

# ROMANTIC LAKES, MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS



The romantic atmosphere of the lakes, the grandeur of the mountains, the traces of ancient rural settlements and the excellence of its wine-making art and its cuisine make the Distretto Turistico dei Laghi (Lake District), situated within a stone's throw from the Swiss border, a perfect place for a high quality vacation.

From Lake Maggiore, with its captivating Borromeo Islands, to the uncontaminated and more tranquil waters of the Lake of Mergozzo, all the way up to the almost bewitching scenario of Lake of Orta with the suggestive Island of San Giulio, the offer is really wide-ranging. Mountain lovers will find here a never ending range of spectacular valleys, where enthusiastic excursionists flock all year long and skiers come during the winter to feel the thrill of exciting ski runs. Countless are the opportunities for shopping around the most fashionable towns and in the company stores of local housewares manufacturers. Winter and summer sports are available no end and the myriad of flavours coming from the local wine-making art and cuisine, which combine tradition and interpretation, give the palate unforgettable emotions. Last but definitely not least culture, shows and events, health spas and wellness centres complete the offer from a territory to be enjoyed all year round, which looks forward to welcoming you as its guests.



## INFORMATIONS

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01 Lago di Mergozzo - Lake of Mergozzo  
02 Castello di Vogogna - Castle of Vogogna



# LAKE MAGGIORE



**Lake** Maggiore, or Verbano, extends over a surface of 66 km, from the Italian to the Swiss territory, from the plane up to the peaks of the Ossola valley. Fed by the waters of the Ticino and Toce rivers, it is situated at 194 meter above sea level with a maximum depth of 380 meters in the area of Cannero Riviera.

Set in the prealps, Lake Maggiore is of glacial origins and, as it is larger than the other neighboring lakes, since the Roman age it was named Lacus Maximus. It was however also known as Verbano, name derived from the association of two Celtic words.

The upper part of the lake, where Ascona and Locarno are located, belongs to the Swiss territory while the Italian portion is shared by the three provinces of Varese, Novara and Verbania. The western and eastern shores are quite different in some ways.

Through the centuries along the western Piedmontese shore the tourism of elite has developed a closer and closer cooperation with a flourishing tourist industry while the Lombard eastern shore is still not largely exploited and poorly equipped.

Lake Maggiore with its water expanses, protected and closed northwards by the Alps, with the villages unceasingly following one another and the breathtaking Borromeo Gulf dominating it, has been for centuries a place and source of inspiration for men of letters, artists, musicians and writers from all over Europe, who made it the destination of the Gran Tour in the XIX century. Thanks to its strategic position between Italy and Switzerland, with the opening of the Napoleonic Simplon road first later to be used for the international railway line, Lake Maggiore has acquired in time a political relevance. In fact, starting from mid XVI century the lake area was granted as feud to the Borromeo, a Milanese noble family, who chose it also as a vacation residence.

Today every village and town of Lake Maggiore has its own identity and distinctiveness: Arona is the shopping town, Stresa has always been a destination for elitish tourists, Baveno was an important thermal resort and today it has become a lively vacation center; Verbania, the chief town of the province, represents a tourism junction point on one side and a political-administrative center on the other, while Cannero Riviera and Cannobio are among the foreign visitors' favourite destinations.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettolaghi.it>

<http://www.navigazionealaghi.it>

<http://www.illagomaggiore.com>

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lago\\_Maggiore](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lago_Maggiore)

Audio guide/Audio - guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 308, 314)



# BORRAMEO ISLANDS



01

**Through** the years the luxuriant vegetation of Lake Maggiore, favoured by the particular climatic conditions, has been combined to the activity of man, who succeeded in harmoniously blending patrician residences of unique architectural and artistic value with the environment.

The Borromeo islands, situated in the homonymous gulf and delimited by the coast between Stresa and Pallanza, are quite enchanting.

The most renowned is Isola Bella: the island was just a rough rock till the early decades of the XVII century, when in 1632 count Charles III Borromeo decided to transform it. He called it Isabella, in honour of his wife Isabella d'Adda, and only later it was simply renamed Bella. The complete work, commissioned to the most prestigious architects and artists of the time, was originally meant to appear like a big ship anchored off the coast of Stresa. And so it was: in fact the wet dock is the stem, while Palazzo Borromeo is the stern deck; the fore bridge is represented by the topmost of the gardens, which are in turn divided into ten terraces carpeted with the most diversified floral species.

Just a short distance away from Isola Bella is Isola Pescatori: geographically it is an integral part of the Borromeo Islands, though its history is quite different. Its official name is Isola Superiore, but the traditional activity of its inhabitants made it known

as Isola Pescatori (fishers' island). Worth mentioning from an architectural standpoint is the seventeenth-century church of San Vittore, while the characteristic alleys of the island are an ideal destination for shopping of local handicrafts.

The third wonder of the Borromeo Gulf is Isola Madre, so called because it is the largest of the three main islands. It enjoys an extraordinary subtropical climate and houses a rich botanic garden where one can admire many rare species.

Finally, the islet of San Giovanni, where Arturo Toscanini also used to stay, is the fourth and smallest element of the little archipelago. Covered by a thick vegetation, the islet, situated at a very short distance from the Castagnola promontory of Pallanza, is not open to visitors.



02

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.borromeoturismo.it>

<http://www.comune.stresa.vb.it>

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isola\\_Borromeo](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isola_Borromeo)

Altre schede/Also see indexes: *Ville e Giardini*

01 Isola Bella e Isola Pescatori  
*Bella Island and Pescatori Island*  
02 Isola Bella - *Bella Island*



# VILLAS AND GARDENS



The numerous villas standing on the western shore of Lake Maggiore witness the presence of the Milanese and Novarese noble and bourgeois families since the XIX century. Here they built glamorous residences surrounded by beautiful gardens, and the mild climate and the abundance of water made it possible to cultivate exotic and Mediterranean plants.

The most renown gardens overlooking Lake Maggiore are those of Villa Taranto, in Verbania, wanted by a Scottish gentleman who did all he could to create an area of absolute uniqueness with blooming botanical species and luxuriant trees all year round. Inside the garden visitors may admire various wonders: from the conifer alley to the dahlia garden, from the greenhouse with the largest waterlilies in the world to the rhododendron path.

Verbania also hosts Villa San Remigio, situated on top of the Castagnola in Pallanza and surrounded by a park where large panoramic terraces were built at the beginning of the XX century together with wide meadows delimited by exotic plants. By walking along the 8 hectares of Villa San Remigio park visitors experience a sort of journey through the history of the gardens, with an alternated sequence of Italian and British styles.

In Stresa is also another marvel, Villa Pallavicino surrounded by 15 hectares of land: It was Marquis Ludovico Pallavicino of Genua, who in 1862 chose the current English Garden. Especially fascinating is the Flower Park, a terrace decked with roses, magnolias, rhododendrons and azelias. In 1954 the Pallavicino Marquis Family further transformed the garden integrating it with a zoological park, where 40 species of mammals and exotic birds still roam around in total freedom.

Again in Stresa, at an altitude of 750 m. is the botanical garden of Alpina, where can be seen about 700 species of prevalently alpine shrubs and bushes as well as officinal herbs. In 1933 Eng. Ambrosiani selected this site for its breathtaking beauty. The garden, where there is also a mineral water spring with low mineral contents, extends over an area of 12,000 sq.m. The gardens of Isola Bella are instead a magnificent example of Italian baroque garden, where ponds alternate with flowerbeds arranged in geometrical settings. The gardens, full of countless varieties of rare flowers, plants and trees, spread over ten terraces overlapping one another in a truncated pyramidal shape, where architectural shapes typical of the baroque style stand out among all the others. ricchi di ogni varietà di fiori e piante rare, si sviluppano su dieci terrazze sovrapposte a forma di piramide tronca in cui spiccano architetture tipiche del giardino barocco. The different parts of the pyramid bear names that recall the names of some members of the Borromeo family such as for example the Giulia Forest and the Elia Wood. Last but not least is the Garden of Cupid, where many species of birds fly around in total freedom.

Isola Madre, another of the islands of the Borromeo Gulf, is also quite captivating with its splendid gardens, where thanks to a particularly favourable microclimate, botanical species of subtropical origin can be grown in the open. In spring it's an explosion of blooming azelias, rhododendrons and camellias, and, while strolling among the secular trees and the hedges of magnolias, one may surprisingly come across small Chinese pheasants and white peacocks.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.parcozoopallavicino.it>

<http://www.giardinoalpina.it>

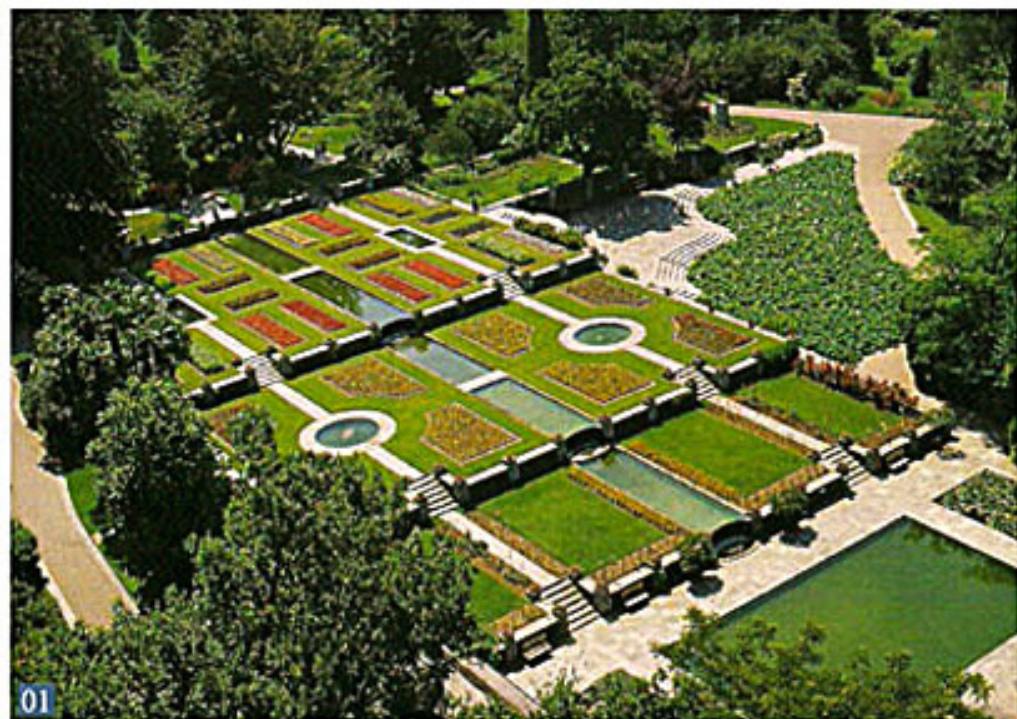
Altre Schede/Also see indexes

Isole Borromeo, Verbania Villa Taranto

01 Villa Pallavicino - Stresa  
02 Villa Taranto - Verbania



# VERBANIA AND VILLA TARANTO



The district of Verbania was originated in 1939 by the unification of the municipalities of Intra and Pallanza to which were later added Suna and Fondotoce, together with the hamlets located on the hills around it. Its territory overlooks Lake Maggiore and extends towards the hills gradually climbing up towards the alpine arc. Many are the opportunities offered to the visitor staying in Verbania: trips on the lake, visits to the parks and gardens, excursions, sightseeing tours of the hinterland, a great museum patrimony and numerous interesting religious as well as historical sites.

