# DISCOVER

























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### INTRO

Questa pubblicazione nasce come utile supporto alle delegazioni delle squadre partecipanti alla 21ª edizione del Torneo delle Nazioni Città di Gradisca d'Isonzo al fine di far conoscere parte del territorio del Friuli Venezia Giulia. Un opportunità per scoprire città e siti ricchi di storia, cultura, arte e località turistiche rinomate.

Dall'insediamento di Roma ad Aquileia alle vicende del '900 che hanno segnato il confine orientale e la città di Gorizia, il percorso descritto in queste pagine toccherà nove località che offrono la possibilità di scoprire delle autentiche perle turistiche e culturali che rivelano la ricchezza e le tradizioni enogastronomiche di questa terra.

Partiamo da Gorizia, il capoluogo dell'isontino impreziosito dalla cultura mitteleuropea, città millenaria con il suo possente castello medievale edificato nell'XI° secolo situato sull'altura che sovrasta la località, il castello offre una spettacolare vista panoramica di Gorizia e del territorio circostante. La città, segnata duramente dalle vicende della Prima

Guerra Mondiale e successivamente dalla Guerra Fredda che per cinquant'anni ha diviso Gorizia da Nova Gorica, quest'anno vede le due città unite in veste di Capitali europea della Cultura (GO! 2025).

La transfrontalierità è una vocazione di questa terra, dove il dialogo negli ultimi decenni è diventato una costante che ha eliminato nel tempo le barriere confinarie tracciate dalla politica dopo la fine della Seconda Guerra Mondiale.

Scendiamo lungo la strada che costeggia il percorso del fiume Isonzo, ai piedi del Carso, ed arriviamo a Gradisca d'Isonzo. la fortezza fondata nel XV° secolo dalla Repubblica di Venezia contrastare le invasioni turche, passata in seguito, dal 1511 al 1919, Austro all'Impero Ungarico. La città è caratterizzata ai giorni nostri dalla verde spianata arborea, dalle possenti mura e torrioni a sua difesa. dal castello e dagli eleganti palazzi che le hanno fatto attribuire il titolo di salotto barocco dell'isontino.

Proseguiamo attraversando il fiume Isonzo e ci portiamo a Monfalcone.

sovrastata dalla Rocca medievale, dinamica ed operosa città con il suo prestigioso cantiere costruito più di cento anni fa dalla famiglia Cosulich, destinato a lasciare una traccia nella storia dell'industria navale italiana, grazie soprattutto alle navi da crociera, che solcano i mari di tutto il mondo.

Nei pressi del cantiere, nel vecchio Albergo Impiegati, trova collocazione il MUCA, Museo della Cantieristica, che racconta la storia e le vicende che hanno determinato la crescita della città.

Da Monfalcone raggiungiamo la città di Udine, capoluogo del Friuli storico, con il suo bellissimo centro ricco di architetture di impronta veneta con i

