



#destination**marche**

#destination**marche**

#destination**marche**

www.turismo.marche.it

ROLLING HILLS AND ANCIENT VILLAGES

A holiday through villages and castles of an ancient region

Is promoted by Marche Region

DMO - Destination Management Organitazion Marche Tourism

Director: Raimondo Orsetti

Coordination: Marta Paraventi

Editor: Andrea Giordani, Cecilia Gobbi, Paola Micucci and Gianni Tenti

Translation: Andrea Giordani and Paola Micucci

with the cooperation of Cinzia Marcotullio

The PDF file can be downloaded from:
en.turismo.marche.it

Photos: Images taken from the Photographic Archive of the Marche Region
Ignacio Maria Coccia, Renato Gatta, Sergio Ramazzotti/Parallelozero, Gianni Tenti
Some images have been realized within the project

"Adriatic Lands" funded by the
European cross-border cooperation programme IPA Adriatic

Graphic layout and printing: Errebi Grafiche Ripesi - Falconara M. (AN)

Marche Region

60125 Ancona - Via Gentile da Fabriano, 9

Tel. +39 071 8062426 / + 39 071 8062710

en.turismo.marche.it

numeroverde.turismo@regione.marche.it

Free Phone Number: 800 222 111 (*only in Italy*)

From abroad please dial: +39 071 2133609

www.turismo.marche.it



www.turismo.marche.it

ROLLING HILLS
AND ANCIENT VILLAGES

*A holiday through villages and castles
of an ancient region*



ROLLING HILLS
and ANCIENT VILLAGES

#destination**marche**



www.turismo.marche.it
eventi.turismo.marche.it
marcheadvisor.turismo.marche.it
blog: www.destinazionemarche.it
Numero Verde: 800 222 111



REGIONE MARCHE
www.turismo.marche.it

HOW TO GET THERE



MOTORWAY
A 14 Bologna-Taranto
www.autostrade.it

ROADS

SS 3 Flaminia - Roma - Fano (PU)
SS 4 Salaria - Roma - Porto d'Ascoli (AP)
SS 16 Adriatica - Padova - Otranto (LE)
SS 73 bis di Bocca Trabaria - San Giustino (AR) - Fano (PU)
SS 76 Val d'Esino - Fossato di Vico (PG) - Falconara Alta (AN)
SS 77 Val di Chienti - Foligno (PG) - Civitanova Marche (MC)
ex SS 361 Septempedana - Ancona - Nocera Umbra (PG)
ex SS 360 Arcevese - Senigallia (AN) - Scheggia - Passignano (PG)



TRAIN
Linea Milano-Lecce: Milano, Bologna, Ancona, Lecce
Linea Roma-Ancona: Roma, Falconara M., Ancona
www.trenitalia.com / www.italotreno.it



BUS
The extra-urban transport system connects Marche to 12 Italian regions
en.turismo.marche.it



AIRPORT
"Raffaello Sanzio" Airport of Marche Ancona/Falconara M.
www.marcheairport.com



PORT OF ANCONA
Connections to: Albania, Croazia, Grecia, Montenegro
www.doricaportservices.it



DISTANCES FROM ANCONA
Milano 430 km, Firenze 280 km, Roma 300 km
Torino 540 km, Bologna 220 km
Venezia 365 km, Napoli 390 km

VISIT MARCHE



en.turismo.marche.it



marcheadvisor.turismo.marche.it



Toll-Free Number: +39 071 2133609



numeroverde.turismo@regionemarche.it



blog: www.destinazionemarche.it



DOWNLOAD
THE APP



CLUSTERS
APP



Blue Flags



Parks and Reserves



Spas with Wellness Centre



Wine Shop



Bike Park



The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy



Authentic Villages in Italy



Spas



Water Park



Ski Resorts



Archaeological Park



Tourist Port



Adventure Park



Unesco City



MARCHE

ITALY'S LAND OF INFINITE DISCOVERY

MARCHE REGION: be enchanted

*A holiday amongst the villages and castles
of an ancient region*





Amandola (FM)

COUNTRY CULTURE AND RURAL TRADITIONS

The hinterland of the Marche Region, with its rolling, cultivated hills, is a perfect fit between man and nature, culture and traditions. The landscape is characterized by hills, which cover 69% of the whole region. The hillsides have been shaped and formed by sharecropping and polyculture, which has been partly replaced by intensive, specialised cultivation. The major crops include wheat, olives and vine. The Marche Region boasts 15 DOC wines, 5 DOCG wines and 1 IGT wine. Certified products are increasingly growing, including six PDO and five PGI products. Old villas or manor houses, intact examples of sharecropping architecture, have often been converted into farm holidays (*agriturismo*): this type of accommodation is a very special way of sampling the excellent culinary traditions and of visiting the many small villages scattered throughout the territory.

These villages are enchanting oases of history and culture, where time seems to have come to a standstill, surrendering to a pleasantly slow and human pace, where the only perceivable rhythm is the inexorable change in the daytime hours or seasons. You can go on an infinite number of tours and itineraries to discover the most hidden and the most picturesque villages in the Marche Region, and where you can still experience a truly authentic atmosphere.

Small villages, like pearls set amidst timeless landscapes, still preserve their original features, where work done centuries ago is still carried on and where local people extend a warm greeting and welcome to visitors. Artisan traditions and local tastes and flavours are waiting to be discovered without haste, in

an intimate atmosphere with a human dimension: from the Montefeltro region to the Sibillini mountains, from the coast of Gabicce to San Benedetto del Tronto, the Marche Region offers a wide range of opportunities to discover perfectly preserved towns and villages to your hearts content, where you can still enjoy a Medieval and Renaissance atmosphere. Immersed in beautiful mountain landscapes or situated on vine-carpeted hills, each town reveals itself to the eye with a beauty and individuality that will take your breath away.

If you steer away from the common tourist routes and visit the less famous and busy towns - by car, by motorbike or using any means of transport - you will discover real Italian life as it is actually lived.

The deep roots of peasant life are, indeed, to be found in these places, where there is a veneration for the land and for a quiet and simple lifestyle. The Marche Region boasts **24** communes which belong to the "**I Borghi più belli d'Italia**" - the club of the most beautiful villages of Italy - including small Italian towns of significant historical and artistic interest. In addition, the **Orange flag** is a prestigious banner awarded by the Italian Touring Club to **21** communes of the hinterland that can meet certain requirements, notably protection of cultural heritage and the environment, the hospitality culture, the food and wine offering and quality hospitality services. The historical pageants that take place in the town centres are spectacular, and many events are connected with religious occasions or local artisan or gastronomic produce.

“ORANGE FLAGS”



The “**Orange Flag**” is a quality brand for the tourism and environment sectors assigned by the Italian Touring Club. It is awarded to small towns of the hinterland which stand out for

excellent services and high-quality hospitality. To get this award the towns have to meet some requirements: protection of both the cultural and environmental heritage, hospitality culture, quality of accommodation, catering, wine and food as well as availability and use of information.

The “Orange Flag” favours the social and economic growth through sustainable development and tourism. Some of the aims are as follows: the enhancement of local resources, the development of accommodation, the strengthening of local identity and the promotion of typical local food and handicrafts. **21 “Orange Flags”** fly in the Marche Region. The towns which were assigned the outstanding award are: Acquaviva Picena, Camerino, Corinaldo, Frontino, Genga, Gradara, Mercatello sul Metauro, Mondavio, Montecassiano, Montelupone, Monterubbiano, Offagna, Ostra, Ripatransone, San Ginesio, Sarnano, Serra San Quirico, Staffolo, Urbisaglia, Valvornace - Municipality of Pievebovigliana, Visso.



The project “**Gusta l'Arancione**” (enjoy the orange) enhances

and promotes the local quality wine and food in the “Orange Flag” towns of the Marche Region, by organizing food and wine itineraries for one or more days. San Ginesio is the leading town of the project which aims at:

- creating a “Sistema del Tipico” (System of the Typical) which is a resource made of knowledge and local production that could meet the global market demand;
- developing the sustainability of these typical products, by making the local systems adopt specific strategies of enhancement as well as efficient actions of coordination and orientation at a regional level.
- focusing on actions aimed at developing the local farm and food products, also in the tourism sector, enhancing their characteristics and highlighting the territorial culture and origins;
- “exporting” the local products of the Marche Region also abroad and through a cultural exchange between “Orange Flag” towns involved in the project and foreign towns;
- qualifying and diversifying the offer for the enhancement of “MARCHE BRAND”.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES OF ITALY



“I Borghi più belli d'Italia” (the club of the most beautiful villages of Italy) is a club including Italian

important art and historical towns. The club was created in 2001 by the National Association of Italian Communes and operates with the aim of protecting, preserving and revitalizing small urban centres, either towns or villages, which are recognized of great importance although they are not included in the main tourist circuit. To join the club, a town must meet the following requirements: integrity of the urban area, architectural harmony, high standards of quality of life, artistic and historical quality of both private and public building heritage, good public services. The club organizes several events in the villages such as festivals, exhibitions, fairs, meetings and concerts to enhance and promote the artistic, cultural and historical heritage as well as the best local wine and food. The inhabitants of villages, associations, schools and local artists are directly involved in the events.

21 towns of the Marche Region are members of the Association “I Borghi più belli d'Italia” (the club of the most beautiful villages of Italy): Cingoli, Corinaldo, Frontino, Gradara, Grottammare, Macerata Feltria, Mondavio, Mondolfo, Montecassiano, Montecosaro, Montefabbri di Vallefoglia, Montefiore dell'Aso, Monte Grimano Terme, Montelupone, Moresco, Offagna, Offida, San Ginesio, Sassoferrato, Sarnano, Servigliano, Torre di Palme - Fermo, Treia and Visso.

AUTHENTIC VILLAGES



The association **Authentic Villages of Italy** is a system of territories and communities, scattered across Italy, that aims at improving the quality of urban and natural environment, besides making lives of citizens and visitors more pleasant. The Local Community, synonymous with good living, food and tradition, opens to tourists, called “temporary citizens”, and becomes an **Hospitable Community**. Every year the association organizes the National Day of Authentic Villages with wine, food and crafts markets, conferences and live music. The contest “From village to village” is particularly interesting; it aims at promoting the image of Authentic Villages of Italy, through stories, videos and photographs.

www.borghiautenticiditalia.it



Genga (AN)



ACQUAVIVA PICENA

Acquaviva Picena, a small town situated in the hinterland of San Benedetto del Tronto, is located on a hill where you can enjoy a breathtaking view over the Apennine Mounts, like Vettore, Gran Sasso and Maiella. The village features the fortress, a real masterpiece of Renaissance military architecture, whose first construction dates back to the fourteenth century commissioned by Acquaviva noble family. It was then rebuilt in 1474 by architect Baccio Pontelli. The plan is an irregular quadrangle, enclosing a large central courtyard with a well and the tops strengthened by pinnacle towers. The highest tower, the keep, has a cylindrical shape and is about

22 m high. The interior, with two vaulted rooms which are linked by a masonry staircase, now houses a very interesting exhibition of ancient weapons. At the foot of the fortress is the “Piazza del Forte”, with its theatrical parterre and low semicircle buildings. The “Piazza San Nicolò” is the hub of the old town, stretching between two opposite hills; upon it the sixteenth century church of the same name, “Casa Rossi Panelli” (Rossi Panelli House) and the Civic Tower rise. Outside the old town,

the Church of San Francesco with the adjoining convent is the oldest Franciscan foundation of the whole region, established by “S. Francesco d’Assisi” upon invitation of Acquaviva family. The traditional activity of the village is the production of straw baskets, made according to a method handed down from generation to generation.

