



Comune di Ascoli Piceno

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Typical products

On the table and in events, tradition is important in Ascoli Piceno

The chief product of Ascoli's gastronomical tradition is the **"Tenere Ascolana" olive**, renowned even in Roman times. Stuffed with meat and then fried, it constitutes the principal element of the **fritto misto all'ascolana**. There are many dishes that are dear to the city's traditional menus: fish sauce for Christmas Eve, Christmas *spignoli* (fried savory pies), *ravioli* for Carnival time - either fried or boiled with meat and sweet filling - and typical cheese-based pastries for Easter, without forgetting the inevitable "scocchetta", a folkloric contest where adversaries tap their hard boiled eggs against each other, trying to break them.

Among the variety of artistic handicrafts produced in the historical center, a special mention is reserved for the ceramics workshops. Here the quality of centuries-old traditional decorations is preserved alongside new proposals, fruit of the creativity of today's artisans.

A feast that involves the entire city is **Carnival**. The extraordinary scenography of the **Piazza del Popolo**, decorated for the occasion with enormous *fin de siècle* lamps, is setting for Ascoli's Carnival. The protagonists are the citizens of Ascoli who, spontaneously donning bizarre and unusual costumes often inspired by the *Commedia dell'Arte*, joyously act out amusing scenes that use wit and irony, making a parody of the vicissitudes of life.



Ascolana olives



Detail of the Quintana parade



Detail of the Quintana parade

One of the most important events related to the medieval tradition is definitely the **Giostra della Quintana**, a jousting tournament. An historic re-enactment of processions and knightly tournaments that, every year, animates the streets of the city. Divided into six factions, the old town revives the past through ceremonies and rituals. The 1,500 role players cross the narrow rue (or alleys) and the main streets, parading with costumes of the time, until they arrive at **Campo Squarcia**, for the occasion called Campo dei Giochi (Square of Games) in order to acclaim the winning knight of the Giostra. This event is held mid-July, in its nightly edition, and on the first Sunday of August.

I sestieri (Factions)

Porta Maggiore - black-green colors

it identifies the entrance that is farthest east of the city and its seat is located in front of the picturesque Forte Malatesta (Malatesta Fort).

Piazzarola - white-red colors

from the Church of Sant'Angelo Magno, the seat of this faction was transferred to Via della Cartiera.

Sant'Emidio - red-green colors

the faction of the Golden Griffin meets in the newly restored spaces in Rua Sgariglia.

Porta Romana - red-blue colors

a stone's throw from the remains of Porta Gemina, it has its seat the farthest west of the city.

