



MARCHE

ITALY'S LAND OF INFINITE DISCOVERY

discovery MARCHE

www.turismo.marche.it

**REGIONE
MARCHE**





MARCHE

ITALY'S LAND OF INFINITE DISCOVERY

discovery MARCHE

VADEMECUM FOR THE TOURIST OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM



Discovering THE MARCHE REGION

MARCHE *Italy's Land of Infinite Discovery*

*"...For me the Marche is the East,
the Orient, the sun that comes
at dawn, the light in Urbino
in Summer..."*

Mario Luzi (Poet, 1914-2005)

Overlooking the **Adriatic Sea in the centre of Italy**, with slightly more than a million and a half inhabitants spread among its five provinces of **Ancona, the regional seat, Pesaro and Urbino, Macerata, Fermo and Ascoli Piceno**, with just one in four of its municipalities containing more than five thousand residents, the **Marche**, which has always been Italy's "Gateway to the East", is the country's only region with a plural name. Featuring the mountains of the **Apennine** chain, which gently slope towards the **sea** along parallel valleys, the region is set apart by its rare beauty and noteworthy figures such as Giacomo Leopardi, Raphael, Giovan Battista Pergolesi, Gioachino Rossini, Gaspare Spontini, Father Matteo Ricci and Frederick II, all of whom were born here.

This guidebook is meant to acquaint tourists of the third millennium with the most important features of our territory, convincing them to come and visit Marche.

Discovering the Marche means taking a path in **search of beauty**; discovering the Marche means getting to know a **land of excellence**, close at hand and just waiting to be enjoyed. Discovering the Marche means discovering a region where both culture and the environment are very much a part of the **Made in Marche** brand.



GEOGRAPHY

On one side the Apennines, on the other the Adriatic coast, and in the middle an expanse of gentle hills atop which sit century-old villages protected by medieval walls: this is **the Marche, also called the Marches**, the region with the plural name, bordering to the north with Emilia Romagna; to the south with the Abruzzi and Latium; to the east with the Adriatic Sea, and to the west with Umbria and Tuscany. With an area of 9,366 km², the Marche is divided into five provinces (Ancona, Pesaro and Urbino, Macerata, Fermo, Ascoli Piceno) with 239 municipalities. Known as “Italy in one region”, the Marche region contains three types of territory: mountain, hill and coast.

THE CLIMATE

The region's climate is as diversified as the lay of the land is varied. The average temperature ranges from 10°C to 15°C, with temperature changes of between 5° to 13° C. Along the coast, the climate is subcontinental north of Ancona with sharp shifts in temperature between the seasons: summers are hot but rarely humid, thanks to the breezes and the cool air from the hills set back from the sea, while winters are cold, with the rains typical of the season. Due to the Monte Conero promontory, the climate south of Ancona is subcoastal, presenting increasingly Mediterranean features further south, in the direction of the Riviera delle Palme. The best peri-

od for beach tourism is July and August. The climate in the inland areas is harsh in winter, making it advisable to visit villages, parks and other sites in those areas in Spring and Autumn. Summers in the mountain areas are cool, and the Winters are rather brisk, with snowfall that allows enthusiasts to take to skiing and engage in other winter sports.

MOUNTAINS AND PASSES

More than 90,000 acres of Marche, **almost 10% of the total regional territory**, are **protected**. There are **2 national parks** (Monti Sibillini and Gran Sasso plus Monti della Laga), **4 regional parks** (Monte Conero, Sasso Simone e





Simoncello, Monte San Bartolo and Gola della Rossa plus Frassassi), **6 nature reserves** (Abbadia di Fiastra, Montagna di Torricchio, Ripa Bianca, Sentina, Gola del Furlo and Monte San Vicino plus Monte Canfaito), more than **100 protected plant and flower areas**, **15 state forests**, and over **60 environmental education centres**. The forests still contain deer and wolves. Birds of note include the golden eagle, the lanner falcon, the chough and the eagle owl. The region's mountains include: the Montefeltro chain, the Catria chain, the San Vicino chain and the Sibillini chain. Listed from North to South, the main peaks are: Carpegna (1,415 m), Nerone (1,526 m), Petrano (1,091 m),

Acuto (1,668 m), Catria (1,702 m), Pietralata (889 m), Paganuccio (976 m), San Vicino (1,486 m), Bove (2,169 m), Priora (2,334 m), Sibilla (2,175 m) and Vettore (2,476 m).

The highest mountain in the Marche is Vettore (2,476 m); the lowest is the sub-Apennine Monte Conero (572 m), the only portion of rocky coastline between Trieste and Gargano, dividing the Adriatic shore in exactly two portions. Approaching from the North, this break is introduced by Focara, which faces out to sea and was once considered a very dangerous passage (the name "Focara" would appear to derive from the fires that were lit on the hill to warn ships). The roads that connect the Marche with the neighbour-

ing regions are routed through the Apennine passes of Bocca Trabaria (Urbino-Arezzo), Bocca Serriola (Fano-Città di Castello), Passo della Scheggia (Fano-Perugia), Colle di Fossato (Fabriano-Foligno), Passo di Collefiorito (Macerata-Foligno), Forca Canapine (Ascoli Piceno-Norcia).

THE GENTLE HILLS

The hilly zone, which accounts for two-thirds of the territory of the Marche, is where the region's natural features and man-made works blend together best. The gentle hills that flow towards the coast like waves offer the eye-catching patchwork of colours created by the different crops. The orchards and cornfields that cloak the sloping sides of the hills cause the landscape to change from season to season. The rural appearance of the hills of the Marche is a result of tenant farming and the planting of multiple crops, now replaced by intensive, specialized planting. The main crops are still wheat, grapes and olives, while marked growth has been recorded in agro-food

products of **certified quality**, including **21 different wines**: **15** Registered Designation of Origin (**DOC**), **5** Guaranteed Designation of Origin (**DOCG**) and **1** "Indicazione Geografica Tipica" (**IGT**). Many venerable villas and landed estate houses have preserved the architecture of the tenant farming system and are now agrotourism establishments where visitors can spend holidays or stop to purchase organic products or taste the traditional dishes of the Marche cuisine. No fewer than **18 villages** are listed among the "**Most Beautiful Towns in Italy**", and **17 sites** have been awarded the **Orange Flag**, the prestigious banner given by the Italian Touring Club to towns whose preservation of their cultural and environ-

mental heritage, along with their hospitality and wine and food offerings, prove especially outstanding. The tools used by the sharecroppers are kept as reminders of the past in **museums of peasant culture**. The best known include the museum in Senigallia, named after the great economic historian Sergio Anselmi, Montefiore dell'Aso, Morro d'Alba, Pieve Torina, Sassoferrato and the *Biruccio* museum in Filottrano.

THE COAST

From Gabicce Mare to San Benedetto del Tronto, the forms and colours of the coastal landscape are constantly changing. The white cliffs facing onto the Adriatic Sea alternate with the deep green of the hills, spotted with the venerable villages

and the ochre hue of the long beaches. The coast, made up of fluvial deposits of sand and clay, runs along in two straight and almost perfectly flat portions divided by the Monte Conero promontory. Some beaches are protected from erosion by breakwaters. There are **180 kilometers of coastline** and **26 seaside resorts** that face onto the Adriatic, together with the **sea port of Ancona** and **9 tourist ports**. **16 Blue Flag Awards** certify the high quality of the waters and the related services, which offer visitors a full range of beaches made of fine sand, gravel or rock, reefs and palms. Many of the coastal villages present an **upper village**, protected by the walls of a castle perched on a hill which was the initial settlement, while the "mari-





na”, a flat district running along the shore, was only established later as a residential and business area. In some of the seaside towns, **museums of the sea** have been opened, such as the “Washington Patrignani” Museum in Pesaro and the Piceno Mussel Museum in Cupra Marittima. Today, San Benedetto del Tronto has a museum complex with four different sections: the Fish Market houses, the Museum of Amphorae, the Fish Museum and the Museum of the Marine Civilization of the Marche, while the Palazzo Bice Piacentini, in the old district of the upper village, holds the Picture Gallery of the Sea. Any number of **sports** can be practiced along the Marche coast, including windsurfing, waterskiing, sailing, diving, kitesurfing, swimming and beach volleyball.

THE MAGIC OF THE WATER. THE RIVERS AND VALLEYS, THE CAVES OF FRASASSI AND THE GORGES

The region features a series of harmonious hills bounded by numerous waterways that run parallel to each other, almost all of them flowing into the Adriatic, with the exception of the springs of the Nera, located near the Sibillini mountains. The region's main rivers are the Conca, the Foglia, the Metauro - with its tributary the Candigliano - the Cesano, the Misa, the Esino, the Musone, the Potenza, the Chienti, the Tenna, the Aso and the Tronto. Water landscapes have marked the Cossignano and Castignano areas, where the rain water has carved characteristic gullies from the sandstone escarpments. A number of rivers include

waterfalls and rapids that have created spectacular ravines and gorges in the surrounding territory, such as the **Furlo** gorge, an area declared a National Nature Reserve in the vicinity of Acqualagna, and the **Burano** gorge in Cantiano, both found along the Via Flaminia in the Province of Pesaro and Urbino. Rivers have also created the **Rossa** gorge and that of **Frasassi**, located inside the regional park of the same name, in Genga, in the Province of Ancona, together with the **Pioraco** canyon, in the vicinity of the town that bears its name, and the **Fiastrone** and **Infernaccio** gorges in the Sibillini Mountains, to name just a few. The water, pure and crystal clear, or muddy and boiling hot, with a rich load of precious minerals, plays a key role underground as well, where the rivers descend and show their strength, hollowing out underground settings such as the **Caves of Frasassi**, one of Italy's most intriguing and best known karstic complexes and a site that draws thousands of visitors each year. In Acquasanta Terme there are under-

ground caves carved out over the centuries by the subterranean waters but open only to expert speleologists.

LAKES

The only natural lake in the Marche, the Pilato, located inside the National Park of the Sibillini Mountains, has inspired a number of legends. Four man-made lakes can be found in the Chienti Valley, in the Pro-

vince of Macerata: the Delle Grazie Lake at Tolentino, the Borgiano Lake, also known as Caccamo, in Serrapetrona and Caldarella, the Polverina Lake near Camerino and Lake Fiastra in the foothills of the Sibillini Mountains. The Ascoli Piceno area holds Lake Talvacchia, while the Furlo basin lies thirty kilometres from Fano, in the Pesaro district. The magic of the water can be disco-

vered in perfect harmony with nature by canoeing (kneeling in an open boat), kayaking (in a covered boat which is rowed sitting down) or rafting over the rapids. Enthusiasts of "streaming", an increasingly popular sport, can use double cords to descend into deep ravines that sometimes contain rushing streams.





