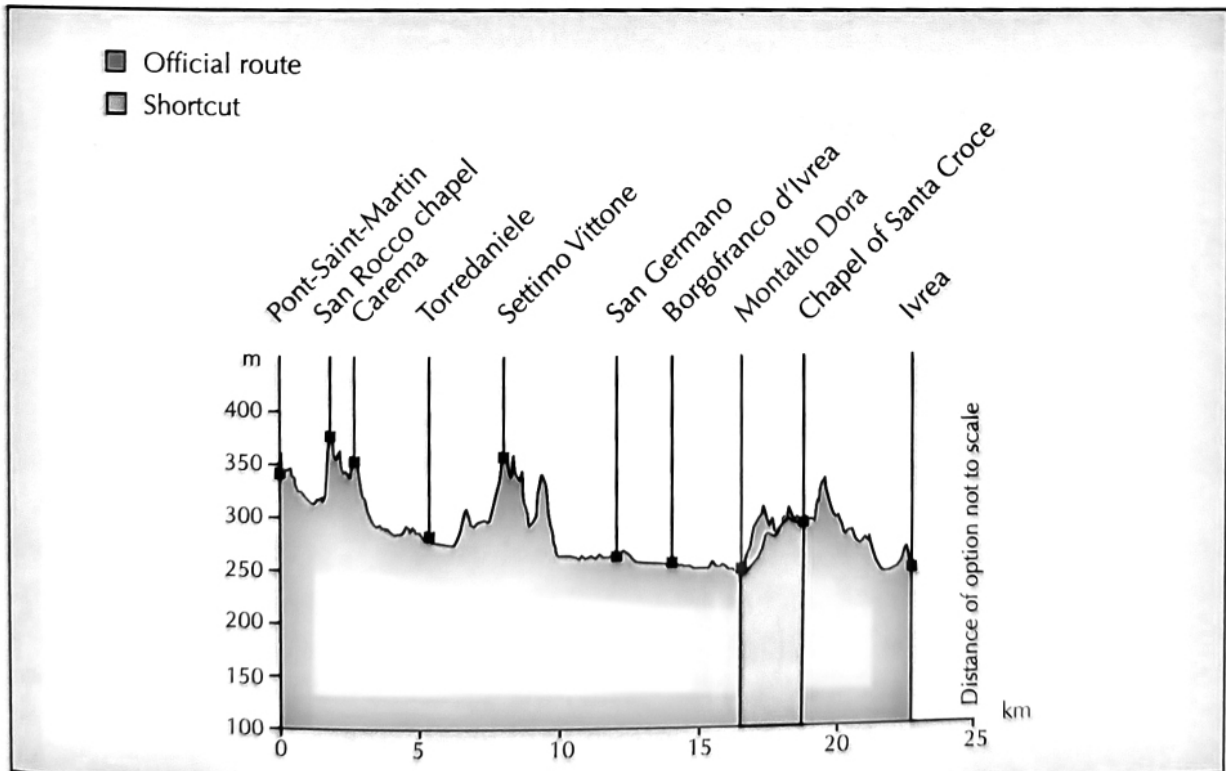


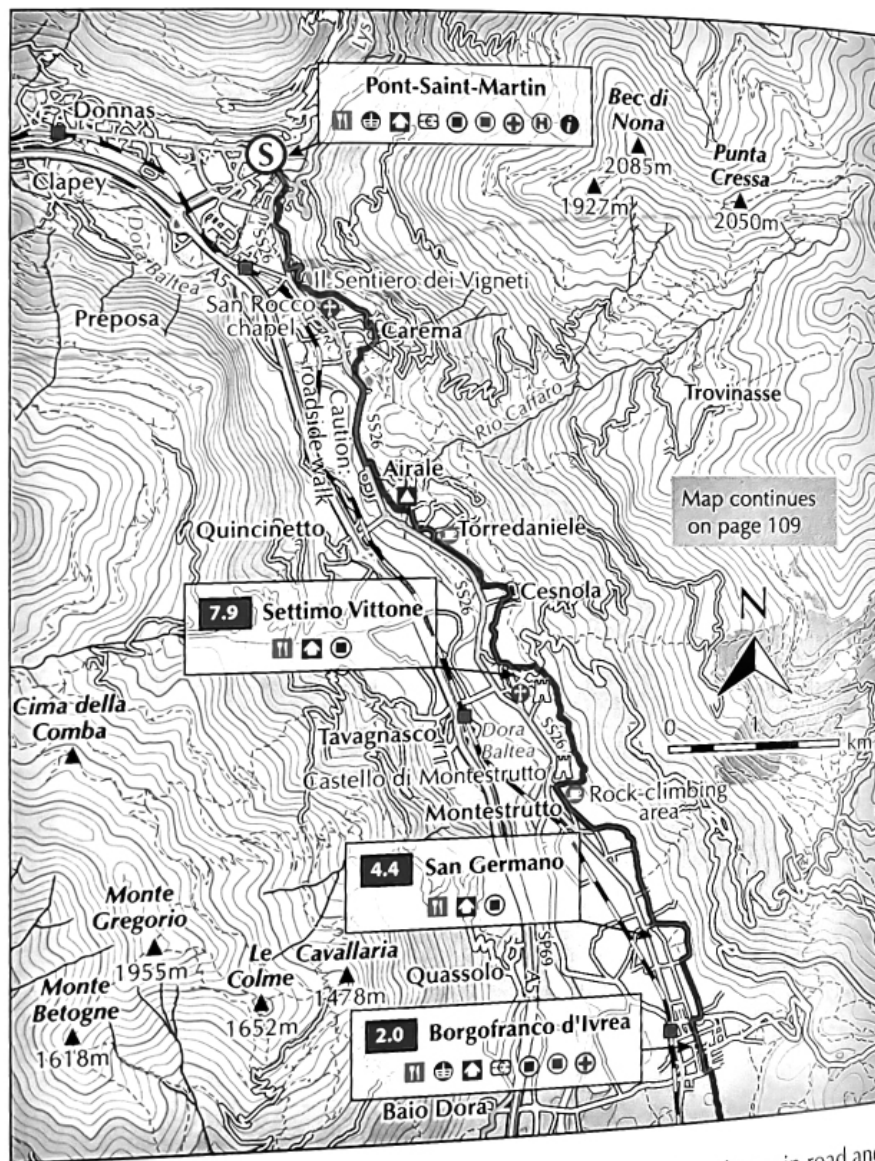
STAGE 12

Pont-Saint-Martin to Ivrea

Start	Pont-Saint-Martin, Roman bridge
Finish	Ivrea, Piazza Ferruccio Nazionale
Distance	23.1km
Total ascent	570m
Total descent	655m
Difficulty	Moderate
Duration	6½hr
Percentage paved	68%
Hostels	Settimo Vittone 7.9km (hotel), San Germano 12.3km, Borgofranco d'Ivrea 14.3km (B&B), Ivrea 23.1km

This could be a melancholy day as you say goodbye to the beautiful mountains of the Aosta Valley and enter the flatter region of Piemonte, except that a few castles and interesting villages add more than a little delight. Footing can be treacherous on the way into Carema, and around Monestrutto.





From the bridge in central Pont-Saint-Martin continue briefly along the main road and then find a side road that branches off to the left. The route keeps to the edge of the hillside among vineyards and under grape arbors rather than following the SR44 and SS26 roads. It briefly touches the SS26 twice, the second time entering the Regione Piemonte, when it turns uphill to **Il Sentiero dei Vigneti** (Trail of the Vineyards). This goat-like trail aims at the 17th c. **San Rocco Chapel** (1.9km) on the hillside above, with splendid views of lovely **Carema** (0.8km), nestled against the mountainside below.



The path brings pilgrims down the mountainside above the church tower of Carema

Carema's name derives from *cameram* for 'customs' due to its historic role as the **border town** between the regions of Piemonte and Aosta. Wine terraces here are famous for production of the Carema wines. The central fountain was built in 1571 and the Latin inscription in English means 'If anyone is thirsty, come to me and drink.'

The downhill is intense, with tricky footing, though at least in the most difficult portion there is a rope handhold fastened to the cliffsides. After Carema, the vineyard route continues on the mountainside, while our route instead heads down to the valley floor, joining the SS26 highway for a hazardous roadside walk until just before **Airale** (1.9km), where it forks left off the highway. Pass a large campground and cross a bridge to enter the next village, **Torredaniele** (0.9km, café). Walk between the Church of San Pietro and its tall tower within the tight, medieval confines of the village. Local tradition says the tower was built here in the 6th c. to defend a Benedictine monastery at this location and was named after the founding abbot.

Now turn onto a grassy farm road, keeping away from the SS26 as well as the forested mountains to the right which are the last of the Alps we will see up close on this walk. A hard left leads up the hillside to **Cesnola** (1.3km), before picking up a pleasant concrete lane among terraces and orchards which then becomes a grassy path just before the outskirts of **Settimo Vittone** (1.3km). Turn right on the SP72 to enter town.

