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Terroir Tours

# Val d'Orcia Italy

Region Guide



# Val d'Orcia

Located in the heart of Tuscany, Val d'Orcia is a picturesque valley known for its rolling hills, rustic farmhouses, and charming medieval towns. The area is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and for good reason: its landscapes have inspired countless artists and filmmakers over the years. Visitors to Val d'Orcia can enjoy scenic drives, take leisurely walks, or hike through the hills, and there's so much to discover along the way.

## **San Quirico**

Situated in the heart of Val d'Orcia, San Quirico is a small but charming medieval town that's worth a visit. The town is known for its well-preserved historic center, which includes the Collegiata di San Quirico, a Romanesque church that dates back to the 8th century. Visitors can also explore the Horti Leonini, a beautiful garden that was created in the 16th century, or simply stroll through the town's narrow streets and alleyways.

## **Wine Bar Recommendation:**

Intralci +390577897555 Via Dante Alighieri, 53A, 53027 San Quirico d'Orcia SI, Italy

## **Montepulciano**

Famous for its wine, Montepulciano is a hilltop town in southern Tuscany that's full of history and charm. The town's historic center is lined with Renaissance palaces, churches, and piazzas, and visitors can take in breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside from the top of the town's walls. Of course, no trip to Montepulciano would be complete without a visit to one of the town's many wineries, where visitors can sample the famous Vino Nobile di Montepulciano.

## **Winery Visit:**

Avignonesi +390578724304 Via Colonica, 1, 53045 Montepulciano SI, Italy  
You'll embark on a tour with one of their knowledgeable guides and discover the importance of Avignonesi on the environment. You will get to visit one of their most iconic vineyards and take a tour through time in the ageing cellars and the Vinsantaia. When you have seen it all, sit down and enjoy a gourmet lunch.





## **Pienza**

Known as the "ideal city" of the Renaissance, Pienza is a small town that was designed by Pope Pius II in the 15th century. The town's historic center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and visitors can explore the many palaces, churches, and fountains that make Pienza so unique. In addition to its historic attractions, Pienza is also known for its delicious pecorino cheese, which can be sampled at the town's many cheese shops. Pienza was one of the locations where the 1968 *Romeo & Juliet* was filmed. Most of the filming was done in and around the Palazzo Piccolomini; principally used for the filming of the interior and exterior scenes relating to the Capulets' house.

### **Wine Bar Recommendation:**

Idyllium +393801018031 Via Gozzante, 67, 53026  
Pienza SI, Italy

\*Cheese & Meat shops are incredible in this town



## **Bagno Vignoni**

Bagno Vignoni is a small town that's famous for its thermal baths. The town's main square is dominated by a large thermal pool, which has been used for centuries as a natural hot tub. Whether you're looking to relax in the thermal waters or explore the town's historic attractions, Bagno Vignoni is a must-visit destination in Val d'Orcia and your home base while exploring the area.

### **Restaurant Recommendations**

- Ristorante at Posta Marucci +390577887112 Via Ara Urcea, 43, 53027 Bagno Vignoni SI, Italy
- Ristorante Enoteca La Terrazza +390577887157 Piazza delle Sorgenti, 13, 53027 Bagno Vignoni SI, Italy
- Osteria C'era una volta +393475956728 Via del Gorello, 40, 53027 Bagno Vignoni SI, Italy
- For Aperitivo - Il Barrino +393928838670 Via del Gorello, 44, 53027 Bagno Vignoni SI, Italy





## **Accommodations**

Albergo Posta Marcucci +390577887112 Via Ara  
Urcea, 43, 53027 Bagno Vignoni SI, Italy  
Spa Treatment Offerings ([linked](#))

## **Nearby Hiking**

There are plenty of wonderful trails for you to get out and enjoy the countryside between soaking in the thermal bathes. We recommend downloading the AllTrails App to your phone. It will show you elevation, distance, estimated time, etc. There are so many incredible views throughout the trails of Val d'Orcia. River Orcia Path Out-and-Back About 6 Km (3.7 mi) along the river just South of town. Fairly easy hike to stretch those legs. Lots of birds to listen to along the way. Bagno Vignoni Ring Roughly 4.3 Km (2.67 mi) medium difficulty. Not only do you pass by the foot of the thermal waterfall of Bagno Vignoni and its open pools free of access, but on the way back you also pass through the village itself. Rocca d'Orcia Ring About 8 km (4.9 mi) of the Val d'Orcia natural and artistic park with one of the most impressive views from Rocca d'Orcia, once the head city of the region. Very pleasant 2-3h break that shares a stretch with the famous Via Francigena pilgrims road. Medium difficulty.







