

# Welcome to Le Marche, Italy's best kept secret

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Italy. What a world of images that word conjures up. Sunshine, wonderful food, mellow red wine, renaissance art, romantic music, tranquil rolling landscapes...

There is a part of Italy where you can find all the good things that Italy has to offer! It is called Le Marche. This unspoilt region offers a rare blend of culture, history, and natural beauty. It also offers an affordable option for relaxing, family-friendly holidays for every taste and age. There are snow-capped mountains for climbing or skiing, 180 kilometres of sandy beaches for swimming or just lounging, medieval villages to explore and vistas of glorious rolling hills which you can just sit and enjoy.

The local communities appear to have resisted external influences and still live rich but simple, slow-paced lives. This, coupled with other local factors, has produced a populace that live longer than in many other parts of Europe! A sense of well-being is manifest.

## Regional Statistics

- Capital of the region: Ancona
- Population: 1,541,692
- Area Size: 9,614 km<sup>2</sup> (3,743 sq. mi)
- Density: 160.0 km<sup>2</sup> (430 sq. mi)
- Coast Line: 180 Km (111.8 mi)
- Max Altitude: 2,476 m. (8,123 ft.)



Come and explore

*Over 3000 years  
of history and  
civilisation*

Indulge in a timeless beauty  
where nature  
meets culture in one of Italy's  
best-kept secrets



Gradara Castle, Province of Pesaro & Urbino



Montefiore dell'Aso, Province of Ascoli Piceno



## How do you say it?

Le Marche is pronounced 'lay markay'. It translates into English as 'the Marches'. The "ch" has the k sound when it goes before the "e" or "i". It is an ancient German word meaning "lands along the border" or "borderlands".

## Where is it?

Le Marche lies on the eastern side of central Italy, nestled between the Adriatic Sea and the Apennine mountains. It borders Emilia Romagna, San Marino and Tuscany to the North, Umbria to the West and Lazio and Abruzzo to the South (see map). The region is divided into five provinces: Pesaro and Urbino (PU), Ancona (AN), Macerata (MC), Fermo (FM) and Ascoli Piceno (AP).

## How do we get there?

Le Marche is easily accessible via low-cost flights to five airports including Ancona, Pescara, Rimini, Bologna and Perugia of which Ancona (Raffaello Sanzio Airport) and Bologna (Guglielmo Marconi Airport) are the most conveniently located.



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## Le Marche Spotlight

The Caves of Frasassi in Le Marche are the most extensive cave system in Europe, reaching 13km (8 miles) in length. Situated in Genga, Province of Ancona, this magical experience is well worth a visit!




Frasassi Caves, Province of Ancona



Ducal Palace of Urbino

### What people say about Le Marche

"A truly magical experience and a truly magical place. The views of the mountains and sea are expansive. The people warm and generous, happy to share their love and knowledge of the region. And the food nourishes the soul. I feel so grateful to have experienced such a beautiful place and have had so many share a bit of their culture with me. I will never forget my visit and I'm already looking forward to returning."

 Kaye Preston, Holistic Interior Designer

[View more testimonials on our website!](#)

## 12 Good reasons to visit Le Marche and acquire the experience of a lifetime

*You might have visited Italy more than a few times, yet you may not have seen all that Italy has to offer until you have experienced Le Marche. The Marche region offers an unrivalled blend of cultural and natural heritage; there is always something for everyone to enjoy within easy reach.*

1. It is one of the most diverse, unspoiled, and picturesque landscapes in Italy.
2. It is the birthplace and source of creative inspiration for world-class talent ranging from composers, opera singers, architects, artists, pedagogues, popes, and emperors.
3. It has one of the highest life expectancies in Europe. This is mainly attributed to a relaxed country lifestyle, quality of environment and local produce.
4. It has over 3000 years of civilisation. The Piceni were the most significant italic population to settle in Le Marche during the early Iron Age (ca. 900 B.C).
5. The region offers the highest density of museums and picture galleries in Italy, a total of 400 spread over 239 municipalities.
6. It has a rich architectural heritage offering one of the finest examples of early renaissance architecture in Italy (e.g., The Ducal Palace of Urbino).
7. It has 180 kilometres of pristine, sandy beaches that provide a clean, safe, and family-friendly environment.
8. It has the highest concentration of theatres in the world (i.e., 113) and the second largest open-air arena for opera in Italy (i.e., the 3000 seat Sferisterio in Macerata).
9. It is the most affordable region in central Italy; both the cost of living and property prices are a fraction of those in Umbria or Tuscany.
10. Faith and spirituality have deep roots within the community. It is the birthplace of ten popes and the foundation of one of world's most revered Catholic shrines attracting over 4 million pilgrims every year (Loreto).
11. It has, arguably, the best outlet shopping in Italy which includes designer shoes at discount prices. Le Marche is the home of fine Italian leather goods and has the highest concentration of shoe manufacturers in Italy.
12. The history and the heart of the paper-making world in Europe began in Fabriano, Province of Ancona, Marche in the 13th century. In 1276 the first paper mill opened.



Maiolica Cistern (one of a pair)



Abbey of San Claudio al Chienti, Corridonia



San Ciriaco Leone, Ancona



## Le Marche: An Exceptionally Varied Landscape

### ❖ One of the most diverse and picturesque landscapes in Italy:

Le Marche is often described as “All of Italy in one region” and “the best of central Italy”. It combines most of the elements that make Italy special: stunning landscapes, rolling hills, snow-capped mountains, over one hundred miles of white sandy beaches and blue sea. It also offers rich wildlife, lakes, valleys, nature reserves, cities of art, medieval towns, hill-top villages, and castles unspoilt by tourism. The region offers a wide selection of parks and protected nature reserves. There are 12 protected areas: two national parks (Monti Sibillini and Monti della Laga, the latter part of the Gran Sasso national park), four regional parks (Monte Conero, Sasso Simone e Simoncello, Monte San Bartolo and Gola della Rossa plus Frasassi), six nature reserves (Abbadia di Fiastra, Montagna di Torricchio, Ripa Bianca, Sentina, Gola del Furlo and Monte San Vicino plus Monte Canfaito) and more than 100 protected plant and flower areas with 15 state forests.

