



THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF PIEDMONT AND THE CÔTE D'AZUR

Between the Alps and the Mediterranean

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EFFATA'
TOUR



1. THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF DON BOSCO

Turin, Colle Don Bosco, Chieri

Visit the key places of Don (which in Italian means "Father") Bosco.

Becchi (now Colle Don Bosco), where he was born. Chieri, where he studied as a boy and attended seminary, and Valdocco, Turin, where he lived his life as a priest ministering to young people. Here he founded the **Salesians** in 1859, an Order of priests and brothers dedicated to the education of young people, named after Francis de Sales, the 16th century saint known for his meekness and gentleness.

Don Bosco saw education as the key component in breaking the cycle of poverty-crime-poverty. He viewed schooling as the path to personal improvement with knock-on benefits for society at large. He called this **"the Preventative System of Education"**.

Experience in the places of origin of Don Bosco the atmosphere that inspired the Salesian philosophy of reason, religion and loving kindness.

2. SOCIAL SAINTS

Helping the needy in Turin

Turin in the 1800s was home to great "Social Saints", educators and builders of charitable works.

- **The Marquises of Barolo, Giulia and Tancredi** dedicate their lives to assisting orphans, girls who were alone and female convicts;
- **Giuseppe Benedetto Cottolengo** founded the Little House of Divine Providence (Piccola Casa della Divina Provvidenza) to give shelter to anyone in need with no distinctions;
- **Giuseppe Cafasso**, "the priest of the rope", the patrons of the chaplains of the prisons, he helped convicts and those sentenced to death;
- **Giovanni Bosco** founded the Salesians for the "education of the young", and in just a few decades created a vast network of boarding schools in Italy and abroad, he set up laboratories and "Oratories", a term which to his mind suggested prayer and organized recreation;
- **Francesco Faà di Bruno** gave shelter to girls coming from the countryside;
- **Leonardo Murialdo**, anticipated the social doctrine of the Church by training young people for work;
- **Giuseppe Allamano** founded the Consolata Fathers and the Consolata Sisters, two missionary congregations active in many countries of the world;
- **Pier Giorgio Frassati**, who is remembered for his Catholic political activism and for his help to the needy.



Discover with us the tradition of social commitment and solidarity found throughout the city of Turin.



3. THE AFTERLIFE IN ANCIENT EGYPT AND THE HOLY SHROUD

The Egyptian Museum and the Museum of the Shroud in Turin

Egyptians were renowned for the attention they paid to the dead: mummification, special instruction for the afterlife inserted into the shroud or coffin, grave goods and monuments for the powerful. The most salient feature of the religion of the Egyptians seems to have been the worship of the gods of the dead and the belief that it was possible for the dead **to live again an eternal existence in the world of spirits**. The Egyptian Museum (Museo Egizio) of Turin offers a rich overview of the sacred rituals, including objects connected with the cults, mummification and the rich pantheon of deities. It's the world's oldest Egyptian museum; founded in 1824 and it ranks second only to Cairo.

Decent burial was regarded to be of great importance also in ancient Israel, as in the rest of the ancient Near East. The Gospels tell us that **Jesus's corpse was wrapped in a "shroud"**.

Turin is associated with the Shroud, a long linen cloth on which the image of a man can be seen. This delicate cloth is actually kept in a climate-controlled container in the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Turin. But if you want to see a replica, you can visit the Museum of the Shroud (Museo della Sindone) instead.

State of the art scientific enquiry allows us to confirm that the body image of the Shroud is certainly not a painting, as has been demonstrated by well-known chemical, physical and computer evidence. Is today's "Turin Shroud" the winding sheet that wrapped the body of Jesus? The museum will either help you answer the question or simply satisfy your curiosity about a famous burial cloth.

Our journey will take us through five thousand years of history. We shall unlock the deepest secrets of religion and spirituality of Egypt. And we'll be using science to uncover the characteristics of the body impression on the Shroud.

4. A DEEP SENSE OF WONDER

Churches and monuments of the Age of the Baroque in Turin

Turin is a true jewel of the Baroque, which marked the city's cultural flourishing.