THE HISTORY OF A TIME-HONOURED REGION



The distinctive plural name, *the Marches*, traceable to a number of historical, geographic and administrative factors (it is derived from the Germanic “Mark”, meaning borderland), is a tangible reminder of the different spirits that animate this region. Each city or town, large, small or tiny, has its own story to tell, with the boundary line between memory and legend growing hazy in the ancient villages whose narrow, faithfully preserved streets, seem ready to bring the past back to life. Inhabited since the Lower Paleolithic period, the territory was occupied by the **Piceni**, an Italic people originating from the Sabine area. Their

symbol, the woodpecker, is used today as the region’s logo. Two names of two modern-day towns have Piceni roots: Cupramontana (Province of Ancona) and Cupra Marittima (Province of Ascoli Piceno). Cupra was in fact a divinity of the Piceni Olympus. Further evidence of this civilisation can be found throughout the region and in the numerous archaeological museums. Strongly influenced by **Greek civilisation**, thanks to the intensive trading activity conducted by sea (Numana was a thriving emporium; Ancona was colonised by Greeks of Doric origin from Siracusa), a land chosen as home by a number of Celtic tribes, such as the **Galli Senoni**, the Marche was made a full fledged part of Rome following the Battle of Sentino (295 BC). The Roman presence led to the foundation of numerous **municipia**, as well as the construction of major consular roadways (the **Via Flaminia** and the **Via Salaria**). In the wake of the barbarian invasions, the first “Marches” of Fermo and Camerino were established. Starting from the 4th century, the invasions of the Goths gradually led the population to abandon the lowland areas for the hills, well defended by forests and cliffs, giving rise to the positioning of the villages atop these heights, where they still stand. The administrative confusion and the considerable distance from Rome, the centre of papal power, favoured the growing influence of the Benedictine order in the towns of Norcia and Farfa (8th-9th century): **monasteries**

and **abbeys** were built primarily along the main Roman roadways (the Via Flaminia and the Via Salaria) and in the river valleys that climb up from the Adriatic Sea to the Apennines. In 1290 the first university was founded in Macerata. When the Great plague ended in 1348, the Pope assigned Cardinal Egidio Albornoz the task of reclaiming the territory from the local lords and vicars who had usurped power and bringing it back under the direct control of Rome. And so, in 1357 the **Constitutiones Aegidianae** was established, destined to remain in force until 1816. In the 15th century a number of feudal seigneuries flourished, including the splendid courts of **Montefeltro** and **Della Rovere** in the Duchy of Urbino, which was deeded over to the Pontifical State in 1631, together with the rest of the region. Other local ruling families were the **Da Varano** in Camerino, the **Chiavelli** in Fabriano and the **Malatesta** in Fano. Between the 16th and 18th century, four popes were born in the Marche, including Sixtus V (1585- 1590), who established the diocese of Montalto delle Marche as the bishopric and capital of the district of the same name. The administrative system created during his papacy lasted until 1810. The arrival of Napoleon marked the start of the modern era. The Nineteenth Century was marked by the struggle for Italian unification (the battle of Castelfidardo on 18th September 1860), as well as being a period of major public works: in addition to the construction of the Ancona-Roma railway and the Tronto line, the Sphaeristerium arena was designed in Macerata. The 1800s were also a time of major cultural figures, including Giacomo

Leopardi, Gaspare Spontini and Gioachino Rossini.

Between the 19th and 20th century, the economic structure of the Marche was plagued by readily apparent imbalances that delayed the start of industrial development for years. With the establishment of tenant farming, agriculture continued to be the predominant activity, setting off large waves of immigration to America, Argentina, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and France, a trend that did not stop until the First World War. The resistance during the Second World War was also nourished by the region's strong set of underlying ideals, allowing the Marche to make a distinctive contribution to founding the post-war republic as well. Today the Marche is a highly competitive region, open to the challenges of the future while making the most of its centuries-old traditions and history, as well as its excellence in the fields of art and culture, its natural surroundings and its highly capable social and economic framework.







CULTURE, THE HEART OF THE MARCHE BRAND

The Marche consists of a network of **cities of art and historic villages** set amidst a rolling expanse of hillside farmland that overlooks valleys stretching from the **sea** to the **Apennines**: sites that hold masterpieces by artists such as Raphael, Piero della Francesca, Lorenzo Lotto, Giovanni Bellini, Carlo Crivelli and G.B. Tiepolo, as well as P.P. Rubens and Titian, plus **historic 18th C. theatres, Roman roads, amphitheatres, historical libraries and renowned pottery manufacturers**. Cultural events enliven the region, including the **Rossini Opera Festival (ROF)** in **Pesaro**, the **Opera Festival in the Sphaeristerium Arena of Macerata** and the **Pergolesi Spon-tini Festival** in **Jesi** and **Vallesina**. Along with the region's museums, libraries, archives and theatres, its cultural heritage includes a host of important religious structures such as **abbeys, monasteries and churches**. As for civil constructions, the Marche boasts a

wealth of **castles, walled towns and fortresses** harking back to a glorious, lively past: buildings whose key features are still intact in all the cities and towns. In **Urbino**, a **UNESCO City** and a capital of the Renaissance, **Duke Federico da Montefeltro** commissioned the building of the **Palazzo Ducale**, one of Europe's most sumptuous noble residences. The Marche is a region where **culture is placed on the scale of values**, having become second nature over the centuries in the region's economic fabric and its way of life. For the Marche is a region with both a millennial history and an extremely modern, innovative outlook. It is a region open to change, but also firmly anchored in the values and traditions that continue to inspire it, a region whose quality of life and environmental health make its residents Italy's longest-lived, a region where the centuries-old tie between culture and the art of doing, creating, inventing and practicing

crafts has ushered in a **Made in Marche** system known worldwide. **Culture** is the heart of the **Marche Brand**. A 2010 video meant to promote the Marche region in Italy and throughout the world starred the American actor **Dustin Hoffman**, shown walking among the hills and theatres of the region while reading one of the most symbolic poems of Italian literature, the *Infinito* by **Giacomo Leopardi**. With its unique, innovative vision of the Marche, the video met with great success.



www.cultura.marche.it
<http://musei.cultura.marche.it>



ARCHAEOLOGICAL MARCHE

A stylised **woodpecker** dating back more than 2000 years, to the **Piceni civilization**, appears on the crest of the Marche region, symbolising its cultural unity. According to Festus, Piceno was given that name because the symbol of the Sabines, who migrated in the direction of modern-day Ascoli (Ausculum), was the woodpecker (*picus*) a bird sacred to Mars and one that had perched on their banner during the journey. This is said to be the reason for the name of Piceni or Picentes. The discovery of numerous necropolises in the area bounded by the Foglia River to the north and by Pescara, in Abruzzo, to the south, point to the existence, between the 8th and the 1st century BC, of a zone whose culture was referred to as the “Piceno” civilization: a key player in the history of that portion of central Italy, until the Romans finally conquered the territories once and for all. Between the 4th and the 3rd century BC, the central-northern portion of the Marche, from Marecchia to Esino, was occupied by the Celtic tribes of the **Galli Senoni** (Gauls). The chief settlements of this people, which left behind splendidly crafted gold ornaments that can be viewed today at the National Archaeological Museum of the Marche, were found in Arcevia and Senigallia. After the Battle of Sentinum in 295 BC -pitting the Gauls and the Samnites, on the one hand, against the Romans and the Piceni, on the other, in the area between Camerino and Sassoferrato (Sentinum in antiquity)- the **Romans** occupied the Gallic territory, underlining the local culture by naming it *ager gallicus*. Over the next two centuries, they penetrated throughout the rest of the region, founding colonies

and municipalities, widespread evidence of which has survived to the present. Among these are: the **Via Flaminia** consular road, which still connects Rome with Fano and the **Via Salaria**, which served as the route for bringing Adriatic Sea salt from Porto d'Ascoli to Rome, as well as the artefacts of the **archaeological museums**, many of which are state-run (in Ancona, Arcevia, Urbino, Cingoli, Urbisaglia and Ascoli Piceno); the urban layouts of certain cities (Pesaro, Fano, Senigallia, Jesi and Ascoli Piceno); the **monuments** (Trajan's Arch in Ancona; the Arch of Augustus in Fano, along the Via Flaminia, the Tunnel of Vespasian in the Furlo Gorge, near Fermignano, the Mallio Bridge in Cagli, the Grosso Bridge in Cantiano and in the town of Pontericcioli; the Gemina Gate along the Via Salaria and the Solestà Bridge in Ascoli Piceno), plus the many **archaeological parks** (Fossombrone, Sassoferrato, Castel-leone di Suasa, San Severino Marche, Urbisaglia, Falerone and Cupra Marittima). In the Roman-age **theatres** and **amphitheatres** of the Marche, visitors can watch an ancient comedy by Plautus or a classic Greek tragedy: the archaeological sites of the Marche host **theatrical performances** during the summer season.





MEDIEVAL MARCHE

From Monasticism to St. Francis of Assisi From Frederick II to Dante Alighieri

«Whence I, who speak alone before the others, pray thee, if ever thou dost see the land that 'twixt Romagna lies and that of Charles, thou be so courteous to me of thy prayers in Fano, that they pray for me devoutly, that I may purge away my grave offences.»

Dante Alighieri, *Purgatory* V 67-72

Among the many firsts, set by the Marche, is that of having been one of the first regions in the Italian peninsula to have accepted the phenomenon of **Monasticism**, a spiritual movement born in the East in the third century A.D. and spread in the West as early as the VI century, thanks to the charismatic personality of St. Benedict of Nursia. Its "Rules" which amounted to Monasticism's first written constitution and were based on the dignity of work and the sanctity of prayer, gave rise to a new way of life that was to enjoy enormous popularity in the West and was to become one of the pillars of the formation of Western civilization. Thanks to the easily travelled valley routes, between the Foglia and the Tronto rivers, as early as the VII and VIII centuries, monasteries and convents began springing up in the **Marche**, often at a short distance from one another, along the paths travelled by the first pilgrims heading for Rome. The Marche was also heavily influenced by

the figure of **St. Francis of Assisi**, given the region's proximity to Umbria and its elective affinities with the Saint, who was warmly welcomed in the Marche from the start. St. Francis' first journey to the region dates from 1209, when his destination was the *March* of Ancona. By 1282, the province represented by that *March* held no fewer than 85 convents. The Franciscan Order has written an extraordinary chapter in the history of the Marche, influencing the culture of the area from the XIII century onward. Two more outstanding figures marked the medieval history of the Marche: emperor **Frederick II of Swabia**, (1194-1250), born in the royal city of Jesi, and **Dante Alighieri**, whose *Divine Comedy* presents references and descriptions of sites and features of our land, transforming them into focal points in the narrative, as well as iconic figure of world literature. Just think about the tragic love story of Paolo and Francesca in Gradara, the subject of one

of the best-known cantos of *the Inferno*. From unbridled lust to the silence of Fonte Avellana, the focal point of the existence of St. Pier Damiani, whom the reader meets in Paradise, Dante travels through the Marche from Montefeltro to Urbisaglia, from Senigallia to the promontory of Focara; from Castel della Pieve, where his exile was decreed, to Fano, a town with ties to, among other stories, that of Jacopo del Cassero, whose soul, which the supreme poet met in the fifth Canto of the *Purgatory*, describes to Dante the places from which he comes, asking that he be allowed to go to "that country which lies between Romagna and Charles' land": the Marche. With these words, Jacopo del Cassero provides one of the earliest, if not the first, historical-geographical interpretations of the cultural and territorial identity of the Marche.