7.9KM SETTIMO VITTONI (ELEV 318M, POP 1535) (913.6KM)

Set at the entrance to the Canavese plain, Settimo Vittone traces its roots back to a Salassi settlement at this location. After conquest by the Romans, Settimo Vittone's name ('seventh') was changed to reflect its distance of seven Roman miles up the road to Aosta. Local lore says that **Ansgarde, Queen of Burgundy**, repudiated by her husband, returned here in the 9th c. to live with her brother Attone Anscario, Lord of Settimo and that at her death in 889 she was buried in the castle's former baptistry.

■ **Le Case di Palu** P R K G W S Z 2/4, €-/40/-, Via Castello 1, www.lecasedipalu.it, info@lecasedipalu.it, tel 339 3654980.

■ **Hotel Campo Base** P R D R B G W S 8/20, €20/20/40/60, Via Nazionale at Via Casellino, www.hotelcampobase.it, campobase167@gmail.com, tel 346 4271113 or 0125 658202.

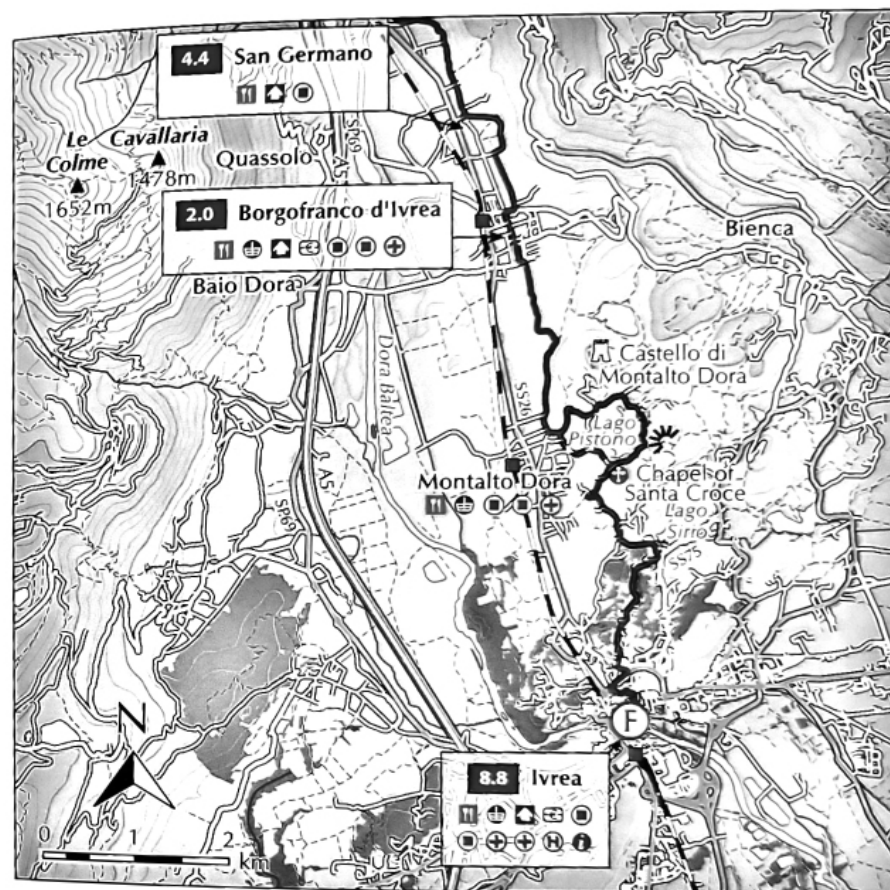
Continue along the route as it heads toward the church in the upper part of the town. To the left are the 9th c. **baptistry and castle**. A small, stone stairway leads down from the castle and becomes a footpath across a small field and vineyard. Soon the path plunges into a dark wood, emerging briefly onto an asphalt road then becoming a narrow and steep trail as it crosses a granite spur of the mountain. The **Castello di Montestrutto** looms on the right and you descend through thick forest among boulders, rounding a spur of the mountain with a zip line course overhead. Come out of the woods at **Montestrutto** (2.2km). As you continue through town come alongside a **rock-climbing area** (café), source of the zip line route. The path continues along the foot of the mountain, on mostly asphalt roads among orchards and large houses to reach **San Germano** (2.2km).