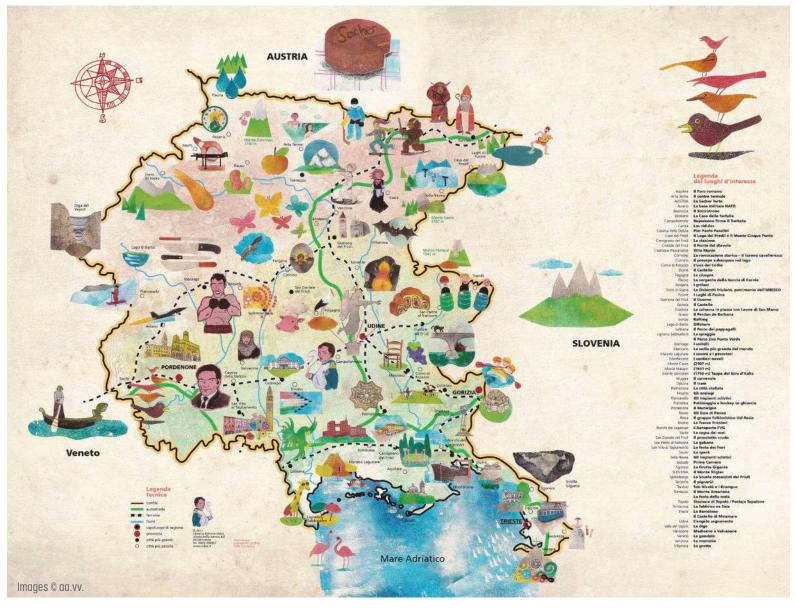
caratteristici portici e i negozi. Il centro storico è sovrastato dal colle del Castello costruito artificialmente dall'uomo in epoca pre-romana, probabilmente durante l'età del bronzo tra i 3500 e 3000 anni fa. Dall'alto del colle possiamo godere di uno straordinario paesaggio che spazia dalle alpi carniche alla pianura fino al mare. Città imprenditoriale molto importante per la regione Friuli Venezia Giulia, con grosse attività commerciali, artigianali ed industriali e con radicate tradizioni sportive. l'Udinese Calcio è l'unica squadra regionale partecipante al campionato di Serie A, e vivaci iniziative culturali quali spicca, a livello East Film internazionale. il Far Festival, la più ricca rassegna



europea dedicata al cinema asiatico.

Da qui proseguiamo verso sud-ovest nella pianura friulana e presso il fiume Stella troviamo Rivignano Teor, città di architettura veneta in un territorio ricco di acqua, verde, monumenti e tradizioni. L'acqua di risorgiva caratterizza un paesaggio bucolico dove trionfa la natura con prati e vegetazione boschiva, con ville e castelli costruiti sull'acqua come la suggestiva Villa Ottelio dove nel XVI° secolo ha vissuto Lucina Savorgnan, l'originale "Giulietta" della novella Romeo e Giulietta di William Shakespeare. Nel 1985 il prof. Cecil Clough dell'Università di Liverpool ha scoperto che la novella Shakespeare si basava su racconto scritto precedentemente da Luigi da Porto, autore veneto che scrisse una storia autobiografica ambientata, per ragioni di privacy, a Verona dove Luigi era Romeo e Lucina era Giulietta. In realtà la vicenda originale si svolse in Friuli nel 1511 tra Udine, il Castello di Ariis (Villa Ottelio). Gradisca d'Isonzo ed altre importanti località friulane. Una visita indubbiamente ricca di fascino evocativo per una drammatica storia d'amore conosciuta in tutto il mondo.

Da Rivignano ci spostiamo nuovamente nella pianura friulana a Cervignano del Friuli, importante



centro emporiale, con i suoi suggestivi borghi e piccoli castelli come quello di Strassoldo, che ci narrano le vicende del periodo della

dominazione veneziana in Friuli e a pochi chilometri, verso il mare Adriatico, raggiungiamo Aquileia, importantissima città fondata dai romani che per lungo tempo è stata uno snodo commerciale e portuale importantissimo dove arrivavano e partivano le merci per le terre



dell'Impero. Aquileia, patrimonio dell'UNESCO, si presenta con la straordinaria Basilica Patriarcale impreziosita dai bellissimi mosaici e da un ricco patrimonio archeologico e museale.

Proseguendo verso il mare raggiungiamo Grado, la splendida isola del sole che, con la sua incantevole laguna e le numerose isole, è da 140 anni prestigiosa meta turistica con la storica spiaggia d'impianto asburgico, le terme marine ed il romantico centro storico dove, circondata da un dedalo di viuzze, troneggia la Basilica paleocristiana di Sant'Eufemia.

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costeggiando la riviera del Golfo di Trieste, arriviamo al Castello di Miramare. Il complesso, circondato da un ampio parco, fu originariamente costruito tra il 1856 e il 1860 sul promontorio vicino alla baia di Grignano come dimora di Massimiliano d'Asburgo e dal quale l'Imperatore del Messico partì il 14 aprile 1864 per la sua tragica destinazione sudamericana.