Medieval itineraries in the Marche

 www.turismo.marche.it
www.francescanesimomarche.it



FORTRESSES, CASTLES AND VILLAS

The territory of the Marche, located between the Apennines and the coast, is characterized by gentle rolling hills, dominated by villages surrounded by walls or protected by strongholds. These places, less well known than the art cities, are appreciated not only by lovers of castles, medieval architecture and defensive military constructions. Splendid fortresses built for defence, or the desire to rule, can be admired in the province of Pesaro and Urbino: the Castle of Gradara and the Costanza Fortress by Luciano Laurana in Pesaro. In Mondavio, Sassocorvaro and Cagli, instead, it is well worth visiting the fortresses built by the military architect from Siena, Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Not to be missed is the imposing



Brancaleone Castle in Piobbico. In the province of Ancona it is also worth visiting Arcevia and its nine "castles", Corinaldo, with its impressive town walls, the Fortress of Offagna, with its Museum of medieval Weapons, Sassoferrato with the Albornoza Fortress and Senigallia with the Roveresca Fortress designed by Baccio Pontelli. Close to Macerata are Caldarola, with the Pallotta Castle, and nearby the feudal castles of Pievefavera, Croce and Vestignano; Camerino, surrounded by a defence system dating back to the time of the Varano family; San Ginesio, Tolentino with the Rancia Castle, and the Urbisaglia Fortress dominating the valley. Ascoli Piceno boasts the Malatesta and Pia Fortresses, as well as the nearby Acquasanta Terme, Castel di Luco and Arquata del Tronto, which were already well known in Roman Times. Also worth visiting is Acquaviva Picena with its grand fortress, and Moresco, crowned by a 12th century hexagonal tower.

There are many villas, such as the Della Rovere Villa also called "Imperiale" near Pesaro, and Villa Buonaccorsi with a splendid Italianate garden located in Potenza Picena.





THE MARCHE OF THE SEIGNEURIES

From International Gothic to the Renaissance

Urbino, Fabriano, Fermo, San Severino Marche, Camerino were some of the cities at the centre of the cultural renewal between the 14th and 15th century, known as International Gothic. **San Severino Marche** is a symbolic city where Lorenzo and Jacopo Salimbeni were born and worked, leaving important paintings behind them. The Salimbeni brothers also worked in **Urbino**, in the Oratory of San Giovanni Battista (1416), with frescoes dedicated to the life of the saint. This work is considered one of the European masterpieces of International Gothic Art.

Gentile da Fabriano, "highly renowned in the Venetian world" (as pointed out by Jacopo Bellini, 1436) was born in the Marche. In Fermo, the chapter of Gothic Art is attested by the splendid *Messale de Firmonibus* (Museo del Tesoro), illuminated by Giovanni Ugolino da Milano in around 1436,

and by the precious panel paintings by Jacobello del Fiore. The Gothic Style was also used in architecture and at the Fermo Oratory of St. Monica reached very high levels. Humanism in the Marche was a fortunate period. With the birth of the Seigneuries such as Montefeltro in Urbino, Da Varano in Camerino, Della Rovere in Senigallia, new conditions were set out and Figurative and Humanities Arts flourished. The cultural revival of the area reached its artistic peak with **Federico da Montefeltro**, who made Urbino the cradle of Italian Art. In the ducal court under the last Duke of the Montefeltro, Guidobaldo I and under his successor Francesco Maria I Della Rovere, nephew of Pope Julius II, elegant noble ladies gathered, first of all Elisabetta and Eleonora Gonzaga together with other personalities such as Baldassarre Castiglione, Giuliano de' Medici, Bernardo

Dovizi da Bibiena and Bembo, who started writing the *Prose della volgar lingua*. Famous artists working on the so called "*città in forma di palazzo*" - a town shaped like a Palace - (Il *Cortegiano* by Baldassarre Castiglione) were Donato Bramante, Luciano Laurana and Francesco di Giorgio Martini and illustrious painters, such as Piero della Francesca and Paolo Uccello. **Raphael**, working with his father, the court painter Giovanni Santi, absorbed the art of the palace. The seignury of **Giulio Cesare Da Varano** marked the history, the culture and the art of the capital, Camerino. So did the seignury of the Malatesta in Fano. Other Renaissance buildings like Ascoli Piceno's Palazzo dei Capitani, the Loggia and the splendid porticoed square, were designed by Cola di Amatrice and Bernardino di Pietro.



ILLUSTRIOUS PERSONALITIES AND MUSEUM HOUSES

Literature, painting, sculpture, teaching, architecture, scientific discoveries, music, sport, the Marche has given birth to internationally famous personalities, who made it important in the world. **Raffaello Sanzio** (Raphael), for example, the genius from Urbino (1483-1520), was the son of the famous painter Giovanni Santi. Urbino is also the native city of **Federico Barocci** (1535-1612). **Bramante** (1444-1514), architect and painter, was born in Fermignano. Fabriano is the birthplace of **Gentile da Fabriano** (1370-1427), one of the most significant figures of the International Gothic. **Rossini, Spontini, Pergolesi**: the great musicians were born in the Marche region and influenced European music. **Gioachino Rossini** (1792-1868) was from Pesaro, **Giovan Battista Pergolesi** (1710-1736) was from Jesi; **Gaspere Spontini** (1774-1851) was born in Maiolati, now called Maiolati Spontini. The Marche Region is also the land of poets and writers: Recanati was the birthplace of **Giacomo Leopardi** (1798-1837), the poet of the poem *'Infinito' (the Infinite)*. Among the famous personalities worth mentioning because of their legacy are: the grand emperor **Federico II di Svevia** (Frederick II of Swabia) (1194-1250) from Jesi; **Father Matteo Ricci**, born in Macerata in 1552 and died in Beijing in 1610; the educationalist **Maria Montessori** (1870-1952) was from Chiaravalle. From the Marche Region is also one of the greatest spiritual and mystical figures of the 15th century: **Camilla Battista Varano** of Camerino, canonized in 2010. Sports personalities include Valentino Rossi, Valentina Vezzali and Giovanna Trillini. The following personalities were not born in the Marche Region, but left an important legacy

here: San Ciriaco, San Romualdo, San Pier Damiani, Guido d'Arezzo, Cecco d'Ascoli, Arcangelo di Cola, Federico da Montefeltro, San Giuseppe da Copertino, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Leonardo da Vinci, Stendhal, Torquato Tasso, Baldassarre Castiglione, Casanova, Carlo e Vittore Crivelli, Lorenzo Lotto, Luigi Vanvitelli, Montesquieu, Giulio Perticari, Giovanni Bellini, Sibilla Aleramo, Franz Liszt, Luciano Pavarotti, Arnaldo Pomodoro and Leonardo Castellani.

MUSEUM HOUSES

Museum houses are where important personalities of the Marche Region were born and lived. In Urbino the house where Raphael was born is used as a museum and is next to the workshop of his father, Giovanni Santi, where the artist learnt the first painting techniques. In Pesaro it is possible to visit Rossini's house where he, known as the "*Swan*" from Pesaro, was born and lived the first eight years of his life. In addition to this museum house, which contains important objects and memorabilia belonging to the composer, Pesaro has dedicated to its illustrious citizen the Music Conservatory, with the "*Tempietto Rossiniano*", a small casket containing the composer's treasures. On display in the house where G. Leopardi was born in Recanati is the most precious gift that the poet's family gave to the city, a huge library with 20,000 volumes. The Gaspere Spontini museum house is situated in the centre of Maiolati, that owes its name and fame to the *maestro*. It contains treasures belonging to the composer and his wife Celeste.



SKILFUL HANDS

In the artisan workshops in the Marche Region, and not only there, the “**old crafts**” still survive today. Among the oldest traditional crafts worth mentioning is **leather** working, that today boasts a number of industries from footwear to leather and handbag production, widespread around Macerata and Fermo areas. The Fabriano **paper** processing is internationally famous and the city hosts the **Paper and Watermark Museum**; this tradition is also present in Pioraco. Another regional handicraft is the making of **terracotta**, to be found locally from Montottone near Fermo to Appignano near Macerata. Fratterosa, in the Cesano valley, is the home of an important **museum** dedicated to this ancient tradition. **Majolica** is produced in several places: Urbino, Urbania (formerly Casteldurante), Pesaro and Ascoli Piceno. Each of these cities has a museum displaying 14th to 20th century masterpieces. **Wrought iron and copper**

work are present all over the Marche Region. The area of Ascoli is one of the most flourishing centres, in particular Force and Comunanza, where today's coppersmiths continue this century-old tradition. In Jesi, Fossombrone and Fano **goldsmiths' workshops** can be found. In Offida another famous local tradition, **pillow lace** production, has been passed down and both a special museum and summer exhibitions are dedicated to it. The **textile sector** is important for the creation of **rustic wool carpets** around Cantiano and Mercatello sul Metauro, near Pesaro. **Furniture production**, mostly in the Pesaro area, is very famous all over the world. **Restoring antique furniture** is a fairly widespread activity, from Ostra to Corinaldo, from Pollenza and Amandola to Fermo. The **Musical instrument** sector is also important. Musical instruments are manufactured in Castelfidardo, so famous for its **accordions**, to which

the city has dedicated an international museum. The area is also important for the saxophone and guitar manufacturing. In Macerata, especially in Mogliano, **cane, bamboo and wickerwork** is popular. **Hats** are manufactured from Montappone to Massa Fermana, in the Fermo area and some of them are displayed in the Hat Museum in Montappone. **Wooden pipes** are carved in the area from Pesaro to Cagli and from Loreto to Recanati. Lastly, we should not forget to mention the ancient **stone working** tradition, from **travertine** in Ascoli Piceno to **stonecutting** in Sant' Ippolito. The Marche Region boasts a solid tradition in the **restoration of ancient books**: in particular in the city of Urbino there is a nationally famous school.



MARCHE TASTE. FOOD AND WINE

The Marche, a land rich in culinary traditions, have a cuisine where spices, fats, aromas from the sea and gems of the land, such as truffles, are skilfully blended. Promotion and preservation of brand productions are guaranteed through **Quality Assurance and Product Certification**, such as **DOP** (DPO, Protected Designation of Origin) and **IGP** (PGI, Protected Geographical Indication).

The Marche Region has a huge gamut of **wines** produced inside the region: 15 **DOC** (RDO, Registered Designation of Origin) wines, 5 **DOCG** (GDO, Guaranteed Designation of Origin) and 1 IGT (IGT, "Indicazione Geografica Tipica") wines. To get to know the oenological heritage of the region it is well

worth visiting **the regional wine shops and wine bars in Jesi and Offida**; **Wine Routes** combine wine aromas with charming hills and local specialities. There is a long tradition and an ample variety of **spirits** produced in the Marche Region. The best known are the **anise spirits**. Anise is of supreme quality and is produced in huge quantities in the province of Ascoli Piceno and Macerata. Fano is famous for **Moretta Fanese**, a '*caffè corretto*', laced with anise, rum and brandy. Two **wines** come from rural traditions: **Vin Cotto** (cooked wine) in which the grape's must is reduced by boiling, common in the southern part of the region and **Vin Santo** (holy wine) that is produced after drying the grapes.

