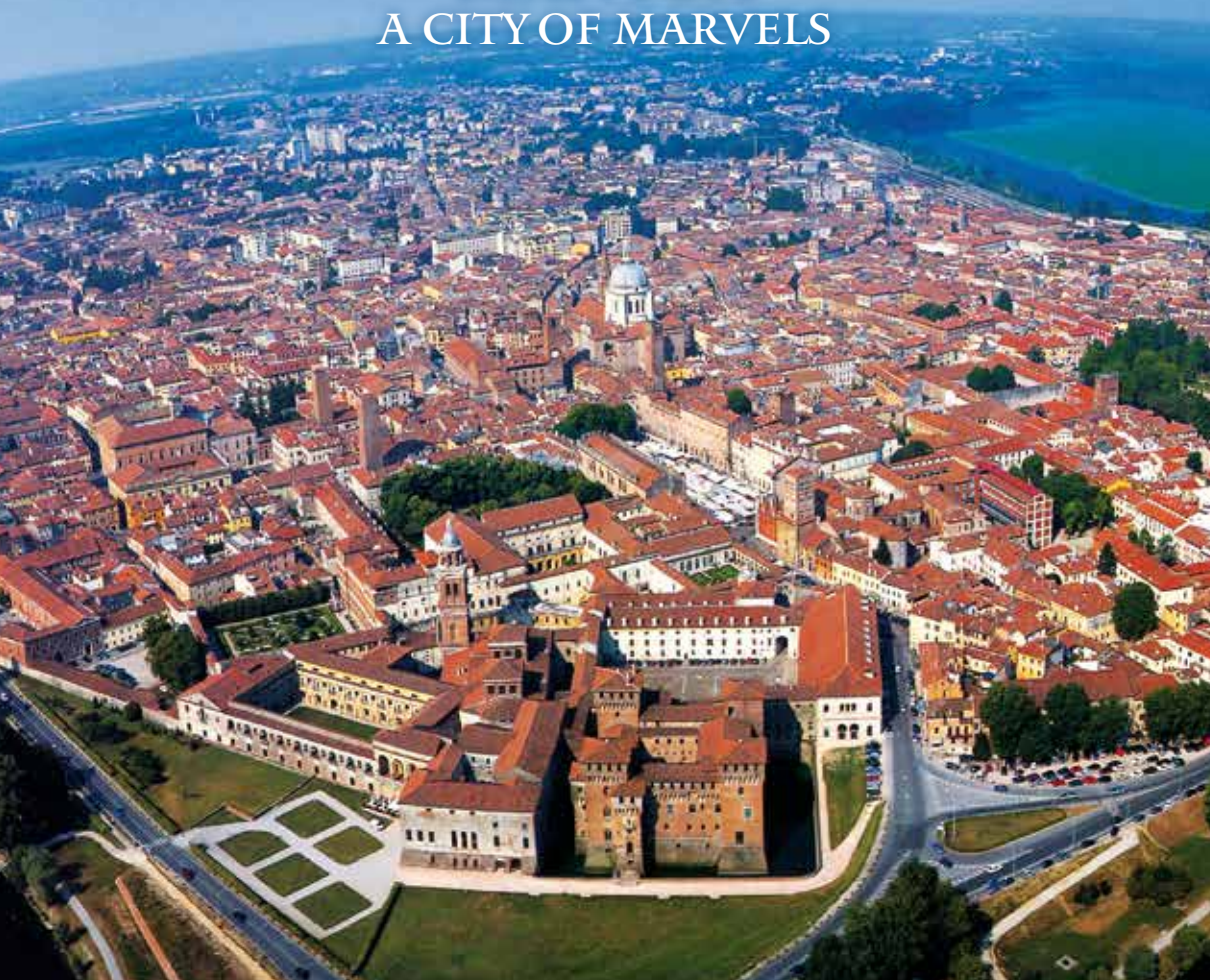




MANTUA

A CITY OF MARVELS



MANTOVA CITTÀ D'ARTE
E DI CULTURA



Piazza Sordello

MANTUA. A CITY OF MARVELS

Mantua captivates visitors with its unique, timeless allure and welcoming atmosphere. From across its lakes, the city is a splendid sight, seeming to float above the water at the heart of a dreamlike landscape, woven from history, art and nature.

Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site along with the neighbouring town of Sabbioneta, Mantua is built for leisurely exploration. Its squares, passageways and cobblestone streets invite you to linger and contemplate every monument and historic building you encounter.

In every corner of the city, history, art and culture intertwine. And it is all surrounded by an environment of inestimable natural value. Mantua's unique and magical places make it a city of marvels.





Teatro di Sabbioneta



MANTUA AND SABBIONETA: A WORLD HERITAGE SITE

July 2008 saw the inscription of Mantua and Sabbioneta, as a single site, onto the UNESCO World Heritage List. Under the Gonzaga family, both cities underwent significant urban development during the Renaissance, albeit according to different, complementary models. The newer of the two, Sabbioneta was designed and built by Vespasiano Gonzaga in the second half of the 16th century as the ideal capital for his duchy. Mantua, on the other hand, was a pre-existing Etruscan-Roman city whose urban fabric was transformed in medieval times to adhere to the ideals of Renaissance urban design. Two cities, one site: vital cultural heritage to be protected and passed on to future generations.