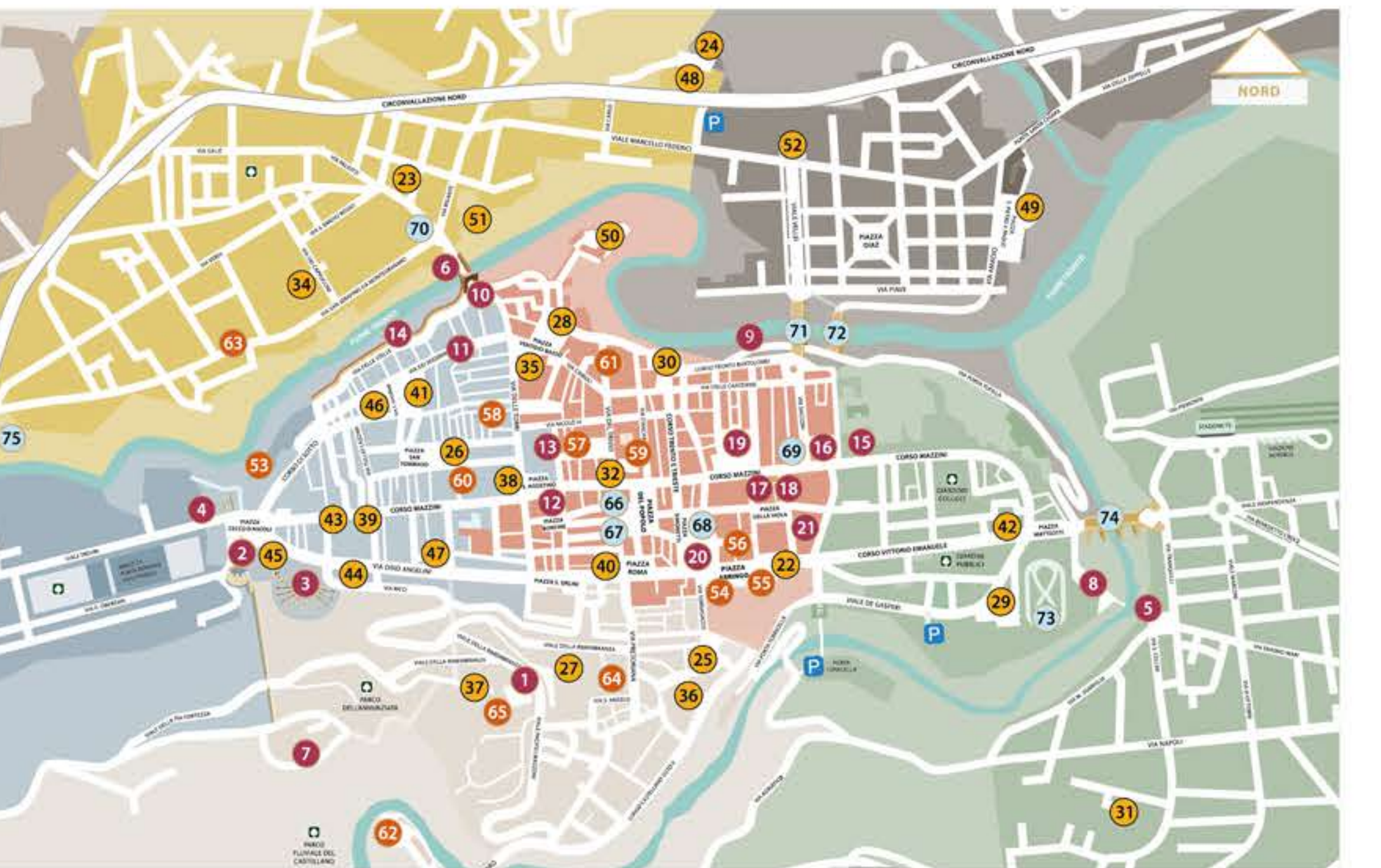
Porta Solestà - yellow-blue colors

the Faction of the Sun starts off from the homonymous gate and crosses the Roman Bridge.

Porta Tuffilla - red-black colors

its seat in the recently renovated cloister of the Church of Ss. Pietro e Paolo.

CITY MAP



- 1 Sostruzioni dell'Annunziata
- 2 Porta Gemina and Medieval Walls
- 3 Teatro Romano
- 4 Lavatoio Porta Romana
- 5 Ponte di Cecco
- 6 Ponte Augusteo
- 7 Fortezza Pia
- 8 Forte Malatesta
- 9 Porta Tuffilla
- 10 Porta Solestà
- 11 Palazzetto Longobardo and Torre Ercolani
- 12 Tower and Church of San Venanzio
- 13 Torri gemelle and Palazzo Merli
- 14 "Rrete li Mierghie" - Rua delle Stelle
- 15 Palazzo Malaspina
- 16 Palazzo Centini-Piccolomini
- 17 Palazzo Parisani
- 18 Palazzo Lenti-Gallo
- 19 Palazzo della Cassa di Risparmio
- 20 Palazzo Tarlazzi
- 21 Palazzetto Bonaparte

