

Visit Ferrara and its province

EN





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Useful information


READER'S GUIDE

Along with the Pedestrian Roadsigns sited in the Historic Centre, this booklet will guide the visitor through the most important areas of the city.

The five themed routes are identified with different colour schemes.

 The starting point for all these routes is the Tourist Information Office at the Estense Castle.

 Route indications

 The "MUSEO DI QUALITÀ" is recognised by the Regional Emilia-Romagna "Istituto per i Beni Artistici Culturali e Naturali"

Please, check the opening hours and temporary closings on the official **Museums and Monuments schedule** distributed by the Tourist Information Office.

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A short history

the origins of Ferrara are wrapped in mystery. Its name is mentioned for the first time in a document dating to 753 A.D., issued by the Longobard king Desiderius. In the earliest Centuries of its life the city had several different rulers, later it gained enough freedom to become an independent Comune. After some years of fierce internal struggles between the Guelph and the Ghibelline factions, the Este family took control of the city.

The great cultural season began in 1391, when the University was founded, and afterwards culture and magnificence grew unceasingly. Artists like Leon Battista Alberti, Pisanello, Piero della Francesca, Rogier van der Weyden and Tiziano came to Ferrara and the local pictorial school, called "Officina Ferrarese" produced the masterpieces of Cosmè Tura, Ercole de' Roberti and Francesco del Cossa. The best musicians of the time worked for the Dukes of Ferrara, who also inspired the immortal poetry of Boiardo, Ariosto and Tasso.

Niccolò III, the diplomat, Leonello, the intellectual, Borso, the magnificent, Ercole I, the constructor, and Alfonso I, the soldier: these are the names of some famous lords of Ferrara, still recalled together with those of the family's princesses: the unlucky Parisina Malatesta, the wise Eleonora d'Aragona, the beautiful and slandered Lucrezia Borgia, Renée of France, the intellectual follower of Calvinism.

Ferrara had an active role in the Risorgimento and in the history of the Kingdom of Italy, eventually becoming the modern city rich in memories of the past that we can admire today.

Living the city

A year of events

Every month of the year Ferrara is the setting for numerous cultural initiatives of an international nature, from the Municipal Theatre seasons, to the art exhibitions at **Palazzo dei Diamanti**, and the **Renaissance Palio** to the renowned music, hot air balloon and journalism festivals. In the area, the range of events goes from Primavera Slow, with its many walking, cycling or boat trips in the Oases of the Delta Park, to the famous Carnival in Cento, and the numerous food and drink festivals, among which the eel festival held in October in Comacchio stands out.



Our programme is available on www.ferrarainfo.com or on the free application for iPhone and Android "Ferrara Eventi": all the events always close at hand!

The bicycle, queen of the roads

The bicycle has always had an important role in Ferrara as a means of transport. With 85 km of cycle paths, 120,000 bikes and 25% of journeys being made on two wheels, Ferrara is one of the cities with the highest density of bicycles in the world. It is the lightest and healthiest way to visit the large flat historic centre, which is closed to traffic, or to discover the area following the dense network of cycle paths among picturesque villages and areas of great natural beauty such as the Po Delta Park.

Many accommodation facilities offer free bike hire so that guests can move freely around the "bicycle capital".

On www.ferrarabike.com it is possible to find all the paths in the Ferrara area with maps, GPS files for satellite navigators, Google Earth routes, videos, audio-guides and biker-friendly accommodation facilities.



Shopping and markets

The Renaissance art of etched ceramics continues in Ferrara's workshops after four centuries, with the same techniques and creative skills as in the time of the Este family.

Around the Cathedral and the Castle in the area that since the most ancient times has been the centre for shopping, there are many things to buy and every Sunday various theme street markets offer lively stalls.

Markets

ARTICLES FROM THE PAST ANTIQUES AND CRAFT MARKET

Each first Saturday and Sunday of the month (except August).

*Piazza Trento Trieste,
Piazza Savonarola*

STREET MARKET OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Each second Sunday of the month (except July, August, December, January).

Piazza Trento Trieste

ARTISTIC CRAFTS STREET MARKET

Each third Saturday and Sunday of the month (except July and August).

Piazza Trento Trieste



CRAFT MARKET WORKS OF ORIGINAL DESIGN

Each fourth Saturday and Sunday of the month (except July and August).

Piazza Trento Trieste

WEEKLY MARKET

Each Monday and Friday of the week.

Piazza Travaglio, Piazza Trento Trieste

THE FARMER'S MARKET

Every first and third Sunday of the month.

Piazza Municipale



Cuisine

The popular country traditions and their simple and natural tastes, blended with the customs of the elaborate dishes of the ducal court, give birth to the Ferrarese cuisine and its special flavours.

Something that is always present on the Ferrarese table is **bread**, called "coppia" (pair), unique for its twisted and elaborate shape, which was probably invented by Cristoforo da Messisbugo, cook at the service of Alfonso I and Ercole II d'Este. Together with **lasagne** and **cappelletti** (a local variant of the more famous tortellini), **capellacci**, filled with squash and parmesan cheese, are also very popular. Not to be forgotten is the **pasticcio di maccheroni** (macaroni pie), a true triumph of the ancient courtesan traditions: a sweet short pastry filled with macaroni in béchamel sauce and white bolognese sauce, flavoured with mushrooms

Butternut squash risotto

Ingredients

1 litre vegetable stock, 50 g butter, 1 onion, 100 g parmesan, 400 g rice, ½ glass white wine, 300 g butternut squash.

Clean the squash, removing the seeds, cut it into slices, peel it and dice it. In the meantime, brown the finely chopped onion in frying pan with the oil. When the onion is a nice golden colour, first add the cubes of squash then the rice (making sure the cubes of squash have softened well before adding the rice!). Mix everything and leave to cook for at least 10 minutes. Then add the wine and the stock bit by bit, leaving it to cook for at least 20 minutes. 2 minutes before the end of cooking add the butter and parmesan and mix well. Serve hot!

and truffles. Among the main courses, the **salama da sugo** is the queen of Sunday tables: it is an unusual mixture of pork meat savoured with wine and spices, left drying for many months in its roundish wrapping. It is usually served with a potato purée, which complements perfectly its very strong taste. **Pampepato** is the name of the most popular Ferrarese cake, created centuries ago by the nuns of the venerated convent of Corpus Domini and once made at home for Christmas time: it is a spiced chocolate bread enriched with lots of almonds and candied fruit, topped with a thick layer of melted chocolate.

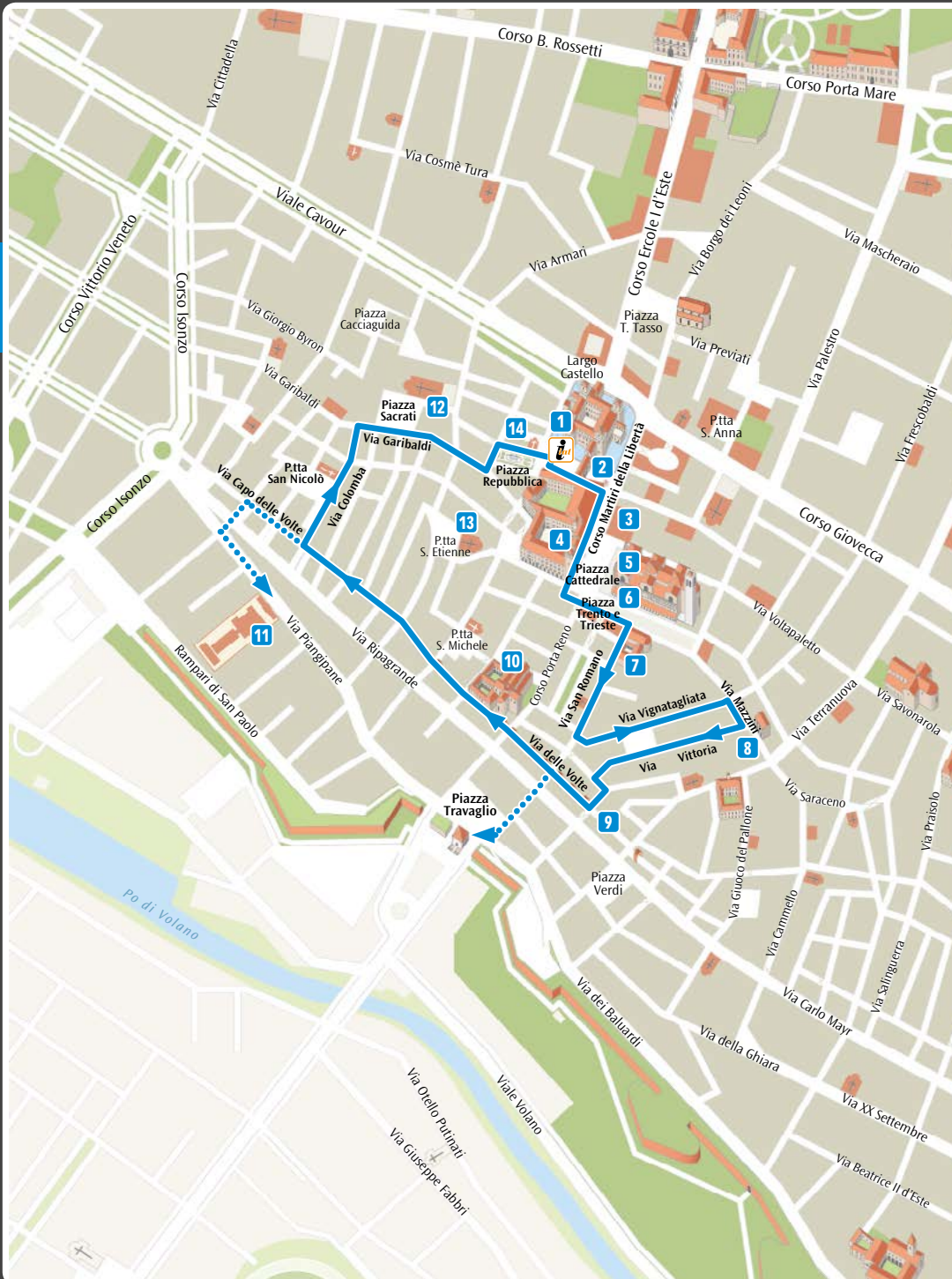
The rich gastronomic tradition perfectly matches with its valued wine production - the DOC wines of Bosco Eliceo - and it is based on the region's equally substantial agriculture. Green asparagus, pears from Emilia-Romagna and nectarine from Romagna have all been accorded an IGP, a geographically limited certification of quality; also worthy of note are garlic from Voghiera, rice from the Po Delta, eels from the Comacchio lagoons, carrots from the Ferrarese Delta, local watermelon, melon from Emilia, violin squash, Ferrarese salami, and clams from Goro.



THE MEDIAEVAL CENTRE

From the Middle Ages to today, the area around the Cathedral has always been the focus of the city life. The seat of the various rulers over the years and a commercial and historical area of great importance, the centre is still the favourite meeting place of residents and visitors alike.

The original layout of the ancient city, which has been developing along the banks of the river PO, is still clearly recognizable in the famous area of Via delle Volte.



THE ITINERARY IN BRIEF

- 1 CASTELLO ESTENSE** 
Starting point of the route
- 2** Piazza Savonarola
- 3** Palazzo Arcivescovile
- 4** Palazzo Municipale
- 5** Cattedrale
- 6** Piazza Trento e Trieste
- 7** Museo della Cattedrale
Via San Romano
- 8** Ghetto, Sinagoge e Museo Ebraico
- 9** Via delle Volte
- 10** Chiesa di San Paolo
- 11** MEIS Museo Nazionale dell'Ebraismo Italiano e della Shoah
- 12** Chiesa di San Domenico
- 13** Chiesa di Santo Stefano
Via Garibaldi
- 14** Chiesa di San Giuliano

1 Castello Estense

tel. +39 0532 299233



MUSEO
DI QUALITÀ



In 1385 a dangerous revolt convinced Niccolò II d'Este of the need to erect mighty defences for himself and his family; thus the Castello di San Michele was built, a fortress erected against the people. Its imposing proportions, its moat, its drawbridges and its towers date back to that remote period. An elevated covered passageway, which still exists, joined the military building to the marquises' Palace (today Palazzo Municipale). Centuries went by and the risk of riots died down. So the castle became the magnificent residence of the court and was embellished with roof terraces at the top of the towers, marble balconies, the Renaissance-style courtyard (at the time fully frescoed) and sumptuous apartments.

INTERIOR

Once passed through the entrance halls on the **ground floor**, the visit starts in the so-called **Gothic Halls**. The first, with its highly ornate ceiling decorated with ramified vegetation motifs, hosts a scale model of the Castle as it appeared in the fourteenth Century. The following three Halls of the series are given over to exhibits showing different aspects of life at Court under the rule of the Este dynasty.

The **Castle Kitchens** were located in the following two rooms. Replica ovens are on display in the second. Next comes the so-called Corridor Hall, which was probably a guards room.

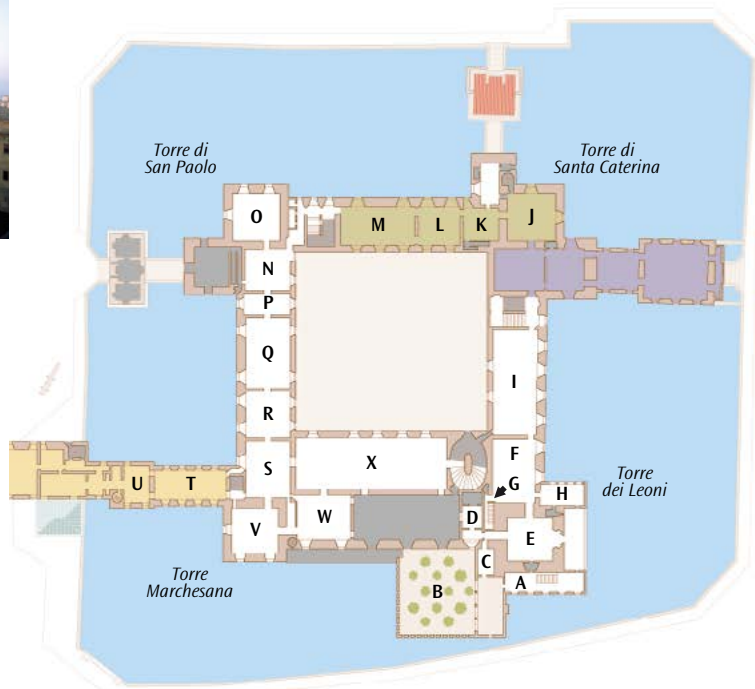
A narrow corridor and a low doorway lead on to **Don Giulio's Prison**, so called because the brother of Alfonso I, Prince Julius, was imprisoned here for having led a famous conspiracy. The graffiti on the walls were made by prisoners and date back to the sixteenth Century.

After backtracking to the corridor and climbing down some steep steps, the visitor reaches **Ugo's and Parisina's Prisons**. These two luckless lovers were the protagonists of one of the saddest stories under the rule of the Estes.

Parisina Malatesta was the second wife of the marquis Niccolò III, who was a womanizer and much older than her. After seven years of uneventful marriage she fell in love with her stepson Ugo, whose mother, Stella dei Tolomei, was Niccolò's favourite. The two lovers were discovered, summarily judged and beheaded after a short but distressing period spent in the castle dungeons. It was the year 1425; Parisina was twenty, Ugo still nineteen.

A long ramp, originally used for artillery, leads to the ducal apartments.

On the **first floor**, some rooms can be visited; unfortunately, they lack the original furniture, but have magnificent ceilings whose colours have lost none of their former splendour.



- Bookshop and Cafeteria
- Areas closed to the public

- The Patience Suite
- The Duke's Private Chambers

FIRST FLOOR - Itinerary

A The duchesses' Loggia

Going up a short modern staircase, you reach a bright ante-room with a few traces of decoration, where is situated an extensive description of the leading Estensi characters and what they did to the structure of the castle.

B Garden and Loggia of the Oranges

A small hanging garden for the duchesses and their most intimate friends. The terrace was adorned, as it is today, with large vases containing citrus plants around which were set out smaller vases with other plants in the form of flowerbeds.