Si respira la storia in questo territorio, sobrio ed elegante, accogliente e ricco di sorprese.

Benvenuti in Friuli Venezia Giulia!





### INTRO

This publication was created as a useful resource for the delegations of the teams participating in the 21st edition of the Torneo delle Nazioni Città di Gradisca d'Isonzo, with the aim of introducing part of the Friuli Venezia Giulia region. It offers an opportunity to discover cities and sites rich in history, culture, and art, as well as renowned tourist destinations

From the Roman settlement of Aquileia to the 20th-century events that shaped the eastern border and the city of Gorizia, the journey outlined in these pages will take you through nine locations, each offering

the chance to explore authentic cultural and tourist gems that reveal the richness and gastronomic traditions of this land.

We begin in Gorizia, the capital of the Isontino region, enriched by its Mitteleuropean culture. This thousand-year-old city is dominated by its imposing medieval castle, built in the 11th century and perched on a hill overlooking the town, offering a spectacular panoramic view of Gorizia and the surrounding area. The city, profoundly shaped by the events of the First World War and later by the Cold War, which divided it from Nova Gorica for fifty years, this





year jointly holds the title of European Capital of Culture (GO! 2025).

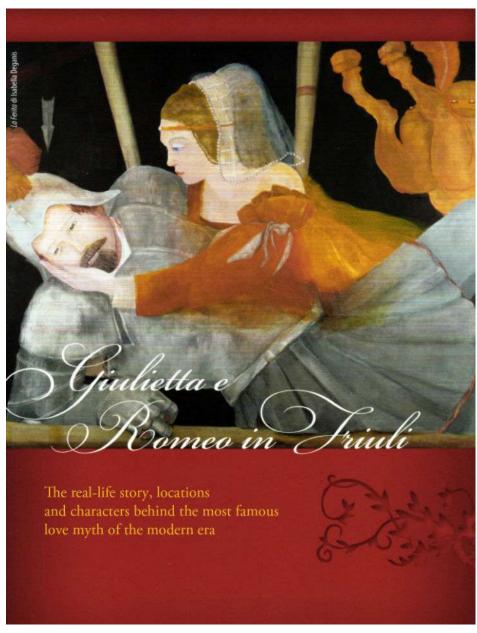
Cross-border cooperation has become a defining trait of this region, where dialogue and collaboration have gradually erased the political boundaries drawn after the Second World War

Following the road along the Isonzo River at the foot of the Karst Plateau, we arrive at Gradisca d'Isonzo, a fortress founded in the 15th century by the Republic of Venice to defend against Turkish invasions. From 1511 to 1919, it became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Today, the town is characterised by its lush green esplanade, imposing defensive walls and towers, the castle, and elegant palaces, earning it the title of the 'Baroque Salon of the Isontino'.

Crossing the Isonzo River, we arrive at Monfalcone, overlooked by its medieval fortress.

A dynamic and industrious city, Monfalcone is home to a prestigious shipyard established over a century ago by the Cosulich family, a name that left a lasting mark on the history of Italian shipbuilding, particularly through the construction of cruise liners that sail the world. Near the shipyard, the former Albergo Impiegati now houses the MUCA, the Museum of Shipbuilding, which tells the story of the history and events that shaped the city's development.

From Monfalcone, we reach Udine, the historic capital of Friuli. The city's charming center features Venetianstyle architecture, with characteristic arcades and boutiques. The old town is dominated by the hilltop Castle, an





Project, text and photos by Albino Comelli

artificial mound dating back to pre-Roman times, likely built during the Bronze Age between 3,500 and 3,000 years ago. From its summit, visitors can enjoy an extraordinary panoramic view, stretching from the Carnic Alps across the plains to the Adriatic Sea. A key economic hub in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region, Udine thrives as a center of commerce, craftsmanship, and industry. The city is also home to deep-rooted sporting traditions, with Udinese Calcio being the only regional team competing in Serie A. Cultural life flourishes in Udine, notably with the internationally renowned Far East Film Festival, Europe's largest showcase dedicated to Asian cinema.