4.4KM SAN GERMANO (ELEV 265M, POP 50) (909.2KM)

What appear to be small houses stretching along the mountainside are in fact **balmetti**, **wine cellars** that take advantage of currents of cold air from deep in the mountain to keep a constant temperature of 8–10°C (46–50°F) year-round. In June each year the **balmetti** are open to the public.

■ **Ostello di San Germano** P R D R K B G W S Z 3/21, €20/30/56/75, Piazza Pertini 3, ferrandopatrizia64@gmail.com or ostellosangermano@gmail.com, tel 328 1513417. Reservations recommended. Can arrange visits to the nearby **balmetti** for wine sampling.

Continue along the foot of the mountain through the village of Cune to meet an asphalt road where you turn right into **Borgofranco d'Ivrea** (2.0km).

**2.0KM BORGOFRANCO D'IVREA (ELEV 258M, POP 3740) (907.2KM)**

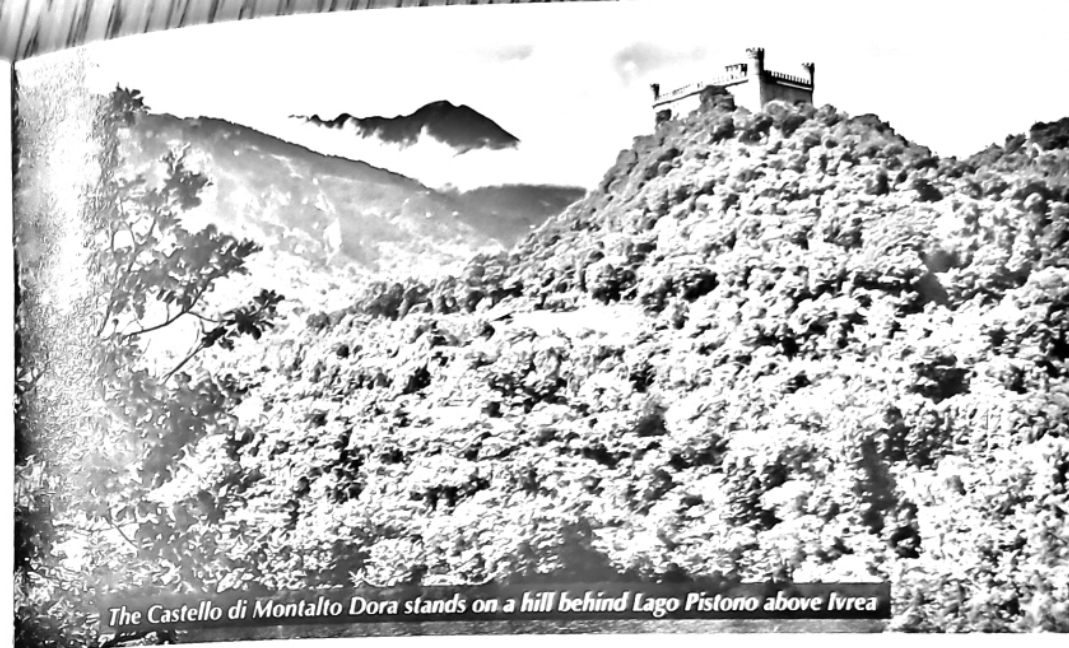
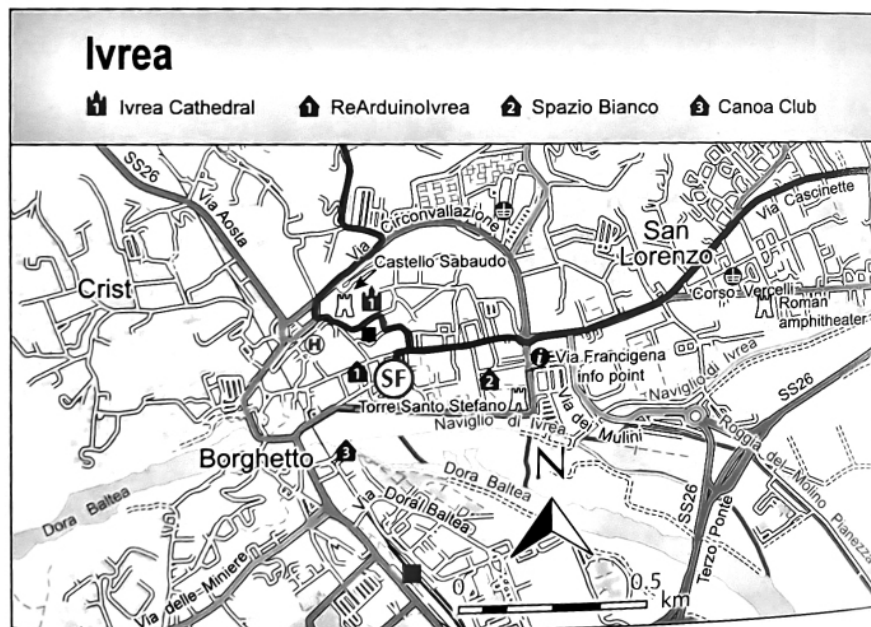
In the 13th c. the three towns of Quinto, Monbuono and Buó merged to form Borgofranco. Fortifications were built after disputes with nearby Ivrea and soldiers from Vercelli, but the only surviving remnant is the **Torre Campanaria** bell tower at the entrance to the old town. The parish church was finished in 1663.

