

visitAosta

TOURIST GUIDE TO THE CITY
AND ENVIRONS

With interactive
qr-code



Valle d'Aosta
Vallée d'Aoste

Office Régional
du Tourisme
Ufficio Regionale
del Turismo



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visitAosta

TOURIST GUIDE TO THE CITY AND ENVIRONS





My pleasure, Aosta

"...la vecchia Aosta di cesaree mura ammantellata, che nel varco alpino èleva sopra i barbari manieri l'arco di Augusto..."

This is how the poet Giosuè Carducci, Nobel Prize for Literature, described the city. Glorious thousand-year history and majestic Alpine peaks, of course.

But we, as we walk round the city, realise that Aosta is much, much more! Aosta is an original, authentic, lively place, able to excite young and old alike and offer moments of real pleasure. It is the perfect place for lovers of art, traditions and ancient history, for the sportingly inclined and for gourmets.

Since time immemorial a crossroads of cultures and peoples, the city is fiercely intercultural: French, in the Aosta Valley, is the official language on an equal footing with Italian, many villages, streets and roads have French names and French and Swiss tourists in their thousands regularly visit the city, so don't be surprised to hear French spoken in the streets, restaurants and shops!

Aosta is a wonderful mix of conviviality, good food, shopping, music, outdoor activities, but also of silence, spirituality, and fascinating echoes of the past.

But that's not all: the city has recently become an important film set! If you're a fan, you can't miss taking a selfie in the most famous locations used in the series starring deputy police chief Rocco Schiavone.

Set in the heart of a region that boasts more than 40 peaks of over 4000 metres, Aosta is also the best of starting points for reaching these magnificent giants and visiting the entire region, the different valleys and the

many castles.

So, join us on the discovery of Aosta and its environs, its past and its present, its major figures of yesterday and today!

And since words are sometimes not enough, we invite you to scan the Qr-codes and download the content and multimedia analysis for more comprehensive and entertaining information.



The Roman Theatre, at night it is even more magical... 😊



Info Aosta

Aosta, Oûtta in Aosta Valley patois (altitude: 583 m, inhabitants: 34,082 Lat. 45° 44' 16" N - Long. 07° 19' 29" E), the capital of the Aosta Valley region, is situated on the left bank of the Dora Baltea, at the confluence of the Buthier river, in a basin surrounded by high mountains, the Grand Combin and Mont Vélan to the north, Mont Emilius and Becca di Nona to the south and the Rutor massif to the west.

Due to its geographical location and convenient access to the motorway and rail networks, the city is an excellent base camp for visiting the entire region.

COMING BY CAR

From Turin: A5 motorway Turin-Aosta. Exit at Aosta Est towards Aosta Centre, E27.

From Milan: A4 motorway Milan-Turin. Exit the A4 at Santhià towards E66. Exit at Aosta Est towards Aosta Centre, E27.

From Lyon: Motorway A40/E21/E62 towards Milan/Geneva/Oyonnax. Keep left at the fork to remain on the A40, continue on the N205, continue on the T1. E25 for Aosta Centre.

From Geneva: Motorway A411. Exit the A40/E25/E712 towards Mont Blanc. Continue on the A40, proceed on the N205, T1, E25 in direction of Aosta Centre.



MOVING AROUND THE CITY

The huge pedestrian area means that it is completely safe to move around Aosta on foot.

Parking: parking areas/blue payment zone, present all over the city.

Paid covered parking areas: *Umberto Parini Hospital* (via Roma), *Consolata* (viale Federico Chabod, 13), *Carrel* (via Giorgio Carrel, 1) and *De la Ville* (via 1° Maggio).

Free open parking areas: *Parking areas in piazza Ducler*, *via Giuseppe Mazzini 1*, *Aosta Apelle* viale Federico Chabod 102, *via Lavoratori Vittime del Col du Mont*, and *viale Partigiani* (below the Headquarters of the Valdostan Union).

Peripheral parking areas: *Cemetery*, *Area Sogno* and *Croix Noire*. Free link (for visitors using the parking area) to the city centre using the *Green Shuttle* service (direction: piazza Manzetti - Cemetery - piazza Manzetti 06:30-19:45 work days).

Info: for parking areas www.apsaosta.it/sosta-e-mobilita/
for bus/shuttle service www.svap.it

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!

Aosta is a friendly, clean and tidy city.
We reciprocate the attention we receive by following these simple rules that we teach our children, and share with friends.



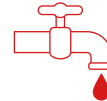
We always wear appropriate, decent clothing, especially in places of worship.
We don't annoy others with irritating noise, shouting, or bothersome cell phone ring tones.



We do not leave signs of our passage: we recycle waste correctly and we pick up our dog's droppings.



We respect the natural environment: we follow the marked pathways, we do not rip off flowers or leaves.



All resources are precious for the planet: we fight water and energy waste as if we were at home!

Special terms for tourists

Single ticket for admission to each of the following sites: the Roman Theatre, Forensic Cryptoporticus, Early Christian Church of San Lorenzo, Regional Archaeological Museum

Where to buy it: Tourist Office, Roman Theatre and Regional Archaeological Museum.

For **Aosta Valley Card** holders the ticket is cut price.

To learn more: www.aostavalleycard.it

For the holders of the Piedmont/Aosta Valley and Lombardy/Aosta Valley **Museum Cards** admission is free (go to the Roman Theatre ticket office).

The nominative **Archaeological Site Card** allows unlimited access for one year to the 4 sites and the Pont d'Aël in Aymavilles. Where to buy it: Tourist Office.

Free WiFi in all town squares. Click on the *WiFiRegioneVdA* mobile phone: you can use the link to access institutional and tourist sites in the region, for full use you need to register. Happy surfing, everyone!

For whatever you need, please contact the Tourist Office, piazza Porta Praetoria, 3 - Tel +39 0165.236627

Not to be missed, in our opinion

The **REMAINS OF AUGUSTA PRAETORIA**, in particular the **ARCH OF AUGUSTUS**, a reminder of the greatness of the Empire for those travelling from Gaul to Rome, the **ROMAN THEATRE**, now also a spectacular setting for theatrical performances and concerts in summer and for Christmas markets in winter and the **FORENSIC CRYPTOPORTICUS**. And if you have more time visit the Roman villa outside the walls and the funeral area outside the Porta decumana.



SACRED ART IN AOSTA: the **COMPLEX OF SANT'ORSO** (the Collegiate Church of Saints Peter and Orso, the Cloister, the Priory with its 15th century chapel) and the **CATHEDRAL**: places rich in mystery and spirituality with frescoes from the year 1000 in both churches, the church of **ST. STEPHEN** with its painted façade and the suggestive statue of St. Christopher.

The **MAR** Regional Archaeological Museum, a long journey from prehistoric times to the medieval era. Surely one of the most beautiful pieces is the bronze *balteus* (belt) from the Roman age, a horse harness and a parade breastplate, evocative of the absolute supremacy of the Romans over the barbarians.

WALKING AND SHOPPING IN THE HISTORICAL CENTRE: from via Sant'Anselmo, through Porta Praetoria and along the pedestrian streets, to piazza Chanoux and beyond, wandering aimlessly through main streets and alleyways. Go in and browse around the shops and art workshops and their fine creations in wood, leather, wrought iron and wool.

LOCAL ENOGASTRONOMIC DELICACIES: black bread, cold cuts, cheeses, wines, sweets: there is something for every taste! Stroll around the markets and food stores, take a break in one of the many places that offer traditional Aosta Valley dishes. A real joy for the palate!



THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF THE MEGALITHIC AREA OF SAINT-MARTIN DE-CORLÉANS: when, in 1969, a bulldozer turned up a strange "stone", nobody could ever have imagined how exceptional was the discovery that had just been made. The "stone" was actually the top of a decorated stele and the whole area, inhabited from the 5th millennium B.C., proved to be a very rich source of invaluable remains of prehistoric man. Traces of propitiatory tillage, sacred wells with votive offerings and then again megalithic tombs, menhirs and dolmens. The anthropomorphic stelae of the third millennium B.C. are absolutely magnificent: heroes, gods, leaders of the primitive communities? We don't know for sure, but what counts is the emotion they convey.

The modern museum structure offers an evocative exhibition itinerary, a journey backwards in time for a sensorial experience where space and time seem to expand. We won't tell you any more, you have to find out for yourself!



FAIR OF SANT'ORSO: if you are lucky enough to be in town on 30 and 31 January, you won't want to miss the Fair that has been invading the centre for over a thousand years with its stalls, music, folklore and tradition. It is a people's fair, a moment for coming together, an occasion, in short, for feeling just a bit "Valdostan". A summer edition, the **FOIRE D'ÉTÉ**, is held in August.



A JOURNEY BY CABLE WAY: from the heart of the city, in winter and summer and in less than 20 minutes, it is possible to reach the town of Pila, a magnificent ski area at 1800 metres above sea level, surrounded by fir and larch woods: sport, entertainment, bars and restaurants but also wide open spaces, immense silence, and a 360 degree view from Mont Blanc to the Grand Combin, from the Matterhorn to Monte Rosa. Really not to be missed!