C Camerino of the Bacchanalia

A small connecting room that was once entirely painted. Three scenes

inspired by the myth of Bacchus are still present on the right-hand wall.

D Ducal Chapel

This small room, with elegant geometric lines, was used for private prayer. The decoration, free of sacred images, is traditionally believed to have been ordered by Renata of France, the duchess with Calvinist sympathies, although this is contradicted by the ceiling with its paintings of the Four Evangelists and the white eagle of the Estense family.

E Chamber of Dawn

On the magnificent ceiling are depicted the four phases of the day. To the right of those entering from the chapel is *Dawn*: a young winged goddess who advances pulling the horses of the sun chariot by the reins. Proceeding in a clockwise direction we find *Day*, where

the sun chariot proceeds in all its radiance, preceded by the Dawn holding two torches; *Dusk*, with the sun chariot moving towards the horizon; *Night*, where Diana, with the disc of the moon on her forehead, reaches her lover Endymion. At the centre an old man surrounded by the three Fates, goddesses of life and death, represents time. Lower down, a long train of putti advance on chariots pulled by all types of animals. The great mirrors that are a feature of this room and the two following were set there to recall the name of these rooms, recorded in documents as 'The Apartment of the Mirror'.

F Small Chamber of Games

The centre of the ceiling is decorated with the round dance of the *Four Seasons*, all around are frescoes with "games" scenes from Ancient Rome.

G access to the "Torre dei Leoni" staircase.

H Small Chamber of Poison

It seems that this room was originally used by the court pharmacist for making medicines and, according to some, the poisons used against political enemies. The ceiling is nineteenth-Century.

I Hall of Games

This large room was for evening entertainment, such as concerts or games. The ceiling is divided into eleven sections, each one showing a sport after the taste of Duke Alfonso II. The most



valuable, on the courtyard side, are the work of **Bastianino** and from the left, show *free-style wrestling*, *shot-put* and *Greco-Roman wrestling*. The athletes are nude in homage to the ancient Greek traditions.

J Room of the Tower of St. Catherine

The attractive ceiling is in the Renaissance Revival style. The highlight is a raised panoramic view of eighteenth Century Ferrara.

K Gallery Ante-room

This room originally led into a long gallery which was subsequently partitioned to form smaller rooms. A panoramic view of Ferrara as it appeared between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is depicted in a large panel.

L "Hector and Andromache" Room

This Hall takes its name from the nineteenth Century fresco painting on the ceiling. Aeneas says farewell to his son and wife Andromaca. A replica of a fresco painting showing the Dukedom of Ferrara is depicted in the panel.

M Gallery Room

The original decorations have been lost. Today, the Gallery hosts an exhibition of the "Delizie", the name by which the various leisure lodges the Estes had built throughout the Dukedom are known.

N Land Reclamation Projects

The exhibit here shows the various reclamation works carried out throughout the territory of the Province of Ferrara.

O Room of St. Paolo Tower

The Hall is decorated with grotesques and medallions in the Neo-classical style.

P "Governo" ante-room

This small room was where those who



Hall of Games

had asked for an audience with the duke waited. The ceiling is reminiscent of the one in the following room.

Q "Governo" Room

Commissioned by Ercole II d'Este (1534-1559) to dispatch government business, it still conserves its gold-painted panelled ceiling, one of the most beautiful of its type in all Italy.

R Devolution Room

Ferrara's devolution, that is its transition from Este to Papal domination in 1598, is shown in the ceiling scenes. Clockwise we have: Lucretia d'Este, Duke Cesare d'Este, Cardinal Aldobrandin, one of the many feasts given in honour of Pope Clement VIII upon his arrival.

S Landscapes Room

This room takes its name from the section of the wall decorated with remarkable landscape frescoes, executed in the 18th Century by an unknown artist.

T Gallery Hall

This highly ornate room is decorated with grotesques in the Renaissance Revival style.

U The Duke's Private Chambers

Starting in the early sixteenth Centu-

ry, Duke Alfonso I had these famous Chambers finely appointed by several of the most renowned artists of the time.

(Open for temporary exhibitions only)

V Geography Room

Splendid geographical maps of the Ferrarese territory, drawn in 1709-1710. Note the vast area covered by water and marshes, most of which has now disappeared following major land reclamation.

W Blue Room


Elegant nineteenth-Century ceiling with rosettes and garlands.

X Coats of Arms Room

This room presents a double decoration from the papal period. The oldest decoration consists of a long series of shields with the Pope's tiara and St. Peter's keys. The lower part of the wall is taken up with a decoration executed in 1857 on the occasion of the visit of the Pope Pius IX. More coats of arms and some views of Ferrarese territory as it was at the time; the city of Ferrara (the castle), Comacchio (Trepponti bridge), Cento (the main square), Lugo di Romagna (the porticoes), and Pomposa Abbey




The sixteenth Century spiral staircase brings back in the courtyard.

 Leaving the Castle behind, you find yourself in

2 Piazza Savonarola

In the centre stands the **monument to Girolamo Savonarola**, built in 1875 in honour of the famous reformer born in Ferrara in 1452. The small piazza is closed off to the south by a 16th-Century loggia which forms part of the Town Hall, to the north by the Castle and to the west by the so-called **via Coperta** (Covered Route), a five-arched building intended to link the two ducal residences.

 Piazza Savonarola overlooks Corso Martiri della Libertà. Turn right towards the Cathedral where you can admire

3 Palazzo Arcivescovile

Corso Martiri della Libertà, 77

Built from 1718 to 1720 by order of the cardinal Tommaso Ruffo. It has a long façade divided into three bays, of which the two side ones are decorated with a pseudo fiat rustication. The windows are framed in marble and the majestic central portal, with a balcony above, is in the same material.

The interior, not open to visitors, has a luxurious staircase, with a double flight of stairs, and sumptuous apartments.

Opposite the Archbishop's Palace stands the

4 Palazzo Municipale

The building of the Town Hall started in 1243. This was the residence of the Este family up to the 16th Century, when the court moved to the Castle. Right opposite the Cathedral stands the ancient entrance to the court palace: a **big arch** flanked by the statues of the Marquis Niccolò III on horseback and **Duke Borso of Este enthroned**. Passing through the arch we reach the former ducal courtyard, now known as the piazzetta Municipale.

A fine **grand staircase** can be admired, built in 1481 by the architect Pietro Benvenuto degli Ordini, next to which stands the **court chapel**, commissioned by Ercole I of Este and now used as a theatre. Inside, the following can be visited: the **Duchesses' room** - a small room possibly designed for Eleonora and Lucrezia d'Este and splendidly decorated in the second half of the 16th Century, and the **Sala**



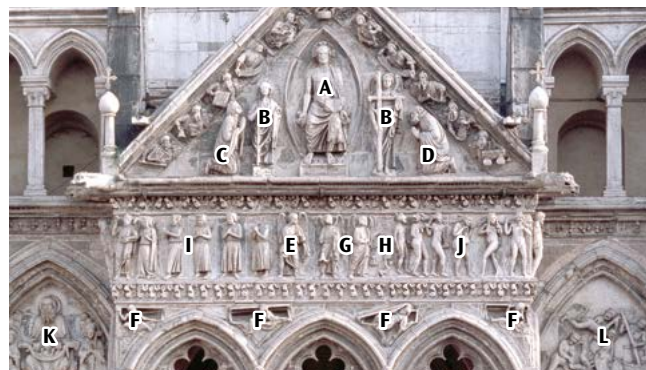
dell'Arengo, with frescoes painted between 1934 and 1938 by Achille Funi.

 Walking through the Vòlto del Cavallo (the Horse Archway) one reaches the

5 Cattedrale

tel. +39 0532 207449

The Cathedral dates from the 12th Century and bears witness to all the historical periods of the city. The outstanding façade, divided into three sections, was begun in Romanesque style, still visible in the lower part. Note the St. George and the scenes from the New Testament above the central door, the work of the sculptor **Nicholaus** (1135). The upper part was built some decades later in a Gothic style and besides the numerous small arches and the splayed mullioned windows presents an extraordinary *Last Judgment* by an unknown sculptor over the central loggia.



- | | |
|---|---|
| A Christ in Glory | H A small devil lowers the dish containing sins in an attempt to damn the souls being judged |
| B Angels with the symbols of the Passion | I The blessed souls, dressed and crowned, set off for Heaven |
| C The Virgin Mary | J The damned souls set off for Hell |
| D St John the Evangelist | K Heaven, Abraham seated with the blessed souls in his lap |
| E Two angels play trumpets | L Hell: sneering devils |
| F The dead leave their tombs | |
| G An angel weighs sins and good deeds on a scale | |

Under these sculptures there is an elegant Gothic loggia with a statue, once gilded, of the *Virgin Mary and the Child*, which dates from the early part of the 15th Century and is attributed to Michele da Firenze. In the lower part of the façade, on the left, a memorial tablet recalls the passage of power in Ferrara from the Este family to Pope Clement VIII, whose head in bronze is placed above the marble plaque. To the right, in a niche, stands a statue of the marquis **Alberto d'Este**, founder of the University (1391). The side facing Piazza Trento

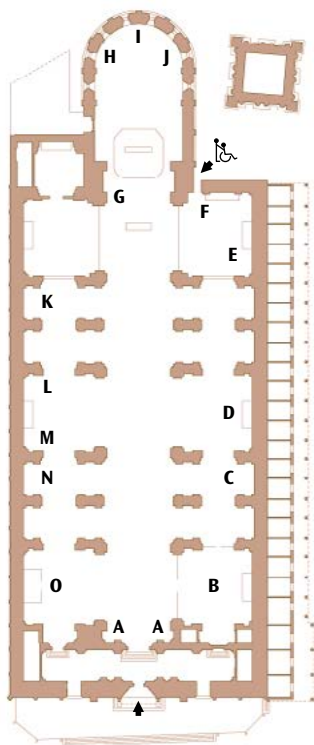
e Trieste is decorated with two galleries and small columns of various shapes. At ground level is the Loggia of the Merchants, occupied by shops since Medieval times. Half way along the south side what remains of the *Porta dei Mesi*, demolished in the 18th Century can still be seen; some of its sculptures are conserved in the Cathedral Museum. The imposing Renaissance belltower, in pink and white marble, is an unfinished work attributed to **Leon Battista Alberti**. The brickwork apse, whose sober design is lightly embellished by terracotta arches and marble capitals, is the work of Ferrara's top architect and town planner, **Biagio Rossetti**.

INTERIOR

Over the centuries the interior has been completely redesigned; the apse in the 16th Century, the transept in the 17th Century and the aisles in the 18th Century. Today it has a classic style, whose pictorial decoration is complex and sumptuous. Valuable works representative of various eras can be admired there.

A In the entrance to the cathedral there are some noteworthy works: *St Peter and St Paul*, frescoes removed from a deconsecrated church, the work of **Benvenuto Tisi da Garofalo** (1481-1559), maestro of the Ferrarese school. Above, in two niches, the monumental statues of the co-patrons of Ferrara, St George and Bishop St. Maurilius, realised in 1746.

B The Chapel of *Madonna delle Grazie*: here an image of the Virgin Mary particularly dear to the Ferrarese people is worshipped. It is conserved inside a magnificent polychromatic marble altar by **Agapito Poggi** and



Andrea Ferreri (18th Century).

C *Madonna in Glory with St. Barbara and St. Catherine*; canvas by Sebastiano Filippi, known as **Bastianino** (1532-c.1602).

D *St. Lawrence and St. Francis, with a portrait of the donator*; by Ippolito Scarsella, known as **Scarsellino** (1550-1620).

E *The Martyrdom of St Lawrence*, by Giovan Francesco Barbieri, known as **Guercino** (1591-1666).

F Above the supine funeral monument of Archbishop Ruggero Bovelli there is a beautiful group of 15th Cen-

tury bronze statues; The *Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and St John*, the work of **Niccolò Baroncelli**; to the sides are *St. George and St. Maurilius*, realised by his brother-in-law, **Domenico di Paris**.

G Tomb of Pope Urban III. The pontiff died unexpectedly in Ferrara 1187, while staying in the city during a journey.

H Choir (early 16th Century): the work of the **Canozzi** family from Lendinara, cabinet makers who worked all over northern Italy.

I The walls of the apse are covered in magnificent gilded stucco executed in 1583-84 by **Agostino Rossi** and **Vincenzo Bagnoli**.

J The bowl-shaped vault of the apse: *Last Judgment* by **Bastianino**. The fresco (completed in 1580) is

clearly inspired by the work of Michelangelo.

K *Crowning of the Virgin Mary and Saints*, canvas by **F. Francia** (1450-c.1517).

L *Betrothal of the Virgin Mary*, by **Niccolò Roselli** (16th Century).

M *Mary as Intercessor*, executed by **Garofalo** in 1532 as a votive offering for the liberation from the plague which began in 1528.

N *Madonna Enthroned with Child and Saints Sylvester, Maurilius, Jerome and John*, signed and dated (1524) by **Garofalo**.

O Baptistery Chapel: the baptismal font, based on Byzantine models, was made from a single block of marble in the 13th Century. It is surrounded by an elaborate neo-Gothic construction from the late 19th Century.

On the right side of the Cathedral opens the wide

6 Piazza Trento e Trieste

It was for centuries the location of the main town market. Nowadays it features a widening to the south of the Cathedral, whose southern wall, together with the bell tower, occupies one of its largest sides. On the opposite side a building built to a design by Marcello Piacentini from 1954 to 1956 in place of the 14th Century **Palazzo della Ragione**, destroyed by a fire in 1945. Further on, past the side of the former **Church of San Romano**, there is the façade with large windows of the **Teatro Nuovo**, built from 1923 to 1925 by Sesto and Adamo Boari. The piazza is closed off to the east by the neo-classical façade of the



former oratory of **San Crispino**. This later building has a curious feature: on the capitols of the side arches of the portico shields with a shoe sole in their centre can be clearly seen: this is the mark of the guild of cobblers, for centuries housed in this oratory, dedicated to its patron.


Along the South side of the piazza, the former Church of San Romano with its brick façade, houses the

7 Museo della Cattedrale

Via San Romano • tel. +39 0532 244949




The Cathedral Museum was created through a joint initiative between the Cathedral Chapter and the Municipality of Ferrara with the aim of documenting the history of the most important sacred temple of Este spirituality. The collection is made up of ecclesiastic- and municipality- owned works, which range from the early Middle Ages to the 19th Century. These include the series of 24 anthem books illuminated starting from 1481 by Guglielmo Giraldi, Martino da Modena and Jacopo Filippo Medici; two great masterpieces such as the series of tiles by the Maestro dei Mesi (1225-30 ca.) and the grandiose *Madonna of the pomegranate* by **Jacopo della Quercia** (1403-06); the splendid tapestries with the *Stories of Saints George and Maurelius* (1551-53) woven by Johannes Karcher based on a drawing by Garofalo and Camillo Filippi; the monumental organ panels depicting *Saint George and the dragon* and the *Annunciation* by **Cosmè Tura**, among the highest levels reached by Italian 15th Century art.

 **Via San Romano** starts in front of the church and was a main artery in the mediaeval city.

This ancient road was the main link between the market square (currently piazza Trento e Trieste) and the port, which was situated at the present via Ripagrande.

Nowadays, as before, it is one of the busiest commercial streets and with several houses with porticoes.

 Turn left off San Romano into Via Vignatagliata that is one of the streets encompassed in the Jewish Quarter.

8 Ghetto, Sinagoghe e Museo Ebraico

Via Mazzini, 95 • tel. +39 0532 210228



The origins of the Jewish community in Ferrara are very ancient and the city boasts a tradition of religious diversity. Many groups of Jews, driven out of their native countries – Spain


(1492), Portugal (1498) and Germany (1530) – were welcomed by the Este family.

They settled in Ferrara and created a strong and well-organised community. The ghetto was set up in 1627 by the papal government which, after the devolution of 1598, ended the previously liberal policy. The area set aside included the present via Mazzini, via Vignatagliata and via Vittoria. The **Synagogue** is found in via Mazzini, at n. 95. The front of the building is distinguished from its neighbours by the memorial stones at the entrance.