## **Local Dishes to Try**

### **A Chianina Beef (Top Left)**

Giant T-bone steak from the local Chianina cattle, grilled simply and served rare. The meat's quality and depth of flavor are exceptional—best shared.

### **Pecorino di Pienza (Top Right)**

Sheep's milk cheese from Pienza, aged to different stages from fresh (fresco) to hard (stagionato). The milk's flavor changes with the sheep's seasonal diet, making each bite a taste of the land.

### **Pici Pasta (Bottom Left)**

Thick hand-rolled pasta (like fat spaghetti) that has a delightfully chewy texture. It's served with garlic & tomato, as a cacio & pepe or with the local black truffle when in season.

### **Ribollita (Bottom Right)**

A hearty bread-thickened vegetable soup, often with kale, beans, and olive oil. Perfect for cooler days and a true expression of Tuscan cucina povera ("poor kitchen" tradition).

# Benchmark Wines of Tuscany

## Vino Nobile di Montepulciano

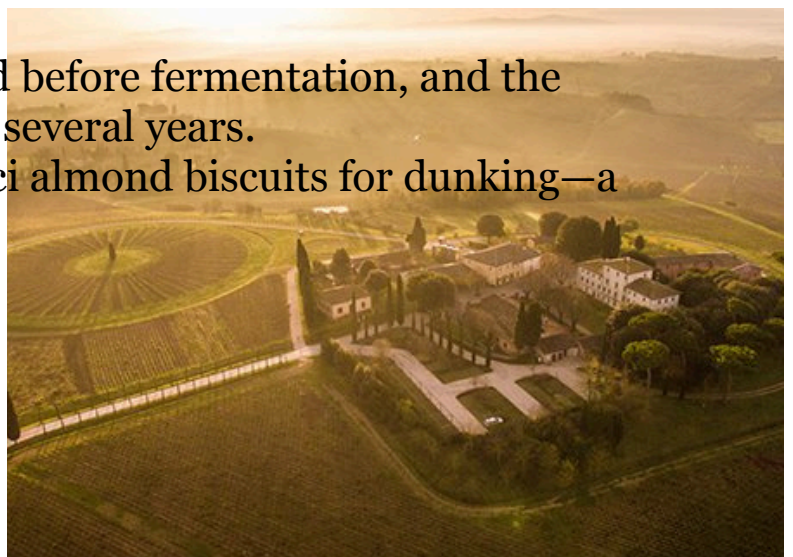
- Grape: At least 70% Sangiovese (locally called Prugnolo Gentile), often blended with Canaiolo and other native grapes.
- Style: Elegant and medium- to full-bodied with red cherry, plum, and gentle spice notes.
- Experience: Aged a minimum of 2 years (3 for Riserva), offering a balance of fruit, acidity, and supple tannins.
- Pairing Tip: Perfect with Tuscan classics like pici pasta in ragù or aged Pecorino di Pienza.

## Brunello di Montalcino

- Grape: 100% Sangiovese (locally called Brunello).
- Style: One of Italy's most prestigious reds—rich, powerful, and structured, with flavors of dark cherry, leather, and herbs.
- Experience: Aged a minimum of 4 years (5 for Riserva), allowing for depth and complexity.
- Pairing Tip: Best with hearty dishes—think Chianina beef steak or wild boar ragù.

## Vin Santo

- Grapes: Traditionally Trebbiano and Malvasia (sometimes with Sangiovese for the rosé style Occhio di Pernice).
- Style: A luscious, amber-gold dessert wine, rich with dried fruit, honey, and nutty flavors.
- Experience: Grapes are air-dried before fermentation, and the wine is aged in small barrels for several years.
- Pairing Tip: Served with cantucci almond biscuits for dunking—a quintessential Tuscan treat





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Terroir Tours

# The Veneto Italy

Region Guide





# Verona, Italy

Verona is well known for the setting of William Shakespeare's plays *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. But between the art, architecture, food, and wine of the region, we think Verona will quickly hold a special place in your heart too.

Records show settlements in the area from about 550 BCE. Verona eventually became a Roman Colony in the first century BCE. Its location situated between trade crossroads on the Adige river made Verona an important location to control for the Empire.