Heading southwest across the Friulian plains and along the Stella

River, we reach Rivignano Teor, a town with Venetian-style architecture set in a landscape rich in water, greenery, monuments, and traditions. The spring waters shape a pastoral landscape, where nature thrives with meadows, wooded areas, villas, and castles built along the water, such as the evocative Villa Ottelio. It was here in the 16th century that Lucina Savorgnan, the original Juliet of William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, lived. In 1985, Professor Cecil Clough from the University of Liverpool discovered Shakespeare's play was based on an earlier story by Venetian writer Luigi da Porto. For privacy reasons, Da Porto set his story in Verona, where he himself was Romeo and Lucina was Juliet. In reality, the original events took place in Friuli in 1511, spanning locations such as Udine,



the Castle of Ariis (Villa Ottelio), Gradisca d'Isonzo, and other important places in Friuli. This visit is undoubtedly full of evocative charm for a dramatic love story known worldwide.

From Rivignano, we return to the Friulian plains to Cervignano del Friuli, an important trade centre featuring picturesque villages and small castles such as Strassoldo. which recount the history of Venetian rule in Friuli. A few kilometres away. towards the Adriatic Sea. we arrive at Aquileia, a Roman city of immense historical significance. For centuries, it served as a crucial commercial and maritime hub where goods from across the Empire arrived and departed. Today, Aquileia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, showcases its extraordinary Patriarchal Basilica adorned with stunning mosaics, alongside a wealth of archaeological and museum treasures

Heading further towards the sea, we reach Grado, the splendid 'Island of the Sun'. With its enchanting lagoon and numerous islets, Grado has been a prestigious tourist destination for 140 years. It boasts an imperial Austro-Hungarian beach, thermal spas, and a romantic historic centre, where the Early Christian Basilica of Sant'Eufemia stands surrounded by a maze of charming alleys.

To conclude our journey, we follow the coastline of the Gulf of Trieste to the magnificent Miramare Castle. Surrounded by an extensive park, this architectural masterpiece was built between 1856 and 1860 on the

promontory near the Bay of Grignano as the residence of Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg. From here, on 14 April 1864, he departed for his fateful journey to Mexico, where he would meet his tragic destiny.

You can breathe the history in this territory, sober and elegant, inviting and full of surprises.

Welcome to Friuli Venezia Giulia!

For more information: https://www.turismofvg.it/en













- www.discoveraquileia.com
- www.basilicadiaquileia.it
- www.fondazioneaquileia.it
- www.comune.aquileia.ud.it

AQUILEIA, a UNESCO World Heritage site, offers a fascinating glimpse into Roman and early Christian history. The Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta is a must-see, housing the world's largest early Christian mosaic. This stunning 760 sqm floor depicts biblical stories, animals, and characters, providing a visual lesson in early Christianity. The basilica's crypt reveals layers of history, showcasing Roman-era floors and the impressive foundations of the 11th-century bell tower, offering panoramic views of the Friulian coast and Alps. Don't miss the baptistery and south hall, where baptisms still occur, adorned with intricate 5thcentury mosaics.

Explore the Domus di Tito Macro, one of Northern Italy's largest Roman dwellings. This 1,700 sqm residence features remarkable mosaics, including the famous *Kidnapping of Europe* and the *Unswept Floor*, now

displayed at the **National** Archaeological Museum. The *Good Shepherd* mosaic, currently in Palazzo Meizlik, is another highlight.