In Jesi and in the Pesaro area, **Vino di Visciole** (aromatized drink with wine and sour cherries) is well-known. It is made from wild cherries from the hills and the mountains, fermented together with local red wine. Pork is the main theme in inland cuisine, with delicious and tasty **salumi** (salami and cold pork meat, delicatessen). The most famous are the **salame di Fabriano**, and the spreadable **ciauscolo** which is mostly produced in the area around Macerata. **Carpegna ham** is famous both in Italy and abroad. Several kinds of cheeses are made from cow's and sheep's milk, goat's milk and mixed milk. Typical of this location is the **formaggio di fossa** (pit cheese) (DOP) and the **casciotta di Urbino**



(DOP). The Marche is appreciated for its high quality meat. The meat of the **cattle breed** (IGP) '**marchigiana**' and of the sheep breed are among the best, due to their authenticity and value.

There is a rich production of all major species of **truffles**, **both white and black**. The most precious truffle is the white truffle (tuber magnatum Pico). It is to be found in Sant'Angelo in Vado and Acqualagna, but also in

other provinces. Among the various types of **pasta**, the **small macaroni of Cam-pofilone** are a speciality now appreciated all over the world. They differ from other pasta products, being mixed only with chicken eggs, 10 eggs per kilo of durum wheat flour.

The **olive oil** of the Marche, known since 1228, is slightly fruity. The quality of the oil is inextricably linked to the olive. Very valuable is

the **tender Ascoli olive**, which is unanimously considered to be the best green olive. Its natural habit is close to Ascoli Piceno. All over the world it is known not only in brine, but also fried and stuffed "all'ascolana" (Ascoli-style).



TRADITIONS

RELIGIOUS FESTIVITIES

Over time, the Marche has carried on intact a number of events tied to specific religious festivities. There are numerous **Nativity scenes**, with the most impressive to be found in Altidona, Genga, the dramatic setting of the Frasassi gorge, the castle of Precicchie (Fabriano), Comunanza, Falerone, Pioraco, Potenza Picena and Porchia (Montalto delle Marche). There are three major **Nativity museums** located relatively near each other: Morrovalle, Macerata and Tolentino. Worth recommending is the mechanised Nativity scene in Fano in the cellars of the 18th century Palazzo Fabbri, and the Nativity scene at San Marco in Colmurano. "Nativities in a nativity town" can be admired in Quintodecimo di Acquasanta. The **Passion of Christ** is evoked in the "La Turba", an evocative **historic re-evocation** of the Good Friday Passion dating back to 1260 and held in Cantiano; other such events are held in Mogliano, at Villa



Musone di Loreto, at Porto Sant'Elpidio, Montepreandone, Monte San Pietrangeli, Pioraco, Recanati and Ripatransone. **Corpus Domini** is celebrated with **floral street decorations** in Castelraimondo, Corridonia, Cupramontana, Montefiore dell'Aso, Monterubbiano, Ortezzano and Servigliano. On the night of December 9th the **Arrival of the Holy House** is celebrated in Loreto.

PAGAN FEASTS AND CARNIVAL

The **Fano Carnival** is Italy's oldest, with giant floats and a bonfire where a large effigy (Pupo) is burned at the end. Along with the **Ascoli Piceno Carnival**, one of the most thrilling is the two-phase **Offida Carnival**: the **Lu Bov Fint** (on Good Friday), with the zany adventures of a *fake steer*, and the **Vlurd parade** (on Shrove Tuesday). Also remember the **Fermo Carnival**, the **Ancona Carnival** (*Carnevalò*) and the

more recent witches' feast of **Halloween** in Corinaldo. On January 6th, the **National Epiphany Feast** is held in Urbania. The main celebrations linked with the growing of grain are the **Covo Feast**, held yearly on the first Sunday of August in Campocavallo di Osimo, and the **Canestrelle procession** in Amandola (FM).

HISTORICAL PAGEANTS

Every year the magic of the past is revived in the Marche with horse races and costumed parades. The Historic Pageant Association of the Marche organizes evocations of historical events handed down and dramatised through centuries of local oral tradition. Numerous historic pageants are held in the old town centres (including the famous **Quintana in Ascoli Piceno**).



Visiting THE MARCHE REGION

MARCHE TRAVEL: TOURISM USING ALL FIVE SENSES

Discovering the Marche is a multi-sensorial exploration that brings into play **all five of the senses**, thanks to the delights to be found in the **five provinces** of the Marche, each very distinct from the other, and yet also quite similar, with every borough, every hidden corner of the Marche offering visitors unfailingly new and surprising emotions.

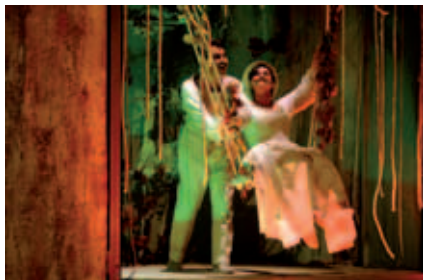
The **sense of sight** is swept away by a wide variety of intriguing landscapes and



a number of different coastal settings; the expanse of hills with its unmistakable profile and masterful mix of natural colours and the works of man, in the form of the centuries-old villages, the sanctuaries, the castles and the abbeys; the Apennine mountains, with their forests, valleys and peaks, all still echoing with the legend of the Sybil, are waiting to be discovered. Visitors lingering in the towns and boroughs can discover a large number of museums and churches preserved like so many gems, as well as a wealth of works by artists such as Crivelli, Piero della Francesca, Raphael, Bellini, Titian and Lotto, just to mention the most famous, though the works of lesser known artists, as well as examples of folk art, combine with the masterpieces to tell the story of a territory whose past is filled with proud towns and prestigious seigneuries.

The **sense of touch** is stimulated by the vast array of top-quality crafts products, including paper and parchment, hand-made pillow lace and traditionally manufactured majolica and ceramics.

The **sense of hearing** will delight in the immortal music of our composers Rossini, Pergolesi and Spontini, played during the “ROF, Rossini Opera Festival” and the “Pergolesi Spontini” Festival and during the numerous local opera seasons held in



theatres and other sites in the Region, with the best known example being the season at the Arena Sferisterio in Macerata. Also to be enjoyed is the more discreet sound of the verses of Leopardi, a beacon from the past for all the modern and contemporary poets of the Marche.

The **sense of smell** is stimulated by endless scents, each of which calls forth sensations of pleasure, wellbeing and joyful living. The Marche is a land of aromas: the sea breeze, the odour of freshly caught fish, the vast fields of lavender and broom of Monte Conero, the bouquets of wines that tell the history of the hills and the wide

selection of grapes in their vineyards, the intense aroma of the truffles of Acqualagna and the mountain zones, the delicate scents of the salami and other cured meats of Carpegna, Fabriano and Visso, plus the traditional local cheeses.

The **sense of taste** is coddled by a treasure trove of traditional local produce and wines. The culinary offerings of the Marche include traditional peasant fare and seafood, often reinterpreted for modern tastes, but without losing sight of the genuine, natural values we treasure, as well as the emphasis on quality. In fact, the tastes and pleasures of fine dining extend beyond special occasions, filling the entire lifestyle of the Marche with an uncomplicated simplicity that revolves around a respect for tradition.

What the five senses take in during a visit to the Marche leaves behind both a physical and emotional wellbeing, with a stay in the region proving the perfect way to refresh both body and soul.





Visiting the **MARCHE** *region*



The many Marvels of URBINO, A UNESCO CITY

Urbino was a focal point of the Italian Renaissance, a heritage still on display in its architecture; since 1998 the city has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Thanks to Federico da Montefeltro, the medieval Montefeltro residence was transformed from a “fortified castle to a palace city”. Expanded and beautified by Luciano Laurana and Francesco di Giorgio Martini, it became the **splendid Ducal Palace**, with its “torricini” (“turrets”) and “cortile d’onore” (“honour court”) a masterpiece of Renaissance art, and currently the site of the **prestigious National Gallery of the Marche**, whose collection of great works includes “The Flagellation” and the “Madonna of Senigallia” by Piero della Francesca, plus the “Muta” by Raphael. The old city centre has a long history of art and culture, as seen in the neo-Palladian Cathedral and the magnificent travertine door of the Church of San Domenico, in the copy of the lantern window by Luca della Robbia, the medieval church of San

Francesco with its Gothic spire and the great altar piece by Federico Barrocci, and in the Oratory of San Giuseppe, with the famous “Presepe” (Nativity) by Brandani, plus the Oratory of San Giovanni, frescoed in 1416 in a late-Gothic style by the Salimbeni brothers from San Severino Marche, not to mention the home of

Raphael. Higher up is the Alborno fortress, from whose walls the eye is drawn to the Ducal Palace, but also to the nearby hills, including the site of the 15th century Church of San Bernardino, which holds the Dukes’ Mausoleum. Further down, from Borgo Mercatale, the massive semi-cylindrical bastion containing the “Rampa Elicoidale” (Helicoidal Ramp) built in the 15th century by Francesco di Giorgio Martini

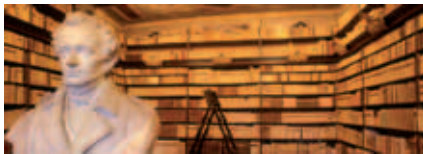


can be admired, together with the “Raffaello Sanzio” Theatre, built atop it, in the 19th century. Always a scholarly city, Urbino’s **prestigious university** dates back to the 16th century, and it also has a **National Art Institute** (the ISIA), plus the ‘**Book School**’, renowned for turning out accomplished graphic artists and engravers, and a **school of journalism**.



RECANATI AND LEOPARDI

Mention of Recanati brings to mind the great poet Giacomo Leopardi, who was born here in 1798, and drew much of his inspiration from this charming town in the Marche. Obvious examples are the “Il Sabato del Villaggio” (Saturday in the Village) square, just outside the poet’s own house; the “Passero Solitario” (Lonely Sparrow) tower, part of the cloister by the Church of Sant’Agostino, dating back to the 13th century; the hill of “The Infinite” on Mount Tabor, with the venerable garden of the Poor Clare sisters and the World Centre of Poetry and Culture. Today the town of Recanati is known worldwide, thanks to its poet and the **National Centre of Leopardi Studies**. And let us not forget the other celebrated native son: the tenor **Beniamino Gigli** (Recanati 1890 - Rome 1957), in whose honour the city placed a museum in the 19th century in the Persiani Theatre. Visitors with a thirst for culture have countless other reasons to visit: the **Leopardi Library**, open to the public since 1812, with its 20,000 volumes, plus the noble residences and the churches rich in works of art. Particularly noteworthy are: the Church of San Vito, dating from the 11th century and completed according to the design by Vanvitelli, with a painting by Pomarancio on its walls; the Church of Sant’Agostino (13th C), renovated and designed by Bibbiena, with a handsome front door in Istrian stone by Giuliano da Maiano and works by Pomarancio, Fanelli and Damiani inside; to the left, the Cloister with the venerable bell tower of the Lonely Sparrow, mentioned in the poem of the same name; the Cathedral of San Flaviano with its 15th century sarcophagi, including that of Pope Gregory XII; the Church of Santa Maria in Castelnuevo (1139), with its splendid



Romanesque crypt. Recanati is the starting point for tracing the works of Lorenzo Lotto in the Marche: in fact, the municipal museum of Villa Colloredo Mels, together with the Civic Art Gallery of Jesi hold the first works created by the artist for the Marche.