A year of events in the city

JANUARY

Fair of Sant'Orso
30th and 31st
of the month



JUNE

Aosta - Great Saint
Bernard
car hill climb



JULY

Aosta Classica



Théâtre et lumière

AUGUST

Foire d'été



GiocAosta



SEPTEMBER

Plaisirs de culture



OCTOBER

Bataille de Reines
Combat final



7 Towers Trophy



MezzAosta



NOVEMBER DECEMBER

Marché Vert Noël



Aosta's birthday

Where to sleep

To make sure your holiday in Aosta is perfect, it is important to choose the accommodation that is most suitable for you.

Our offering includes 4 four-star hotels, 7 three-star hotels and 6 two-star hotels, 2 residences and 3 farm holiday locations.

Or you can opt for a guest house or a B&B, small family run premises. There are many of them in the city: charming, warm, friendly structures, furnished with taste and attention, in typical rustic-mountain style. A shrewd mix of tradition and comfort.

For reservations: bookingvalledaosta.it.

Alternatively you can rent a private house through the best known portals: just a room or the whole house, in the historic centre or in the countryside just outside the city. Well-kept premises that offer every comfort, to make us feel at home, free to enjoy our holiday at our own pace and without changing our habits.

For a complete list of hotels we refer you to the map of the city and to the site www.lovevda.it/it/dormire/dove-dormire-in-valle-d-aosta.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AOSTA!



In December, you're all invited to the city's birthday celebrations! Some symbols discovered on a stone at the base of the Balivi Tower point to the date of the laying of the city's foundation stone: 23 December 25 B.C.

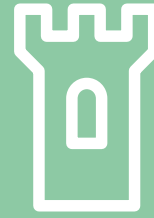
So the appointment is for the day of the winter solstice, the symbol of a new beginning and rebirth in Croix de Ville street, before Calvin's Cross, to watch the sun rise in alignment with the Cardo Maximus (the North-South street) and celebrate the foundation of Aosta.

On the winter solstice the sun rises from the Becca di Nona and illuminates the cross at the top of the fountain!





The Priory frescoes, how wonderful! 😊



A stroll through history

Aosta's long history began 6,000 years ago, as evidenced by the ancient remains of a sacred area linked to worship found in the Megalithic Area of Saint-Martin-de-Corléans. The Salassi, a valiant population of Celtic-Ligurian origin, settled in Valle d'Aosta as early as the 7th century BC. No important historical evidence of their settlement remains, but their language, a "dialectal" form of Gallic, has survived to some extent through its strong influence on the patois, still spoken (and sung) throughout the Valley. From 143 B.C. onwards, the Romans launched numerous attacks to conquer the area, which they considered to be of strategic importance. After decades of clashes, the Salassi were forced to surrender in 25 B.C., and the glorious era of imperial Aosta began. The magnificent **Augusta Praetoria Salassorum**, which took its name from Emperor Octavian Augustus and the three thousand Praetorian soldiers sent to garrison the area, was born. The city still retains the orthogonal layout typical of the Roman castrum, preserving gates, walls, splendid examples of imperial architecture and inventive hydraulic works that were used until almost the modern age. But with the decline of Empire, Augusta Praetoria was put to fire and sword by the barbarians. Depopulated, it was reduced in size to a small rural village. Starting from the year 1000, the great feudal families and the strengthening of episcopal power gave the city fresh momentum. A resting place for pilgrims along the Via Francigena and a crossroads for the exchange of goods and peoples, Aosta found itself once again at centre stage! In 1191, Tommaso I of Savoy granted the city the *Carta delle franchigie*: a charter of freedoms that in effect gave the city political and administrative autonomy, which it maintained until its revocation in 1770. The famine and dreadful plague of 1630 decimated the population with all the inevitable negative consequences for the life and economy of the city. In the nineteenth century, with the arrival of the railway and the industrial exploitation of its mineral and natural resources, Aosta experienced an economic revival. With the birth of the Kingdom of Italy, the Region's demands for autonomy took on new life. It was made an autonomous region in 1946 with Federico Chabod becoming the first President of the Council of the Valley, and it finally became an Autonomous Region with Special Statute in 1948. Since then the tertiary sector has grown strongly at the expense of industry. The great investments for urban redevelopment, the development and promotion of the ancient "savoir faire", the construction of leading edge sports facilities, the use of renewable energy and technological resources are changing the face of Aosta which, it will be no surprise to learn, has held a leading place in the ranking of the most liveable cities in Italy for years now!

Guided tours

Aosta can be visited quite independently, at your own pace and however you like, but we would still like to let you know the initiatives that are proposed by the Tourist Office and the Association of Aosta Valley Hoteliers, by qualified Tourist Guides and by emerging new cultural resources that will be able to tell you about Aosta “according to them” and give you some extra emotion to take home.



City Visit organised by the Tourist Office and the Association of Aosta Valley Hoteliers: **every Sunday at 10 a.m.** departing from the Arch of Augustus without booking. **From Monday to Saturday, booking required** at the Tourist Office, **departing at 11 a.m.** from piazza Porta Praetoria. The tours are in Italian and French.

Cost: 10 euros for adults, 5 euros up to the age of 17, free up to the age of 6.

Associazioni di Guide Turistiche:

- A.G.T. Association of Tour Guides, info@guideaosta.it
www.guideaosta.it
- Akhet srl, eventi@akhet.it - www.akhet.it
- Aosta Guide, canuia@libero.it
- AostaWelcome, aostawelcome@gmail.com - www.guideaostawelcome.it
- Centro Studi De Tillier, aostamauro@gmail.com
www.guideturistiche-aosta.it
- DidaCulture, didaculture@libero.it
- Aosta Valley Guide Service, guideservice.vda@gmail.com
- Aosta Valley Tourist Guides, info@guideturistiche.vda.it
www.guideturistiche.vda.it

The most original proposals in our opinion?

- **The waterways of Aosta** www.guideturistiche-aosta.it
- **Tour of the walls and towers** www.guideaostawelcome.it
- **Aosta and Rocco Schiavone** www.valledaosta-guidaturistica.it
- **City trek along the Via Francigena** www.valledaosta-guidaturistica.it

Graziella City Tour - Discovering Aosta on a bike: easy mini-tours, suitable for everyone, planned by certified cycling guides, to allow you to visit the city in an eco-sustainable and fun way, in the saddle of a legendary Graziella bike from the '60s and '70s, perfectly restored. **“Overview of Aosta”** and **“On the tracks of Aosta’s ancient water channels”** are the two proposed trails.
Info and reservations: www.bike4heritage.com - booking@bike4heritage.com

We would like to point out the initiatives of the Mirabilia Cultural Association (mirabiliaosta@gmail.com) **guided tours of the Sant’Orso complex daily at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. (3 p.m. October - March)**, the Association offers **themed theatrical tours, conferences, night-time tours and aperitif-concerts** with tastings in collaboration with the best traditional Aosta establishments.

Independent itineraries /1

DISCOVERING THE HEART OF ANCIENT AOSTA, AMONG IMPERIAL SPLENDOURS AND THE WAYS OF MEDIEVAL SPIRITUALITY

Arch of Augustus ➔ *via Sant’Anselmo* ➔ *Collegiate Church of Sant’Orso and Cloister* ➔ *Early Christian Basilica and Church of San Lorenzo* ➔ *Bailivi Tower* ➔ *via San Giocondo and the ancient ecclesiastical district* ➔ *piazza Papa Giovanni XXIII and the Cathedral* ➔ *the Cryptoporticus* ➔ *Porta Praetoria* ➔ *Roman Theatre*



The **Arch of Augustus** **2** **F3**, dedicated to the victory over the Salassi in 25 B.C., strikes the visitor, today as then, with the majesty of its single-arched structure, framed by half-columns with Corinthian capitals, majestic in its height of almost 12 metres. The arch was enriched with statues and trophies which have been plundered or removed in the course of the centuries. In the Middle Ages, the monument became a place of Christian worship; the locals would go there to pray to the image of the *Saint-Vouût* of Christ towering above, take vows and invoke graces. The cross below the vault is a copy of the one placed there in 1449 as a votive offering for the danger of flooding of the river Buthier. The original is in the Museum of the Treasure in the Cathedral.



Walking along the lively *via Sant’Anselmo* **E3**, stop at number 66: a plaque there commemorates Sant’Anselmo, perhaps Aosta’s most famous and illustrious personage, a Benedictine monk and leading exponent of medieval philosophy.



ST. ANSELM

St. Anselm was born in Gressan, near Aosta, in 1033. From his early childhood he expressed a strong religious faith although his hostile father had different plans for him. Around the age of 20 Anselm left Aosta and entered the abbey of Notre-Dame du Bec as a monk. Thanks to his qualities as a man of faith and refined intellectual, he became prior and then abbot of the abbey. At the age of 60, he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury where he was buried in 1109.

Considered one of the most significant figures in medieval culture and spirituality, Anselm is best known for his arguments demonstrating the existence of God; his philosophical thought is based on the close relationship between reason and faith: they are not in contrast with each other but, on the contrary, the former is a fundamental instrument for understanding and strengthening the latter.



Turn right into via **Sant'Orso**, a dive into medieval spirituality awaits you!

