

**Crags, rocks & co.
Single-pitch climbs near
to Turin (Piedmont, Italy)**



Michele Motta

Crags, rocks & co. Single-pitch climbs near Turin (Piedmont, Italy)

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Cover: Pietra Filosofale (front), Motta Michele on the Dhau, Chisone Valley (back)

Rock climbing near Turin

In this guidebook are selected the best walls of the Western Alps near Turin, according to quality of rock, ease of access, choice of fully equipped sport routes. For each wall we provide the basic information on approach, best season and necessary gear.

The evaluation of difficulty is expressed in the French scale. In Piedmont, for historical reasons, i.e. rivalry between different valleys, the promotion policy of walls, difference in type of climbing for each kind of rock, and evaluation on sight or after working the route, the evaluation of difficulties varies greatly from valley to valley, sometimes even from wall to wall. In this guide we have tried to correct at least the unfair differences, and we reassessed the grades in the routes when become tougher for polishing of handholds.

The best time of attendance should be fixed as a function of weather. After the rains, for instance, you should try the hottest cliffs to find dry rock.

The walls marked as sheltered from rain are inaccessible after several days of rain, because of resurgences.

The necessary length of the rope is slightly more than twice the length of the longest route of the wall. Caution and always a figure of eight knot at the end of the rope!

At the quickdraws indicated as necessary are to be added, when useful, a couple for the belay points and for do the lowering manoeuvre. Very often the abseils don't have a karabiner.

No wall requires an entrance fee; the access is free also in the national parks.

It is recommended to park in such a way as to not irritate the locals, especially in narrow streets.

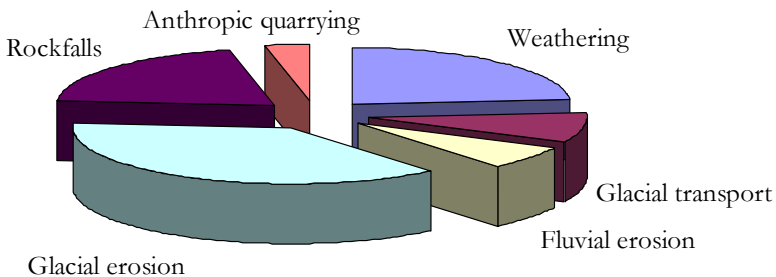
Of course, take away your waste, including toilet paper!!

Equipment, hazards and accessibility vary over time. The guide was drawn up on the basis of the information in our possession. We no assume responsibility for any discrepancies with the reality that you will meet, look good always before you go!

Where the rocks are

The alpine rocks exploited for sport climbing are a treasure from the sporting point of view, both as landscape elements and geosites. The rock walls near Turin have different origins.

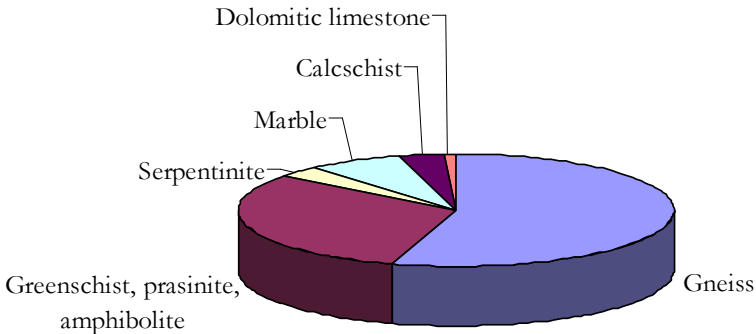
- 1) Walls formed by selective exaration: the glaciers have eroded schistose rocks easily, while rocks more resistant (gneiss, serpentines) form long cliffs flanking the glacial valleys. The rock is smooth and climbing is mostly in adherence or the rock is shaped to big handholds for the glacial extraction of blocks (quarrying).
- 2) Scars of rockfalls. Are typically lightweight sheer walls with holds made from edges and cracks.
- 3) Tors born for selective weathering, which has gradually removed the rocks that could be altered easily, while quartz-rich and feldspars-rich rocks form groups of small towers. The holds and cracks are mostly rounded. There are also holes (tafoni, honeycomb surfaces) and “alligator scales” of patina.
- 4) Erratic blocks abandoned by glaciers. The rock is smooth, with micro-crimps (holds are carved sometimes). They are very appreciated also for bouldering.
- 5) Freestone quarries, where the holds are sharp notches and cracks caused by the outbreak of the explosives.
- 6) Banks of rivers or gorges of the ancient subglacial streams (*orridi*). The rock is many times very smooth and the climbers have to exploit the cracks.



Origin of the rocks for sport climbing nearby Turin (percentage distribution).

