



**Rifugio Branca 2493 m** - ORTLES-CEVEDALE GROUP

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

**Punta San Matteo** 3678 m

This is surely one of the most beautiful mountaineering routes of the Alps. The classic route is extremely varied and technical, mostly because it stretches for a large part through the glacier. It is one of the most popular destination of the Forni area and amongst mountaineers. The seracs of the north face are the perfect setting for a wonderful and charming experience on the glacier. From the summit you can enjoy a breathtaking 360° view of the surrounding mountain groups. The descent offers, often also later in the season, low- cohesive snow for an unforgettable skiing adventure.

**Alpine difficulty:** good skier

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

**Starting Altitude:** 2493 m rifugio Branca-2450 Lago di Rosole

**Arrival altitude:** 3678 m

**Vertical Height gain:** 1228

**Orientation:** NW-N-NE-E

**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:** 3/4 hours-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](http://www.arpalombardia.it/meteo) – [www.aineva.it](http://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.

**Classic Route**

From the Rifugio Branca, follow the easy narrow route till you reach the plateau below in the proximity of the Lago di Rosole. From here, move in a south-easterly direction and descend following the normally well-trodden road just above the first hairpin turn. From here, halfway on the slope, cross the base of the lateral moraine horizontally till the evident couloir. After climbing the short final steep section, you get to a wide plateau with small carved valleys. Continue on the plateau and keeping fifty meters to the right of the steep moraine side enter the glacier. Head close to the edge of the medial moraine and go by it. Continue in a southerly direction on a rather plain section. Then start climbing towards an evident triangular shaped bedrock. Go around it on the left and – after crossing some steeper sections, you reach a plainer area. Ascend towards the right, passing below huge seracs. Where they end, slightly on the right, go past a very steep section to reach the final plateau of the route. Head in a westerly direction to climb the last slight slopes – in proximity of the east ridge - that lead you to the summit through the south-western side.

**Descent**

Follow the ascents itineraries.

**Alternative descents**

**Through the north - east hump**

**d1.** Follow the first part of the classic route, at the beginning of the northern seracs, head – in a northerly direction - towards the small and evident spur at 3260 m. Go around it from the left and descend the steep slope that leads directly to the wide plateau of the Forni glacier. Then, towards the right, join up with the ascent itinerary.

**Through the north seracs:** d.2 Follow the first part of the route, before going towards the steep section, turn to the right above the evident seracs. Descend for around 300 meters. Move down on the steep slope for around one hundred meters and then go right. Continue to descend into the following depression up to the plateau below. Follow the ascent route on the north side or continue to descend towards the north around the basal rocks of the Cime di Pejo to reach the left of the evident medial moraine. From here continue on the final plateau of the Forni glacier.

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