RECANATI AND LEOPARDI. THE MARCHE, HOME TO INTELLECTUALS

Viene il vento recando il suon dell'ora dalla torre del borgo. Era conforto questo suon, mi rimembra, alle mie notti, quando fanciullo, nella buia stanza, per assidui terrori io vigilava, sospirando il mattino. Qui non è cosa ch'io vegga o senta, onde un'immagin dentro non torni, e un dolce rimembrar non sorga.

G. Leopardi, XXII - LE RICORDANZE

Along with Leopardi, the Marche is the birthplace of poets, writers, artists, photographers who, over time, have continued to “see” the region as both a source of inspiration and a visual and intellectual metaphor for understanding life, including: Adolfo de Carolis and Osvaldo Licini from the Piceno, Ugo Betti from Camerino, Libero Bigiaretti from Matelica and Luigi Bartolini from Cupramontana; in modern times, Umberto Piersanti, Gianni d’Elia, Eugenio De Signoribus and Francesco Scarabichchi, plus the late Franco Scatagliini and Paolo Volponi, who was honoured with a literary park. Mario Giacomelli made photography the most effective and intriguing means of expression for interpreting the countryside of the Marche, while Tullio Pericoli, with his paintings and illustrations, restored colour and dreams to the region’s hills.

(Paolo Volponi)



LORETO AND THE “SANTA CASA”

The town of Loreto developed around the famous Basilica that contains the **“Santa Casa” (the Holy House of Nazareth)** where, according to tradition, the Virgin Mary was born, lived and received the announcement of the miraculous birth of Jesus. Tradition says that, when in 1291 the Muslims finally expelled the Christians from Jerusalem and then tried to regain Nazareth, a group of angels took care of the House and, after some wanderings, spreading their wings took it to Loreto. For this reason, the Madonna of Loreto is venerated as the patroness of aviators. Studies highlight that the origin of the House is Palestine in view of both the architectural style and the use of construction materials, unknown to the Marche territory and instead widely used in the Holy Land at the time. A recent theory, supported by the discovery of documents written after 1294, asserts that the transfer was the work of the Angeli Comneno princes, a branch of the imperial family of Constantinople, who car-

ried the stones by ship. Both theories, in any event, concur that the House left Nazareth in 1291, passed through Dalmatia, remaining for about three years in Trsat (now a district of the town of Rijeka in Croatia), and arrived in Loreto on the night of December 9th-10th, 1294. In 1469, on the initiative of the bishop of Recanati, Nicolò delle Aste and later with Pope Paul II, the first construction of the present basilica began, first with Gothic and later Renaissance forms. In 1586, Pope Sixtus V appointed Loreto to the diocese and the bronze statue designed by Antonio Calcagni and Tiburzio Vergelli, that is placed in all its majesty next to the entrance of the Basilica, was dedicated to him. The octagonal dome was the work of Giuliano da Sangallo and was built in the years 1499-1500. **The statue of the Virgin Mary**, made of embossed and gilded copper, is on the top of the dome's lantern. Next to the white Istria stone facade, completed in 1587, stands the elegant bell tower (1750-55) by Luigi Vanvitelli.

The shrine of the Holy House is positioned under the dome, faced with marble and with statues and reliefs, a masterpiece of 16th century sculpture. The highly evocative interior is a destination for pilgrims who come from all over the world to pray before the statue of the **Black Madonna**. The Chapel of the Annunciation was decorated with frescoes by Federico Zuccari, the sacristies of San Marco and San Giovanni by Melozzo da Forlì and Luca Signorelli, the ceiling and the roof of the Sala del Tesoro by Pomarancio. The **Museum and Picture Gallery of the Holy House of Loreto**, housed in the Apostolic Palace, preserves paintings, sculptures, tapestries and majolicas from the Sanctuary and donated to the Holy House in the course of the centuries. The later works by Lorenzo Lotto, who died in Loreto in around 1556, stand out in the collection of paintings. The **Holy House Treasure** includes valuable works of very refined jewellery.

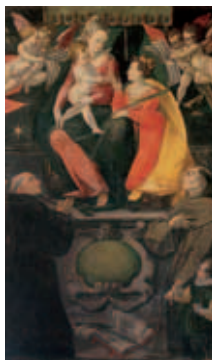


BASILICA OF SAN NICOLA DA TOLENTINO

The Basilica of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino is **one of the most important sanctuaries of central Italy**.

St. Nicholas of Tolentino (1245-1305) was an **Augustinian friar, miracle worker and great preacher**. He lived in the convent of the Hermit Friars of St. Augustine in the city, from 1275 until his death. He reached such a high notoriety during his life, especially for his extraordinary miracle working powers, that he was venerated and canonized in a short time (1325). St. Nicholas is venerated as the patron saint of the souls in purgatory and the protector of motherhood and childhood difficulties.

The basilica was consecrated in 1465. The interior is a rectangular nave with a polygonal apse. The coffered wooden ceiling and eight chapels date back to the 17th century. It preserves important works of art (S. Anna by Guercino, S. Tommaso da Villanova by G. Ghezzi). The great 17th century chapel of the Holy



Sacrament, topped by a cupola, is on the left of the altar. The arms of St. Nicholas are preserved in the Chapel of the Holy Arms (Sante Braccia). An attempt at theft was made after the saint's death, but failed because the amputated arms began

to gush blood. The miraculous event is represented in the painting by G. Foschi near the high altar. Two large paintings are preserved in the chapel, ex-voto offerings, "L'incendio del Palazzo Ducale a Venezia" by Matteo Stom and "La Peste a Genova" (or in Venice, according to some) by Giovanni Carboncino.

Of particular value is the *Cappellone* (Chapel) whose frescoes painted by artists from Rimini (Pietro, Giuliano and Giovanni Baronzio) of the Giotto school, are the highest examples of 14th century painting in the Marche. The chapel floor plan is rectangular and has a cross vault. A Renaissance marble arch, with the statue of St. Nicholas above it, is in the centre of the Chapel. **The Museum of the Basilica**, that can be reached by staircase, houses numerous paintings and sculptures, precious ceramics, offerings and permanent Nativity exhibitions. The cloister is considered to be one of the most interesting in the Marche. Here the Saint's cell is found, now converted into the oratory of the Augustinian community that still preserves two early 16th century frescoed lunettes, representing episodes of the saint's life.





NATIONAL PARK OF THE MONTI SIBILLINI

and the Myth of the Sybil

The Monti Sibillini are a **mountain range** located between Marche and Umbria.

Most of the Monti Sibillini are **protected by the homonymous National Park**, established in 1993; the protected area covers an area of about 70,000 hectares, with a length of about 40 km, and includes 18 municipalities in the provinces of Ascoli Piceno, Fermo, Macerata and Perugia.

Legend has it that the **Sybil** attracted errant knights in the cave located under the mountain that now bears the same name. After going through many ordeals and after demonstrating their skill, the knights were accommodated in the cave for one year but once that time had elapsed they were doomed to eternal damnation. It is just one of the many sto-

ries, almost all of medieval origin, that envelop the Sibillini mountains in **magic and mystery**. 1,800 floral species are present in the area, including the edelweiss of the Apennines; there are 50 species of mammals, among which the wolf, the porcupine and the wild cat, deserve to be remembered. The presence of the golden eagle, the peregrine falcon, the deer and the bear should be remembered along with a rare case of endemism, the **Chirocefalo del Marchesoni** (*Chirocephalus marchesonii*), a unique small crustacean inhabiting **Lake Pilato**. There are a number of peaks exceeding 2,000 metres in the area, including the **Monte Vettore** (2,476 m) where the lake is located. According to legend, the body of the Roman procurator in Palestine, whose

cowardice was responsible for the death of Christ, was dragged into the lake by a group of buffaloes. Therefore the stretch of water was for centuries a destination for magicians and followers of the occult. At a short distance, the impressive **Infernaccio Gorge**, the scene of necromantic rites in the past, also deserves a visit. The Park is full of important architectural buildings, admirably set into the landscape, such as abbeys, monasteries, churches, towers, castles, forts, mills and tower houses. We suggest, among the others, the Church of SS. Vincenzo e Anastasio of Amandola and the Sanctuary of the Madonna dell' Ambro di Montefortino.





THE HEARTS OF THE MARCHE. ART CITIES

Widespread Charm

Ancona is a seaside town with a unique feature, shared by few other cities in the world: it offers the spectacle of sunrise and sunset over the sea. **Capital city of the Marche region**, it was founded by the Syracusan Dori, in the 4th century BC. It boasts an old town centre rich in churches and museums, that culminates in the Cathedral of St. Cyriacus, an extraordinary Romanesque



sque monument that soars over the harbour.

Pesaro, with nearly one hundred thousand inhabitants, is the second largest city by population in the region after the capital city,

Ancona: with its old town that still shows the splendour of the seigneurly of the Della Rovere family and its precious museums, the city was the birthplace of Gioachino Rossini. The annual **Rossini Opera Festival** is devoted to him and his work is protected by the Rossini Foundation. The city hosts the **International Festival of the New Cinema**.

Urbino is considered the **Ideal City** because it combines the culture of Humanism and the Renaissance. The “city in the form of a building” became the privileged place of the elegant and refined society of the 16th century, described in the wonderful pages of the “Il Cortegiano” by Baldassarre Castiglione.

Macerata, still surrounded by its sixteenth-century bastions, is crossed by many roads that lead up to the heart of the old city where there are the “Loggia dei Mercanti”, the Teatro Lauro Rossi and, at a short distance, the civic museums of Palazzo Buonaccorsi with the renowned Aeneid Gal-



lery, an 18th century masterpiece, and the Museo della Carrozza (Carriage Museum). Birthplace of Father Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), the city houses the popular **Sferisterio Opera Festival**. **Fermo** is an ancient Roman colony where the top of the hill, the Girfalco, can be reached after crossing typi-





cally medieval hoops and circles. From here, you can enjoy a spectacular view that sweeps from the sea to the peaks of the Monti Sibillini. Piazza del Popolo, the heart of the city, preserves the historic library and the civic gallery, with the Nativity by P. P. Rubens. A few steps away stands the Teatro dell'Aquila, one of the most beautiful - among the about 70 - historical theatres in the Marche.

Ascoli Piceno, according to a tradition mentioned in ancient literature (Strabo, Pliny, Festus), was founded by a group of Sabines, who were led by a woodpecker, a bird sacred to Mars, during one of their so-called “*ver sacrum*” migrations. The impressive Roman ruins, evidence of the Roma-

nesque and Gothic influence, remain indelible in what has been called **the city of the hundred towers**.

AND ALSO ...

Besides the capital cities of the province, the Marche boasts a number of art cities spread all over the region. In **Gradara**, the **fortress** and the **ancient village** are the best preserved medieval structures in Italy. The **city walls** which protect the fortress, make it one of the most impressive. The castle was home to Lucrezia Borgia and Francesca di Rimini, the protagonist, together with Paolo, of one of the most famous love stories narrated by Dante in his Divine Comedy.

Fano, governed by the Malatesta family and deeply

afflicted in Roman times, known for its Arch of Augustus, is now home to the Centro Studi Vitruviani; **Urbania and the upper valley of the Metauro river** feature many ducal monuments and their **majolica**. The environmental setting around the nearby cities of S. Angelo in Vado and Mercatello sul Metauro is very evocative.