- 22 Cathedral of Sant'Emidio and Baptisery
- 23 Tempietto di Sant'Emidio Rosso
- 24 Chiesa di Sant'Emidio alle Grotte
- 25 Chiesa di San Gregorio Magno
- 26 Chiesa di San Tommaso
- 27 Chiesa di Sant'Angelo Magno
- 28 Chiesa dei Ss. Vincenzo and Anastasio
- 29 Chiesa di San Vittore
- 30 Chiesa di Santa Maria Intervineas
- 31 Chiesa di San Salvatore di Sotto
- 32 Chiesa e Chiostro di San Francesco
- 33 Chiesa di Santa Maria delle Donne
- 34 Chiesa di San Serafino da Montegranaro
- 35 Chiesa di San Pietro Martire
- 36 Complesso di San Domenico (Complex)
- 37 Chiesa della Ss. Annunziata
- 38 Chiesa di Sant'Agostino
- 39 Chiesa di Santa Maria del Buonconsiglio
- 40 Chiesa di Santa Maria della Carità
- 41 Chiesa dell'Immacolata Concezione
- 42 Chiesa del Carmine

- 43 Chiesa di Sant'Andrea Apostolo
- 44 Chiesa di Santa Croce
- 45 Chiesa del Ss. Crocifisso dell'Icona
- 46 Chiesa di San Giacomo Apostolo
- 47 Chiesa di San Giuliano
- 48 Chiesa di Sant'Illario
- 49 Chiesa e Chiostro dei Ss. Pietro e Paolo
- 50 Chiesa di San Pietro in Castello
- 51 Chiesa di San Bartolomeo
- 52 Chiesa del Sacro Cuore
- 53 Auditorium San Leonardo
- 54 Palazzo dell'Arengo
- 55 Diocesan Museum and Bishop's Residence
- 56 State Archeological Museum
- 57 Teatro Ventidio Basso
- 58 Teatro dei Filarmonici
- 59 Sala Cola dell'Amatrice
- 8 Museo dell'Alto Medioevo

- 60 Polo culturale Sant'Agostino
- 61 Auditorium San Francesco di Paola
- 26 Museo dell'Arte Ceramica
- 62 Cartiera Papale e Musei
- 63 State Archives
- 64 Auditorium Montevercchi
- 65 University Complex
- 66 Palazzo dei Capitani del Popolo
- 67 Caffè Meletti
- 68 Palazzo del Governo
- 69 Fonte dei Cani
- 70 Lavatoio Borgo Solestà
- 71 Ponte Nuovo
- 72 Ponte di Sant'Antonio or Ponte Tuffillo
- 73 Campo Squarcia
- 74 Ponte Maggiore
- 75 Monumental Cemetery



ASCOLI PICENO

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TOURIST GUIDE



VisitAscoli

The Travertine City

The stone that characterizes the old town

The incredibly harmonious and compact appearance of Ascoli Piceno's historical center is due in large part to the use of travertine stone that, from the very origins of the city, has been the principal material used in construction: from simple dwellings to patrician ones, to churches, to the pavement of the squares, this stone - used without interruption for two thousand years, encompassing ever-changing styles and the march of history - has made up the urban fabric of the urban landscape of the city, making Ascoli unique and particular.



Work by Giuliano Giuliani



Detail of Shrine by Lazzaro Morelli



A Voyage Into History

The cradle of the Piceni and the splendor of the Roman age, the historical center of Ascoli Piceno is a medieval gem

The **Capital of the Piceni** since the Iron Age (9th century BC), Ascoli Piceno became part of the 5th **Region** of the Roman Empire in 89 BC, after a long siege.