The **Collegiate Church of Saints Peter and Orso**   in piazza Sant'Orso (admission every day from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. - Partially accessible to the disabled, if accompanied) is one of the most important places of worship in the entire Alpine area, a destination of choice, together with the Cathedral, for pilgrims on the Via Francigena. The origins of the church are rooted in early Christian times. Named after Saints Peter and Orso, it was commissioned by Bishop Anselm I at the turn of the year 1000 and restored by Prior George of Challant in the 15th century. It accommodates some real treasures: the mighty quadrangular **bell tower**, originally erected in the town's defence, with its three elegant, superimposed trifora, ending with a four-light window, capitals and pyramidal cusp, the ogival **late-Gothic portal**, the cycle of beautiful 11th century A.D. **frescoes**, hidden and



protected for centuries by a 15th century ceiling, the late-Gothic frescoes of **St. Sebastian** at the bottom of the right nave, the wooden stalls of the **choir**, the 16th century **polychrome stained glass windows** and finally the perfectly preserved 11th century **crypt**.

See the frescoes from the artist's perspective, rather than from below: how many small details can be discovered!



But what has most captured our imagination is the **mosaic**, dating back to the first half of the 12th century in front of the choir. The enigmatic inscription **ROTAS OPERA TENET AREPO SATOR** immediately conjures up the mysterious atmosphere of medieval literature: the verse is not only palindromic, i.e. readable the same in both directions, but, if written as a square, it is also readable from top to bottom and vice versa: it is the version in letters of a numerical magic square. There is no unique translation and we like the idea that the Magic Square of the Sator remains a mystery: we will just tell you that "**sator**" means "sower": for the rest everyone can let their imagination run riot!





The play of light and shade between the columns: that's the mystical charm of this place!

The **Cloister**, to the right of the Collegiate Church, is a veritable jewel. Its construction dates back to 1132. Splendid capitals, made of white marble, later covered with a protective dark varnish, on finely decorated columns in local blue-grey marble (bardiglio of Aymavilles). Walk in silence along the colonnade, admire scenes from the New and Old Testament, episodes from the life of Saint Orso, imaginative characters and animals, and enjoy the intense atmosphere of spirituality that you breathe.

Coming out of the cloister to the left of the parvise, stands the **Priory**. Prior George of Challant did not limit himself to the Collegiate Church and Cloister: he wanted his residence to be representative and present a decidedly spectacular effect, the symbol of his spiritual and temporal power. He chose a mix of new and old style, leaving nothing to chance: the Renaissance façade with its windows decorated with terracotta tiles (an absolute novelty for the period), the coats of arms and heraldic symbols of his family, the octagonal tower and ogives in pure Gothic style, and finally the small, intimate chapel with frescoes on chivalric and religious themes.



Paleochristian Basilica and Church of San Lorenzo   (partially accessible to the disabled if accompanied). Beneath the deconsecrated church of San Lorenzo, today a venue for art exhibitions, stands the cruciform early Christian basilica, called Concilium Sanctorum, Assembly of Saints, a place of worship and burial. Here was found the tomb of San Grato (5th century), patron saint of the city.

On the way out, pause for breath under the splendid linden tree which, tradition has it, was planted almost 500 years ago to replace an elm tree planted by Sant'Orso himself. Despite its age and the adverse weather conditions, it returns to bloom every spring, flooding the piazzetta with its unmistakable scent.

In via Guido Rey, at the north-east corner of the city walls, you will find the **20** **Balivi Tower** **E2**, or the *Tour du Baillage*: from 1263 home to the political official of the House of Savoy, then a courthouse at the beginning of the 15th century, and finally a prison until 1984. Today it is the seat of the Superior Institute of Musical Studies of the Aosta Valley.

For those who, like ourselves, adore the medieval atmosphere, we suggest a short detour to **via San Giocondo** **D3**, the heart of the ancient ecclesiastical quarter, a quiet, intimate street, marked by long walls that used to hide (and still partly do) gardens, vegetable gardens and orchards.



In Pope John XXIII Square, we find the **9** **Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta**, *Cathédrale Notre-Dame de l'Assomption* **D3** (weekdays 6.30 a.m.-12 p.m. / 3 p.m.-7 p.m.; Sundays and public holidays 7 a.m.-12 p.m. / 3 p.m.- 7 p.m.

Admission free), the city's main place of worship. The church was built around the year 1000 at the behest of Bishop Anselm I on the structure of an early Christian *Domus Ecclesiae*. What we see today is the result of interventions done over the centuries. Of the ancient church there remain the mosaics of the choir floor, the crypt, the frescoes rediscovered only last century in the space between the roof and the 15th century vaults and the two

bell towers which, although later modified by the Gothic cusp and the four corner pinnacles at the top, maintain their typically Romanesque appearance. From the neoclassical façade with the statues of Saints Giocondo and Anselm, we move on to the Renaissance façade inside the atrium, which is striking for its chromatic riches. Inside, the beautiful reliquary case of San Grato, second bishop of Aosta and patron saint of the city.



The **Cathedral Treasure Museum** (*visitable during cathedral opening hours - contact the custodian - accessible to the disabled*) houses masterpieces of sacred art belonging to the Cathedral and to other churches in the diocese. The **cycle of frescoes from the attic** (*not accessible to the disabled*): with scenes from the Old and New Testament and the stories of St. Eustace is, together with the frescoes of the Collegiate Church of Saint Orso, one of the most extensive painting complexes we have dating back to the year 1000.



The garden that opens on to the square leads to the **10** **forensic Cryptoporticus** **D3** (*not accessible to the disabled*), a quadrangular horseshoe shaped underground building that serves the purpose of supporting an above-ground portico, levelling the ground and delimiting the sacred area dedicated to the cults of imperial Rome. A truly suggestive place and another of the priceless gifts of *Augusta Praetoria*.

Walking along via Hôtel des États, here we are finally at the throbbing heart of the city, **piazza Chanoux** **D3**, a meeting place, in all seasons, for ceremonies, parties, markets, concerts and events. It is the artistic expression of a "modern"

urban redevelopment, which began under Charles Albert of Savoy (to whom it was initially dedicated) and then extended to all the elegant nineteenth-century buildings that give on to it, including the palace on the south side, once site of the luxurious Hôtel de la Couronne et de la Poste, the home of the writer Xavier de Maistre and the neoclassical building on the north side that houses the Town Hall.



ÉMILE CHANOUX

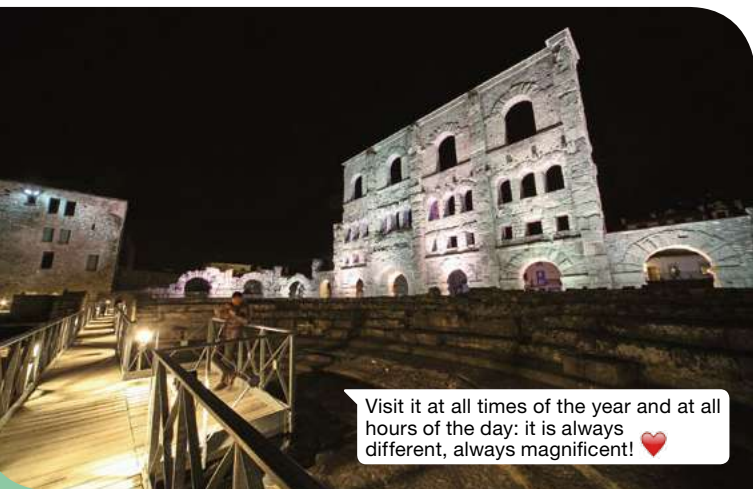
Émile Chanoux was a martyr and hero of the Valdostan Resistance, rightly celebrated by the city where he lived and died, killed by the German SS at the age of only 38. A convinced anti-fascist, he graduated in law at a very young age, not by chance with a thesis on ethnic minorities. He founded the clandestine National Liberation Committee of Aosta which was headquartered in his notary's office. Arrested by the police and subjected to ferocious torture, he died in prison on 18 May 1944.

Going along the last stretch of the decumanus maximus, we return to the era we began with.

Set between two mighty square towers stands the imposing **6** **Porta Praetoria E3**, the eastern gateway. It makes something of an impression passing under it: the road was wide, almost 13 metres: pedestrians on the sides, carts in the centre in two directions: even back then there was no lack of traffic!



We've kept the best to the end: the **Roman Theatre 7 E3** (via Porta Praetoria, corner of via du Baillage - accessible to the disabled), in our opinion the most striking place in the whole city. The only external wall to have survived the trials of time is the southern facade, but that's still enough to remain carried away. With its 22 metres in height, buttresses, arches and three superimposed orders of windows of various shapes and sizes, it stands out majestically against the mountains and the sky. In the area you can see the remains of the entire structure: the auditorium, the semicircular terraces able to pack in close to four thousand spectators, the stage (orchestra), 10 metres in radius, and the stage wall, of which only the foundations are left, but which once astounded the public with its rich array of marble, columns and statues. It is said that in 1833, for the construction of the town hall, it was proposed to use the theatre as a stone quarry: Prior Jean-Antoine Gal is said to have walked to Turin to talk to King Charles Albert himself, to stop the outrage!