### ❖ The largest cave system in Europe:

The Frasassi Caves are located near Genga in the province of Ancona. They are the longest and among the most interesting in Italy with a 240 m high central chamber which is large enough to comfortably hold Milan cathedral. The protected area is a series of towering limestone gorges which provide the rocky habitat for several golden eagles as well as peregrine falcons and eagle owls.

### ❖ 180 kilometres of pristine coastline and sandy beaches:

Le Marche has been voted as having the second cleanest beaches in Italy (by the Federation for Environmental Education). There are now 17 'blue flag' beaches in Le Marche spread along a total of 180 kilometres (111.8 miles) of pristine coastline with 26 seaside resorts and nine marinas. The important "eco-label" is given to sites that meet strict criteria including water quality, environmental management, safety, and other services.



Grottammare



Lago di Plato, Sibillini Mountains



Numana Beach




Caves of Frasassi



View from Montefiore dell'Aso

### What people say about Le Marche

“ When you’re satiated with the unsurpassed culture of the region, go to Pesaro and bask on the sun-drenched sandy beaches and take a swim in the warm Adriatic...”

 Anthony D’Angour, Artist & Entrepreneur



Sibillini Mountains



San Benedetto del Tronto



Sibillini Mountains



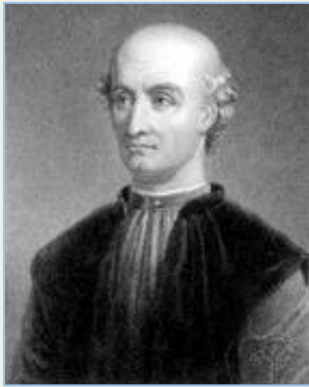
Cupra Marittima



# Le Marche: A Source of Creative Inspiration – Artists & Architects



Gentile da Fabriano



Donato Bramante



Raffaello Sanzio (Self Portrait)

## Artists & Architects

Le Marche has been the birthplace and source of creative inspiration for great talents including composers, artists, opera singers, educationalists, architects and sportsmen. Here are a few of the world-famous ones. The region has generated extraordinary artistic talent including one of the most influential artists of the High Renaissance, Raphael Sanzio.

**Gentile da Fabriano** (1370 - 1427) was born in Fabriano and died at the age of 57 in Rome. He was the foremost painter of central Italy at the beginning of the 15th century and his few surviving works are among the finest examples of the International Gothic style. His most famous altarpieces of this style are entitled the 'Adoration of the Magi' and 'Rest during the flight to Egypt', both painted in 1423.

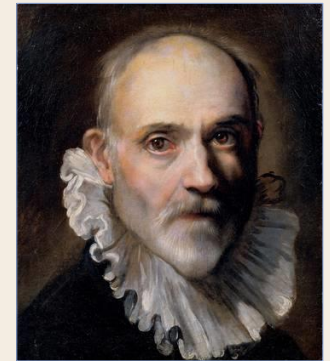
**Donato Bramante** (1444 - 1514) was an architect and painter, one of the main artists who created the architectural style of the High Renaissance. Bramante introduced Renaissance architecture to Milan and High Renaissance style to Rome where he was appointed as the principal designer of St Peter's Basilica. Bramante was also commissioned by Pope Julius II to design the Basilica of the Holy House of Loreto, province of Ancona, Marche.

**Raffaello Sanzio** (1483 - 1520) was a master painter and architect of the Italian High Renaissance. The genius from Urbino, Marche is one of the greatest Renaissance artists along with Titian, Donatello, Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo. Raffaello was a very prolific artist, and his paintings are displayed in museums throughout the world. One of his better-known masterpieces is a portrait of a young woman *La Muta* (1507 - 1508) which is on display in the National Gallery of Le Marche in Urbino. The first Italian painting to become part of the English Royal Collection was Raffaello's *St. George and the Dragon*, a gift to the King Henry VII by the Duke of Urbino in 1506 during Urbino's 'Golden Age'. It remains to this day the most tangible evidence of the relationship between the English and the Urbino court of the time.

**Federico Barocci** (1535 - 1612) was born in Urbino and was one of the most celebrated and highest paid artists of his generation and a major influence on key figures such as Pieter Paul Rubens, Annibale Carracci and Guido Reni. Among his patrons were Le Marche's Duke of Urbino, Pope Pius IV and the Emperor Rudolf II Habsburg.

**Simone Cantarini** (1612 - 1648) was born in Pesaro and known as 'il Pesarese', arguably one of the most significant and independently minded Italian painter-etchers of the first half of the Seicento. He was also one of the most talented pupils of Guido Reni and was influenced by both Federico Barocci and Orazio Gentileschi.

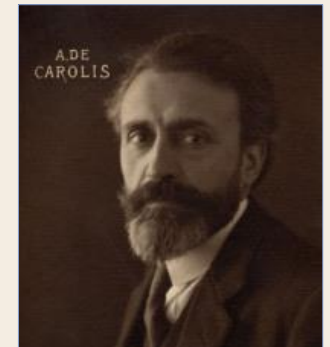
**Adolfo de Carolis** (1874 - 1928) was born in Montefiore dell'Aso, Le Marche. He was a very influential Italian painter, engraver, xylographer, illustrator, and photographer of the Italian "Stile Liberty" period generally associated with Art Nouveau. De Carolis was an artist of great national significance, and his artwork can be found throughout Italy including Rome, Florence, Arezzo, Lucca, Bologna, Padua, Ravenna, Grottammare, San Benedetto del Tronto and Ascoli Piceno.