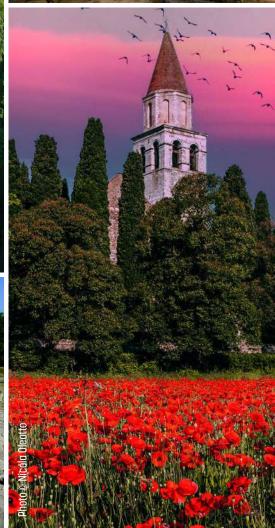
The Roman Forum and Decumanus reveal the heart of ancient Aquileia. The Forum, once the city's political and social centre, retains its 1stcentury AD layout, with remnants of arcades and the courthouse. The Decumanus of Aratria Galla, a wellpreserved Roman street, showcases the city's ancient infrastructure. Its trachyte paving, attributed to Aratria Galla, connects the river port to the Forum and theatre, offering a tangible link to Aquileia's Roman past. These historical sites provide an engaging experience for visitors of all ages, bringing ancient history to life.

Duration of visit: 3 hours















- www.comune.cervignanodelfriuli.ud.it
- www.turismofvg.it/
- it.wikivoyage.org

CERVIGNANO DEL FRIULI, with its historical roots intertwined with those of ancient Aquileia, offers an authentic experience in the heart of the Bassa Friulana. The town, once an important monastic centre, preserves traces of its past in the Parish Church of San Michele Arcangelo, where sacred art tells centuries of history. The lively town centre invites relaxing strolls, discovering local shops and cosy cafés.

The fate of the inhabitants of the area was restored only by the Benedictine nuns of the Monastery of St Mary of Aquileia, to whom the Patriarchate had donated the swampy and unproductive Cervignano territory. The nuns carried out a reclamation and repopulation programme that brought life back to the area.

A short distance away, the village of **Strassoldo** enchants with its **medieval charm**. Strassoldo, a hamlet of Cervi-

gnano, is famous for its two castles, the Castello di Sopra and the Castello di Sotto, nestled in a centuries-old park. These manors, still inhabited by the Counts of Strassoldo family, offer a unique spectacle, especially during spring and autumn events, when the gardens open to the public, revealing their beauty and history.

The village of Strassoldo is a rare example of a perfectly preserved medieval settlement, where time seems to have stood still. The ancient walls, cobbled alleys, and secret gardens create a magical atmosphere, ideal for a family walk.

In the surroundings, the Friulian countryside offers relaxing land-scapes, ideal for cycling or walking excursions. The **Ausa river**, which flows nearby, provides picturesque views and the possibility of spotting local wildlife.

Duration of visit: 2 hours















- www.comune.gorizia.it
- www.go2025.eu
- www.turismofvg.it/it/gorizia

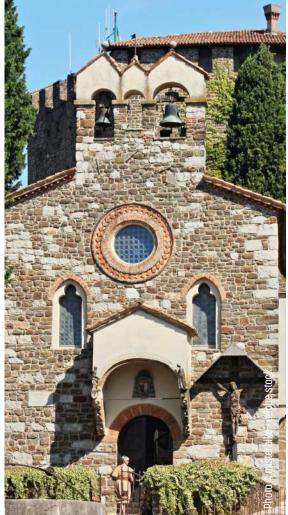
A small and pleasant city, where the Habsburg past still lives on in the palaces and gardens, GORIZIA symbolises the troubled European history of the 20th century. As part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the Great War, and annexed by Italy in 1918, it experienced first-hand the dramatic events involving Italy's eastern border during Fascism and World War II. At the end of the conflict, it lost part of its periphery to the former Yugoslavia and was divided by the so-called 'Gorizia Wall', erected in Transalpine Square. The wall became one of the symbols of the political-ideological separation between Western and Eastern Europe during the Cold War years.

However, the dividing fence was torn down when Slovenia joined the European Union in 2004, and nowadays the border represents, on the contrary, an **element of unity**. It is precisely in the spirit of friendship

and cooperation between Gorizia and Nova Gorica that the two cities have been chosen together as the European Capital of Culture 2025 (GO! 2025). This prestigious designation marks a significant milestone, transforming the former dividing line into a vibrant hub of cultural exchange and collaboration.

GO! 2025 will showcase a rich programme of events, exhibitions, and performances designed to celebrate the shared heritage and unique identity of both cities. This year, Nova Gorica and Gorizia will become a stage for artists, performers, and visitors from across Europe, fostering dialogue and understanding through the power of culture.