City walls, an arena, and other fortifications were established by the Romans; many of which are still visible. After the eventual collapse of the Roman Empire, the city was left vulnerable to attack by various groups.

During Medieval times, around 1260, a powerful local family known as the della Scalas came to power and Verona entered into a prosperous time. The della Scalas were large supporters of the arts, supporting famous artists such as Dante.



The city continued to prosper during the Renaissance period under the Venetian Republic. Verona became the home of nobility and wealthy merchants. Many palaces, churches, and other buildings were constructed during this time. Over the millennia, Verona was controlled by various groups including the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Romans, Lombards, Charlemagne, Napoleon, Habsburgs, and other prominent families. Eventually, in 1866, Verona became part of the Kingdom of Italy. In World War II, the city was heavily bombed by Allied forces and further damaged by retreating German troops. In 2000, the city was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO due to its urban structure and architecture.

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## Local Dishes to Try



### **Risotto with Tastasal (Left)**

Typical dish of Veronese and Veneto cuisine, this risotto is made of minced pork, salted and peppered. The meaning of the word “tastasal” is just “taste the salt” in Venetian dialect.



### **Sfogliatelle di Villafranca (Right)**

Regional variety of the iconic Italian pastry. Sfogliatella means "small, thin leaf/layer", as the pastry's texture resembles stacked leaves when baked.



### **Risotto all'Amarone (Left)**

Made with a beef broth, Amarone wine with Vialone Nano rice, a type of medium grain rice specific to the region.



### **Other Local Specialities (Right)**

Check out pasta specific to the area such as Bigoli (pictured Right) as pictured in bigoli con le sardée (Bigoli with Sardines) or bigoli con l'arna (Bigoli with Duck & tomato sauce), another local favorite.

### **Wheretoeat**

When in Verona it would be pretty hard to go hungry. There is no shortage of restaurants, bakeries, and bars to check out. Verona has four one-starred Michelin restaurants – 12 Apostoli, Il Desco, Osteria La Fontanina and Oseleta. There is also one two-starred restaurant, Casa Perbellini, just a short walk away in the Basilica di San Zeno neighborhood.

### **Lunch**

For lunch or a lighter dinner, we recommend finding a nearby osteria. Here are a couple of our favorites you might want to try. Osteria del Bugiardo Corso Porta Borsari, 17/A, 37121 Verona VR, Italy

**Ai Mascheroni Ristorante Osteria Via Ponte Pietra, 7 - 7/A,**  
37121 Verona VR, Italy



## **Dinner**

Antico Bottega del Vino Via Scudo di Francia, 3, 37121 Verona VR, Italy Boasting an impressive wine list, we think this spot is sure to please. Be sure to try the Risotto all'Amarone! They will likely be able to squeeze you in somewhere, but a reservation doesn't hurt. Entrees 20 EUR

Ristorante Maffei Piazza Erbe, 38, 37121 Verona VR, Italy

A decadent spot with a four-course tasting menu for ~70 EUR

## **Apperativos/Cocktails**

Re Teodorico Piazzale Castel S. Pietro, 1, 37121 Verona VR, Italy

Looking for that beautiful view over the city? This is your spot! Great spot to enjoy a cocktail with the setting sun.

FRZ LAB Via Guglielmo Marconi, 15/a, 37122 Verona VR, Italy

Craft cocktail experience with a ton of interesting ingredients—it might take you a while to settle on just one.

## **Accommodations**

### **Hotel Gabbio d'Oro**

Nestled at the corner of Piazza delle Erbe, the atmospheric Roman forum of Verona, right beside the Gardello Tower. Housed in an elegant 18th-century palazzo, the hotel preserves classical grandeur with frescoed ceilings, antique paintings, wooden beams, period furnishings, oriental rugs, and rich fabrics—orchestrating a romantic, old-world ambiance.



## **Where to Visit**

If you're looking to visit a number of the popular attractions in Verona, the Verona Card might be a good option for you. It costs 20 EUR for a 24 hour period. The card can be purchased at the Verona Tourist Office (Piazza Brà) or any attraction the card covers. More information can be found ~~here~~.

Covered by the Verona Card:

the Arena, the Arche Scaligere tombs, Basilica di Sant'Anastasia, Basilica di San Zeno, Juliet's House, San Fermo church, Verona Cathedral, GAM Achille Forti modern art gallery, Castelvecchio museum, natural history museum, Juliet's Tomb and frescoes museum and the Lamberti towers.

