



## PIEDMONT

**Territory.** Piedmont is located in the north-western part of Italy and is the second largest region by surface with its 25,387 km<sup>2</sup>; the territory is mostly mountainous (43%), followed by hills (30%) and plains 27% respectively). Its name derives from the Latin Pedemontium, which means at the foot of the mountains, due to the characteristic conformation whereby, unlike other Italian regions of Northern Italy,

the mountain tops rapidly descend towards the plain; at the center of the latter, in the provinces of Asti and Alessandria, is the Monferrato hilly system. The highest peak in the region, Punta Nordend (4609 m), is located in the Monte Rosa massif. The longest Italian river, the Po (562 km), is born in Piedmont and some of its most important tributaries flow there. On the border with Lombardy is Lake Maggiore, the second largest in Italy.

**Population.** The current inhabitants are about 4,200,000. The population from 0 to 24 is 21.3%, from 25 to 34 is 9.9%, from 35 to 64 is 42.8%, from 65 and up is 26%. The most populous city is Turin, the capital, with its 850,000 inhabitants. The second largest city by population is Novara, with more than 100,000 inhabitants, followed by the other provincial capitals: Alessandria, Asti, Cuneo, Vercelli, Biella, and the Verbano-Cusio-Ossola area. Piedmont is the fifth Italian region for the number of foreign residents. In Piedmont, 176 different nationalities are represented (including EU ones). The largest foreign community is made up of Romanian citizens. The most represented nationalities are Moroccan and Albanian. In recent years there have been some changes in attendance by national groups: a slight reduction in the Moroccan community, a historical presence in our region, and an increase in Nigerians, Senegalese, Egyptians, and Chinese. Many foreigners residing in Piedmont, due to their long stay in our Country, have now acquired Italian citizenship.

**Climate.** The geographical position and the morphological characteristics mean that the climate, mainly continental, is also very varied. In the lower areas there is a significant annual temperature range with winter lows even below 0 ° C and summer highs of 25-28 ° C with peaks that reach 35-38 degrees in the warmer months. The mountainous region, on the other hand, has alpine climate conditions, although lately, as in all of Italy, we can see the variation now underway towards a tropical climate, with dry winter months and very rainy summers.

**Economy.** The economy, despite having gone through periods of crisis, not least that of the pandemic, is well developed. Of great importance is the manufacturing industry, in particular the metalworking sector, which has long been a driving force with the automotive industry and all other activities connected to it. The textile sector is also noteworthy, especially in the Biellese area. Agriculture is also an integral part of the production system with the cultivation of cereals (wheat, corn, rice), potatoes, vegetables, sugar beets, fruit, and forage. In addition, there is the cultivation of poplars for the wood industry; in the hilly areas, the wine sector is very accentuated. Breeding is mainly concentrated on cattle and pigs. Tourism is gradually expanding with an increase in accommodations, catering, and the use of artistic activities that enhance the history and culture of the area. The average number of employed in Piedmont, according to the latest Unioncamere statistical research, in 2020 stood at 1,778 thousand, 2.8% less than the 2019 average and is attributable to a decline in the agricultural and trade sectors, tourism, and services, offset by the growth of the construction sector. The employment and general unemployment rates are respectively 64.6% and 7.5%, while the youth unemployment rate is 24.6% (current Italian average 32%).

**Art and culture.** The symbolic monument of the Piedmont Region is the Sacra di San Michele, an ancient abbey built between 983 and 987 on the top of Mount Pirchiriano, near Avigliana, 40 km from Turin. The capital of Piedmont and the first capital of Italy, Turin is now a lively cultural center, characterized by a rich heritage of events, museums, and monuments. The Egyptian Museum is the second in the world after the one in Cairo. The National Cinema Museum, one of the most important internationally for the richness of its cinematographic heritage, is housed within the Mole Antonelliana, which with its 167 meters is the symbol of the city. Turin and Piedmont have a strong link with art, especially contemporary: the region hosts numerous museums, private foundations and trade fairs. Of particular importance is the presence, in Piedmont of five UNESCO heritage sites: the Savoy residences, the pile-dwelling sites of the Alpine arc, the Sacri Monti, the wine landscapes of Langhe, Roero, and Monferrato, the municipality of Ivrea, industrial city of the twentieth century, and of four intangible assets: the art of dry-stone construction, mountaineering, the musical art of hunting players, the hunting and quarrying of truffles.