Domus romana



The Lovers of Valdaro

A CITY WITH OVER 2000 YEARS OF HISTORY

Legend has it that the city was founded by and named after the Greek fortune-teller Manto. However, the name more likely derives from the Etruscan fire god Mantus, as suggested by the ancient Etruscan settlements in the area, such as the nearby *Forcello archaeological site* (in Bagnolo San Vito).

The Etruscan city of Mantua occupied an island area on the Mincio river, corresponding to little more than the current Piazza Sordello. Because of its elevated position, this area was also inhabited in Roman times, as the remains in Piazza Sordello indicate: perimeter walls and mosaics of a *Domus romana*, together with numerous other finds preserved in the *Museo Archeologico Nazionale*. From deeper in Mantua's past come the *Amanti* ('Lovers'), two Neolithic skeletons buried in an embrace. They were unearthed in Valdaro, near the city, and are now on display at the *Museo Archeologico Nazionale*.



Piazza Erbe with Palazzo della Ragione and Palazzo del Podestà

IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Around the year 1000, Mantua was absorbed into Canossa, becoming its capital under Boniface III. He was succeeded by his daughter Matilda, who built the oldest church in the city, the *Rotonda di San Lorenzo*, restored in the early 20th century. The church has a circular footprint and retains its matroneum, which still bears traces of the original fresco decoration by the Byzantine school. Upon Matilda's death, Mantua became a free commune. The city was first expanded by Alberto Pitentino who adjusted the course of the Mincio river in 1190, forming the lakes that surround the city. The city's numerous towers date back to this period, including the Acerbi tower: known as *Torre della Gabbia* ('Tower of the Cage'), a 16th-century cage structure is built into the external wall where prisoners were placed in the stocks. The *Palazzo del Podestà*, with its 13th-century statue of *Virgilio in Cattedra*, houses the *Museo Virgilio*, an innovative, cultural space with multimedia exhibits dedicated to the great Latin poet. The *Masseria*, which contains a fresco featuring the oldest image of the city, and the *Palazzo della Ragione*, built as a palace of justice, overlooking Piazza Erbe, home of the market, as it was in the past, too. The *Chiesa di Santa Maria del Gradaro* also dates back to the medieval period, built in 1256 outside the walls.



THE RENAISSANCE IN MANTUA

The Gonzaga family became the Lords of Mantua in 1328, after expelling the Bonacolsi family. They further expanded the city and stimulated extraordinary artistic activity there. Work to develop the city began under Marquis Ludovico II. Numerous artists worked to modernise and enrich the city. These included Andrea Mantegna, who painted the *Camera Picta* or '*Camera degli Sposi*', for the Marquis. Another was Leon Battista Alberti, who renovated the *Basilica di Sant'Andrea* and built the *Temple* in the area of Renaissance expansion, opposite Te island, where Giulio Romano would soon build the luxury villa, *Palazzo Te*. Every building located in the area outside the oldest part of the city must glorify the signoria (rulers), including functional places such as the 16th-century *Pescherie*, designed by Giulio Romano as a centre for the fish trade.

During this period, the court was enriched with works by famous contemporary artists and the classical artefacts that made up the city's artistic collections. Pieces from these collections can still be seen at the *Museo MACA in Palazzo San Sebastiano*, the *Museo Diocesano* and the *Museo di Palazzo Ducale*. Important examples of Renaissance urban architecture include: the *Casa-bottega of the Merchant Boniforte*, in Piazza Erbe, in the Venetian Gothic style; the *Casa-bottega of Viani*, in Piazza Marconi, with its painted 15th-century façade in the style of the Mantegna school, which is entirely preserved; the rigorously geometric *Casa del Mantegna* containing an unusual round courtyard, currently used for exhibitions; and the *Casa di Giulio Romano*, which visitors can only view from outside.



Basilica di Sant'Andrea



Palazzo Te, Loggia di Davide



Palazzo Te, Camera di Amore e Psiche, detail of the wedding feast

PRINCELY RESIDENCES

The Gonzaga family lived in prestigious residences. The oldest and most architecturally complex is the *Palazzo Ducale*, which, with its magnificent halls, numerous buildings connected by corridors and galleries, courtyards, squares and gardens—including one hanging garden—is one of the largest in Europe. The official residence of the Lords of Mantua until the end of the 17th century, the complex has undergone modifications and adaptations to suit the changing tastes of the different eras. It houses 15th- and 16th-century masterpieces, such as the rooms containing *Pisanello's chivalric fresco cycle*, Mantegna's *Camera degli Sposi* inside the *Castello di San Giorgio*, the exquisite cabinetry in the *Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* in the Corte Vecchia, the *Appartamento di Troia* designed by Giulio Romano in Corte Nuova, and the complete *cycle of Flemish tapestries woven to cartoons by Raphael*.

