



WEEK 1 FROM BOURG ST. PIERRE TO PONT ST. MARTIN

PRATICAL INFORMATION

The Alps have always been a great barrier and a challenge that foreign armies and pilgrims have always found on their way into the Italian peninsula. The main interest in Valle d'Aosta is certainly the grand landscape. Starting from the Swiss side of the San Bernardo Pass we climb to the 2473m of the Pass. Beautiful mountains such as the Gran Combin make a breath-taking view. As we descend, we find woods and pastures that give away to vineyards on the sun exposed sides of the mountains. Typical villages with “lose” roofed houses and stone walled churches, ancient castles and watch towers, Romanesque churches and Roman ruins are to be found all along the route.

However not many of the castles can be visited while has been reopened the ancient “Strada delle Gallie” which is part of the original Roman road and you will be walking on it.

DAY 2 - THE PASS - ETROUBLES

- INFO POINT** There is not an information point at the pass – the nearest one is A.I.A.T. Gran San Bernardo
- PILGRIM STAMP** At the Hostel of the Padri Agostiniani – also Mass in the morning

DAY 3 - ETROUBLES - AOSTA

- PILGRIM STAMP** A.I.A.T. Gran San Bernardo - Strada Nazionale G.S. Bernardo, 13 - Etroubles
Ph. +39 (0)165 78559
- PRIEST** House of the priest - Frazione Cretaz Roisan - Ph. +39 (0)165 50232
- DRUGSTORE** Farmacia Mion - Rue Albert Deffeyes- Etroubles Ph +39 (0)165 78488

DAY 4 - AOSTA - CHAMBAVE

- PILGRIM STAMP** A.I.A.T. Aosta Piazza Chanoux, 45 - Ph. +39 (0)165 33352
info@aiataosta.com
- PRIEST** Parrocchia di St Orso - Via Sant'Orso, 14 -Aosta - Ph. +39 (0)165 262026
- LAUNDROMAT** Onda blu - Rue M. Guerin Reg.ne Tzamberlet - Ph. +39 (0)165 235152

DAY 5 - CHAMBAVE - VERRRES

- INFO POINT** A small one in P.zza Orsieres n.1 - Ph. +39 349 1443723
- PRIEST** Parish of San Lorenzo
- DRUGSTORE** Farmacia Quacquareni – Rue Emilio Chanoux - Ph. +39 (0)166 46125

DAY 6 - VERRRES - PONT ST. MARTIN

- INFO POINT** A.I.A.T. Verrès Via della Circonvallazione 119
- PILGRIM STAMP** Either at the hotel or at the Parish
- PRIEST** Parish of S. Egidio - Vc. S. Egidio, 13 – Verres - Ph. +39 (0)125 929093
- DRUGSTORE** Farmacia Quey - Via Caduti Liberta', 16 – Verres - Ph. +39 (0)125 929019
- LAUNDROMAT** Lavanderia Acqua Blu - Self-service - Circonvallazione 84 Verrès

DAY 7 - PONT ST. MARTIN

- INFO POINT** A.I.A.T. La porta della Vallée - Via Circonvallazione, 30 - Ph. +39 (0)125 804843
- PILGRIM STAMP** At the information office
- PRIEST** Chiesa di S. Lorenzo – Via S. Lorenzo 4
- DRUGSTORE** Farmacia Giaccherio – Via Emilie Chanoux 121
- LAUNDROMAT** Lavanderia Acqua Blu – Self-service - Via Nazionale per Donans 36

WHAT TO SEE

AOSTA



Aosta was settled in proto-historic times and later became a centre of the Salassi, a pre-Roman population that was killed or sold into slavery by the Romans in 25 BC. The campaign was led by Marcus Terentius Varro, who then founded the Roman colony of Augusta Praetoria Salassorum, housing 3,000 retired veterans. After 11 BC Aosta became the capital of the Alpes Graies ("Grey Alps") province of the Empire. Its position at the confluence of two rivers, at the end of the Great and the Little St Bernard Pass, gave it considerable military importance, and its layout was that of a Roman military camp.



