

Lesson Four: Zoom in on Italy

Factsheet on Aosta

Name in Italian: Aosta

Region located in: Valle d'Aosta

Population: 130,000

Historical background

Aosta has an interesting background and was founded by the Romans in 25 B.C. The Romans required Aosta for military purposes and to extend their empire. If you look on a map Aosta is at the foothills of the Alps, and therefore it was easy for enemies to enter Aosta. Roman soldiers built the city and they developed it in a grid formation.

Most famous tourist sights

Due to the Roman occupation of the city, there are a huge amount of Roman artefacts to be found in Aosta. These include two Roman gates, a forum, a Roman bridge and a theatre. Every year Rome gives money to the 'Comune of Aosta' for the upkeep of its Roman artefacts. Aosta has the second largest amount of Roman artefacts after the city of Rome itself.

Aosta has a cable car which leads up to the mountain village of Pila, so it is a very accessible city for skiers. It is very close to the Mont Blanc tunnel and has quick access into France. Aosta is surrounded by some of the most beautiful and the tallest mountains in Europe, including Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. Due to being close to France, signs and street names are also written in French, which is a unique element to the city.

City economics

Aosta Comune has its own economy in that, whilst it is part of Italy, it is not governed by the country's tax systems and payments. Aosta Comune manages their own finances and organise how the city is run. Aosta relies heavily on the tourism industry. It is a popular place for hiking in the summer and a popular city for skiers in the winter. The Aosta Comune has to work hard to advertise the city, to make sure that people continue to visit this less known Italian city.

Other information

Aosta is a bilingual city (both Italian and French is spoken) and the local dialect is very similar to the French language.