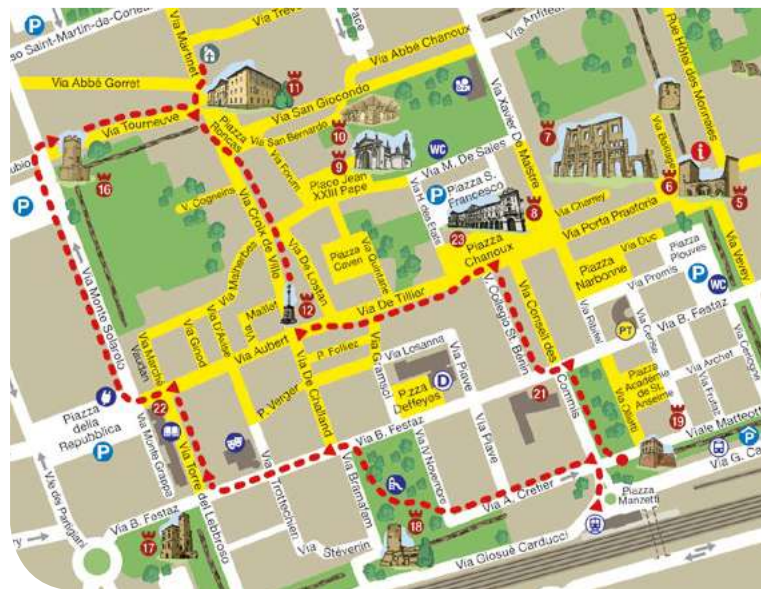


Visit it at all times of the year and at all hours of the day: it is always different, always magnificent! ❤️

Independent itineraries /2

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE ROMAN WALLS IN THE DISCOVERY OF HISTORIC REMAINS, UNUSUAL CORNERS AND LESSER KNOWN AREAS

Railway station ➔ Bramafam Tower ➔ via Festaz ➔ Leper's Tower ➔ piazza della Repubblica ➔ Tourmeuve ➔ piazza Roncas and via Martinet ➔ via Croix de Ville ➔ via E. Aubert and via Jean B. De Tillier ➔ the Bicara district ➔ piazza Chanoux ➔ via Collegio Saint Bénin ➔ viale Conseil des Commis ➔ Pailleron Tower ➔ Railway station





The **railway station 18 E4**, with its sober façade and elegant cast iron shelters, was inaugurated on 4 July 1886, a memorable date in the history of the city: on the same day, in fact, the streets of Aosta were illuminated for the first time by electric lighting. In short, we might say that in the brand new station, renamed “the cathedral of progress”, the train of modernity had arrived, and right on time!


Proceeding along via Cretier, we come upon the imposing **18** **Bramafam Tower D4** (11th-13th century), residence of the Lords of Challant. Next to the central body with its mullioned windows, arched gate and adjoining drawbridge (no longer there) stands the Guelph crenellated tower, which stood on the bastion of the right main gate of the Roman walls. Legend has it that the tower was called *Bramafam*, from the patois “*bramé la fam*”, “to cry out for hunger”, because inside it was locked and left to die of starvation the hapless wife of the Lord



of Challant, who was consumed by jealousy. According to another version, less suggestive but in our opinion decidedly more realistic, during the long winters of famine the exhausted population would gather under the Tower to shout their hunger and despair to the feudal lord. The inside of the tower cannot be visited.

Continuing along via Festaz, we arrive at the **Leper's Tower**  **D4** (*Tour du Lépreux*) (12th century). A feudal residence built on an ancient Roman bastion, known as the *Tour de la frayeur* (the Tower of fright), it was later renamed *Tour du Lépreux*, in memory of Pietro Bernardo Guasco, who was imprisoned there, together with other members of his family, all suffering from leprosy, to prevent the contagion spreading in the city. His story inspired Xavier de Maistre for his novel "Le lépreux de la cité d'Aoste" published in Paris in 1811. The tower is not visitable at the moment.


The imposing mass of the former Palazzo Littorio, today the headquarters of the Department of Productive Activities, welcomes us in **piazza della Repubblica**  **C4**. Built in 1939 by the architect Giuseppe Momo, the palace, together with the bronze Capitoline she-wolf that since 1940 has stood atop the 15-metre granite column, is the main example of Fascist architecture in the city, legacy of a regime that wanted to make Aosta "the Rome of the Alps" again.

Once past the **Tour Neuve**  **D6**, you arrive in **piazza Leonardo Roncas** **D3**, site of the *Porta Principalis sinixtra* and access to the city from the north. In the recently renovated square, you will find the 17th century palace of the same name (currently not open to visitors), rich in priceless frescoes, the convent of the Ladies of the Visitation, now home to the Regional Archaeological Museum and a choreographic water wheel, a reminder of the ancient mill that once stood on the *Mère des Rives*, an irrigation canal from Roman times, now underground.

MAR - Museo Archeologico Regionale  **D3** (**Regional Archaeological Museum**) (*site accessible to the disabled, mar@regione.vda.it*). The museum offers a thematic chronological timeline from the Mesolithic period to the High Middle Ages and contains some real treasures, especially from Roman times. The **Andrea Pautasso Numismatic Collection** is remarkable: 2500 years of history told through a collection of coins from the Greeks to the Savoyes. The Celtic, Padane and Gallic coins are true rarities. The remains of the *Porta Principalis sinixtra* are visible underground.

A few steps from the square, in via Jean-Laurent Martinet, stands the **church of Santo Stefano** **D3**: the façade, with its recently restored 18th century frescoes, is truly beautiful. Inside, the magnificent baroque altar, the choir stalls and the 4.6 metre tall wooden statue of St. Christopher from the 15th century, carved in a single block.



Walking down **via Croix de Ville** brings you to **Calvin's Cross**  **D3**, in front of the Waldensian Evangelical Church. In 1541, to celebrate the expulsion of the Calvinists from the Aosta Valley, the citizens were ordered to paint the name of Jesus on all their front doors and this stone cross was erected as a memento.

Via Aubert and via De Tillier have their starting points at the crossroads and the ancient *faubourgs* "Bicaria" and "Malconseil", today as then, full of thriving commercial activities, wind their way through alleys and lanes with a picturesque medieval flavour. A curiosity: the Bicaria district, from the French *boucherie*, butcher's shop, was so called because of the presence there of the cattle market and slaughterhouse.



At the end of via De Tillier, from piazza Chanoux, take via Collegio di Saint-Bénin: you will arrive at the **Saint-Bénin Centre**  **E3**, via Festaz 27, seat of the former Benedictine priory, of which only the 12th century Romanesque bell tower is still standing today. Here the young Saint Anselm received his first teachings. Transformed by Pope Clement VIII into a College of Higher Studies in 1597, it was for centuries the cultural centre of the town. The deconsecrated Church is today an interesting modern art museum (*accessible to the disabled*). Not to be missed is the room dedicated to **Innocenzo Manzetti**, a brilliant, multifaceted inventor who lived in Aosta in the mid-19th century, unjustly largely forgotten by history. Take a close look at the incredible flute-playing automaton that he constructed in 1840 at the age of only 14: don't you think that its almost "human" appearance is its most exciting feature?



Finally, going down via Conseil des Commis before returning to our starting point, turn your gaze up again to the southern side of the Roman walls and the **Pailleron Tower**  **E4**, so called because it was long used as a barn: it is the best preserved Roman tower of all the walls.

INNOCENZO MANZETTI

Who invented the phone? Graham Bell? No, Antonio Meucci, everybody knows that!

That's not exactly how it is: the discovery really seems to belong to Innocenzo Manzetti who in 1865 created an electrical device able to communicate at a distance using the principle of electromagnetic induction.

At the time, Italian and foreign newspapers made a lot of noise about it, but Manzetti was unable to file the patent and when he died, in 1877 his invention had just been attributed to Alexander Graham Bell.

Itineraries outside the city / 1

AMONG VINEYARDS AND CASTLES TO THE HEART OF THE GRAN PARADISO

Sarre Castle ➔ Aymavilles ➔ Pont d'Aël ➔ Cogne ➔ Gran Paradiso National Park ➔ Jovençon



Just a few kilometres outside the built-up area of Aosta and you are in a different dimension, where nature rules: woods, sweeping green fields, orchards and vineyards surround us.

The first stop is **Sarre**. King Vittorio Emanuele II was so struck by it that in 1869 he bought the **Castle** (built in the 13th century) and turned it into one of his hunting residences. Even today you can admire the trophies of the “hunter king”, the sculptures, furnishings, books and memorabilia on display in the royal rooms.



At the entrance to Cogne valley we find **Aymavilles and its Castle**. Situated on a hill and surrounded by a beautiful park, the building is a mixture of medieval fortress and baroque residence: the original complex dates back to the 13th century, but it was Amadeus de Challant between the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century, and Joseph Felix de Challant, in the first half of the 18th century, whose interventions gave it the appearance it has today.



TOUR VINEYARDS AND WINE CELLARS BY E-BIKE



What could be healthier than cycling alone or with the whole family on a beautiful spring, summer or autumn day? If you don't have your bike with you, the **Cave des Onze Communes cooperative** in Frazione Urbains, Aymavilles, offers a Tour of the Vineyards, 6 itineraries on a pedal-assisted bicycle, to discover its vineyards, located in Villeneuve, Aymavilles, Jovençon, Aosta, Sarre and Saint-Pierre. An experience to be tried!



In the vicinity of the tiny village of **Pont d'Aël**, you will be really captivated by one of the most spectacular monuments in the Aosta Valley: the **Roman aqueduct bridge** over the Grand-Eyvia stream. A great hydraulic project about 56 metres high that allowed the passage of water and, through a lower walkway, the transit of people and animals. As indicated by the inscription on the north face, the work was done in 3 B.C. by Caius Avillius Caimus, an exponent of a wealthy family of Paduan entrepreneurs dedicated to the management of the Aymavilles marble quarries.



