

Identification of the geotourism path ITALY

Mediterranean Pearls APS
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Sulphurous flavor: trekking and mining path in southwestern Sardinia

This itinerary can be totally covered on foot. The path is located in the southwestern part of Sardinia (Sulcis Iglesiente), characterized by a strong mining vocation, which had its heyday and activity in the first half of the 20th century. In fact in Sulcis Iglesiente is concentrated the largest area of mining activities carried out in Sardinia in recent centuries. For this reason, the “Parco Geominerario Storico ed Ambientale della Sardegna” (Historical and Environmental Geo-mining Park of Sardinia) was established the first one to be recognized by UNESCO. All of Sulcis Iglesiente mines are dismissed. They are located in the territories of different municipalities. Some of these municipalities were predominantly coal or metalliferous mining sites and their economic activities revolved mainly around mining and industrial production related to the extraction of minerals (power plants, foundries, washeries, workshops, etc.). This path is located within Sulcis Iglesiente area in a reduced area called Fluminese, named after the town of Fluminimaggiore, which is the most populous city in the nearby. About thirty disused mines are in this area, as well as several naturalistic and historical-archaeological attractions. The proposed path, a true experiential activity, starts from Terras Nieddas mining site along the old animal-drawn railway that connected Terras Nieddas mine to Su Zurfuru mine, in a landscape of high naturalistic and historical interest, a journey through time, full of stories and anecdotes will turn this adventure into an unforgettable experience. The route encounters three main points of interest: the *Terras Nieddas* mine, the *Su Mannau* cave, and the *Su Zurfuru* mine.

Length: 4 km approx.

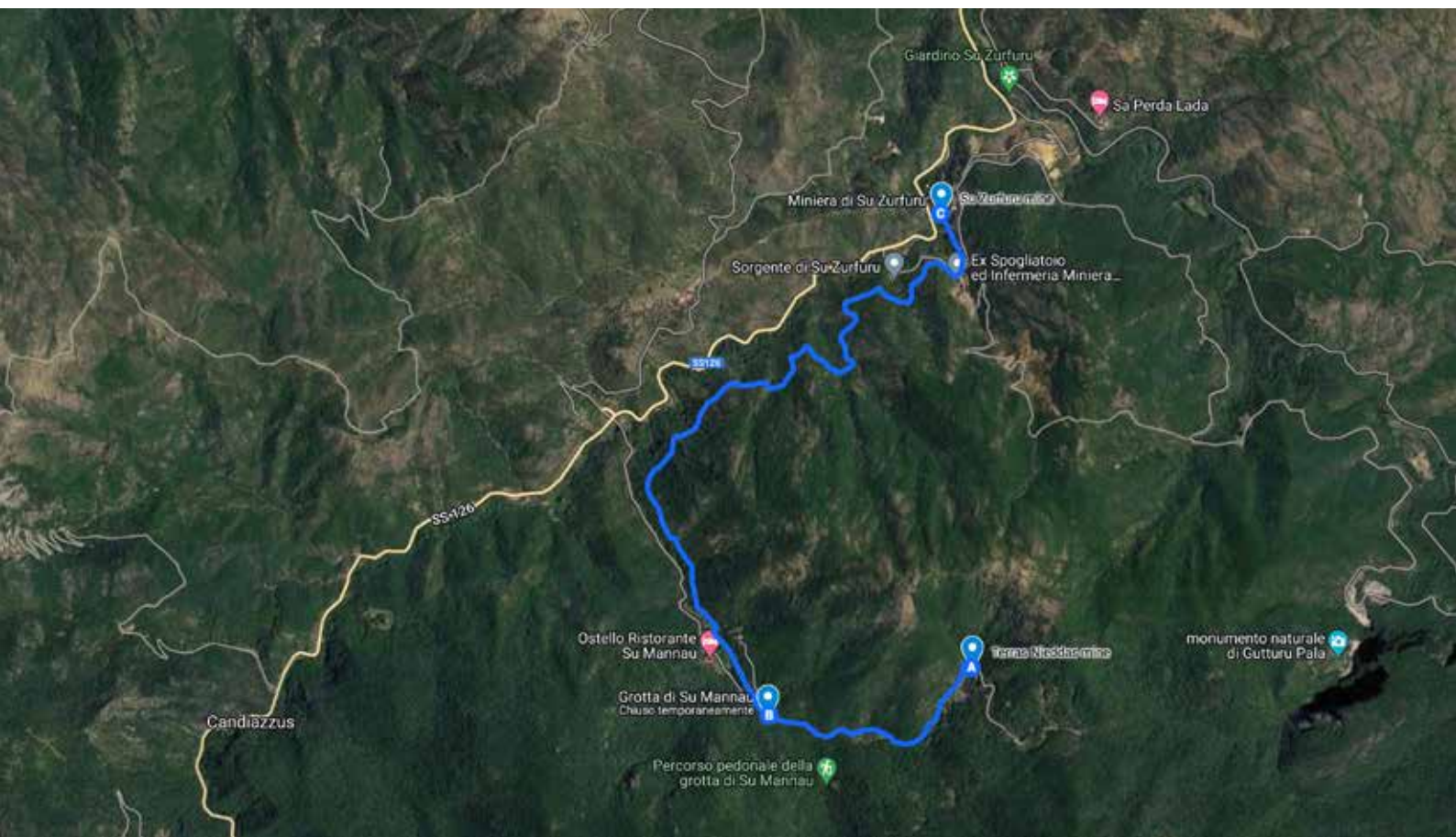
Walking time: 1h approx. not including visits to POIs

Point of Interest: Terras Nieddas mine, Su Mannau Cave, Su Zurfuru mine

Municipalities: Fluminimaggiore

Map: <https://tinyurl.com/3nbnuy8v>

Height difference: 200m approx.