The Gonzaga family lived and received important visitors in their residences at the opposite end of the city. *Palazzo San Sebastiano*, built in the early 16th century for Francesco II, housed the nine canvases that form Mantegna's '*Triumphs of Caesar*', now conserved in Hampton Court (London). The palace is home to the *Museo MACA (Mantova Collezioni Antiche)*, with its exhibition dedicated to Mantuan collectors. *Palazzo Te* was built for Federico II for *honesto ocio* ('honest leisure'), as a place where he could rest and find intellectual refreshment. Built between 1525 and 1535 by Giulio Romano, the palace is an absolute masterpiece. It houses the *Sala dei Cavalli*, dedicated to the precious horses that the Gonzaga bred, the *Camera di Amore e Psiche*, intended for receiving illustrious guests at banquets and dinners, and the *Camera dei Giganti*, with its stunning acoustic and visual effects, painted in honour of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V who had granted Frederick the title of Duke.



Palazzo Ducale, Camera degli Sposi



Teatro Scientifico Bibiena

AUSTRIAN AND FRENCH CONTROL

With the fall of the Gonzaga family, Mantua came under Austrian and French control.

In 1775, the Palazzo Accademico was enlarged and became the seat of the *Reale Accademia di Scienze e Belle Lettere* founded by Maria Theresa of Austria, now the *Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana*. Within the palace, the *Teatro Scientifico* theatre was built a few years earlier, a baroque gem designed by architect Antonio Galli Bibiena. Shortly after its inauguration, the theatre hosted a concert by the 14-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Maria Theresa also founded a *public library*, named 'Teresiana' after her, inside the *Palazzo degli Studi*. A perfect example of neoclassical style, *Palazzo d'Arco* (1782-92) is now a museum conserving period furniture and furnishings as well as beautiful paintings. The *Sala dello Zodiaco*, with its 16th-century fresco cycle, overlooks the garden. In 1810 the palace hosted the Napoleonic court's trial of Tyrolean hero Andreas Hofer, convicted and executed at the Cittadella di Porto (today's Cittadella), where a museum and garden honour him today. Between the 18th and 19th centuries, the Cisalpine Republic annexed Mantua, and the city was occupied by Napoleonic troops. Mantua was under French rule when the *Piazza Virgiliana* was converted into a public garden complete with a bust of the poet. The present monument dates back to 1926.



Palazzo della Camera di Commercio,
detail of interior decoration



Lunetta Frassino

FROM THE RISORGIMENTO TO THE 20TH CENTURY

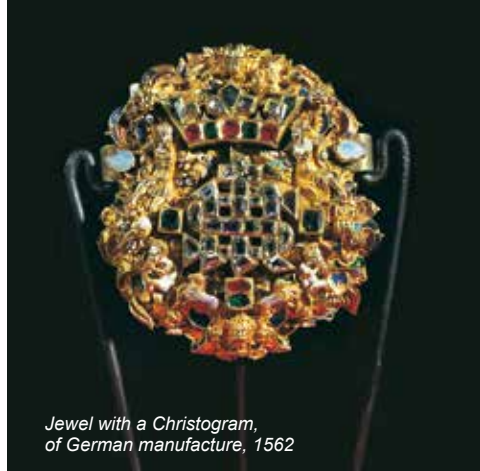
During the Risorgimento, Mantua was under Austrian rule. The Austrians built fortified structures incorporating the city into the system of the Quadrilateral fortresses, together with those in Peschiera, Verona and Legnago. By following a winding route around the city, you can explore the remains of the military architecture, from the *Fossamana* and *Frassino lunettes* to the *Forte di Pietole*, located in the municipality of Borgo Virgilio and home to the *Parco Museo Virgilio*.

Between 1851 and 1855, a number of Mantuan patriots (*the Belfiore Martyrs*) were executed in Belfiore for plotting against the Habsburg Empire. The city has dedicated a memorial stone and monument to them. Inaugurated in 1822, the *Teatro Sociale* dates back to this historical period and, along with famous actors and artists, hosted figures such as Garibaldi and Vittorio Emanuele II. Plaques commemorating these visits can be seen on the building's façade.

The eclectic works of Mantuan architect and sculptor Aldo Andreani stand out in particular among the 20th-century buildings. As well as many private houses, such as Tazio Nuvolari's house in Via Chiassi, Andreani was involved in building and decorating the *Palazzo della Camera di Commercio* (Chamber of Commerce) in 1914 and renovating the municipal buildings of Piazza Erbe, completed in 1944.