Commune of Acquaviva Picena

**Tourist association
Acquaviva Picena**

EVENES

Palio del Duca-Sponsalia
August



CAMERINO



Camerino boasts a well preserved historic centre - its Medieval plant underwent a little change over the last few centuries – as well as a brilliant architecture of the ancient capital ruled of Da Varano family. The Ducal Palace, important and lively cultural centre, is the seat of the University of Camerino; it is worth visiting its fifteenth century portico and courtyard, the “Sala degli Sposi” (Bride and Groom hall) with its fifteenth-century frescoes, as well as the “Valentiniana” Library, boasting a prestigious book heritage. At the foot of the Ducal Palace there is the nineteenth century Botanical Garden. The thirteenth century Convent of “San Francesco” houses the Civic Picture Gallery (with an important sculptural and pictorial collection housing thirteenth eighteenth century works), the

Archaeological Museum with findings from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages, as well as the Museum of Natural Science.

The Cathedral, rebuilt by Andrea Vici in the nineteenth century, retains the fifteenth century wooden sculpture “Madonna della Misericordia”, the so-called “la Madonna bella” and, in the crypt, the fourteenth century Gothic Sarcophagus of “Sant’Ansovino”, ancient Bishop of the town.

From the impressive Stronghold of Cesarew Borgia, which was destined to protect the western sides of the hill where the town rises up, there is a breathtaking view over the « Sibillini » Mountains.

Not far from the town walls stands the Roman Gothic Church of « San Venzio », which was later rebuilt in neo-classical style.

About 3 km away from the

town centre, in Renacavata area, rises up the Capuchin Convent, mother house of the order, dating back to 1528.

The church preserves a magnificent decorated majolica in a showcase attributed to Mattia della Robbia.

The most typical Camerino's specialties are: the “ciauscolo”, a kind of spreadable salami, the nougat and the walnut bread.

INFO

Commune of Camerino

EVENTS

**Historical pageant of the
“Corsa alla Spada e Palio” - May**

**International Festival of music
and chamber theatre - August**

Note: the historic center, the monuments and the museums of the town are partially accessible. For information please contact the commune.

CINGOLI



Geographically located in the centre of the Marche Region at the top of Monte Circe, **Cingoli** offers a 360° view of the hills of the surrounding territory. In the background, the Apennines lie on one side and the Adriatic sea and Monte Conero on the other, deserving the name of “the Balcony of the Marche Region”.

Originally a Roman *municipium*, Cingoli was the birthplace of the Roman General Titus Labienus and, more recently, of Pope Pius VIII.

The centre is characterized by a series of noble residences with exteriors of warm-coloured plaster and Renaissance portals.

Visiting the town is a pleasant experience, with an impressive atmosphere of ageless calm, also because the centre is almost fully closed to traffic. Many churches are worth a visit: the Cathedral dedicated to “Santa Maria Assunta”, the Church of “San Filippo Neri”, the Church of “San Niccolò” and the Church of “San Domenico”, which contains the great painting Madonna of the Rosary by “Lorenzo Lotto”.

The laical buildings are the Town Hall, the “Palazzo Conti”, “Palazzo Puccetti” and “Palazzo Castiglioni”, where Pope Pius VIII was born.

It is worth visiting: the Archaeological Museum, which

preserves findings of the nearby site of “Moscosi”, dating back to the Bronze age, and the Civic Picture Gallery.

Outside the city walls lie the Collegiate Church of St. “Esuperanzio”, with its beautiful Romanesque façade, where numerous artworks are preserved, and the Sanctuary of “Santa Sperandia”, whose original structure dates back to the thirteenth century.

The municipal area of Cingoli is extensive and very well preserved: it is possible to take nature excursions in the many woods and forests on the slopes of “Monte San Vicino”, and in the area of Lake “Castreccioni”.

INFO

Commune of Cingoli

EVENTS

“I Giovedì dell'Arte” - Art Thursdays

July/August

Cingoli 1848



CORINALDO



Strategically located between the cities of Ancona and Urbino, **Corinaldo** preserves its undamaged fifteenth century surrounding walls.

They feature impressive walls, interrupted by gates, polygonal bastions, towers of various shapes and ramparts, one of which - crenellated and sharp in form - is attributed to Francesco di Giorgio Martini. The fortress is noted for having withstood a deadly siege by the Duke Francesco Maria della Rovere.

It is worth taking a walk around

the walls - over 900 meters in circumference - in the shade of a series of lime trees that surround the historic centre. Enclosed within these walls are the remains of the previous town walls, which date back to 1367.

The typically mediaeval town centre is a succession of narrow streets and brick houses. The most attractive, typical street of the town is "Via Piaggia", also known as the "Cento Scale" (a hundred steps), which ascends straight up to the "Piazza del Terreno" at the

top of the hill. The Venetian painter "Claudio Ridolfi" lived and worked in Corinaldo in the seventeenth century. He was dedicated the Art Town collection that houses works by "Ercole Ramazzani" and "Domenico Peruzzini".

The town was the birthplace of "Santa Maria Goretti", so you can visit the house and shrine dedicated to her.

In the area of "Santa Maria del Piano", the church of the same name - subject to excavation works - represents a showcase for investigation of the ancient mediaeval settlement.

INFO

Commune of Corinaldo

EVENTS

"Contesa del pozzo della polenta"
historical pageant - July

Corinaldo Jazz - August

Halloween
"La Festa delle Streghe"
October

FRONTINO



Parco interregionale del
Sasso Simone e Simoncello



Frontino is, by population, the smallest Municipality in the Province of Pesaro and Urbino and in the Montefeltro Mountain Community. Its territory is part of the Natural Park of Sasso Simone e Simoncello where, in Pian dei Prati, during the summer months a Wildlife Park can be visited. Boasting a number of breathtaking panoramic views, Frontino is dominated by Mount Carpegna and at his feet lies the valley of the river Mutino, whose stones pave its internal streets.

These stones were used to build beautiful towers, the castle walls and the fountains by Franco Assetto, the great artist from Turin precursor of pop art and promoter of the artistic movement “Baroque Ensemb-

liste”, who left most of his works to the city of Frontino. The museum in the old town centre is infact devoted to him. The pride of the town is the **thirteenth century convent of Montefiorentino**. According to tradition it was founded by St. Francis in 1213 and it is one of the largest monasteries in The Marches. From its church comes the Altarpiece by Alvise Vivarini, which is now on display at the National Gallery of Urbino.

The monastery includes a small cloister and preserves the **Renaissance Chapel of the Oliva Counts**, built in 1484 and a masterpiece of Renaissance art, attributed to Francesco De Simone Ferrucci da Fiesole, where it can also be found the beautiful altarpiece by Giovanni Santi, Raffaello's father, and a fresco attributed to Evangelista da Piandimeleto.

The fourteenth century **water mill** known as “di Ponte Vec-

chio”, which supplied flour and bread to the castle, has a guard and a defense tower and it now houses the “Museo del Pane” (Museum of Bread). The **monastery of San Girolamo**, a wonderful place surrounded by oak trees, has recently been restored and it is now used as a service residence. It consists of a church, a convent and a service dependence. The back wall of the dining hall is adorned with one Last Supper. The upper floor houses the old monks' cells. Among the flavours of this earth are to remember the black truffle and the bean, to which some events are dedicated, the organic baked goods, dairy products and beef.

For over thirty years in Frontino has been taking place the National Literary Prize “Frontino Montefeltro”.

Since 2014 it has been acknowledged as one of The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy.

INFO

Comune of Frontino

Via Giovanni XXII 5 (Town Hall offices)

EVENTS

National Prize for Culture “Frontino - Montefeltro”

October

Black Truffle Festival

1st weekend of August

Feast of leguminous plants of Montefeltro

1st weekend of September



GENGA



The **castle of Genga** is located in the heart of the Regional Park of “Gola della Rossa e di Frasassi”; its origins are linked to “Pierosara” (ancient Longobardic family of Castelpetroso) and the Monastery of San Vittore.

The name of the village originates from the family of “Conti della Genga”, feudatories who built the imposing palace and the fine medieval walls. In the town centre it is worth visiting the Church of “Santa Maria Assunta” and the “Museo di Arte Sacra” (Museum of Sacred Art) which is rich in valuable works of art.



INFO

Commune of Genga

“Frasassi” caves

**Regional Natural Park of
“Gola della Rossa e di Frasassi”**

EVENTS

Autumn Festival
October/November

Live Nativity Scene
December

The territory of the town has a number of attractions: the *Frasassi Caves*, discovered in 1971, are one of the most interesting and well-known karst subterranean system in Italy. The Romanesque Abbey of “San Vittore alle Chiuse”, one of the most important buildings of the region, is located in this area. Next to the Abbey, there is the Speleological Museum, whose most important attraction is an ichthyosaur fossil, a kind of rare marine reptile which lived 150 million years ago.

The “Gola di Frasassi” is a succession of breathtaking

places, woods and caves to be discovered: climbing up you will see the octagonal church commissioned by Pope Leone XII (coming from Genga) and built by Valadier inside a cave, as well as the ancient Monastery of “Santa Maria infra saxa”, located inside a natural cave.

San Vittore has a health spa with sulphur water containing sodium and chloride for the treatment of respiratory diseases. In the area of Genga and the park you can go hiking, enjoy mountain biking, canoeing and horse riding.

GRADARA



Gradara is definitely linked to the romance of Paolo and Francesca, the lovers immortalized by Dante in his “Divina Commedia” (Poem V). The tourist can easily plunge into the medieval atmosphere of knights, weapons and love, by visiting the fortress and its fortified village which overlooks the landscape of this strip of land located in northern Marche. Gradara has two walls: the most external one, crowned by theatres and squared crenellated towers, has a strong visual impact on the visitor; going through the Clock Gate, the only doorway,

you enter the village. Via Umberto I, full of short buildings with shops, coffee bars and restaurants, leads to the intermediate walls, which separate the village from the squared Fortress with a polygonal tower in the north-eastern side. The town plan of Gradara dates back to the twelfth century, but extensions and modifications occurred under the rule of the Malatesta and Sforza families, until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The interiors are decorated with fifteenth and sixteenth century pieces of furniture, and contain frescoes

by Aspertini, and altarpieces by Andrea della Robbia and Giovanni Santi.

Around the castle you can take the path “Sentiero degli innamorati” (the lover’s path) that surrounds the hill, where you can enjoy the sharecropping landscape over Pesaro, full of both cultivated lands and wood areas.

The most typical dish is the «bigol», a kind of homemade spaghetti topped with mushroom or meat.

INFO

Commune of Gradara

EVENTS

“Gradara d’amare” - (Gradara to love)
February

Solstice in the Castle
Thursday in the Castle
June/September

Siege in the Castle
July

GROTTAMMARE



The village of **Grottammare** is located on the edge of a hill overlooking the Adriatic Sea. The historical centre of Grottammare, with rural houses and medieval alleys, is generally called the “Vecchio Incasato” (while the historical name is “Castrum Gruptarum ad Tisinum”); it is located around the remains of the eleventh century fortress and it is surrounded by walls.

Along the walls it is worth visiting the Tower of Battle, a sixteenth century fortification recently renovated, housing the museum dedicated to the sculptor “Pericle Fazzini”, author of the famous Resurrection in the Nervi Hall at the Vatican.

It is lovely to walk around the village, where Pope “Sisto V” was born and his memories are still alive: the Church of St John the Baptist, that today houses the “Sistino” Museum, with the objects that the Pope offered to his town, the sixteenth century Church of “Santa Lucia”, built by the Pope nearby his home, and the eighteenth century “Arancio” Theatre (Orange Theatre), with the statue of the Pope on the façade.

The historical centre is surrounded by Mediterranean vegetation, with orange groves and agaves.

In the lower part of the village, especially along “Viale Colombo”, there are fine cottages in liberty style.

The seafront is one of the most outstanding of the region, with a lush palm line, imported from Canary Islands during the early years of the twentieth century.