Well worth a visit are: **Senigallia** with its “velvet” beach, the nearby Jesi and its castles of the Verdicchio, **Fabiano**, famous for its paper, the village of **Serra S. Quirico** with its Copertelle (copper lids) and the proud city of **Osimo**, not far from the sea. **S. Severino Marche**, **Tolentino**, **Caldarola** and **Camerino**, all located near Macerata, are a cocktail of history and art. Other places not to be missed are **Offida**, **Ripatransone** and the neighbouring villages, all located between Fermo and Ascoli Piceno.

The brochure dedicated to art cities in the Marche can be downloaded from:



Visiting the MARCHE region



THE CAVES OF FRASASSI

Millenary Charms

The Caves of Frasassi are underground karst caves **inside the Natural Regional Park of “Gola della Rossa e di Frasassi”** in the municipality of Genga, in the province of Ancona. The Caves of Frasassi were discovered on 25th September 1971, by the CAI speleological group of Ancona. In 1972 the municipality Genga and the Province of Ancona set up the Frasassi Consortium with the aim of protecting and enhancing the Caves of Frasassi complex. Within the karstic formations, you can admire the natural sculptures shaped by layers of limestone deposited over 190 million years, thanks to the force of water carving the rock. The water flowing over limestone dissolves small amounts of limestone and falls to the

ground and through a continuous dripping, which has lasted for millennia, deposits and shapes concretions of considerable dimensions with sometimes curious forms. These natural shapes are divided into **stalagmites** (conic masses formed on the ground, projecting upward) and **stalactites** (hanging from the roof of caves). Forms and dimensions of such natural works have stimulated the fantasy of speleologists, who after their discovery **“baptised”** them **with curious names**; the most popular stalagmites include “The Giants”, the “Camel” and the “Dromedary”, the “Great Bear”, the “Madonnina”, the “Sword of Damocles” (a 7,4 m high stalactite with a diameter of 150 cm), the “Niagara Falls”, the “Slice of bacon” and the “Slice of

lard”, the “Obelisk” (a 15 m high stalagmite located in the middle of Room 200), the “Organ Pipes” (conelaminated concretions that resonate when struck), the “Witches’ Castle.”

Inside the caves are also **pools of water** where the dripping water stagnates and “pozzi”, cylindrical hollows up to 25 m deep which may collect water and convey it to the karst layers below. The visit of the cave has a duration of 70 minutes. The groups are accompanied by **professional guides** provided by the Frasassi Consortium. The route is 1,500 m long and is well equipped and easily accessible. The temperature inside is a constant 14 °C.



S. MARIA DI CHIARAVALLE IN FIASTRA FONTE AVELLANA and the great Abbeys of the Marche Region

The Marche offers tourists an extraordinary series of **routes and monuments** that point to the **deeply felt spirituality** which, since the arrival of Christianity, has characterised this land. Camaldolians, Cistercians and Franciscans studded the territory with **monasteries, abbeys and convents**, some of which **take in guests and visitors today**, the way they used to take in pilgrims and wayfarers.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Marche region was dominated by the Byzantine Exarchate and by the Longobards of the Duchy of Spoleto; later it was fought over by the Emperor and the Papal State, until the latter finally became the sole ruler. The lengthy period of administrative uncertainty, together with the considerable distance from the centre of papal power in Rome, favoured the spread of the Benedictine Order in the 8th- 9th centuries, starting from the towns of Norcia and Farfa. The monasteries and abbeys arose primarily along the main Roman roads – the Via Flaminia and the Via Salaria – and along the river valleys that climb toward the Apennine mountains from the sea, such as the valleys of the Marecchia, Metauro, Esino, Potenza and Chienti rivers.

The region boasts two magnificent examples of Romanesque-Gothic Cistercian architecture: in Chiaravalle, the Abbey of Santa Maria in Castagnola, founded by the monks of Clairvaux, and, in the towns of Urbisaglia and Tolentino, the **Abbey of Santa Maria di Chiaravalle in Fiastra**,

founded by the friars of the homonymous church in Milan.

The church is a model of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic architecture. It is built using the stones taken from the ancient Roman city of Urbs Salvia. The entrance to the abbey church faces west and the apse is east-facing. The east side of the church borders the north side of the adjacent cloister, set in its turn among a series of buildings which completed the monastery: the chapterhouse, auditorium, dormitory, scriptorium and refectory.

San Romualdo, the founder of the Camaldonian Order who died in the Marche in 1027, in the powerful abbey of San Salvatore in Valdicastro near Fabriano, founded by him in 1006, inspired in the monks of **Fonte Avellana**, in the Monte Catria foothills, the first form of organised living. In this remote place of meditation, immersed in the solitary woods and mentioned in the XXI Canto of Dante's Paradise, Pier Damiani took monastic vows in 1035, after having stopped there. The building complex conserves a treasure of inestimable value for the national and European cultural tradition, with a large variety of art forms, from the harmonious architecture to the precious **collections of books (15,000 volumes) and sculptures**. Places to visit: the church, the crypt, the scriptorium, the parlour, the library and the cloister.



Living in the Territory

DISCOVERING THE PROVINCES OF THE MARCHE REGION

The following summaries illustrate the diversity and excellence of the provinces of the Marche Region.

PROVINCE OF ANCONA

The Province of Ancona is bordered by rivers along the Adriatic coast, to the north by the River Cesano and Musone to the south, and to the west by Monte Catria and Monte Strega. Its total area is approximately 1,940 Km², with a population of 478,319 inhabitants.

The capital of the Region, Ancona, is located on the promontory of Monte Conero perching over the sea. This is the only high part of the coast of the Marche full

of grottoes, cliffs, coves and small sandy beaches. The original vegetation of the region was almost everywhere deciduous forests with a prevalence of the Downy oak that is found widely today in the Bay of Portonovo. Ancona has an **airport** and a **port** for passenger connections to the Balkans and Greece. It is



divided in two parts: the historical centre on Monte Guasco and the modern section on the coast. The city is full of charm with the Cathedral of San Ciriaco and the Arch of Trajan that recall Graeco-Roman origins. The paper industry is among the most famous productions in the district of Fabriano. The Caves of Frasassi, located in Genga, is one of the area's major attractions. The entire province is a tale in the making, passing through Jesi,

Arcevia, Sassoferrato, Camerano, Loreto, Corinaldo, Osimo, Castelleone di Suasa, Senigallia, Sirolo and Numana but also through villages, towers and hamlets. Of the many culinary traditions of the province not to be missed the stockfish and the 'brodetto all'anconetana' (fish stew Anconetana style).

PROVINCE OF PESARO AND URBINO

The Pesaro and Urbino Province is located between the River Foglia to the north and Cesano to the south and to the west by Monte Catria. It covers a total area of approximately 2,564 Km² and has a population of 365,788 inhabitants. The territory, comprising 60 municipalities, corresponds to the historical and geographical region of the ancient Duchy of Urbino.



The Regional Park of Sasso Simone e Simoncello was set up in the Monte Carpegna area for its flora, vegetation and zoological aspects and for the landscape. The Furlo Gorge, near Acqualagna, is located between Monte Pietralata and Monte Paganuccio where an excellent product grows: the truffle. This precious tuber is abundant in the entire Apennine area around Pesaro.

The splendour of nature and history is reflected in the coasts of the so-called "Riviera of the hills". The seaside town of Pesaro is an unmissable destination for tourism lovers, surrounded by two important hills that guarantee a mild climate all year round; S. Bartolo to the north and Ardizio to the south, separating it from Fano. A stay in these areas will lead to the discovery of the relationship between the city and the sea, between rural and urban landscape. Pesaro is famous for Gioachino Rossini's music and the voice of Renata Tebaldi. Urbino is home to an ancient university that attracts thousands of students from Italy and the rest of the world. A com-

mon feature of the two cities is the ceramic craftsmanship.

PROVINCE OF MACERATA

The province of Macerata stretches between River Potenza in the north and River Tenna in the south and, to the west, the Sibillini mountains. Its total area is approximately 2,774 Km², and its population counts of 324,369 inhabitants. The area presents the typical characteristics of the Apennine landscape: a flat coastal strip, gentle hills shaped by the agricultural labor and the mountain that has become a destination for winter sports. Mountains, hills, valleys, forests and cultivated fields lead towards the Adriatic coast, where a natural setting of a thousand faces is outlined – Porto Recanati and Civitanova Marche – that have given rise to plentiful fishing, touristic and sea bathing activities. The capital, Macerata, stretches between the valleys of Potenza and Chienti set in a vast and harmonious landscape surrounded by nature's colours. A neo-classical building, the

Sferisterio, can be found in the city and is considered to be one of the most beautiful monuments in Italy. In the province lie Recanati, the birthplace of Giacomo Leopardi and Beniamino Gigli, Camerino, home to one of the oldest universities, Tolentino, a religious and tourist centre, and San Severino, a city of art. But culture has been the protagonist of the Macerata territory since the time of Father Matteo Ricci who left Italy for China, thereby opening a door from Europe to the Orient.

PROVINCE OF FERMO

The Province of Fermo lies on the Adriatic coast between the rivers Chienti to the north and Aso to the south and to the west by the Sibillini mountain range. Its total area is approximately 860 Km² and it has a population of 177,480 inhabitants. The



area has the typical characteristics of the Apennine landscape with peaks over 2,000 m, deep gorges and ravines, a flat coastal strip, and a rich, hilly hinterland. In 1993 the Monti Sibillini National Park was founded owing to the presence of flora and fauna of particular conservation interest (endemism).

Along the main valleys, Valtenna, Valdete and Valdaso, agriculture is dynamic and industrial production thrives. The presence of rivers and the gentle cultivable hills made this area particularly suited to settlements back in Picenes and Roman times. The charm of the province of Fermo vanishes among villages and abbeys, the images of the face of the Virgin Mary by Carlo and Vittore Crivelli and the paintings by Osvaldo Licini. Professions that were thought to be forever lost are found in the Fermo area; quality products and footwear manufacturing is widespread. Nearly all of the related industry is concentrated in the capital where there are thousands of small designer footwear firms, designer shoes by the major Italian and foreign

designers. But the heart of the territory is Fermo, an ancient Roman colony, later a Seigneurie of castles and today a university town. The Theatre dell'Aquila deserves a visit.

PROVINCE OF ASCOLI PICENO

The Province of Ascoli Piceno is bordered by rivers along the Adriatic coast, to the north by River Aso and to the south by River Tronto and to the west by the Sibillini Mountains. Its total area is approximately 1,228 Km², and it has a population of 213,586 inhabitants.

Ascoli Piceno is the southernmost province of the Marche region. The land slopes down from the Apennines to the sea with mountains and hills from the Sibillini mountains that rise high to the south-west, delimiting the border with Umbria. The Ascoli side is inaccessible and for this reason many toponyms of the area refer to hell. The hills are made of brittle rocks, where the phenomena of erosion is frequent, sandstone, calanche cliffs, down to the gravel and sandy terraces by the sea. The capital city, even after



the Roman conquest, retained its name (Ascoli Piceno) owing to its bond with its founding fathers. The narrow and sandy coastline is full of seaside resorts of great touristic interest such as San Benedetto del Tronto, which has an important role in the regional economy in tourism, as well as in fishing activities with the consequent development of the frozen fish industry.