Among the most important parts inside are the former German Synagogue, used for the most solemn ceremonies, the erstwhile Italian Synagogue, and the Fanese Oratory, used for Sabbath worship. In this historic building there is also the **Jewish Museum**: liturgical objects, 18th Century furnishings, and printed documents with works of the celebrated Isacco Lampronti, a doctor and theologian who lived between the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th Century.

[TEMPORARILY CLOSED]

As a matter of interest - The column supporting the statue of Borso d'Este facing the Cathedral was built using miscellaneous grave stones from the Jewish cemetery in Via delle Vigne (see page 20).

 Walking along Via Ragno, one reaches the charming

9 Via delle Volte

In this long and narrow road, whose unmistakable appearance has become one of the symbols of Ferrara, much of the commercial activity of the Medieval city took place.



There are still many elevated passages (known as “volte”) which joined the merchants’ houses (on the south side) to their warehouses (on the north side). According to another interpretation, the volte were used to regain living space in a highly populated area.



Diversion for the southern city walls at Porta Paula.

Following Via delle Volte will take you to the junction with Corso Porta Reno where we suggest you make a little detour by turning right to visit the

10 Chiesa di San Paolo

Piazzetta Schiatti • tel. +39 0532 765284

The current church was built after the earthquake in 1570 by the architect **Alberto Schiatti**. Officiated for centuries by Carmelite monks, the church was the object of a number of legacies and donations which made it today’s sumptuous building. On one side there still stands the former convent, with two elegant cloisters. Frescoes and precious 16th and 17th Century paintings are housed inside, including some works by Bastianino and the fresco *Elijah’s Abduction* by **Scarsellino** in the bowl-shaped vault of the apse. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]



You can return to the planned route by taking Via Capo delle Volte. With a small deviation, you can turn left along Via della Grotta and then left along Via Piangipane to reach the

11 MEIS Museo Nazionale dell’Ebraismo Italiano e della Shoah

Via Piangipane • info@meisweb.it

The National Museum of Italian Hebraism and the Shoah (**MEIS**), entrusted to the management of the foundation by that name, has the task of spreading the history, thought and culture of Judaism in Italy. The complex architectural design, still to be completed, comes from the idea of transforming the former prison building, which was built at the beginning of the 20th Century and voted to be isolated and closed, into a place where different elements such as Time, History, the Earth, Water and Air combine to create a welcoming and open atmosphere. Spread across five architectural volumes, which refer to the five books of the Torah, the design allows the construction of the Museum in successive stages. Since 2011 a first part has been operative in which temporary exhibitions and cultural events are held.



Continuing along Via Capo delle Volte you can turn right into Via Colomba.

The streets in this mediaeval area are laid out in “riviera” style and were initially designed to provide housing for soldiers. Continuing along Via Colomba you will come to the wonderful Chiesa di San Nicolò with its famous apse designed by Biagio Rossetti.



The street ends at the junction with Via Garibaldi, one of the oldest and most important arteries of the city. It was once known as Via della Rotta (breach) in an obvious reference to flooding caused by breaches in the banks of the River Po.



Little diversion along Via Spadari to reach the

12 Chiesa di San Domenico

Via Spadari • tel. +39 0532 203383

The church was built in its present form in 1726, in place of an older one, of which a chapel and the bell tower remain, to be seen to the right of the façade. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]



Little diversion along Via Bocccanale di Santo Stefano to reach the

13 Chiesa di Santo Stefano

Piazzetta Saint-Etienne • tel. +39 0532 203969

A very ancient church (11th Century), it has been rebuilt a number of times. The present façade, the work of extensive restoration performed in 1825, has an elegant decoration in brickwork and a marble portal taken from another church, no longer standing. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]



The tour continues into Via Garibaldi until it meets Via della Luna where, a left turn will take you to the Piazza Repubblica where you will be greeted by the façade of the

14 Chiesa di San Giuliano

Piazza Repubblica

This small church was built in 1405 in place of an older one, demolished during the building of the Castello Estense. The lines of the building are Gothic, with decorations in the typical brickwork of Ferrara, in particular those of the tricuspid portal, above which a marble relief represents St. Julian killing his parents. The interior was rebuilt in the 18th Century. [NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC]



THE RENAISSANCE ADDITION

Throughout the Middle Ages and almost to the end of the 15th Century, the northern boundary of the city ran along the current road System of *viale Cavour-corso Giovecca*. To the north of this boundary there were a number of buildings, even prestigious ones, some of which were owned by the Duke. In 1492 Ercole I commissioned Biagio Rossetti to include this vast area in the centre (thus doubling the surface area of the city) and the great architect and town-planner designed a plan which, due to its original and rational nature, made Ferrara "the first modern city in Europe". In honour of the Duke who ordered its building this great district is known as *Addizione Erculee*.

THE ITINERARY IN BRIEF



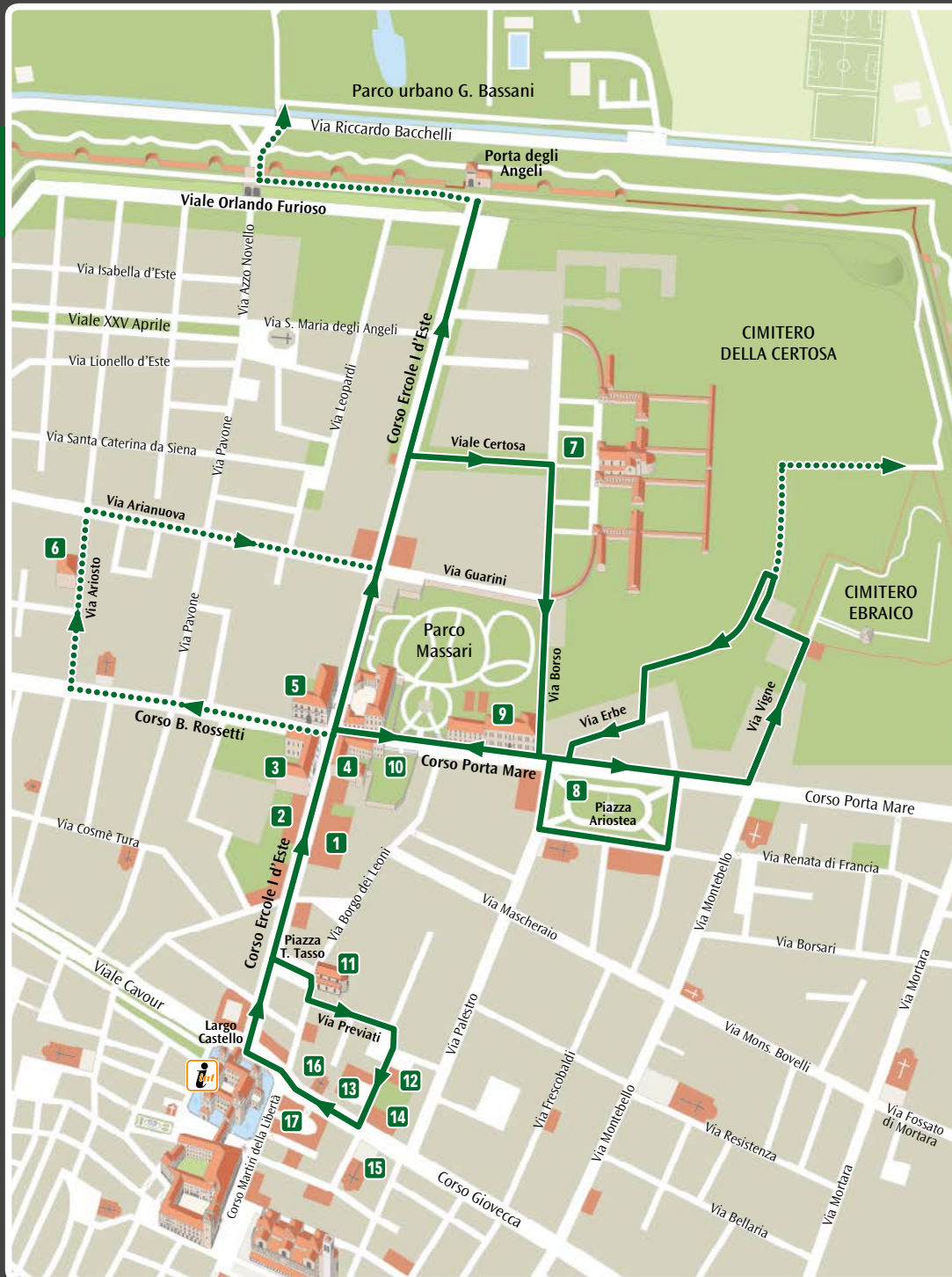
CASTELLO ESTENSE

*Starting point of the route
Corso Ercole I d'Este*

- 1 Palazzo di Giulio d'Este
 - 2 Museo del Risorgimento e della Resistenza
 - 3 Palazzo dei Diamanti
 - 4 Museo di Paleontologia e Preistoria
 - 5 Palazzo Prosperi Sacrati
- Diversion from the itinerary*
- 6 Casa di Ludovico Ariosto
- Direction Parco Urbano G. Bassani*
- 7 San Cristoforo alla Certosa
 - 8 Piazza Ariostea
 - 9 Palazzo Massari
 - 10 Orto Botanico
 - 11 Chiesa del Gesù
 - 12 Museo Civico di Storia Naturale
 - 13 Piazzetta S. Anna

Corso Giovecca

- 14 Palazzo Roverella
- 15 Chiesa dei Teatini
- 16 Chiesa di San Carlo
- 17 Teatro Comunale





THIS ITINERARY BEGINS AT THE NORTH RAVELIN (OR ENTRANCE) TO THE CASTLE. THE VIEW FROM HERE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THE GRANDEUR OF THE PROJECT KNOWN AS THE **HERCULEAN ADDITION**.

This Street was formerly known as *Via degli Angeli* after the church dedicated to *S. Maria degli Angeli* which stood along it. It forms one of the two main thoroughfares of the *Addizione Ercolea*. With no shops and flanked by fine palazzos, it still retains the features of a residential road as the Duke intended. Its focal point is the **Quadri-vio degli Angeli** ("Angels' Cross-roads"), at the junction with the other road of the *Addizione* (*corso Porto Mare - Biagio Rossetti - Porta Po*), underlined by the presence of three elaborately decorated buildings.



Along Corso Ercole I d'Este stand the following buildings

1 Palazzo di Giulio d'Este

Corso Ercole I d'Este, 16

Built in the early years of the great building works of the *Addizione Ercolea*, the Palazzo belonged for some years to Giulio, illegitimate son of Duke Ercole I, famous for his participation, together with his brother Ferrante, in the plot of 1506 against Alfonso I and Cardinal Ippolito, his great enemy. Subsequently the building was the property for centuries of the ancient lords of Carpi, the princes Pio di Savoia. The attribution to **Biagio Rossetti** is based on different elements, such as the marble portal, the use of brickwork in the arch vaults of the windows and in the highly jutting cornice, the extremely free use of architectural style, and a small balcony which appears to be set halfway between the ground and first floors. [SEAT OF THE PREFECTURE]

2 Museo del Risorgimento e della Resistenza

Corso Ercole I d'Este, 19 • tel. +39 0532 244949

In the section dedicated to the **Risorgimento** a large collection of period illustrations are to be found, including some particular curious satirical caricatures and cartoons in the first room. The showcases display a good number of uniforms, firearms and weapons. One showcase contains a curious series of objects among which is a set of handcuffs, some cell keys and even a spyhole, a reminder of the imprisonment of the Ferrarese patriots Succi, Malaguti and Parmegiani. The second room is dedicated in particular to the Bersaglieri del Po, a Ferrarese volunteer corps under the command of the marquis Tancredi Trotti Mosti (whose bust is in the entrance hall), which fought heroically in the battles of Cornuda and of Monte Berico in 1848. The collection is completed with decorations and banners.

The section dedicated to the **Resistenza** is organised in a very similar way to the first, except that there are less objects. The documents date from between 1919 and 1945 and deal with the period of the great social struggles, the Fascist dictatorship, the Second World War and liberation.

3 Palazzo dei Diamanti

Corso Ercole I d'Este, 21 • tel. +39 0532 244949

Palazzo dei Diamanti, one of the most famous examples of Italian Renaissance architecture, stands at the crossroads of the two main routes of the *Addizione Ercolea*, the modern part of the city commissioned by Ercole I d'Este at the



end of the 15th Century. Intended for Sigismondo d'Este, the brother of the Duke Ercole I, it was begun in 1493 by **Biagio Rossetti**, the architect responsible for the *Addizione*. It was completed and modified the following Century. The building symbolises the prestige and glory of the Este dynasty. In fact its name derives from the 8500 stones cut to a diamond point that comprise the ashlar-work of the two façades: diamond was one of the Este emblems. The building was designed for a diagonal view and its focal point is therefore the corner where the admirable repetition of diamonds is interrupted by the precious candelabra that can be dated to the start of the 16th Century and the small balcony added some decades later. Home to the Este family until 1641, it was bought first by the Villa marquises and then in 1832 by the Municipality of Ferrara.

On the **ground floor** is the exhibition area, which has long been fa-

mous for the quality of the exhibitions organised by the Civic Galleries of Modern and Contemporary Art. On the noble floor is the **Pinacoteca Nazionale** (art gallery), whose rooms hold consistent traces of the decorations used in the ancient Este palace. The great hall of honour is covered by a grandiose wooden ceiling with lacunars dating back to the end of the 16th Century. Its pictorial deco-



Cosmè Tura, *Judgement of St. Maurelius*

ration, which was perhaps envisaged, was never carried out. The two fireplaces, positioned on the short sides of the hall, were decorated by a delicate frieze stylistically similar to the candelabra decoration of the external corner of the palace. Frescoes are housed in the hall of honour removed from various Ferrara churches including the one of the oldest works in Ferrara: the *Stories of San Bartolo* from the second half of the 13th Century. The collections in the Pinacoteca cover a time span that ranges from the 13th to the 19th Century: works by Jacopo and Giovanni Bellini, Ercole Roberti, Andrea Mantegna; paintings on a golden background by painters of various origins, such as Simone dei Crocifissi, the Maestro di Figline and Guariento. Among the paintings by great 15th Century Ferrara artists the *Judgement* and the *Martyr of Saint Maurelius* by **Cosmè Tura** can be admired – the initiator of the great season of 15th Century Ferrarese painting – as well as the famous *Muse Erato and Urania* from the Study of Leonello d'Este created in Palazzo di Belfiore based on the humanistic iconography of Guarino Veronese. Paintings by **Garofalo**, Ortolano, Carpaccio, Mazzolino, **Dosso** and **Battista Dossi**, Scarsellino, Bononi, **Bastianino** and Guercino testify the particular vivacity of Ferrarese culture. The last hall in the Pinacoteca is dominated by the grandiose polyptych painted by Garofalo and Dosso for Antonio Costabili, an important diplomat and intellect in the Este ducal circle. The Pinacoteca Nazionale di Ferrara has enriched its original nucleus of paintings mainly from the city's churches, thanks to a series of purchases, donations and entrustments. These include in particular the Vendeghini Baldi collection and that of the Cassa di Risparmio di Ferrara Foundation.

4 Palazzo Turchi di Bagno. Museo di Paleontologia e Preistoria "Piero Leonardi" Corso Ercole I d'Este, 32 • tel. +39 0532 293731


Founded in 1964 due to the initiative of Prof. Piero Leonardi, the Geology and Mineralogy Institute and the University of Ferrara, the Museum includes the Palaeontology of Vertebrates, Prehistory, Palaeontology of Invertebrates, and Historical Geology sections. Each

section is split into a display part and a conservation part. The display part is made up of original fossil samples, some of which are unique in Italy (titanotheres, *Smilodon* or saber-toothed tigers, *Lystrosaurus* etc.), casts and rocks, all accompanied by illustrations and captions. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]

5 Palazzo Prosperi Sacrati Corso Ercole I d'Este, 25

Building began in 1493. The building has a corner decoration, like the other palazzos of the *Quadrivio*, but stands out above all due to its grandiose marble portal, which is the most significant example of monumental sculpture in Ferrara.

[NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC]

 A little detour from the itinerary takes you to Corso Biagio Rossetti. Turn right into Via Ariosto where, at N° 67, you will find the

6 Casa di Ludovico Ariosto Via Ariosto, 67 • tel. +39 0532 244949


"Parva, sed apta mihi, sed nulli obnoxia, sed non sordida, parta meo, sed tamen aere domus". "The house is small but suitable for me, clean, free of expenses and purchased solely with my own money", reads the inscription on the façade of the house where Ludovico Ariosto (1474 - 1533) spent his twilight years, devoting himself to the third and final edition of *Orlando Enraged*, published in 1532.

The house, probably built to the design of **Girolamo da Carpi**, has a simple but elegant brick façade. **Interior:** on the first floor a small museum dedicated to the poet has been laid out. The room on the right conserves the bronze cast of his inkstand, editions of his works and many medals representing him, including the one found in his tomb in 1801.

In the small central corridor stands a display case which conserves the beautiful 1881 edition of *Orlando Enraged* illustrated by Gustave Doré.

In the room on the left, with its elegant chimneypiece, are a nineteenth Century bust and portrait of the poet and some furniture, including a chair that belonged to him.

In the second part of the street, the one which leads to the city walls and to the **Porta degli Angeli** ("Angels' Gate"), the buildings gradually decrease in number and importance, until the Street becomes almost identical to a country road, lined with tall poplars.

 Carrying on to the end of the street, you will come to the **Porta degli Angeli** designed by B. Rossetti. From here you go up on to enjoy a walk along the walls that still protect the city.

The stroll along the walls will take you to the immense **Parco urbano G. Bassani**.


On the way back, going along Corso Ercole I d'Este, turning left will take you to the splendid Certosa, where you will find

7 San Cristoforo alla Certosa

Piazza Borso d'Este • tel. +39 0532 244949



One of the most significant and precious monuments of the historical and artistic heritage of Ferrara, the Church of San Cristoforo alla Certosa was founded in 1452 by Borso d'Este outside the ancient boundaries of the city. The area was included in the Este walls when the Addizione Ercoleale was built, hence losing its original hermitage characteristic. The importance and fame developed in the meantime led to the need to erect a new, grandiose temple in 1498, whose design is attributed to **Biagio Rossetti**. Over the centuries, the Carthusian complex underwent various changes, for example the demolition of the first church and part of the cloisters, until it was transformed into a public cemetery in 1913. Damaged by two bombs in 1944 and then only partially restored, the Temple has regained its ancient decorative layout, made up of monumental and precious ancons, grandiose paintings, among which the altar pieces by Bastianino stand out, and sumptuous liturgical displays. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]

 The tree-lined Via Borso will next take you to Corso Porta Mare. Ahead of you lies

8 Piazza Ariostea

This square was intended to become the fulcrum of the *Addizione Ercoleale* and was at the time named **Piazza Nuova** (New Square), to distinguish it from the former market square, on the southern side of the Cathedral. However it never became important for commerce, but remained a large area free of buildings, with the function of a public park. In the centre stands a column on which a **statue of Ludovico Ariosto** was placed in 1883. The buildings which open onto the piazza are very



simple: to the south stands *Palazzo Rondinelli*, built at the end of the 15th Century by **Biagio Rossetti**, which stands out above all due to its large portico with 22 arches, with a wooden ceiling, which performs the function of a “covered Street”. On the west side of the pi-

azza stands *Palazzo Strozzi Bevilacqua*, built in 1499 characterized by a large portico with 15 arches.

In this *piazza*, on the last Sunday in May of each year, the **Palio di San Giorgio** is held - an extremely ancient event which includes, in addition to a great historical procession, four races: the race of the *Putti* (young boys) and that of the *Putte* (young girls), donkey and horse races.

Staying on the left of Corso Porta Mare, you will come to Via delle Vigne for a detour that touches the **Cimitero Ebraico** after which you will follow the cycle/footpath that runs as far as the end of the city walls.

 Taking Corso Porta Mare to the right, it leads to

9 Palazzo Massari

Corso Porta Mare, 9 • tel. +39 0532 244949



It was built at the end of the 16th Century, commissioned by Count Onofrio Bevilacqua and underwent various extensions including, in the 1770s, the construction of the adjacent building to the main palace, namely the “Cavaliere di Malta” who resided there between 1826 and 1834. The palace houses the “**Giovanni Boldini**” Museum, the “**19th Century Museum**” and the “**Filippo de Pisis**” Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art. A hall of honour leads to the rooms on the **noble floor** decorated by frescoed ceilings.



The **Giovanni Boldini Museum** is housed here, dedicated to the great artist from Ferrara active in Paris between the 19th and 20th Centuries, who became one of the most sought-after portrait painters of the *Belle Époque*. The rich collection embraces all the aspects of his production, from the original portraits of the “macchiaioli” years spent in Florence to the daring experiences carried out in the Paris of the impressionists, between 1870 and 1880, and from the large official portraits for which he became famous throughout the world, such as the *Portrait of young Subercaseaux* and the *Woman in rose*, to the most intimate and refined experiments made up of still life works, views of Venice and indoor scenes.



G. Boldini, *Woman in rose*, 1916

The **19th Century Museum**, which is housed in the adjacent halls, covers the evolution of the arts in 19th Century in Ferrara through paintings and sculptures by its most significant exponents. These include the purist and romantic inspired experiments of Giovanni Pagliarini, Gaetano Turchi and Angelo Conti, and the masterpieces of the protagonists of divisionism such as Gaetano Previati and Giuseppe Mentessi.



F. De Pisis, *Gladiolus Struck by Lightning*, 1930

The **Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art**, named after **Filippo de Pisis (1896-1956)**, houses a vast collection of paintings and works on paper by the artist illustrating every stage of his career, from his works as a young artist, still seeped in the crepuscular climate and of metaphysical painting, to the brilliant Paris season during which he gave life to his very unusual “pictorial stenography”; and from the penetrating masculine effects such as the *Portrait of a cheerful man*, to the lyrical and melancholy still life works of his later years. The museum also displays a collection of paintings and sculptures by the main 20th Century artists from Ferrara – including Roberto Melli, Aroldo Bonzagni, Mario Pozzati and Achille Funi – as well as works by Italian artists such as Carlo Carrà and Mario Sironi. [THE MUSEUMS OF PALAZZO MASSARI ARE TEMPORARILY CLOSED]

In the garden of Palazzo Massari is the **Contemporary Art Pavilion**, used for temporary exhibitions. The palace is embellished by Parco Massari which is the biggest of the public gardens within the city walls.

A deviation of about 1.5 km along Corso Porta Mare and then right along Via Mortara leads to

Museo Anatomico “G. Tumiati” (via Fossato di Mortara, 66 - tel. +39 0532 455935) owned by the University of Ferrara, whose collection includes osteology and anatomy preparations, casts, models, ancient anatomy instruments, atlases and anatomy wall charts.

10 Orto Botanico

Corso Porta Mare, 2 • tel. +39 0532 293782

The University of Ferrara Botanical Garden, with greenhouses and irregular shaped flowerbeds, covers a surface area of 4,500 m² in the garden of **Palazzo Turchi-Di Bagno**. The collections are currently split into 5 thematic sections – Systematic, Useful plants, Theme gardens, Protected flora and Exotic plants – covering about 700 plant species. The greenhouses include a large central unheated building (cold greenhouse) and two lateral buildings that are used as temperate and hot greenhouses. The Garden draws up an *Index Seminum* every year, a catalogue of seeds and spores, which it makes available for exchanges with over 250 Italian and foreign institutions every year.



The route now takes you back along Corso Ercole I d'Este but, before reaching the Castle, you can turn left into Piazza Torquato Tasso to admire the

11 Chiesa del Gesù

Via Borgoleoni, 56 • tel. +39 0532 205908

Overlooking *Piazzetta T. Tasso*, it was built in 1570 to a design by Alberto Schiatti, and later extended by adding chapels. The austere façade is in fired brick and tiles throughout. The interior, with a single nave, contains paintings of considerable interest. To the left of the entrance we can see an important 15th- Century sculpture group in polychrome terracotta: *The Mourning of Christ* by **Guido Mazzoni**. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]

A short distance walking along via Previati there is a group of buildings built in the rationalist style by the architect **Carlo Savonuzzi** in the 1930s as part of redevelopment of the area previously occupied by the hospital. It is one of the few good redesign projects performed in that period. The piazzetta is dominated by a primary school with a fluted tower which acts as a perspective fulcrum. Opposite, two identical buildings house the “C. Frescobaldi” conservatory and the Civic Museum of Natural History.


12 Museo Civico di Storia Naturale

Via De Pisis, 24 • tel. +39 0532 244949



The Museo Naturalistico is the first museum in Emilia Romagna to be developed along the lines of an eco-museum that combines displays exhibition areas along with a Learning Centre and reading materials. The museum offers

the visitor a broad review of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds, invertebrates and insects covering branches of the natural sciences such as zoology and entomology. There are large collections of fossils, minerals and rocks in the sections devoted to the earth sciences: palaeontology, geology and mineralogy. Of particular interest is "Earth's Environment", a section dealing with understanding the environment and its development and organised using innovative museum techniques, which brings to light the environmental diversity and changes in the world we inhabit. The Specialist Library, the Reading Room and the Educational Section are also the public's service. The museum also carries out important work in scientific research and the spread of knowledge.

 Continuing along Via Boldini will take you to the

13 Piazzetta Sant'Anna

This was the courtyard of the old **Sant'Anna main hospital**, dating back to the 15th Century and operative up until the early 20th Century. The hospital incorporated pre-existing buildings, including the Armenian monastery of San Basilio, whose picturesque portico can still be seen. For many years the poet **Torquato Tasso** was kept prisoner in one of the rooms there.

 Continue along **Corso Giovecca**

This Street, built by Biagio Rossetti by demolishing the old walls, forms the link between the Medieval city to the south, and the Addizione Erculea to the north, thus forming the main thoroughfare of the city. Embellished by a number of noteworthy buildings, the road is closed off to the east by a theatrical 18th-Century arch.

14 Palazzo Roverella

Corso Giovecca, 47

Built in 1508 circa, to a design by **Biagio Rossetti** for Gaetano Magnanini, secretary to Duke Alfonso I. It was acquired by the Roverella family in the 18th Century. The façade has an elaborate decoration in brickwork arranged so as to achieve an actual geometrical division of the surface.

[NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC]



15 Chiesa dei Teatini

Corso Giovecca, 52 • tel. +39 0532 247822

This church was built in the first half of the 17th Century to a design

by Luca Danesi. The unfinished façade has the preparation for the marble facing.

The interior has elegant decorations and a panel depicting the *Purification of the Virgin* painted by **Guercino** in 1634 of great interest.

[TEMPORARILY CLOSED]

16 Chiesa di San Carlo

Corso Giovecca, 19 • tel. +39 0532 247173

This church was built between 1612 and 1623 on the area of a demolished oratory, to a design by **Giovan Battista Aleotti**. It is a unique example in Ferrara of pure Baroque architecture. The façade is divided by two double columns bearing an architrave with tympanum, niches with statues and a portal with divided tympanum and angels holding a coat of arms. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]

17 Teatro Comunale

Rotonda Foschini • tel. +39 0532 218326

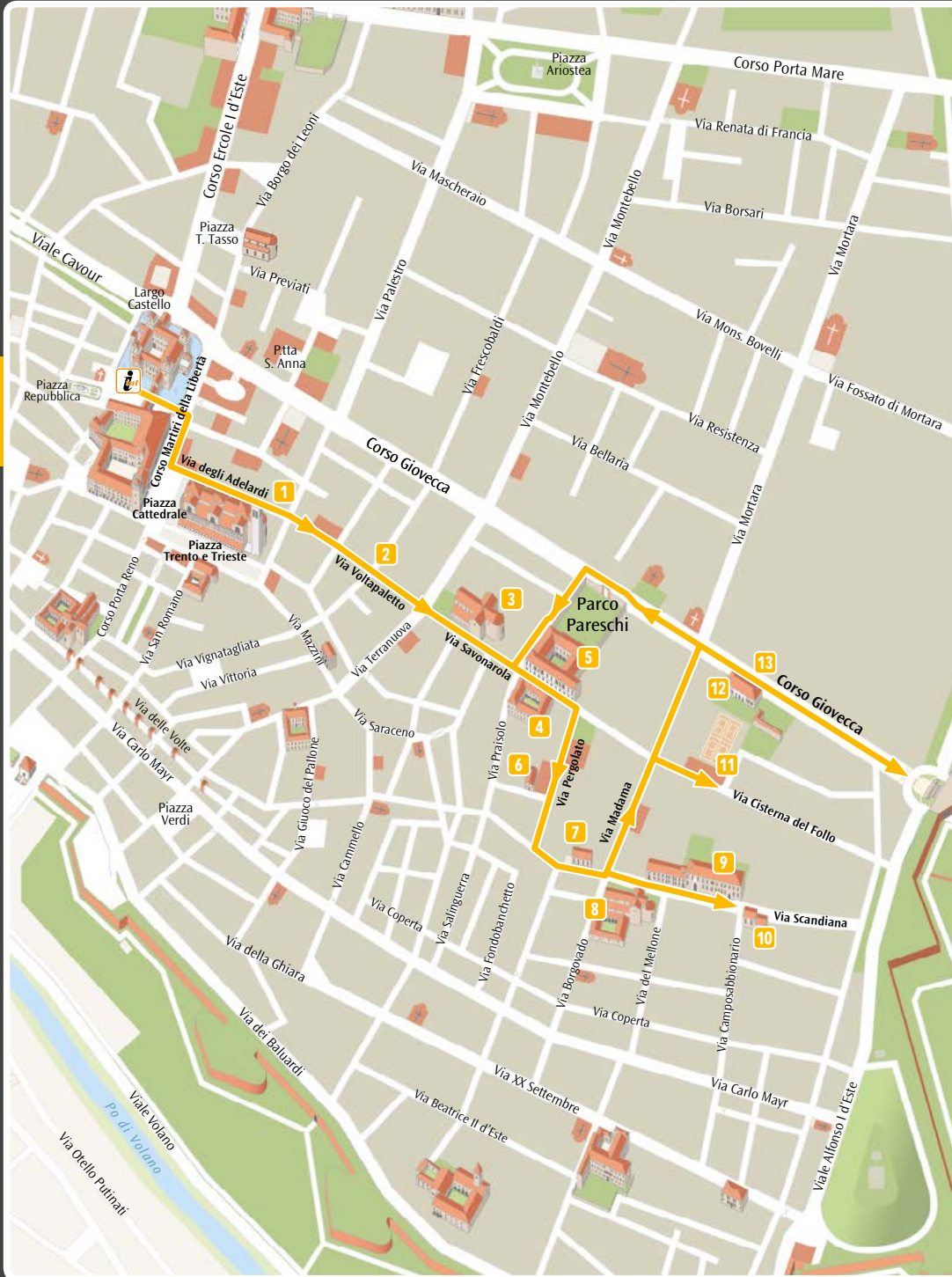


The theatre was built between 1790 and 1797, under the direction of **Antonio Foschini** and **Cosimo Morelli**. The two façades of the building, not heavily decorated, blend with the urban setting and the two exits of the elliptical widening, which originally served for the arrival and departure of carriages, frame two important buildings: the Castello Estense to the west and the church of San Carlo to the north. Inside the **Foyer** can be admired with its rich, mainly Empire style, decorations and above all the large auditorium, a typical example of Italian-style theatre, elegantly stuccoed and frescoed by Francesco Migliari in 1850.

The Civic Theatre currently performs a central role in the cultural life of the city and whole country, the venue for several seasons of theatre, opera, ballet and concerts, as well as top-rate concerts organised by the Ferrara Music Committee.

RENAISSANCE RESIDENCES AND CHURCHES

Along the ancient Via di San Francesco, the main thoroughfare of the new districts commissioned by Niccolò III and an elegant street in the Medieval city, stand many palazzos, patrician residences and major churches. The itinerary winds among these wonders to the "Delizie", dwellings built by the court for amusement and relaxation, far from the cares of governing.