The talented Baroque architect and theologian Guarini planned the **Church of S. Lorenzo**, symbolised by its soaring dome which describes an eight point star within a perfect octagon. Guarino Guarini's architectural daring must be seen in relation to the virtuosic use of structural techniques common to the century, aimed at "stupefying" (the stunned marvelling of the faithful), almost to make manifest the miracle of divine logic through the human technical "miracle".

The architect Juvarra was behind the styling of the **Church of S. Filippo Neri**, Turin's largest. Then there are two churches with twinned frontages – **S. Carlo and S. Cristina** – forming the backdrop to Piazza S. Carlo, one of the finest squares in Europe, on account of its grandeur, its size and the symmetry of its buildings. The **Our Lady of Consolation Shrine** displays votive offerings donated by the faithful in thanks for miracles performed. Taking the quaint rack-tramway you reach one of the most important places of worship in Turin: the **Basilica of Superga**. This sumptuous church, from which a unique view of Turin and the Alps can be enjoyed, is one of Juvarra's greatest masterpieces.

The Baroque also characterizes the 15 Royal Residences in and around Turin – such as the **Royal Palace of Venaria Reale**, **Racconigi Royal Castle**, **Stupinigi Royal Hunting Palace** – that bear witness to the Savoy monarchy and constitute a unique treasure declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Turin is a city that was born in the Baroque style of architecture and at grew to become a city of sensational architectural monuments. Explore the spiritual and royal history of Turin with a tour of some of its most significant churches and palaces.

UNESCO World Heritage Site: Residences of the Royal House of Savoy



Basilica of Superga, Turin

5. THE VIA FRANCIGENA

The pilgrim's road through Italy to Rome

The Via Francigena is a **medieval pilgrim trail** and **Cultural Route of the Council of Europe** between the cathedral town of Canterbury, UK and the tombs of the two Apostles, Peter and Paul, in Rome. It passes through England, France and Switzerland before entering Italy at the Great St Bernard pass or the Col de Montgenèvre. The Italian leg leads through the southern Alps, the Apennines and the hills, the forests, olive groves, vineyards, hilltop villages and farmsteads of Tuscany and Lazio. The essential stops were – and remain – the great churches visited by the pilgrims and the pilgrim hospitals such as:

- **Saint Michael's Abbey**, better known as "Sacra di San Michele", built in the 10th century, where the boulders of the rocky mountains blend into a single body with the whole of the basement, stairways and buttresses;
- **St. Martin's Cathedral of Lucca** where, on a marble pillar adjacent to the Tower, there is a carving in the shape of "Labyrinth", a symbol of the Francigena;
- the ornate Romanesque-Gothic **Siena Cathedral**, contains numerous masterpieces from every epoch. A work that in many respects is exceptional, is the floor, "the most beautiful... largest and most magnificent... that ever was made" in the words of Giorgio Vasari, art historian and artist of Italian Renaissance art.

The Via Francigena tour is designed for those who intend to embark on the sacred journey, exploring the ways in which the ancient rites of pilgrimage might inspire modern equivalent for today's traveller. By taking the Via Francigena, pilgrims are offered the opportunity to restore the spirit, mind and body.

UNESCO World Heritage Site: San Gimignano, Siena, Val d'Orcia, Rome



6. SACRED MOUNTAINS AND PREALPINE LAKES

Recreate the Holy Places of Palestine in Northern Italy

Piedmont is dominated by mountains. As the name suggests, the region lies at the foot of the Alps and is also home to small and large lakes: Lake Maggiore, with its Borromean Islands, and Lake Orta.

Near the lakes area stand the Sacred Mountains ("Sacri Monti"), architectural complexes dedicated to the Christian faith, created in the late 16th and 17th centuries and declared UNESCO world heritage sites.

Worthy of note is the **Sacred Mountain of Varallo**, in the Sesia Valley, characterized by a complex urban plan which imitates the Holy Places of Palestine. Its Basilica and 45 chapels are adorned by hundreds of life-size wooden and terracotta statues depicting the life of Christ. Devotional paths are arranged in stages and run along the slopes of the hills, in chapels or kiosks placed in natural contexts and landscapes of rare beauty and panoramic positions that reproduce on a smaller scale the places and spaces of the "New Jerusalem" where sacred events were held.