Federico Barocci (Self Portrait)



Simone Cantarini (Self Portrait)



Adolfo de Carolis

*[Curious to learn more? Explore the fascinating people of Le Marche on our website!](#)*

# Le Marche: A Source of Creative Inspiration – Artists & Architects



Piero della Francesca  
(Madonna of Senigallia)



Francesco di Giorgio Martini



Carlo Crivelli (detail of Montefiore dell'Aso Polyptych)

## Artists & Architects

Le Marche was an arts crossroads and welcomed the genius from other regions of Italy and throughout Europe enabling the region to play a pivotal role from the medieval to Renaissance period. A few of the great artists like Titian, Piero della Francesca, Leonardo da Vinci, Guido Reni, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Carlo Crivelli, Lorenzo Lotto, Joos van Wassenhove, and Pedro Berreguete worked and lived in Le Marche. Even the great Flemish Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens was commissioned an artwork for a church in Fermo, Marche.

**Piero della Francesca** (1415 - 1492) was one of the greatest and most admired renaissance painters from Tuscany. Between 1469 and 1486 Piero worked in the service of the Duke Federico of Montefeltro in Urbino. One of Piero's oldest and most controversial works of art in the early Renaissance is the *Flagellation of Christ* (c. 1444 - 1470). Other masterpieces include the *Madonna of Senigallia* (c. 1470 - 1485), and the *Diptych of Federico da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza* (c. 1465 - 1472) of which the original is displayed in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

**Francesco di Giorgio Martini** (1439 - 1501) was born and died in Siena and was an architect, engineer, painter, sculptor, and writer. Di Giorgio Martini was probably one of the most creative and influential military engineers of the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. From 1475 - 1484 he was employed by the Duke of Urbino, Federico da Montefeltro and built close to 70 fortifications in the Marche region of which the fortress of Sassocorvaro is arguably one of the most peculiar examples.

**Carlo Crivelli** (1430 - 1495) born in Venice and died in Ascoli Piceno, Marche. Crivelli spent most of his working career in the Marche region. He is one of the most important, overlooked painters of the Early Italian Renaissance. According to [Prof. Daphne De Luca](#), Art Historian, Conservator and Restorer, one of Carlo Crivelli's finest works of art is the *Montefiore Triptych* altarpiece preserved in the museum complex of San Francesco in Montefiore dell'Aso, province of Ascoli Piceno, Italy. Numerous works Crivelli painted in le Marche are hosted in museums literally all over the world.

**Lorenzo Lotto** (1480 - 1557) was born in Venice and died in Loreto, Marche, where he had come back to stay and where he painted his last works. Lotto was a late renaissance painter, draughtsman, illustrator of the Venetian school. From 1532 he worked in various towns in Le Marche and was known mainly for his portraits and religious paintings.

**Tiziano Vecellio (Titian)** (1488 - 1576) is widely considered the founder and the greatest Renaissance painter of the Venetian school. One of his best-known masterpieces is called the '*Venus of Urbino*' (1534) acquired by the Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo II Della Rovere in 1538. Titian also painted a series of superbly executed family portraits of the Duke of Urbino including Eleonora Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino, Giulia Varano Duchess of Urbino, Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duke of Urbino and Guidobaldo II Della Rovere, Duke of Urbino.

**Guido Reni** (1575 - 1642) was born and died in Bologna. Reni was one of the most influential Italian Baroque painters of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In Le Marche he worked in Ascoli, Osimo, Pesaro and Fano.

**Peter Paul Rubens** (1577 - 1640) was a Flemish baroque painter. One of his masterpieces entitled *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, on canvas, was commissioned from Rome by Padre Flaminio Ricci at the request of Padri Filippini for the Church of San Filippo Neri in Fermo. It was delivered in 1608 and is now displayed in the civic art gallery of Fermo, Marche.



Lorenzo Lotto (Self Portrait)



Tiziano Vecellio (Titian) (Self Portrait)

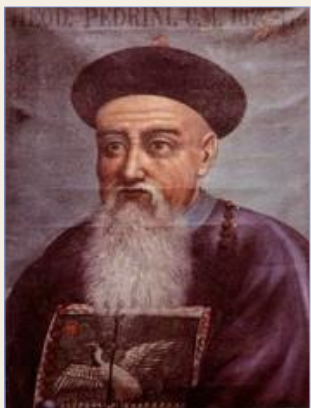


Guido Reni by Domenichino

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# Le Marche: A Source of Creative Inspiration – Composers & Opera Singers



Teodorico Pedrini



Giovanni Battista Pergolesi



Gaetano Brunetti



Gaspare Spontini

## Composers and Opera Singers

**Teodorico Pedrini** (1671 - 1746) was born in Fermo, and was an Italian Vincentian priest, musician, and composer, but mainly a missionary for 36 years at the Imperial Court of China. He was the music teacher to three sons of the Qing Dynasty's Kangxi Emperor and co-author of the first treatise on Western Music theory ever written in Chinese.

**Giovanni Battista Pergolesi** (1710 - 1736) was born in Jesi, province of Ancona and was an Italian Baroque composer, violinist, and organist. Pergolesi was one of the most important early composers to bring Opera Buffa (comic opera) to the theatre. Pergolesi also wrote sacred music, and his best-known sacred work is 'Stabat Mater' (1736).

**Gaetano Brunetti** (1744 - 1798) was born in Fano and died in Madrid. Brunetti was a prolific and influential composer active in Spain under Kings Charles III and Charles IV. Most of his compositions were designed for chamber music.

**Gaspare Spontini** (1774 - 1851) was born and died in Maiolati, province of Ancona. Spontini was a successful opera composer and conductor. One of his well-known masterpieces was *La Vestale* (1807). He spent most of his career in Paris and Berlin, became an important figure in the French Opera during the Napoleonic period and is considered one of the greatest Italian composers of his time. Spontini became one of Napoleon's favourite composers and was made *Chevalier* of Napoleon's Legion of Honour, the highest French order of merit both military and civil.