Trade between the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic sides was favored by the **Consular Salaria Road** already a few centuries before the alliance between Rome and the Piceni. Under the command of **Emperor Augustus**, the city was reborn and was enriched with temples, theaters, hot spring baths, streets, bridges, and fortifications. Still visible in the city are **Porta Gemina**, the **Piceno Walls of Porta Romana**, the remains of the **Theater** brought to light between 1932 and 1959, the particular **Augustan Bridge** made entirely accessible after restoration, the temples from the Imperial age adapted in the Middle Ages to construct the **Churches of San Gregorio Magno**, and **San Venanzio** and all the remains preserved in the **Museo Archeologico Statale**. Following the siege in 578 AD, the city became part of the Duchy di Spoleto, formed by the Longobards. In 1893, a vast necropolis complete with funerary objects was discovered at **Castel Trosino**, leaving a precious testimony of the early Middle Ages.

In **medieval times**, there were two hundred patrician towers in Ascoli, before **King Frederick II** ordered the destruction of ninety of them, in 1242. Today, the origins of about fifty can still be retraced, even if many have been resized and incorporated into the adjacent dwellings, and two were transformed into bell towers. Particular sites to visit include the itinerary in **Via delle Torri** to **Via dei Soderini** and the romantic **Rua delle Stelle**, also known as "**Rrete li Mierghie**" (Behind the Crenels).



Ponte (Bridge) Augusteo

The city of Ascoli has always had the advantage of a natural protection given by the deep beds of the **Tronto** and **Castellano** Rivers, which envelop it on three sides. Since the Roman era, a complex system of walls, fortresses and gateways was devised, providing the defence of the city over the course of the centuries, especially on the west side. During the **Renaissance**, the Pontifici renewed the defenses of Ascoli with the erection of the **Fortezza Pia** (Pia Fortress), of the **Forte Malatesta** (Malatesta Fort) by **Antonio da Sangallo the Younger**, and of the **Porte Tuffilla e Solestà** (Tuffilla and Solestà Gates). Between **Humanism** and **Renaissance**, especially in the latter part of the 15th century, Ascoli enjoyed an extremely rich cultural phase. In this context, the custom of engraving mottos on the architraves of the entranceways was adopted. Over one hundred of these maxims, written in Latin or in the vernacular and inspired by culture, religious sentiment and popular wisdom are still visible.



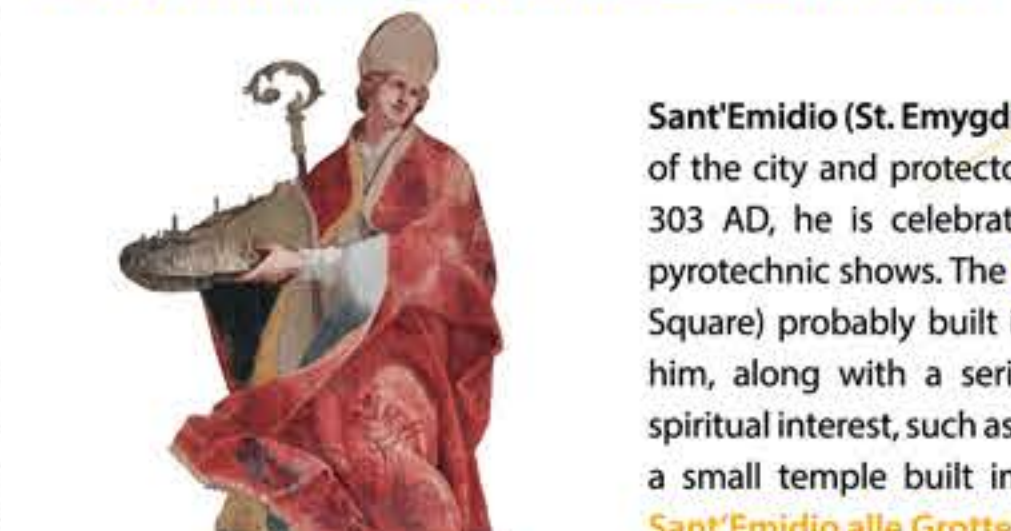
"Chi po non vo chi vo non po chi sa non fa chi fa non sa et coi il mundo mal va"

1529 - Rua Lunga

The beauty and the number of buildings and works of art realized during the **Baroque period** between the 15th and the 17th centuries makes the city very interesting. The role of Ascoli as the capital of the Province, acquired after the **unification of Italy**, produced new works of art reflecting the eclectic taste of that era.