THE ITINERARY IN BRIEF



CASTELLO ESTENSE


Starting point of the route

- 1 Via degli Adelardi
- 2 Via Voltapaletto - Via Savonarola
- 3 Chiesa di San Francesco
- 4 Casa Romei
- 5 Palazzo di Renata di Francia
- 6 Monastero del Corpus Domini
- 7 Oratorio dell'Annunziata
- 8 Chiesa di Santa Maria in Vado
- 9 Palazzo Schifanoia
- 10 Lapidario Civico
- 11 Palazzo Bonacossi
- 12 Palazzina Marfisa d'Este
- 13 Corso Giovecca

 From Piazza Girolamo Savonarola, turning right towards the **Cathedral** (page 13), you will reach the 18th Century **Palazzo Municipale** (page 12) with the Palazzo Arcivescovile on your left. When you reach the Cathedral, turn left into

1 Via degli Adelardi

It flanks the northern side of the Cathedral, in fired brick and tiles throughout. Here stands the ancient Bishop's House, which can be recognised by the long row of paired windows framed in fired brick. The same building houses the most ancient *osteria* or hostelry in the world, also mentioned by Ludovico Ariosto.

 Continuing along this street will lead you to

2 Via Voltapaletto - Via Savonarola

This is a thoroughfare “added” by Niccolò III, formerly known as *via di San Francesco*, from the church of the same name which stands at the corner with *via Terranuova*.

3 Chiesa di San Francesco

Piazzale S. Francesco • tel. +39 0532 209646



The present church is the third one built on this site where the Franciscans had settled as early as the 13th Century and was built by **Biagio Rossetti** from 1494 onwards. The brickwork façade is divided up by pilaster strips in marble in the first order and in fired brick and tiles in the second, which is linked to the lower one by very large side scrolls. The brickwork frieze in the line separating the two orders is remarkable, with its portrait of St. Francis, borne by angels, which is repeated tens of times. The interior has a Latin cross plan, with three naves and eight chapels on each side. [PARTIALLY CLOSED]

 Passed the Church of San Francesco stands

4 Casa Romei

Via Savonarola, 30 • tel. +39 0532 234130

This house, an almost unique example of an aristocratic residence of the 15th Century, was built for the banker Giovanni Romei and, on his death, became part of the adjacent Corpus Domini monastery. The courtyard is extremely fine, with its double loggia and large monogram of Christ in terracotta on the back wall. It should be noted how the architect, probably Pietrobono Brasavola, used Medieval elements and Renaissance features, effortlessly juxtaposing them.



In the ground floor rooms there are **frescoes** from the original decoration, in an international Gothic style, in addition to a large painted Medieval fireplace. In other rooms on the same floor there is a small museum, with sculptures of various origins.

On the first floor an apartment, built in the 16th Century for Cardinal Ippolito II of Este and used for centuries by the illustrious guests of the Monastery, can be visited. The “grotesque” decorations of the ceilings recall those of the ducal residences but are more understated and, given the setting of the rooms in a religious environment, the main pictures represent Biblical scenes, in place of the mythological scenes in fashion in aristocratic houses. In the decorative bands the heraldic symbol of Cardinal Ippolito II, the white eagle, is often to be found.

 On the opposite side stands

5 Palazzo di Renata di Francia


Via Savonarola, 9

The palazzo was built around 1475. A few years later Biagio Rossetti took over, as seen by the decentralised position of the main portal, once more grandiose and still today crowned by the Este device of the unicorn. The building takes its name from the wife of Duke Ercole II who often



lived there, possibly to stay away from the court where she was kept under close control due to her approval of the ideas of the Reformation.

The courtyard still has a Renaissance appearance, while the façade and the interior were totally rebuilt in the 18th Century. Since 1963 the building has housed the University. Behind the building opens the park, now a public garden, surrounded by high walls. The entrance is on *corso Giovecca*.

 After Casa Romei, turn right into Via Pergolato: on the corner with Via Campofranco stands the

6 Monastero del Corpus Domini

Via Pergolato, 4 • tel. +39 0532 207825



Founded in 1406, this convent of cloistered Clarisse nuns conserves the heirlooms of St. Catherine de Vigri, a mystic and a writer who lived here until 1456. The convent owes its fame to the fact that several members of the Este family are buried in the nuns' choir: Eleonora d'Aragona, Alfonso I, Ercole II, Alfonso II and the famous **Lucrezia Borgia**.

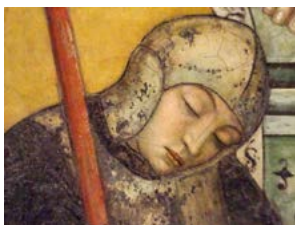
The interior of the public church was richly decorated in the Baroque era.

 Turn left at the end of Via Pergolato into Via Borgo di Sotto to arrive at


7 Oratorio dell'Annunziata

Via Borgo di Sotto, 49 • tel. +39 338 2954013 / 340 649498

The Oratory, built in 1376 as the seat of the "Confraternity of Death", currently has a simple 16th-Century façade, attributed by some to Aleotti. The interior is divided into two halls, lower and upper: the latter was decorated with frescoes which narrate the *Legend of the Wood of the Holy Cross*. The frescoes, the work of Camillo Filippi, Bastianino, Roselli and Dielai, are not all of the highest standard, but they do represent a rare and interesting example of 16th-Century decoration which is still intact. Behind the altar there is an older Resurrection with a Pisanello influence. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]



The Resurrection of Christ's detail

 Continuing along Via Borgo di Sotto will lead you to the

8 Chiesa di Santa Maria in Vado

Via Borgovado • tel. +39 0532 65127

Built near a ford (vado) of the Po, there is mention of this church from the 10th Century onwards. In 1171 a miraculous event took place there: at the moment of the consecration, drops of blood sprayed from the Host, and washed over the vault of the church (at that time small).

Rebuilt in 1495 with the technical assistance of Ercole de' Roberti and Biagio Rossetti, the church has a façade in fired brick and tiles, decorated by a fine marble portal and crowned by statues. Richly decorated, the interior has a basilica plan, with an apse, and divided into three naves by two rows of columns. The wings of the transept, with two chapels per side, house a 16th-Century organ and the **Sanctuary of the Precious Blood**, in which the ancient vault is preserved with the traces of blood of the Eucharistic miracle. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]



 Along Via Scandiana stands

9 Palazzo Schifanoia

Via Scandiana, 23 • tel. +39 0532 244949



An ancient residence of the Este family, also defined as a *Delizia*, intended for representative and leisure purposes, **Palazzo Schifanoia** represents one of the most precious art treasures of the city. Its name, Schifanoia, derives from its original function: loathing boredom and sending away tedium.

Built from 1385 onwards, it was then extended as requested by Borso d'Este around 1470; on the noble floor it houses the famous cycle of the **Mesi** (Months) painted between 1469 and 1470 by Francesco del Cossa, Ercole de' Roberti and other artists of the "**Ferrara workshop**". Commissioned by Duke Borso to exalt his government activity, the cycle represents one of the greatest testimonies of Italian Renaissance culture.

The complex iconographical program, of which only the months of



March and September have survived, was drawn up by the court astronomer and librarian Pellegrino Prisciani with the intention of creating a sort of large calendar in which the celebratory requirements of Borso, ancient mythology and Arabic astrology came together in a skillful representation.

Each month of the year has the Triumph of protective divinity of the month portrayed at the top, the sign of the zodiac in the median strip with the respective decans and at the bottom the glorification and dual virtues of Borso, in these areas depicted a whole three times every month. In the other parts of the Hall, as can still be seen on the south and north walls, Ferrara at that time was represented.

Another precious room, contemporary to the Salone dei Mesi, is the **Sala delle Virtù**, also known as the Sala Stucchi, where the frieze with the cardinal and theological virtues can be admired, the undertakings of the Este family, and a splendid golden, painted coffered ceiling, all work of the skillful sculptor from Padua, Domenico Di Paris.

Since 1898 Schifanoia has housed the collections of the **Civic Museums of Ancient Art**, whose rich collections are distributed in the late 14th Century wing of the building and in the 15th Century halls. These include an interesting nucleus of Greek, Etruscan and Roman ceramics, the extraordinary illustrated codes (such as the *Bibbia della Certosa*, the bible decorated by Guglielmo Giraldi), the ivory collection and the bronze and plaque collection.



Opposite the palace, one can visit the

10 Lapidario Civico

Via Camposabbionario • tel. +39 0532 244949

Founded in 1735 by the marquis Ercole Bevilacqua, its first location was the courtyard of Palazzo Paradiso, then moving to the former church of Santa Libera from 1984 onwards. The collection includes quite significant testimonies of the civil and religious life of Roman society documented in the area of the Po Delta from the 2nd Century BC onwards. The exhibits from the administrative centre of Voghenza are particularly important, such as the *Sarcophagus* of Aurelia Eutychia, or in the numerous settlement areas along the branches of the Po Delta.



Return along Via Madama and turn right for

11 Palazzo Bonacossi

Via Cisterna del Follo, 5 • tel. +39 0532 244949

This was built in 1468 for Diotalvi Neroni, a Florentine exile protected by Borso d'Este. His simple and austere palace has a tower with battlements at the centre. Its present appearance dates back to 1572, when it was bought by Francesco I d'Este to join it up with

the little Marfisa d'Este Palace. In 1643 the property was acquired by Conti Bonacossi who was responsible for the opening of the present windows, and the installation of balconies, besides the interior decoration from the baroque and classical periods.

The exhibition halls also house the **Museo Riminaldi**, the collection of marble sculptures, small bronzes, refined furnishings and 17th and 18th Century mosaics and paintings collected by the cardinal Gian Maria Riminaldi (1718-1789).



Take Via Ugo Bassi and turn right into Corso Giovecca to reach

12 Palazzina Marfisa d'Este

Corso Giovecca, 170 • tel. +39 0532 244949



This is a magnificent example of an aristocratic residence of the 16th Century, once surrounded by splendid gardens in which other buildings stood. Built by Francesco d'Este, the small *palazzo* formed part of a larger group of buildings, linked by the garden which is no longer in existence. Passed down as an inheritance to the daughter Marfisa, it then took the name of this princess, who lived there until her death, refusing to leave Ferrara even



when her family moved to Modena. Inside we can admire the frescoes on the ceilings, partially repainted in the 20th Century, the work of the **Filippi studio**. The “grotesque” decoration here achieves great sophistication and sumptuousness. The *palazzina* is furnished with **furniture from the 16th and 17th centuries**, partly from Ferrara and partly purchased on the antiques market. The loggia, once open on the outside, has two fresco portraits of little girls on the walls: these are the two daughters of Francesco d'Este, Marfisa and Bradamante. Through what remains of the garden a frescoed loggia, once used for concerts and small shows, can be reached.

13 Corso Giovecca

This Street forms the link between the Medieval city to the south, and the Addizione Ercolea to the north, thus forming the main thoroughfare of the city. The road is closed off to the east by the **Prospettiva archway**: a theatrical 18th-Century arch built to a design by Francesco Mazzarelli, to serve as a permanent scenic structure at the end of corso Giovecca. From here, you can go up on to the city walls.

WHERE THE RIVER ONCE FLOWED

Until the 12th Century, Via Ripagrande was the main branch of the Po that today runs a few kilometres away to the north of the city. It originally flowed past the southern walls, where in the past a river port handled the shipping of goods. The south of the city was the oldest part and extended along the banks of the river, where various streets along which goods were taken to the marketplace met with it. This area is still largely intact and offers glimpses of buildings of significant cultural and religious importance. When the course of the main river was re-routed to the north of the city, the riverbed gradually narrowed and new buildings were erected; later, Duke Borso had the area encircled by the city walls to create a new quarter.



THE ITINERARY IN BRIEF



CASTELLO ESTENSE

Starting point of the route

- 1** Palazzo Paradiso
- 2** Chiesa di San Gregorio
- 3** Casa di Stella dell'Assassino
- 4** Monastero di Sant'Antonio in Polesine
- 5** Palazzo Costabili
Museo Archeologico Nazionale
- Byzantine Castrum**
- 6** Via XX Settembre
- 7** Casa di Biagio Rossetti
- 8** Chiesa di San Giorgio

 The tour starts from the **Castle Estense** (page 8), crosses Piazza Savonarola and heads towards the **Cathedral** (page 13). It then takes along the front of the 18th Century **Palazzo Municipale** on your right with the Palazzo Arcivescovile on your left.

After the Cathedral, cross **Piazza Trento e Trieste** (page 15) and take Via Mazzini, one of the main arteries of the old Jewish quarter. In Via Scienze, you will find

1 Palazzo Paradiso


Via delle Scienze, 17 • tel. +39 0532 418200

Built in 1391 by order of Alberto of Este, the building later had various owners until 1567 when Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este rented it to the city authorities in order to transfer all the university faculties there.

In 1753 the **Civic Library** was founded here, later dedicated to Ariosto.

The Library contains one of the widest ranging collections of manuscripts and publications on the main local poets, writers and scholars including Ariosto, Tasso, Monti, Govoni, Caretti and Bassani. In 1801 the body of **Ludovico Ariosto** was transported here from the Church of San Benedetto, and placed in a monumental tomb, created based on a design by Aleotti, inside the Library.

Of special interest are also the grandiose main staircase and the **Anatomy Theatre**, both from the 18th Century.

 After Via Giuoco del Pallone, Vicolo Granchio, will take you to **Via Cammello**, in front of the

2 Chiesa di San Gregorio

Via Cammello, 19 • tel. +39 0532 209794

The existence of the church is documented from 1035 onwards. The Gothic façade in fired brick, restored in 1932, and the ancient bell tower (1092, made higher in the 14th Century) make it a particularly evocative building.

 At a short distance stands

3 Casa di Stella dell'Assassino

Via Cammello, 15

This is a tall building, with massive walls and ogival windows and doors. Traditionally it is known as the house of Stella dei Tolomei, favourite mistress of Niccolò III, to whom she gave three famous sons: Leonello, Ugo and Borso. The nickname dell'Assassino was possibly attributed to her given that her father was from Assisi (with the ad-

jective Assisino - from Assisi, later turned into Assassino- murderer).
[NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC]

 This route will take you along the streets where the bed of the River Po once lay and where in the fifteenth Century, a new quarter sprang up with churches, streets and mansion houses that Borso d'Este had included to the city.

At the end of Via Quartieri you come to the city walls and passing through Porta San Pietro will take you into the park area outside the walls.

Secluded in Via del Gambone from the rest of the city that surrounds it, lies the

4 Monastero di Sant'Antonio in Polesine

Via del Gambone • tel. +39 0532 64068

Founded by Saint Beatrice II d'Este on an island in the centre of the old Po, this group of buildings is of great importance and still has a special atmosphere of peace and isolation.

The small public church, in the Baroque style, has a remarkable **frescoed ceiling** from the 17th Century. Inside the church **three**

chapels with precious frescoes can be visited: the left-hand chapel contains the *Stories of the Childhood of Jesus* and the *Life of the Virgin*, of the Giotto school (1315-20). In the right-hand chapel *Stories of the Passion* can be seen, also of the Giotto school, painted between the end of the 13th and the middle of the 14th Century.

The central chapel has frescoes of different schools and periods, including the delicate *Annunciation* by D. Panetti (1460-1530) and the 16th-Century "grotesque" ceiling. The nuns' choir and a 16th-Century *Flagellation*, with a precious gilded and sculpted wood altar-piece, are also interesting. The monastery has other interesting features, above all the elegant cloisters and the tomb of the foundress saint, to whom a number of traditions of religious devotion are linked.

 Leaving the Monastero di Sant'Antonio in Polesine behind you, turn right and take Via Beatrice d'Este until you come to the

5 Palazzo Costabili Museo Archeologico Nazionale

Via XX Settembre, 124 • tel. +39 0532 66299

Begun in 1500 by order of A. Costabili, Este ambassador at the court of Ludovico il Moro, Duke of Milan, the *Palazzo* is an important work of **Biagio Rossetti**, who however left it unfinished. The marble deco-





ration of the pilaster strips and of the steps of the main staircase, by Gabriele Frisoni, is worthy of note.