**Gioacchino Rossini** (1792 - 1868) was born in Pesaro and was regarded as the greatest Italian composer of his time. His compositions continue to make a significant contribution to the world of music. He began to compose at 12 and was educated at the music school of Bologna. He was noted for his comic operas of which 'The Barber of Seville' (1816) is his best known.

**Beniamino Gigli** (1890 - 1957), born in Recanati province of Macerata, Marche, is considered one of the very finest tenors of his generation and in the history of recorded music. His most renowned performances included Edgardo in Donizetti's 'Lucia di Lammermoor', Rodolfo in Puccini's 'La Bohème' and the title role in Umberto Giordano's 'Andrea Chénier'.

**Renata Tebaldi** (1922 - 2004) was born in Pesaro and became one of the most acclaimed and popular sopranos during the post-war period. She famously performed Mimí in 'La Bohème' 111 times and performed the title role in 'Tosca' 162 times, making up 26 percent of her lifetime performances.

**Franco Corelli** (1921 - 2003) was born in Ancona. He was a tenor and had a hugely successful international opera career between 1951 and 1976. Corelli was celebrated worldwide and was dubbed 'prince of tenors' for his passionate singing and charismatic performances. By 1960 his active repertory included some 30 roles, including the title role in Giordano's 'Andrea Chénier', Turiddu in Mascagni's 'Cavalleria Rusticana', Rodolfo in Puccini's 'La Bohème', and the title roles in Verdi's 'Don Carlos' and 'Ernani'.



Gioacchino Rossini



Beniamino Gigli



Renata Tebaldi



Franco Corelli

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# Le Marche: A Source of Creative Inspiration



Giacomo Leopardi Beniamino Gigli



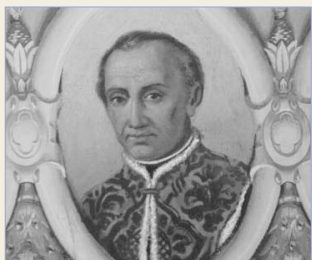
Matteo Ricci



Maria Montessori



Ostilio Ricci



Alberico Gentili

## Poet, Philosopher and Philologist

**Giacomo Leopardi** (1798 - 1837) was born in Recanati and was the greatest Italian poet of the nineteenth century and, after Dante, the most renowned of all ages.

## Jesuit Priest and European Ambassador

**Matteo Ricci** (1552 - 1610) was born in Macerata. He was a founding figure of the Jesuit China mission and link between the millenary eastern and western cultures.

## Educationalist

**Maria Montessori** (1870 - 1952) was born in Chiaravalle in the province of Ancona and began an educational revolution that changed the way we think about children more than anyone before or since. Her educational method is still in use today in over 22,000 schools throughout the world.

## Scholars and Academics

**Ostilio Ricci** (1540 – 1603) was born in Fermo, died in Florence. He was a mathematician and military engineer and started his career as court mathematician to Francesco, the second Grand Duke of Tuscany in Florence in 1580. He subsequently became Galileo's first teacher of geometry (Euclid and Archimedes) and deeply influenced Galileo's later work. Ostilio became Galileo's close friend and mentor of his illustrious pupil.

**Alberico Gentili** (1552 - 1606) is a seminal figure in the history of International Law. He was the first foreigner to be awarded the title of Regius Professor at Oxford University and served as professor of civil law for 21 years. He was also the tutor to Queen Elizabeth I. He practiced law in Britain, particularly for the Admiralty and was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn in 1600. He died in London and was buried in the Church of St Helen Bishopsgate in the City of London.

## Leaders

**Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo** (135 – 87 BC), from Fermo and father to Pompey the Great, was a valiant Roman general and politician and served as Consul in 89 BC.

**Pompey the Great** (106 - 48 BC) was a leading Roman General and statesman. One of three most powerful men in Rome, forming the first Triumvirate with Julius Caesar and Marcus Crassus in 60 BC. He also played a significant role in the transformation of Rome from republic to Empire.

**Titus Labienus** (c.100 - 45 BC), Military commander of the roman Republic, friend, collaborator, and lieutenant of Julius Cesar in Gallia.

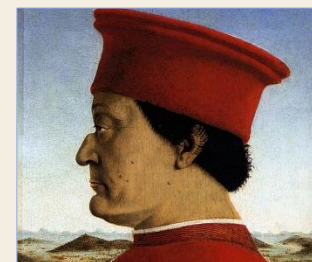
**Frederick II Hohestaufen** (1194 - 1250) was born in Jesi, province of Ancona and was one of the most powerful Holy Roman Emperors of the Middle Ages.

**Duke Federico da Montefeltro** (1422 - 1482) built his palace fortress in Urbino, one of the masterpieces of Renaissance architecture. Federico transformed the small state of Urbino into the most cultured and sophisticated of all the Renaissance courts which became a centre of patronage and learning. Federico was also responsible for creating one of the finest and greatest libraries since ancient times which was second only to the Vatican.

## Sports

**Valentino Rossi** (multiple MotoGP World Champion), one of the most successful motorcycle racers of all times. He is considered to be the greatest motorcycle rider, with nine Grand Prix World Championships of four different classes to his name. **Valentina Vezzali** has been the first fencer in Olympic history to win three Individual Foil gold medals at three consecutive Olympics. **Roberto Mancini**, born in Jesi, province of Ancona in 1964, was a national football player and is an outstanding Football Manager of the Italian national team. **Gianmarco Tamperi**, born in Civitanova Marche, is an Olympic high jump champion (2020 Summer Olympics) and World indoor champion 2016 (Portland, Oregon, USA).

*Curious to learn more? Explore the fascinating people of Le Marche on our website!*



Duke Federico da Montefeltro



Emperor Frederic II



Pompey the Great



Valentino Rossi



Valentina Vezzali



# Le Marche: Faith and Spiritual Heritage

The Le Marche region offers an extraordinary number of sites of great spirituality, including hundreds of churches of various architectures, monasteries, abbeys and 183 shrines spread all over the region.