INFO

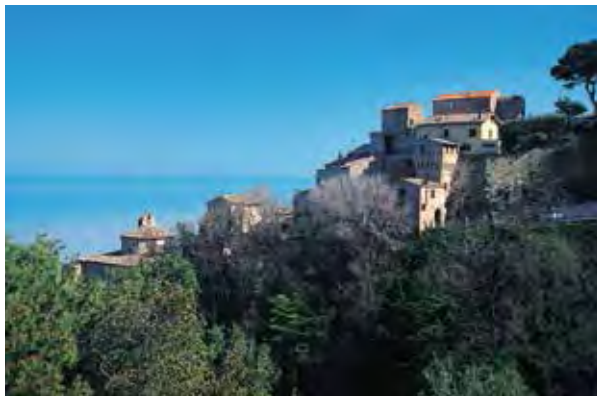
Commune of Grottammare

Hotel Association
“Riviera delle Palme”

EVENTS

“Cabaret amore mio”
(Cabaret my love)
International Festival of humour
July/August

Liszt Festival
July/August



MACERATA FELTRIA

Macerata Feltria, the Roman Pitinum Pisarense, is nestled in a green valley on the border among the Regions of The Marches, Romagna and Tuscany, in the heart of Montefeltro and it boasts a landscape of great beauty. A prime land for its geographical location, a moderate climate, natural and cultural resources and the richness of its thermal springs, make it an ideal place for a full recovery of health and a complete relaxation. Not by chance, it is one of The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy”.

The Village is home to the eighteenth century *Palazzo Antimi Clari*, the beautiful Theatre “A.

Battelli” of 1932 fully restored and operational, the nineteenth-century Parish Church of *St. Michael the Archangel* in which is preserved a precious *Crucifix painted on wood by Olivuccio di Ceccarello* in 1396, and the *Pitinum Thermae*, the thermal First Level Super, where you can practice all types of spa sulfur treatments . In the basement of the Church of Santa Chiara (thirteenth century) is a *Museum of industrial archeology*, which exposes equipment in perfect working order.

In the basement of the Church of Santa Chiara (thirteenth century) is a *Museum of Industrial Archeology*, which exposes equipment in perfect working order.

Along the road leading to the castle you can find the Church of St. Francis, built in the fourteenth century and rebuilt in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with a Gothic portal and frescoes of the fifteenth century and also

the remains of its ancient monastery, which now houses the *Museum of Vintage Radio*, the second public museum of antique radios in Italy. The Palace of the Podestà (twelfth century) houses the *Civic Museum of Archaeology and Palaeontology*.

Across the river stands the Castle (eleventh and fourteenth centuries) with a pyramidal shape, placed on a hill and surrounded by walls, on the top of which stands the Torre Civica where palaeontological specimens are displayed. Near the southern entrance of the Castle is located the Arc of the Pelasgians, the mythical “Sea Peoples” of the pre-Hellenic Greece, founders of the town .

On the road to Carpegna stands the Romanesque church of San Cassiano in Pitino near which you can see the excavations which have revealed the remains of the Pitinum Pisarense and in particular of an ancient Roman road.

INFO

Commune of Macerata Feltria
Via Antimi 14 (Town Hall offices)

EVENTS

Tuesday weekly market

Kids' carnival, last sunday of carnival

Antique fair of San Giuseppe
saturday and sunday close to march 19th

Jewels in Macerata Feltria
first weekend of august

Wonderland, december 8th

Theatre season, from december to april





MERCATELLO SUL METAURO

The village, which was one of the most important castles of the ancient region of Massa Trabaria, retains medieval features; its walls are protected by the groove of two water courses: "Metauro" and "Sant'Antonio". In the central "Piazza Garibaldi" stands the Collegiate Church, which still

preserves the walls of the earliest Romanesque building, with beautiful Gothic windows and an old Byzantine icon representing "Madonna delle Grazie" retained in a precious golden and painted wooden shrine.

The museum of the Collegiate Church contains a wide

collection of Sacred decorations. The Church of "San Francesco", located in the square with the same name, is a very beautiful building dating back to the Romanesque Gothic time and renovated in the fifteenth century. It boasts a number of artworks: a fourteenth century crucifix by Giovanni da Rimini and the tomb of "Bartolomeo Brancaloni", who was lord of Mercatello in the first half of the fifteenth century, stand out in the apse. The area of Mercatello sul Metauro is well known for its truffles, both black and white, which are the main ingredients of the local dishes.



INFO

Commune of Mercatello sul Metauro

EVENTS

"Palio del Somaro"
Traditional Italian Donkey race
July

MONDAVIO



Situated on a hill at 280 m above sea level, between the valleys of the Metauro and Cesano rivers, with views that sweep from the Adriatic to the Apennines, the beautiful historic centre is among the best preserved of the Marche Region.

Mondavio was ruled by the Malatesta, the Piccolomini, Medici, the Montefeltro and the Della Rovere families until 1631, when it passed to the Church State. Apparently decentralised, Mondavio became a soldering centre and a focal point for a perfected system of fortifications, as well as an administrative hub and a commercial, religious

and cultural centre of an extensive territory.

Today it is still protected by its walls and defended by a mighty fortress, and its palaces and churches witness a glorious past.

The Fortress is considered to be the greatest landmark in Mondavio, commissioned by Giovanni della Rovere and designed by the Sienese architect "Francesco di Giorgio Martini". It was built between 1482 and 1492. Today it is seat of the Museum of Historical Pageant and Armoury in the Fortress. An exhibition of the "war machines" of Francesco di Giorgio Martini has been set up in the castle moat, with

careful reconstructions of real-size catapults, trebuchets, bombards and other siege machines. The historic centre is surrounded by a wall system of 780 m. in length; the most remarkable monuments are: "Palazzo dei Malatesta", the church of "San Francesco", the Collegiate Church of "Ss. Pietro e Paterniano", the fourteenth century "Palazzo della Comunanza", the old Institute managing the Community Property, and the Theatre "Apollo", built in the mid-eighteenth century on the ruins of a fifteenth century church.

The former Convent of "San Francesco" houses the Town Museum with interesting documents of art and history like the Virgin Mary with Child by Olivuccio di Ceccarello.

INFO

Province of Pesaro-Urbino

EVENTS

"Nino" Festival - January

Boar-hunting and Renaissance banquet - August

MONDOLFO



Mondolfo, an ancient village placed as a balcony overlooking the sea, its name comes from *Castrum Montis Offi*, that is the Mount of Offe, the forefather of the feudal family who had the lordship of the castle until the advent of the Malatesta.

The first circle of walls, oval-shaped, dates back to the sixth century. A.D. It belonged to a Byzantine castrum having a regular urban structure.

In the fourteenth century Mondolfo passed under the rule of the Malatesta, then the Montefeltro and Della Rovere, under whose rule the new boundary wall and a mighty fortress were built (and then demolished destroyed in the nineteenth century) by Francesco di Giorgio Martini. The

heart of the castle is the large central square dominated by the Town Hall from which ray-shaped alleys and staircases start in different directions. Alongside is the Collegiate Church of Santa Giustina, with a Baroque interior that preserves an eighteenth century organ by Gaetano Callido. In the Oratory of "San Giovanni Decollato" a crucifix which is considered as miraculous and a Baroque painting portraying Salome with the Head of St. John are exhibited. Among the civil buildings worthy to be mentioned are Palazzo Giraldi della Rovere, Palazzo Peruzzi and the Bastion of Saint Anne, that once its military function was over, has become an elegant Italian garden.

Outside the city walls there are the Church and the Convent of St. Augustine, with works by Claudio Ridolfi and Giovan Francesco Guerrieri; the Convent of San Sebastiano and the Abbey of San Gervasio of Bulgaria, founded in the fifth-sixth century, that houses an important sarcophagus from Ravenna area dating back to sixth century.

A few kilometers far from the old town center, Marotta is a pleasant seaside resort to which the Blue Flag was awarded. The rural and marine soul of Mondolfo can be found in its typical products and cuisine, where dishes based on bean flour and fish (Spaghetti Mondolfese) and "garagoj" (molluscs) play a leading role.

INFO

Commune of Mondolfo

EVENTS

"La Spaghetтата" - March

"Sagra dei Garagoj" - April



MONTE GRIMANO TERME



Monte Grimano Terme, formerly called Mons Germanus, is situated on a spur overlooking the valley of the Conca and, thanks to its 600 m above sea level, it offers pure air, a mild climate and the atmosphere of hill landscapes. As an old medieval castle, it

was important in the disputes between the Montefeltro from Urbino, for whom it represented a defensive stronghold, and the Malatesta from Rimini.

Today, it represents a true gateway to the Montefeltro for people coming from Romagna. Immersed in an enchanting natural scenery, the precious healing alkaline, sulphurous and saline-bromic-iodic waters used in the well-equipped hydrotherapy station, flow from the slopes of the near S. Paolo mountain. The proposed natural methods of the thermal station exploit the properties of herbs and mud. The Centre also hosts a modern spa for medical and aesthetic treatments. This is an ideal place to regenerate body and spirit, characterized as it is by gardens, woodlands and trails where you can meet squirrels,

hares, deer and hawks.

The urban layout of its old town centre has a spiral shape of typical medieval origin. The fifteenth-century Civic Tower is what remains of the Medieval Palace. In the parish church of San Silvestro, built at the end of the eighteenth century and designed by Cosimo Morelli from Imola in neoclassical style, but altered, there is an organ dating back to the 1700-1800, a musical jewel of a little less than 500 barrels, now inventoried as a cultural asset of the Marche Region. Thanks to the fulfillment of the criteria for admission to the Most Beautiful Villages in Italy, Montegrimano Terme came to be part of this exclusive Club that aims at safeguarding, preserving and revitalizing small settlements that, despite their great value, risk to be forgotten.

INFO

Commune of Monte Grimano Terme

Monte Grimano Terme Spa

EVENTS

Festival of the Pig
January/February

Festival of Montefeltro black truffle
July

Festival of Montefeltro good meat
August

Festival of gourmet pasta
September

MONTECASSIANO



Montecassiano is a Medieval village located in the heart of the Marche Region, among the hills of Macerata; it is surrounded by high walls overlooking the valley of the river “Potenza”.

The town planning of the village is made of concentric ring roads which, following the hill shape, join on the top, in the central square. Here stood the castle of “Santa Maria in Cassiano”, attested as early as 1151, with the name of “Castrium Montis Sanctae Mariae”. The Palace of “Priori” rises up in Piazza Leopardi, where in the past the castle court was located, with a crenellated façade and porch; the Town Council Meeting Room of the Palace houses an altarpiece with Virgin, Saints and musician angels by Johannes Hispanus.

The nearby Collegiate Church of “Santa Maria Assunta”, built by the Benedictine monks of the Abbey of “Fiasstra”, with a beautiful terracotta façade, houses a splendid terracotta altarpiece by “Mattia della Robbia”. In the Church of “San Marco” is preserved an archaeological collection and the Church of “Santi Filippo e Giacomo” is the seat



of the gathering place of the “Seven Brotherhoods”. The discovery of the village has to include beautiful historical courtyards which have been recently restored: the Augustinian cloister, housing the Tasting Centre, the Garden of “San Giacomo” and the courtyard of the Monastery of the Poor Clares. These historical places liven up every summer on the occasion of the “Palio dei Terzieri”. In Autumn in Montecassiano you can taste a typical specialty of the Marche Region: “li sughitti”, a kind of pudding made with the grape must according to the local farming tradition.

INFO

Commune of Montecassiano

Tourist information

EVENTI

“Palio dei Terzieri”
July

Festival of “Sughitti”
October

MONTECOSARO



Montecosaro is between Civitanova and Macerata on a hill overlooking the valley of the river Chienti and looks like a small castle facing the sky. The historical centre, which can be reached through the Door of “San Lorenzo”, is surrounded by the fourteenth century walls. In central “Piazza Trieste” stand the nineteenth century “Teatro delle Logge”, “Palazzo Cesarini”, former “Palazzo dei Priori”, the medieval town tower rebuilt in the eighteenth century and the Collegiate Church of San Lorenzo, featuring its original Romanesque tenth century bell tower and housing a large wooden pre-Giotto crucifix.

