

Lanzo, a "climb" among churches, towers and bridges

Davide Battaglia

Località di partenza:

Regione Piemonte, Provincia di Torino, Lanzo
Torinese

Tipo di itinerario:

a piedi

Difficoltà a piedi:

Turistica

Difficoltà in bici:

Facile

Dislivello in salita (m):

70

Dislivello in discesa (m):

70

Tempo (hh:mm):

2:30

Periodo consigliato:

all year round

Uffici informazioni:

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Lanzo

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Accesso al percorso e note:

To Lanzo Torinese

By car: A32 Turin-Bardonecchia motorway if you
are coming from France, via Modane; A6
Turin-Savona, if you are coming from France, via
Nizza-Ventimiglia; A21 Turin-Piacenza, if you are
coming from central and southern Italy; A4
Turin-Milan, if you are coming from northern Italy
or from Austria, via the Brenner Pass; A5
Turin-Aosta, if you are coming from Switzerland
or France via Chamonix-Aosta. From the
Northern ring-road of Turin, take the Venaria
exit, continue towards Valli di Lanzo, then
continue as far as Lanzo.

TREKKING

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By train: Turin-Ceres railway line, Lanzo Torinese station.

*Departure and arrival point
Ufficio ATL, Via Umberto, 1*

Starting from the ATL office, in Via Umberto I we follow Via dei Molini until we arrive at the Church of Santi Giacomo e Filippo, one of the oldest churches in the town and known as the headquarters of the Brotherhood of the Holy Cross. On the outside we can admire Gothic decorations in terracotta, a sun-dial and traces of frescoes, while inside there is a remarkable wooden crucifix dating back to 1700. From here, we cross the public gardens and shortly arrive at the Railway Station, one of seventeen along the famous Turin-Ceres line. In the hall of the station, a curious plaque recalls the first experiment involving the remote transmission of electricity from generators, the starting point of the modern alternate current electric system.

Passing to the left of the station we enter the avenue that leads to the Ponte del Diavolo Nature Park, an attractive, very popular place. After a few minutes we find ourselves before the spectacular Ponte del Diavolo (Devil's Bridge): about 16 metres high and with a humpback span of 37 metres, it is an admirable feat of engineering for the time when it was built and, this was the reason why a legend attributed it to the work of the devil. At the mouth of the bridge there are two chapels: one dedicated to Saint Rocco and the other, a bit higher up, to Saint Giacinto; on the opposite side, on the slopes of Mount Basso, visitors can climb up to an exceptional panoramic site called "Madonna degli Alpini" (10 minutes from the bridge, along a well sign-posted path).

After walking along the panoramic path we climb up the slopes of Mount Vuriasco to arrive on its peak in the historical Piazza Albert; there used to be a medieval castle here but it was destroyed in 1551 by the French troops, during the French-Spanish war. Fortunately, we can still admire the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli, built originally in the X century (even if it has been extended and modified over the years), alongside the castle, many objects belonging to Don Bosco during his stay in Lanzo are kept here.

Leaving the square behind us, we descend to the right, following Via Cottolengo and come to the little building called "Casa dei Ceci" (the House of the Chickpea), the old village bakery, built in 1300 inside the castle.

After passing the walls we turn left and, climbing up a steep flight of steps, we come to the heart of the town: the Contrada del Borgo, today Via San Giovanni Bosco. The road is still intersected today by the characteristic little transversal streets called "chintane", that were crossed by arches and buttresses from which the tops of the towers along the town walls were controlled by soldiers. Near here we can also see Mauriziano hospital dating back to 1769 and the ancient, silent church of Santa Maria del Borgo.

Just a few metres before the Challant tower, we turn right into Chintana di Cordero and arrive in the fifteenth century Piazza Gallenga (also called "piassa granda"), which, in the past, used to be the throbbing heart of the town.

Returning to Via San Giovanni Bosco we come to Torre Ajmone di Challant, the ancient gate into the town and one of the most important monuments of Lanzo.

We now climb up a flight of steps on the left, following Via Sant'Ignazio for a few metres until, on the left, we see a commemorative plaque on the house of Teobaldo Pecchio, the inventor of the "ghersin" i.e. the Lanzo grissini, which have been popular throughout the whole of northern Italy since the second half of the Eighteenth century.

Walking on we come to the Chapel of San Michele dating back to 1503. Then we come to Via Loreto and the Sanctuary of the Madonna di Loreto, built in 1618 in imitation of the Holy House of Loreto.

Beside the church there is a medieval house that used to be the home of the hermit who looked after the church. We then take Via Vindrola and, just a few metres along the road we turn right into Via Savant. Opposite the local kindergarten, we turn into Via Vittorio Emanuele and return to the old part of the town, walking first along Via Diaz and then Via Cibrario. From here we turn left into Via Umberto I and find ourselves back at the place where we started, opposite Piazza Peradotto and its impressive "Ala" (wing), a large building with stone and brick arches which, in Spring and

Autumn, used to be used for the transhumance.

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