The ancient town walls of **Augusta Praetoria Salassorum** are still preserved almost in their entirety, enclosing a rectangle 725 by 571 m. They are 6.4 m high, built of concrete faced with small blocks of stone. At the bottom, the walls are nearly 2.75 m thick, and at the top 1.83 m. Towers stand at angles to the enceinte and others are positioned at intervals, with two at each of the four gates, making twenty towers in total. They are roughly 6.5 m square, and project 4.3 m from the wall. Of the 20 original towers, only a few are well preserved.

The east and south gates exist intact. The latter, a double gate with three arches flanked by two towers known as the **Porta Praetoria** (1st century AD) was the eastern gate to the city and has preserved its original forms apart from the marble covering. It is formed by two series of arches enclosing a small square.

You can still see the **Roman theatre**, of which only the southern façade remains today.

Outside the town is a triumphal arch in honour of Augustus, built in 35 BC to celebrate the victory of the Romans over the Salassi. About 8 km to the west is a single-arched Roman bridge, called the Pont d'Aël. It has a closed passage, lighted by windows for foot passengers in winter, and above it an open footpath, both being about 10 m in width.

The Sant'Orso complex, which is one of the most important in the Alps, includes the Church of Saints Peter and Orso, the isolated and majestic bell-tower, the marvellous cloister and the Renaissance priory. In ancient times the building formed part of a vast extra-urban necropolis where an Early Christian complex was erected at the beginning of the V century. The building of the current church is attributed to Bishop Anselmo (between the X and XI centuries).

The crypt and the important Ottonian frescoes (the upper part of the central nave) dating from that period survive to this day. The current architecture (the end of the XV century) is attributed to George of Challant. Worth noting, the Gothic seats in the choir (XV century) and the mosaic (XII century). The Sant'Orso cloister, a real "marble masterpiece", is a place where you can feel the deep spirituality of the complex. The building was completed in 1133. Built with 37 marble columns (the northern side was demolished during the XVIII century and the columns replaced), which were subsequently covered in a protective paint that gives the cloister its current, curious colour, the monument is one of the best examples of Romanesque sculpture. The capitals depict scenes from the bible, tales or ornamental motifs or episodes from the life of St. Orso. There is a big festival that takes place at the end of January in St Orso honour.

Opening hours: 8h30 – 12h30 and 2h00 – 6h00

WHAT TO SEE



BARD

Almost intact from the moment of its construction, the Fortress of Bard represents one of the best examples of early 1800 military strong-holds. The Fortress of Bard is formed of 3 main defence stations positioned at different levels upon a high imposing rock spur, the lowest at 400m above ground and the highest at 467m. The Ferdinando Opera is the defense structure at the bottom, the Vittorio Opera in the middle, and the Carlo Alberto Opera at the top. There are a total of 283 rooms in the entire fortress.

The Village of Bard itself is worth visiting.



STRADE DELLE GALLIE

There were some primitive roads in Valle d'Aosta in the pre-Roman period. They were paths which, since pre-historic times, enabled trade and cultural relations through the Alpine passes. Today, a road still exists on the Aosta hillside called the Strada dei Salassi, which is higher up than the subsequent Roman itinerary. The Gaul consular road, an undertaking of the highest engineering quality, which takes the formation of the land into consideration, was the first public work of the new conquerors, an indispensable infrastructure for their political and military expansion. The road used to cross the Valdaosta territory to reach Eporodia (Ivrea), up to Augusta Prætoria (Aosta), then split in two directions to the Alpis Graia hills (Piccolo San Bernardo) and the Alpis Pœnina hills (Gran San Bernardo). Today, the route is mainly known for its archaeological ruins, which are still visible, and thanks to the reconstruction of the ancient itineraries which also mark the areas delegated as places of rest for people and animals. As well as the section between Donnas and Bard, the Pierre Taillée district (Avisè) preserves the most monumental part of the road, which cuts into the bare rock and is supported by cyclopean buildings.



PONT ST. MARTIN

At Pont Saint Martin starting point of the Gressoney Valley, it is worth visiting the Roman bridge dating back to 1st cent BC. The span is 103 feet (31.4 m) according to recent research, but frequently stated to be 35.64 m or 36.65 m.