The original pictorial decoration can still be seen in some

rooms of the 16th Century frescoed by **Garofalo**, particularly noteworthy is the frescoed ceiling of the **Sala del Tesoro** where the influence of Mantegna can be seen. The building, bought by the government in 1920, became the seat of the **National Archaeological Museum**. It contains the finds of the Etruscan city of Spina which flourished from the 6th to the 3rd Century BC, discovered from the start of the 20th Century following the drainage works in the marshes of the Po Delta near Comacchio. The frescoed halls on the ground floor are dedicated to the built-up area of the city with exhibits and multimedia equipment. The exhibition also includes the **Sala delle Piroghe**, where the two monoxylous boats are displayed, discovered near Comacchio in 1940, dating back to the 3rd-4th Century AD.

Outside, the vast **south garden**, a simulation of the original Renaissance garden, and the **east garden**, where the tomb signs discovered in the necropolis of Spina are located, have been restored.

In the thousands of burials unearthed, the abundance of banquet accessories of Athenian origin, bears of Athenian origin bears witness to the city's close cultural links with Greece. Particularly fascinating are the large **Attic symposium vases** upon which are depicted mythological episodes and scenes of daily life. Other objects, such as candelabras, tripods, stands, mostly in bronze, were made by the Etruscans. Some candelabra cymatia are true works of sculpture. Note the High Adriatic ceramics, produced locally when commerce with Greece came to a halt. The museum has been greatly enriched by the exhibition on display in the **Sala degli Ori** that houses almost a hundred items of gold, silver, amber and paste stone jewellery e pasta recovered from tomb decorations dating back to the sixth and seventh centuries A. D.

On the noble floor is the relaxation room with the tactile bench for blind people where it is possible to touch authentic items and captions in braille.



Panathenaic vase

6 Via XX Settembre

This Street was once known as via della Ghiara (Gravel Street) in that it ran along the old course of the Po which, as it dried up, left large quantities of round stones, known as *ghiaioni*, uncovered. Marquis Niccolò III d'Este had it levelled off in 1401 and donated land to those who wanted

to build houses. It later became the main thoroughfare of the Addizione di Borso. The road is closed off by an 18th-Century archway.



Heading east along Via XX Settembre will take you to the

7 Casa di Biagio Rossetti

Via XX Settembre, 152

The house was built in 1490 by the great architect and town-planner **Biagio Rossetti** for himself and his family. It is a small building with a simple design, whose door and windows are crowned by arch vaults in brickwork and a highly projecting cornice, decorated with panels in the same material. [TEMPORARILY CLOSED]



Detour here for the city walls of Alfonso I. Crossing the San Giorgio bridge will lead you to the first cathedral in Ferrara, the **Church of St. George**, dedicated to the city's Patron Saint.

8 Chiesa di San Giorgio

Piazzale San Giorgio • tel. +39 0532 62231



The church of St. George is mentioned from the 10th Century onwards and was the **city cathedral** up to the 12th Century. From the middle of the 15th Century the monastery buildings and church were administered by the monks of the "Olivetian Congregation". The **bell tower** was built in 1485 by **Biagio Rossetti**.

The current layout of the church is the result of alterations made by Alberto Schiatti (1581) and later work in the 17th Century. The façade in fired brick is decorated by a large stone bas-relief: *St. George slaying the Dragon*. The interior has a basilica plan with three naves and an apse. In the area of the presbytery stands the sepulchral monument of Lorenzo Roverella, bishop of Ferrara, rich in elegant decorations. At the entrance to the bell tower there is the tomb of the painter **Cosmè Tura**, leader of the Ferrara painting school. The sacristy and cloisters, the only remains of the large ancient convent, have a very elegant design.

On the way back, **Via Coperta** and **Via Ghisiglieri** are some of the ancient streets that, according to historians, lay at the very heart of development of the city. The horseshoe layout of these streets bears witness to the past existence of a "**castrum**" or military defensive building founded by Ravenna Byzantines in about the 8th Century on the left bank where the River Po once flowed.



THE WALLS

The walls, stretching for nine kilometres, surround Ferrara almost entirely, forming one of the most comprehensive and varied routes in Italy. All the most significant periods of Italian military architecture are represented there, surrounded by the greenery of the embankments and ramparts. Also studied by Michelangelo as an example of the highest military art, the red tile curtain walls bear witness to the important past of the city.

Nowadays, the city walls have become a large park, in addition to the smaller ones within the city.



The Fortifications of the Addizione Erculea

1 2 From Torrione del Barco to Torrione di San Giovanni

The north walls were mostly built between 1493 and 1505 by the court architect **Biagio Rossetti**, commissioned by Duke Ercole I d'Este, in order to defend the city from any attacks by the Venetians. The embanked town-walls are supplemented, according to a well-defined plan, by low semicircular keeps. Great importance was given to the embankment against the base of the keeps, which served to dampen the overwhelming projectile force. On the rear part of the embankment tall trees were planted which strengthened it. The moat in front was filled with water.

At the northwest end of the town-walls stands the **Torrione del Barco** ("torrione" = keep), built as from 1493, which represents the most advanced example of military architecture between the two centuries. Continuing eastwards we come to six smaller keeps, with a semicircular base, which allowed crossfire by crossbows and small artillery through the slits and openings between the merlons. In this section the walls are sharply interrupted by two barrel vaults formed in 1959 at the exit of via **Azzo Novello**. The **Porta degli Angeli** was built in 1526, but was already included in the 15th-Century design, at the bottom of *via degli Angeli*. According to tradition the last Duke of Ferrara, Cesare, exited through this gate in 1598, year of devolution of the city to the Papal State. In front of it an embanked arrow-shaped rampart was built in 1991 to replace the original one erected in the 16th Century to defend the northern part of the city and then destroyed in 1859. An elevated passage allows the rampart to be reached.

In the subsequent section 12 embrasures for heavy firearms inserted in the wall system were recently discovered and restored. A short distance away there is a nineteenth-Century ice-house. The moat was known in the sixteenth Century as the "Duke's Fishery" as there was a mooring point for the ducal boats, and also because tournaments took place on the water there, attended by the court.

We then come to the **Punta della Montagnola**. The eighteenth-Century works totally altered the appearance of the walls in this point, by the total demolition of a tower and the alterations to the curtain wall, with the building of point *della Montagnola*. The name was taken from an artificial hill created in the 16th Century in order to serve as a high and privileged vantage point. The decorative element of the kerb or earth layer at the top of the slope and also serving as an obstacle to the climb of assailants, is of interest.

The sixteenth-Century ramparts

2 3 From Torrione di San Giovanni to Torrione di San Lorenzo

These walls were designed for Alfonso I, who between 1512 and 1518 had the first arrow ramparts built in the eastern part of the city.

The first salient military point is the **Punta di San Rocco** - not a true rampart but instead a "diversion", used to defend the **Baluardo di San Rocco** ("baluardo" = rampart), built in 1518 and demolished around 1870. Further on, the **Punta della Giovecca** hill can be seen, at the sides of which two barrel vaults were

formed in 1937.

Next there are the **Doccile di San Tommaso**, built in the 17th Century to convey the city's waste water outside of the city centre and the **Baluardo di San Tommaso**, a rampart whose simple triangular plan without orillions at the side dominates the section of wall prior

to the **Baluardo del Montagnone**. The latter is a second artificial hillock, built as from 1512 and with a platform immediately on top as a high vantage point. It was originally much higher, and at present it serves the simple function of a park area and memory of an ancient and vast garden, of which the elegant nearby building of the Bagni Ducali ("ducal baths") formed a part. At the entrance to *Via Marco Polo* the **Baluardo di San Giorgio** and a 17th-18th Century sentry-box, the last remaining of those built during the period, can be seen. To remind us of the ancient **Porta San Giorgio** the remains of the **Prospettiva** archway, partially demolished during bombing in 1944, can still be seen.

In the section from San Giorgio to **Porta Paola** there are four impressive **ramparts** built between 1575 and 1585 by order of Alfonso II. The first three known as *dell'Amore*, *di S. Antonio* and *di S. Pietro* are the type with round orillions ("ace-of-spades") with open embrasures at the top and casemates at the lower levels. Among the ramparts opens the **Porta San Pietro** where a sloping section allows to change from rampart to ground level or vice versa.

The Pontifical Defence ramparts

4 5 From Porta Paola to Baluardo di Santa Maria alla Fortezza

Porta Paola was built in 1612 to a design by G. B. Aleotti and was dedicated to Pope Paul V, who reigned at that time. It was positioned in the centre of the bastions, consisting of the ramparts of **San Paolo** and **San Lorenzo**, renovated in the 16th Century. In 1901, at the sides of the Gate, two openings were made and it was reduced to a customs barrier. The two Ramparts of **San Paolo** and **Santa Maria della Fortezza** are what remains of the pentagonal fortress of Ferrara: built between 1608 and 1618, after the departure of the Este family, it was mostly demolished between 1859 and 1865.

5 1 From Baluardo di Santa Maria alla Fortezza to Torrione del Barco

The itinerary along the walls, after a break, can begin again at the entrance to *viale Belvedere*, where the rampart of **San Benedetto** had been built by the Este family in 1582 and then demolished as from 1846. From here, covering another section of wall distinguished by the Salient of **Porta Catena** (16th Century), the **Barco** Keep is reached once again.



VISIT THE PROVINCE

ARGENTA

This once Roman town is first mentioned in medieval documents. Argenta passed from the Bishopric of Ravenna to the Este family and became an important trading town because of its strategic, central position on the Emilia-Romagna waterway network. Borso D'Este paid much attention to the town, and he took good care of its ancient protective walls, having them restored. Argenta, along with Ferrara, came under the control of the Papal State and decline slowly set in with the gradual drying-up of the River Po di Primaro and the earthquake of 1642. During WWII, the town was more or less totally destroyed and nowadays Argenta is a modern town with some important links to the past: it boasts the oldest church in the Province of Ferrara, the Pieve di San Giorgio. It also features cycle tours that go along river banks, cross through woods and floodplains and let you meet local people as well as sample traditional dishes. There is also a thriving variety of cultural events and theatrical performances all year round.

MUSEO DELLE VALLI DI ARGENTA

Via Cardinala, 1/c • Campotto • tel. +39 0532 808058



The seat of the museum is in the **Casino di Campotto**, a rural building at the entrance to the Oasis. Along with the **Reclaimed Land Museum** and the **Civic Museum**, it constitutes the “**Eco-museum**” and is also a visiting centre of the Emilia-Romagna

Po Delta Park. Inside, various displays have been created for a mixed audience, from families with children to school pupils. The museum is made up of a history/anthropology section, which documents the evolution of the relationship between man and natural environment, and a nature section with the multi-sensory room. This last part emotionally involves visitors, preparing them for the path through the **Oasis of Val Campotto**, the real open air museum covering 1,600 hectares. Here, the landscape is dominated by water, made up of four habitats: the plant community, the cane thicket, the wet meadow and the hygrophilous wood.

MUSEO DELLA BONIFICA

Via Saiarino, 1 • tel. +39 0532 808058

The **Reclaimed Land Museum**, dedicated to human effort over the centuries to defend the area, is situated in the Saiarino Drainage Plant, the heart of the water control system between the rivers Reno



and Sillaro. It is not just a museum of historical documentation but a real work site that is still active today. This museum of industrial archaeology is set

in a context of liberty style buildings, comprising the large water sampling system, with 6 pumps still operating, and the old thermoelectric power station for the transformation and production of electricity.

MUSEO CIVICO

Via G.B. Aleotti, 46 • tel. +39 0532 808058

Located in the 15th-Century former church of *San Domenico*, the **Civic Museum** includes a remarkable collection of old paintings. Among those worthy of note are the works by **Antonio Aleotti**, **Garofalo**, **Scarsellino** and **Camillo Ricci**. The Museum also includes a large **archaeological section** dedicated to the recent discoveries in and around Argenta that pieces together the stages in the development of settlements and town layouts of an area that was, for a long period, dominated by water.

PIEVE DI SAN GIORGIO

Via Cardinala



The small Church of St. George, of Byzantine origin and style, dates back to 569 A.D. Originally, the structure consisted of three aisles communicating by means of 6 arches on each side and a pentagonal apse and mosaic floor. Today it has a brickwork face and a single hall with a pitched roof. The marble portal is Romanesque and dates back to 1122, on the sides are allegorical representations of the main and typical activities carried out during the months of the year; the central lunette bears a description of St. George's martyrdom.

 **Tourist Information Office**

tel. +39 0532 330276

BONDENO

Several finds regarding prehistoric times have made Bondeno the oldest inhabited area in the province. Bondeno remained loyal to the Este family and went down in history with them. This border town was originally heavily fortified and was home to many castles. The most significant local event in its history was when nearby River Po burst its banks.

PINACOTECA CIVICA “G. CATTABRIGA”

Piazza Garibaldi, 9 • tel. +39 0532 899245

Galileo Cattabriga (1901-1969), celebrated and valued painter, gave his name to the Civic Art Gallery which, as well as his works, exhibits around

sixty paintings, all belonging to the council, that cover the period between the 17th and 20th Centuries. On the ground floor a room has been set up for temporary exhibitions.

CENTRO VISITE CAVA SEI

Settepolesini • tel. +39 0532 886519 / 348 4975755

A nature reserve and a deposit site of Mammoth bones, the centre assembles the fossilised remains of animals who lived on the Po Plain at the time of the last Ice Age and the Holocene era. Thanks to a careful reconstruction, the mammoth, the woolly rhinoceros, the plains bison, the mega-deer, and the elk can all be seen today, full size, near the visitor centre.

MUSEO CIVICO ARCHEOLOGICO "G. FERRARESI"

Via Gramsci, 10 • Stellata • tel. +39 0532 899293

Bondeno and its hinterland can boast a long and eventful history, as the finds on display in this Museum clearly testify. The Museum consists of five distinct sections, with exhibits ranging from prehistory to the post-classical period: the **Neolithic**, with exhibits dating back to the first centuries of the IV Millennium BCE, from a village discovered at Fornace Grandi; the **Bronze Age**, with exhibits from six digs in the area, all traceable to the Terramare civilisation; the **Iron Age**, with exhibits from a Villanova burial ground dating back to between the VIII and VII centuries B.C. and from digs concentrated around the ancient branches of the Po River; the **Roman Age**, with exhibits covering the long period of Roman domination, from the II-I centuries BCE to the IV Century of the common era; the **Post-Classical Age**, when the Benedictine Monastery of Nonantola held sway over the area up to the High Middle Ages, governing the waters and detaining fishing rights, and when a cluster of fishermen's huts probably gave rise to the first nucleus of *Castrum Bondeni*.

ROCCA POSSENTE

Via Argine Po • Stellata • tel. +39 0532 885470

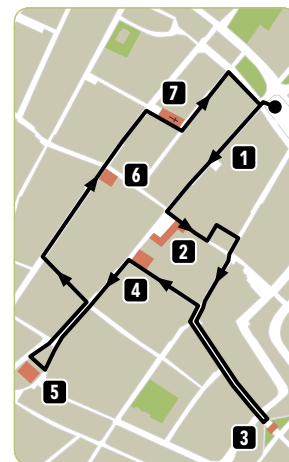
A small fortress stood in the flood bed area where the Panaro flows into the Po right from the year 1000, then, in the middle of the 1300s, Niccolò II d'Este had the building extended and it assumed its present-day form at the end of the 1600s. The Rocca was positioned to guard Ferrara's interior at the extreme north of the Estense territory. The building's original star-shaped layout gave the village in which it stands its name.



CENTO

The tour starts from **Piazzale Bonzagni**. From here, take **Corso Guercino 1**, Cento's main thoroughfare along the right hand side of which is a long row of arcades. Some of the older houses feature wooden arcades and among these, the house at number 74, **Casa Pannini**, (15th Century) has a splendid façade with double ogive windows.

Almost facing number 49 is the offices of the **Partecipanza Agraria**, a very old, local, savings institution.



More than once during mediaeval times, the Bishop of Bologna and the Abbot of Nonantola gave land to the city to administer collectively. Rich and powerful landowners frequently tried to take possession of these properties but in the end, the poor won and the communal system prevailed. Still today, these properties belong to the Partecipanza that every twenty years redistributes them amongst its members by means of an ancient criterion system.