## One of Europe's greatest Catholic shrines

Loreto (province of Ancona) is Italy's second most important pilgrimage site after Rome. The main attraction in Loreto is a great late Gothic Basilica that encloses the Holy House, certainly brought here from Nazareth, where the Virgin Mary is supposed to have conceived and raised the young Jesus. The basilica in Loreto has been a Catholic pilgrimage site since the 13th century. Each year it attracts more than four million pilgrims from all over the world.

## The birthplace of 10 popes

Starting with Pope John XVII (1003-1009), Pope Siccone, up to Pius IX (1846-1878), Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti.



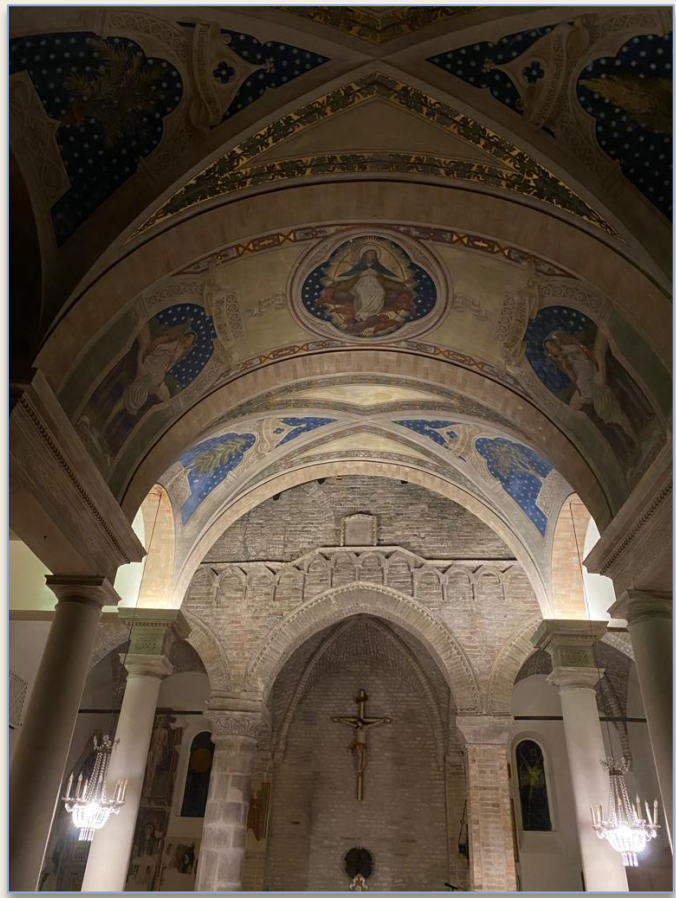
Sanctuary of Macereto, Visso



Loreto Basilica



An impressive and unique medieval Istrian stone funerary monument to the parents of Cardinal Gentile Partino (1310), Church of San Francesco, Montefiore dell'Aso



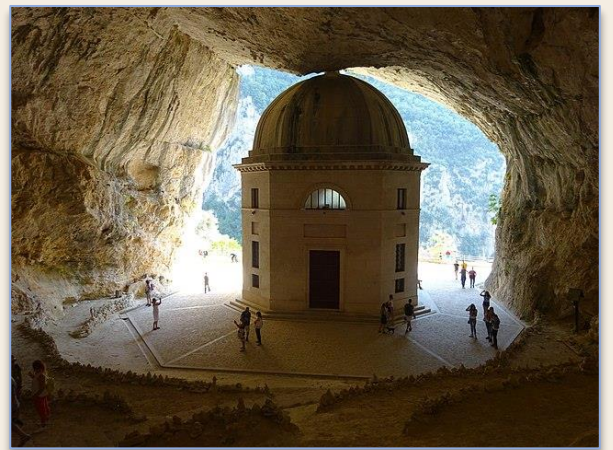
Church di S. Maria a Mare, Torre di Palme



Cappellone in the Basilica of San Nicola, Tolentino



Cathedral of Sant'Emidio, Ascoli



Temple of Valadier, Genga



# Le Marche: A Rich Architectural Heritage

The region has 500 well-preserved main piazzas, more than 1,000 important monuments, approximately one hundred cities of art, 113 theatres, 200 churches, 90 abbeys, 106 castles, 170 towers, 37 fortresses and 15 strongholds. Le Marche also has one of the finest examples of early Renaissance architecture in Italy (i.e., Ducal Palace of Urbino).

**The highest concentration of theatres in the world.**

The region boasts a total of 113 theatres dating from the Renaissance to the 19<sup>th</sup> century which are of great interest to theatre and architecture enthusiasts alike. Le Marche also has the second largest open-air arena for opera in Italy - the 3000 seat Sferisterio based in the province of Macerata.



Rocca Rovaresca, Senigallia



Sferisterio Open Air Theatre (3000 seat capacity), Macerata



Ducal Palace of Urbino



Santa Maria della Rocca, Offida



Offagna's Castle during medieval festival



Gradara Castle



# Le Marche: Ideal for Outdoor Activities

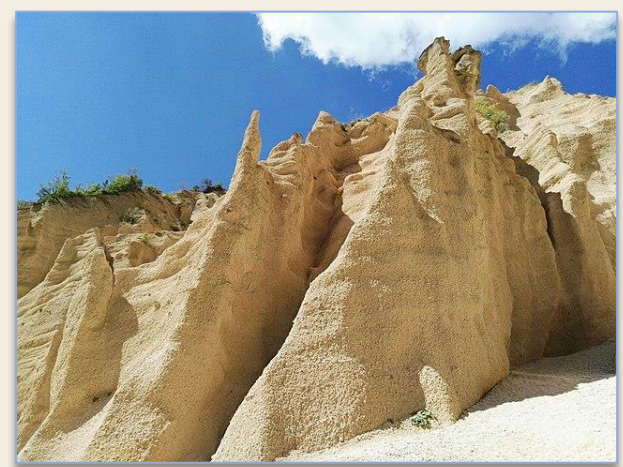


Yellow Apennine poppy, Sibillini Mountains

The extremely varied landscape and varying natural environments of Le Marche offer opportunities to enjoy many different sports and outdoor pursuits including biking, hiking, trekking, horseback riding, golfing (18 golf courses), diving, snorkelling, sailing, windsurfing, alpine and cross-country skiing - all in a pleasant and safe environment.