Basilica di Santa Barbara



*Jewel with a Christogram,
of German manufacture, 1562*

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS AND SACRED ART

Mantua's numerous churches are of great artistic and architectural importance. Within the old town, the *Duomo* or *Cattedrale di San Pietro* (Mantua Cathedral) is particularly noteworthy. Built in the 11th century, it was restored after a 14th-century fire, and its interior was renovated according to a design by Giulio Romano in the 16th century. In 1756 Nicolò Baschiera replaced the medieval late-Gothic façade with the one we see today in the late-Baroque style. Inside the *Palazzo Ducale museum complex* is the *Basilica Palatina di Santa Barbara*, commissioned by Duke Guglielmo for the court's religious services and built to a design by Mantuan architect Giovanni Battista Bertani in the second half of the 16th century. Designed with optimal acoustics to enhance every kind of sound, the church retains Graziadio Antegnati's extraordinary organ dating back to 1565. In the heart of the city stands the *Basilica di Sant'Andrea*, a masterpiece of Renaissance architecture designed by Leon Battista Alberti in 1472. It was completed in 1765 when Filippo Juvarra's dome was integrated into the structure. Visitors can climb up to the dome, where they will be rewarded with a panoramic view over the city. Built onto the church of an ancient Benedictine complex, the Basilica houses the funeral chapel of Mantegna. At the back of the church in Piazza Leon Battista Alberti, you can see what remains of the cloister and the Benedictine monastery. Important and valuable examples of sacred art are conserved in the *Museo Diocesano Francesco Gonzaga*, in Piazza Virgiliana. The museum also houses masterpieces of painting, precious tapestries and French enamels, works of the Gonzaga goldsmiths, and an exceptional collection of Renaissance armour from the *Santuario della Madonna delle Grazie*.



Sacri Vasi (Sacred Vessels)



Sanctuario della Madonna delle Grazie and Madonnari at work

PILGRIMAGES TO MANTUA

The *Basilica di Sant'Andrea* has always been a pilgrimage destination because its crypt houses the exquisite Sacri Vasi (Sacred Vessels), containing the Preziosissimo Sangue di Cristo ('Most Precious Blood of Christ') relic. Legend has it that Longinus, the Roman soldier who pierced the side on Christ on the Cross, collected his blood and brought it to Mantua. The relic is displayed to the faithful and carried in a procession through the city on Good Friday.

Another centuries-old pilgrimage destination is the *Sanctuario della Madonna delle Grazie*, in Grazie, Curtatone, to the south of the city. The sanctuary was built by Francesco I Gonzaga in 1399 as a votive offering to the Madonna after the plague epidemic ended. Built in the Lombard Gothic style, with 16th-century restructuring and decoration, its interior is a vivid example of popular faith: the wooden side structure houses life-size statues made of various materials including papier-mâché in the 17th century, and anatomical wax and pictorial votive offerings. A stuffed crocodile hangs from the ceiling: according to popular tradition, a boatman left it as a votive offering after being saved from the animal's jaws by the grace of the Virgin. It is in fact a Nile crocodile, which has been carbon dated to the same period as the building.

The Ferragosto holiday (15 August) sees the *Antichissima Fiera delle Grazie* come to the grounds of the Sanctuary, a fair which hosts the international contest of the Madonnari, artists who depict sacred subjects in chalk.



Riserva Naturale Valli del Mincio

FROM GARDA TO THE RIVER PO THROUGH THE MINCIO PARK

The route of the Mincio, Lake Garda's main outlet, is an area of great naturalistic, historical, devotional and cultural interest. It has been protected since 1984 when the *Parco del Mincio* reserve was established. From Lake Garda, the reserve stretches across the gentle slopes of Mantua's morainic hills, with their numerous fortified villages, and the partially cultivated plains and marshy stretches near the city of Mantua, as far as the great Po River. A strong bond has existed between Mantua and the Mincio since ancient times. Around the city, the river widens and spreads out into three lakes: Lago Superiore ('Upper Lake'), Lago di Mezzo ('Middle Lake') and Lago Inferiore ('Lower Lake'). They were created in 1190 by Alberto Pitentino, claiming entire areas of marshland in the process.

NATURE RESERVES AND PARK CENTRES

As it gently flows toward the Po between Rivalta, Grazie (Curtatone) and Mantua, the Mincio brings life to the *Riserva Naturale Valli del Mincio* nature reserve. Here, the river swells into one of northern Italy's principal wetlands, with expansive reed beds and a summer profusion of lotus flowers. The right bank of Lago Inferiore marks the boundary of another nature reserve, the *Riserva Naturale della Vallazza*. This vast complex of wetlands is of great naturalistic value because it demonstrates the various stages in the spontaneous evolution of the river's meanders. These enchantingly beautiful landscapes are a maze of channels and small bodies of water where water lilies of various types, rose mallow and water caltrop flourish. As well as astonishing vegetation, the reserve is home to a rich



Centro Parco Bertone



Riserva Naturale della Vallazza

array of typical marshland fauna: herons, coots, little egrets, common reed warblers, squacco herons, kites, mallards, swans and many other rare species. A few kilometres from the city lies the *Riserva Statale Bosco Fontana* state reserve, which contains remaining fragments of the ancient forests that covered the Po Valley millennia ago. In the middle of the wood, home to an exceptional variety of plants, is an elegant building dating back to the end of the 16th century. It was built by Vincenzo I Gonzaga, when the forest served as the family's hunting reserve. In the municipality of Goito, with its enchanting views and tiny lake, the *Centro Parco Bertone* (Parco del Mincio's visitor centre), creates the perfect atmosphere for a pleasant walk amid lush greenery. It is sited within a garden including both exotic and native trees, some of which are 150 years old. Since 1994, it has also been a centre for the reintroduction of white storks. In the heart of the Valli del Mincio lies the *Centro Parco di Rivalta*, home to the Museo Etnografico dei Mestieri del Fiume (*Ethnographic Museum of River Crafts*). The museum documents the interdependence and balance between humans and the marshlands, and records the valley's native crafts.