Geology of the crags

The climbing in Turin Alps takes place almost exclusively on metamorphic rocks. The predominant rock is gneiss of crystalline massifs, followed by rocks derived from seabeds and ocean ridges (basalts metamorphosed in greenschists facies, calcschists). Finally the Susa Valley is characterized by rocks derived from ancient carbonate platforms and almost always metamorphosed into marble.



Percentage distribution of different types of rock in climbing crags near Turin.

Natural hazards

Under normal circumstances, the only objective danger of walls that are in this book is the (rare) detachment of debris. It is therefore advisable to wear a helmet.

You must climb gently when the handholds are friable. Do not try to remove anything you see, who does the maintenance of routes will strengthen possibly the unstable holds with the resin.

Dangerous animals and plants

We list the animals and plants that can be dangerous or annoying when climbing in Piedmont.

Italian / <i>English</i> name	Habitat	Notes
Vipera / <i>Viper</i>	< 1500-2000 m a,s,l,, at the foot of cliffs, along mountain tracks, from spring to autumn	Not aggressive, live and let live! Protected by law
Vespa / <i>Wasp</i>	Holes and cracks of walls, during summer	Beware of nests in cracks and holes!
Ghiro / <i>Dormouse</i>	Holes and cracks of walls, from spring to autumn	Aggressive only when touched
Zanzara / <i>Mosquito</i>	Woods, during hot months	Dangerous for dogs (filariasis)
Pappatacio / <i>Sand-fly</i>	Near Po Plain, during hot months	Dangerous for dogs (leishmaniasis)
Tafano / <i>Horsefly</i>	Near meadows, during hot months	Very annoying
Simulide / <i>Gadfly like a wasp</i>	During hot months	Annoying
Ortica / <i>Nettle</i>	N-rich soils (at the foot of walls)	Stinging

Legend of pictograms



Crag recommended for winter



Crag recommended for spring and autumn



Crag recommended for summer



Cliff sheltered from the rain



The foot of cliffs is not too dangerous for small children



Slope orientation



Necessary length of rope



Number of necessary quickdraws

Tornetti crags

1070 – 1090 m a.s.l., rock: metagabbro.

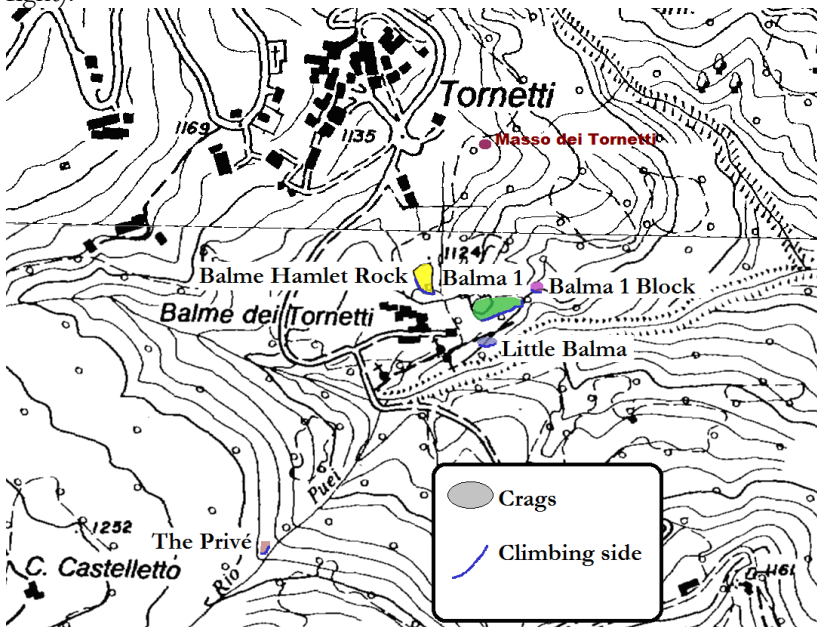
Several huge erratic blocks, 30 m high!

Balma 1, Little Balma, Balme Hamlet Rock

							
OK	OK	OK	NO	OK	All	60	14

Drive & Hike:

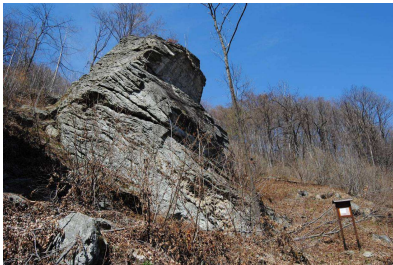
Turin → Lanzo → SP32 to Viù → in Viù turn right → Tornetti (P). A dirty road go down from P to Balme hamlet (it is impossible no see the Rock!). Just after the hamlet you find Balma 1 (on the left) and Little Balma (on the right).



Other crags:

The Privé, 9 routes 7a → 8a and more.

Balma 2, 10 routes 6a → 7b



Balma 1 Block and Little Balma.





Balma means a hovering rock, which protects the old inhabitants of the Alps.