Cogne, indeed, *Veulla* in patois: more beautiful in summer or winter? Impossible to decide! 😊📍

Continue into the valley for another twenty kilometres or so between the high walls of conifers and the sharp peaks of the Grivola and Grand Nomenon and you will reach **Cogne**, a renowned tourist centre in the heart of the Gran Paradiso National Park.

Take a walk through the town: the church of Sant'Orso, the *Meson di Pits* where the women of the Cooperative "Les Dentellières" make their precious bobbin lace, up to the **Prato di Sant'Orso**, which in our opinion is worth the trip on its own: a green, broad, sunny meadow, from which you can enjoy an enchanting view of the Gran Paradiso massif with its peak of 4061 metres, deservedly recognised as a Meraviglia Italiana in 2012.



The **Gran Paradiso National Park** is home to an exceptional heritage of mountain flora and fauna.

Treat yourself to a visit to the **Paradisica Alpine Botanical Garden in Valnontey**: especially in June and July this place is a veritable triumph of nature.

Fancy a cool picnic by the water? From Cogne you reach the village of Lillaz and, proceeding along an almost flat path, an easy walk for the whole family, you will reach the **Lillaz Waterfalls**, 150 metres high, with three levels of cascades flowing from the river Urtier.

On the way back, if you are into natural medicine, stop off at **La Maison Des Anciens Remèdes in Jovençan**, in the hamlet of Les Adams 29 (*open only on Saturdays and Sundays, accessible to the disabled*), and find out all about the ancient healing secrets of Alpine flora and herbs. The 17th century wooden and stone building, once a winter shelter for animals, has, since 2011, been the cradle and memory of the therapeutic practices and knowledge typical of Aosta Valley folk culture.



THE OLD MINES OF THE AOSTA VALLEY



The Aosta Valley boasts a very long history of mining, starting from the time of the Salassi. Many mining sites, abandoned over the years, have been recovered and today offer tourists an exciting journey back in time, to discover how hard life was in the mines.

Don't miss a visit to the **Costa del Pino magnetite mine in Cogne**, with its more than 100 km of tunnels (*for information and reservations: Tour Operators Consortium Cogne Valley +39 0165.74835 e Coop. Mines of Cogne +39 0165.749665 - +39 339.3360670; Tourist*

Office of Cogne +39 0165.74040) and the **mining site of Servette**, in the valley of Saint-Marcel, formerly exploited by the Romans for the mining of pyrite and calcopyrite. Magical places, where time seems to have stood still: tunnels, dormitories, offices, everyday objects, work tools, even a small period train with trailer trolleys still in operation. Visits are possible with compulsory booking and with qualified guide only.



Itineraries outside the city /2

CASTLES AND STARRY SKIES: LET'S ALL GO BACK TO CHILDHOOD

Quart → Ru Souverou and Ru Prévôt → Nus → Astronomical Observatory → Fénis



An itinerary that children and teenagers are sure to enjoy, but also perfect for adults who are still open to surprise and excitement.

The first stop is **Quart castle** (*not open to visitors*), fiefdom of the Lords of Quart before being passed on to the Savoy, which dominates the hill and offers a splendid view of the valley below. In summertime, we recommend a walk along the **Ru Souverou and Ru Prévôt**, the medieval irrigation canals. The route, suitable for everyone, connects the Castle to the **Mater Misericordiae Monastery** of Villair di Quart, inaugurated in 1989 by John Paul II, the pope who was so fond of these parts. All around you the majestic grandeur of the Pennine and Graie Alps: from Mount Zerbion, to the *Ladies of Challand* (the Becca Torché and its twin the Becca di Vlou), to the group of peaks of Mont Avic to those of Mont Emilius. Truly breathtaking.



When the apple and cherry trees are in bloom, these places celebrate the triumph of scents and colours! 🍏🍒

The second stop is the **Astronomical Observatory of the Aosta Valley Region** and the **Planetarium**, in Lignan. Once past the village of Nus, the road starts to climb and offers glimpses of vineyards, small hamlets and open plains. We are sure you will stop many times to take a picture! The **Astronomical Observatory** offers day and night activities (from the Heliophysics Laboratory for the observation of the Sun, to the Teaching Balcony with its seven telescopes, to the Star Theatre for observing



the sky with the naked eye using special laser pointers), while the **Lignan Planetarium** will take you on a journey through the Universe, among constellations, nebulae and galaxies. The night-time visit is particularly spectacular: on clear evenings you will really feel as if you were touching the Milky Way with a finger!

From Nus we move to **Fénis**: the **Castle** (*not accessible to the disabled*), is located on a small knoll, without natural defences. It was the prestigious seat of the Challant family, equipped with impressive defences and exquisite pictorial and architectural elements, symbols of the family's prestige.



Along the road, just outside Nus, the monument to the Vignerons, the winegrowers of the Aosta Valley. 🍷👍 Truly original!

After a well-deserved stop at the "Tzanté de Bouva" picnic area near the Castle (for you a breathtaking view, for the little ones a well-equipped play area), we recommend a visit to the **MAV Museum of the Aosta Valley Traditional Craftworks**, Villa Montana - Hameau Chez Sapin 86 in the village of Fénis.

LEARNING THROUGH WOODWORK, IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY AT THE MAV



If your children can't wait to give vent to their creativity, let them take part in the "Learning through Woodwork" workshops at the MAV. A real kid-friendly workshop, where our budding creatives, with benches and authentic craftsmen's tools, are given free rein to express their creativity under the guidance of experienced craftsmen, unleash their imagination and create unique and certainly... unrepeatable pieces! (For information and reservations: **MAV - Aosta Valley Museum of Traditional Craftwork** +39 0165.764276 and Aosta Tourist Office +39 0165.236627)



Itineraries outside the city /3

UP TOWARDS THE GREAT ST. BERNARD PASS AND A LOOK INTO SWITZERLAND

Aosta ➔ Étroubles ➔ Gran San Bernardo Pass ➔ Martigny



Beautiful day in mid-summer? Then it's the ideal time for a trip to the **Great St. Bernard pass**, the Alpine pass of the Pennine Alps, at 2473 m above sea level, which connects Aosta and the Great St. Bernard valley with Martigny and the Swiss Val d'Entremont.



Crossing the Great St. Bernard Valley against its breathtaking backdrop, you come across delightful villages where time seems to have stood still. Indulge in a stroll to **Étroubles**, with its enchanting medieval village and **open-air museum**, a permanent contemporary art gallery set up in collaboration with the prestigious **Fondation Gianadda in Martigny**, or make a tasty stop in the village of **Saint-Rhémy-en-Bosses**, famous for its spicy raw ham with mountain herbs.

On reaching the top, surrounded by the powerful beauty of Nature and faced with the majestic statue of Saint Bernard, we are almost taken aback by a deep sense of godliness. The Pass is a mystical, evocative place, where history and spirituality have been intertwined since ancient times. How many soldiers, pilgrims, merchants have crossed it over the centuries and with what means! From the first Celtic tribes who honoured the god Penn, to the Romans who built a temple here in honour of Jupiter Pennino, to the pilgrims who struggled to climb the pass following the ancient Via Francigena, up to Napoleon who in May 1800, during the second Italian campaign, led his army through it on his way to conquest.

ST. BERNARD OF AOSTA, PATRON SAINT OF TRAVELLERS



Saint Bernard of Aosta is the patron saint of mountaineers and travellers. Around 1050, Bernard gathered round him a congregation of Augustinian canons and built a Hospice to shelter wayfarers and pilgrims. Beginning in the 16th century, the Canons of the Great St. Bernard began breeding large rescue dogs.

The dog Barry, as the ancestor of the St. Bernard was called, was a breed particularly suited to the mountains and soon became the rescue dog par excellence.

During the summer, some of these splendid specimens are present in the Hospice, to the delight especially of the little ones.

Inside the **Hospice** is a small but extraordinary church. The Treasury room displays some beautiful sacred objects which belonged to the congregation of monks. The Museum, located in front of the Hospice, leads us to the discovery of the age-old history of these places. The Roman statuette of Jupiter Pennino is exquisite.

The summit of the pass is already on Swiss territory, so why not go down to **Martigny**, in the Valais canton, for a stroll through the elegant streets of the centre, enjoy some excellent food sitting in the open-air bistros, admire the Rhone Valley and, to the delight of the little ones, enter the magical world of **Barryland**, at the **Barry Foundation of the Great St. Bernard** - Rue du Levant 34 - to make the acquaintance of the Saint Bernard dogs and their irresistible puppies?



At the Infopoint of the Barry Foundation in Aosta, via Martinet 19, you will find all the information you need on events taking place in Martigny: don't miss the treasure hunts and nature walks with a trusty Saint Bernard at your side! *(For information and reservations: **Fondation Barry** +41 (0) 583177700 or info@fondation-barry.ch)*



Itineraries outside the city /4

VALPELLINE, CONCA DI BY, PLACE MOULIN DAM, POSTCARD AOSTA VALLEY

Aosta → Valpelline → Place Moulin Dam



A plunge into the Aosta Valley at its most picturesque, that of green valleys in bloom, placid cows grazing, delightful villages that look like paintings, with geraniums at the windows and the inevitable pointed-roof church.



From the main road that leads from Aosta to the Great St. Bernard, turning right at the junction of the township of Variney, you reach **Valpelline** (960 m), immersed in vast meadows and orchards. Wandering through its small hamlets, admiring the long wooden balconies of the houses, the slow rhythms of rural life and the sounds of nature, serenity pervades you.