The artistic culture and the landscaping values of the Verbano area are witnessed by the Landscape Museum, founded in 1909. The departments of archaeology, painting and sculpture are seated in Palazzo Viani-Dugnani while Palazzo Biurni Innocenti houses the department of popular religiousness, which presents a collection, unique in Europe, of about 5000 painted votive offerings. The sacred buildings dominate the urban scenario and trace an itinerary marked by the austere-

rity of the Romanesque churches, the harmony of the XV Century forms and by the architectural inventions of the late baroque.

Villa Taranto, a true botanical and architectural jewel, made even more precious by luxuriant gardens, dates back to 1831. It was the Scottish gentleman Neil Boyd McEacharn who desired and actually succeeded in realizing one of the most beautiful botanical garden in the world. Thus the wild woodland area that surrounded the villa was transformed into a 7 km long itinerary, a perfect example of English garden in Italy. The villa was named after one of the captain's ancestors, who was nominated Duke of Taranto by Napoleon Bonaparte. To enrich his estate the captain travelled several times around the world in search of rare species and investing in this project most of his great patrimony. The project was aimed at retracing the taste for the English garden, which found a fertile land in the lake area, a destination beloved by the Anglo-Saxons. Strolling along the alleys of the garden one can admire countless rare and precious botanical species. The main entrance to the park is the conifer alley, on the right of which is the Valley of the Fern trees. Further on comes the dahlias garden with over 300 varieties and then the greenhouse, where can be seen many tropical species among which some of the largest waterlilies in the world. Just as an example: the leaves of the *Victoria Amazonica* can reach a diameter of 2 meters and can support up to 5 kg of weight. On the way to the villa one passes hundreds of rhododendron varieties, pride of the gardens. In 1939 captain McEacharn donated the estate to the Italian government and in 1952 the gardens were opened to the public. Since then the flow of visitors has continued uninterrupted and none, who has had a chance to visit them, will ever forget their beauty.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.villataranto.it>  
<http://www.comune.verbania.it>  
<http://www.museodelpaesaggio.it>

Audioguide/Audio-guides  
+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 304)

Altre schede/Also see indexes  
Villa e Giardini

01 Villa Taranto  
02 Camelia Japonica



# ARONA AND THE STATUE OF SAINT CHARLES



**Thanks** to its history and to its privileged geographical location, Arona, a traditionally shopping and sightseeing town, has in time become a really fascinating tourist destination. History, nature and trade merge into a series of itineraries, which from the mountain peaks down through the historical center of town reach all the way to the lakeside. From the pedestrian route, stretching out for about 3 km along the lakefront, it is possible to admire the panorama of the Lombard shore, the ancient town with its history-permeated lanes and the churches full of precious paintings. The striking Piazza del Popolo is dominated by the ancient Law Courts, a Lombard gothic style building.

Arona is also an important junction between the railway and the navigation on the lake. Many cruises are in fact organised on board a fascinating "Belle Epoque" boat or a modern motorboat, from which one can admire the beauty of Lake Maggiore.

Arona offers many opportunities for entertainment: art exhibitions and musical events at Villa Ponti, summer "get-togethers" such as the "Lunga Notte" (Long Night) the boat race and the Period Costume Parade, the Winter Competition, i.e. a dive in the lake in February, the Tredicino Fair on March 13 and the Fair of Lake Maggiore, held between May and June, which attracts about 150,000 visitors every year.

A truly unique lookout from Arona is offered by the Hill, on

which in the XVI Century rose the Castle of Rocca Borromea, later destroyed by Napoleon. The statue of Saint Charles Borromeo, popularly known as San Carlone, one of the most important and grandiose religious monuments in Piedmont, erected between 1614 and 1698, towers now from the hill above the town. Made of copper and bronze the statue is 23,40 meters tall and with the pedestal reaches up to 35,10 meters. It is the second highest statue in the world after the Statue of Liberty of New York. It was dedicated to Cardinal Charles Borromeo, who was born in Arona in 1538 and was canonized in 1610 for the help and assistance given to the poor and the sick. The statue can be visited inside: up to six people can for example stand inside the head and from the top windows it is possible to admire one of the most beautiful panoramas of Lake Maggiore.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.comune.arona.no.it>

<http://www.ambrosiano.it/ita/colosso.asp>

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosso\\_di\\_San\\_Carlo\\_Borromeo](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosso_di_San_Carlo_Borromeo)

01 / 02 Vedute di Arona Views of Arona



# PARKS AND NATURE RESERVES OF LAKE MAGGIORE



**Some** areas of important naturalistic value both for the flora and the fauna that populate them are along the Piedmontese shore of Lake Maggiore.

The Lagoni Nature Park of Mercurago spreads out over the territory of Arona, Dormelletto, Oleggio Castello and Comignago. It can be visited following the over 30 km of track and trails where oak groves alternate with areas of hardwood forest, chestnut woods, robinias and pastures, where one can admire beautiful horses. On the reserve were also found important archaeological remains dating back to Roman time.

Approximately 4 km long and covering an area of about 157 hectares is instead the Special Reed-Thicket Nature Reserve of Dormelletto. It represents one of the last examples of original lacustrine vegetation and exercises the important role of filtering the lake water, thus ensuring an ideal habitat for many fish species. Numerous bird species are also present in this area, over one hundred of them identified, among which some water birds that come here to nest, as well as the migrant species, which stop in this area to rest and feed during their flight to the south.

Within the reserve can also be found some nice beaches, ideal for spending some relaxing hours while enjoying to the most the surrounding environment.

The Special Nature Reserve of Fondotoce covers an area of about 360 hectares over the plane of the Toce river with an environment heavily influenced by man's activity, pleasant beaches and places perfect for relaxation. The reed-thickets are ideal for the reproduction of many lake fish species and a great habitat for nesting, wintering and resting of numerous bird species.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.parchilagomaggiore.it/index.htm>

<http://www.parks.it/parchi.lago.maggiore>

<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/parchi>

Audioguide/Audio-guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codici/codes 312, 315, 316)

Altre schede/Also see indexes

01 Veduta del Lago Maggiore - View of Lake Maggiore  
02 Canneti di Fondotoce - Reed-thickets of Fondotoce



# CANNERO AND CANNOBIO



**Cannero** Riviera and Cannobio are the last towns of Lake Maggiore before the Swiss border. Cannero, at a few km from Ghiffa, enjoys a mild climate and the typical Mediterranean lush vegetation. In fact, its shores are carpeted with luxuriant lemon, citron, olive and mimosa plants. Deep down the lake bottom preserves the remains of ancient fortifications which during hot summer days are the favourite destination of many boats that drop their anchors in the surrounding crystal waters.

Cannero is also the official seat of the Società Italiana della Camelia (Camelia Italian Association), which every year, together with other associations organizes in Pallanza the camellia exhibition.

Cannobio is a lovely town at the outlet of Val Cannobina, is well known for its beach and for its medieval town center, which every Sunday attracts the Swiss tourists flocking in to its big market. Other great points of interest are the XVIII century Chiesa Collegiata of San Vittore, the Palazzo della Ragione and the Sanctuary of the Santissima Pietà, where every year a miracle is recalled and celebrated on January 8th. The symbol of the town is a big stone lion, sculpted by the local artist Giovanni Branca, which later became the symbol of the battle engaged by the inhabitants of Cannobio against the Austrians in 1859.

From Cannobio, one can explore the Valle Cannobina on board the typical Ferrovia Vigezzina train, cross Valle Vigezzo, reach Domodossola and then always by train get back to Lake Maggiore.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.comune.cannororiviera.vb.it>

<http://www.cannobio.net>

<http://www.vallecannobina.it>

Altre Schede/Also see indexes

Valle Vigezzo, Forti e fortificazioni

01 Cannobio

02 Castelli di Cannero - Castles of Cannero

03 Treno della Vigezzina - Vigezzina Train



# FORTRESSES AND FORTIFICATIONS



Through the centuries, the entire area between the lakes and the mountains was used as a defensive outpost for its particularly favourable geographic position and the numerous testimonies of ancient castles and fortifications are the proof of the strategic role played in ancient times and in contemporary and modern history.

Not far from the shore, two rocky islets rise on the water of Lake Maggiore, right in front of Cannero Riviera, where the ruins of ancient fortifications are still clearly visible. These Castles were built between the XI and XII centuries and are popularly known as "Malpaga". At the end of the XIV century the Mazzardi brothers, nicknamed Mazzarditi, natives of the Swiss shore of the lake, settled on the islets. Those were times of harsh fights raging in Cannobio between Guelphs and Ghibellines. Between 1403 and 1404, the Mazzardis took possession of the Municipal building of Cannobio, invaded Cannero and got hold of the Malaga, the departure point of their raids along the entire Verbano area aimed at creating a small private state. Backed by bandits, smugglers and pirates they persecuted the inhabitants of the coastal villages with incursions and tortures. In 1412 Filippo Maria Visconti became duke of Milan and in 1414 he sent an army of 500 men to defeat the Mazzarditi: the Malaga was razed to the ground and the Mazzarditi exiled. The Cannobiese feud was bestowed to Vitaliano Borromeo and it was left unattended till 1519, when Lodovico Borromeo commissioned a fortress,

named "Vitaliana", in honour of the Paduan family, founder of the Borromeo family. After Lodovico's death, the fortress slowly drifted away, as its closeness to the shore made difficult its defense. During the following centuries the three islets became refuge for smugglers, and were later used by fishermen. Today only the ruins remain of the fortification, but the charm of the historic vicissitudes marking the Cannero Castle remains unaltered, so much that they are "a must see" destination for the tourist ploughing through the waters of Lake Maggiore.

In Vigogna, a town of the Ossola Valley rises one of the most beautiful medieval villages of Italy, the Visconteo Castle, built in the XIV century by Giovanni Visconti. Its semicircular tower and the battlemented walls overlook the entire village and the Ossola valley, a reminder of the strategic role played by this fortification.

The Cadorna line, an uninterrupted sequence of trenches and fortified posts covers instead a 2,000 meter level drop, winding down between the Ossola and Verbano areas: it was commissioned by general Luigi Cadorna during World War One to defend the northern border of Italy, close to Switzerland. It includes a thick network of roads and military muletracks, trenches, artillery posts, lookouts, camp hospitals and logistic structures. Actually the Cadorna line was never used during the war because the defensive strategies constantly changed, and today these fortifications represent a rich trekking and excursion patrimony.