The Frasassi caves are the most extensive caves in Europe where visitors can go on relaxed walks or organised caving (or spelunking) tours.

Le Marche also offers seven main ski resorts spread along the Apennine mountains ranging from 1,236 to 2000 metres in altitude and containing a total of 27 ski lifts and 80 km of slopes.



Lame Rosse, Fiastra



Lago di Pilatus



Hiking in the Sibillini Mountain



Skiing at Sassotetto near Sarnano



Sailing in the Adriatic Sea



San Benedetto del Tronto



Il Conero, Ancona



# Le Marche: Over 3000 Years of History and Civilisation



'The Capestrano Warrior' (6<sup>th</sup> Century BC), a nearly 7ft rock and marble Piceni sculpture. Photo by [Sailko](#), licensed under CC BY 3.0

## The Piceni

Archaeology has revealed human settlements in Le Marche which date from at least 400,000 years ago. This region is characterised by the civilization of the Piceni, a pre-Roman, unique population. According to ancient Roman historians, such as Pliny and the Greek Strabo, the Piceni were a group of young Sabines who crossed the Appenines about 9 centuries B.C. The Piceni settled in a territory corresponding to the Le Marche region and the coastal part of Abruzzo, including Pescara. They were clever farmers and skilful craftsmen, capable of creating their own civilization and a good quality of life.

The Piceni owe their name to the woodpecker (picus in Latin), their symbol, itself a witness of a tradition in processing wood. Their culture emerged long before Rome and was enriched by the contribution of other populations who settled in the area and then integrated completely with the Piceni, themselves becoming Piceni. Pelasgians inhabited the Aegean Sea before the invention of the Greek language; at least some of them left for the Piceno after the eruption which destroyed the island of Thera (Santorini); then came the Liburnians, who later taught the Romans how to build ships and become invincible seamen. They came from the other side of the Adriatic Sea and founded the towns of Castrum Truentum (San Benedetto del Tronto) and Liburnum (Livorno), important ports even today. Piceni were also traders of goods, including metals, terracotta and amber, the latter came from northern Europe, in an area by the Baltic Sea. Fighting for their independence, they formed a big army to try to stop Roman expansion, but after few battles were defeated and became an important part of the Roman empire (268 B. C.), till its end.

## The Piceni and the Romans

The last battle was fought not far from the mouth of the river Tronto, and the Romans took advantage of an earthquake which took place just before it, when the two armies were facing each other. Soldiers of both armies were frightened, but the Roman commander, Sempronius the Wise, promptly reared his horse back and cried that it was a sign of the earthquake goddess, Tellure. The Roman soldiers instantly took this as a battle cry and eventually won the battle so the Piceno became part of the Empire (V Regio). Rome gained many riches in terms of food and associated lifestyle. Historians and writers of ancient Rome, like Pliny (The Elder) or Martial (Marcus Valerius Martialis) wrote that three things were excellent in the Piceno: olives, good bread, and pork sausages.



6<sup>th</sup> Century Piceni Breastplate



A guided tour in the Roman cisterns, Fermo (1st Century AD)



Arc of Trajan, Ancona (114 – 117 AD), Photo by [Derekambrosio](#), licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0



# Le Marche: Over 3000 Years of History and Civilisation



Roman Gilt Bronzes of Cartoceto di Pergola (50-30 BC)



Roman Gilt Bronzes of Cartoceto di Pergola (50-30 BC)

Marcus Valerius Martialis also mentioned the Pane Picentino (i.e., Piceno), a cake that required nine days of preparation and which could be stored. Once prepared, people ate it after dipping it into milk and honey.

In about seven centuries, the Piceno gave Rome illustrious personalities like Titus Betutius Barrus, who according to Cicero was considered the best orator of his time; Ventidius Bassus, who fought and beat the Parthians (Persians), and Lucius Flavius Silva Nonius Bassus, conqueror of the famous fortress of Masada (Israel).

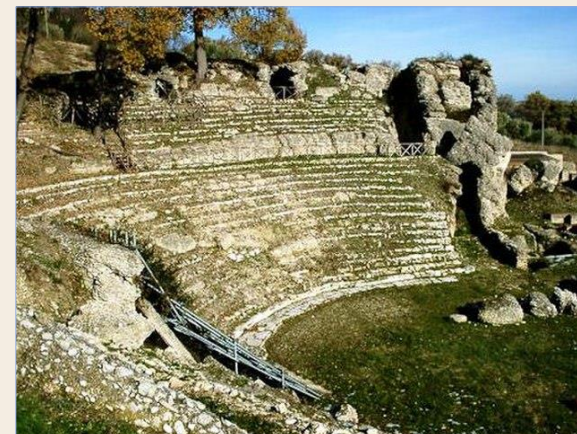
Around Fermo and its territory, the Romans founded a new colony, giving land to their veterans who could live the rest of their lives with their families. Those land partitions have preserved precious biodiversity today, as each property had its own wheat field, orchard, vineyard, and kitchen garden. The Romans did much building in the Piceno towns including roads and cisterns, many of which are still in very good condition like those in Fermo (Firmum Picenum). They also built theatres, one of them in Falerone (falerius Picenum) remained and used as a theatre today, even after two millennia.

### From the Medieval Period to the Unification of Italy

The Romans dominated the area for almost 700 years. At the fall of the Roman Empire, Le Marche was plundered by the Goths, Vandals, Ostrogoths and, finally, the Lombards.