The mild climate of Grottammare and Cupra Marittima has favoured the growth of rich tropical vegetation and the development of the tourism industry. Among the typical products are *Olive Ascolane* (fried olives stuffed with meat), also marketed outside the region.

Marche open-air Museum

GRAND TOUR. ART AND TRAVELLING

Art, History and Culture provide the Marche region with a network of thematic itineraries made up of places, times and absolutely unique features that make the region an open-air museum, where big-name artists appear: Raphael, Carlo Crivelli, Giotto, Lorenzo Lotto and Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Cities such as Urbino, rich in historical wonders and the Holy House of Loreto, the destination of religious pilgrimages, are important tourist attractions.

THEME ROUTES

The Architecture of Francesco di Giorgio Martini

Francesco di Giorgio, an engineer and designer, left admirable civil, religious and military architecture in the Marche territory.

Giotto Itineraries

Giotto's figurative models entered the Marche thanks to the Franciscans and the Augustinians who became promoters of new artistic achievements.

Paintings by Carlo Crivelli

Carlo Crivelli was commissioned painting works in the Marche, in Camerino, Fabriano, Ascoli Piceno, that today are largely preserved in major museums around the world.



Paintings by Lorenzo Lotto

The Lotto itinerary is divided among various cities and towns in the Marche that house masterpieces.

Fortresses and Castles

The birth of autonomous municipalities gave a start to fortified military construction with the participation of well-known architects of the time.

International Gothic in the Marche

The region was among the capitals of figurative Gothic in Italy and in Europe between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Monasticism in the Marche: Abbeys and Monasteries

It is a journey back to the roots of European civilization to rediscover the phenomenon of Benedictine monasticism.

Franciscan Itineraries in the Marche Region

The tours include stops in historic towns and villages in the Marche where convents, churches and museums related to the Franciscan origins are found.

Ancient Libraries in the Marche

The libraries are located in historical buildings. They contributed to the architectural, artistic and decorative development of the city.

The Places of the Order of San Filippo Neri

The Marche Region provid-

ed fertile ground for the San Filippo Neri movement in the centuries-old relations with Rome.

Andrea Vici. Architect and hydraulic engineer in the Marche in the 18th Century

The guided tour illustrates and highlights the works of the architect Andrea Vici in the socio-historical context of the Marche.

DISCOVER THE MARCHE AND ITS MUSEUMS WITH THE 'MARCHE MUSEUM CARD'

The dissemination of fine arts is so widespread that the Marche truly deserves

the definition of "open-air museum": **500** squares, more than **1,000** significant monuments, more than **100** art cities, **33** strongholds, **106** castles, **15** fortresses, **170** towers, numerous historical homes with gardens, many of which provide accommodation, thousands of churches of which **200** are Romanesque, **90** well-preserved abbeys, **183** sanctuaries, **34** archaeological sites, **over 70** picturesque historical theatres. There is the **highest density in Italy of museums, art galleries and museum collections**, about **400** out of **239** municipalities and an impressive **315** libraries, including the ancient **Hermitage of Fonte Avelana** (Province PU), the **Oliveriana** in Pesaro, or the one in **Palazzo Leopardi** in

Recanati (Province MC), not to mention the **National Gallery of the Marche in Urbino, a UNESCO Heritage City**. The Marche Museum Card allows you to visit museums and archaeological sites, providing **free access** to each without restriction during opening hours. The Marche Museum Card also provides **discounts and special offers** for events and exhibitions and other benefits in the area of tourism and culture. The updated list of stipulated agreements and their characteristics can be consulted in the "Strutture Convenzionate", **Agreed Facilities section**, or by calling the **freephone number 800 439392** (Italy only).





Living by the Sea

HILL TOWNS BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE

From Gabicce Mare to San Benedetto del Tronto the **coastal landscape** of the Marche is **ever-changing** in shape and colour. The white cliffs plunging down to the sea, the deep green of the rolling hills on which ancient villages rise and the ochre-coloured beaches are amazing. The urban landscape of the numerous little towns on the sea varies just as the scenery does. Where the terrain allows it, the settlements are laid out in different ways, often with a double function, both defensive and commercial. The historical borough of **Montedolfo**, with its extension on the coast of Marotta, is a typical example of “two cities in one”, representing the blending of two cultures, from land and sea. A different model, from sea to town, can be seen in **Montemarciano**, founded by the coastal inhabitants following a fire in the fifth century. It is therefore often possible to distinguish among the coastal boroughs the “**upper village**”, well-protected by the walls of a castle perched high on a hill, which was the original settlement and the “**marina**”, the flat land along the shore which was usually

developed at a later date for commercial and residential purposes. This kind of composite pattern is typical of the medieval “*castra*” of **Gabicce Monte** (the ancient “Castellum Ligabittii”), **Casteldimezzo** and **Fiorenzuola di Focara** in the province of Pesaro and Urbino, like those of **Falconara Alta** north of Ancona and south of **Sirolo** and **Numana**. **Recanati**, **Potenza Picena** and **Sant’Elpidio a Mare** on the other hand are important little towns, a fair distance from the sea, with “*marine*” which grew from simple mooring facilities along the coast into ports: Porto Recanati, Porto Potenza Picena and Porto Sant’Elpidio.

Civitanova Alta is a fascinating fortified borough overlooking the sea, while nearby **Porto San Giorgio**, the ancient “Navale Firmatorum”, is divided into two parts with the Castle and its surrounding district above and the “*marina*” below, beyond the main road. Nearby is the splendid castle of **Torre di Palme**, perched on a cliff with a sheer drop to the sea. Other Picentes centres follow: **Cupra Marittima** and

Marano, **Grottammare** and **Grottammare Alta** and **San Benedetto del Tronto** with its panoramic terrace dominated by the **Torre dei Gualtieri**. As a defence against such terrible enemies as pirates, corsairs, Turks and Saracens, about 60 **watchtowers** were built along the coast of the Marche in the eighteenth century. They were placed at intervals of 3 km and used smoke signals during the day and fires at night to raise the alarm. Of this complex system of communication there remain the beautiful **Torre di Montignano**, south of Senigallia, the **Torre di Portonovo**, in the bay of the same name south of Ancona and the so-called **Torre Guelfa** at the mouth of the Tronto at Porto d’Ascoli. The **Torre di Sant’Andrea** at Cupra Marittima, the **Torre del Castello** at Grottammare and the **Torre dei Gualtieri** at San Benedetto del Tronto were also part of the whole system.



Living in Nature. PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS, BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE

In the Marche there are **12 protected areas**: 2 national parks (**Monti Sibillini** and **Gran Sasso plus Monti della Laga**), 4 regional parks (**Monte Conero**, **Sasso Simone e Simoncello**, **Monte San Bartolo** and **Gola della Rossa plus Frasassi**), 6 nature reserves (**Abbadia di Fiastra**, **Montagna di Torricchio**, **Ripa Bianca**, **Sentina**, **Gola del Furlo** and **Monte San Vicino plus Monte Canfaieto**), more than **100 protected plant and flower areas** and **15 state forests**.

PROTECTED AREAS

In the Marche more than 90,000 hectares of the territory, almost **10% of the region**, are **protected** as parks and nature reserves, 15 state forests and more than 100 protected plant and flower areas.

Among the National Parks, that of the Monti Sibillini (50,000 hectares are in the Marche) has high moun-

tains which are mostly over 2,000 m and reach 2,476 m with Monte Vettore, and the legendary Monte Sibilla (2,173 m) not far away. To the south the Monti Sibillini meet the National Park of the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga

, which is characterized by marly sandstone rocks, dense woodlands and wonderful waterfalls like the Volpara and the Selvagrande. The Regional Park of Sasso Simone and Simoncello, in the



heart of Montefeltro, has beautiful walking country with incredibly tall beech trees, real living “patriarchs” of nature, while in the Nature Reserve of Gola del Furlo

, the rocky walls seem almost alpine and the rocky landscape is quite spectacular. In the Park of Monte San Bartolo, between

Gabicce Mare and Pesaro, the cliffs create a wild landscape. In the province of Ancona, the Regional Park of Monte Conero has so-

me enchanting spots with beautiful walking routes winding through the magical Mediterranean maquis. In the Gola della Rossa plus Frasassi Regional Park) the river Sentino

has carved its course creating a complex system of underground caves known as the Grotte di Frasassi. Here you can marvel at the little lakes, carved stalactites and gigantic stalagmites crowned by the majestic Abisso Ancona which is over 240 metres high. Near Jesi, on the River Esino, is the Nature Reserve of Ripa Bianca () with a typical fluvial landscape, which is home to the biggest flock of herons in the Marche. In the province of Macerata, the Nature Reserve of Abbadia di Fiastra () preserves an agrarian landscape which over the years has not lost its typically mediaeval landmarks, including historical Selva and the monumental abbey built by Cistercian monks in 1142, taking the

ancient stones from the Roman city of Urbs Salvia.

The Nature Reserve of Torricchio () preserves a typical landscape of the upper hills of the Marche and was designated a Biogenetic Reserve by the Council of Europe. Recently reserves have been created including the Sentina Nature Reserve () in San Benedetto del Tronto, north of the mouth of the River Tronto, an interesting wetlands area of great importance from a biological point of view and for birdlife. There is also the Monte San Vicino plus Monte Canfai Nature Reserve which covers 1,500 hectares of land with protected plant and flower areas and biotypes of geological and landscape interest.



QUALITY BRANDS

A “**Blue Flag**” means not only that the sea is clean in that area, but also that many other criteria have been met. These criteria include the presence of water treatment plants, the recycling of urban waste, the organisation of environmental initiatives such as limited traffic in urban areas, extensive pedestrian areas, cycling lanes, courses on environmental education for young people and care of the urban environment. In 2011 a total of **16 “Blue Flags”** were assigned to the region of the Marche: **Gabicce Mare, Pesaro, Fano, Mondolfo (loc. Marotta), Senigallia, Ancona (loc. Portonovo), Sirolo, Numana, Porto Recanati, Potenza Picena (loc. Porto), Civitanova Marche, Porto Sant’Elpidio, Porto San Giorgio, Cupra Marittima, Grottammare and San Benedetto del Tronto.** Among the **tourist ports** mentioned are the Marina dei Cesari in **Fano**, the tourist port of **Numana**, the marina of **Porto San Giorgio**, Tiziano, the tourist port of **San Benedetto del Tronto** and Marina Dorica of **Ancona**.

