



COMO – PATH 6 – THE PATH OF INVENTION

STAGE 3 - Over the hill in Brunate

INFORMATION

Point of departure: Brunate, Funicular Station (Piazza Bonacossa 2)

Point of arrival: Brunate, Faro Voltiano (via Scalini)

Type: mixed urban and hiking route

Total length: about 1880 m

Travel time (on foot): one hour

Difficulty: Tourist-excursion. The streets of the historic centre of Brunate have steep climbs and steps; the final part of the route is partly on a mule track

Rise: 190 m

Maximum altitude: 905 m (Volta Lighthouse)

Paving: porphyry cubes, asphalt, dirt road, stone cubes, stone slabs

Public transport to reach the point of departure: Funicular; The point of departure can also be reached on foot through stage 3 of the Camminacittà Como 1 "From the valley to Mount Brunate"

Public transport from the point of arrival: ASF bus Line T3 Brunate Funicular – Faro Voltiano – CAO (only on Sundays and holidays)

Parking at the point of departure: none

Points of interest: House where Alessandro Volta was put out to nurse; S. Andrea in Brunate; Volta Lighthouse

DESCRIPTION

The third stage of this route winds through Brunate, a famous town known as the "Balcony on the Alps" and a renowned holiday resort, which in Alessandro Volta's times was a small village of farmers. In Brunate little Alessandro spent the first years of his life with the nurse Elisabetta Pedraglio and her barometer-making husband Lodovico Monti. Here he learned to love nature and the mountains, passions that would accompany him throughout his life. Maurizio Monti, an historian from Brunate, wrote in *La Storia di Como* (1832): «Volta always loved the villagers of Brunate and, because most of them went to distant lands to practice trading or to sell physics instruments, he did not disdain to instruct them, to recommend them to friends.»

The departure is from Piazza Alberto Bonacossa, or Piazza della Funicolare, the station at the top of the Como-Brunate Funicular, inaugurated in 1894. From the exit, turn left and continue straight on the strip of porphyry cubes with stone inserts (in the summer, pay attention to the tables of the nearby kiosk); after about thirty meters, turn slightly right at the Bellavista Hotel and enter Via Funicolare, paved with porphyry cubes, finding yourself in front of number 16, the entrance to the small park named after the scientist: «Alessandro Volta / in his early years / guest in Brunate / observed the nature of the places / and wide horizons. / To his name / on the second centenary of the battery / the people of Brunate named this public garden / June 17, 2000». From the park you can access the Municipal Library, located in the former Villa Scacchi, which preserves an interesting collection of postcards about Volta. From the entrance to the park, turn right downhill;

after 20 meters the street becomes a staircase, still paved with porphyry cubes; the first step, on the left side, has an iron barrier 1.20 meters high. Descend 86 steps to reach a landing; then turn right, continue with another 27 steps and come out in Via Pietro e Maurizio Monti, also paved in porphyry cubes, in the heart of the historic centre with its medieval layout. Turn left, following the signs for the historic centre; continue for about ninety meters and then, turning right, take a series of low and wide steps paved in porphyry cubes (5 steps – landing – 5 steps – landing and finally another 4) that allow you to connect to the paved Via Volta. Turn left, and, after about twenty meters, on the other side of the street you find yourself in front of the façade of number 5, which a plaque indicates it as the **house where Alessandro Volta was put out to nurse**: “In this house / Alessandro Volta / spent the first years of his life / 1745-1827 / La Pro Brunate on the 150th anniversary of the battery”. Continue along Via Volta for another 50 meters, keeping to the left (be careful because the street is narrow), then turn left into Via Pietro e Maurizio Monti, following it for about forty meters, up to the Chapel of the Madonna of Pompeii. On the left is number 9, which an early twentieth-century postcard from the Funicular administration indicated as the **house where Alessandro Volta was put out to nurse**. Turn right, taking the steep and sometimes stepped Via Santa Guglielma, paved in porphyry cubes. Keep left after 50 meters and after about another 80 meters you will reach Piazza della Chiesa – paved with stone cubes – where the imposing **Parish Church of S. Andrea** dominates. Watch out for the barrier on the first of the last group of 11 steps leading to the square. On the left side of the church a plaque commemorates the stay of little Alessandro in Brunate. Leaving the church square on Via Giacomo Scalini, cross it and immediately take Via Maddalena Albrici, paved in porphyry cubes, and follow it for 150 meters. Reach again Via Scalini, follow it for 50 meters then cross it to take the first of the three shortcuts of mule track (locally called “le corte”) that lead to the locality of San Maurizio crossing the asphalted road. The first section, after 320 meters, ends in via Scalini; cross the road carefully, then take the second 190-metre-long stretch (after 170 metres, pay attention to the iron barrier placed transversely to the passage); cross Via Scalini again and take the last stretch of mule track 230-metre-long, leading to the square of San Maurizio. From here, continue for another 50 meters keeping the large grassy space on your left, then turn left and take the wide avenue in porphyry cubes which after about fifty meters continues in a wide staircase of 69 steps about 10 centimetres high, protected by two large chains, which leads to the stone-paved square where the **Volta Lighthouse** stands (905 meters above sea level). At the back of the lighthouse (facing Como) you find three crosses, as well as three benches for a well-deserved rest, before facing the last climb of the 143 steps that lead to the top inside the lighthouse, to admire a truly breathtaking view. **At present (2025) the lighthouse is closed, waiting for restoration. Its re-opening is expected in 2027 on the bicentenary of Alessandro Volta’s death.**