In the middle of the 8th century AD, Pope Stephen II decided to call upon foreigners to oust the ungodly Lombards. The first to lead the charge of the Frankish army was Pepin the Short, but it was his rather tall son Charlemagne who finally took back control from the Lombards. On Christmas Day 800 AD, Pope Leo III crowned him emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. However, he was not recognised as such by the Eastern Byzantine church, which had control of much of Le Marche's Adriatic coast at the time.

After Charlemagne's death (A.D.814.), Le Marche entered centuries of war, anarchy, and general Dark Ages mayhem. In central Italy, two factions developed, that of the Guelphs – who backed papal rule – and the Ghibellines – who backed rule by the emperor. The Guelph faction eventually won out and Le Marche became part of the Papal States, held under close watch by a succession of popes, while much of Europe was busy enjoying the Renaissance. It remained that way until Italian unification in 1861.




Amphitheatre, Urbisaglia (2nd Century BC)  
Photo by [FAM1885](#), licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



Roman Necropolis, Montefiore dell'Aso (1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD)

### What people say about Le Marche

"There is so much history and art, we are always discovering something new."

 Kathy Caldwell

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# Le Marche: A Heritage of Arts and Crafts



Paper Mill, Fabriano Semiannino Gigli



Bobbin Lace Pillow



Bobbin Lace



Accordion Museum



Hat Museum

## The Oldest Paper Manufacturing in Europe

The history and the heart of the paper making world in Europe began in Fabriano, Province of Ancona, Marche dating back to the 13th century. In 1276 the first paper mill opened. The paper produced was of such a high standard that it was chosen by great artists such as Michelangelo and Titian for their work.

## One of the best hat-making centres in Europe

Montappone, Province of Fermo has a tradition of making hats, becoming one of the most important centres of production in Italy, together with the nearby towns of Massa Fermana and Monte Vidon Corrado. Straw hats were the main product in past centuries, whereas the focus is now on the production of all kinds of fashion hats. More than sixty million hats are produced annually in this area. In Montappone you can also visit two different hat museums, including the unique one named "Il cappellaio pazzo" (The Mad Hatter) which pays homage to Lewis Carroll's famous novel.

## The heart of lacemaking in Italy

Offida, a town in the southern province of Ascoli Piceno, has a very important local tradition dating back over five centuries. That is lacemaking, which is still carried out in the traditional way using bobbins; the finished product being extremely intricate and beautiful. There are still many women here who continue the tradition, and you can watch them work and buy some of the intricate, elegant pieces of lace, pendants, earrings, bracelets they produce. It is very labour intensive, which requires experience and takes many hours to produce one piece.

## The world capital of accordion makers

Castelfidardo, a town in the province of Ancona, has been the international capital of accordion builders since the 19th century thanks to the ingenuity of the artisan and inventor Paolo Soprani, the creator of the first Italian accordion factory in 1863. Castelfidardo has since expanded to about 50 accordion factories. It also produces a variety of other musical instruments including the harmonica, piano, organ, keyboards, and guitar. Every October the town organises an annual accordion festival attracting musicians from all over the world. It also has a unique museum dedicated to the accordion, the International Accordion Museum, which houses over 350 instruments including a replica of the first-known example from China dating back 4,500 years.

## The World Capital of Shoe Production

Le Marche has some of the best shopping outlets in Italy (which include designer shoes at discount prices) scattered in the hills mainly in the centre-south of the region. Artisans, small family-run factories, and big multinationals sit alongside one another producing fashions for designers such as Prada, Armani, and Tod's. Most of the world brands are based in the region or produced under licence and have a Le Marche designer factory outlet or store where you can buy fashion at a discount. Whilst being the capital of footwear manufacturers in Italy, the region is also rich in manufacturing companies that produce locally made high-quality clothing, hats, and other goods like handbags.

Some of the most prestigious fashion brands that are produced include Tod's, Naturino, Hogan, Fay, Prada, Paciotti, Santoni, Loriblu, Kickers, Fabi, Fendi, Nero Giardini, Giorgio Armani, Pollini, Vic-Matiè, Simonetta, Versace, Gucci, Giamarco Lorenzi, Nando Muzi, Rossi, Ugo Boss Churches, Paciotti, Alberto Guardiani, Sergio Rossi, and many others.

Nearly 80% of Italy's domestic production of footwear is based in the provinces of Fermo and Macerata. The factories and outlets gravitate mainly around six municipalities including Fermo, Civitanova, Monte San Giusto, Sant'Elpidio a Mare, Porto Sant'Elpidio, Montegranaro and Monte Urano.

## One of the Oldest Motorcycle Factories still in operation in Europe

The Benelli factory was established in Pesaro in 1911 and has been in continual operation to this day.



The world capital of shoe production



The world capital of shoe production



Accordion Museum



Benelli Motorcycle



Best hat-making centres in Europe



# Le Marche: Food & Wine

## A varied, seasonal, slow, traditional, local homemade cuisine

The food in the Le Marche region shares equally the bounty of the sea and the countryside. The region boasts an incredible variety of dishes strictly based on tradition and local produce. The use of fresh, top-quality ingredients assembled with the minimum of fuss characterises Le Marche's food. As with any rural diet, much use is made of food gathered from the wild such as mushrooms, game, nuts, and field herbs. You can eat traditional Italian dishes and Le Marche recipes at local restaurants at a fraction of the cost than elsewhere in Italy and Northern Europe.

### Fish

Brodetto (fish broth) or Zuppa di Pesce is a fish soup that boasts in Le Marche a few typical recipes (Brodetto all'Anconetana, Brodetto alla Sambenedettese etc.).

### Meat

One of the region's signature dishes is porchetta, a spiced roast pork which is served sliced, classically into crispy bread rolls.