### **Verona Arena & Piazza Brà**

*P.za Bra, 1, 37121 Verona VR, Italy*

*Price: Entrance 10 EUR (free with the Verona Card)*

The Verona Arena is located in the main Piazza Brà.

Built in 1st Century by the Romans, the impressive Arena used to hold almost 30,000 spectators. Today, it is still used every year for the Opera Festival.



### **Torre dei Lamberti**

Via della Costa, 1, 37121 Verona VR, Italy

Price: 5 euros (free with the Verona Card)

Always in search of that incredible panoramic view? 368 steps or an elevator ride plus two floors will get you to the top of this tower. If you stop by early on, you might be able to reserve tickets to go around sunset!





### **Ca sa di Giulietta (Juliet's House)**

*Via Cappello, 23, 37121 Verona VR, Italy*

Price: 6 euros (free with the Verona Card) Walking around Verona, it's hard to miss ads or names related to William Shakespeare's tragedy Romeo and Juliet. It's free to access the courtyard to see the statue of Juliet and the balcony, but to gain access to the balcony and small museum you will need a ticket.



### **Giardino Giusti**

*Via Giardino Giusti, 2, 37129 Verona VR, Italy*

Price: 10 euros (7 euros with the Verona Card)

Take a break from the city and soak up some nature in this masterfully sculpted Renaissance garden. Legend has it that lovers who find each other in the gardens' labyrinth are destined to stay together. Pack a picnic or go near sunset for a great view of the city.

### **Museo di Castelvecchio**

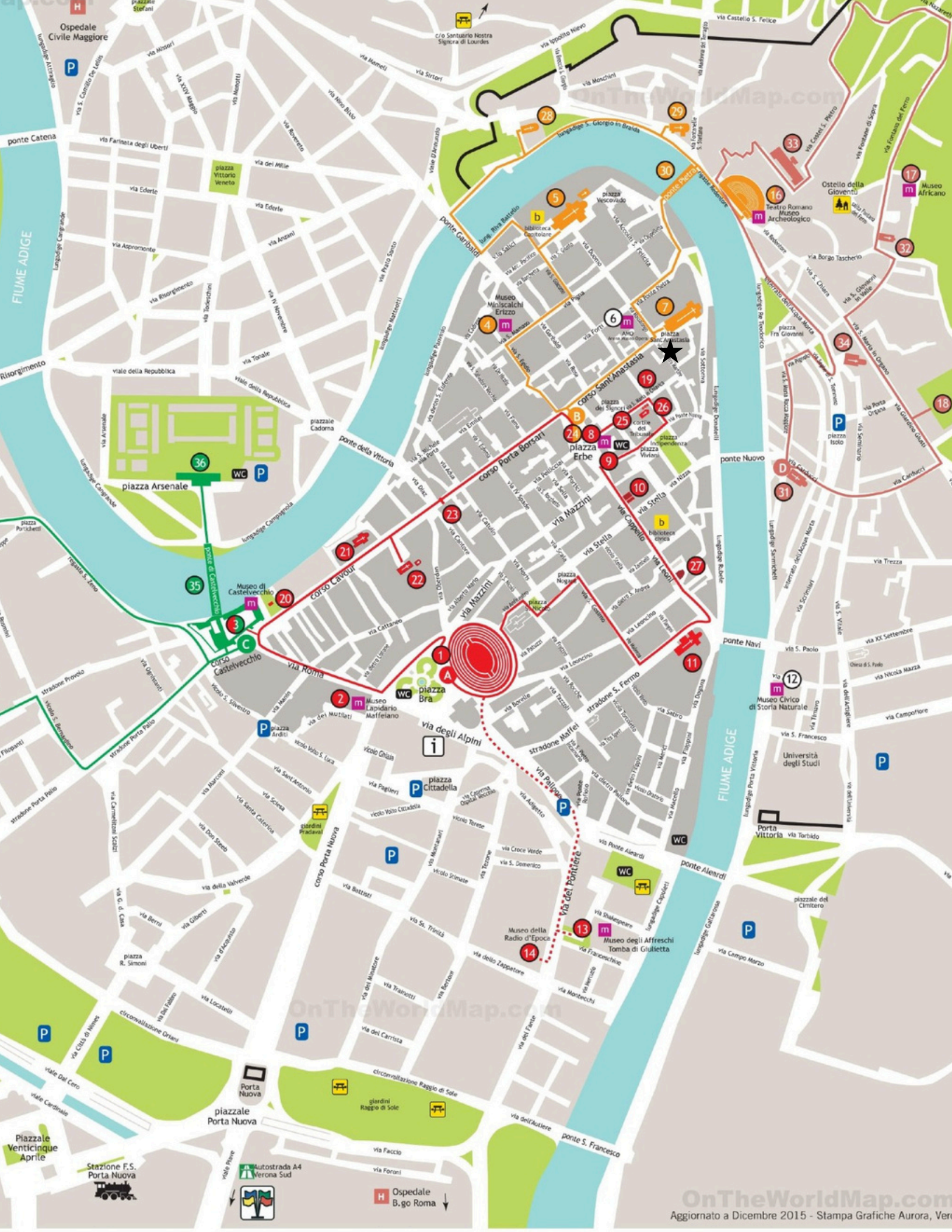
*Corso Castelvecchio, 2, 37121 Verona VR, Italy*