On the other side of the square, further historical monuments are the Augustinian Complex, including the Church of “Sant’Agostino”, built around the middle of the thirteenth century, and the Town Hall, a former monastery of the Augustinians. Finally it is worth visiting the garden of “Cassero”, an ancient fortified fortress, whose tower no longer exists; here the view sweeps from sea to hills. Not far from the town centre there is the Church of “San Rocco”, with its octagonal plan and beautiful frescoes attributed to “Simone de Magistris”. The most remarkable tourist attraction is the Romanesque

Basilica of “Santa Maria a piè di Chienti”, or “Santissima Annunziata”, which is located in the village of Montecosaro Scalo. The church is probably of Longobardic origin as the historical documents prove its existence since 936 and two inscriptions document that most of the present building was commissioned by Abbot Agenolfo and consecrated in 1125.

The building has two floors with a *matroneum* and alabaster windows, the walls retain fragments of frescoes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The apse features volumetric effects due to the combination of various small apses.

INFO

Commune of Montecosaro

Tourist Information

EVENTS

“Contesa dei Ducati” - Duchy Duel
August





MONTEDINOVE

Montedinove stands on a hill at 561 m above sea level, between the Aso and Tesino valleys, at the foot of Mount Ascension.

It belongs to the Mountain Community of the Sibillini Mountains and to the association of the Authentic villages of Italy.

The territory, inhabited in the Picena age, welcomed the “ascolani” seeking shelter from the Longobards in 578 a.c.

Later, the territory was donated in 1039 by “Longino” to the Abbey of “Farfa”, and the “Farfensi” built the fortifications to defend the town.

In 1239 it was besieged by King Enzo and was victorious after two years. In 1279 the town became a free Commune, while in 1586, under Pope Sixtus V, entered the “Presidia to of Montalto”.

In the following centuries Montedinove was under the Church and Italy.

Walking in the old town you will be fascinated by the beauty of many art treasures, like the town wash houses, the “fountains of the aqueduct Pollesio”, the coat of arms of the XIV century Congregation of “sutores” (tailors) and the elegant XV century loggia. Around the main square there are: the “Palazzo Comunale” (Town Hall) with the porch and the

bell tower, the church of Santa Maria de ‘Cellis, documenting the presence of the Templars in the Piceno area, especially for the unique portal, and the Church of San Lorenzo. The ruins of the fortifications, such as “Porta della Vittoria”, one of the two entrances to the village, also known as “Porta Marina”, and the ruins of a medieval tower are also worth visiting. In the village you can find an eighteenth house with an elegant Renaissance style loggia. Outside the town you can visit the shrine of St. Thomas Becket, built in the seventeenth century and dedicated to the English saint, killed in 1170 by Henry II in Canterbury Cathedral.

INFO

Commune of Montedinove

Tourist Information
Pro Loco (Travel Bureau)
Montedinove

EVENTS

Feast of St. Thomas
first Sunday in June

Feast of San Lorenzo
10th August

Montedinove Flavors and Art
12th and 13th August

“E...state in Montedinove”
August

“Sibillini in Rosa”
November



MONTEFABBRI DI VALLEFOGLIA



Montefabbri is a small village in the municipality of Colbordolo, standing out along the road linking the towns of Pesaro and Urbino. Its town plan dates back to the fifteenth century with groups of brick houses surrounded by castle walls, around them the habitat is still intact and striking. The sightseeing of the village is like a backwards time travel: the atmosphere is still like the one of the past centuries, full of peace and intimacy: you go through the arch where was located the lift bridge, on the arch you

can see the fifteenth century “Madonna Lattante” engraved in the sandstone.

Its main attraction is the Church of “San Gaudenzio”, one of the oldest churches of the Parish of Urbino. It was probably built between the seventh and eighth centuries and was dedicated to the first Bishop of Rimini who was martyred approximately in 360. The church houses a number of decorative works made with the technique of the poor canary grass, all in black and white. The church is rich in marble and has a

twelfth century crypt, that houses the remains of “Santa Marcellina” (moved from Rome in 1666) and a fifteenth century bell tower, which is 25 m. high. The apse half-dome of the Baptistry is taken from a Roman marble stone.

From Montefabbri you can also reach the village of Colbordolo, birthplace of Giovanni Santi, Raphael’s father and a painter himself. In the town centre, retaining the old walls, there’s the Romanesque church of “San Giovanni Battista” with a valuable painting by Claudio Ridolfi. The area near Colbordolo is well-known for the production of top quality extra virgin olive oil and DOC wine from Colli Pesaresi.

INFO

Commune of Colbordolo

Province of Pesaro-Urbino

EVENTS

Celebration of “Santa Marcellina”

July

“Table around the walls”

August

MONTEFIORE DELL'ASO



INFO

Commune of Montefiore dell'Aso

EVENTS

Carnival of Montefiore

February

Festival of cinema symphonies

August

"Palio delle Botti"

September

Montefiore dell'Aso is a small village in the "Piceno" area situated on a hill along the valley of river "Aso". It has a panoramic view over the surrounding landscape, from the coast to Sibillini Mountains. The old town is well-preserved with a number of remaining sections of the surrounding walls equipped with doors and six great towers dating back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The heart of the town is "Piazza della Repubblica" which is dominated by the paleochristian Collegiate Church of Saint Lucia, later

rebuilt in neoclassical style. The Museum of "San Francesco", inaugurated in 2007 in the old Convent, contains the eminent artistic history of the village: the remains of the precious polyptych of the Renaissance are displayed in "Carlo Crivelli" room; unfortunately it was dismembered, with Saint Peter among the Saints "Caterina d'Alessandria" and Magdalene; the museum "Adolfo De Carolis" documents the activity of the woodcut artist who was born and lived in Montefiore; the modern section houses the

works by "Domenico Cantatore". There are some other exhibitions such as the "Museum of Farming Culture" and the "theatrical documentation centre Giancarlo Basili" who made the setting. Next to the museum it is worth visiting the fourteenth century Church of "San Francesco", modified in the seventeenth century, boasting fourteenth century frescoes in the upper part of the apse.

MONTELUPONE



The village of **Montelupone**, nestling between Macerata and the sea on the hills along the valley of Potenza river, is one of the little towns in the Marche Region that has better preserved its historical heritage: its walls retain the earliest four doorways and the roads feature the ancient stone paving.

The heart of the village is the square of the Town Hall, a kind of “sitting room” overlooked by the fourteenth century “Palazzetto Podestà”, a rectangular building with a mullioned portico; nearby the majestic town tower, with ghibellines crenellation, has the oldest coat of arms in the town, the clock and the great bronze bell.

On the “piano nobile” (main

floor) of the building there is the the “Corrado Pellini” Town Picture Gallery and Museum, where the “Madonna Immacolata” by Ernest Van Schaych is displayed.

The nineteenth-century Town Hall with its neo-classical portico, designed by the Architect “Ireneo Aleandri”, is located next to the building; inside there is a real surprise: the historical Theatre “Nicola Degli Angeli”, with ceiling painted in 1887 by “Domenico Ferri”, where a group of young boys acting as musician angels, are hanged in a cloud sky. It is also worth visiting the thirteenth-century Church of “San Francesco” and the Church of “Santa Chiara”.

It is very pleasant to go on discovering the historical town

centre, as there are a number of historic buildings owned by aristocratic families with beautiful façades.

The nineteenth-century Benedictine Abbey of “San Firmiano” is located not far from the centre and near the river Potenza; it has a doorway with a beautiful Byzantine fanlight and inside, under the great staircase of the presbytery, there is the crypt with the remains and polychrome terracotta statue of the Saint. Montelupone is not only history and art: it boasts a rural and agricultural tradition: the most typical products are artichokes and honey.

Industry is very developed too: in the village there are important companies at an international level.



INFO

Commune of Montelupone

Tourist information

EVENTS

Festival of “San Firmiano”

March

Festival of the artichoke

May



MONTERUBBIANO



The Church of “Santa Maria dell’Olmo” or “Santa Lucia”, embellished by a statue of the seventeenth century Veneto Saint School, is interesting, too.

Each year the event “Sciò la Pica” commemorates the ancient colonization by the Piceni tribes, who came to the Marche, led by a woodpecker. The most typical dish is the “fried noodle”, whose recipe is kept strictly secret.

The ancient ***Castrum Montis Rubbiani*** from 1000 AD was the result of the union of three fortified towns - a clear sign of a disputed territory, especially with neighbouring Fermo.

In 1443, the town fell under the occupation of the Sforza dynasty, which then surrendered to the Papacy. Its fortified walls bears the typical mark of Sforza influence: they were much bigger than the buildings inside.

Monterubbiano has lost most of its fortified wall system, except for the tower of the keep and some sections of the walls, but its mediaeval

plan is unchanged. Worth visiting are the fourteenth century “Palazzo Comunale” (town hall), which houses the archaeological and art museum collections, the collegiate Church of “Santa Maria dei Letterati”, housing works by the native “Vincenzo Pagani”, who has been dedicated the nineteenth century Theatre, the old Romanesque Church of the “SS. Stefano e Vincenzo” dating back to the eleventh century as well as the thirteenth century Church of the “SS. Giovanni Battista ed Evangelista” boasting eighteenth century frescoes.

INFO

Commune of Monterubbiano

Tourist Information

EVENTI

Withsun Army “Sciò la pica”
May

Festival of the “fried noodle”
August

MORESCO



The **Castle of Moresco**, with its alleys, square portico, frescoes and ancient buildings perfectly preserved, takes the tourist into a medieval and magic atmosphere.

It is situated on the top of a hill overlooking the surrounding Valley of "Aso". During the Middle Ages it was the stronghold of the town of Fermo in the war against the town of Ascoli. Its strategic position is undeniable: the village has a breathtaking view that sweeps from "Monte Conero" to "Gran Sasso". The triangular shaped village, completely surrounded by medieval walls, features the imposing heptagonal twelfth century tower.

The other tower, called the clock tower, dating back to

the fourteenth century, dominates the old doorway of the castle and it is framed by a fifteenth century elegant portico. The left aisle of the earliest church of S Maria Castro is now the portico, at the sides of the square, frescoed by "Vincenzo Pagani" (Madonna with Child).

The town hall houses a small art gallery, boasting many works coming from churches and private collections; the main work is a large altar piece by Pagani, featured in the Council meeting room.

Outside the walls worth visiting are: the Sanctuary of the "Madonna della Salute" and the Church of Our Lady of the Elm, with a niche frescoed by Pagani dividing the church

INFO

Commune of Moresco

EVENTS

"Sagra della polenta con le vongole"
Festival of the "polenta" (corn mush) with clams - August

"Festa della Madonna della Salute"
Festival of Our Lady of Health
October

"Festa del Braciere"
Festival of the brazier - October

into two parts in an unusual and original way. The Church of "Santa Sofia", which can be reached passing under the Clock Tower, has been deconsecrated and is now known as "lu teatri". Actually it was turned into a small theatre. The church houses an interesting fresco by the school of "Carlo Crivelli" (1430-95).

The valley of Aso, at the foot of Moresco, is well-known for its fruit and vegetables crops. The peach of the "Valle dell'Aso" is one of the most famous peaches in Italy thanks to organic farming.

OFFAGNA



Offagna, located near Ancona and “Monte Conero”, is overlooked by its squared fortress standing out as a solitary watch person over the surrounding hills. Built in the middle of the fifteenth century on the ruins of an old castle, it is one of the most beautiful and impressive fortresses in the region. It is quadrangular and rises on a sandstone cliff increasing its defensive characteristics. It still retains the massive five-floor tower, that now houses a Museum of Ancient Weapons. The sentry's walkways run along the fortified walls, hemmed by dove-tail battlements. The village

around the fortress is pretty small, but full of remarkable buildings: the church of “SS. Sacramento”, which is circular in plan, was built by the Architect “Andrea Vici” in pure neo-classical style. Andrea Vici designed also the Monastery of “Santa Zita”, which is a fortified building. The Church of Saint “Lucia”, attested as early as fourteenth century, keeps a wooden crucifix dating back to the sixteenth century as well as seventeenth century paintings: an altar piece devoted to Saint “Bernardino”, Patron Saint of the village, is featured in the Church of “San Tommaso”. The sightseeing

of the village goes on in the Provincial Museum of Natural science “Luigi Paolucci”, with interesting paleontological, mineralogical, zoological and botanical collections and the Regional Museum of the Liberation of Ancona attesting the phases of the passage of the allied coalition in the Marche Region. The typical specialty of the village is the “crescia”, a kind of flat bread cooked on the grill and served with a variety of herbs, the so-called “foie de campo”. Rosso Conero is the local outstanding red wine, whose vineyards are throughout the surrounding countryside.

