



LE MARCHE: ITALY'S BEST KEPT SECRET

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You may have visited Italy more than a few times, but you have not 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.

[Discover more of Le Marche on our website & Pinterest](#)

Beaches & Seaside Towns (Find out more [Beaches](#))

- 180 kilometres of coastline and sandy beaches
- 26 towns facing the Adriatic Sea, 1 Seaport and 9 Marinas

Spectacular Caves (Find out more [Caves of Frasassi](#))

- The most extensive cave system in Europe (13 km-8mi), the Frasassi Caves are situated in Genga (province of Ancona).

The Highest concentration of Theatres in the World (Find out more [Theatres](#))

- The region boasts 113 theatres dating from the renaissance to the 19th century, the highest density of theatres in the world!
- Home of 2nd largest open-air arena for opera in Italy. The 3,000 seat Sferisterio is based in Macerata.

The Oldest Paper Manufacturing in Europe (Find out more [The Paper Museum](#))

- The history and the heart of the paper making world in Europe begins 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.

Nature & Wildlife (Find out more [Nature & Wildlife](#))

- Two national parks (Monti Sibillini, Gran Sasso, and Monti della Laga)
- Four regional parks (Monte Conero, Sasso Simone and Simoncello, Monte San Bartolo, Gola della Rossa and Grotte di Frasassi)
- Five nature reserves (Abbadia di Fiastra, Gola del Furlo, Montagna di Torricchio, Ripa Bianca and Sentina)
- More than 100 protected floral areas
- 15 state forests, over 347 species of birds, numerous environmental-educational centres

Sport & Leisure (Find out more [Sport & Leisure](#))

- The extremely varied landscape and varying natural environments of Le Marche offer opportunities to enjoy many different sports and outdoor pursuits including biking, hiking, rock climbing, trekking, horseback riding, golfing (18 golf courses), Scuba diving, snorkelling, windsurfing, alpine and cross-country skiing - all in a pleasant and safe environment.
- 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. The highest peak in Le Marche is Monte Vettore 2,476m.

Food & Wine (Find out more [Food & Wine](#))

- 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.
- The region's main signature dishes include Brodetto or zuppa di pesce, a fish broth flavoured with saffron, Porchetta where a roast pork is either served whole or sliced into crispy bread rolls. Vincisgrassi is the Le Marche recipe for their own Lasagne made from ground pork, tomato and bechamel sauce and is sometimes topped with truffles. Other classic pastas include "pappardelle alla papara", a flat pasta with duck sauce.

- A typical Marche Christmas sweet is Frustingo based on an ancient recipe dating back 2,500 years to Picentes civilisation and greatly appreciated by the romans who called it Panis Picentinus. The recipe consisted of poor bread mixed with dried figs, raisins, nuts and Vino cotto (cooked wine). Today there are about 22 different types recorded throughout the region.
- Finally, a unique recipe for an olive appetiser is Olive Ascolane. This is an exquisite dish made from special olives called 'Ascolana Tenera' olives, filled with meat, breaded and deep-fried. The recipe dates to 1800 but the type of olive was well known since the Roman times. Since the late 19th century Olive Ascolane have become very popular throughout Italy.
- The classic wine of Le Marche is Verdicchio, a crisp, young, green-tinged white wine, excellent with fish and seafood. Verdicchio has been documented since the 14th century and today Veredicchio dei Castelli di Jesi is rated as the best white wine worldwide. There are good red wines such as Rosso Conero, based on the Montepulciano grape, and the Sangiovese of Rosso Piceno.
- **Truffle** - Le Marche is the biggest truffle producer in Italy, particularly of the prized white truffle. Truffles are another Le Marche delicacy that are found in many local dishes, the most common in the region being the rarer white truffle. The town of Acqualagna in the province of Pesaro and Urbino boasts 9 types of black and white truffles of which it's superior white truffles share the designation of origin with those of Alba.