The “**Orange Flag**” is a quality award for tourism and the environment conferred by the Italian Touring Club. It is awarded to small municipalities inland which offer outstanding services and hospitality. The towns with this award have fulfilled strict criteria for the evaluation of the protection of both the cultural and environmental heritage, hospitality, access to information, the availability and efficiency of public transport, accommodation, catering and the support of local operators, wine and food quality, cultural entertainment and street furniture. **17 “Orange Flags”** fly in the region of the Marche: **Acquaviva Picena, Camerino, Corinaldo, Gradara, Mondavio, Montecassiano, Montelupone, Monterubbiano, Ostra, Ripatransone, San Ginesio, Staffolo, Urbisaglia, Genga, Mercatello sul Metauro, Pievebovigliana and Sarnano.**

To be part of the club of “**The most beautiful villages of Italy**” there are several structural requirements, such as the architectural harmony of the urban area, the quality of both private and public buildings and general standards with regard to the quality of life in the town in terms of activities and public services. In the Marche **18 villages** have been admitted to this club: **Cingoli, Corinaldo (European Destination of Excellence in 2008 and officially nominated “The most beautiful village of Italy” in 2007), Esanatoglia, Gradara, Grottammare, Matelica, Montecassiano, Montecosaro, Montefabbri, Montefiore dell’Aso, Montelupone, Moresco, Offagna, Offida, San Ginesio, Sarnano, Treia and Visso.**



ACTIVE HOLIDAYS IN THE MARCHÉ



There are many opportunities to experience the Marche and to practice sport in **a region that changes scenery and landscape in just a few kilometres**, with an offer ranging from canoeing to bowls, skating to flying, bowling to golf, potholing to archery ...and more... scuba diving, horse riding or mountain biking tours, beach volley and free climbing ...and endless opportunities to enjoy nature fully and to use your free time enjoyably, getting to know other people and

improving your fitness. A deep relationship links the Marche and sport. In some sports such as motorcycling, fencing, swimming, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball and table-tennis, the Marche excels at an **international level** with champions worthy of **Olympic gold medals**. This shows the dedication to competitive sport of a hardy people used to putting themselves to the test. In our region sport represents an opportunity for growth and an excellent means of personal development and solidarity, because everyone, including the disabled, can practice any kind of sport.

ACTIVE HOLIDAYS AT THE BEACH

Beach volleyball, cycling holidays, golf... there are many different possibilities to make your seaside holiday in the Marche enjoyable and fun. The great variety of beaches and their close proximity to hills and mountains, allows the coast of the Marche to offer a wide variety of different sports in a short space of time: from **scuba diving to horse riding or mountain biking**, from **beach volleyball** tournaments on the finest of sandy beaches to **free climbing** on the white cliffs plunging down to the Adriatic Sea.

HOLIDAYS IN THE HILLS

For anyone who enjoys walking and close contact with nature, **horse riding, canoeing, golf, fishing, jogging, mountain biking, trekking**... the hills of the Marche offer the opportunity to do different kinds of

leisure activities immersed in the myriad colours of the cultivated fields or the green grass, beneath the blue sky with the view of the sea or in the shade of the mountains rising not far away. Visiting the Marche is an ideal opportunity to keep fit, recharge your batteries or just have fun.

ACTIVE HOLIDAYS BY BICYCLE

The hilly landscape of the Marche slopes gently down to the Adriatic sea, immersed in nature with occasional small villages, castles and fortresses. Despite the slopes, one of the most enjoyable ways to explore the region is by **bicycle**. It offers the tourist the chance to appreciate the natural beauty, the history and the art and to try the local wine and food specialities.

ACTIVE MOUNTAIN HOLIDAYS

The mountains in the Marche offer enthusiasts of high peaks a unique experience all year round. The white mountain peaks of the Apennines offer slopes that are ideal for **winter sports**. Spring encourages you to enjoy all the scents, sounds and colours of fresh uncontaminated landscapes to be explored during relaxing **walks** or in the thrill of **rafting, white water canoeing or free flight**. The high peaks in the summer offer coolness and **well-being**, while in

October the smell of **truffles**, mulled wine and chestnuts make you want to join the local **mountain festivals**.

SKIING IN THE MARCHE

In winter it is possible to go **skiing** thanks to the modern ski-lifts at Monte Catria in Frontone, Monte Nerone in Piobbico, Villagrande and Eremo Carpegna in Montecopiolo, Sassotetto and Maddalena in Sarnano, Pintura in Bolognola, Frontignano in Ussita and Monte Prata in Castelsantangelo sul Nera, that give access to slopes of different difficulties and lengths. Forca Canapine di Arquata del Tronto and Monte Piselli are located further south in the area of Ascoli. Lovers of **cross-country skiing** can head to Piani di Ragnolo di Acquacanina. Environments suited to more technical disciplines such as **ski-trekking** and **ski-mountaineering** are found in the Monti Sibillini.

Province of Pesaro Urbino

Monte Catria at Frontone

Monte Nerone at Piobbico

Eremo Carpegna at Montecopiolo

Province of Macerata

Sassotetto - Maddalena at Sarnano

Pintura at Bolognola

Piani di Ragnolo at Acquacarina

Frontignano

Monte Prata near Castelsantangelo sul Nera

Province of Ascoli Piceno

Forca Canapine near Arquata del Tronto

Monte Piselli near Ascoli Piceno

HORSEBACK RIDING

Green woods and hills with beautiful views are the backdrop for experiencing the thrill of horseback riding in the Marche countryside. **Horse riding** is not only a sport, but it is a way of getting in touch with nature and the animal world, discovering their secrets in total freedom.

There are many opportunities to try these activities ranging from small local riding schools in the many holiday farms for passing visitors, to the larger riding cen-

tres that offer quality courses and trekking accompanied by an “equestrian guide”.

The Marche region is known for its equestrian traditions, shown by the presence of **three racecourses** (*San Marone* in Civitanova Marche, *Martini* in Corridonia and *San Paolo* in Montegiorgio), the famous **Carriage Museum** of Macerata and the **Historical Harness Racing Museum** of Civitanova Marche next to the racecourse stables, with equestrian memorabilia, documents and trophies on display.

MOTOCROSS AND MOTORCYCLING

The thrill you get from a motorbike, riding on a road full of bumps and rises, trying to “take off” and then landing on the shock absorbers is unique. On such occasions it is inevitable to feel your heart leap while you wait for the wheels to land safely on the ground again. In the Marche it is possible to try this in many locations with well-equipped facilities. **Motocross** is done on closed circuits with natural surfaces (**motodromes**) approved by the Italian Motorcycle Federation on the basis of specific security regulations.



WELLNESS: THE SPAS

The Marche, an ideal place for relaxation, located between the Apennine Mountains and the Adriatic coast, and interspersed with gentle, rolling hills and valleys, is crossed by numerous rivers, parallel to each other, that give rise to waterfalls and rapids, marking the territory with impressive gorges and spectacular canyons such as those of Furlo, Burano, Rossa and Frasassi, Piore, Fiastrone and the Infernaccio, just to name a few. The water, pure and crystal clear, or muddy and boiling hot, with a rich load of precious minerals, plays a key role giving rise to a

widespread thermal system throughout the territory. A wide range of spas scattered from north to south provide waters with beneficial and healing properties for bottling and making hydropinic cures and aesthetic medicine treatments. The thermal activity, known as “**water culture**”, now has a major role in modern medicine proving crucial in a key sector for health protection: that of prevention. The spa-goers want to have complete check-ups, fight stress and detoxify while taking care of their physical appearance. For this reason, the spas, while

maintaining the supply of traditional therapies, are becoming true wellness centres with solariums, gyms, whirlpool baths, aesthetic treatments and pools, which can turn their holiday into a unique opportunity for the maintenance of psychophysical wellbeing. The imperative behind the success of the **ten spas** scattered throughout the region is that of bringing people to a healthy lifestyle. A trip to the Marche is a journey into *wellbeing*, which here becomes synonymous with *feeling good*, good living and attention to the quality of life.

*The **Terme di Monte Grimano** are in the province of Pesaro and Urbino, in the town that bears their name (); the **Pitinum Thermae** are in Macerata Feltria (), the **Terme di Raffaello** in Petriano () and the **Terme di Carignano** in Fano (); seated in the province of Ancona are the **Terme dell'Aspio** in Camerano () and the **Terme San Vittore** in Genga (); the **Terme Santa Lucia** () are in the province of Macerata, in Tolentino, and the **Terme di Sarnano** in the same locality that bears their name (); the **Terme di Palme** in Torre di Palme are in the province of Fermo, and the **Nuove Terme di Acquasanta** in Acquasanta Terme are in the province of Ascoli Piceno ().*



INDEX

	<i>pag.</i>		<i>pag.</i>
DISCOVERING THE MARCHE REGION	3	Living in the Territory.	
MARCHE <i>Italy's Land of Infinite Discovery</i>	3	Discovering the Provinces of the Marche Region	55
Geography	5	Marche open-air Museum	58
<i>The Climate</i>		Grand Tour. Art and Travelling	
<i>Mountains and Passes</i>		<i>Discover the Marche and its Museums with the "Marche Museum Card"</i>	
<i>The Gentle Hills</i>		Living by the Sea. Hill Towns between Nature and Culture	61
<i>The Coast</i>		Living in Nature. Parks and protected Areas, between Nature and Culture	63
<i>The Magic of the Water. The Rivers and Valleys, the Caves of Frasassi and the Gorges Lakes</i>		<i>Protected Areas</i>	
The History of a time-honoured Region	11	Quality Brands	65
Culture, the Heart of the Marche "Brand"	15	Active Holidays in the Marche	67
Archaeological Marche	17	<i>Active Holidays at the Beach</i>	
Medieval Marche	19	<i>Holidays in the Hills</i>	
Fortresses, Castles and Villas	21	<i>Active Holidays by Bicycle</i>	
The Marche of the Seigneuries.		<i>Active Mountain Holidays</i>	
From International Gothic to the Renaissance	23	<i>Skiing in the Marche</i>	
Illustrious Personalities and Museum Houses	25	<i>Horseback riding</i>	
Skilful Hands	27	<i>Motocross and Motorcycling</i>	
Marche Taste. Food and Wine	29	Wellness: the Spas	71
Traditions	31	THE MARCHE. IDENTIFICATION CARD	73
<i>Religious Festivities</i>		Getting there and getting around the Marche	73
<i>Pagan Feasts and Carnival</i>		Getting around the Marche	73
<i>Historical Pageants</i>		<i>Travelling by Car</i>	
VISITING THE MARCHE REGION	33	<i>Taking the Bus</i>	
Marche Travel: Tourism using all five Senses	33	<i>Rental Cars and Taxi Service</i>	
The many Marvels of	37	<i>Getting around by Train</i>	
<i>Urbino, a Unesco City</i>		<i>Sea Travel</i>	
<i>Recanatani and Leopardi</i>		Tourist Information	74
<i>Loreto and the "Santa Casa"</i>		<i>Tourist Information Offices</i>	
<i>Basilica of San Nicola da Tolentino</i>		<i>Local Tourist Systems</i>	
<i>National Park of the Monti Sibillini and the Myth of the Sybil</i>		<i>Tourist Websites of the five Provinces</i>	
<i>The Hearts of the Marche. Art Cities</i>		<i>Pro Loco</i>	
<i>The Caves of Frasassi</i>		Friendly Marche. Accommodation	76
<i>S. Maria di Chiaravalle in Fiastra,</i>		<i>The "Ospitalità Italiana" Seal</i>	
<i>Fonte Avellana and the great Abbeys of the Marche Region</i>		Guided Tours	76
		Useful Telephone Numbers	77
		Amusement Parks and Shows for Children and Young People	78
		The Marche for the Young	79

Contribution to the translation: **Anna Maria Barbadori**

With the cooperation of: **Andrea Giordani**

Free Distribution, Edition 2012





MARCHE

ITALY'S LAND OF INFINITE DISCOVERY

www.turismo.marche.it

**REGIONE
MARCHE**