INFO

Commune of Offagna

Tourist information

EVENTS

Offagna in bloom
May

Medieval Festivals
July

“Colombaccio”
Fair
September



OFFIDA



Offida is located on the spurs of a Rocky Mountain between the valleys of “Tesino” and “Tronto”; the village is surrounded by the ancient walls (Mure Castellane) dating back to the fifteenth century. A good way of visiting this town is to begin with the monument to the *Merlettaie* (lace-workers), depicting three generations of women engaged in the local artisan trade *par excellence*: bobbin lace, which is still in common practice. Indeed, while ambling around the town centre you will often see women busily working their small wooden bobbins in the shady entrance-halls of their own houses. The heart of the town is the Piazza del Popolo, with its unusual triangular shape, overlooked by buildings erected in different styles and materials, but which nevertheless retain

an unusual aspect of harmony and beauty. The “Palazzo Comunale” (town hall) is on the main side of the square, with an elegant loggia formed by 13 treverine arches and a portico raised in the fifteenth century and formed by brick collums with travertine capitals. From the portico you can reach a hidden marvel: the wonderful Theatre of the “Serpente Aureo”, built in the eighteenth century, with gilded stucco and intaglio. The square is overlooked by the eighteenth century *Church of Collegiata*, with a façade in a heterogeneous style. The old town centre offers a number of surprises to discover: noble residences, fountains, churches as well as the most important worship building which is located on the border of the residential area, on a cliff: the Church of

“Santa Maria della Rocca”, an imposing cotto-tile building in Roman-Gothic style, was built in 1330 on the foundations of an existing small longobardic church boasting very beautiful fourteenth century frescoes attributed to the Master of Offida. The visit of Offida includes the best local wine and food products. The specialties to taste in the village are: “chichi ripieno” (a flat bread with tuna, anchovies, capers and peppers), the so-called Offida’s “mushrooms” (anise-based sweet cakes) and Offida’s DOC and DOCG wines. The former convent of “San Francesco” now houses one of the two sections of the “Enoteca Regionale” (*Wine Bar*, the other is located in the town of Jesi), important and dynamic centre for the promotion and tasting of the Marche Region wines.



INFO

Commune of Offida

Regional Wine Cellar in Offida

EVENTS

Carnival of Offida, February

Festival of the “chichiripieno”, August

Offida Opera Festival, September

“Di Vino in Vino” - From Wine to Wine
September

OSTRA



Situated along the basin of the river “Misa”, **Ostra** was known as “Montalboddo” until 1881 and, according to tradition, it was founded by refugees from the Roman town of Ostra which was destroyed by the Gothic invasions.

It is surrounded by medieval walls with square plan towers, nine of them are still existent. The central square, “Piazza dei Martiri”, is dominated by the neoclassical “Palazzo Comunale” (town hall) and the sumptuous theatre from 1865 – “Teatro La Vittoria”. The square is the focal point that connects the two sides of the ancient settlement: upper Ostra, where the fortress was located and which has typically

medieval circular, winding streets, and lower Ostra with its regular and symmetrical streets - planned for the area around the Abbey of “Santa Croce” and built between 1280 and 1350. The Church of “San Francesco” still occupies a central position and is well worth visiting, boasting frescoes by “Filippo Bellini” and a number of paintings by “Ercole Ramazzani”.

Not far from the centre a must see attraction is the eighteenth century Sanctuary of “Madonna della Rosa”, which houses the miraculous seventeenth century niche dedicated to the Virgin Mary. According to tradition, in 1666 a small girl placed a lily in front

of the image of the Madonna, which remained fresh and fragrant for several months, as if it had only just been plucked. The façade and the bell tower were built in the nineteenth century.

Even today, the shrine is a notable pilgrimage destination and is one of the most important Marian shrines in the region.

The typical products are: “Lacrima di Morro d’Alba”, the local red wine, and the extra virgin olive oil obtained from “raggia” olive, one of finest olive variety of The Marche.

INFO

Commune of Ostra

Tourist information

EVENTS

National exhibition of artistic crafts and antiques
August

“Sprengoli” night
October

ROTELLA



Rotella is on the slopes of Mount Ascension, in the Marche's inland, at the confluence of the Oste stream in the Tese river.

The name could be traced back to the Latin word *Rotula*, which indicated the shield of the Roman soldiers, or may refer to the location of the manor, located on a bight of a river; according to a more certain source, Rotella derives from the diminutive of the Latin word *rota* (small wheel). Although the town has been forced in recent years to an almost total redevelopment due to continuous landslides, the architectural heritage is still remarkable: sacred buildings and remains of the fortifications are scattered throughout the town. In Poggio Canoso area, domi-

nated by the fortress, there's the parish church, with a Romanesque portal a precious painting by Pietro Alemanno; frescoes and precious reliquaries can be found in various religious buildings in Castel di Croce and Capradosso areas; the eleventh century Church of Verdiente is in Icone area. The church has a rectangular shape (1200 x 500), with round apse facing east and full of frescoes. In Torbidello area, in a small clearing at the foot of Mount Ascension, there is the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Consolation or Montemisio. The church was built by the monks of Farfa on the ruins of a pagan temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis or Artemisia. In the village the worth visiting attractions are : the

impressive fifteenth-century clock tower; the rectangular shaped collegiate church of Santa Maria and San Lorenzo (1767), boasting paintings by Filippo Ricci; the Piccolomini museum of sacred art, housing valuable reliquaries.

INFO

Comune of Rotella

Tourist information Pro Loco

EVENTS

**Feast of San Lorenzo
the town's Patron**
August

Feast of Our Lady of Montemisio
August

RIPATRANSONE



High on a ridge between the valleys of the stream “Menocchia” and river “Tesino” stands **Ripatransone**, in a fine panoramic position so as to deserve the title of “balcony of Piceno”. Its position on the ridge of a hill allows long and wide views over most of the highest peaks of the central Apennines as well as the Adriatic coast of “Monte Conero” up to “Gargano”. Its historic centre boasts buildings dating back to the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque time, as well as a curious distinctive feature, the narrowest alley of Italy, only 43 cm. in width.

Inside the town, around “Corso Vittorio Emanuele II” and the square there are several remarkable monuments. The Cathedral, built in 1597 but not completed until 1902, contains seventeenth century statues and paintings; inside you can visit the shrine of the “Madonna di San Giovanni” (Our Lady of St. John), the Patron Saint of the town. Worth visiting is also the fourteenth century “Palazzo del Podestà”, one of the best-preserved public buildings of the Marche Region. It was restored in 1824, and now is known as the “Mercantini” Theatre, dedicated to the poet who wrote the Hymn to Garibaldi. Particularly interesting



are the archaeological Museum, with over three thousand finds, and the Art Gallery, which contains a rich artistic heritage including important works by “Vittore Crivelli” and “Vincenzo Pagani”.

Worth visiting are also the “Museo della Civiltà Contadina e Artigiana” (museum of rural life and handicrafts) and the “Museo del Vasaio” (potter’s museum), with a nearby production workshop.

Among the specialties of the cuisine of Ripatransone are the “lumacone” or large snails (cuccèlú in dialect) and the “ciavarro”, a typical soup of the Piceno area made with different legumes. In Ripatransone’s neighborhood there’s a

good production of extra virgin olive oil and top quality wines, such as “Falerio dei Colli Ascolani” and “Rosso Piceno Superiore”.

INFO

Commune of Ripatransone

Tourist information

EVENTS

“Cavallo di Fuoco” - Fire Horse
First Sunday of Easter

Festival of the Magdalene – July

SAN GINESIO



INFO

Commune of San Ginesio

Tourist information

National Park of Sibillini Mountains

EVENTS

**International Folk Festival
The Balcony of Sibillini Mountains**
August

**"Medievalia" - Historical Pageant,
"Palio di San Ginesio"**
**Traditional Horse Race and "Battaglia
della Fornarina" - Fornarina battle**
August

Note: the historic center, the monuments and the museums of the town are partially accessible.

San Ginesio is a small town with a medieval plant; it is surrounded by an impressive and wide wall system featuring sentry's walkways, embrasures and towers.

Its name derives from its Patron Saint, the Christian martyr whose remains are preserved in the principal monument of the town - the Collegiate Church. Despite its Romanesque style, it has a late Gothic façade, and inside are numerous works of art, including a wooden crucifix and paintings by "Zuccari", "Pomarancio", "Simone de Magistris". The crypt houses delightful early frescoes decorated by Lorenzo Salimbeni in 1406.

The Church of "San Francesco", with its fine doorway and polygonal-shape apse, is almost of the same period as the Collegiate. The museum heritage of San Ginesio can be found in "Scipione Gentili" Art Gallery with the antique section, housing paintings dating back to the mid fifteenth century until the seventeenth century, and the modern section, with contemporary works, musical instruments and holy ornaments. The Municipal Historical Archives, kept intact from 1199 until today and accurately retracing centuries

of the history of the Marche Region, is very important.

One of Marche Region's environmental education centres - "Angolo di Paradiso" (corner of Paradise) - is located within the beech woods of San Ginesio.

The monastery of "San Liberato" is located near "San Liberato" area, in the National Park of the Sibillini Mountains. It was founded at the foot of "Monteragnolo" mountain by the Lords of Brunforte. The remains of the Blessed "Liberato da Loro" were transferred to the monastery; after embracing the rule of St. Francis of Assisi, he had retired to the monastery of Soffiano in penance, until his death.

The new church was called "San Liberato", and the Blessed "Fra' Umile" and "Fra' Pacifico" were also buried in this church: these two friars were companions of the Saint, as well as characters who appeared in two chapters of St. Francis' writings - the "Little Flowers of St. Francis".

The most typical dish is "polenta" (corn mush), obtained with a variety of local corn and a sauce made of different types of meat; the wine "San Ginesio" is one of the fifteen DOC wines of the Marche Region.

SARNANO



Sarnano is situated in the middle of a beautiful valley at the foot of the Sibillini Mountains. Its history is linked to St. Francis of Assisi and his followers; according to the legend the Seraph depicted in the town coat of arms had been drawn by the Saint himself. The medieval historic centre is one of the best preserved of the Marche Region, with the typical urban structure of a walled town, its ancient streets in the form of concentric circles, and with interesting staircases and breathtaking views. “Piazza Alta” is the centre of the ancient settlement, where the town’s principal monuments are located: “Palazzo del Popolo”, transformed in

the nineteenth century into the magnificent “Teatro della Vittoria”, “Palazzo dei Priori”, “Palazzo del Podestà”, and the Church of “Santa Maria Assunta”, housing works by “Pietro Alemanno”.

The Civic Museum and Art Gallery is located inside the former Monastery of St. Clare, and contains a Madonna with child by “Vittore Crivelli”.

Sarnano is also known for its thermal baths: special pure low mineral content waters are extracted.

Sarnano is a spa town: its waters are claimed to be beneficial for a whole gamut of complaints, including gout, arthritis and liver disease. Immersed in the natural scenery

of mountains and surrounding woods, you can cross the territory on numerous trails on foot, horseback or mountain bike. In winter you can enjoy winter sports in the nearby district of Sassotetto-Santa Maria Maddalena.

In Sarnano and in the surrounding territory you can sample the culinary delicacies of the Sibillini region: cold meats and salami, game, vegetables, the simple artisan bread baked in wood-fired ovens. The typical nougat tart is well worth tasting, exclusively hand-made, using almonds, hazelnuts and spices and cooked in a wood burning oven to give them their typically crunchy texture.

INFO

Commune of Sarnano

EVENTS

**National market exhibition
of artistic crafts and antiques**

May/June

“Castrum Sarnani”

August

www.castrumsarnani.org

Note: the historic center, the monuments and the museums of the town are partially accessible.