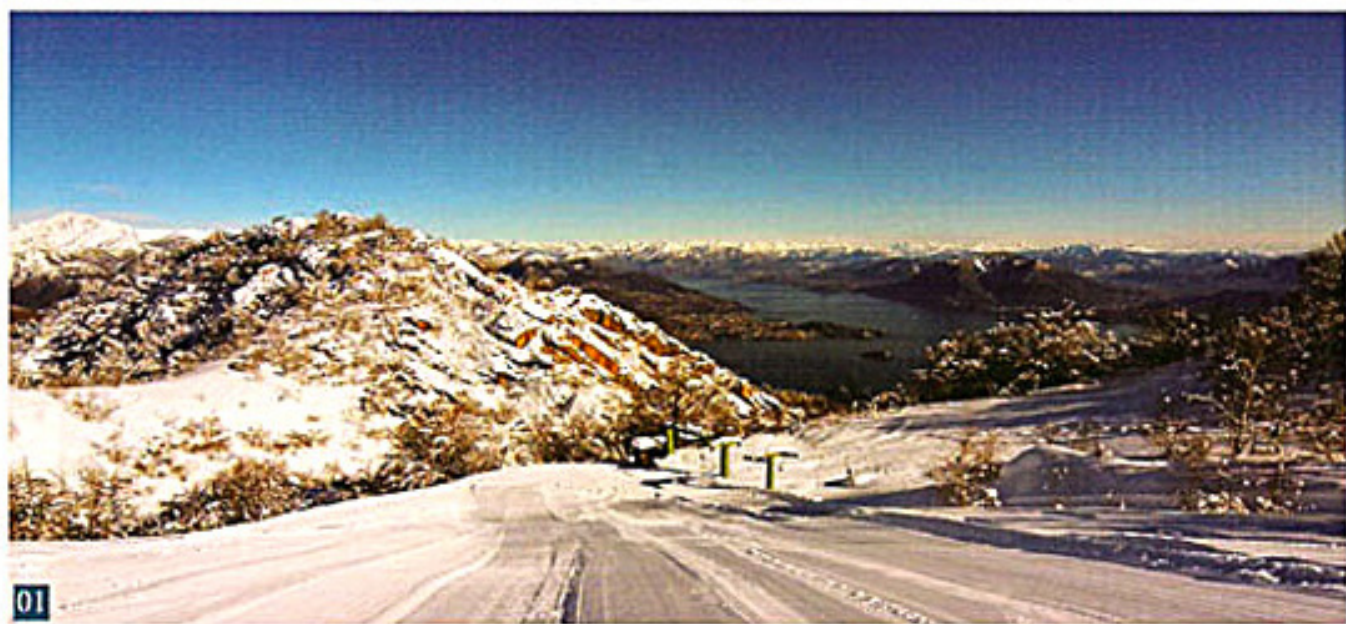
## INFORMATIONS

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castelli\\_di\\_Cannero](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castelli_di_Cannero)  
<http://www.comune.vogogna.vb.it>  
<http://www.piemontefree.it/interesse/74.html>  
<http://www.associazionelineacadorna.it>  
<http://www.cmaltoverbano.it/cadorna.asp>  
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01 Castelli di Cannero - Castles of Cannero



# CUSIO AND VERGANTE



**The** Vergante is a hilly area surrounded by Lake Maggiore, the Mottarone and the Lake of Orta, and shared by the provinces of Verbano Cusio Ossola and Novara. Overlooking the area are mountain peaks from 600 to 1491 meters high, the tallest of which is Mottarone, also known as the "mountain of the two lakes" for its particular position from which one can enjoy a truly striking panorama embracing Lake Maggiore, Lake of Orta, the Po Plane, Mount Rosa and the chain of Italian and Swiss Alps. On especially clear days one can even admire seven lakes: Lake Maggiore, Lake of Orta, Lake of Mergozzo, Lake of Varese and the lakes of Monate, Comabbio and Lugano. In Stresa from Lido di Carciano it is possible with a 30 minutes cableway trip to reach the top of Mottarone, from which one can ride down by mountain bike or on foot through the numerous dedicated trails and tracks. Skiing on Mottarone is possible both in winter on ski runs and in summer on grass runs.

The Vergante and Upper Novarese area, which connects the Po Plane with the alpine arc, is a territory still intact for the most part and preserved through three special nature reserves: the Sacred Mount of Orta, Mount Mesma and the Hill of the Tower of Buccione. The Nature Reserve of the Sacred Mount of Orta

offers a suggestive combination of nature and mountain scenery encompassing the religious architecture and spirituality of the Sacred Mount complex. Mount Mesma, situated within the territory of Ameno, is almost entirely decked with chestnut woods surrounding the historical-religious complex with the church and the XVI Century convent, which look out onto a panoramic terrace. Instituted to safeguard and preserve the Tower of Buccione, a monument of special architectural and historical value, the reserve is located between the municipalities of Gozzano and Corconio.

Within walking distance from Orta is Legro, known as the "painted village". "Murales" by modern artists portraying scenes from films, many of which set in the village itself, decorate the walls of the little town. In Vacciago, a village not far from Orta, is the Sanctuary of Madonna della Boccia, inside which can be admired valuable frescoes. Visible from almost the entire opposite shore is the Sanctuary of Madonna del Sasso, built in a dominant position overlooking the lake, from which one can admire a panorama without par.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vergante>

<http://www.cm-cusiomottarone.it>

<http://www.comune.massinvisconti.no.it/ComPag-inoCM.asp?id=56>

<http://www.sacromonteorta.it>

Audioguide/Audio-guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codici/codes 204, 205, 210, 202)

Altre schede/Also see indexes

Lago d'Orta e Isola di San Giulio, Cultura Arte e Folklore



01 Sci sul Mottarone - Skiing on Mount Mottarone  
02 Muri dipinti a Legro - Murales in Legro



# LAKE OF ORTA AND THE ISLE OF SAN GIULIO



01

The Lake of Orta is situated West of Lake Maggiore. It is the most occidental of the prealpine lakes and has its source in the southern front of the Simplon glacier. Contrary to what happens to many of the alpine lakes, which usually run South, Lake of Orta runs North and crossing the town of Omegna, forms the Nigoglia river, which in turn flows into the Strona and then through the Toce river, flows into Lake Maggiore. The presence of human beings on Lake of Orta dates back at least to the neolithic age. In 1786 the Cusio territory became property of the Savoia family thus passing from Lombardy to Piedmont.

Ideal destination for artists and writers, the coastal resorts of Lake of Orta are often described in works by important authors such as Balzac, Rodari, Montale and Soldati. Many local chefs-de-cuisine and industrialists of world renown have contributed through the time to boosting their fame. The Cusio, as the area of the Lake of Orta is called, is a charming jewel case where arts and culture magically intertwine in the rarefied atmosphere typical of lacustrine zones.

Omegna, capital of the Cusio, is among the best known locations of the Lake of Orta. Established in the past as leader in the houseware sector it is today also a cultural point of reference for the entire territory. Orta San Giulio, a tiny medieval town, which through the years has been attracting writers and cultured people, is the pearl of the Lake. Strolling through its me-

dieval narrow lanes, one breathes in an enchanting atmosphere. On Piazza Motta, lined with open air tables, is the XVI Century Palazzotto, first seat of the municipality, and the pier, departure point for the isle of San Giulio.

This is a plot of land where, according to tradition, San Giulio defeated dragons and snakes. In the centre of the island stands the ancient Seminary, mystical symbol of the entire lake, built in 1844 and today an abbey where a community of Benedictine cloister nuns lives and works. Inside the majestic Basilica of San Giulio, built by the Saint in the V Century, can be admired some beautiful frescoes reproducing images of Saints and paintings realized by the apprentices of the painter Gaudenzio Ferrari.



02

## INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettoalghiti.it>

<http://www.comune.ortasangiulio.no.it>

[https://www.borghitalia.it/html/borgo\\_it.php?codice\\_borgo=711](https://www.borghitalia.it/html/borgo_it.php?codice_borgo=711)

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orta\\_San\\_Giulio](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orta_San_Giulio)

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+39 0323.1975525 (codice 201)

Altre schede/Also see indexes: Vergante, Omegna

01 Isola di San Giulio - Island of San Giulio  
02 Borgo di Orta - The village of Orta



# OMEGNA



**Omegna** capital of Cusio, is renown world round for its houseware industries, whose trademarks are present in almost every kitchen of the world. The abundance of water paved the way for the settlement of the first plants in the XIX century and the entire Cusio territory experienced its greatest development during the first decades of '900. Though decreased from a quantitative standpoint, this fervent activity is still the synonym of the "made in Italy" and of the most appreciated and sought for design with its coffee machines, kettles and pressure cookers. The former Cobiainchi foundry houses the "Forum", a multi-purpose center conceived as the headquarter for research and preservation of the Cusian historical and industrial memory with exposition rooms for temporary shows dedicated to the arts and industry, while the Collezione Museale Permanente collects various historical objects manufactured by the Cusian firms. However, Omegna is not just industry: The town directly overlooking Lake of Orta can boast a beautiful lakeshore front in addition to a charming historical town center distinguished by valuable architectural works. In fact, strolling down the maze-like alleys of the "Vatican Quarter", along via Alberganti, one can admire several XI, XII and XIII century buildings. The modern part of the town is mostly characterized by an industrial architecture typical of the XIX and XX centuries. During World War Two the Cusio area witnessed a brave anti-fascist and antinazist resistance led by Filippo Maria Beltrami, with an alternation of victories and mournings (sixty victims both among the civilians and the partisans).

In September 1944 Omegna was also the stage of the Ossola partisan liberation.