Duration of visit: 6 hours















- www.comune.gradiscadisonzo.go.it
- www.go2025.eu
- www.turismofvg.it/it/gradisca-di-isonzo

GRADISCA D'ISONZO, a town with a rich and layered history, began as a Venetian fortress in the late 15th century, later transitioning to Habsburg rule. This unique blend of influences is visible throughout the town, in its architecture, palaces, and gardens.

Piazza Unità, the town's central square, connects the old fortress with the newer parts of Gradisca, which emerged after the walls were partially demolished in 1863. The square features the Lion of San Marco monument, a reminder of the town's Venetian origins.

Palazzo Torriani, a 17th-century building, and the Castle, which served various purposes, including a prison, stand as key landmarks. The Porta Nuova and the Campana Tower offer glimpses into the town's fortified past, with well-preserved sections of the ancient walls.

The Documentary Museum of the city, housed in the Casa Maccari Cultural Centre, provides insights into Gradisca's history through exhibits and documents. This museum, along with the Civic Library and other cultural spaces, makes the Casa Maccari a focal point for visitors. The town's atmosphere, a mix of Venetian and Habsburg heritage, creates a captivating historical experience.

Duration of visit: 2 hours















- grado.it/en
- www.grado.info
- www.turismofvg.it/en/grado

GRADO, the 'Island of the Sun', seamlessly blends historical elegance with seaside charm. Its old town, a labyrinth of picturesque squares and alleys, showcases Venetian influences, with vibrant fishermen's houses adding to its allure. At its heart lies Campo dei Patriarchi, dominated by the Basilica of Santa Eufemia, a testament to Grado's rich religious heritage, and the adjacent Basilica of Santa Maria delle Grazie, the town's oldest church, adorned with ancient mosaics.

Grado's south-facing beaches stretch for three kilometers, ensuring sun-drenched days, a feature enhanced by its unique microclimate. This abundance of sunshine, coupled with the **therapeutic sea air**, has long attracted visitors.

Once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Grado became a favored retreat for Habsburg aristocracy in the 19th century, drawn to its marine spas. Today, the town's thermal baths continue to offer rejuvenation, combining health and beauty treatments. Beyond the historic center and beaches, Grado's lagoon, a protected natural reserve, provides opportunities for birdwatching and boat excursions. The nearby Sanctuary of Barbana, accessible by boat, adds a spiritual dimension to Grado's diverse offerings, making it a destination that caters to both relaxation and exploration.

Duration of visit: 3 hours















- www.comune.monfalcone.go.it
- www.mucamonfalcone.it
- www.turismofvg.it/locality/monfalcone

Located between the Karst and the Adriatic Sea, MONFALCONE is known as 'The city of shipyards' and offers a vast range of cultural, sporting and musical events.

The Shipbuilding Museum (MuCa), a unique Italian institution, chronicles the evolution of shipbuilding, earning recognition as a European Industrial Heritage Anchor Point. Housed in the former Workers' Hotel of Panzano, it provides a fascinating glimpse into the city's industrial past.

Dominating the landscape is the Fortress, an 11th-century structure built on prehistoric remains. This strategic point now houses a paleontological museum, offering insights into the region's ancient history. The Museum of The Medieval City, within the municipal building, traces Monfalcone's development through Roman, Patriarchal, and Venetian eras, using multimedia displays.

The Theme Park of The Great War, an open-air museum, commemorates World War I, featuring trenches like the Joffre Trench and connections to the Dolina dei Bersaglieri and Mount San Michele. This park allows visitors to walk through history, experiencing the region's wartime legacy.

For art enthusiasts, the Municipal Gallery of Contemporary Art show-cases modern and experimental works in a renovated historical building.

Finally, Marina Julia and Marina Nova offer recreational opportunities along the coast. These bathing establishments cater to sunbathers and water sports enthusiasts, providing facilities for sailing, windsurfing, and other activities.