Places of The Spirit

A suggestive itinerary among centuries and places of worship



Sant'Emidio



Church of Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio

Places of Culture

A concentration of works of art

Ascoli has had its own theater since the Roman era, but it was only in the second half of the 16th century that a true theatrical tradition began. Of particular interest are the theaters: **Teatro Ventidio Basso** (Ventidio Basso Theater), the **Teatro dei Filarmonici** (Theater of the Philharmonics) and other areas in the city dedicated to public representations.

Ascoli Piceno can be defined as an open-air museum, due to its fascinating well-preserved monuments and for the many artworks that can simply be admired strolling through the historical center. All the findings and works that were recovered are exhibited in the numerous museums and historical archives of the city. Places to visit include the **Pinacoteca Civica** (Civic Art Gallery), the **Museo Archeologico Statale** (State Archaeological Museum), the **Museo Diocesano** (Diocesan Museum), the **Museo dell'Alto Medioevo** (Museum of the Early Middle Ages), the **Museo della Cartiera Papale** (Papal Paper Mill Museum), the **Galleria d'Arte "Osvaldo Licini"** ("Osvaldo Licini" Art Gallery), the **Museo dell'Arte Ceramica** (Ceramic Arts Museum), the **Biblioteca comunale** (Municipal Library), and the **Archivio di Stato** (State Archives).