Fond of fishing? Along the river Buthier, in the stretch that runs from the Ru Pompillard intake structure at Prailles to the Champette canal intake, you will find a trout fishing reserve about 3 kilometres long.

Formed by stretches in the stream and a small lake basin, the reserve is set in an exquisite naturalistic context.

In Prailles, an extensive green area equipped with a refreshment point and a playground for children, is the ideal place to chill out for the whole family.



THE ORIGIN OF FONTINA, QUEEN OF CHEESES



If you want to learn all about the secrets of Aosta Valley's most famous D.O.P. cheese, Valpelline is the right place to be! In the hamlet of Frissonnière go to the **Fontina Visitors Centre**: exhibition rooms, multimedia spaces and video projections tell the story of the production phases of the queen of Aosta Valley cheeses. Really spectacular are the **maturing warehouses** dug into the rock, one of which had once been an ancient copper mine.

Also worth a visit is the **Conca di By farm** in Frazione Glassier di Ollomont (1335 m) where, thanks to the passion of eight local producers, the best alpine tome and fontina cheeses are made.



The colour of the lake water is incredible, a dazzlingly shiny turquoise under the rays of the sun!

But the day offers other emotions: from Valpelline you pass by Bionaz, until the mighty arched wall of the Place Moulin dam, built in 1965 to regulate the hydroelectric plant, suddenly appears. From the car park, a walk of about an hour, flat and suitable for everyone, leads to the **Prarayer hut** (2005 m), the starting point for magnificent hikes, some of which can be decidedly challenging.

For enthusiasts, we recommend the walk to the Livournea lake, which takes you almost right round the artificial lake, or the hike to the Valcornera pass (3075 m), to enjoy the splendid view of the Valtournenche. On your way, then, but watch out!!





Shopping in Aosta, unique temptations

After nourishing spirit and mind and flooding our eyes with so much beauty, we definitely deserve a good dose of relaxation and fun.

Let's start with some shopping, which in Aosta is really easy and entertaining! Via Sant'Anselmo, via Porta Praetoria, piazza Chanoux, via Croix de Ville, via Jean-Baptiste De Tillier and via Edouard Aubert: these are the main shopping streets in the city where you can hunt out traditional treasures, artistic creations and local products: there is something for everyone.

Shops, workshops, ateliers: take all the time you need to go in, browse around and talk with the shopkeepers and artisans: we guarantee that you will find friendliness and courtesy and a great desire to tell you, with pride, their story and maybe some little



secret of their activity.

The most iconic objects? The *grolla*, the wooden friendship cup, felt slippers and clogs. But the object that we liked best is the "Tatà" (a term in patois derived from the childish expression "taa-ta"), a little horse on wooden wheels, a toy very popular with local children long ago.

Not to be missed are the ateliers and art galleries scattered around the city,

where artists and craftsmen give life to creations that combine innovation and tradition. Go into the workshops, smell the glue, colours, wood, emotions are guaranteed.

As for local products, then, you will be spoilt for choice: cold cuts and sausages, cheeses and traditional sweets, jams, honey, DOC white and red wines, craft beers, liqueurs.

So, what's keeping us back? Let's go shopping!



The small creative workshops in the centre of Aosta

What could be better than a quiet stroll through the streets of the old town centre in search of a small piece of the Aosta Valley to take home? Every shop has a story to tell and a soul to discover. Here we will point out only some of them, we will leave the fun of discovering many more to you!

At number 70 of via sant'Anselmo, we were spellbound in front of the delightful **I mercanti di luce**, and its display of creative productions done by the young people of the Valley: candles, candle holders, perfumers, household objects and coloured wooden bijoux, all different, all beautiful.



On the opposite side of the street, at number 75, the herbalist's **La Botanique** offers beauty and health products made with herbs and flowers from the Aosta Valley. Creams, soaps and special balsamic ointments.

At **D'Socka**, in via Porta Praetoria 44, you have to try on all the warm, comfortable and colourful cloth slippers made by the Cooperative of the same name according to the ancient tradition of the women of Gressoney. A classic product of ancient Valdostan *savoir faire*.



In via Croix de Ville, at number 75, Anna Maria Malavolti, **Minel**, will grab your attention with her artisan, strictly handmade leather creations: bags, backpacks, wallets. The colourful, fun key-rings shaped like the bird of St. Orso are irresistible.



At via De Tillier 3, go and hunt out **Laura Giuffrè** goldsmith's workshop.

The tiny showcase is not enough to contain the world of Laura. So go inside and discover her line of jewels in gold and aged Aosta Valley wood. The contrast between two such different materials (cold and precious one, warm and simple the other) leads to some really special creations.

What did we like the most? The toy horse-shaped pendants, of course!

SAVOIR FAIRE IN VALLE D'AOSTA



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT SAVOIR FAIRE?

Download the video from L'Artisanà's Youtube channel de L'Artisanà



For an overview of the entire panoply of traditional Aosta Valley craftsmanship, a must-see is the shop **L'Artisanà** of the **Institut Valdôtain de l'Artisanat de Tradition**, in piazza Chanoux: objects in turned or carved wood, soapstone, ceramics and wrought iron as well as bobbin lace, loom-woven woollen scarves, traditional cloth slippers.

Originally L'Artisanà was the point to which, after the Fair of Sant'Orso, artisans brought their products to be put on display and sold throughout the rest of the year.

Today it is a body that deals with the cultural and commercial dissemination of handicrafts. Apart from the outlet in Aosta there are three other shops in the region where you will find artefacts of the age-old tradition of the Aosta Valley, marked to guarantee origin and authenticity.

In Gignod, Fraz. Caravex 2, about ten kilometres from Aosta, you can visit the **MAIN - Maison de l'Artisanat International** - an exhibition space dedicated to traditional crafts, a meeting place that puts on an abundance of events, exhibitions and temporary shows.

Hunting for Artists

Joël Balan, a creative following in his father's footsteps, exhibits works by his father Franco, famed artist and designer, as well as works by others, including foreigners, in the Atelier Balan in Aosta (+39 347.2348055). His "Paralumi d'Autore" crafted with care and passion exclusively from the drawings of his father are highly original.



In his atelier in via Sant'Orso 1 (+39 347.0057902), **Ezio Bordet** does mixed media panels on pressed cardboard. He rejects the definition of painter and prefers to describe himself as a draftsman who paints, creates and invents. His paintings preferably depict moments from the rural tradition of the Aosta Valley, in memory of his childhood spent in the small village of Pontboset.

Franco Grobberio, an authentic Aostan, defines his painting as "domestic surrealism, imbued with a dreamlike and at times melancholic vein". In his workshop in via Bramafam 22 (+39 348.6958960), in addition to painting, he also explores other artistic techniques, creating exquisite painted wooden toy sculptures, joyful and sunny, firmly rooted in the territory and tradition of the Aosta Valley.



The **Inartendu** art gallery at number 6 via Martinet (+39 0165.45977), right in the historic centre, is a landmark for all modern art lovers: the owners, **Luciano Seghesio** and **Daniela Grivon**, creative artists in their own right, are on the lookout for young talents to discover and promote, adding them to a consolidated group of established Aosta Valley artists on permanent display. The rich programme of temporary exhibitions set up throughout the year guarantees that its showcase of artists and works is constantly renewed. Consult their Facebook page to keep up to date.



Chicco Margaroli, rue Hôtel des Monnaies 22 (+39 328.6680500), will welcome you to her studio where, in addition to paintings and trompe-l'œil, she creates imaginative, entirely hand painted shoes with very fine brushes and an exclusive mix of ultra-resistant polymers. One-off pieces, all different, from soques, the age-old Valdostan shoe, to ballet flats, boots and slippers.



Dzoyé in patois means "play", but it is also the phonetic root of "joy". And joy and love are what you breathe in this happy little corner.

Raffaella Moniotto's shop-laboratory, *Gatta cova* in rue Croix de Ville 46 (+39 0165.44106), is a magical, fairy-tale place that sweeps you back into childhood. Raffaella proudly calls herself a "craftswoman" but in reality she is a true artist: she paints on wood and canvas, writes fairy tales and, in collaboration with a master upholsterer, creates unique, beautiful furniture.

All her creations are permeated by her delicate sensitivity in re-interpreting traditional Aosta Valley iconography: for us it was love at first sight!



Bobo Pernetta, in via Voison 9 (+39 329.2668453), is a "woodwork tailor", as he likes to call himself.

He inherited his love for wood from his uncle, the village carpenter. Exhausted, corroded and worm-eaten woods are "sewn" to other materials, even unlikely ones such as fabrics, old iron sheets, objects of memory from everyday life, playing with their textures and colours. Hard to explain in words, go and see for yourself!

The specialist food shops

You can't go home without an enogastronomic reminder of a territory that is so rich in unique products. Here are some suggestions, it's up to you to complete the shopping list!



The **Alpenzu** artisanal workshop in via Croix de Ville 8, offers a vast range of products from the best Aosta Valley tradition: jams, honey, sauces, appetisers, wines, liqueurs and much more.

The **Bottega degli Antichi Sapori**, in via Porta Praetoria 63, is a true feast for the senses! Entering the shop you are almost stunned (especially if you are hungry) by the aromas and scents. Cold cuts, sausages, cheeses and then wines, jams, chocolate, all there to be tasted!