Duration of visit: 3 hours















- www.comune.rivignanoteor.ud.it
- www.turismofvg.it/locality/rivignano-teor
- www.archeocartafvg.it

Visit RIVIGNANO TEOR, and immerse yourself in a landscape of rivers, trees, and history. In the heart of the Friulian countryside, among ancient waters and centuries-old trees, life moves at a slow and harmonious pace, in tune with nature.

A place of secret and mysterious nature, Rivignano Teor holds stories of people, life, and love. Along the banks of the Stella River, protected by the trees of the nearby natural Reserve, stands the brick-colored facade of Villa Ottelio Savorgnan. According to legend, it was within these walls that the love affair between Luigi da Porto and Lucina Savorgnan unfolded—an affair that inspired William Shakespeare to write one of the most famous tragedies of all time: Romeo and Juliet.

Despite its tranquil surroundings, the people of Rivignano Teor are dynamic and proactive. The municipal-

ity hosts one of Italy's oldest fairs, the Fiera dei Santi, even mentioned by Ippolito Nievo. Thanks to the contributions of over 40 volunteer associations and more than 100 annual events, there is always something happening in the area.

There are plenty of attractions for sports lovers as well, who can enjoy our trekking trails and the entire network of bicycle paths that wind through lower to middle Friuli, from the sea to the hills. These routes offer the opportunity to admire castles, villas, and quaint churches, providing a relaxing and culturally enriching experience.

Rivignano Teor is a land waiting to be discovered—a destination for the curious. We look forward to welcoming you.

Duration of visit: 2 hours















- www.discover-trieste.it
- eng.triestecultura.it
- www.turismofvg.it/en/trieste

TRIESTE, a border city steeped in history and culture, offers a variety of attractions for all tastes. Begin your visit at Piazza Unità d'Italia, one of the largest sea-facing squares in Europe, framed by grand historic buildings and offering breathtaking views of the Gulf.

A short walk from the square, you'll find the Roman Theatre, an ancient testament to Roman Trieste, and the Castle of San Giusto, which dominates the city from the top of the homonymous hill, offering unparalleled panoramic views.

Don't miss the opportunity to visit the Castle of Miramare, an elegant Habsburg residence nestled in a centuries-old park, just a few kilometers from the city center. The castle, with its luxurious interiors and manicured gardens, is a true architectural gem.

Trieste is also renowned for its his-

toric cafés, meeting places for intellectuals and artists, where you can enjoy a Triestine coffee and immerse yourself in the city's unique atmosphere.

For nature lovers, the **Karst** plateau offers striking landscapes and spectacular caves, including the **Grotta Gigante**, one of the largest tourist caves in the world.

Finally, take a walk along the Molo Audace, a symbolic city landmark, and visit the Revoltella Museum, a modern art gallery housed in a historic building.

Duration of visit: one day















- www.comune.udine.it
- www.turismofvg.it/en/udine
- www.civicimuseiudine.it/en

**UDINE**, a charming city in northeastern Italy, is a hidden gem rich in history and culture. Located in the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, Udine boasts a unique blend of Venetian, Austrian, and Friulian influences.

At the city's heart lies Piazza Libertà, considered Udine's most beautiful square, surrounded by elegant Venetian-style buildings such as the Loggia del Lionello and the Torre dell'Orologio. Just a short walk away, the Udine Castle sits atop a hill, offering breathtaking views and housing several museums.

Art lovers will appreciate the works of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, found in the Duomo di Udine and the Museo Diocesano. Another must-see is Casa Cavazzini, a modern and contemporary art museum showcasing international artists.

For a taste of local life, Piazza Mat-

teotti (also known as Piazza San Giacomo) is the perfect spot to enjoy a coffee while admiring colourful historic buildings. Food enthusiasts will love Udine's traditional Friulian cuisine, including *frico* (cheese and potato dish) and San Daniele prosciutto.

Udine is a city that captivates visitors with its elegant atmosphere, cultural heritage, and friendly locals, making it an ideal destination for history, art, and gastronomy lovers.

Duration of visit: one day



















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