■ **B&B Verde Musica** P R B G S 2/4, €-/25/50/-, Via Cavour 10, bbverdemusica@gmail.com, tel 349 0835837. Closed 20 Jul–20 Aug and Dec/Jan.

Pass through the arch at the base of the church tower adjacent to the large, yellow church and continue as the road spills out onto a gravel track aiming toward the

last mountain on the left. For a time, the road continues under trees, then it opens up as it comes to the back streets of **Montalto Dora** (2.4km, restaurant, groceries, bus, train, pharmacy). Following the signs, the route now makes a hard left up toward the mountains. In just two blocks comes an option. A right turn takes you to the south of **Lago Pistono**, saving you 1.4km, and rejoins the route at the Chapel of Santa Croce. On the official route come first to the San Rocco Chapel (0.5km), and then further up the mountain you can see the picturesque 12th–17th c. **Castello di Montalto Dora** alongside serene Lago Pistono. The best view of the castle is found on the far side of the lake, where a footpath leads you to a wide, gravel drive and the **Chapel of Santa Croce** (1.8km).

The gravel road ends and a dirt footpath under trees picks up. Just as you think you are heading straight downhill toward town a path takes off on the left carrying you steeply uphill on sometimes jagged gravel. Finally come to the **SS75** highway (1.8km) where you turn left in the direction of 'Milano' and after a time find a narrow, asphalt road on the left between stone walls that leads you to the outskirts of **Ivrea**. Above and ahead you see the tall, brick turrets of the Castle of Ivrea and the smaller white towers of the Cathedral of Ivrea. Enter town with a right turn on the Avenida di Circolazione (1.6km) and then turn left into a small piazza at the base of the castle walls. Double back under a yellow arch to climb to the castle and cathedral, or simply continue around the piazza to find the main, pedestrian street and Piazza Ferruccio Nazionale at the center of the old city (0.6km).



The Castello di Montalto Dora stands on a hill behind Lago Pistono above Ivrea

8.8KM IVREA (ELEV 258M, POP 23,599) [Icons] (898.4KM)

Settled by Celts from around the 5th c. bc, Ivrea first appears in documents as a Roman outpost called Eporedia. Remains of a **Roman amphitheater** lie just east of the city center. After the fall of Rome, it was variously under control of the Lombards, Franks, and the House of Savoy. Sigeric stayed here, noting its name as Everi, his Stage XLV. The 11th c. **Cathedral of Ivrea** was rebuilt in 1785 in Baroque style above town, and the nearby tall, brick Castello Sabaudo of Ivrea was built in 1357 by Amadeus VI of Savoy. The **Romanesque Tower of St Stephen** in the SE center city was built in 1041 for a Benedictine abbey located at its base.

Ivrea was headquarters of the once-mighty Olivetti typewriter company, and in 1970 the town swelled with 90,000 industrial workers. On the last three days of Carnival each year, the **Battle of the Oranges** is waged. According to legend, the festival arose when a miller's daughter refused to grant the local duke his 'right' to spend a night with her before her wedding. Instead she chopped off his head. During the festival townspeople throw some 265,000 oranges at actors representing local nobility.

- ▲ Ostello Canoa Club** [Icons] 5/25, €15/-/50/-, Via Dora Baltea 1/d, www.ostelloivrea.it/en, info@ostelloivrea.it, tel 328 0999579. Closed Jan. Reservation required. Riverside location across from city center.
- ▲ ReArduinolvrea** [Icons] 8/15, €-/70/90/110, Via Arduino 43, rearduinoivrea@gmail.com, tel 340 3324240.
- ▲ Spazio Bianco** [Icons] 9/18, €-/80/95/-, Via Patrioti 17, info@spaziobiancoivrea.it, tel 0125 1961620.