Omegna is the native town of Gianni Rodari who found here his inspiration to write stories and work out his pedagogical theories.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.comune.omegna.vb.it>

<http://www.rodariparcofantasia.it>

<http://www.sanvito-omegna.it>

Audio guide/Audio - guides:

+39 0323.1975525 (codice 208)

Altre schede/Also see indexes

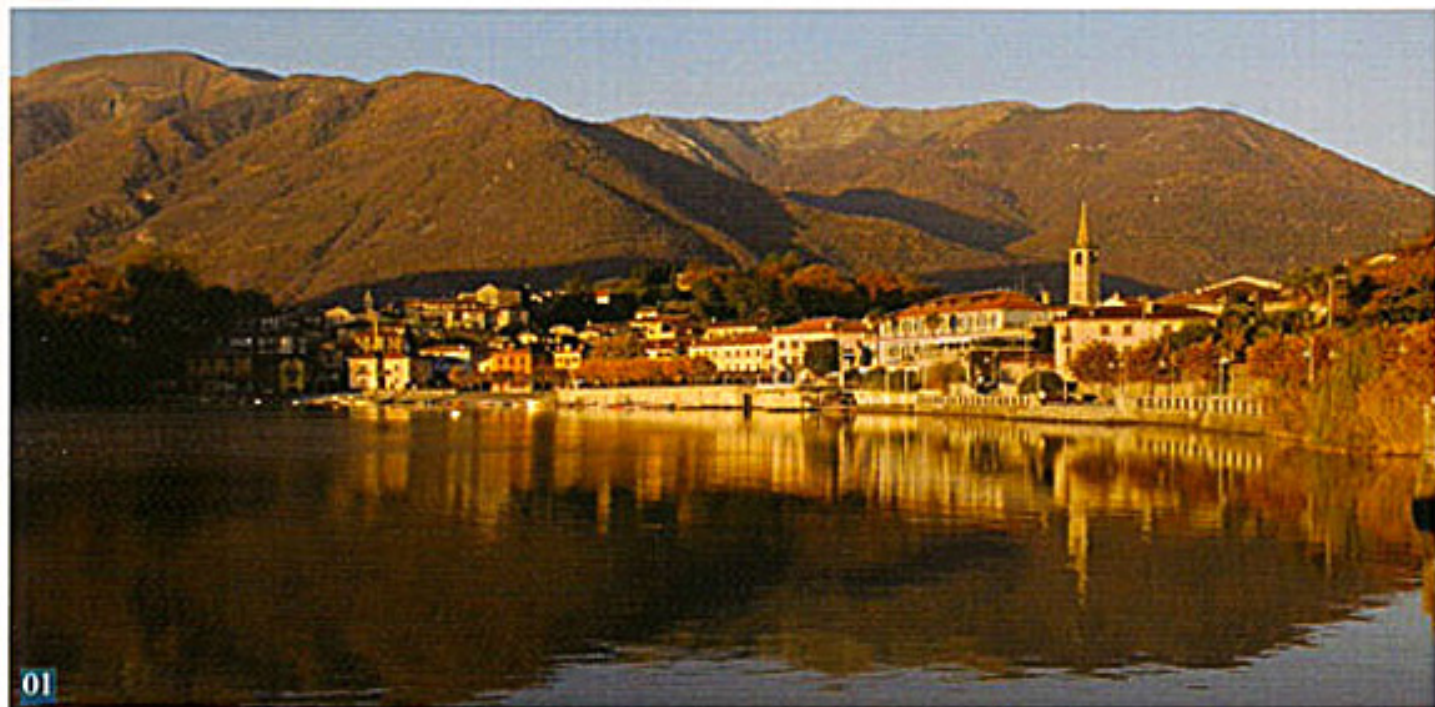
Lago d'Orta e Isola di San Giulio, Industria del casalingo,

Design e Artigianato

01/02/03 Vedute di Omegna  
Views of Omegna



# LAKE OF MERGOZZO



**Lake** of Mergozzo, repeatedly awarded the Blue Flag for its clean waters, is situated right at the entrance of Val d'Ossola and is a favorite destination for swimming, sunbathing, canoe and fishing enthusiasts. About 2 ½ km. long and with a maximum depth of 74 meters, the Lake of Mergozzo was in ancient times an integrating part of Lake Maggiore. The great floods isolated then a section of the lake and generated the Lake of Mergozzo. Prehistorical remains discovered on the terrassings above the town prove that man settled down in this area at least 500 years ago. Later on, thanks to its favourable transit position, it acquired great importance during the Roman age. Nowadays the lake is especially appreciated for the peace and tranquillity and for the numerous opportunities it offers to open air sports enthusiasts, from canoeing to fishing, from trekking to simply strolling around the woods around it all the way to bicycling excursions.

Overlooking the lake is the town bearing the same name. Some of the charming stone houses are arranged almost as an amphitheatre along the western shore while some cling to the slope of the ancient hamlet of Sasso, which can be reached by climbing up a long flight of steps hollowed out of the rock and dominated by the Casaforte Castle, built at the times of the Communes.

On the shore stands majestically a centuries-old elm tree, with an almost hollowed out trunk, which has been declared by the Piedmont Region a monumental tree with landscaping, historical and cultural importance. From the main town it is possible

to reach the numerous hamlets of Mergozzo: Montorfano, with the ancient residential settlement built around the Romanesque church of San Giovanni, then Bracchio, Albo, Bettola, Nibbio and Candoglia, the latter known for the light-pink marble quarries, from which starting in 1387, by concession of Duke Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo (the Venerable Board of The Duomo) started to mine the material required for the construction of the Lombard Cathedral.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettoalghini.it>

<http://www.comune.mergozzo.vb.it/home>

<http://www.duomomilano.it>

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmo\\_di\\_Candoglia](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmo_di_Candoglia)

Audioguide/Audio-guides:

+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 301)

01/02 Vedute di Omegna - Views of Omegna



# PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS



**From** the Val Grande National Park to the Veglia-Devero Regional Park, from the special nature reserves to the faunal oases, between the Ossola and Lake Maggiore nature offers uncontaminated wonders preserved by man's care. The Val Grande National Park overlooking the mediterranean shores of Lake Maggiore is the most extensive wilderness area in Europe. It is a totally uninhabited valley, dominated by silence, where nature is sovereign with its harsh mountains, breathtaking valleys and canyons, waterfalls and striking cliffs. Considering the difficulties it presents only the very experts dare to challenge the Val Grande, but thanks to the fully equipped trails realized within the Park entrance areas, anyone can enjoy its wonders. In the Upper Valle d'Ossola within the Alpe Veglia and Alpe Severo Regional Park, surrounded by a pleasant and at the same time austere environment, one can admire nature as the combination of imperious peaks encircling pastures, meadows and extended grazing grounds adorned with lush blooms. Within the Ossola region there are three faunal oases: Macugnaga's, in the Anzasca valley, created to support the return of the rock goats and ideal destination for whoever wants to enjoy a day surrounded by nature; Bosco Tenso's, within the municipality of Premosello Chiovenda, established to safeguard the territory of

the Toce valley, and the Oasis of Pian dei Sali, in Valle Vigezzo between Malesco and Villette, dedicated to protect amphibians and specifically the grass frog.

The Sacred Mounts of Domodossola, Ghiffa and Orta are not only places of deep faith, but also destinations of great naturalistic interest with Special Nature Reserves created to preserve beauty.

Many are the areas where nature deserves to be protected, so much so that there are proposals for new Parks and Protected areas waiting for approval: in the upper Valle Antrona, Upper Valle Strona, on mount Mottarone, in Cossogno, in Ornavasso, Migliandone and Vignone.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.parcovallgrande.it>

<http://www.parcovegliadevero.it>

<http://www.comune.macugnaga.vb.it>

<http://www.wwf.it/client/render.aspx?content=0&root=1320>

<http://www.malesco.net/turismo/oasi/oasi.html>

<http://www.lifeco.it>

Audio guide/Audio-guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codici/codes 114, 117, 118, 311)

Altre schede/Also see indexes

Parchi e riserve naturali del Lago Maggiore, Sacri Monti

01 Val Grande

02 Val Divedro

03 Alpe Devero



# OSSOLA VALLEY

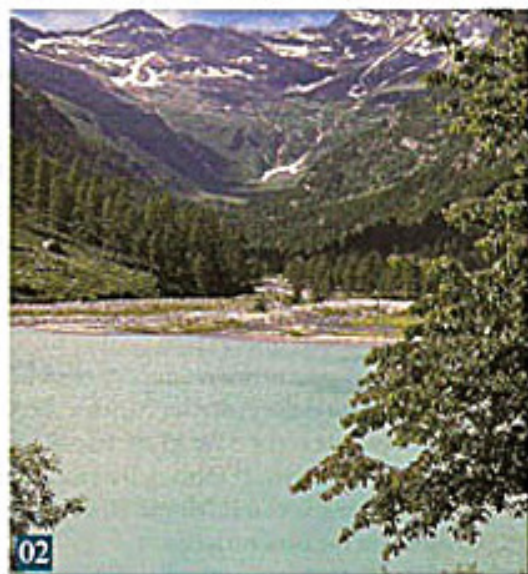


**It's** quite a jump from the 196 meters (470') above sea level of the Lake of Mergozzo up to the 4637 meters of the Punta Dufur of Mount Rosa. In between the Toce river and nearby seven valleys, that seen from above recall the shape of a maple leaf. This is the Ossola region, bordering upon Switzerland, where the mountain explodes in all its majesty and where attractions, the wonders of nature, the traditions and culture arouse strong emotions and gratify the senses. Ossola, land of glacial and artificial lakes, of parks created in the past to protect nature and respect its rules. The Nature Park of Val Grande, for example, embraces one of the most extended and uncontaminated regions of Europe with guided tour centres and nature tracks to explore the park. Ossola, land of painters and ancient traditions. The Val Vigezzo, with its seven mountain villages a strong identity and a pronounced hospitality vocation, is home to artists, who enriched with their frescoes the beautiful houses and whose works are exhibited in the Rossetti - Valentini Pinacoteca of Santa Maria Maggiore. The mountain railway "La Vigezzina" crosses the entire mountain and, combined with a trip on the Lago Maggiore Express, makes for a unique train-boat combined itinerary. In the Anzasca Valley, with its magnificent mountain peaks, border paths, ski- and chair-lifts leading up to the 2796 meters of Mount Moro, one can still feel the culture and traditions, such as the ones dating back to the XVII Century.

s Militias at Bannio and Calasca.

Ossola, land where Nature puts up an immense and powerful show with the impressive waterfalls of the Toce river, roaring down in the Formazza Valley and with Mount Rosa towering above Macugnaga, a pretty and hospitable tourist resort.

Ossola, which arouses intense emotions all year long with itineraries, where an uncontaminated nature offers the opportunity to explore ancient mule tracks and rural settlements. The succession of natural beauties continues then with Valle Antigorio, Valle Divedro, Val Formazza, Valle Bognanco with its hundred waterfalls and finally in Valle Antrona, with Viganella, the very first village in the world, electrically powered by a solar mirror.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettolaghi.it>; <http://www.cmvo.it>  
<http://www.vallevigezzo.vb.it>; <http://www.monterosa.vb.it/ita>; <http://www.andifor.it>; <http://www.cmvalleant-rona.it>; <http://www.valbognanco.com>

Altro schede/Also see indexes: Parchi e Aree Protette, Monte Rosa e Macugnaga, Valle Vigezzo, Valle Antrona e Val Bognanco, Valle Antigorio, Divedro e Formazza, Acque e Terme

01 Domodossola

02 Macugnaga, Lago delle Fate - Lake of the Fairies



# MONTE ROSA AND MACUGNAGA



01

**Valle** Anzasca covers an area of about 30 km west of Valle d'Ossola with a level difference of over 1000 mt., culminating with Monte Rosa, the majestic massif towering with its 4633 mt., over a one of a kind scenario in the entire mountain chain. It owes its name to the pink shade spreading over its peaks at sunrise and sunset. The many peaks rising up to over 4000 meters make Monte Rosa a "must" for climbing enthusiasts. The eastern wall overlooking Macugnaga, with its 2000 mt. of ice, snow and rock, is considered a real Himalayan peak.