A little further along is the superb **Piazza del Guercino**, dominated by the imposing **Palazzo del Governatore 2** (16th Century), that was the residence of the ruling Este family and then Papal delegates that governed the city.

Ownership of Cento (along with neighbouring Pieve) was hotly disputed with adjacent provinces and was formally placed under the care of the Bishops of Bologna. Their control however was so ineffective as to allow the local community a great deal of freedom of action. This rather nice little arrangement came to an abrupt end in 1502 when **Lucrezia Borgia**, the daughter of Pope Alessandro VI, married Alfonso d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara. Part of her amazingly rich dowry was Cento and Pieve. In 1598, Cento, along with all the Este properties passed to direct Papal rule whom replaced the Duke's governors with Papal delegates but without restoring the freedoms once enjoyed.

GALLERIA D'ARTE MODERNA "A. BONZAGNI"

Piazza Guercino, 39 • tel. +39 051 6843390



The **Modern Art Gallery Aroldo Bonzagni**, dedicated to one of the most important Italian artists of the 1900's (Cento 1887 – Milan 1918), is now housed in the palazzo. The gallery exhibits other works by artists such as Giacomo Balla, Mario Sironi, Achille Funi, Aligi Sassu, Salvatore Fiume, Lucio Fontana, Arnaldo Pomodoro and many others. [CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS UNTIL 2014]

The 17th Century **Town Hall** building is also situated along the piazza. There is an Eclectic/Liberty-style building at the corner of Via Matteotti. Take **Via Provenzali** and on the left, between numbers 3b and 3c you will find an alleyway that leads to the small **Ghetto** area. The short right-angled street of the Jewish Quarter opens out into **Via Malagodi** where you turn right.

You will soon see the **Church of San Pietro**, that was built in the 14th Century but greatly restored in the 1900's and the unpretentious arcaded house (number 13) where **Guercino** and his brother Paolo Antonio lived for many years.

Giovan Francesco Barbieri was born in Cento in 1591. The nickname "Guercino", with which he became famous, was given him because of the way he squinted after a fright in his childhood. During his apprenticeship he was influenced by Scarsellino from Ferrara and through him by Veneto colourism. Later in life Guercino saw this style at first hand whilst visiting Venice (1618). His meeting in Bologna with the Carraccis was of great significance, especially that with Ludovico who widened the Cento artist's horizons on the most up to date painting techniques in use at that time. Even as a youth he achieved considerable note and was given a number of commissions particularly in Bologna, Ferrara and Cento. Some of his most famous frescoes must be those at the Casa Pannini. He had a number of patrons during those times and one of them was the Papal Legate to Bologna, Cardinal Ludovisi who bought a number of his works and the Papal Legate to Ferrara, Cardinal Serra who not only bought his works but also made him a Knight of the Order of the Golden Spur (Cavaliere dell'Aurata Milizia). In 1621, Ludovisi became Pope Gregory XV and immediately had the young man that had become his favourite painter brought to Rome. During the three-year period with the Pope as his patron, Guercino met many new people and carried out numerous commissions for the church and Roman aristocratic families. After Pope Gregory's death, Barbieri returned to Cento where he lived for many years in an unassuming house, receiving commissions and distinguished guests alike. After the death of Guido Reni in 1642, he moved to Bologna where he was very soon considered the new leader of local art. He died in Bologna in 1666.



If you take **Via Malagodi** and then **Via Donati** you will arrive at the turreted **Porta Pieve** **3** that marks the exit from the city going towards Pieve di Cento. This village, already in the Bologna territory is very near-by (easily reached on foot) and its history is closely tied to that of Cento.



This itinerary however, continues by turning into **Via Campagnoli**, a short street that leads to the second part of Corso Guercino where the **Teatro Borgatti** **4** stands. The building stands out with its striped, two-tone, terracotta façade. It was designed by Antonio Giordani and opened in 1861.

Continuing down the street you will see the former **Church of San Filippo Neri** on the left and the **Sanctuary of Beata Vergine della Rocca**, built in 1884 over an older church [THE CHURCHES ARE TEMPORARILY CLOSED]. The Sanctuary is situated at the entrance to an enormous square that houses the exquisite **Rocca** **5**, built in 1378 and modified towards the end of the 15th Century by the bishops of Bologna. Heading back towards the centre, turn left into **Via Accarisio** that will lead you to **Via Ugo Bassi**. Turn right and this will take you to the **Collegiate Church of San Biagio** that has an incomplete façade and houses inside the the *San Carlo Borromeo in prayer* by Guercino (1614).

PINACOTECA CIVICA "IL GUERCINO"

Via Matteotti, 16 • tel. +39 051 6843390



A little after the church at the corner with Via Matteotti (number 16) is the former Pawnshop, that now houses the **Civic Picture Gallery** **6** [CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS] in which a rich collection of 16th to 19th Century paintings is housed, among the largest collection in the world of works by Guercino which, as of 2013, began its long tour of prestigious international museums, including St. Petersburg, Rio de Janeiro, Warsaw, Tokyo and Chicago.

A little further along on the right you will see a small churchyard that lies in front of the colourful **Chiesa del Rosario** **7**. The church was designed by Guercino for the Brotherhood of the Rosary of which he was Prior. Many of his works of art are kept here.

A short walk along **Via San Salvatore** up the side of the church will take you to **Via Baruffaldi**.

If you turn right here, you will find the **birthplace of Ugo Bassi** at number 7.

Ugo Bassi was born in Cento in 1801 and took up a vocation for the church by entering the Barnabite Order. He was a noted orator but his fiery sermons on the rights of the poor and concepts of an Italy that was equal for all gained him the animosity and, on occasion, outright censorship by his superiors. The year 1848 was crucial to his life: at the outbreak of popular uprisings he was sent along with the Pope's army as chaplain but he very soon crossed over to the side of the insurrectionists. In Rome he actively participated in the birth of the Republic and her defence against enemies from abroad. When the Republic fell, he followed Garibaldi's retreat towards the north to defend Venice that was the last of the Italian cities still offering resistance to the Austrian army. He never arrived- he was captured at Comacchio then brought to Bologna where he was executed.

Turning now to the right, you will arrive at the gardens alongside *Piazzale Bonzagni*, where the tour began.

 **Tourist Information Office** tel. +39 051 6843334

CODIGORO, loc. Pomposa

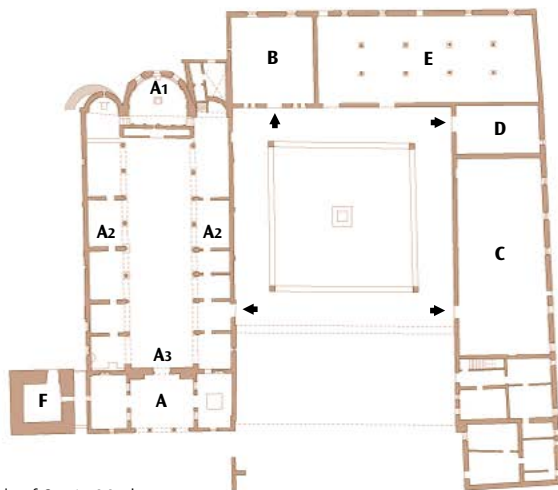
ABBAZIA DI POMPOSA S.S. 309 Romea

A masterpiece of Romanesque art, **Pomposa Abbey** can be seen from a distance with its towering campanile. The **church** was founded in the 6th Century A.D. and from the middle of the 9th Century the first community of Benedictine monks began to form, reaching its peak after the year 1000, when the Abbot's spiritual and political jurisdiction extended over all the surrounding villages. Civil administration of the abbey's feuds was centred in Codigoro, nearby. A true lighthouse of culture, Pomposa had one of the most extensive libraries of the time. Among the personalities that made it so famous were the saint and abbot Guido degli Strambiati who imposed a very austere lifestyle within the monastery. Here the monk **Guido da Pomposa** invented the **modern musical notation**. In the 15th Century most of the monks moved to Ferrara, where Duke Ercole I had built a new monastery for them.



EXTERIOR

The first building the visitor sees is the **Church of Santa Maria**, with a portico in front of it, richly decorated in terracotta, marble and colourful majolica tiles. The two circular windows, closed by beautiful stone transennas sculpted with animals and vegetative forms are particularly graceful. To the left, near the arches of the narthex, there's a large white plaque with an image above it, in memory of the extensive renovation work carried out under the abbot Giovanni Vidor (1148-1161). To the side of the church stands the 48-metre high **campanile F**, built in 1063 by the architect **Deusdedit** who chose to be remembered on the western wall. It is divided into nine levels, each one having windows that are wider and with more lights than the level below it, giving the building a particularly light and soaring appearance that is emphasized by the spire of considerable height. The red and yellow brick face conserves very rare inserts of ceramic bowls (18 of ancient origin, the others of the modern era) with designs of trees, fish, birds and flowers: these can be dated to the 11th Century and come from various parts of the Mediterranean such as Egypt, Tunisia and Sicily. On the opposite side with respect to the campanile is a courtyard of which only three sides have survived. Opposite the cloister is the **Palazzo della Ragione G**, from which the abbot administered justice in his feuds. As the building did not have religious functions, it was detached from the others.



- A** Church of Santa Maria
- B** Chapterhouse
- C** Refectory
- D** Pomposa Museum
- E** Sala delle Stilate
- F** Campanile
- G** Belfry
- Entrances

INTERIOR

Despite the loss of many of the structures of the ancient abbey over the centuries, today it is still possible to visit many richly decorated parts of it.

A Church of Santa Maria: the interior is divided into three aisles with two rows of Byzantine-Ravenna style columns, with elaborate capitals and pulvins above them. The floor is of great value, with sections laid in different periods (from the 6th to the 12th Century).

A1 The apse area was decorated in the 13th Century by **Vitale da Bologna**. At the centre is a monumental *Christ Enthroned* in the mandorla of heavenly light, surrounded by groups of angels (on his left, lower down is the Archangel Michael with the scales for weighing sins and good deeds). To the sides of the representation are two groups of saints. Below the vault is a band with portraits of saints and lower down still a second band with stories from the *Life of St. Eustace*.

A2 Along the side walls of the central nave runs a rich 13th-Century frescoed decoration, arranged in

three bands. The upper band shows scenes from the *Old Testament*, the middle one scenes from the *New Testament* and the lower one, at the level of the arches, scenes from Saint John's *Apocalypse*.

A3 The wall on the inside of the façade is decorated with a large *Last Judgement*.

B Chapterhouse: 14th-Century frescoes. In the centre *The Crucifixion*, flanked by the portraits of Saint Benedict and Saint Guy, the abbot of Pomposa.

C Refectory: on the rear wall are three well-conserved frescoes.

D Pomposa Museum: located in a room on the first floor, it contains decorative exhibits from many of the parts of the abbey that have now disappeared. Finely sculpted capitals in various styles, marble plutei and panels with mythical animals, fragments of frescoes and majolica tiles.



 Tourist Information Office

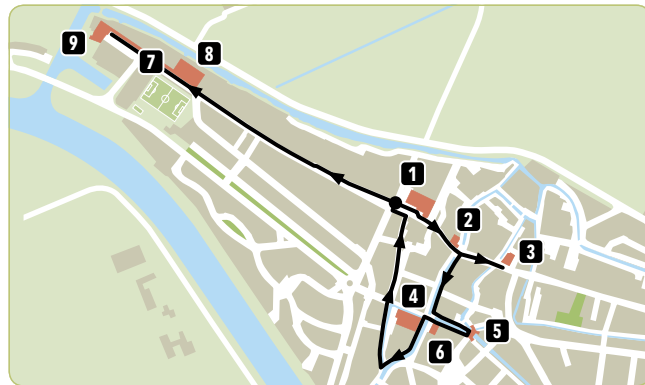
tel. +39 0533 719110

COMACCHIO

The tour begins at **Piazza XX Settembre** that faces the **Cathedral of San Cassiano 1**, an ancient church founded in the 8th Century that owes its façade to reconstruction work in 1659.

The interior is particularly noted for the 17th Century *Crucified* by Germano Cignani and the organ by Gian Domenico Traeri (19th Century). To the right in front of the main altar is a beautiful portrait of the patron saint and beneath this is a picture of Comacchio in days gone by when it was surrounded by water.

The cathedral **bell tower** was built in 1751, collapsed after only seven years and was rebuilt in 1868 but never completed (inside the cathedral near the entrance you will see a sketch of the original bell tower design).



Take the somewhat narrow Piazzetta Ugo Bassi and continue until you reach the **Loggia del Grano 2**, built in 1621 at the behest of Cardinal Giacomo Serra. The first floor held a room that was used to keep grain for the poor while the first floor housed a spacious gallery where traders could do business in comfort while in Comacchio. This gallery is still visible today.

The clock tower or **Torre dell'Orologio** was built in 1842 to replace 14th Century construction and stands alongside the gallery. Free tours around the town's canals depart from near the tower.

Going through Piazza Folegatti, take Via Sambertolo (to the left is a shortcut by the **Canale Maggiore** to the *Church of Carmine*), at the beginning of which you will find the splendid 17th Century **Church of Rosario 3**. There are some very precious canvases housed there including the *Decollation of the Baptist* by Carlo Bononi (17th Century) and works by Mezzogori and Van Schayek.

Turning left into **Via Gramsci** will take you to where most of the splendid brickwork bridges over the canals are located.

This part of town has best kept its original design and the little waterways and canals are very reminiscent of Chioggia and Venice. Indeed, Comacchio was founded long, long ago on a group of islands in the middle of an immense lakeland. Like other **Laguna towns**, Comacchio, in the high middle ages was a flourishing trade centre and its fleet was used by Charlemagne in the war against the Byzantines. A war against the rival Venice, in 946 left it half-destroyed and killed its business aspirations. For hundreds of years, the town could only be reached by water and the canals acted as streets. This isolation ended in 1821 when the first road along the riverbanks connected it with Ostellato. Nowadays, following the great land reclamation works of the 1900's, Comacchio is framed by the valleys only in the southeast.

You will soon see the **Chiesa del Carmine** (17th Century) that you can reach by taking **Via Carducci**. After crossing the *Ponte del Teatro*, continue along the left of **Via Cavour** that will lead you back to the *Torre dell'Orologio*. After the clock tower turn into **Via Fogli**. The tall building at number 34 is the ancient Comacchio **Bishop's Palace**. When you reach a junction of the canals, you will see the **Ponte degli Sbirri** that was built by Luca Danese in the 17th Century. The view from here is without any doubt the best in Comacchio. To one side you can see the former **Ospedale di San Camillo** **4**, an elegant, and at the same time, imposing classical style building that features a central portico supported by terracotta and marble pillars with a small bell tower to either side of it. The hospital was built between 1778-1784 by Cosimo Morelli. The 19th Century **Palazzo Bellini** sits facing the hospital and close by The Roman Ship Museum.

Turning into **Via Peschiera** you will find the small brick **Fish market** (17th Century) that is rarely used, then take the steps up to the **Trepponti** **5**. The symbol of Comacchio is to be found at the end of a section of the canals.



This 17th Century bridge complex was the work of Luca Danese and has some rather peculiar elements. There are five sets of steps that all lead to a central landing featuring two small towers. When you cross the bridge you will find the **Museum of the Roman**

Ship **6**, at number 2 that houses the hull (still being restored) and cargo of an ancient merchant ship recovered near the town.

In ancient times, the **Comacchio wetlands** were part of an immense system of lagoons that were dotted all along the Northern Adriatic coastline. These lagoons with their sheltered waters allowed navigation from Romagna right up to Grado. A Roman merchant vessel from the early years of the Empire (the end of the first Century BC) was discovered on the outskirts of Comacchio in 1981. It was wrecked just off the coast, which was much farther inland in Roman times, and it was rapidly covered with sand. This quick burial ensured that its entire cargo was preserved for 2000 years, and now you can see both the goods, the ship carried and the personal effects of the crew on display in the **museum**. Particularly interesting pieces are the leather clothing, wooden utensils, weighing scales, crockery, precious votive temples, lead ingots, wood, wine and goods for sale, like the six miniature votive temples - the only ones in the world.