SASSOFERRATO



Sassoferrato is located in the eastern side of the Apennines; there are two parts: the “Borgo” at about 310 metres above sea level and the “Castle” area, dominated by the ruins of a fourteenth century Fortress, built by Cardinal Albornoz in 1365. In the territory of Sassoferrato is the ancient Roman city of Sentinum. It was here that the Roman army defeated the combined Samnite and Gaul forces in 295 B.C. (Battle of the Nations). There’s the archaeological Sentinum area, with cobblestone streets, the cardo and the decumano, the remains of a thermal temple and the portico of a large building outside the walls of the city. The Archaeological Museum of Sassoferrato, housed in the Palazzo dei Priori, documents the different aspects of everyday

life and society in the ancient Roman city of Sentinum. On the ground floor of the Palazzo dei Priori is the Perottiana Hall, boasting a valuable collection of Byzantine and Flemish reliquaries, including the icon of St. Demetrius.

The Civic Art Collection includes twenty-six valuable paintings dating back to the fifteenth and the late eighteenth century. The main attractions are two paintings made by Giovan Battista Salvi (Sassoferrato 1609 - Rome 1685), the great painter universally known as Il Sassoferrato, whom is dedicated the International Prize of Contemporary Art Exhibition G.B. Salvi, that takes place in summer. You can’t miss: the Museum of the Sulfur mine, located in Cabernardi, documenting the history of one of Europe’s

most important sulfur mines; the Museum of Art and Popular Traditions, housed in a former convent, where a typical local farmhouse is shown; the Collection “Engravers of the Marche”, boasting over four graphics (including seventeen drawings), made by two hundred and ten artists from the Marche.

Another remarkable tourist attraction is the Abbey of the Holy Cross, built in the late twelfth century by Counts Atti with stones from nearby Sentinum.

INFO

Commune of Sassoferrato

EVENTI

Prize of Contemporary
Art Exhibition G.B. Salvi

“Sentino 295 B.C. Battle of the Nations” August
August



SERRA SAN QUIRICO



On the left side of the Esino River lies **Serra San Quirico**, where flies the Orange Flag, an award given by Touring Club Italiano to small inland towns across Italy in recognition of the quality of what they offer the tourist while not sacrificing the environment. The whole territory is covered by the Regional Natural Park of Gola della Rossa and Frasassi.

Some archaeological findings would date the first settlements at the time of the Etruscans. Later the Romans founded a military base, around which the original village developed.

The delightful village houses beautiful monuments; the first thing you'll notice as the village comes into view are the coper-telle, or covered walkways built above the 12th century walls. You can stroll through them taking in the splendid views of the valley below. You can also admire the striking tower

of defense, built between 1360 and 1374. The church of Santa Lucia is one of the region's prettiest high baroque churches built in 1650 on an older church. In amongst the gilt and the cherubs are remarkably fine paintings by Guido Reni, Pasqualino Rossi and Cavaliere D'Arpino. The halls of the former convent of St. Lucia now house the regional Cartoteca, boasting a large collection of cards, maps and engravings. Must see attractions are also the parish church of SS. Quirico and Giuditta, the baroque Church of St. Philip and the former church of

Santa Maria del Mercato, in Romanesque style, now used as a theatre. A few kilometers from the center, in the valley below, is the Abbey of St. Elena, built between 1009 and 1010 in Romanesque-Gothic style. In spring Serra San Quirico hosts the "Theatre Festival of School Children"; during the last week of July you can't miss "Paese dei Balocchi" (Pleasure island), an event dedicated to children, with performances, workshops and recreational activities; at Christmas time Serra San Quirico becomes a Nativity scene village.

INFO

Commune of Serra San Quirico

EVENTI

"Theatre Festival of School Children"

Spring

"Paese dei Balocchi"
(Pleasure island)

July



SERVIGLIANO



Servigliano is a small town in the province of Fermo and it belongs to The most beautiful Villages in Italy association. Its name (which recalls a Servilius or gens Servilia) derives from a Roman settlement.

In 1771 the little town collapsed; it was rebuilt under Pope Clement XIV and took the name of Castel Clementino. It was later rebuilt under Pope Pius VI.

In 1863, with the unification of Italy, it took its original name again. In 1915 a large prison camp was built: from World War I until 1955 there were Austrian, Jews, Greek, British, American and Maltese prisoners.

The most remarkable tourist attractions are: the quadrangular castle walls dating back to the eighteenth century; the ancient Church of Santa Maria del Piano, boasting a statue of the Assumption (XV century), a XV century crucifix and a beautiful elm choir; the former Convent of the Friars Minor; the eighteenth century Collegiate Church of San Marco; the Civic Palace; the bridge over the river Tenna, the old Gates and Palazzo Filoni, which was frescoed in Neoclassical times (it's been damaged by the earthquake in the year 2016).

You can't miss two splendid rural villas: Villa Brancadoro

and Villa Vecchiotti. In mid-August there's a festival - an Historical re-enactment - commemorating the donation of the Plains of San Gualtiero, by the Abbot of Farfa, to the community of Servigliano in 1450.

The solemn "Infiorata of the Corpus Domini" is held in June. From dawn the 'infioratori' begin to set up the splendid floral path in the historical centre square, with scenes between art and sacredness, geometric patterns enhancing the neoclassical architectural structure of the town and figures inspired by the symbols of this Christian festival.

INFO

Commune of Servigliano

EVENTI

"Infiorata of the Corpus Domini"

June

"Torneo Cavalleresco
Castel Clementino"

August



STAFFOLO



Staffolo, known as the “balcony of the Vallesina area” due to its unique panorama, is situated on a hill between the Adriatic Sea and the mountains.

The intact walls are dominated by the so-called “Albornoz” fourteenth century tower.

The parish church of “Sant’Egidio” contains a valuable fifteenth century

polyptych by the so-called “Maestro of Staffolo” and a wooden altar step attributed to the school of Lorenzo Lotto. The Church of San Francesco (St. Francis) dates back to the twelfth century and contains numerous important works, including a wooden choir and a valuable organ built in 1769 by the renowned Venetian organ builder “Gaetano Callido”. The well worth visiting Church

of “Santa Maria di Castellar-etta” is a jewel of baroque art: it was built to commemorate the victory of the Battle of Lepanto.

The “Museo del Vino e dell’Arte Contadina” (museum of wine and rural art) is located near the town walls and aims at promoting the local wine. In the attached wine bar, you can taste and purchase the best wines made in the area; the most typical of them is the Verdicchio.

The village has earned the title of “Colle del Verdicchio” (Verdicchio hill) due to its wine. The vine and the olive are the most thriving traditional cultivations. Staffolo is a member of the National Association of Oil Towns.

INFO

Commune of Staffolo

EVENTS

“Verdicchio” Festival
August

National Prize of the Golden
“Verdicchio”
September

TORRE DI PALME - FERMO



The charming center of **Torre di Palme - Fermo** is a fantastic panoramic balcony on top of a hill dominating the coast and the Adriatic Sea.

Torre di Palme is characterized by the preservation of its environment and the stylistic uniformity of the medieval and Renaissance buildings, elements that make it, despite its small size, one of the most interesting historical centers of the region.

The visit of the town can start from the little Church of San Giovanni dating from 1000, in ashlar of stone and hanging arches, in which there are frescoes of the fifteenth century, followed by the Palazzo Priorale with a round arch walled in the frontage and a small bell gable and the Gothic Church of Sant'Agostino (formerly of the Hermits) with the adjacent

convent, with its typical red brick, whose façade is ennobled by a beautiful Gothic portal and a rose window: not to be missed, inside, a panel of Vincenzo Pagani (1578) and an impressive altarpiece by Vittore Crivelli, ennobled by the original frame in carved wood and characterized by bright enamelled colors, made even more intense by the gold of the background. Continuing along the course leads to the Church of Santa Maria a Mare, built in the twelfth century and later amended, in ashlar of stone and terracotta, whose bell tower is decorated with interlaced arches and majolica basins: the interesting interior has three naves with raised presbytery and Byzantine frescoes of the fourteenth century. On the left of the church, in a small gar-

den, there is a well-curb, once used as a baptistry.

Torre di Palme is surrounded by the lush vegetation of the protected area called "Bosco del Cugnolo", where typical plants of the Mediterranean Sea can be found. It's very appreciated by hikers and it also features the Lovers' Cave, which is the place of the tragic love between Antonio and Laurina.

INFO

Commune of Fermo

EVENTI

"Romantic Night"

June



The origin of the name derives from the word of the Goddess Treia-Jana, divinity of Greek and Sicilian origin, who was worshiped here. **Treia** was founded by the Romans: it was first a Roman colony then Municipium. In the central "Piazza della Repubblica" stands the little Palace of the Georgica Academy made by Valadier, the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries town hall ("Palazzo Comunale"), that houses the Civic Museum and the eighteenth century Cathedral, one of the most important religious buildings of the Marche Region. The church, devoted to Saint "Annunziata", contains various artworks, such as the altar piece by "Giacomo da Recanati". Worth visiting are: the

church of "San Michele", the church of "Santa Chiara", in baroque style, the church of "San Francesco", the church of "Santa Maria del Suffragio" and the "Teatro Comunale" (Municipal Theatre), inaugurated on 4th January, 1821. The outer southern bastion of the village is the "Onglavina" Tower, being part of the old fortified system, with a view sweeping from the sea to the Sibillini Mountains. In San Lorenzo area, outside the town, there is the Sanctuary of the Crucifix with finds of the Roman "Trea", such as a mosaic with Ibis, on the base of the bell tower and at the entrance of the Convent. Here the ancient parish church was built on the remains of the Temple of Isis. The sanctuary

contains a valuable fifteenth century crucifix; the tradition says that it was engraved by an angel, however somebody says that it shows the art of the great Donatello. Treia's specialty is the so called "calcione", boasting DOP brand, a typical Easter cake made with cheese.

INFO

Commune of Treia

EVENTS

"Calcione" festival
May

The "Bracelet Duel"
July/August

URBISAGLIA



INFO

Commune of Urbisaglia

Nature Reserve
"Abbadia di Fiastra"

EVENTS

TAU - United Ancient Theatres
July/August

"Palio dell'Assunta"
August

Note: the historic center, the monuments and the museums of the town are partially accessible.

Urbs Salvia was an ancient and great city of the Piceno, a colony and a Roman municipality. Today **Urbisaglia** overlooks the valley of the Fiastra, and with its surrounding walls it is a worthy heir of the ancient and glorious Roman town, remains of which may be viewed in the Archaeological park.

This contains the amphitheater, which dates back to the first century A.D., and the theatre, considered to be the most outstanding example of its kind in the Marche Region, for its size and shape, and the only one in Italy that still preserves its painted decorations.

The fortress, built between the thirteenth and fifteenth century, is in trapezoidal shape and has four towers and a keep with Ghibelline battlements. Nearby is the Church of the "Addolorata", with a portal of Roman origin as well as early sixteenth century frescoes. Not far from the centre stands the Abbey of "Chiaravalle di Fiastra", with the church in Cistercian style, the Monastery and the Palace of Princes "Giustiniani Bandini", who succeeded to Cistercian Monks in 1773 coming into possession of the lands. Today the abbey is the seat of the Nature Reserve "Abbadia di Fiastra" covering 1825 hectares of protected land; a large and pleasant green area is fully available, as well as a number of facilities such as the Museum of Rural Culture, the Archaeological Museum and the Wine Museum. In the reserve you may hike over three paths: "La Selva" (the forest), "Il Lago e le Vene" (the lake and the traces), "Il bosco e il fiume" (the wood and the river).



