



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

STAGE 2 – FROM THE LANDING STAGE ON THE ISLAND TO THE CASA TORRE

INFORMATION

Point of departure Comacina Island, pier

Point of arrival Comacina Island, Casa Torre

Path type tourism-excursion route

Total length approx. 400m

Travel time (on foot) 15 min

Difficulty tourist-excursionist

Rise 15m

Maximum height 215m

Paving stone, concrete, boardwalks, gravel, dirt track, grass with outcropping roots and rocks

Public transport to the point of departure boat

Public transport from the point of arrival –

Parking at the point of departure –

Points of interest Casa Torre (Tower House)*

* building totally or partially in ruins

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 price) and that fines apply if you do not show the ticket when required.

DESCRIPTION

After crossing the stretch of the lake which separates the mainland from the Island on board the private boat service, docking is on the latter's western part. After getting off the boat, walk along the wooden pier and boardwalk connecting it to some low stone and concrete steps (their number varies according to the level of the lake; usually between four and eight) which lead to the shore. Turn left and walk along a section of the shore, then climb 7 concrete steps: at the small landing keep to the left (on your right you will reach the "Locanda dell'Isola" restaurant and the "La botte" bar, the only points of refreshments). Climb a further 5 steps, this time made of stone, to reach a small plateau on which stands a small wooden house on the left that acts as an info point/ ticket office for the Island. Here you can buy entrance tickets to the Island (or validate them, if you already bought them at the *Antiquarium*). After passing the small house, keep left and continue along the almost flat footpath called "Viale del Poeta (Avenue of the Poet)" that borders the northern shore of the Island. At the beginning, the base is made of dirt and gravel, then sections of wooden walkways, again dirt track, grass with small surfacing rocks and roots alternate. The left side of the footpath, overlooking the lake, is protected by a metal railing, about 1 metre high; on the right, here and there one can see carvings into the surfacing limestone, thought to be the remains of houses supposedly dating back to a period between the late-Roman age and the 12th century. The type of construction is very simple and makes the most of the limited space available: the rocky slope was carved and chiselled to obtain vertical walls and floors. The environments were then supplemented with walls, attics supported by roof beams, and lean-to or gabled roofs, which could be covered by Roman-type tiles or Moltrasio stone slabs ("pioda" in Italian). At various points along the footpath one can also see remains of walls, further evidence of ancient buildings, sometimes with later additions. One of these has the appearance of a terraced portico with three frontal arches, which is accessed by two central steps, the first of which is higher; the base is made of concrete. A white marble plaque with the inscription «Avenue of the Poet 1-5-1910» is walled into the first pillar of the porch, on the right handside.

The archaeological excavations showed that the homes were concentrated mostly on the northern side, not in the position enjoying the best exposure, but certainly in the most protected and safe for its proximity to the mainland; the

sunnier southern slopes were reserved for crops.

After about 180 metres from the beginning of the footpath, ignore the grassy deviation leading uphill, and keep to the left. By descending two steps you come to a small cobbled widening of about 2 metres, protected by two ropes on the left side, towards the lake. The right side is bordered by a stone wall in which three iron rings are walled (to moor boats), and there opens an arch, highlighted by terracotta bricks. A steep climb starts from the small widening with 79 steps, protected on the left by a railing – approx. 1m high – and lined with elegant cypress trees; after the first 28 steps and after another 20 there are two small plateaus that allow you to “catch your breath”. After 74 steps, turn left and you will come to a large grassy open space at the eastern end of the island, with beautiful olive trees, benches and wooden tables for a break, and a fountain made of cast iron.

Our route continues keeping always to the left and bordering the 1.20m high wooden fence which delimitates the area for about 40 metres. Climb 8 loose wooden steps and, after about ten metres, take the steep downhill footpath into the woods, the left edge of which continues to be protected by a 1.20m high wooden fence. You take a flight of irregular steps, with a wooden riser and a base made of dirt (please mind the wooden posts driven into the ground to support the risers): first you descend 21 steps, then along a slightly downward slope, then another 24 steps, then another slightly downward section, and then two more steps to reach the remains of the **Casa Torre (Tower House)**, the base of which is partly excavated in the rock and the elevation is built in masonry, made of Moltrasio stone blocks, with a narrow slit opened into it. The Casa Torre is the best preserved example of homes that once characterized the Island; you can get an idea of how this building must have been like by looking at the tower which rises on the slopes of the hill above the village of Sala Comacina.