The City

Living in the historical center

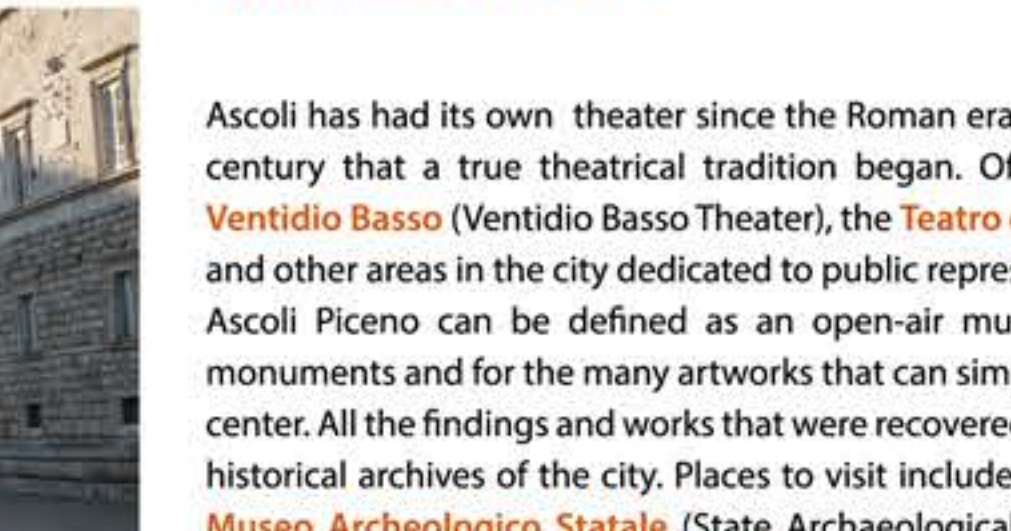


Piazza Arringo

Up until the **municipal era**, political, economic, and religious power had been exercised in the two crucial centers of the city: **Piazza del Popolo** (People's Square), and **Piazza Arringo** (Arringo Square). Today, the two Squares still represent the landmarks of city life, yet, over the centuries the city has expanded its meeting places. **Piazza del Popolo** is the city's gathering place. It has reached its current regular aspect in the first half of the 16th century with the addition of graceful columned porticoes, which kept the disorderly artisan workshops hidden from view, consolidating the pre-existing medieval buildings - such as the **Palazzo dei Capitani** and the **Church of S. Francesco** - into a layout of equilibrated harmony typical of the Renaissance period. Also of great importance is the **Caffè Meletti**. As always, it has been an elite place for gathering, in a full art nouveau style, with its specialty: **Anisetta Meletti**. **Piazza dell'Arengo** - or Piazza Arringo - was named after the public assemblies which were held here, under an elm tree, since the founding of the free city-state. Today, it is still the civil and religious center of Ascoli due to the presence of the **Cathedral**, of the building of the **Episcopate**, and of the **Town Hall**, also called **Palazzo dell'Arengo**.

The City

Living in the historical center



Piazza Arringo

Places of Culture

A concentration of works of art

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In Detail

Perusing through the city

The reality of a city of art is not made exclusively of majestic and important monuments. Often, the visitor can find traces that are more significant of a place's culture in curious details that serve to reveal the secrets of an antique way of life. Ascoli is incredibly rich in so many of these details, that it is definitely worth the effort to search them out in order to understand - not only history - but also the elements of daily living that comprise the raw materials of history. Several examples are the **rounded edges** of the buildings, which facilitated the passage of carriages, the **small doors "of death"** in houses of medieval origin, and the "**musical columns**" that resound on the main portal of the **Church of San Francesco** (St. Francis).



Fonte dei Cani

In the Vicinity

A city surrounded by wonders

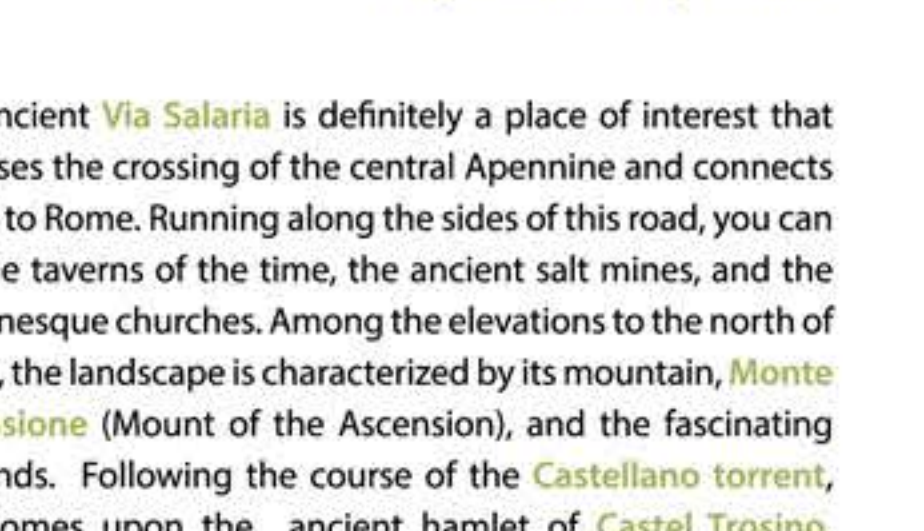


Castel Trosino

The landscape is unique due to its various mountains and hills: **Montagna dei Fiori**, **Monte Piselli**, and the **Colle San Marco**, a tourist spot for the locals. The surrounding **National Parks** are a significant presence. There are the **Sibillini National Park**, with **Monte Vettore** and its peak that exceeds 2,000 meters, **Lago di Pilato** - the Apennine glacier lake that is unique in its kind - and the **Gran Sasso-Laga National Park**, populated by hikers during all periods of the year with the summit of the **Sibilla** that recalls medieval myths and stories of esoteric journeys. From the mountains, you can reach the beautiful **Riviera delle Palme** (Riviera of the Palms), six miles of fine sand beach, crossing the gentle hills of the valley, skirted by ancient historical centers, such as **Offida**.

In the Vicinity

A city surrounded by wonders



Gorge of Mount Vettore