Mantua-Peschiera cycle path



Bosco Fontana

BY BICYCLE

Mantua offers a network of cycle paths within the city that offer quick access to the various cultural centres. It also boasts an equally rich network of cycle-tourism routes through the exceptional natural environment.

The main loop of these routes is the cycle and pedestrian path that circles the city, skirting the three lakes. The route crosses the *Parco Periurbano* leading to the Giardini di Belfiore on the left bank of Lago Superiore, and to Cittadella on the right bank, with its 16th-century *Porta Giulia* designed by Giulio Romano. From here, you can continue the route toward the *Rocca di Sparafucile*, which offers a view of Mantua's enchanting skyline. On the shores of Lago di Mezzo, you will find the *Parco della Scienza* science park, a trail equipped with interactive devices where children can experience various scientific phenomena through play. There are also various cycle routes from the city to the tourist destinations in the province of Garda and around Lake Garda. The *Mantova-Grazie cycle path* is about 7 km long. It runs along Lago Superiore before following the country road towards Grazie (Curtatone). The *Mantova-Peschiera cycle path*, which runs for about 43 km, is mostly flat. It passes a number of points of cultural interest, such as Bosco Fontana, Borghetto, Castellaro Lagusello and finally Peschiera, a fortified town on Lake Garda. The 47 km *Mantova-Sabbioneta cycle route* joins the two cities declared a joint UNESCO World Heritage Site. Along the way, you will pass the Torre d'Oglio pontoon bridge, Commessaggio with Vespasiano Gonzaga's *Torrazzo* tower fortress, and finally Sabbioneta, the perfect city.



Lotus flowers



River excursion

BY WATER

Since its origins, Mantua has been closely tied to the water around it, which is part of its identity. Over the centuries, the water has served as a means of military defence, a vital asset for the economy and for exchange and commercial trade. Even today, the city has strong ties with its lakes and the public parks that line their shores.

The lakes present a unique opportunity to learn about the landscape and aquatic environment on guided boat and motorboat excursions: in the north, you can get to Belfiore and the villages of Grazie and Rivalta via *Lago Superiore*; heading southward via *Lago di Mezzo* and *Lago Inferiore* towards the Po, you can get to the basin of Governolo, where onward travel to Ferrara and Venice is possible. The various boat companies offer various tourist excursions and itineraries led by expert environmental guides, especially on full moons. Some boats allow bikes on board and even offer catering services, allowing guests to enjoy traditional local dishes in a spectacular setting.

One experience not to be missed is an excursion on Lago Superiore between July and August, to see the *lotus flowers* in bloom. The plants were imported from the East by naturalist Anna Maria Pellegriffi in 1921 and have since become a symbol of the city.



Palazzo del Podestà, Virgilio in cattedra



Basilica di Santa Barbara, organo Antegnati

CITY OF MUSIC AND POETRY

It was February 24, 1607, when, in a room of the Palazzo Ducale, the tenor Francesco Rasi sang the first notes of *'L'Orfeo'*. *Claudio Monteverdi's* work marks the transition from Renaissance to Baroque music and is considered the first true masterpiece in the history of opera. Mantua has always loved music, both sacred and secular. The Gonzagas were patrons of the greatest musicians. For example, Pierluigi da *Palestrina* who composed the famous nine *'Messe Mantovane'* for the Basilica di Santa Barbara, with its Antegnati organ gifted by Duke Guglielmo. In 1770, the young *Mozart* also performed in Mantua at the Teatro Bibiena, described by his father Leopold in the following terms: *'Today I saw the most beautiful theatre in the world.'* The link between the Gonzagas and music continued over time, somewhat artificially, when Giuseppe Verdi, in 1851, composed his *'Rigoletto'* opera to a libretto by Francesco Maria Piave set in the Mantuan court. In the literary field, Mantua was the birthplace in 70 BC of *Virgil*, the greatest poet of the Latin world and a pillar of Western culture, who recalls his origins at the beginning of the famous Latin epitaph *'Mantua me genuit'* ('Mantua birthed me'). The medieval statue of *Virgil* in Palazzo del Podestà, the Renaissance effigies of the poet, presented as a model of classicism, the names of the square and of the Academy in the 19th century, the wood and the monument dedicated to him in the 20th century... All of this testifies to the city's love for the great poet. The *Museo Virgilio* has recently been inaugurated at Palazzo del Podestà: visitors can discover the life and writings of Virgil, author of the *'Eclogues'*, *'Georgics'* and *'Aeneid'*, as they explore eight exhibition rooms with multimedia and interactive features. The poet *Teofilo Folengo* was also a Mantuan. He began writing by imitating Virgil's Latin verses, before becoming the greatest exponent of 16th-century macaronic poetry.



Learco Guerra



Tazio Nuvolari

CITY OF SPORT

Mantua's sporting history is tied to legendary speed, human strength, and cars.