Archaeological Sites & Museums (Find out more [Archaeological Sites & Museums](#))

- 400 museums and art galleries in 239 towns, highest density in Italy!
- 34 archaeological sites
- 7 archaeological parks including Urbs Salvia (modern Urbisaglia), Sentinium (Sassoferrato), Cupra Marittima, Falerio Picenus (Falerone), Forum Sempronii (Fossombrone), Septempeda (San Severino) and Castellone di Suasa, Discover Roman, Hellenistic, Villanovan, and a unique, pre-roman civilisation of the Picentes dating back to 900-400 B.C.

Architectural Heritage (Find out more [Architectural Heritage](#))

- The Ducal Palace of Urbino (mid-15th c.) is one of the finest examples of early Renaissance architecture in Italy, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- 106 castles, 48 fortifications, 37 fortresses, 170 towers, 15 strongholds, 200 Romanesque churches, 90 abbeys and sanctuaries, 183 religious shrines, 100 cities of art, 1000 outstanding monuments, 500 well preserved piazzas, 315 antique libraries housing over 4 million volumes.

Spiritual Heritage (Find out more [Pilgrimage to Loreto](#))

- Birthplace of 10 popes, from Pope John XVIII to Pius IX including Pope Sixtus V who was the most dynamic reformist of the administration of the Church and urban plan of Rome.
- Home of Loreto, Italy's second most important pilgrimage site after Rome attracting over 4 million pilgrims every year.

The World Capital of Shoe Production (Find out more [Outlet Shopping](#))

- Le Marche is the birthplace of shoemaking in Italy and one of the best shoe manufacturing industries in the world.
- Most of the world brands are based in the region or produced under licence. Some of the most prestigious brands are produced in the region including Versace, Gucci, Armani, Prada, Tod's and many other.
- The region is one of the best in the world for shopping outlets, for shoes as well as other goods such as handbags, hats and clothes.

The birthplace and source of creative inspiration for world-class talent (Find out more [Famous People](#))

Art & Architecture

- **Raffaello Sanzio** (1483 - 1520), the genius from Urbino is one of the greatest Renaissance artists, along with Titian, Donatello, Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo.
- **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.
- **Gentile da Fabriano** (1370 - 1427), one of the most representative painters of international Gothic style and his best known work of art is 'The Adoration of The Magi' (1423).
- **Donato Bramante** (1444 - 1514), architect and painter, one of the main artists who created the architectural style of the High Renaissance. Introduced Renaissance architecture to Milan and High Renaissance style to Rome where he was appointed as the principal designer of St Peter's Basilica.
- **Federico Barocci** (1535 - 1612) was one of the most celebrated and highest paid artists of his generation and a major influence on key figures such as Rubens, Annibale Carracci and Guido Reni. Among his patrons were Le Marche's Duke of Urbino, Pope Pius IV and the Emperor Rudolf.
- **Adolfo de Carolis** (1874 -1928) 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, San Benedetto and Ascoli Piceno.

Performing Arts

- **Gioachino Rossini** (1792 - 1868), one of the greatest opera composers in the history of music.
- **Giovanni Battista Pergolesi** (1710 - 1736) was one the most important early composers of opera buffa (comic opera).
- **Gaspere Spontini** (1774 - 1851), opera composer and conductor.
- **Beniamino Gigli** (1880 - 1957) was the most famous tenor of his generation and is considered by some to be the greatest ever in the recorded history of music.
- **Renata Tebaldi** (1922 - 2004) became one of the most acclaimed and popular sopranos during the post-war period. The internationally famous lyric soprano Renata and Maria Callas were the top two sopranos of their day.
- **Franco Corelli** (1921 - 2003), an outstanding tenor.

Scholars & Academics

- **Matteo Ricci** (1552 - 1610), one of the greatest scholars of Eastern civilization who promoted Western culture in China.
- **Ciriaco d'Ancona** (1391 - 1452), humanist and antiquarian. Was one of the most important and accurate recorders of Greek and Roman antiquities during the 15th century and became known as the father of archaeology.
- **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 Elisabeth 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.
- **Ostilio Ricci** (1540 - 1603) 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.

Poet & Philosopher

- **Giacomo Leopardi** (1798 - 1837) is probably one of the most important poets in the history of Italian literature after Dante Alighieri and one of the most important figures in world literature.