VALVORNACE - MUNICIPALITY OF PIEVEBOVIGLIANA



Pievebovigliana, which dates back to the ancient Roman time, when it was a station along the route to Umbria, passed on to Benedictine Monks during the Late Middle Ages and then under the rule of “Da Varano” family. Pievebovigliana, which has always been a crossroad of various population, enjoys a brilliant “middle” position. Its view overlooks middle and top hills: on one side there are the fertile valleys of the Marche’s countryside, on the other side there are the first mountain pastures which are typical of the “Sibillini” Mountains area. One part of its territory is actually included in the National Park of Sibillini Mountains. In the upper part

of the village stands the fine Romanesque parish church of “*Santa Maria Assunta*”, later restored in Neoclassical style; it houses a precious crypt recovered in 1930. The Town Hall houses the *Museum “Raffaele Campelli”* with remarkable Roman and Pre-Roman archaeological finds as well as some valuable paintings. Around Pievebovigliana there are two remarkable buildings: the castle of “*Beldiletto*”, which was renovated in the Renaissance time, and the *Romanesque church of “San Giusto”* located in “San Maroto” area. The local typical products are: the local fabric, which is handmade according to textile tradition, as well as the famous and old “Mistrà”

liqueur, prepared with green aniseeds which are macerated in alcohol for 40 days; it is very appreciated both as a “digestivo” (digestive) after meal and as an added dash of liquor to coffee.

INFO

Commune of Pievebovigliana

**National Park of
Sibillini Mountains**

EVENTS

“Feste Triennali” in San Maroto

Chestnut Festival
October

Note: the historic center, the monuments and the museums of the town are partially accessible. For information please contact the commune.



VISSO



Visso, a delightful mountain village, is located in the heart of the National Park of the Sibillini Mountains and is the seat of the homonymous park. The historical centre boasts impressive walls, medieval balconies, buildings and towers, Renaissance noble palaces, carved stone doorways with coats of arms and Latin mottoes.

All elements combine with one another to create harmony and elegance. The most representative viewpoint, and the heart of the town, is “Piazza

dei Martiri Vissani”, a bright and harmonious square bordered by elegant fifteenth and sixteenth century buildings and boasts a beautiful façade of the twelfth and fifteenth century Collegiate Church of “Santa Maria”, which contains valuable medieval works of art, and the Church of St. Augustine. The latter church, now deconsecrated, houses the Civic Museum which contains interesting paintings and a group of manuscripts by “Giacomo Leopardi”. Further interesting monuments are:

the fourteenth century Baptistery, “Palazzo dei Priori” and “Palazzo del *Divino Amore*”. Nine kilometres far from Visso’s historical centre there is the Sanctuary of Macereto, in Bramantes’ style, built in the first half of the sixteenth century. It is also worth tasting local food specialties: the town, indeed, is well known for cheese and sausage making. The specialty is the “ciauscolo” a soft spreadable pork salami.

INFO

Commune of Visso

National Park of Sibillini Mountains

EVENTS

“Guaite” Tourney
July/August

Festival of “Pecorino” cheese
and Exhibition of local products
August





FORTRESSES AND CASTLES

In the collective thought, when thinking about The Marche the mind immediately runs to the campaign and the expanse of cultivated hills dotted with villages and towns and this is the peculiarity of the region.

Visiting the countryside of The Marche is not only an opportunity to enjoy a relaxing holiday in the peace of green hills, but also some sort of inner and cultural enrichment determined by the encounter with works of art, historical events and literary memoirs. This harmonious blend of history, art and nature, balances and integrates with the beauty of the coast in a unicum that can engage and captivate the tourists able to choose, among the proposed destinations, those that best meet their interests and expectations.

In addition to the countries included in the clubs Orange Flag and the Most Beautiful Villages in Italy, The Marche has a high incidence of historic villages both on the coast and especially inland.

The Marche Region - the word comes from "Mark" which means a border in German - was far from the centre of imperial power, thus encouraging the development of the independent communes which led, between 1300 and 1400, to the creation of states and autonomous areas ruled by families, unrelentingly struggling with one another. These historical events explain why there are so many **fortresses and castles** in the region, witnessing a cultural past when the best and most renowned military architects of the time worked and made several experimentation. You can go on a fascinating itinerary all over the region, visiting the military structures distributed throughout the area, built to protect the towns and the territory.

The "fortress" (*rocca*) architectural type, aimed at protecting the small armed garrisons, provided with a smaller surrounding circumference of walls and towers that protected and defended the inner keep, could survey the valley passes

Elcito - San Severino Marche (MC)





Piazza del Comune - Fabriano (AN)

safely and defend urban centres. Variable in size and form and equipped with various defensive elements, they were often used as a temporary residence of the Lord. The Marche Region has good examples of such fortresses from the mediaeval to the Renaissance period, and indeed in the latter period this region became an excellence laboratory for the building of this type of fortress.

They were first built during the time of the papal legate **Egidio Albornòz**, who had been charged by Innocent VI of reconquering Church territories (1353). He built powerful stone fortresses throughout the region, the best-preserved of which is the fortress of **Sassoferrato**. In the Renaissance, the military architects of the so-called “transition” worked in the Marche Region, changing the defence systems as well as their anti-ballistic role. Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Baccio Pontelli, serving the Montefeltro family and the Pope, are the architects designing the main defensive buildings.

The **Malatesta** family was the earliest family that started to choose the new style of defence

fortifications in the territory which, today, covers the Province of Pesaro Urbino. They designed the **Fortress of Fano** with the help of the famous expert architect Filippo Brunelleschi and the experienced Matteo Nuti. They were followed by the Sforza family in **Gradara** (formerly a Malatesta fortress) and **Pesaro** (the Fortress of Costanza, by Luciano Laurana). The **Montefeltro** family, in turn, led by the genius of Francesco di Giorgio Martini for defensive buildings (**Fortress of Sassocorvaro**, **Fortress of Montecerignone**, **Fortress of Fossombrone**, the **Fortress and Tower of Cagli**, **Fortress of Frontone**) as well as civil buildings (**Ducal Palace of Urbino** and **Urbania**). The **Fortress of Mondavio** and the **Ducal Palace of Pesaro** (built by Alessandro Sforza), the **Rovere Palace** in **Montebello** and the magnificent **Imperial Villa of Pesaro** designed by Girolamo Genga were commissioned by the **Della Rovere** family. The **Rovere Fortress** and the **Ducal Palace** in **Senigallia** are examples of military architecture in the Province of Ancona. The imposing **Fortress of Offagna** was the seat of the battles



Corinaldo (AN)

between Ancona and the neighbouring Osimo. The **Priora Fortress** in **Falconara** is worth a visit, with its beautiful doorway by Vanvitelli and the castle in the upper section.

Inland, **Corinaldo** - subject to the Malatesta and then to the Church State - dominates the valleys of the Cesano and Misa rivers, with its intact surrounding walls. Ascending Misa valley, **Arcevia** and its castles evoke a truly mediaeval atmosphere. **Jesi** is situated in the next valley, with the castles of Verdicchio and **Fabriano**, surrounded by its fortifications which evoke a proud and fighting past.

Some of the most beautiful and evocative castles in the region are situated in the province of Macerata. Located in the heart of the Chienti valley, near **Tolentino**, is **Rancia Castle**, built by the Lords of Camerino - the Da Varano family - who built an impressive series of castles around their town. Today, only the **Castle of Lanciano**, the **Fortress of Ajello** and the **Fortress of Varano** still stand.

From Tolentino it is easy to reach **Urbisaglia**, dominated by its mighty fortress, and **Caldarola** with its **Pallotta Castle**, which was an elegant residence restored during the Renaissance.

Along or near the Via Salaria, in the Ascoli Piceno area, the castle of **Acquaviva Picena** which was changed in the 15th century by Baccio

Pontelli, the unusual circular-shaped **Castel di Luco** near **Acquasanta Terme** and the 13th century Fortress of **Arquata del Tronto**, overlooking the valley and the ancient Roman road, in the shade of the Sibillini Mountains.

ART WITHIN ART

In many castles and Palaces in the Marche Region take place several events, such as exhibitions or permanent museums: the **Tower of Cagli** hosts a Contemporary Sculpture Centre. The **Fortress of Sassocorvaro** is home to the *Arca dell'Arte* (the "Art Ark") established in remembrance of the saving of 10,000 works of art during the Second World War. The Fortress of Gradara houses Renaissance painting cycles; Mondavio hosts a Museum of Arms, Urbino hosts the National Gallery of the Marche Region. In **Piobbico**, a Technical-Scientific Museum has been set up in **Brancaleoni Palace**. There is a permanent exhibition on the Della Rovere family in the **Fortress of Senigallia**. Medieval Festivals are held in the **Fortress of Offagna** in July; **Rancia Castle** in Tolentino hosts temporary exhibitions. The **Fortress of Acquaviva Picena** is the scene of the *Palio del Duca* ("horse-race of the Duke") and houses a Museum of Arms, as does the **Fortress of Urbisaglia**. A restaurant, by contrast, was the solution adopted in **Castel di Luco**.



Castello di Precicchie - Fabriano (AN)



JESI

BELVEDERE OSTRENSE

CASTELPLANIO

CUPRAMONTANA

MONTECAROTTO

MORRO D'ALBA

SAN PAOLO DI JESI

SERRA DEI CONTI

STAFFOLO



MONSANO

MONTECAROTTO

INFO

Commune of Jesi

Tourist information

EVENTS

Commune of Cupramontana

Festival of grapes, October

Commune of Jesi

"Palio di San Floriano", May

Commune of Jesi

and communes of Vallesina

Festival Pergolesi Spontini, September

Maiolati Spontini

Trivio e Quadrivio, August

Commune of Monsano

and bordering communes

Monsano Folk Festival, August

Commune of Montecarotto

Verdicchio in festa, July

Commune of Serra San Quirico

Paese dei Balocchi, July

JESI E I CASTELLI DI JESI

Jesi is the main town of the **Vallesina** (the Esino Valley), which follows the middle course of the Esino river from Serra San Quirico to the river's mouth at Rocca Priora, near Falconara Marittima.

The town, which was the birthplace of Emperor Frederick II of Swabia and the musician Giambattista Pergolesi, has one of the best-preserved fortified city walls of the Marche Region, equipped with gates, square polygonal and cylindrical towers and fortification curtains and crowned by corbels. The Cathedral of St. Septimius is located in Piazza Federico II (Federico II Square). The Palazzo della Signoria, designed by Francesco di Giorgio Martini in an elegant Renaissance style, accommodates the Planetaria Library and the municipal historical Archives. The Teatro Pergolesi, built between 1791 and 1796, dominates the Piazza della Repubblica.

Palazzo Pianetti (XVIII century) is located in Via XV Settembre and houses the municipal Art Gallery, which contains masterpieces by Lorenzo Lotto as well as the magnificent gallery with rococo



Galleria Palazzo Pianetti - Jesi (AN)



Colline di Poggio San Marcello (AN)



Lorenzo Lotto,
Angelo Annunciante,
Pinacoteca Civica - Jesi (AN)



Castelletto (AN)

plaster works. The distinguishing feature of the Vallesina area, of which Jesi is the main town, is the series of historic villages spread over the hills, surrounded by walls and rich in museums and culture in general. These are the so-called “**Castelli di Jesi**”: Belvedere Ostrense, Castellbellino, Castelplanio, Cupramontana, Majolati Spontini, Mergo, Monsano, Montecarotto, Monte Roberto, Morro D’Alba, Poggio San Marcello, Rosora, San Marcello, San Paolo di Jesi, Santa Maria Nuova, Serra dei Conti, Serra San Quirico, Staffolo. This area is well-known for the **Verdicchio of the Castelli di Jesi**, one of Italy’s main indigenous grape species.

Verdicchio Wine is one of the most famous, traditional DOC wines of the Marche Region. The Verdicchio Castelli di Jesi Riserva carries the DOCG label. Among the best-known red wines is the DOC Lacrima di Morro D’Alba, produced in the area of Morro d’Alba. Palazzo Balleani, in the historic centre of Jesi, houses a section of the *Enoteca Regionale* or regional Wine Bar, which is an important centre of promotion of quality wines and the typical local produce of the Marche region. Italcook has its headquarters in the same building: this Italian cuisine school started thanks to cooperation between the commune of Jesi and Slow Food Italy.