Turn left into Via Agatopisto and follow the paths that perhaps best represent the town with the bright colours of the houses mirrored in the canals. When you have crossed **Ponte di San Pietro**, take Via Buonafede and this will lead you back to *Piazza XX Settembre*. From the piazza, turn left into Corso Mazzini and after a short walk you will find the **Porticato dei Cappuccini** **7**. This arcade is supported by 143 arches and was built as an ex-voto in 1647. Through a passage way situated under the arcade, you reach the **Marinade manufacture**



8, the old eel marinating factory, now a museum and a laboratory of this traditional production.



At the end of the arcade you come to the **Sanctuary of Santa Maria in Aula Regia** **9** that was founded in the early 10th Century then rebuilt to its current form in the 17th Century. The main altar is particularly note-worthy and is overlooked by the Madonna. The annex houses a small museum dedicated to contemporary religious art.

CASA MUSEO REMO BRINDISI

Via N. Pisano, 45 • Lido di Spina



About 7 km from Comacchio, at **Lido di Spina** stands the Museum of Contemporary Art “**Remo Brindisi**”. This building with its modern design was the summer home of the artist Remo Brindisi for many

years, right up to his demise. It was built between 1971 and 1973 to a design by the architect Nanda Vigo, and is clearly inspired by the Bauhaus style. It hosts the collection of the great artist made up of paintings and sculptures by great 20th Century artists such as Fontana, De Chirico, Sironi, Savinio, De Pisis, Vedova and many others including Brindisi himself.

 Tourist Information Office

tel. +39 0533 314154

COPPARO

MUSEO “LA TRATTA”

Via Goito, 4 • tel. +39 0532 864633

A vast collection of material regarding rural society supported by practical, modern exposition methods that place the emphasis on an explanation of the main productive cycles of grain, wine and hemp in the area around Copparo. Domestic rural settings are also reconstructed.

CENTRO STUDI DANTE BIGHI

Via Marino Carletti, 110 • tel. +39 0532 861339

Villa Bighi was built in 1963 by the eclectic artist Dante Bighi who used it as his home and gallery. The Villa still has its original furnishings, a large library and the artist’s private collection that includes some wonderful contemporary works of art. There are about one hundred works from the main movements of the late 1900s by artists painters such as Fontana, Warhol and Giò Pomodoro.

PIEVE DI SAN VENANZIO

Via per S. Venanzio • località Saletta • tel. +39 0532 864633



The Romanesque church of St. Mary of Savonuzzo, otherwise known as the church of San Venanzio, was built in 1344 above an old riverbed, by the orders of Giovanni da Saletta,

the local overlord. The Church of San Venazio, having been deconsecrated in 1918, was then used as a storage depot for agricultural implements and as a silo for hemp. Some remains of the attractive XIV Century frescoes have been restored inside the church, based on stories from the life of the Virgin, to whom the church was dedicated.

VILLA DELLA MENSA

Strada per Formignana • Sabbioncello S. Vittore • tel. +39 0532 864633

The villa was built on the orders of Bartholomew della Rovere, bishop of Ferrara between 1474 and 1495. The Villa has a polygonal groundplan and a cloistered court. The front of the building, facing west, continues in two walls with battlements that extend to the service courtyards at the sides of the villa.

MASSA FISCAGLIA

MUSEO PARROCCHIALE

Piazza Ferrari • tel. +39 333 2163401



Exhibits in this Museum include sacred art objects from the Church of Sts. Peter and James. The **first section** is given over to such objects as reliquaries, chalices, pyxes and thuribles. The crowns and the sceptre of Our Lady of the Corba is also on display here. A collection of paintings ranging from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, including an Annunciation believed to be by Jacopo Bassano, are on display in the **second section**.

MESOLA

CASTELLO ESTENSE

MUSEO DEL BOSCO E DEL CERVO DELLA MESOLA

Piazza Umberto I, 1 • tel. +39 339 1935943



Right from the start, development of the area tended to be centred around the Castello degli Estensi. The huge building stood at the edge of what were then vast hunting lands that are now known as the “**Gran Bosco di Mesola**”.

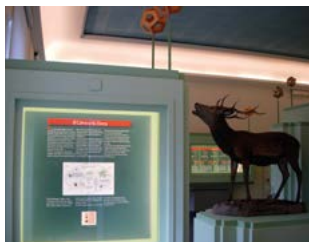
The **Castle** was built in the sixteenth Century under the last Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso II, as a tribute to his third wife, Margaret Gonzaga. It

was the last of the leisure or pleasure lodges, known as “delizie”, of the Este family to be built. It is rather unique as, though refined, it is also quite austere-looking. It was in the middle of extensive hunting grounds and surrounded by a twelve-kilometre long wall, of which only a lookout tower (the Abbot's Tower) is still extant. The outhouses and utilities embracing the Castle in a semicircle have survived and are currently used for shops and restaurants.

According to some historians, this architectural complex must have been the fulcrum of a future Renaissance city, built to contrast the power of Venice on the Adriatic: an ambitious project that needed time and heirs that Alfonso II did not manage to have. In fact, in 1598 the Papal State returned to the ownership of the Dukedom of Ferrara and consequently also of Mesola. The Castle houses the **Museo del Bosco e del Cervo della Mesola** that serves to increase public awareness about the natural habitat of the Parco del Delta del Po and especially provides us with fascinating details about the Dune Deer, the only native deer in the whole of Italy, an animal with a special genetic make-up,

physical appearance and behaviour, admirably suited to the environment in which it exclusively lives. The exhibition covers the path, documenting the marks made on the area, history and culture.

Few kilometres from Mesola you can visit the **Gran Bosco della Mesola, Torre Abate**, and the **Fossil Dunes of Massenzatica Natural Reserve**.



Tourist Information Office tel. +39 0533 993358

MIGLIARINO

MUSEO DEL TROTTO

Via Garibaldi, 2/g • tel. +39 0533 640210

The Harness Racing Museum conserves an impressive collection, the only one in Italy, of documents, prints, mementos and similar objects relating to the discipline of harness racing.

OSTELLATO

The first mention of Ostellato was in a Papal bull by Pope Gregory V in 997. The Este family had a residence there. The area suffered from economic problems that began in 1598 and were only resolved in the period between 1800 and 1900 with agrarian reform and land reclamation works. Nowadays, nature tourism is a very important factor in the local economy.

MUSEO DEL TERRITORIO - MdT

Strada Mezzano, 14 • tel. +39 0533 681368



The museum represents a starting point in the quest of knowledge about the history of the earth. In fact it illustrates the evolution of mankind and the geology of the area from the origins of the universe to the present day. The installation develops on the ground floor the theme of the evolution of the ground and transformation of the delta area. On the first floor, a long historical excursion acquaints the visitor with all the populations who have settled on the plains territory around Ferrara. A special section showcases the Etruscan period and the city called Spina.



PARCO DI SCULTURA CONTEMPORANEA

Via Argine Mezzano, 1

Launched in 1998, the Nature Reserve of Ostellato **Contemporary Sculpture Park** is host to works by various Italian artists on the theme of the sky, the stars and the land which, placed along the nature trails, highlight the beauty of the place.

Nearby stand the **Anse vallive di Ostellato** and the romanesque **Pieve di San Vito**.

PORTOMAGGIORE

The name of this town reflects the fact that navigable courses of water once flowed through these areas. It had a strategic position in the heart of a dense network of waterways, among which the ancient branch of the Po di Volano, known as “Sandalo”. About 3 km from Portomaggiore, at Gambulaga stands the

DELIZIA DEL VERGINESE

Via Provinciale • Gambulaga • tel. +39 0532 323258 / 335 236673



Originally a rustic hamlet, the Verginese was turned into a Ducal residence in the early sixteenth Century by Alfonso I d'Este, and was later granted to Laura Eustochia Dianti, his companion after the death of Lucretia Borgia. The lady turned

it into the seat of her small private court and ordered its reconstruction. The main architect in charge of this major renovation was Girolamo da Carpi. According to his plan, the Castle is rectangular and on two

levels, with four square towers at each corner. An eighteenth Century chapel stands at the side of the main building, to which it is joined by an arcade, also of the same period. Interior decorations cover several centuries, starting from eighteenth Century stuccoes through to tempera-painted art nouveau-style flowers, shells, rosettes, scrolls, and thick cornices bordering the ceilings. The Villa del Verginese is now a noted artistic and cultural centre thanks to archaeological discoveries made in the grounds adjacent to the **Sepolcreto dei Fadieni** and to the later establishment of the archaeological museum housing an important collection of Roman remains on its first floor gallery. The nearby pigeon tower dating back to the sixteenth Century is a surviving relic of the outhouses with which the lodge was originally endowed. The Renaissance **garden** between the lodge and the tower is a faithful replica of the original, based on contemporary plans and documents. It is known as the “**brolo**”.



SANT'AGOSTINO

This town was erected along the bank of the Reno river and was once known as “Sant'Agostino of the Swamps”, given the area's vulnerability to frequent flooding. Finally, in 1767, the course of the river was diverted through the lagoons of the Poggio and the situation changed. The land was progressively turned over to farming and life improved quickly. The town's new-found wealth and importance was reflected by its establishment as an autonomous Commune in 1816.

CENTRO MUSEALE “FERRUCCIO LAMBORGHINI”

Via Statale, 342 • Dosso
tel. +39 347 5329320



This museum is dedicated to the famous “Lamborghini” motorcars. A section is dedicated to industrial vehicles, up to 1993. Among the ten unique prototypes on display, one can admire the “Fiat Topolino”, from the 1948 “Mille Miglia”. [OPEN ON REQUEST]

Nearby you can have a walk in the **Panfilia Wood**.

TRESIGALLO

Tresigallo is the small capital of Rationalism and a unique case of urban design. It is an excellent example of an absolutely innovative architectural reality, built according to the fundamental principles

of Rationalism. The architectural layout is a hybrid of European and American lines using an abstract language. There are no symbolic references; lines are minimalist and strongly geometric. Some of the world's greatest architects came from the early 1900's, names like F.L. Wright, Le Corbusier, Garnier, Loos and W. Gropius. Tresigallo, a small mediaeval town that was totally transformed between 1927 and 1934, now remains a little museum to architecture set in a rural landscape in its own dimension.



Comune di Tresigallo

tel. +39 0533 607711

VIGARANO MAINARDA

DELIZIA DELLA DIAMANTINA Vigarano Pieve, Diamantina



A tower was built here in the 12th Century on the site of previous Roman settlement and later, during the land reclamation project carried out by Borso d'Este at Polesine di Casaglia, the main building of the Diamantina was built around it. This development took place between the late 1400's and early 1500's. The overall construction was carried out in various stages and many changes and restructuring works took place over the years in line with requirements at any given time. The three-storey villa features paired windows. The turreted tower was modified in the 19th Century and now features a Moorish-style three-light window leading on to white balcony supported by two columns. [NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC]

VOGHIERA

The town grew up along the river Sandalo, no longer in existence, in the vicinity of the Este palace of Belriguardo, which in its days was one of the grandest and most luxurious palaces of Renaissance Italy.

DELIZIA DI BELRIGUARDO

Strada Provinciale, 274 • tel. +39 0532 328511 / 328063

This Lodge was built by order of Niccolò d'Este in 1435. It was the first of the famous “Delizie” that the Dukes of the dynasty had built for their leisure and pleasure beyond the city walls. Its deterioration began after

the departure of the last Duke, Alfonso II, from Ferrara. The original building comprised fifty fully decorated rooms and two open galleries, with many outlying buildings and large horse stables. The entrance beneath the porch and entrance tower, which still bears the Este family coat of arms, leads into a spacious courtyard. The main building features large Gothic-style windows and an archway leading to a colonnade. At one time there was an extensive and luxuriant garden with many fountains and fish ponds here. The scenes painted by **Girolamo Carpi** in the **Hall of the Vines** afford a pale glimpse of the magnificence that once adorned the rooms of this Lodge. The works on display in the **Sala Virgili** are by the famous modern-day sculptor of the same name. One of the wings hosts the **Archaeological Museum**.



MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO

Strada Provinciale, 274 • tel. +39 0532 328511 / 328063

In rooms by the entrance tower to the Delizia of Belriguardo are collected the finds emerging from the Roman Necropolis of Voghenza and from settlements across the area. This small museum also houses funeral items from 67 tombs. These include pieces of gold and amber jewellery, amphorae and other types of containers, lanterns, coins, incense vessels in glass paste and a magnificent onyx balsamarium. The epigraphic section is particularly rich. The upper room is dedicated to the finds from the immediate area and from Fondo Tesoro, where 64 tombs from a Byzantine necropolis were discovered. There is also a rich collection of lamps and other material from places outside the Voghenza area.

Nearby stands a large private garden surrounding a stately 18th Century villa that was once the summer residence of the Papal Legates of Ferrara. This separates the area from the older town of **Voghenza**, where you can visit the Church, the mediaeval sarcophagus of Saint Leo, the small **Necropoli Romana** that can be seen from the exterior and the Museo del Modellismo Storico.

MUSEO DEL MODELLISMO STORICO

Via San Leo 9/a • Voghenza • tel. +39 333 1901154

The Associazione Modellisti Ferraresi (Ferrarese Modelling Enthusiasts Association) has set up this interesting **Museum of Historical Scale Models** where it is possible to admire a quite extraordinary working model of a railway, collections of scale model cars, Estense costumes and weapons and model soldiers.

Useful information

HOW TO GET THERE



AIRPORTS

Bologna "G. Marconi"

tel. +39 051 6479615
www.bologna-airport.it

Bergamo - Orio al Serio

"Caravaggio"

tel. +39 035 326323 | www.sacbo.it

Forlì "L. Ridolfi"

tel. 0543 474990
www.forliairport.com

Rimini "F. Fellini"

tel. +39 0541 715711
www.riminiairport.com

Treviso "A. Canova"

tel. +39 0422 315111
www.trevisoairport.it

Venezia "M. Polo"

tel. +39 041 2609260
www.veniceairport.it

Verona "V. Catullo"

tel. +39 045 8095666
www.aeroporto.verona.it



BY TRAIN

Trenitalia

(Venezia - Firenze - Roma)
tel. 89.20.21 (calling from Italy)
tel. +39 06 68475475 (calling from abroad) | www.trenitalia.com

Trasporto Passeggeri

Emilia-Romagna

(Mantova - Ferrara - Codigoro)
tel. 840.151.152 | www.tper.it



BY CAR

Motorway A13

Bologna - Padova

FE Nord, FE Sud exits

Raccordo autostradale

A13 exit

FE Sud - Porto Garibaldi

State Route SS309 Romea

Links the Lidi di Comacchio together



BUS SERVICES

Urban and suburban bus lines
tel. +39 0532 599490 | www.tper.it



RADIOTAXI

tel. +39 0532 900900



TAXIBUS

tel. 800 521616
tel. 199113155 (mob.) | www.tper.it



BUS & FLY

Shuttle Service from Bologna Airport to the historic centre of Ferrara. Every day, every 2 hours and 30 min. 16 trips a day. 50 min. journey
tel. +39 0532 1944444
www.ferrarabusandfly.it

App Event

Get a free download of the app for iPhone and Android: you will have all the events at the push of a button!



Wi Fi

In Ferrara you can surf the net for free (max. 90 mins. per day), thanks to the public wireless network.



Augmented Reality

Download the free app for the browser Layar "Ferrara Tour" and use Augmented Reality to visit the main highlights.



Podguides

Download free mp3 audio guides and listen to them on your computer.



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Ferrara, City of
the Renaissance
and its Po Delta

Ferrara, City of the Renaissance and its Po Delta Unesco World Heritage

In 1995 U.N.E.S.C.O. classified Ferrara's historic centre as a world heritage site, defining it as "... a fine example of a city designed during the Renaissance that has managed to retain the integrity of its historic centre".

This acknowledgement has been extended to the Po Delta Park and to the itinerary of the ancient dwellings, called Delizie Estensi. The Delta Po is the cultural and planned landscape, which preserves its original layout.



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