Mining areas in Sardinia



**Parco Geominerario
Storico ed Ambientale
della Sardegna**

- Area 1
Monte Arci
- Area 2
Orani, Guzzurra sos Enattos
- Area 3
Funtana Raminosa
- Area 4
Argentiera, Nurra, Gallura
- Area 5
Sarrabus, Gerrei
- Area 6
Sulcis
- Area 7
Iglesiente
- Area 8
Guspinese, Arburese
- Siti puntiformi

--- Limiti di provincia
 ⊙ Capoluogo di provincia
 ○ Comuni del Parco

TERRAS NIEDDAS MINE

The mine of Terras Nieddas is located a short distance away from Su Mannau Caves. Coming from Iglesias, taking the S.S. 126 Road to Fluminimaggiore direction, at about halfway you will find the Caves turning to the left. Once arrived at Su Mannau parking lot, unless you are driving an off-road vehicle, you need to take a dirt road that, after a few kilometers, crosses the Terras Nieddas mining sites.

As early as 1861, privates needed permission by the Governor of Cagliari to search for argentiferous galena in the area. In 1877 the “Societa’ Anonima Generale delle Miniere” (Anonymous General Mines Society) became interested in the mining area by assaying the mineralized seams. In this year the Terras Nieddas mine was then declared discovered, and the mining concession was issued. The site was mined underground and opened pit in search of lead, zinc and silver ores. A small washery equipped with sieves was also built, fed by the large amount of water from the Su Mannau spring.

In 1883, Fluminimaggiore - Iglesias road was opened, which finally took the Fluminimaggiore area out of isolation and allowed the ore to be transported directly to Iglesias, avoiding transportation by sea from the port of Portixeddu. In 1907 the owning company invested its capital to build an animal-drawn railway connecting Terras Nieddas to the modern Su Zurfuru washery. Terras Nieddas mine closed permanently in 1969.



SU MANNAU CAVE

Su Mannau Cave is a large karst complex located under the limestone block from Su Mannau - Terra Nieddas to Antas - Oghittu slope. Made up with two main branches, originating from two small internal streams: the Left Branch from the Placido River and the Right Branch from the Rapido River.

Su Mannau Cave is located in the municipality of Fluminimaggiore, and is considered one of the most interesting karst cavities in Sardinia. The total length is 8 km and the highest point is 153 m. The part that can be visited consists of numerous halls adorned with concretions, stalactites and stalagmites (the highest measuring 11 m), columns rising up to 15 m, aragonite crystals, and underground lakes. Archaeological Hall, known since ancient times, and particularly important from a historical point of view, is the first room in Su Mannau Caves, used as an underground temple since the pre-Nuragic period. It is about 70 m long with an average width of 8-10 m. In the past it was used as a place of worship by the indigenous people who inhabited the Fluminese mountains. Inside it is a veritable hypogeal temple dedicated to the Cult of the Waters. Thousands of fragments of small votive oil lamps have created a mixture with soil and mud of which the floor is made.



SU ZURFURU MINE

The mining complex of Su Zurfuru, is one of the most important identity sites in Sardinia, both for the historical vicissitudes that have followed over the centuries and for the prestige and uniqueness of the industrial archaeology assets kept within it.

One of the peculiarities of the mining complex is the presence of all stages of ore processing: from extraction (with the “Pietro and S’Arribasciu” tunnels), to material processing (with the “Giuanni Longu” plant). Adjacent to the “Laveria” (washery) are the premises that have already undergone a conservative restoration, which in recent years has become the “Mining Memory Museum” with private collections, with donations from miners and their families. The regeneration project of the mining site, that is still in progress, includes the securing and installation of thematic areas inside the mining galleries, the integration of the “Laveria” (washery) and the premises formerly home to the Mining Memory Museum, into a unique and historical-cultural path of interest. The intervention will be part of a broad strategic project having as its objective the redevelopment of the entire mining area and its reconversion for tourism, cultural and scientific purposes.

This is a path promotes development of sustainable and experiential tourism in a route of historical cultural and unique interest. The proximity to the SS 126 Road to the village of Fluminimaggiore (1,500 m), and its location along the most important trekking paths and trails in the area, makes Su Zurfuru a place particularly vocated to the development of soft mobility. In this regard, the “Associazione Culturale Su Zurfuru Mine” (Su Zurfuru mine Cultural Association), which manages the mine site, received an honorable mention in the ninth edition of the National Go Slow Prize 2021.