Price: 6 euros (free with the Verona Card), the inner courtyard is free This next one is probably more for the art-lover, but the medieval castle in which the art is housed is also beautiful.

Gothic, Medieval, and Renaissance art can be found in addition to ancient weapons. Be sure to walk the Castelvecchio's Ponte Scaligero (bridge) after you're done at the museum!









## **Wines of the Region**

Valpolicella is northwest of Verona. In the North, the topography is hillier slowing down the ripening of the grapes which preserves more acid. In the South, the area is flatter and warmer which gives the grape fruitier qualities with less acid. The main grape used is Corvina, an Italian grape native to the region.



Amarone della Valpolicella and Recioto della Valpolicella are special wines of the area that are made using the passito method, whereby grapes are left to dry on straw mats which help to concentrate sugar and aromas. Soave is east of Verona near the River Po. Once again, the climate and soils in the hillier areas lend themselves to wines that are full of flavor ripeness and high in acidity. These wines are capable of maturing for many years—look for Soave Classico DOC for this style. Soave from the plain is fruitier with medium acidity made to be drunk young. The main grape used for Soave is Garganega.

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## **Tenuta Sant'Antonio**

*Via Monti Garbi località San Briccio  
37030 Lavagno (Verona) – ITALIA*

Tenuta Sant'Antonio's winery is located in San Briccio, between Verona and Soave. The family of four brothers work together to run this winery. In 1989, they decided to buy a site in the Garbi mountains. On our visit we plan to try Amarone, Valpolicella, and a lineup of other delightful wines representing their estate's terroir.





The background image shows the interior of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan. The architecture is highly ornate, featuring a large central dome with a glass and iron structure. The walls are covered in intricate mosaics and frescoes. The floor is made of polished marble with a complex geometric pattern. People are seen walking through the gallery, and various shops are visible along the sides. The lighting is warm and comes from the skylight above.

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Terroir Tours

# Milan Italy

City Guide





# Milan

Northern Italy's vibrant, international city of Milan serves as the capital of the Lombardy. The city is known for its fashion, design, finance, and art, making it a popular destination for travelers from all over the world. Milan is also home to some of Italy's most famous landmarks, including the impressive Duomo di Milano, the world-renowned La Scala opera house, and the historic Castello Sforzesco.

Milan has a rich history that spans over two thousand years. It was founded in 600 BC by the Celts and became a strategic Roman city in 222 BC. During the Middle Ages, Milan became a center of commerce and banking, and its rulers, the Visconti and the Sforza families, commissioned many of the city's iconic landmarks. Milan joined the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth century and then the Austrian Empire before joining the newly created Kingdom of Italy in 1861.

Milan was heavily bombed during World War II, but the city quickly recovered and grew economically and industrially in the years that followed. Milan is now the financial hub of the nation and the location of numerous multinational corporations, including many houses of fashion and design. Milan is a fascinating destination for tourists interested in history, art, and architecture because of the city's rich cultural past, which is also visible in its museums, art galleries, and historical buildings.



**Terrazza Duomo 21:** Get a spot at the rooftop bar that overlooks the Duomo. You'll pay a premium for the cocktail, but the view is well worth it. Small bites are also available.