Macugnaga, defined the "pearl of the Rosa", is the most appealing town of Valle Anzasca and its first settlements date back to around mid XIII century. At the time the monks promoted the first fair, which takes place near the church and Macugnaga still represents the shopping town par excellence of the entire valley. With their history and traditions passed on from generation to generation the Walsers left a distinctive mark all through this area. They were natives of the German upper Valais and through a massive migration which lasted through the XIII and XIV century they actually started the first medieval mountain colonization through a remarkable migration.

The traces of such settlement are particularly evident both in the Walser village, perfectly preserved and maintained and in the Museo Casa Walser where visitors can discover the tough life conditions of people, who were able to adapt to such a harsh

environment.

Macugnaga is also a favourite destination for passionate skiers in winter and excursionist and nature enthusiasts and peace lovers in summer.

Worth the trip is the Miniera della Guia, situated in Borca: this is a 1.3 km long mine-museum where one can relive the history of such a back-breaking work, get to know the techniques and processes of gold mining and get a close look at the ancient tools.



02

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.monterosa.vb.it/ita>

<http://www.macugnaga-online.it>

<http://www.comune.bannioanzino.vb.it/Milizia-Tradizionale>

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milizia\\_Tradizionale\\_di\\_Calasca](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milizia_Tradizionale_di_Calasca)

Audioguide/Audio-guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 110)

Altre schede/Also see indexes: Cultura, Arte, Folklore

01 Monte Rosa - Mount Rosa

02 Macugnaga, Lago delle Fate - Lake of the Fairies

03 Bannio Anzino



# VALLE VIGEZZO AND THE CENTOVALLI



**Spreading** over the plateau of the Lepontine Alps at an altitude of 800 mt. is Valle Vigizzo, the only one of the seven Ossola valleys extending Eastwards. The luxuriant vegetation, woods, meadows and alpine lakes offer countless opportunities for suggestive walks surrounded by nature and in total relax. Valle Vigizzo with its seven municipalities is known as the "painters' valley" for its ancient tradition of artists, portraitists and landscapists. Santa Maria Maggiore is the vibrant heart of the valley, a pretty town particularly appreciated for the plateau surrounded by conifers. In addition to the Rossetti Valentini Fine Arts school, the town also boasts the Chimney Sweepers Museums which narrates the story of the Vigezzini, who enduring great hardship, left their homes and families to walk the world in search of fortune.

Another charming destination is Craveggia, a small rural village which has turned into a true open-air museum with high-class buildings, decorations and frescoes. And then comes Re, the devotional core of the valley with its majestic Sanctuary dedicated to the Madonna del Sangue. From Malesco one can reach Valle Loana, the entrance gate of the Val Grande National Park, the most extended wilderness area in Europe, while in Druogno particularly striking are the terraced fields of Coimo. Villette, with its Museum of alpine culture, is the town of the sundials, the solar clocks that told the time to the entire community, while

Craveggia still keeps intact the atmosphere of its peasant culture. Valle Vigizzo is a synonym of silence and relax, but in winter offers skiing enthusiasts many opportunities to practice their favourite sports.

One can cross Valle Vigizzo on board of a traditional train of the Ferrovia Vigezzina, a railway line that from Domodossola crosses Valle Vigizzo and the Centovalli all the way to Locarno. A thrilling ride on board of a sightseeing train to enjoy a rich and breathtaking view in any season of the year.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.vallevigizzo.vb.it>  
<http://comune.santamariamaggiore.vb.it>  
<http://www.comune.re.vb.it/Santuario>  
<http://www.vigezzina.com>  
<http://www.lagomaggioreexpress.com>

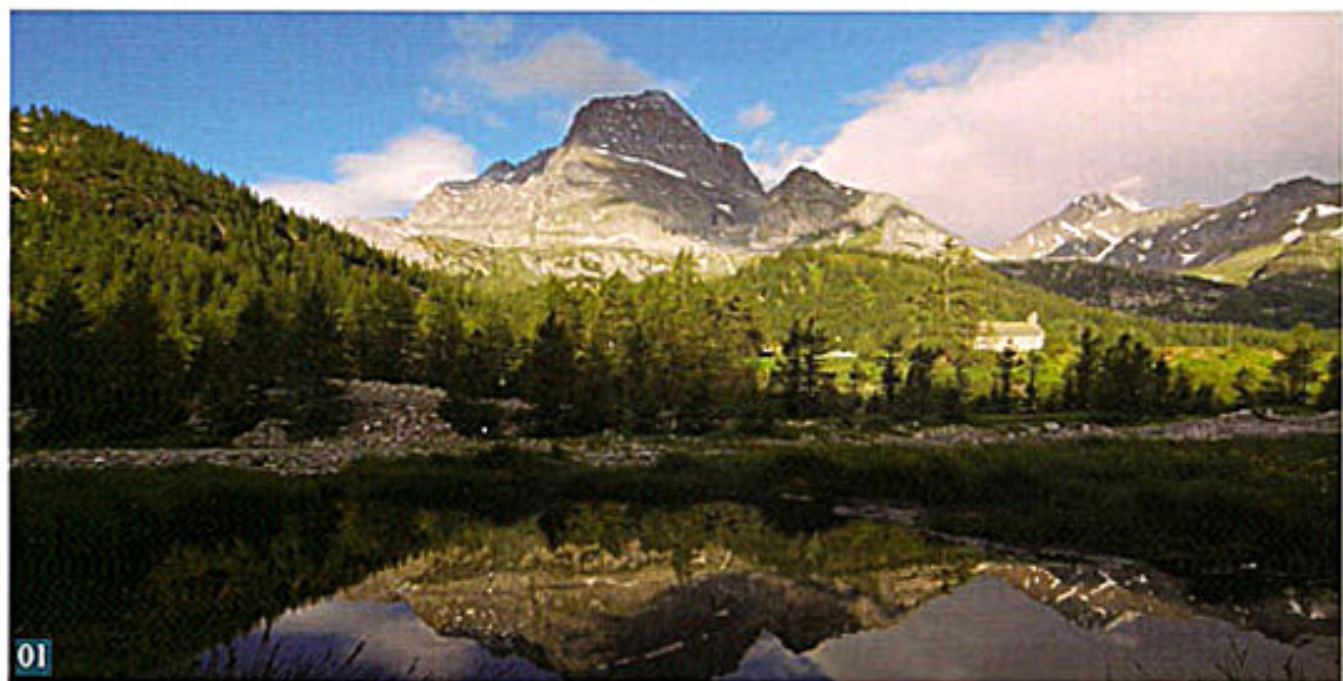
Audioguide/Audio-guides: +39 0323.1975525  
(codice/code 107)

Altre schede/Also see indexes: Parchi e aree protette

01 Santa Maria Maggiore  
02 Festa degli Spazzacamini - Chimney Sweepers Festival  
03 Treno della Vigezzina - Vigezzina Train



# VALLE FORMAZZA AND THE ANTIGORIO AND DIVEDRO VALLEYS



01

**In** Valle Formazza, the last portion of the Ossola region on the border with Switzerland, water is sovereign: six small alpine lakes dot with speckles of crystal blue the surrounding green and brown peaks, many of which reach up to 2000 mt. The real protagonist is, however, the 143 m. high Toce waterfall jump, which foaming and roaring down the mountain generates the homonymous river and then gently flows into Lake Maggiore 80 km to the south.

The Toce waterfall, located at an altitude of 1657 mt. is at 6 km from Val Formazza, the ancient Walser town. Here in the XII century, a group of German native shepherds from the Valais Canton settled down peacefully, adapting themselves to the rigours and harsh rules of the mountain.

Valle Formazza offers striking views and extends over wide slopes scattered with a variety of of unique and often rare specimens of mountain flora.

The Antigorio and Divedro valley branch out to the south from Valle Formazza. Here can still be found the ancient pastures of Devero and Veglia, today included in a protected park area of over 10,500 hectares covered with conifers and spruces where white hares, marmots and chamoises live in total freedom. In Valle Antigorio instead, nature offers a show created by water in thousands of years: the orridoes of Uriezzo and Balmasudra, deep and winding cavities etched in the rock by the millenary action of glaciers and streams.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.andifor.it>

<http://www.valformazza.it>

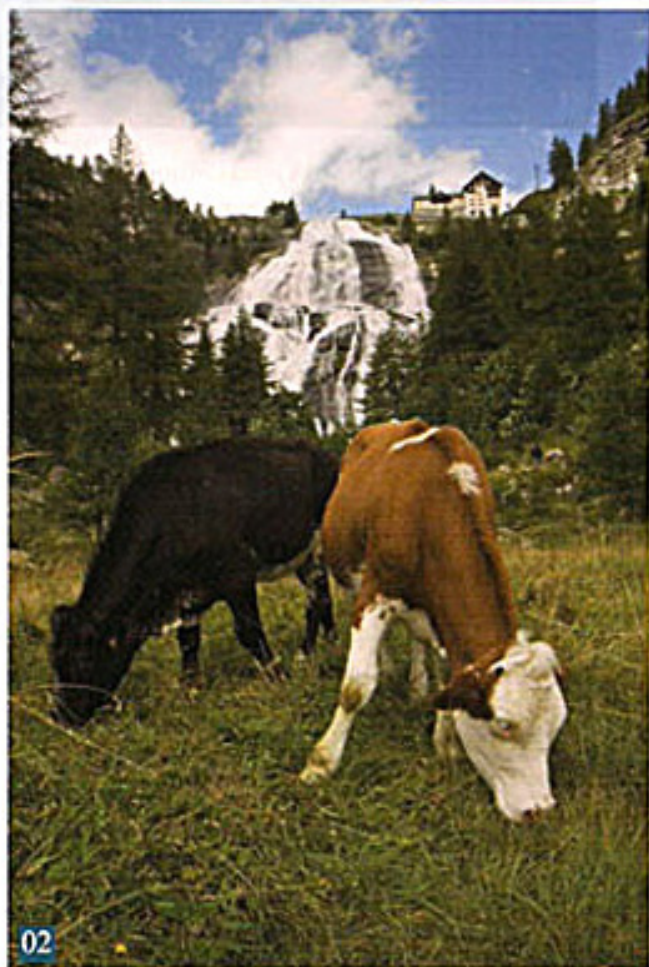
<http://www.valdivedro.it>

Audioguide/Audio-guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 101)

Altro schedo/Also see indexes

Parchi e aree protette, Arte Cultura Folklore



02

01 Parco Veglia - Devero - Veglia - Devero Park

02 Mucche in Val Formazza - Cows in Formazza Valley



# DOMODOSSOLA



**In** Domodossola, a lively town situated in the heart of the Ossola, is laid out along the valley floor of the Toce river, at the foot of the renowned Mattarella rise and the hills of Vagna. Its historic centre still maintains the original medieval architecture. Core of the Ossola valleys and of the streets converging from all directions, the town is a busy crossroad for Italians and foreigners and numerous tourists and vacationers choose it as a favorite destination. Its economy is mainly based on the tertiary sector with many commercial and artisan activities.