Education

- **Maria Montessori** (1870 - 1952) was a physician and pedagogue began an educational revolution that changed the way we think about children more than anyone before or since. Her revolutionary educational method is applied in over 22,000 schools worldwide. She died aged 81 in Noordwijk, Netherland.

Leaders

- **Federico II** (1194 - 1250) was born in Jesi province of Ancona and was one of the most powerful Holy Roman Emperors of the Middle Ages and head of the House of Hohenstaufen. He was also King of Germany, Italy and Burgundy, King of Jerusalem, and King of Sicily.
- **The Duke Federico da Montefeltro** (1422 - 1482) was one of the most successful Condottieri of the Italian Renaissance. He 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. In 1474 King Edward IV of England Federico was elected Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter.
- **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.
- **Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo** (135 - 87 BC) was father of Pompey the Great, a Roman general and politician and served as Consul in 89BC.
- **Lucius Flavius Silva Nonius Bassus** was born in Urbs Salvia (AD 43) (modern Urbisaglia). He was a Roman General, governor, and consul of the province of Judea. In 72 AD he headed the 10th Roman legion and laid siege to the Jewish fortress Masada by constructing a massive siege ramp and a 6-foot high, 7-mile-long siege wall. Lucius Flavius commissioned the building of the amphitheatre in Urbs Salvia in 81 AD, one of the best preserved examples in the Marche region.
- **Titus Labienus** (c.100 - 45 BC), Military commander of the roman Republic, friend, collaborator, and lieutenant of Julius Cesar in Gallia.
- **Publius Ventidius Bassus** (90 AC - died before 27 BC), politician and General of the Roman Republic and one of the main lieutenants of Marco Antonio.

Sports

- **Valentino Rossi** (multiple MotoGP World Champion) is one of the most successful motorcycle racers of all time. He is also considered to be the greatest motorcycling rider, with nine Grand Prix World Championships to his name, seven of which are in the premier class.
- **Valentina Vezzali** was 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 on the 27/11/1964. An outstanding Football manager of the Italy national team.
- **Gianmarco Tamperi**, Olympic high jump champion (2020 Summer Olympics) and World indoor champion 2016 in Portland.

Eight Historical Curiosities that you probably didn't know.

- **Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury** (1162 - 1170). The Thomas Becket chasuble is a sacred bell-shaped garment that belonged to Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1162 to 1170, the year of his assassination. It is kept at the Diocesan Museum of Fermo, Marche, donated to the Cathedral of Fermo by Presbitero, Bishop of Fermo (1184-1201), who had received it from Thomas Becket himself, his friend and companion at the University of Bologna. The extraordinarily beautiful medieval artifact was embroidered in Islamic Spain around 1000-1030. It is believed to be the most important and oldest known example of Islamic embroidery used for a Christian purpose in the world.
- **Queen Christina of Sweden** (1632 - 1689) Cardinal Decio Azzolino from Fermo, Marche was appointed Queen Christina's representative within the Catholic Church and became her adviser and confidant. Queen Christina grew fond of Azzolino and it was rumoured he became her lover. A classic historical drama film (1974) directed by Anthony Harvey starring Peter Finch and Liv Ullmann is based on this romantic relationship. Queen Cristina died in 1689 having named Cardinal Azzolino her sole heir. She was given the honour of being buried within the Grotte Vaticane in St. Peter's Basilica.
- **Sir Moses Haim Montefiore** (1784 - 1885) was the most famous British Jew of his time, a true philanthropist, successful financier, stockbroker and banker of the 19th century. His Italian origins with the Marche region are firmly established. In 1563 the Montefiore family moved to Ancona, capital of the Marche region and a main trading port on the Adriatic Sea. Ancona was the oldest and the most important centre for the Jewish community in Italy dating as far back as the 10th century. From Ancona the Montefiore family migrated to Livorno (Leghorn, Tuscany) where Sir Moses Montefiore was born in 1784. As a young man he moved with his family to London.