Maiolati Spontini – Abbey of Santa Maria



Castello di Palazzo - Arcevia (AN)



ARCEVIA AND CASTLES OF ARCEVIA

Arcevia is located on a hill with the evocative name of Monte Cischiano, the lowlands of the pre-Apennine chain on the Umbria-Marche Region slopes. Its thirteenth-sixteenth century town walls retaining a number of towers and four gates, are mighty and easily accessible. The most interesting buildings of the old town are: the baroque collegiate church of St. Medardo, which contains masterpieces by Luca Signorelli, works by Della Robbia, Gian Battista Salvi and Claudio Ridolfi; the Misa theatre, an architectural gem built between 1840 and 1845 inside the Palazzo dei Priori and the Church of St. Agatha; the cultural centre of San Francesco, housed within the former Franciscan convent where the Renaissance cloister and the magnificent church are located. The State Archaeological Museum of Arcevia has an important collection of archaeological finds from the territory of Arcevia. There are splendid funerary remains in the Gallic necropolis of Montefortino (forth-third century BC). The nine castles of Arcevia (Avacelli, Castiglioni, Caudino, Lorello, Montale, Nidastore, Palazzo, Piticchio, San Pietro) are among the main attractions: these are walled towns based on a fourteenth-fifteenth century plan, which have preserved their typological traits right up to the present day.

INFO

Commune of Arcevia

Tourist information

**Natural Regional Natural Park
of Gola della Rossa and Frasassi**

EVENTS

One Sunday going to eat cornmeal much
on Sundays in February

Arcevia Jazz
July/August

Grapes festival
September

One Sunday, going to eat first courses
on Sundays in October

Autumn Festival
November



Castello di Lorello - Arcevia (AN)



Arcevia (AN)



Castello di Piticchio - Arcevia (AN)



Luca Signorelli,
Battesimo di Cristo,
Chiesa di San Medardo
Arcevia (AN)

ARCEVIA: THE DELLA ROBBIA FAMILY AND THE MASTERS OF PLASTICIZATION FROM THE MARCHE

Arcevia holds precious glazed furniture and paintings of the sixteenth century, a unicum in the history of the Della Robbia family in the region Marche for its extraordinary concentration.

In the old town centre, the collegiate church of St. Medard is home to the majestic altar of Giovanni Della Robbia, a frontal and a beautiful crucifix glazed by Mattia Della Robbia, a nativity scene of a Marche workshop and two painted statues of St. Catherine and the Magdalene, also works by Della Robbia, whereas in the church of S. Maria del Soccorso you can admire a monumental glazed altar depicting the Annunciation by Mattia Della Robbia.

In the castle of Avacelli the church of San Lorenzo holds a Crucifix and a spectacular painted terracotta altar depicting the Madonna of the Rosary and Mercy, work of a Marche workshop influenced by the Della Robbia family.



Fra' Mattia della Robbia, Annunciazione,
Chiesa Santa Maria del Soccorso
Arcevia (AN)



Rocca Varano - Loc. Sfercia - Camerino (MC)

DUICAL ITINERARIES.

THE DA VARANO FAMILY: FORTRESSES, CASTLES AND PALACES

The Da Varano family ruled Camerino from the mid thirteenth century until 1539. During the Giulio Cesare da Varano's rule (1464-1502), Camerino enjoyed a flourishing period. He showed his grandeur in his military enterprises. There are actually many fortresses surrounding Camerino and its neighbourhood: the **Fortress Borgesca** (Camerino), the **Fortress Varano** (Sfercia di Camerino) the **Fortress Aiello** (Castelraimondo), the **Castle of Lanciano** (Castelraimondo) and **Beldiletto** (Pievebovigliana). The Fortress Borgesca was built in 1503 upon Cesare Borgia's order, to protect the western slopes of the hills where the town stood; it still retains two towers and the keep.

The fortress was separated from the town by a precipice that was bridged using an arduous drawbridge. The Fortress Varano, built in the early twelfth century, was the fortified residence of the Da Varano family. It features much of its original structure: the white limestone entrance; the majestic underground building with barrel vaults, connecting the two wings of the fortress and probably overlooked by rooms and small towers; the low tower in the eastern corner and the adjoining building. Today, after careful restoration, the Fortress Varano of Camerino has rooms for permanent exhibitions and hosts the Exhibition Centre of the *Artigianato Artistico* ("artistic handicraft centre").

The name of the Fortress Aiello, built in 1382, derives from the Latin "agellum", meaning "small field": in fact, the fortress is located at about 400 m. above sea level on a hill that dominates the surrounding landscape. Giovanni da Varano promoted the construction of the Castle Lanciano and oversaw, in particular, the building of the *intagliata*, a distinctive 12-km trench dug in the ground and filled with trees to protect the north-eastern border of Camerino. Giulio Cesare Varano gave the castle to his wife Giovanna who restored it around 1489, transforming it into a castle-residence in the Renaissance style. It now houses the museum "Maria Sofia Giustiniani Bandini".

The Castle of Beldiletto, built between 1371 and 1381, is square-shaped and has corner towers. Inside is a courtyard with arcade, with octagonal pillars and round pointed arches in red and white stone. The remains of a vast cycle of frescoes depicting knights are to be seen in the castle's largest room, evoking the literary

INFO

Commune of Camerino

Tourist information

EVENTS

Camerino: Historical pageant
of the "Corsa alla Spada e Palio"
May

Camerino: International Festival
of music and chamber theatre
August

Pievebovigliana:
"Feste Triennali" in San Maroto

Pievebovigliana: Chestnut Festival
October



Rocca di Aiello - Camerino (MC)

culture of the poems of chivalry. The Ducal Palace of Camerino is among the notable buildings of civil architecture built by the Da Varano family, and is now home to the University. It has an original section, which was rebuilt in the late fourteenth century. It was extended and completed in the mid-to-late fifteenth century in the Renaissance style. The whole building is centred around a wonderful square-porticoed courtyard accessed by several rooms, including the Sala degli Sposi (“hall of the newly-weds”) with fifteenth century frescoes.

In **Esanatoglia**, the Varano family built a fortified residence in the fourteenth century (now the Palazzo Comunale, or Municipal Building). Following an earthquake in 1997, restoration work was carried out which unearthed a unique pictorial cycle of jousts on horseback.

The Da Varano family also founded religious buildings such as the Monastery of Santa Maria Nova in Camerino, which was later dedicated to St. Clare.

The history of the Monastery has always been associated with the Varano lineage and with the



Esanatoglia (MC)



decision made by Giovanni Varano (Camilla's grandfather) who, during the renovation of the town's walls, placed a number of religious communities for defending the town gates.

Another example of religious architecture established by Giulio Cesare Varano is the **Temple of the Annunciation**, built between 1493 and 1508 on the site of a former church - Santa Maria dei Vignali - where, according to legend, a visual representation of Our Lady took refuge, fleeing from the house of a blasphemer.



Castello di Beldiletto (Pievebovigliana) (MC)



Giovanni Angelo di Antonio,
Annunciazione, Pinacoteca Civica
"Girolamo di Giovanni" Camerino (MC)



Palazzo Ducale - Urbino (PU)

DUCAL ITINERARIES. FEDERICO DA MONTEFELTRO AND THE MONTEFELTRO AND DELLA ROVERE RESIDENCES

The towns and landscape of the northern Marche Region are still marked by the cultural activity of Federico da **Montefeltro** over five hundred years ago (Gubbio, June 7, 1422 - Ferrara, September 10, 1482). He was an Italian troop commander, mercenary captain of fortune and famous Renaissance lord, Count of Montefeltro, Urbino and Castel Durante; he ruled over many other places, rising to the rank of Duke of Urbino from 1474 until his death. He deployed the huge profits from his military campaigns to maintain a splendid court, to set up one of the period's most famous libraries and to reinforce the military defence of his state, by building and renovating fortresses and castles. Piero della Francesca was one of the artists who worked at Federico's court, and he played a leading role in that area: recent research has

shown that his paintings still portray the actual Montefeltro landscapes, that can be seen wandering among the hills and valleys of the Metauro and Marecchia rivers. Federico assigned to the Sienese architect and military engineer Francesco di Giorgio Martini the task of implementing his defensive construction projects and, in doing so, Francesco deeply changed the traditional conception of military engineering, leaving a lasting impression on the landscape over time. His most famous achievement is the **Ducal Palace** in **Urbino**, a splendid example of civil architecture. He built the **Ducal Palace** in nearby **Urbania**, with the beautiful spiral ramp inside the cylindrical tower. The **Fortress of Fossombrone** was transformed by Martini into a complex fortress, with the inclusion of the imposing "*caput carenato*"

INFO

Commune of Urbino

EVENTS

Urbania: National Day of the Epiphany
January

Urbino: Ancient Music Festival
July

Urbino: The Feast of the Duke and the Courtesan's Tournament
3rd Sunday of August

Urbino: Festival of the kite
1st Sunday of September



Monte Cerignone (PU)



Palazzo Ducale - Urbania (PU)



Castello di Frontone (PU)



Rocca Ubaldinesca di Sassocorvaro (PU)

or ravelin fortification structure. The **Fortress Montecerignone** preserves its ancient medieval structure, alongside the typically Renaissance elements introduced by Martini. The **Ubalduinesca Fortress of Sassocorvaro**, still fully intact, combines robust military construction with the typical features of the aristocratic residence. At **Sassocorvaro**, Martini refined the prototype of the circular fortress, whose main function was to deflect the stone balls shot from the bombard cannon. In **Frontone** there is also a fortress designed by Martini, whose shape resembles a ship's prow. The **Fortress Mondavio** is a remarkable stronghold, with its keep on polygonal foundations, and the typical series of trap doors and battlements. During the **Della Rovere** family's lordship, the Marche Region enjoyed a flourishing period. The **Fortress of Gradara**, created as a

military stronghold on bordering lands from the twelfth century, was transformed into a noble residence by the powerful families that succeeded one another in ruling the territory, including the Della Rovere. Lucrezia Borgia and Francesca da Rimini stayed at the castle. This was probably the location of the tragic love story between Paolo and Francesca, told by Dante Alighieri in his Divine Comedy. The **Sforza Castle of Pesaro**, known as Villa Imperiale, was transformed in 1530 at the behest of the Della Rovere family, and the Palazzo Nuovo ("New Palace") was added, renowned for its beautiful interiors filled with frescoes. **Senigallia** boasts its fifteenth century **Fortress Roveresca**, a model military fortification typical of lowland strongholds. It was built in 1450 by Giovanni della Rovere, who became lord of Senigallia in 1474.



Sant'Angelo in Vado (PU)

INFORMATION – FARMHOUSE ACCOMMODATION

The Marche Region is the ideal destination for those who love nature, colourful flora, well-kept farms, lush landscapes as well as a rich and widespread architectural and cultural heritage and, not least, appreciate an imaginative and flavoursome cuisine.

Hospitality and accommodation in the Marche Region is varied: there is a wide choice of hotels, residences, bed & breakfasts and apartments. Experiencing farmhouse holidays (**agriturismi**) is a unique way of tasting the typical food and wines of the Marche Region. It ensures guests that they are getting a genuinely-classified farm holiday, and offers the possibility to visit the hinterland and the main tourist attractions of the region.

There are nearly **800** farm holiday resort accommodations and nearly **300** country houses, aimed at creating an integration between farms, typical products and quality assurance tourist service.

Four trade Associations in the Marche Region foster, support and promote *agriturismi* in the region, besides optimising and exploiting its country heritage.

Agriturist Marche is an association which supplies information on vacancies, prices and offers of its members (www.agriturist.marche.it).

Terranostra, including 76 agriturismi, promotes quality accommodation as well as production methods and systems which are environmentally and eco-friendly (www.terranostra.it).

“Coccinelle”, created by the association Copagri, is an association joining about 20 farms. (www.copagri.it/mappa).

Turismo Verde, supported by the “Confederazione Italiana Agricoltori” (Italian Farmers Association), is an Association joining 116 members; in order to widen the offer, the guide-book on Agriturismi includes also information on the most striking museums and fishing tourism (www.turismoverde.it).