The town has ancient origins: during the pre-roman era the Lepontis founded the age-old "Oscella", which was first mentioned by the Greek geographer of the II century, Tolomeus, who named it capital of the Lepontian territory. According to tradition in 917 Berengario I, king of Italy and later on Emperor of the Sacred Roman Empire, granted to the city of Domodossola the right to hold the weekly open-air market in the center of town, a tradition still kept up and which attracts numerous visitors from the bordering Canton Valais. Among the most important episodes of the history of Domodossola, the one carrying great weight was surely the self-governance experiment known as "Repubblica dell'Ossola". Declared in September 1944, during the German occupation, the "Republic" or "liberated territory" included the entire Ossola Region all the way to Mergozzo and Ornavasso.

Another page of history, which left a mark on the destiny of Domodossola and its territory was the opening of the Simplon Tunnel (Traforo del Sempione). The first railway tunnel was inaugurated in 1906 in the presence of the King of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele III and of the President of the Swiss Con-

federation. Ever since the Roman era the Simplon Pass has always been an important commercial and military communication route between the the Po Plane and the Upper Rhône region. The first documented passage through the Simplon dates back to 1254, when in February, Archbishop Odo of Rouen passed through it on his way to Rome.

It was however Napoleon, who succeeded in making France and the Cisalpine Republic come to an agreement with the Valais for the construction of a road between the lakes of Geneva and Maggiore through the Rhône Valley and the Simplon Pass. The works were completed in 1805.

The opening of the Simplon Tunnel was celebrated in 1906 as a victory of humanity. The economic and social returns led to the development of the entire territory crossed by the Simplon railway line. The city's role is still today of great importance so that it is considered the "Mediterranean Gate to Europe" for the transfer of goods and passengers.

Domodossola is rich in monuments, elegant palaces and testimonies of its past. The Piazza del Mercato (Market Square), heart of the city, with its XV Century Arcade supporting mansions dating back to the XV-XVI centuries, scenographically perfect in its asymmetry, is a true jewel of Renaissance architecture. Close to the square is the Quartiere Motta, one of the most ancient boroughs of the city. "Motta" is a toponym recalling the accumulation of gravel and stones brought down by the Bogna river during the XV century floods. Center of the borough is the charming Piazza Fontana dominated by an octagonal fountain with an obelisk dating back to 1844. Designed by Architect Matteo Zucchi and built between 1792 and 1798, the Chiesa of the Insigne Collegiata, dedicated to the Saints Gervasio and Protasio, presents a nave and two side aisles with six chapels and a precious high altar made of polychromatic marbles. Palazzo Silva is one of the most beautiful noble Renaissance building in the subalpine region, so much so that it was included among the National Monuments.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.comune.domodossola.vb.it>  
<http://www.prodomodossola.it>  
<http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domodossola>

Audioguide/Audio-guides  
+39 0323.1975525 (codice/codes 103)

Altre schede/Also see indexes  
Santi Monti, Traforo del Sempione

01 Veduta dal Sacro Monte Calvario - View from the Calvario  
02 Piazza del Comune - Square of the City Hall



# THE SIMPLON TUNNEL



The first gallery of the Simplon Railway Tunnel, situated at the foot of Monte Leone in the Alps that connect the Ossola Region and the Swiss Canton Valais was inaugurated in 1906, in the presence of Vittorio Emanuele III, King of Italy and of the President of the Swiss Confederation. Ever since the Roman Empire, the Simplon pass has always been a very important trade and military communication artery between the Po Plane and the Upper Rhône region. The first documented passage through the Simplon dates back to 1254, when in February Archbishop Odo of Rouen passed through it on his way to Rome. In 1267 the Bishop of Sion ensured his protection to the Italian merchants and, with his successors, he ensured the maintenance of the roads on the valley floor. At the time, the pass was negotiable in about 12 hours albeit not without difficulties for the wayfarers. At the end of the XV century the troubled history of the Valais had a rather strong effect on the trade coming through the Simplon, which suffered a substantial decrease, but during the XVII century the noble Baron Stockalper, a very shrewd merchant, realized how important the pass still was for the region, and for his intuition and trading skills he was nicknamed "king of the Simplon". It was however Napoleon, who succeeded in making France and the Cisalpine Republic come to an agreement with the Valais for the construction of a road between the lakes of Geneva and Maggiore through the Rhône Valley and the Simplon Pass. The works were completed in 1805. The opening of the Simplon Tunnel was celebrated in 1906 as a victory of humanity. The economic and social returns led to the development of the entire territory crossed by the Simplon railway line, which still plays a role of primary impor-

tance and is considered the "Mediterranean Gate to Europe" for the transfer of goods and passengers. It is in Trasquera, a town on the border with Switzerland, where the visitor feels strongly the presence of and the importance they have for the community of the road first and the tunnel built later. Historical remains, museums and exhibitions of mementos take the visitor way back in time, helping him understand the difficulties encountered by man when realizing such works.

The Simplon region is, however, also a territory where nature reigns supreme offering scenarios of a beauty beyond compare, destinations beloved by excursionists and mountain experts and where the visitor can plunge into the rural atmosphere of ancient villages perched on the mountain slopes or enjoy the ski runs of Val Divedro.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.centannisempione.it>  
[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traforo\\_del\\_Sempione](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traforo_del_Sempione)

Audio guide/Audio-guides  
+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 116)

Altre schede/Also see indexes: Domodossola

01 Treno a vapore in occasione delle celebrazioni dei 100 anni  
- Steam train during the 100 years of the opening of the tunnel  
02 Stazione di Iselle - The station of Iselle



# THE HOLY MOUNTS



**Faith** art and history surrounded by nature: the Sacro Monte of San Francesco on the isle of San Giulio, the Sacro Monte of the Holy Trinity of Ghiffa, the Sacro Monte Calvario of Domodossola. On these sites, included in 2003 among the ones declared by Unesco "Patrimony of the Humanity", the visitor can really experience moments of deep devotion and meditation.

The Sacro Monte of Orta, now nature reserve, extends through a thirteen hectares historical park. Twenty-one chapels with frescoes and sculptures dedicated to the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, a series of life-size polychromatic terracotta statues, realized by the most important artists of the XVI, XVII and XVIII Centuries, over 900 frescoes, which stage real theatre representations, within a mystical environment, at times opening onto panoramic views over the Lake of Orta and framed by the majestic chain of the Alps.

The Sacro Monte of the Holy Trinity of Ghiffa, with its monumental baroque complex, which includes the Sanctuary, three main chapels, the arcade of the Way of the Cross, the Getsemani Chapel and the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrow, rises on a spectacular panoramic terrace with about 200 hectares of woodland overlooking Lake Maggiore.

The Sacro Monte Calvario of Domodossola stands on the panoramic hill of Mattarella, scene of many historical events, which overlooks the Ossola Valley. The Sacred Mount, dedicated to Christ on the Cross, was built starting in 1656 and through the centuries was enriched with the 15 chapels, which recall the stations of the Way of the Cross. In 1828

Antonio Rosmini, who was recently made a saint, came to stay and created the Charity Institution, of which the Rosminian Fathers are still the keepers. Near the sacred complex runs the excursion itinerary "Way of the Presses and Mills" where the visitors can admire interesting remains of ancient rural civilizations.

Another place of profound faith and destination of many pilgrimages is the Sanctuary of Madonna del Sangue of Re, constructed in memory of a miraculous event and located on the eastern side of the Vigevano Valley.

Faith has prompted the construction of glorious monuments such as the colossal church of San Gaudenzio in Baceno, the church of Saints Pietro e Paolo in Crevaldossola, the churches of Madonna di Campagna and San Remigio in Verbania, San Lorenzo in Gozzano, which, according to tradition, was the ninety-ninth church built by the brothers San Giuliano and San Giulio, before they constructed on the Island, which from the Saint takes the name, the magnificent Basilica, where it is possible to admire a precious medieval ambo.

The uniqueness of our territory lies in the surprising contrasts that characterise our tourist areas ranging from chapels, oratories and small sanctuaries spread all over the mountains to the Giant Statue of Saint Charles. The colossal figure, second statue in the world after the Statue of Liberty, towers over the town of Arona and the surrounding area from a height of 35 meters and can be visited inside.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.sacromonteorta.it>

<http://www.sacromonteghiffa.it>

<http://www.sacromontedomodossola.it>

**Audioguide/Audio-guides**

+39 0323.1975525 (codici/codes 102, 108, 112, 203, 209, 302, 303, 306, 119, 309, 310)

**Altre schede/Also see indexes**

**Parchi e riserve naturali, Valle Antigorio Divedro**

**Terme di Verbania, Orta San Giulio, Arona**

01/02 Sacro Monte Calvario Domodossola

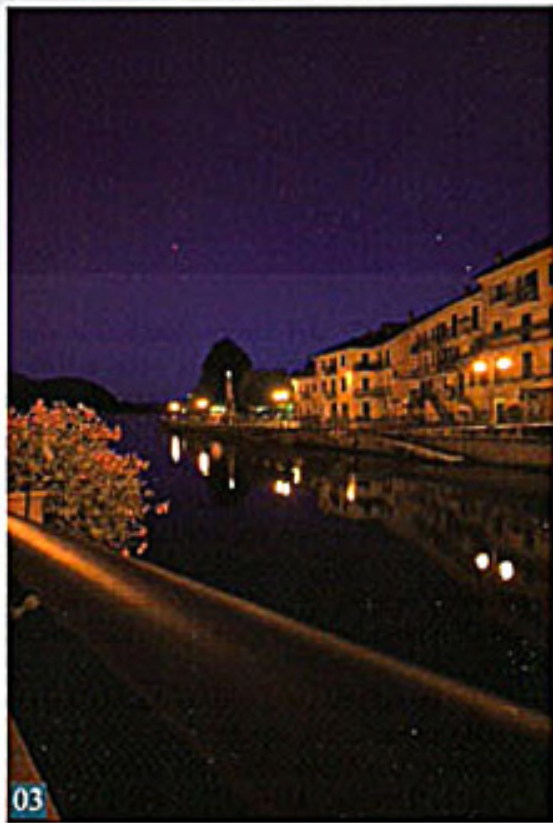


# HOUSEWARES INDUSTRY



**Housewares** with an artistic life of their own: kettles, coffee machines, pots and pans, cutlery, accessories and utensils present not only in the most prestigious kitchens of the world but also exposed in museums and international exhibitions. Trademarks of Italian design created in the Cusio region, where plants that in the 1900s worked on sheet metal have gradually developed and following the post-WWII tastes, specialized themselves and started to produce articles in stainless steel combining functionality with innovation, refined taste, art and creativity.