In 1902, the cyclist *Learco Guerra* was born on Mantuan soil. His style of cycling and great physical strength earned him the nickname 'Human Locomotive'. Learco Guerra was the first rider to wear the *maglia rosa* (pink jersey) at the 1931 Giro d'Italia, winning the inaugural Milan-Mantua stage. Another sporting great is the legend of Italian and international motoring, *Tazio Nuvolari*. Born in Castel d'Ario in 1892, his propensity for dynamism and speed earned him the nicknames 'The flying Mantuan' and '*Nivola*'. He began his career as a motorcyclist, but soon switched to motoring, competing in over 300 races. On four wheels, he won the Targa Florio and Mille Miglia, both twice, the Vanderbilt Cup, the Tripoli Grand Prix, two Italian Grands Prix and the German Grand Prix. Located in what was once a church—the Chiesa del Carmelino—the Museo Tazio Nuvolari contains the champion's awards and some personal items like helmets, gloves, goggles, racing suits and his precious yellow jersey.

The 'Flying Mantuan' also evokes the Futurist movement and its founder, *Filippo Tommaso Marinetti*. He presented his famous 'Futurist Manifesto' in Mantua on February 8, 1909, glorifying the ideals of speed, dynamism and flight, 12 days before its publication in Paris.



Agnoli in brodo (pasta in broth)



Lambrusco mantovano

CITY OF TASTE

Mantuan cuisine derives from the cross-pollination between the traditions of the Gonzaga court and those of the local people. Sophisticated yet simple, and based on the fruits of the local land and lakes. Lunch or dinner in one of the city's many typical trattorias or restaurants is a must. Sample the *tortelli di zucca* (pumpkin tortelli), traditionally eaten on Christmas Eve, *agnoli in brodo* (agnoli pasta in broth), pasta stuffed with meat, and *risotto alla pilota*. The name of this last dish derives from the 'pilarini', a dialectal term for rice labourers. It is seasoned with salamella pesto and sometimes served with *puntèl*, or stewed pork chops or ribs. Pork is the true star of Mantuan cuisine, particularly *Mantuan salami* flavoured with garlic, *gras pistà* (minced lard with garlic and parsley) served on steaming polenta, and Cotechino sausage, paired with mashed potatoes or lentils. Particularly delicious 'secondi piatti' (main courses) include *stracotto d'asino* (donkey stew) and *luccio in salsa* (pike in sauce), both served with polenta. Based on an old recipe from the Gonzaga's court cook, another favourite is *capon alla Stefani*, served on a bed of fresh salad, raisins and pine nuts. Mantua is the only province to produce both *Grana Padano* and *Parmigiano Reggiano* cheese, both excellent with *Mantuan mostarda*, a condiment made from candied Campanine apples. The traditional dessert here is *sbrisolona* cake, made with yellow flour, almonds and lard. But be sure not to miss *Elvezia*, invented in Mantua by Swiss pastry chefs in the 18th century, or the *Anello di Monaco*, a typical Christmas cake of German origin. To crown the table, Mantua offers white and red wines from its morainic hills, currently gaining recognition, and *Lambrusco Mantovano DOC*.

Since 2017, the city of Mantua, together with Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona, has been part of *East Lombardy*, a network of producers and restaurateurs upholding a culture of healthy, sustainable food that respects local biodiversity.



Lungoro farmers market



Parco Te

A CITY TO EXPERIENCE

To really know Mantua, you have to enter its living fabric. You must walk through it, discovering its most hidden details, passing from one portico to another, from one square to the next, and peering inside the palaces and the beautiful, unexpected historical gardens. Experiencing Mantua means getting to know its people, going to its gathering places, following the lakeside walkways, attending the theatre, concerts and events in the town squares, shopping and visiting the markets, and sampling traditional Mantuan dishes. Throughout the year, Mantua's institutions and cultural associations organise events, shows, concerts, conferences and exhibitions in the city's iconic places. These spaces take centre stage in a continuous exchange between ancient beauty and modern culture. *Parco Te*, *Parco di Belfiore*, *Parco Periurbano*, *Bosco Virgiliano* and *Giuseppe Roda's Giardini di Belfiore*, *Giardini Valentini*, *Giardino del Lungorio IV Novembre*, *Piazza Lega Lombarda*, and *Piazza Virgiliana*. With so many parks and gardens, the city invites us to sit back, relax and be revived in the open air. For lovers of curiosities and antiques, the antiques market takes place every third Sunday of the month. Also worth mentioning is the weekly Thursday market in the old town and the Saturday morning farmers market on *Lungorio*, next to the *Pescherie*. Here you can buy cheeses, fresh pasta and other typical products direct from the producers.

With such rich and vast cultural and architectural heritage, Mantua takes several days to visit properly. Only by allowing yourself the time can you immerse yourself in the welcoming atmosphere of this enchanting and exciting Renaissance city.



