Barbengo (1.27). You need the track on your **left** that unfortunately is not signed (at present). Don't worry if the route seems to be going back on itself. Within a few metres you pass an electricity company building and at the next junction turn right (North). Look out for a derelict chateau on your left.
 15. Shrine on your left in the woods (1.36). Soon the path narrows near some buildings.
 16. Enter Agra, keeping left in the car park, and head for a friendly bar on your right (1.42).
- Agra is a very attractive village with two bars and a restaurant (see Gazetteer).
17. Pass by Agra Parish Church with its large sundial (1.48).
 18. Stunning views of Monte San Salvatore on your right (1.51). Keep straight on avoiding the diversion to the grotto on your left (one of Hesse's favourites!) if you are in a hurry. (1.53).

19. The tarmac road descends into Bigogno, a pleasant village with a tiny church. (1.58). The route from here is difficult owing to a missing signpost. Look out for a path on your right 100 metres after the Post Box in Bigogno. There is an old sign showing collection times for sending mail to the surrounding villages above this box. The path is just beyond a detached pink house on your right with a lawn to the front. An unmarked wooden post is in the middle of the path. Follow this path down to some steps and then cross a main road.

20. You will see a sign pointing to the Herman Hesse Trail and Al Guasto. The path leads down a track which becomes a concrete road (2.10).

21. After several minutes take the wooded trail on your left and eventually this sandy path comes out at the first marker board on the Herman Hesse Trail (2.15).

22. Stroll past Casa Rosa (Casa Bodmer), past a park on your right, on to the Via Herman Hesse which takes you up to the main road by the Elementary School. Down the road into the main square where there is a restaurant and a small supermarket close by (2.30).

At this stage you can visit the Herman Hesse Museum which is located down a road that starts at the far corner of the square. It is well signposted. The Herman Hesse Trail is dealt with in a separate walk (Walk 7). From here you have a choice. You can continue the circuit back to Carabietta or continue onto Lugano.

To reach Carabietta pick up the route that starts at the back of the Town Hall; you'll spot a sign pointing to Arasio. The path passes through this settlement and drops down into Carabietta. This walk will take you about 1 hr 30 mins.

23. To reach Lugano follow the road sign from the main square in the direction of Lugano. Within five minutes you will see a Trail sign pointing down a road on your left. You should not have passed the Bellevue Hotel (2.20).

24. The metalled track becomes a narrow path and soon a plaque is reached on the Trail. Head down the track until you hit a road where you turn right. Turn left down a shale path that starts before you reach Cameroni SA.

25. The shale path becomes a riverside walk and passes another Trail plaque. Fifty metres on a finger post points down some steps.

26. Soon you reach a Grotto Cavicc and the hideous pink Montmartre piano bar (2.45). 100 metres past the Grotto turn left taking the second fork to Lugano. Another plaque on the trail eventually comes into view (2.50).

27. Continue along the path until you reach the back of the cemetery at St. Abbondio. Walk around the cemetery skirting its left hand side and spend some time to visit the church and the cemetery (3.00).

28. To return to Lugano head down the hill and pass the BP garage on your left. At Gentilini Casa Comunale turn right, past the Tennis Club, over the railway line back into Lugano (3.45). Buses will take you into Central Lugano or Paradiso after you have crossed the railway.

Gazetteer:

Carabietta

Situated beside Lake Lugano looking towards the Gulf of Agno.

Church of San Bernardo dates from 1634, built on earlier foundations.

Once an agricultural community but now a residential village with some vernacular building in the centre. Population: 78 in 1990.

Casoro

Lakeside hamlet with a Youth Hostel and Osteria. Some vernacular housing in tiny centre.

Agra

Located 570m above sea level, at the foot of Crocione, with splendid views over Monte San Salvatore. Still an agricultural community, surrounded by woods. The Church of San Thomasio dates back to 1591. Population: 515 in 1930, 333 in 1990. Two bars and a restaurant.

Bigogno

Bigogno is a hamlet with a chapel and is part of Agra commune. Home of the Adamini family who were architects in Tsarist Russia.

Montagnola

Large hilltop village now almost a suburb of Lugano. There's a small convenience store here, a hotel and several bars and restaurants. There is also a large American International school with marvellous wall paintings. The village was the home of the Gilardi family who were architects in Russia during the 18th and 19th centuries. Hesse lived here from 1919 until his death in 1962.

San Abbondio

This wonderful church in Gentilino, with its avenue of cypress trees, stands in a spectacular position overlooking the plain south of Lugano and Monte San Salvatore opposite. The plain, however, is now filled with housing, a shopping centre and factories and a screaming motorway.

The cemetery opposite has the graves of Hesse, Hugo Ball (Hesse's 1920s biographer), architect Gilardi and Bruno Walter (conductor and friend of Gustav Mahler).