In this area houseware production is a thriving industry, that, thanks to the collaboration with the best known contemporary artists, manufactures not only standard items but also collection articles. Alessi, Bialetti, Lagostina produce refined objects, available also at the company's outlet; the drawings, however, can only be seen in Crusinallo, in the museum set up at its headquarters by Alessi, one of the historical companies of the Cusio region. Elegant, flexuous, light forms, where stainless steel and aluminium blend in with modern materials such as polyamide, porcelain or other plastic materials. These mostly family-run firms, located along the shores of Lake of Orta, have for years been projected towards the worldwide markets and manufacture dreamlike, high quality and indestructible articles at prices suitable for everyone's pocket.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.forumomegna.org>

<http://www.museimpresa.com>

Altre schede/Also see indexes  
Omegna, Cultura, Arte, Folklore

01/02/03 Vedute di Omegna - Views of Omegna



# DESIGN AND CRAFTSMANSHIP



01



02

**Marble** and wood, natural elements, symbol of the specificity of this territory, sometimes moulded into products typical of the local production, sometimes used to create sublime objects, such as for example the wooden "Pinocchio", elevated to symbol of Valle Strona, a real kingdom of local woodcrafting, or the grandeur of the Cathedral of Milan (Duomo) realized with marble coming from the quarries of Candoglia, overlooking the Lake of Mergozzo. White granite from Montorfano, pink granite from Baveno, "serizzo" and "beola", precious resources, with which skillful craftsmen have realized objects unique of their kind.

Objects for everyday use, present in all the kitchens of the world, pots and pans, coffee makers and tableware, objects which are not simply practical, but are also the symbol of the most refined design. It's in the Cusio area, on the shores of Lake of Orta, that the handicraft and industrial tradition of houseware production, along with the manufacturing of taps and fittings, was born and bloomed during the last centuries and has become today a symbol of international creativity and design.

Another well known aspect of this area is represented by the cultivation of flowers typical of the Lake Maggiore region: camellias, azaleas, rhododendrons and minor acidophilic plants, which, thanks to the very favourable microclimate of Lake Maggiore, thrive luxuriantly. The tradition of typical flower cultivation goes back to the mid XIX Century, the time when the nobility created beautiful gardens and introduced on the territory flowers and plants coming from all over the world. Undisputed queens are the camellias from Japan and China, and the azaleas.

Ancient traditions, passed on from generation to generation, such as pottery in Valle Antigorio, where with the clay extracted locally, craftsmen would make baroque style majolicas, today proposed with blue and brown flowery decorations, or again the weaving of textiles and the use of hand looms, or last but not least the realization of gold jewellery inspired by the ancient Walser tradition.



03

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.comunitamontanadellostroanaebassotoce.it>

<http://www.itinerari.distrettolaghi.it>

<http://www.assocave.it>

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmo\\_di\\_Candoglia](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmo_di_Candoglia)

<http://lagomaggioreflori.it>

Altre schede/Also see indexes: Omegna, Lago di Mergozzo, Floricoltura

01 Ceramica ossolana - Majolica from the Ossola Valley

02 Artigianato in legno - Woodcrafts

03 Cava di granito - Cave of granite



# FLOWER GROWING



**Azaleas** rhododendrons, camelias, Pieris, Skimmie and Kalmie: the highest concentration of acidophilic plants is found along the shores of Lake Maggiore with about 150 nurseries, botanical gardens and flower growing enterprises. For over 200 years high quality flowers and plants have been grown in this area: the fertile soil, the especially mild and temperate climate and the presence of villas and botanical gardens realized during the XIX century by Italian and European noble families, have lead to the start and intensification of the production. The creation of parks and gardens developed into the introduction and exchange of new plants. The local flower growing industry is part of a floricultural production District with producers and floriculturists affiliated to the Typical Flower Cooperative of Lake Maggiore, and plants are exported all over the world.

Among the most appreciated plants are the spring and winter camelias. While the first, originary of Japan and China are characterized by a variety of colour shades, the winter kind can continuously bloom from September to February. The azalea is number one among the flowers cultivated along Lake Maggiore, with over 1.5 million specimens produced every year. Another plant quite common in this area and generally available in the red colour is the rhododendron, which blooms during the same period as the azalea. Other less known acidophilic plants, such as the ones of the Pieris, Skimmia, Kalmia and Leucothoe species, characterized by pretty but less striking leaves and flowers, are also part of the local production. Several shows and exhibitions dedicated to azaleas and rhododendrons are held every year on Lake Maggiore: among the most ancient, best known and widely apprecia-

ted are the Spring and the Winter Camelia Exhibitions, both held in Verbania Pallanza. Meetings, shows and conventions are also organized along with the flower exhibitions not only in Verbania but also in Cannobio, Cannero Riviera and generally all along the shores of Lake Maggiore.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/agri/ita/piemontedoc/flori/produtz/lagomag/index.htm>

<http://www.lastradadeiflori.it>

<http://www.lagomaggioreflori.it/ita/index.htm>

<http://www.comuniflori.it>

Altro schedo/Also see indexes

Design ed artigianato, Ville e giardini

01 Giardini di Villa Taranto - The gardens of Villa Taranto  
02 Camelia Japonica



# OENOASTRONOMY



A full table of ancient flavours which take their roots from the traditions and history of a population that has been able to exploit the resources offered by the territory. From Appetizers to Desserts it's an outburst of skillfully prepared simple and genuine delicacies. Absolute protagonist of the mountain cuisine is bread, the making of which was in the Ossola region a consolidated family and social process. Bread was generally produced with rye mixed with other types of flour, sometimes enriched with nuts and raisins and served with locally made sausages and cheeses. From salami to mortadella, from raw ham to bresaola (cured meat), from the famous "goat violins" to flavoured lard, every family had a special recipe of its own, which would be passed on from generation to generation and that can still be tasted in all the various products of these valleys. The art of cheese-making dates back to the year 1000, when the work of a mountaineer and his family was officially sanctioned. About thirty alpine pastures produce excellent cheeses that bear the name of the places where the most important "casere" are located. A name in point is the Bettelmat, a cheese currently produced by seven alpine pastures of the Antigorio and Formazza valleys. A limited production which has contributed to enhance its taste and its preciousness on the market. Excellent are also the cheeses from Mottarone, which can be tasted and purchased from various farms located between the Lake of Orta and Lake Maggiore, possibly tasting them with a good glass of wine from the Novara plains. Cheeses to be tasted with the many sorts of honey produced in this area with various taste nuances. From the mountains to the lake, where both river and lake fish is the true protagonist. From the lake come the lavaret, the perch, the bleak, the jackfish and the trouts. The species typical of Lake Maggiore is the perch, which cooked with the original recipe brings to life once again the tradition

according to which, since olive trees did not grow in this area, people used to press nuts to obtain the oil to cook.

High quality wines and desserts are available to accompany a typically local meal. The absence of wind and the warmth rising up from the plane of the Toce river have allowed the cultivation of terraced vineyards in the Ossola region, where one of the most famous wines, the "Prunent", is produced. As for desserts the choice is quite ample: from the "Credenzin", made like the black bread of Coimo, but with the addition of nuts, raisins and figs, to the Sweet Bread of Cannobio, to the "Imperialine" and "Reginette", biscuits typical of the area of Omegna, to the "Margheritine" of Stresa, the "Fugascina" of Mergozzo, the "Intresine" of Intra and the "Amaretti" of Pallanza. All these products can be purchased from the numerous, mainly family-run firms or included in the menu of the various restaurants, some of which have been cited by the most important restaurant guides, as well as at several typical holidays farms.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/agri/vetrina/index.htm>  
<http://www.distrettolaghi.it>

01 Fugascina, Mergozzo  
02 Margheritine, Stresa  
03 Credenzin, Ossola  
04 Erbe e liquori - Herbs and liquors



# SUMMER SPORTS



**Canoeing** sailing, windsurf, swimming, golf, trekking, beach volley, horse riding, free climbing or simple but regenerating nature strolls and excursions are just some of the sport disciplines that can be practiced in summer on a territory that represents a real open-air gym. In the Valgrande Nature Park, as well as in the countless parks, reserves and uncontaminated nature oases, one can practice trekking, alone or accompanied by expert environmental mountain guides. On the mountain it is possible to do some bird-watching or practice free-climbing on cliffs that can satisfy the needs of both beginners and experts. The Ossola area offers cycling enthusiasts and mountain bike riders many opportunities to enjoy themselves along thousands of paved roads or on "green" tracks and trails deep in the heart of nature. Horse riding, kayaking or paragliding complete the offer of sports that are available to mountain lovers. On the other hand the lake offers a great variety of water sports: canoeing, sailing, scuba diving can be practiced on Lake Maggiore as well as Lake of Orta and Lake of Mergozzo. The soft rolling hills of Vergante, with fully equipped international golf courses, are instead a paradise for golf lovers. Then those wanting to put their ability to the test can try out the many adventure parks located near the lake. Finally miles and miles of beaches are available for swimming, beach-volley matches and many other more or less demanding sports.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.piemontefeel.org/it/sport/index.php>

<http://www.caipiemonte.it/sezioni.php>

<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/sport/organizzazioni/conitalia.htm>

Altre schede/Also see indexes:

Parchi e aree protette

Sport d'acqua - Water sports



# WINTER SPORTS



**150** kms of ski runs always open thanks to programmed artificial snow systems, skiing stations offering 50 ski-lift systems from 1,000 all the way up to 3,000 meters and various other opportunities to practice all sorts of winter sports: downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, off-the-slopes skiing, alpine skiing, lighted slopes, snow parks, skating rinks and ice waterfalls: Neveazzurra, the skiing district situated within the Distretto Turistico dei Laghi between the Verbano Cusio Ossola and Novara provinces, offers all enthusiasts moments of pure fun surrounded by an environment of absolute splendour. The installations and structures are well distributed, thus ensuring safe as well as highly professional support. While skiing along the Mottarone and Pian di Sole runs one can enjoy landscapes with a view over the lakes beyond compare, while in Valle Antrona one feels in direct contact with nature.

Cross-country skiing enthusiasts have many opportunities to enjoy long itineraries harmoniously inserted in areas of extraordinary beauty: Formazza, Santa Maria Maggiore, Trasquera, Macugnaga, Antronapiana, Alpe Devero offer ski runs painstakingly maintained and adequate for all different degrees of technical skill. Within the Ossola territory appropriate facilities are available for the new snow sports such as snowboarding, freestyle and heliskiing, which are becoming more and more popular.