A unique recipe is Olive all'Ascolana. This is an exquisite dish made from local variety called 'Tenera Ascolana' olives, pitted and filled with spiced meat, breaded, and deep-fried. The recipe dates to the 1800's but the type of olive has been well-known since Roman times. Since the late 19th century Olive Ascolane have become popular throughout Italy.

### Pasta

Vincigrassi is the Le Marche recipe for their own Lasagne made with minced meat, tomato, mozzarella, and parmesan cheese plus bechamel sauce (sometimes topped with local truffles). Favourite meats include cinghiale (wild boar), pork, veal, rabbit, hare, game birds (quail, pigeon), chicken and goose.

Other classic pastas include "Pappardelle con la Papera", a larger tagliatella with duck sauce.

### Dessert

A typical Marche Christmas sweet has different variants in name and recipe (Pistringolo, Frustingo, Bostrengo etc.) which is based on an ancient recipe dating back 2,500 years to the Picentes civilisation. It was greatly appreciated by the Romans who called it Panis Picentinus. It consisted of bread dough mixed with dried figs, raisins, nuts, and vino cotto (cooked wine) and baked. Today there are about 22 different types recorded throughout the region.

### Wines

The classic wine of Le Marche is Verdicchio, a crisp, young, green-tinged white wine, excellent with fish and seafood. There are good red wines such as Rosso Conero, based on the Montepulciano grape, and the Sangiovese of Rosso Piceno.

### Le Marche is the biggest truffle producer in Italy

Le Marche is the biggest truffle producer in Italy, particularly of the prized white truffle.

Truffles (tartufi) are a Le Marche delicacy that are found in many local dishes. The town of Acqualagna in the province of Pesaro and Urbino boasts 9 types of black and white truffles of which its superior white truffles share the designation of origin with those of Alba.



Grandma's Sweet Bread



Brodetto (Fish Stew)



Tagliatelle in a Rib Sauce



Olive Ascolane (Stuffed Fried Olives)



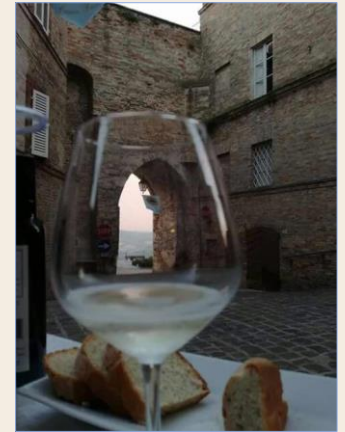
Vincigrassi (Regional Lasagne)



Porchetta (Boneless Roast Pork)



Spaghetti and Meatballs



Verdicchio Wine

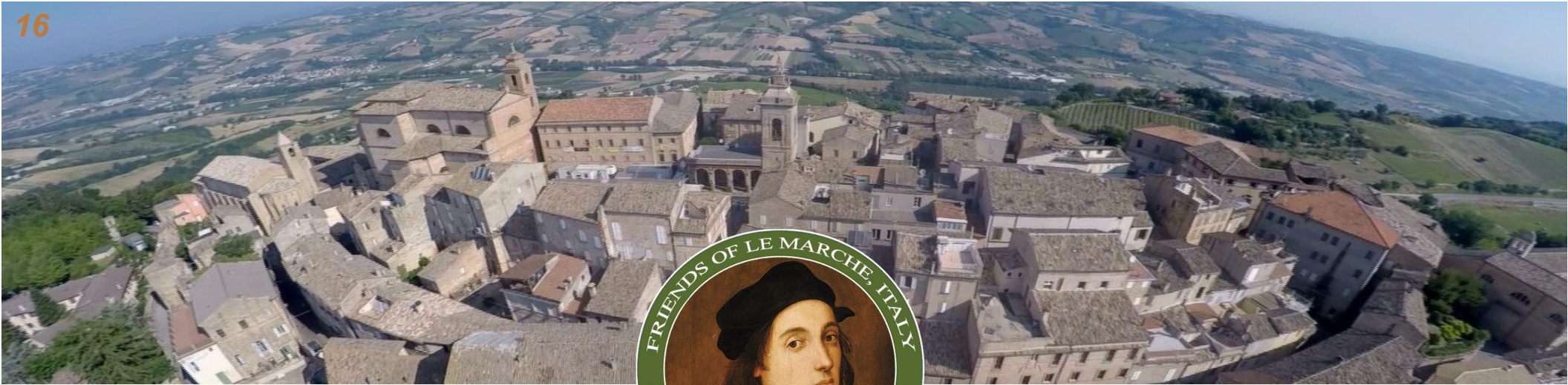


Chocolate and Cherry Cake



Mediterranean Stuffed Calamari





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‘Uncovering the Secrets of Carlo Crivelli’s Montefiore Polyptych’ by Daphne De Luca

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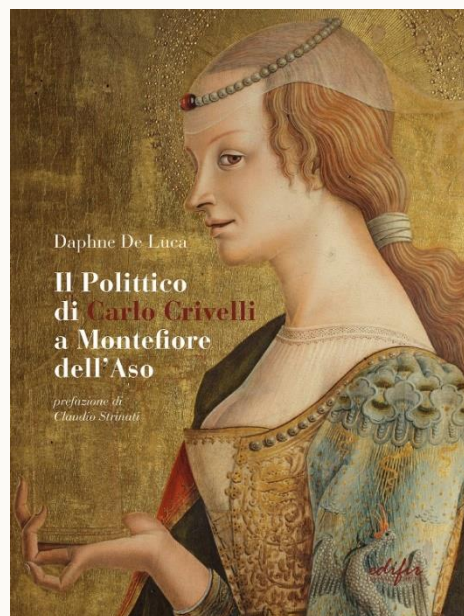
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Church of San Francesco, Montefiore dell'Aso



The Polyptych of Carlo Crivelli in Montefiore dell'Aso by Daphne De Luca



Church of San Filippo Neri, Montefiore dell'Aso



Polyptych by Carlo Crivelli, Montefiore dell'Aso