Palazzo del Podestà, Museo Virgilio



Museo Storico Nazionale dei Vigili del Fuoco
(Fire Brigade Museum)

THE MUSEUMS

There are many museums and cultural sites that require a visit. For example, the Sonnabend Collection Mantuova at Palazzo della Ragione, a contemporary art museum with works from the famous New York collection; the *Museo Virgilio* in Palazzo del Podestà contains works and installations that tell the Latin poet's story. The civic collections of the *Museo MACA - Mantova Collezioni Antiche* in Palazzo San Sebastiano is dedicated to the Mantuan collectors: the classical antiquity collections of Francesco II and Vespasiano I Gonzaga, Giuseppe Acerbi's collection of ancient Egyptian, Islamic and ethnological items, and Ugo Sissa's Mesopotamian collection. The *Museo Archeologico Nazionale* conserves finds from Mantua and the surrounding area. *Giulio Romano's Pescherie* building was recently restored and now serves as a place to discover the historical and artistic heritage of Mantua and Sabbioneta. The *Torre dell'Orologio* (Clock Tower) and the *Museo del Tempo* (Time Museum), accessible via Palazzo della Ragione, conserves the original gears of Bartolomeo Manfredi's 15th-century astronomical and astrological clock. The *Museo Storico Nazionale dei Vigili del Fuoco* (Fire Brigade Museum) is the only one of its kind in Italy: it houses service vehicles from the 18th to the 20th century. The *Casa della Beata Osanna Andreasi* (House of Blessed Osanna Andreasi), a patron Saint of Mantua, is an example of a 15th-century mansion. The *Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana*, is an important cultural institution with an archive and a library of international value and a unique collection of 18th century surgical tools. The *Madonna della Vittoria*, a former church with remains of decorations in the style of Mantegna, currently serves as an exhibition space, while the *Galleria Arte e Arti*, in the Camera di Commercio, houses a large collection of works owned by the Camera di Commercio. The *Galleria Museo Valenti Gonzaga* has frescoes by Flemish painter Frans Geffels and sumptuous decorations by Giovan Battista Barberini. And finally, *MASTeR*, Mantova Ambiente Scienza Tecnologia e Ricerca ('Environment, Science, Technology and Research, Mantua'), is an interactive laboratory for educational purposes and a space for experimentation, research and scientific engagement.



Piazza Sordello, Mantova Live Summer Festival

YEAR-ROUND EVENTS

The city's squares, palaces and numerous cultural spaces host year-round cultural events and fairs. Events in the city celebrate theatre, music, dance, shows, art and literature, but also artisan crafts, food and wine, and sports and leisure.

Some of the most important include: *Trame Sonore*, an international festival of chamber music held in the spring, drawing artists from all over the world; *Food&Science festival*, an international event that creatively and accessibly explores issues related to the science of food production and consumption; *Open Festival* with theatre performances in the streets and squares of the old town and in Palazzo Te; and *Without Frontiers - Lunetta a Colori*, a cultural festival of urban regeneration.

In July and August, the great musical concerts and shows of the *Rassegna Mantova Live Summer Festival* take place in Piazza Sordello and in Palazzo Te's Giardino dell'Esedra, featuring nationally and internationally renowned artists.

In September, one of the most anticipated cultural events for book lovers, the *Festivaletteratura*, comes to Mantua: five days of readings, literary events, and performances in the city's palaces and squares, drawing writers and artists from all over the world.

The *Segni New Generation Festival* takes place in autumn, an international art and theatre event aimed at children and young people, and featuring some of the best known and innovative Italian and international artists and theatre companies in the world. The *Mantova Scienza* event includes conferences, meetings, and workshops aimed at exploring science in all fields.



Mantua is also known for important art exhibitions promoted by the Fondazione Palazzo Te, the Museo di Palazzo Ducale and other museums and exhibition spaces belonging to the various Mantuan public and private cultural institutions.

It also hosts *MantovaMusica*, a programme of jazz, contemporary and classical concerts featuring international and emerging artists. *MantovaTeatro* brings a season of performances to the Teatro Sociale, while *Mantova FilmFest* brings the magic of the big screen to the city with screenings, previews, and special events. *Mantovamedievale* takes place on the shores of Lago Inferiore, with parades, shows and demonstrations in medieval costume. And *Centro in Festa* offers an evening of shopping, entertainment and shows in the old town.

Sporting events include: the *Minciomarcia*, a historic non-competitive walk through the streets of central Mantua; the *Gran Premio Nuvolari*, a regular international classic car event; and active tourism events such as *Cammino Mantova*, with urban trekking routes on foot and by bicycle for discovering the city and its surrounding area.

And finally, events dedicated to food and wine: *Antica Fiera dei Mangiari*, with food, music and entertainment on the lake shores; the *Festival della Sbrisolona*, with tastings, show cooking and shows dedicated to traditional sbrisolona cake and other Mantuan desserts; and the *Fiera del Riso* rice fair in October, for tastings of Mantuan risottos.



Centro in festa



Mantova Live Summer Festival



Open Festival



Castello di San Giorgio



Palazzo Ducale, Cortile della Cavallerizza



Palazzo Ducale



Palazzo Te, Camera dei Giganti



Andrea Mantegna's House



Biblioteca Teresiana (Teresiana Library)



HOW TO GET THERE

✈ By air

The nearest airport is located in Villafranca di Verona, 33 kilometres from Mantua. The main domestic flight connections are with Rome, Bari, Naples, Cagliari, Catania and Palermo. International flight connections are with Vienna, Paris, Moscow, Munich, Frankfurt, Cologne, Amsterdam and London. www.aeroporto.verona.it. Other airports: Montichiari, Brescia (60 km) Parma (60 km) Bologna (100 km) Bergamo (100 km) Milan (185 km) Venice (160 km).