**e/n enoteca naturale:** Tucked away behind Basilica de Sant'Eustorgio, Enoteca Naturale's large outdoor yard is full of Milanese drinking natural wine and snacking on house-made focaccia or small plates of lamb, artichoke, and creamy cicerchie beans. With over 300 labels, their natural wine collection is the largest in the city.

**28 Posti:** Owner Silvia Orazi's mother welcomes guests to the small restaurant. Chef Marco Ambrosino works in full view of guests as he aims to incorporate Mediterranean gastronomy and biodiversity.

**Rita:** Unique cocktails. The complimentary small bites (common currency in Italian bars) include a selection of healthyish tartines and crudites. [\$\$]

**Cantina Urbana:** Located just outside Milan's center, this micro winery offers a different type of winery experience. There are also local aperitivo snacks, charcuterie boards. [\$\$]



## Attractions

1. The Duomo di Milano: This is one of the most iconic landmarks in Milan, a massive cathedral with elaborate Gothic architecture. Take the time to explore both the exterior and the interior, and climb up to the rooftop for stunning views of the city.
2. Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II: This is a luxurious shopping arcade that features high-end Italian brands, cafes, and restaurants. It is also home to a stunning glass dome and intricate mosaics.
3. Sforza Castle: This imposing fortress was once home to Milan's rulers and now houses several museums, including the Museum of Ancient Art, the Museum of Musical Instruments, and the Museum of Egyptian Art.
4. The Last Supper: This famous fresco by Leonardo da Vinci can be found in the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie. Make sure to book your tickets in advance as they sell out quickly.
5. Pinacoteca di Brera: This art museum contains an impressive collection of Italian Renaissance masterpieces, including works by Raphael, Caravaggio, and Tintoretto.
6. La Scala: Milan's world-renowned opera house has been the stage for some of the most famous operas in history. If you can't catch a show, you can still take a tour of the theater and its museum.
7. The Quadrilatero della Moda: Milan is one of the fashion capitals of the world, and this district is home to some of the biggest names in fashion, including Prada, Armani, and Gucci.
8. San Siro Stadium: If you're a football fan, make sure to visit this historic stadium, which is home to both AC Milan and Inter Milan.



## Getting Around

**Public transportation:** Milan has a comprehensive public transportation system that includes metro lines, trams, and buses. The metro system is fast, efficient, and easy to use. You can purchase tickets at metro stations or via the ATM Milano app.

**Taxis:** Taxis in Milan are typically more expensive than public transportation, but they can be a good option for getting around quickly. You can hail a taxi on the street, or you can call a taxi service or use a ride-hailing app like Uber or Lyft.

**Bike sharing:** Milan has a bike-sharing system called BikeMi, which is a great option for exploring the city's historic center. You can rent a bike from one of the many BikeMi stations located throughout the city and return it to any other station.

## Other

[QC Termemilano](#): Tranquil day spa in lush garden surrounds offering thermal baths, saunas, massage & a cafe.



## **Helpful Italian Phrases:**

Yes – Sì – See

No – No – Noh

Please – Per favore – Pehr fah-voh-reh

Thank you – Grazie – Grah-tsee-eh

You're welcome – Prego – Preh-goh

Cheers! (To your health) – Salute! – Sah-loo-tay

Excuse me (for attention) – Scusi – Skooh-zee

Excuse me (to pass by) – Permesso – Pehr-mehs-soh

Do you speak English? – Parla Inglese? – Parh-la een-glai-zeh

I don't understand – Non capisco – Non kah-pee-skoh

I'm sorry – Mi dispiace – Mee dees-pyah-cheh

Good morning (formal) – Buon giorno – Bwohn-johr-noh

Good afternoon (formal) – Buona sera – Bwoh-nah-seh-rah

Good night (formal) – Buona notte – Bwoh-nah-noh-teh

Can I see the menu please? – Il menu, per favore – Eel men-oo, pehr fah-voh-reh

House wine – Vino della casa – Vee-noh del-lah car-sah

Red / white wine – Vino rosso / bianco – Vee-noh ross-oh / bee-ahn-koh

A glass / bottle – Una bicchiere / una bottiglia – OO-nah beek-kyeh-reh / boht-tee-lyah

Where's the bathroom? – Dov'è il bagno? – Doh-veh eel bahn-yoh?

The check (bill) please – Il conto, per favore – Eel kon-toh, pehr fah-voh-reh

Can I pay by card? – Posso pagare con la carta? – Pohs-soh pah-gah-reh kon la cahr-tah?

# Notes

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