In the adjacent **Bar à vin**, in a cosily suggestive setting, you can have an aperitif or taste typical dishes prepared with the best local products.

Still in via Porta Praetoria, at number 3, the **caseificio Nicoletta** has been offering its own dairy products for over 30 years, as well as a discerning selection of other typical products from the region.

In the small shop **L'Erbavoglio**, in via Monseigneur de Sales 14, the agronomist owner Stefano Lunardi, offers a selection of more than 80 types of cheese, the result of the painstaking work of small valley producers.

Real specialties, some of which are kept in the cellar under the shop where the cheeses are matured, brushed and turned, according to tradition.

The **Bottegaccia di Luca e Danila** in via Sant'Anselmo 90 not only sells top quality cold cuts and cheeses but is also a popular meeting point, a friendly, well-stocked winebar for a tasty stop.



In corso Lancieri d'Aosta 13, **Agrival** produces before your eyes, jams and marmalades prepared according to tradition without thickeners or additives. Classic flavours and innovative ideas: a real gem is the Apple and Habanero jam to go with meats and cheeses.

For Luisa Silvestri chocolate is poetry and speaks of her Aosta Valley. Must tries are the chocolate bars **Poésie Chocolat Artisanal de Montagne** that you will find in many shops in town, with umpteen taste variations and combinations. Our favourite? A classic, the "75% dark chocolate" if you are to fully appreciate the scent and taste of real chocolate.

Fancy popping in to the supermarket? In Aosta (and only in Aosta), there is the **Gros Cidac**, in via Paravera 4, where you will find a wide assortment of local products of guaranteed quality at affordable prices.

Just outside the city, in Saint-Christophe, rue Croix Noire 19, stop off at the **Cooperativa Produttori Latte e Fontina** shop where you will find, in addition to Fontina itself, fresh tommini, goat or sheep cheese, Toma di Gressoney, beuro colò, walnut oil, jams, motsetta cured meat and a wide selection of mountain honeys.



A passion for wine!

Aosta is spoilt for choice: there are multiple wine shops where even the most demanding customers will find the right label for their palate.

Stop off at the **L'Uva e Un Quarto** wine shop in via Challand 21/a or at **La Vineria** in via Sant'Anselmo 121 for a rich selection of local wines, liqueurs and spirits to take home or taste directly on site, expertly accompanied by traditional dishes and cutting boards.

Making wine in the city centre? Yes, in Aosta this happens too! The **Cantina Tanteun e Marietta** run by the two Marcoz brothers boasts a production of 10,000 bottles of white and red DOC wines. Book a visit with tasting in the winery in via Vevey 23, you will be enchanted!



THE MARKETS



If, like us, you love the lively atmosphere of markets, where colours, voices and smells joyfully intermingle, then on the second Sunday of the month head over to the arcades of piazza Chanoux for **Lo Tsaven Campagna Amica**, the market that promotes traditional Valdostan food products: the DOPs, the DOCs and, of course, organic products.

For our lesson in patois: *Tsaven* means basket, the inevitable "accessory" of every housewife and farmer of the Aosta Valley of yesteryear!



Fondue, polenta concia, civet: what a delight for the palate! 😊



Aosta, a delight for the senses

One good way to discover the city and live it to the full is to allow yourself to be guided by your senses, something that Aosta, as it offers up emotions and suggestions difficult to forget, knows how to stimulate.

The taste of a dish, the aroma of a wine, the sound of music or silence, views and panoramas that flood the eyes and heart, and contact with nature in all its elements, conjure up sensations that, better than many words, are able to tell the story of the city and its environs.

Let's start with the cuisine: the delicious traditional dishes such as fondue, Seupa à la Vapelenentse, polenta "concia", carbonade, civet di chamois and Cogne cream will delight your palate with a real blast of taste and flavours.

Let yourself be inebriated by the aroma of local wines: Torrette DOC red, Pinot noir, Chambave red, Nus red, Enfer Arvier, Donnas, the white Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle, Nus Malvoisie, Chambave Muscat. Immerse yourself in the intense aroma of Genepì, *grappa* and *caffè alla valdostana*.

In your ears will remain the sound of the music and festivities that, in winter as in summer, pervades Aosta with joy and the desire for togetherness. Always a crossroads of people and peoples, the city and the entire region are strongly multicultural, thanks also to the fact that they are bilingual. The close contacts with the neighbouring French in Savoy and the Swiss of the Canton of Valais are not only touristic, but also historical, linguistic and cultural. And if you are lucky enough to be able to attend festivals and performances in "patois", the ancient Francoprovençal language, certainly incomprehensible to the majority, you will be able to say that you have really come into contact with the oldest and deepest soul of the city. Finally your eyes will be replete with the beauty of the views and panoramas that you happen upon, almost unexpectedly. Walking through the streets of the city, all you have to do is look up to see the towering peaks of the Becca di Nona, Mount Emilius and the Grand Combin.

And when you climb up to Pila to look at the city from above, admiring the rugged Alpine peaks all round you at 360°, you will really feel one with the place.

Balanced so nicely between mountains and culture, Aosta is a city you don't expect.



Aosta at table

Recommending an eatery in Aosta is not easy: you are truly spoilt for choice between restaurants, historical trattorias, trendy bars, cafes, wine bars. If you have a car, we suggest you also to try the delightful inns and farmhouses in the surrounding area, reachable in a few minutes from the city. The traditional dishes, based on simple, genuine and tasty ingredients such as rye bread, cheese, sausages, butter, polenta, game accompanied by the excellent local wines, red and white, full-bodied and fragrant, must all be tried.

Fonduta is perhaps the most famous dish: whole milk, egg yolks, butter, and, of course, Fontina DOP. Served with bread croutons, preferably black, it is a real blast of flavour and aroma.

Seupa à la Vapelelentse, made with white bread, fontina cheese and meat and cabbage broth, was the typical farmhand's dish, handed down from generation to generation by the women of Valpelline: a simple but truly amazing dish. Perhaps our favourite, and for this reason we challenge you to recreate it with your own hands, according to the traditional recipe!



OFFICIAL RECIPE FOR SEUPA À LA VAPELENTSE



INGREDIENTS FOR FOUR PEOPLE

- 400 grams of white bread (brutto e buono type)
- 400 grams of Fontina
- 150 grams of butter
- a pinch of cinnamon
- 1 ½ litres of meat broth prepared with sage, rosemary, bay leaves, carrots, onions and ¼ of Savoy cabbage

Slice the bread, possibly bought the day before, into slices about 1 cm thick. Cut the fontina cheese into slices about 2/3 mm thick. Butter an oven tray and spread a layer of bread slices closely together, then spread a layer of fontina cheese in the same way, so as to completely cover the bread. Repeat the operation three times. Pour the boiling broth and prick with a fork to make sure it is penetrating well. Add the butter, melted with a pinch of cinnamon on the "seupa". Bake for 40 minutes at 200/220. Be careful, the surface must be golden brown, never burnt. Remove from the oven a few minutes before serving and... enjoy your meal!

FONTINA PDO



Fontina PDO, a beautiful, good, fragrant cheese produced throughout the Valley, according to ancient processing methods, is queen of Aosta Valley cuisine. Eaten alone or used as the main ingredient for some traditional dishes, it is a real joy for the palate. The term fontina appears for the first time, although with a completely different meaning, in a document dated 1270. It is only since 1700 that the term has been used to refer to the cheese. The oldest pictorial evidence of Fontina is to be found in the castle of Issogne, in the lower valley: in a fresco of the late fifteenth, early sixteenth century, a shop is represented on whose counter are displayed cheeses identical to the forms of the Fontina of today.



And to recuperate tastefully on the coldest days? A nice portion of **Polenta Concia alla Valdostana**: abundant fontina cheese and melted butter mixed with steaming polenta: it's definitely the right dish to get your strength back!

Try the delicious **Cutlets alla Valdostana**: meat, Fontina cheese and ham: your children will love them!

Another traditional recipe is **Carbonade**, beef cut into cubes, cooked in wine with onion and bacon: a dish with a strong flavour, to be enjoyed together with a nice helping of steaming polenta and a good glass of strong red wine.

Refined and truly delectable, the **Civet di chamois**, once the 'rich' dish of festivities. A tip: accompany it with potatoes alla valdostana, cooked with water, sage and lots of melted butter.

To close, some traditional sweets: from **Tegole**, hazelnut and almond biscuits, to **Cogne Cream** made with eggs, cream and dark chocolate, to the **Apple and walnut cake** prepared with the delicious rennet apples of the Valley.

Aosta is conviviality, cheerfulness, love for life, and at aperitif time it is there for all to see: down the streets of the centre the multiple clubs, bars and wine bars are crowded all year round with tourists and residents. In the Valley, the ritual of the aperitif is usually accompanied by **rich platters of local cheeses and cold cuts**: among the many delicacies on offer, motsetta, Bosses Ham PDO, Lard d'Arnad PDO, Boudin, and then the local PDO tomas and cheeses.





In addition to the excellent **local wines**, ideal to go with the delicious aperitifs, a special mention must go to the unpasteurised, unfiltered and 100% **natural craft beers** made locally. Barley and wheat malt, hops, yeast and water underlie the production of a good beer. But it is the passion and love of the Valdostan master brewers that make these beers so special.