🚆 By rail

You can travel by train to Mantua on the Modena-Verona line from Verona (45 minutes) and Modena (55 minutes). There is also a train from Milan (2 hours). The following railway lines also pass through the city: Milano-Cremona, Suzzara-Ferrara, Monselice-Padova. The station is just a few minutes from the old town on foot.

F.S. - Ferrovie dello Stato - **Stazione Ferroviaria - Piazza Don Leoni, 14**

For information, booking and ticket purchases, contact the Trenitalia call centre: 892021 - Train timetables: www.trenitalia.it and www.trenord.it

🚗 By road

Mantua can be reached via: **Modena-Brennero Autostrada A22** (the Mantova Nord exit is 4 km from the city centre, and the Mantova Sud exit is 11.5 km from city centre); **Milano-Venezia Autostrada A4**, Desenzano, Sirmione, Peschiera and Verona Sud exits; **Autostrada del Sole A1**, Parma Est, Reggio Emilia and Modena exits.

🚐 Campervan area

Parking areas with facilities:

Sparafucile - Via Legnago 1/A (Mantova) - info: www.aster.mn.it

Città di Curtatone - via della Fiera (Grazie di Curtatone) - info: www.camperclubmantova.it

🚌 Tourist bus area

TOURIST BUS CHECK POINT - Piazzale Levoni; Piazzale Montelungo and Viale Mincio carpark (Mantua)
info: www.aster.mn.it

TOURIST INFORMATION AND WELCOME CENTRES

Tourist Infopoint InLombardia

Piazza Mantegna, 6 - 46100 Mantova - T. 0376 432432 - www.turismo.mantova.it - info@turismo.mantova.it

Infopoint Casa di Rigoletto

Piazza Sordello, 43 - 46100 Mantova - T. 0376 288208 - info@infopointmantova.it



- 1** PALAZZO DUCALE
CASTELLO DI SAN GIORGIO
MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO
NAZIONALE
BASILICA DI SANTA BARBARA
- 2** DUOMO CATTEDRALE DI
SAN PIETRO
- 3** RIGOLETTO'S HOUSE
- 4** TEATRO SCIENTIFICO
BIBIANA
- 5** BIBLIOTECA "TERESIANA"
- 6** MUSEO NAZIONALE DEI
VIGILI DEL FUOCO
- 7** BASILICA DI SANT'ANDREA

- 8** PALAZZO DELLA RAGIONE
SONNABEND COLLECTION
- 9** PALAZZO DEL PODESTÀ
MUSEO VIRGILIO
- 10** ROTONDA DI SAN LORENZO
- 11** LOGGIA DEL GRANO
PALAZZO DELLA CAMERA
DI COMMERCIO
- 12** THE NORSIA SYNAGOGUE
- 13** MUSEO DIOCESANO
FRANCESCO GONZAGA
- 14** MADONNA DELLA VITTORIA
- 15** MUSEO DI PALAZZO D'ARCO

- 16** TEATRO SOCIALE
- 17** PESCHIERE DI GIULIO
ROMANO
- 18** GALLERIA MUSEO VALENTI
GONZAGA
- 19** CASA DELLA BEATA
OSANNA ANDREASI
- 20** MUSEO TAZIO NUVOLARI
- 21** ANDREA MANTEGNA'S
HOUSE
- 22** TEMPIO LEON BATTISTA
ALBERTI
- 23** PALAZZO SAN SEBASTIANO
MUSEO MACA

- 24** PALAZZO TE
- 25** CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA
DEL GRADARO

CYCLE PATH

BUS STOP

SHUTTLE BUS

TOURIST
BOAT

TAXIS

TRAIN STATION

HOSPITAL

PARKING

CAMPERVAN
PARKING

WC TOILETS

INFOPOINT

CASA DI
RIGOLETTO

TOURIST INFOPOINT INLOMBARDIA

Piazza Mantegna, 6 – 46100 Mantova

0376 432432

turismo.mantova.it | info@turismo.mantova.it

INFOPOINT CASA DI RIGOLETTO

Piazza Sordello, 23 – 46100 Mantova

0376 288208

info@infopointmantova.it

comune.mantova.it

mantovasabbioneta-unesco.it

mantovadestinazionesostenibile.it

museimantova.it

museovirgilio.it

maca.museimantova.it

 Mantova città d'arte e di cultura

 [cittadimantova](https://www.instagram.com/cittadimantova)

Comune di Mantova

Settore Cultura, Turismo e Promozione della Città

Tel. 0376 338645/627/334

turismo@comune.mantova.it

*Text by Alessandra Moreschi
and Settore Cultura, Turismo e Promozione della Città*

*Cover photos by Roberto Merlo - Mantova in volo
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kind permission to use their images.*