Ice skating is also in great demand and good rinks, all equipped for night skating, are available in Macugnaga, Antrona-

piana, Premia, Formazza, S.Maria Maggiore, Ornavasso and Malesco. Finally downhill skiing enthusiasts are offered the opportunity to enjoy extremely beautiful itineraries with different degrees of difficulty. Neveazzurra can be reached on line by clicking [www.neveazzurra.it](http://www.neveazzurra.it). The site offers a broader and broader range of services: in addition to the webcams strategically located along the ski runs, and the instant message information center, which have been active for several seasons, a new automatic voice information service has been implemented which can be reached by simply calling 0323 1975665. At the cost of a regular call from fixed or cell phone it is possible at any time to listen to an updated snow report from the Neveazzurra circuit, the meteo forecast as well as other useful information.

Furthermore all information on competitions, events or appointments planned at the various locations are published on line and, by filling in the form available on the web site, one can also register to receive by e-mail a regular newsletter with the most interesting and useful news for all ski enthusiasts.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.piemontefeeel.org/it/sport-sulla-neve/index.php>

<http://www.neveazzurra.it>

Audioguide/Audio-guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 113)

Info Neveazzurra: +39 0323.1975665

01 Sci nel comprensorio Neveazzurra - Skiing in the district of Neveazzurra



# EVENTS



01



02

A long series of events mark the passing of the seasons: from flower shows to open-air concerts, from literary awards to sport competitions, from patron saint festivals and oenogastronomic fairs to international events such as the Musical Weeks of Stresa on Lake Maggiore to the Umberto Giordano Festival of Baveno, that every year attract to our territory famous artists, well known works, concerts and shows of high cultural and artistic profile. Guitar, organ and antique music are protagonists of the events taking place on the lake of Orta, with "Un paese a sei corde", "Armonie sul lago" and the musical cruises on the lake, while "Orta Cultura" proposes every year events of great tourist attraction. Culture through music, but also literature with the "La Fabbrica di Carta" of Villadossola dedicated to the local publishing sector, an event especially lively and of high quality, and with LetterAltura, a festival dedicated to travels and adventure and to the mountain. Culture that generate opportunities for meeting with its protagonists: the "Premio Stresa Narrativa" one of the most important national awards, for years recognized as a moment of literary confrontation, the "Grinzane Cinema Festival" of Stresa and with its characteristic mystery conno-

tation, the Premio "Grinzane Noir" of Orta.

The explosion of flowers and fragrances is an occasion for events with the typical local flowers as protagonists: in Verbania the Winter Camellias national contest, the "Orchids on the Lake" festival, the flowery parade and the "Publishing and Gardens" show. The Camellias are also protagonists in Cannero Riviera while countless market-shows, conventions, meetings follow one another all over the territory.

Events tied to tradition and oenogastronomy, with fairs and shows dedicated to the typical products, and moments of popular devotion with festivals and important events characterized by merriment, such as the San Vito Fireworks show in Omegna or the June Feast of Domodossola. The Ossola region is rich in popular fairs and events such as the Feast of San Bernardo in Macugnaga, The Boden Festival in Ornavasso, the Grapes Festival in Maserà, the Mushroom Festival in Trontano, the Blueberry Fair in Santa Maria Maggiore. Events as an opportunity to get together, to trade and promote, such as the Fair of Lake Maggiore, which for years has steadily been attracting visitors to Arona, a town also popularly known for the Tredicino Patronal Fair.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://distrettolaghi.it>  
<http://www.stresafestival.eu>  
<http://www.festivalgiordano.it>  
<http://www.unpaeseaseicorde.it>  
<http://www.grinzane.it>  
<http://www.letteraltura.it>  
<http://www.lafabbricadicarta.it>  
<http://www.camellieinmostra.it>  
<http://www.corsofiorito.it>  
<http://www.editoriaegiordani.it>  
<http://www.sanvito-omegna.it>  
<http://www.giugnodomese.it>  
<http://www.fierarona.it>



03

- 01 Raduno spazzacamini S. Maria Maggiore - Chimney sweepers festival  
 02 Sagra della Zucca Omegna - Pumpkins Fair  
 03 Corso Fiorito Verbania - Flower Course



# CULTURE ART AND FOLKLORE



A culture, whose roots go back to many centuries ago or that draws inspiration from a more recent grandeur. An example thereof is the culture of the Walser civilisation: an ancient population of Germanic origins migrated from the Valais to the Italian Alps, where they settled in colonies with their language, their architecture and their traditions. Macugnaga and Formazza with the ancient Walser houses, now also turned into museums, and then Agaro, Ausone and Salecchio, the "Walser of Silence" in the communities of Baceno, Premia and Campello Monti, a hamlet clinging to the mountain slope and part of the municipality of Valstrona; then comes Ornavasso, with the Sanctuaries of Boden and della Guardia, where the most ancient traditions still survive in spite of the passing of time.

A rural culture still very much alive in mountain villages, with the ancient houses clinging to the stone and surrounded by terraced fields, which tell about the antique civilization and preserve the fundamentals of the farmers' way of life: wine-presses, stone ovens to bake the bread, imposing terracings, mills to grind rye, oats and chestnuts, as can still be seen on the Graglia streamlet in Trontano. Territory and material culture are shown and narrated in the museums and along the itineraries of the Ecomuseo del Cusio, and by typical exhibitions dedicated to the umbrella and the parasol (Gignese), to the chimney sweeper (Santa Maria Maggiore), the art of hat making (Ghiffa), the musical instruments (Quarna Sot-

to), and ethnographic collections such as the ones exposed in Gurro, in the Cannobina Valley. That's where ancient crafts and modern trades can be rediscovered, such as in the Museo del Contrabbando (Smugglers Museum) and the Gold Mine of Guia (Macugnaga), the Museo degli Alberghieri (Museum of Hotel Traders) (Armeno), or where one can learn about the history of local production at the Forum of Omegna and the Museo del Rubinetto (Faucet Museum) in San Maurizio d'Opaglio.

A culture of bourgeoisie and nobility, which lives on in Vogogna, one of the most beautiful villages in Italy, with the Visconti Castle and the Praetorial Palace, traces of which can also be found in the mansions of Villa Caselli in Masera, villa Nigra, in the XIX Century Castle of Miasino and the Visconti Castle of Massino Visconti.

Verbania is fascinating also for its elegant palaces: Palazzo Viani Dugnani and Palazzo Biumi Innocenti house the important collections of the Museo del Paesaggio (Landscape Museum), while in Arona the Archaeological Museum retraces the age-old history of this territory.

A culture that through the "Belle Epoque" and the grandeur of the XIX Century, found in the mansions and palaces spread all around Lake Maggiore the meeting point for men of letters, humanists and artists coming from all over Europe, attracted by the rich art treasures of the Borromeos, whose collections, gardens and palaces continue to be among the attractions most appreciated by tourists from all over the world. Travelers through time and arts, who chose the lakes as one of the stops for their Grand Tour on the Simplon Railroad line, and who stopped here to stay for some time: Alessandro Manzoni, the composers Arturo Toscanini and Umberto Giordano, Balzac, Nietzsche, Hemingway, Eugenio Montale, Mario Soldati, Gianni Rodari, a native of Omegna on Lake of Orta, just to mention a few. Culture as a moment for knowledge, with prestigious events dedicated to Modern Art, such as the exhibitions held in Arona of paintings by artists like Picasso and De Chirico, the expositions in Orta.

## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.minieradoro.it/http://www.walser-alps.eu>  
<http://www.lagodorta.net/elenco.asp?cat=6>  
<http://www.museodelpaesaggio.it>  
<http://www.archeomuseo.it>  
[http://www.paesidipinti.it/s\\_legro.asp?LK=3](http://www.paesidipinti.it/s_legro.asp?LK=3)

Audioguide/Audio-guides  
+39 0323.1975525 (codici/codes 115, 207)

Altre schede/Also see indexes  
Forti e fortificazioni, Verbania, Isole Borromeo, Lago d'Orta  
San Giulio

01 Museo Walser, Macugnaga - Walser Museum  
02 Casa Walser, Macugnaga - Walser House



# WATER AND SPAS



**Water** offering marvelous spectacles but also water with high therapeutical properties. The Ossola region offers numerous thermal springs, from which for many years have been bottled mineral waters with high quality organoleptic or therapeutic characteristics: the Crodo mineral water used to prepare the Crodino aperitif, the water from Bognanco or the one from Vigizzo flowing through the Val Grande Nature Park.

Worth mentioning are also the historical thermal stations: the Bognanco Spa, situated at an altitude of 700 m. in the valley formed by the Bogna stream near Domodossola, dates back to 1862. The water of the Bognanco Thermal Spring is good for stomach, liver, intestine and kidney ailments.

The Crodo Spa is located in the small hamlet of Molinetto, in Val Divedro. The water from these springs is especially good for treatment and prevention of digestive system ailments.

The springs of Cadarese in Premia, discovered just a few years ago and flowing at +25.5°C, present the same characteristics as the water of Tabiano and are indicated for skin and otorhinolaryngoiatric problems. A new thermal spa has just recently been opened in Cadarese, a municipal division of Premia. It has pools with naturally hot water where one can swim both in summer and winter enjoying all the beneficial therapeutical effects or just relax in a very pleasant environment. A large wellness area is under construction dedicated to the comfort and care of the body.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.piemontefeeel.org/it/il-benessere/index.php>

<http://www.acquevigizzo.it>

<http://www.bognanco.it>

<http://www.premiaterme.com>

Audioguide/Audio-guides

+39 0323.1975525 (codici/codes 104, 105, 106)

Altre schede/Also see indexes

Valle Antigorio Divedro Formazza, Valle Vigizzo

Terme di Bognanco - *Thermes of Bognanco*



# VALLE ANTRONA AND VALLE BOGNANCO



**Green** offering marvelous spectacles but also water with high therapeutical properties. The Ossola region offers numGreen and wild extensions, peaks towering above changing colours with the passing of seasons and water roaring down the mountain slopes or flowing calmly into quiet alpine lakes. Valle Antrona, possibly the most intact of the Ossola valleys, is a 16 km. long and narrow gorge along which flows the Ovasca stream. It culminates with the natural terrace of Antronapiana, where, beside the mountains, it is water that reigns sovereign. Streamlets and waterfalls feed in fact five artificial lakes, precious hydrological reservoirs. Here, among these gigantic peaks it is not unusual to get a glimpse of rock goats and marmots.

Valle Bognanco, a nature and especially water kingdom with its alpine amphitheatre rising above it from Fornalino to the Monscera. Val Bognanco is ideal for pleasant excursions at a cost within everyone's reach, but also to pick berries and mushrooms. It was made famous by the thermal spas, where together with the highly curative water springs, it is possible to enjoy a covered thermal pool, a medical center for balneo-therapeutics and a charming thermal park surrounded by greenery and absolute quiet.



## INFORMATIONS

<http://www.cmvalleantrona.it>  
<http://www.valbognanco.com>

Audioguide/Audio-guides  
+39 0323.1975525 (codice/code 109)

Altre schede/Also see indexes  
Acqua e Terme

Val Bognanco - Valley of Bognanco