**Istituto Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice**  
*Salesiane di Don Bosco*  
Ispettorìa Maria Ausiliatrice - IPI  
Torino - Italia



## VALLE D' AOSTA

**Territory.** Established in 1946, the Aosta Valley is the smallest region in Italy with 3,263 km<sup>2</sup> of surface and also the least populated (124,089 inhabitants), with a completely mountainous territory. It is surrounded by the four highest mountain massifs in Italy: Mont Blanc, which with 4,810.02m is the highest mountain in Europe; Cervino (4,478m), Monte Rosa (4,634m); and Gran Paradiso (4,061m). The conformation of the entire regional territory is the result of the work of the glaciations, which dug the main valley and the other side

valleys. Glaciers predominantly occupy the highest peaks. The region is crossed by the Dora Baltea, an important left tributary of the river Po, which marks its main valley from which numerous secondary valleys and their tributaries branch off. The southern part of the territory is occupied by the Gran Paradiso National Park (Parc National du Grand-Paradis), the first Italian national park established in 1922, to safeguard some species of endangered alpine flora and fauna, such as ibex, chamois, marmots, and stoats.

**Population.** Valle d'Aosta has a population of approximately 124,000 inhabitants. Given the mountainous nature of the territory, it appears to be not only the least populated region of Italy, but also the one with the lowest population density, with 38 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. The distribution of the inhabitants is very irregular: more than a third is concentrated in the Plaine, the plain of Aosta, and in the neighboring municipalities. A large part of the population lives in the major centers of the middle and lower valleys, while the minor valleys have become considerably depopulated, except for the main tourist centers. Given the linguistic commonality, Valle d'Aosta has historically been a land of emigration to France. Immigration from the rest of Italy began in the 1920s, coinciding with the installation of the Cogne steel industry in Aosta and with the intensive exploitation of the iron mines in Cogne and coal in La Thuile. The Aosta Valley today attracts a consistent flow of immigrants, especially Maghrebi, favored by the knowledge of French, mainly employed in sheep farming.

**Climate.** Due to the structure of the Valle d'Aosta there are very different local microclimates even between valleys or nearby slopes. Temperatures vary according to the altitude of the territory. At high altitudes there is an alpine climate, so summers are short and alternate with long cold winters

with temperatures that drop even to -20 ° C and with peaks even below -30 ° C at altitudes greater than 2,000 meters. In the valley bottoms, continental climates are observed: in winter temperatures drop below 0 ° C; vice versa in summer they rise even above 30 ° C, with poor ventilation which accentuates the sensation of heat.

**Economy.** Valle d'Aosta is an autonomous region with a special statute. Its administrative bodies enjoy a special autonomy from the Italian central government, not only regarding politics and regional government, but also in other areas closely linked to the life and economy of this mountain region, in particular the management of agriculture, crafts, and tourism, public assistance and charity, and nursery schools. The economy of the Aosta Valley is mainly based on the tertiary sector, in particular on tourism which values its environmental beauty and its culture. Industry employs about 33% of the region's active population, contributing about a third to the overall wealth produced. Of particular importance is the Cogne steel industry, based in Aosta, a steel mill historically at the basis of the regional economy and labor market.

**Art and culture.** Five centuries of Roman life have left impressive marks in the Aosta Valley: the Strada of the Gallie, of which numerous traces remain; the bridge-aqueduct of Pondel; and above all Aosta, the imperial city gate to the Alps, whose Roman urban layout is still clearly identifiable in its main lines, in the walls, and in its most significant buildings. Already since ancient times, the Aosta Valley was an obligatory passage towards the Alpine passes. In the Middle Ages, it was easy to appropriate the lands outside the inhabited centers, to rise to the rank of lords and collect tolls. Thus, the first fortified settlements were established, and over time, castles, towers, and strongholds became a distinctive element of the Valle d'Aosta landscape. Along the Via Francigena, traveled by pilgrims on their way to Rome, there are numerous churches, shrines, chapels, crosses, which stand out against the backdrop of the mountains. Even the wood and stone of rural architecture and many expressions of intangible cultural heritage tell of a territory where traditions are alive and authentic. The Aosta Valley is a bilingual region and Italian and French are spoken in it. In some areas, Franco Provençal and the Walser language are also spoken.