

THE NEW CANYON RIO SASS

The excursion we are going on is a 2 hours adventure through a sequence of bridges and up and down flights of steps hidden below the village; it is 2 kilometres long with a maximum difference in level of 100 meters. There are many stairs and 600 steps. For this outing we recommend wearing protective helmet.

Fondo is the only one village in the whole valley, which is located on a canyon; in Val di Non there are many canyons, but just here people decided to build their houses directly over the gorge. The village has been built on the sides of this canyon in order to exploit this non-agricultural area at best. The name of the canyon comes from stones, because "sass" in the local dialect means stone.

If you go upstream you will reach the Smeraldo lake. There is a beautiful walk, which lasts 10-15 minutes and it is always open. In the year 1965 a dam was built on the lake, which has created a beautiful waterfall.

The territory in this area has been formed by the glacial erosion while the gorge, you'll be looking at, has been shaped by the underground glacier movement and by the river. The erosion begun in the Ice Age and went on with the help of the stream.

The canyon has been formed in the dolomite rock in 5 million years.

At the beginning of the route you can see two bridges dating back to the middle age which connected the two sides of the village.

The small river flows downwards and you can see the first pools (potholes) where water is collected; these are large and circular cavities carved out by rotating pebbles driven by the water. Looking at the watercourse you can recognize the rapids formed by waterfalls and by the narrowing of the rocks.

There is a particular image on a wall of the gorge; we call it SINDONE (the Turin Shroud), because it looks like the face of Jesus Christ. You can see the hair, the eyes, the nose and the mouth.

The different colours of many rocks in some areas are due to dripping water, which contains different minerals: limestone, magnesium, iron and gypsum. The red spots on the rocks are covered of algae colonies, this colour is due by the presence of iron.

The succession of bends toward right and left shows a phenomenon of the extreme Ice Age, we have a succession of apses formed by strong water whirlpools. Over your head you can see many round holes which are old pools. The different flat areas you can see along the canyon and over the river bed are old pools, too, with the sedimentation of different minerals. During thousands of years the water shaped this gorge in the rocks till this depth, the erosion has continued until today and the gorge sinks 1/2 mm every ten years.

The embedded rocks belongs to two different groups: glacier rocks (erratic blocks) which are rounded off and have another colour compared to the ones of this area and then there are pieces of rocks fallen down from the canyon's walls.

Then you can see some small curtains formed through the dripping calcite (limestone) in many millenniums. Please don't touch!

In some points in the canyon you can admire beautiful and rare light games.

In some other points you can't see the water under your feet anymore because there is a depth of 40 meters. The rock in this point is hard and there is a higher depth, down there the gorge opens like a bell and you can see more vegetation then before: this territory looks like a jungle with ivies, maples, hazel nuts. Lichens, musk and ferns flourish prosper in the moistly environment of the gorge.

In the rocks you can see everywhere many small round holes. This particular shape looks like a hearth: these are fossils, whose name is "megalodon". These fossils are bivalve shells, which became stone during the centuries and are 182 million years old.

In the new part of the canyon you can admire the old wooden dam built at the end of the 18th century. You can discover the iron water sources and not far from here there was the old bath visited by emperor Franz Joseph and his wife Sissi.