According to Simon Sebag Montefiore, a direct descendant of the Montefiore family, historian and author Sir Moses came from an ancient Sephardic Jewish family by the name of Carvajal which fled to Italy from Spain in the 14th century. In the late 16th

century, the family moved from Spain to colonial Mexico in the false hope that it would provide safety from the Spanish inquisition. The only survivor of the Carvajal family who managed to escape the Spanish inquisition in Mexico was called Joseph Leon. Joseph Leon sailed by boat to Italy from Mexico, to a small town called Montefiore in central Italy (possibly in Tuscany or Le Marche) from whence originates the name. Joseph Leon is the first member of the Carvajal family to adopt the name of Montefiore. We have two artefacts connecting Sir Moses with the Marche region. The first is his family coat of arms, based on an embroidered Torah ark curtain made for the synagogue in Ancona in 1620 by Rachel Olivetti of Pesaro for her husband Judah Leon Montefiore. This ark curtain is exhibited in the Umberto Nahon Museum in Jerusalem together with other interesting artefacts from the Montefiore family. The second is a 1741 manuscript, naming its original owner as, 'Joseph, the son of the old sage Jacob Montefiore of Pesaro (born in Pesaro, Le Marche 1677), son-in-law of Isaac Alconstantin, Ancona's Chief Rabbi at the time.

- **Charlemagne** (747 - 814) was King of the Franks from 768, King of the Lombards from 774 and Emperor of Romans from 800. The currently accepted wisdom is that Charlemagne was buried in Aachen, under the chapel which pre-existed the current Cathedral. A local historian in Le Marche, Professor Giovanni Carnevale, a Salesian priest, after decades of systematic research in several European countries and the Middle East, has come up with a theory casting doubt on this belief and suggesting that the real site of his initial burial was a church in the countryside near Macerata, the church of San Claudio al Chienti. He also believes he has evidence to prove that the site of Aquisgrana, which was Charlemagne's 'Rome', was not Aachen, but in fact the ancient Roman city of Urbs Salvia, the modern Urbisaglia near Macerata in the Marche region.
- **Joseph Stalin** (1879 - 1953) in 1907 left his country hidden in a cargo ship carrying grain from the port of Odessa to Ancona to escape from the Tsarist police. He worked in Ancona, Marche as a night porter at the Rome and Peace Hotel in exchange for food and lodging. He lost his job because the owners of the hotel felt he was too timid with clients and not entrepreneurial enough. Young Joseph then moved to Venice where he temporarily took on the job of a bell-ringer on the island of San Lazzaro of the Armenians, a small island in the Venetian lagoon.
- **Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici**: The most infamous murder of the Renaissance was the attempted public assassination of the two Medici brothers in the Duomo in Florence on April 26, 1478, on Easter Sunday in front of an audience of 10,000. Giuliano was brutally murdered but Lorenzo managed to escape. The assailants were said to be the Medici's rivals, the Pazzi family, and this murder has come to be known as the Pazzi Conspiracy. More than five hundred years later Professor Marcello Simonetta, a scholar in Italian and Medieval studies managed to break the code of an encrypted letter found in previously closed archive. The letter was written by Federico da Montefeltro (Duke of Urbino and one of the most successful Condottiere of the Italian Renaissance), to Pope Sixtus IV. Simonetta has unearthed compelling evidence to suggest that the Federico da Montefeltro and the Pope were the real conspirators in a plot to assassinate the Medicis and end their rule in Florence.
- **Ascanio Condivi** (1525 - 1574) born in Ripatransone in the Marche. He was a painter, writer, student, close friend and fellow painter of Michelangelo Buonarroti. Condivi's biography of Michelangelo "Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti" is a reliable and unparalleled description of Michelangelo's life, work and personality. Condivi's biography put pressure on Giorgio Vasari to revise his biography of Michelangelo in his publication 'Lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors and architects' in 1550.
- **Michelangelo's** favourite cheese was Casciotta di Urbino and never ran short of this cheese during his artwork. He was so fond of Casciotta that he bought several pastures in the municipality of Urbania (province of Pesaro and Urbino) in order to secure a fresh supply of sheep and cow milk to produce the cheese.

We, friends of Montefiore dell'Aso, would like to share our passion for Le Marche. We welcome you to Montefiore dell'Aso to enjoy warm hospitality, genuine food and the opportunity to discover all the wonders the region has to offer! Let's get started with a few useful links!



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