Offered in many bars and restaurants in the city, the **Bières du Grand Saint Bernard** and the **Bières des Salasses** are well worth a try (outlets: Chez Drink - Les Bières des Salasses, corso Ivrea 95/C Aosta).



If you are in Aosta for the Sant'Orso Fair don't miss the "Sant'Orzo" (barley), the B63 beer prepared just for this fair!



For a really light-hearted evening in company, you really must stop off at the two places that combine beer production and catering: the **B63**, in piazza Caveri, meeting point for residents and tourists in the heart of the city, and the **Birrificcio Aosta**, a brew-pub on the outskirts of Aosta: raw, unfiltered beers prepared with different types of malt, hops and yeast to accompany excellent local or international cuisine.

Finally, to close the evening in the name of one of the most famous and fun traditions, you cannot miss a round of **Coffee alla valdostana**: coffee spiked with grappa, lemon and orange peel, served for all diners in the typical Coppa dell'amicizia (Friendship Cup). Not a normal coffee then, but a moment of conviviality, a real social ritual. The cup is passed round clockwise several times, until the coffee is finished. Watch out, however, tradition has it that the cup, once raised, must never be placed on the table, otherwise it would be a bad omen for the whole company!



Aosta celebrates

CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN TOWN

JANUARY

- The **Sant'Orso Fair**: the most popular celebration of Aosta Valley traditions and creativity has been held every year, on **30 and 31 January** for more than 1000 years. In the streets, among the stalls of the *Atelier des Métiers* and the Food and Wine Pavilion, you breathe pride in work done and love for the land. It is an opportunity for meeting and exchange, a great popular event of music, folklore, good food and good wine, an experience to be lived with intense participation. The night between 30 and 31 everybody piles into the streets until dawn for the traditional *Veilà*, with music, dancing and distribution of free broth and mulled wine.

SANT'ORSO THE ALTRUIST



The **Fèira de Sènt-Or** originated in the *bourg Saint-Ours*, as a celebration of the most beloved Saint in the Valley. Legend has it that Ursus, a humble and selfless man of God, dedicated to work and prayer, would distribute clothes and "*sabots*", the typical wooden shoes still present at the Fair today, to help the poor get through the harsh winters of the Aosta Valley. He cultivated his small patch of land, sharing its fruits with the neediest and in his goodness he did not forget anyone, not even the sparrows, who would come to rest gratefully on his head, on his shoulders, on his hands.



INTERESTED IN THE SANT'ORSO FAIR?

Scan the QR-code and watch the video



MARCH

- **Printemps Théâtral**: eight appointments for **patois theatre**, in collaboration with the association of Aosta Valley folk theatre companies performing in Franco-provençal..

JUNE

- **Historical Race Aosta-Gran San Bernardo**: a car race run for the first time in 1920. Watching the cars come together in piazza Chanoux, hearing them speeding through hairpin bends and corners and seeing them climb up towards the Great Saint Bernard Pass, is an emotion for everyone, not just for fans of historic motor racing.

JULY

- **Aosta Classica**: in the Roman theatre, a rich review of classical, popular, jazz and auteur music. There is something for all tastes and the location is superlative!
- **Théâtre et Lumières**: a show of sound and light that floods the warm summer nights with charm in the splendid setting of the Roman theatre.



AUGUST

- **Foire d'été**: the summer fair of traditional crafts in the streets of the old town. A great open-air festival with stalls, music, folklore and lots and lots of participation!

- **Streets of cinema**: music and the visual arts, the International Festival of Silent Movies accompanied by Live Music is one of the most important festivals in Europe.

- **GiocAosta**: a festival of games in the heart of the city: table football tournaments, darts, crosswords, chess and then card games, role-playing, sports simulation. An outdoor playroom for young and old that, year after year, becomes more and more charged with energy, enthusiasm and participation!



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT GIOCAOSTA?
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SEPTEMBER

- **Plaisirs de Culture en Vallée d'Aoste**: initiatives and events promoting the region's artistic and cultural heritage. Free admissions and exceptional openings of cultural sites and spaces normally closed to the public in Aosta and throughout the region.

OCTOBER



- **Bataille de Reines-Combat final**, one of the most popular festivals in the Valley: the event, after twenty or so eliminating rounds in various locations in the region, celebrates the final at the Croix Noire Arena in Aosta. Bloodless battles, based on an instinctive and natural ritual to declare, from among the many cows in the competition, the "Queen of Queens" of the Aosta Valley cattle breeds.

- **7 Towers Trophy - MezzAosta**: two days of races (competitive and amateur), around the ancient Roman walls and its towers. A great celebration for the sportily inclined but not only.

DECEMBER

- **Marché Vert Noël**: in the area of the Roman theatre, from the end of November to 6 January, a lively Alpine village with attention paid to every detail, awash with atmosphere and irresistible temptations (local specialities, handmade objects, decorations of Nordic tradition) to experience the warm sensation of Christmas in the Aosta Valley.

ALL THE MAGIC OF THE MARCHÉ VERT NOËL
Scan the Qr-code and watch the video



- **Aosta's birthday**: on 23 December 25 B.C. Augusta Praetoria was born. On the day of the winter solstice there is a rich programme of events to celebrate the city's birthday.

Aosta in sport

To close our journey with a bang, let's prepare ourselves for one last, great emotion: **Pila!**

We leave the car in the large free car park at the foot of the cableway and in just 18 minutes of panoramic ascent we land directly on the slopes at 1800 metres above sea level. Around us a unique panorama: a large basin of firs and larches, surrounded by the peaks of the most magnificent *4 thousands* in Europe. From **Mont Blanc** to the **Grand Combin**, from the **Matterhorn** to **Monte Rosa**, up to the **Gran Paradiso** (the latter visible from the Platta de Grevon ski slope from where you can also see the town of Cogne), the view is simply breathtaking. And the range of sports on offer is comprehensive: skiing, snowboarding, freestyle, telemark, snowshoeing. In total about 70 km of slopes that climb up to 2800 metres above sea level. If you are a rider, **Aræeffe**, the first snowpark to be created in the valley, is for you: excitement and fun in complete safety.

The **Pila Fun Park**: located in the basin of Chacard, naturally protected by the slopes, the Fun Park is designed for children but adults will find something there too. So let's start off with the tubing slides where laughs and fun are guaranteed!



In Pila, whether summer or winter, adrenaline, emotions and fun for everyone! 🤘

And in summer? In Pila there is something for everyone: trekking, free climbing, fishing and paragliding. Not enough? Then try your hand at Tibetan bridges, log gangways, cable cars, net bridges in the **Adventure Park**: 5 trails for all levels of agility and all ages, for an adrenaline rush, in total safety.

For **bikers** Pila is a true paradise: the paths provided by the **Bike Stadium** await all lovers of the thrills of two-wheel descents. Thanks to the variety of its paths, the area satisfies both the pleasure of those who love to ride in peace and quiet surrounded by an extraordinary panorama and the expectations of those on the lookout for strong emotions. Are you daredevil **Downhillers**, do you love adventurous **Freeriding**, or do you prefer **Cross-country**? At Pila everything is possible!

But don't think that Pila is just sport: Pila is also relaxation, wellness, evening fun and good food. In short, both in summer and winter, after a day spent up here you will never want to go home, we can assure you that!

For the real die-hards, Aosta offers summer and winter sports, indoor and outdoor, for all levels and all ages.

- **Swimming pool B5** - In winter, to relax after a day on skis, the **regional indoor swimming pool** offers pools for adults and children with a wellness centre reserved for adults with sauna, Turkish bath and chilling out area. In summer, you can freshen up at the **outdoor pool** surrounded by a large green area: an Olympic-size pool, a 25-metre pool and a circular play pool with water slide for children, gargoyles, geysers. For info and reservations: Regisport, corso Lancieri 51 - +39 0165.33220.

- Fun for everyone at the **Palaghiaccio B5** in corso Lancieri di Aosta 47 +39 0165.41566. In addition, during the Christmas holidays, you can skate on the outdoor ice rink in piazza Chanoux.



- **Tennis B5 E3** - Two clay courts and one synthetic court (with heated cover), a beachtennis/volleyball court and a paddle court. For reservations: Arena Sport Aosta piazza Mazzini 1, +39 0165.40420.

- **Indoor Rock Climbing Gym B5** - Climbs from the fourth to the eighth level of difficulty and an area dedicated to children - Palaindoor corso Lancieri 41/A, +39 389.3482873.

- **Shooting gallery (National)** - Saumont Region Sports Group 8/a, +39 0165.34890.

- **Archery** - Courses at the Fitarco approved range, via Piccolo San Bernardo - Montfleury, +39 0165.764451.

- **Bicycle Path B5 D5 E5 F5 G5** - An easy route along the banks of the Dora Baltea for walking, running or cycling in the environs of the town. The route runs from Sarre to Fénis, crossing Gressan, Aosta, Charvensod, Pollein, Brissogne, Saint-Marcel and Nus. The route is suitable for all those who wish to cycle in the open air along a route that goes through nature and rural areas.



E-BIKE, ALL THE CONVENIENCE OF AN E-BIKE



You're dying to do some pedalling but you don't have your bike with you? If you are a guest at any kind of accommodation in the Aosta region you can take advantage of the **#Aostaebike** initiative that during the summer offers clients, at decidedly attractive prices, electric bikes and a mountain bike *maestro* to discover the surroundings of the city.

visitAosta

TOURIST GUIDE TO THE CITY
AND ENVIRONS

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