

The Sacra di San Michele

Here, the Great Abbey that served as a model for Umberto Eco (and all the epigones who tried to put that book in images, usually with not very happy results – on tv film, and so on)

Advice and tips:

1. Never on Sundays or holidays. Especially if you have difficulty walking, or don't feel like it. On May 1st the queue started in Rosta at the exit of the motorway (in reality it is possible to get out at the Avigliana barrier of the Torino _ Bardonecchia): getting close to the lakes, prohibitive. During the weekend you will find all those who go to the mountains once a year and believe to be Messner, Simone Moro, Bonatti and Lunger all together.

2 In the weekend, the road to the Sacra is one-way, you go up and down the other side, just to avoid the inevitable (ie the damned SUVs that collide). The parking lot in front of the Sacra is at fee, but it is not the fault of the Rosminian friars who rule it, who are keen to let us know, but of the municipality of Sant'Ambrogio. Finding a parking place can be difficult.

3. You can rely on a free guided tour, or go on your own, anyway at the ticket office you can borrow a synthetic guide, or earphones. You cannot miss the Scalone dei Morti (the Stair of the dead), the Zodiac portal, the church and its ancient frescoes, the Alda Tower (in ruin), and of course the astonishing view from the terraces (better in the morning to fully appreciate the mountain view).

4. If you are into it, this is a magic place, on the magic line of the sanctuaries devoted to the cult of Archangel Micheal from Mont saint Michel in Normandy (yes, *that one*), to Monte sant'Angelo in Puglia to Jerusalem, and it is *exactly* in the middle.

5.If you are into sports, there several hiking paths, a trek, and a via ferrata that climbs up the rock:

For everything else, here is their website

<https://www.sacradisanmichele.com/en/>