



OSSUCCIO – PATH 1 – A SMALL ISLAND AMIDST GREAT HISTORY AND OLD WALKWAYS

STAGE 1 – FROM THE PARKING OF THE ANTIQUARIUM TO THE JETTY FOR THE COMACINA ISLAND

INFORMATION

Point of departure Ossuccio, parking of the *Antiquarium*

Point of arrival Ossuccio, *Antiquarium* pier

Path type urban route

Total length approx. 200m

Travel time (on foot) 5 min

Difficulty tourist

Rise –

Maximum height 210m

Paving stone setts, cobbles, wooden ledges

Public transport to the point of departure bus service; boat in the hamlet of Campo

Public transport from the point of arrival bus service; boat in the hamlet of Campo

Parking at the point of departure yes, paid parking available

Points of interest *Hospitale* (Hospice) and church of S. Maria Maddalena (St. Mary Magdalene); *Antiquarium*; Olive growing on Lake Como

Warning Please note that to visit the Island you need to buy a ticket from the *Antiquarium* or directly at the info point/ticket office on the Island (click here for information on ticket prices) and that fines apply if you do not show the ticket when required.

DESCRIPTION

The itinerary starts at the (paid) parking paved in flagstone on the right handside of the Strada Statale Regina (when coming from Como), immediately after the famous belfry of the church of S. Maria Maddalena in Ospitaletto di Ossuccio (also known as Stabio until 1810), which has become the symbol of Lake Como's beauty. After reaching the east end of the parking area, towards Lenno, take the old Via Regina downhill (please mind the junction) – cobbled and approx. 2.5 metres wide (the left side is protected by a railing) – which borders the “Opera Pia Giovio” public park, a green area with elegant olive trees, tables and benches, serving as a lido in the summer period (there is also a bar and restaurant). After approx. 120 metres you get to the original monumental entrance of the old ***Hospitale* of S. Maria Maddalena**, a place devoted to give hospitality to pilgrims and wayfarers. Turn right and climb the cobbled step, followed by six stone steps which lead to the entrance of the *Hospitale*. Immediately to your left you find the entrance of the Town Hall and of the Local Police station; turn right instead of left and continue on the paved yard. After a few metres, by turning left and climbing two steps, you enter the first bay of the portico in front of the **church of S. Maria Maddalena** (an integral part of the *Hospitale* complex). On the left wall of this first bay, above a niche, you can see a stone frieze with *Monstrous beasts*, which art historians date back to the first half of the 11th century, the author of which remains unknown; under it, a 16th century memorial stone remembers the connection between the *Hospitale* and the Giovio family. A fragment of a late-Roman funerary stele was wallled into the wall of the arch on the first bay, carrying a funerary inscription and a torch-bearing winged genius, framed by an arched architecture supported by spiral columns.

From the second – uncovered – bay of the portico one can access the Romanesque church, which hosts remains of interesting frescoes: to arrange the visit please ask the *Antiquarium*.

After the visit, one step down from the second bay of the portico, cross the yard and walk towards the arched entrance of the *Antiquarium*, (please mind the low threshold and the two automatic glass doors). The *Antiquarium* acts as a

starting point and visitor centre for the Comacina Island and its surroundings; a new museum – opened in 2013 – hosts the archaeological findings and the artistic artefacts coming from various locations of the Island and the territory of Ossuccio.

At the end of the visit to the *Antiquarium* return to the *Hospitale*'s yard, and from there, turn back, cross the old Via Regina and descend an 11 step cobbled stair (on the left there is a shoot, this, too, cobbled). On the left of the stair, beyond a 1.2m high metal railing, a 4m x 4m corner limited by chains has been created to exhibit some presses and a millstone for crushing olives (until a few years ago they were hosted in a room at the *Hospitale* complex) as evidence of the importance of **olive growing on Lake Como**. After crossing a driveway with gravel, about 1.20m wide, you descend other 12 cobbled steps. On the left side of these two flights of stairs there is a green area with elegant olive trees, used as a lido (there is also a bar). At the end of the steps you come to a paved quay, approx. 1 metre wide, overlooking the lake. Wait here for the arrival of the private boat service to and from the Comacina Island. When the boat is moored at the pier, turn right and cross the iron gate opened by the person in charge; turn left and climb a step, then walk along the 1.50m wide and about 10m long wooden pier, and (carefully) board the boat. The fare is to be paid on board.