The Sacred Mountain of Oropa is composed of twelve chapels dedicated to the life of the Virgin Mary and is considered the largest sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin in the Alps, located in a natural and unspoiled setting at 1200 m above sea level.

Enjoy the lake-mountain combination offered by this territory and visit the Sacred Mountains ("Sacri Monti"), important meeting places for the faithful and for lovers of art.

UNESCO World Heritage Site: Sacri Monti of Piedmont and Lombardy



Sanctuary of Oropa

7. THE SOUL AND LANDSCAPE OF WINES

Langhe-Roero and Monferrato in Piedmont

The Langhe area is one of the main Italian wine-producing regions at the crossing with the Monferrato and Roero districts, two other important wine areas. This is the homeland of Piedmont's finest red and white wines: Nebbiolo, Dolcetto, Asti Spumante, and of course Barolo and Barbaresco, two of the most prestigious local wines and internationally known symbols of Piedmont.

The landscape of Langhe-Roero and Monferrato has been nominated for UNESCO World Heritage Sites because it is the result of the combined action of humans and nature. It is a **multicoloured landscape**, where **culture and traditions linked to wine** are still alive, to be seen and felt in all aspects of daily life, in literature, arts, festivals, food and language. In Medieval times, the cultivation of wine was broadly promoted by monasteries as churches were in need of altar wine. Monastic orders were among the largest vineyard owners. Thanks to their libraries, the religious orders contributed also to a considerable transfer of wine-related knowledge from the Ancient Times to the Middle Ages. Today, big brands or local producers produce quality wines, telling the story of this land and of the local wine-growing tradition.

Here you can experience first-hand the authentic Piedmontese way of life and the seasonal traditions that revolve around the historical winemaking business that makes this area so special.

UNESCO World Heritage Site: Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato



8. WHERE ART MEETS SPIRITUALITY

The French Riviera

The most compelling endorsement of the French Riviera has been the number of artists drawn to its shores and hillside villas. In the 20th century, the French Riviera became a sanctuary of modern art. The world's greatest artists found their inspiration in the Mediterranean light and art of living: Renoir, Bonnard, Matisse, Picasso, Chagall to name but a few. Chagall, Matisse and Jean Cocteau all created work which drew on the Bible for inspiration for religious contexts in the South of France.

Matisse wrote that his design and decoration of the **Chapelle du Rosaire** for the Dominican Nuns of Vence was not a work that he chose, but rather a work for which he was chosen by fate.

Chagall wrote of "seeing life's happenings as well as works of art through **the wisdom of the Bible**" and of trying to express this sense in works "shot through with its spirit and harmony".

Notre Dame de Jerusalem is the chapel decorated by **Jean Cocteau** near Fréjus. The contemplative experience which this chapel provides is of an all-encompassing multi-media immersion into the world of Cocteau. The church murals which he undertook in his later years are among the most idiosyncratic contributions to the renewal of religious art in twentieth century France.

Discover the art galleries, coastal towns, medieval villages and take an artistic break on the Cote D'Azur, inspired by the dazzling blue waters and skies.



Chapel Notre Dame de Jerusalem, Fréjus

Travel "inside" history, art and spirituality

**WE TRAVEL BECAUSE WE NEED TO,
BECAUSE DISTANCE AND DIFFERENCE
ARE THE SECRET TONIC OF CREATIVITY.
WHEN WE GET HOME, HOME IS STILL THE SAME.
BUT SOMETHING IN OUR MIND HAS BEEN CHANGED,
AND THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING.**



Christ Pantocrator, medieval fresco in Eldrado's chapel, Novalesa Abbey

Effatà Tour, located near Turin, offers private tours of three regions of northwestern Italy (Piedmont, Liguria and Aosta Valley) and the two southeastern regions of France (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Rhône-Alpes). Our sister company **Effatà Editrice** has been publishing books about spirituality and spiritual growth for over 20 years.

Travel provides the opportunity to step out of the non-stop busyness of our lives, to seek a time of quiet and reflection. It gives us the chance to "walk through" those issues that we have on our minds, whatever they might be. It is a time of simply "being" rather than always "doing". It gives us the chance re-energise mentally, physical and spiritually. And it allows us to reconnect with our cultural heritage and the natural world – as well as to refresh our faith or seek spiritual direction.



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