



Province of Mantova

Tourist Board
Tel. 0376.204.1
www.provincia.mantova.it
e-mail turismo@provincia.mantova.it

Tourist Information Office
Piazza Mantegna, 6
Tel. 0376.328253
www.aptmantova.it

Mincio Nature Park
Piazza Porta Giulia, 10
Cittadella, Mantova
Tel. 0376.22831
www.parcodelmincio.it
www.parks.it/parco.mincio/index.htm

Shipping Company Andes Negrini
Via San Giorgio, 2
46100 Mantova
Tel. 0376.322875,
www.motonaviandes.it

Useful hints

How to get there

By car: A12 Genova-Livorno (Leghorn) motorway, exist Versilia
By train: Genova-Rome railway, Forte dei Marmi station

When to get there

all seasons

Recommended bicycles

Any type

Cartography

Province of Mantova 1:1750000 Touring

Mantova Recommended itineraries
in the Po valley

TREKking
bike

www.trekbike.it



The province of Mantova is like an arrow head, on the border of Lombardy pointing towards the Po valley, wedged between Veneto and Emilia.

Culture, art, religion, nature, good food and drink are all “key words” for discovering this area, lying peacefully on the horizons of the largest Italian plain. If you imagine you are looking at it from above, you immediately notice the thin blue lines that highlight the great abundance of rivers, the most important of which are the Po, Mincio and Oglio, for centuries both an affliction and a delight for the area, great communication arteries during ancient times but still used today.

In the undulating areas towards the North, outlined by the rows of vines, on the other hand, we find hills that are rich in history: Solferino and its battle that sparked off the Red Cross, Castiglione delle Stiviere, Castellaro Lagusello, Volta Mantovana and Cavriana.



PROVINCE OF MANTOVA – TOURIST BOARD

Tel. +39 (0)376 204.1
e-mail: turismo@provincia.mantova.it
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The "heart" of the great plain

Ancient historical periods are intertwined here, leaving their indelible marks, starting from the Etruscans and then the Roman Empire. One of the richest artistic cities in the whole of Italy – Mantova (Mantua) – is located in the centre of this abundant and fertile land, the throbbing heart of the Po valley. Mythologies create the place: first the martyrdom of Longino, the Roman soldier who picked up the earth impregnated with the blood of Christ, and then the discovery of the same relics. An oratory was created in the same place and the city began to grow. The great battles to stop the invasions from the North: Stillicone stopped Alarico and Pope Leone Attila's advance. Then the first of the great women in Mantova's history, Matilde di Canossa, in the years straddling the first millennium. But it was under the Gonzagas, during the first four centuries, and with Isabella d'Este, that Mantova reached the peaks of its heroic deeds, and became an international political and cultural capital. Just like Paris at the end of the nineteenth century, Mantova was the "place" of ferment, epitomising everything that was *avant-garde*.

Renaissance work of art

The greatest artists of the time were torn from Rome and Milan and left behind them memorable works. Mantegna, Donatello, Leon Battista Alberti, but also Leonardo, Pisanello, Cellini, Rubens, Giulio Romano and Monteverdi. It was culture, and with it, architecture, that would forge the city, transforming it into an authentic mass



Anyone wishing to follow this route must get off the boat in Revere. (always remember to tell the shipping company of your intention). After getting off the boat, turn right and then left when you reach the riverbank.

After a short time, you leave the riverbank and ride under the bridge, returning to the riverbank. Go straight on ignoring the junctions until kilometre 2.7 where the road becomes a dirt track. At the intersection at kilometre 4.8, turn right. After about 3 kilometres the road becomes asphalted again. Go straight on, remaining on the riverbank ignoring the detours.

At intersection 13.4 keep to the right and enter the boundaries of Sermide. At kilometre 16.3 you reach a junction where you keep to the left. After a short distance you arrive at the enormous water-scooping machine of Moglia di Sermide. Turn right passing under the bridge and then left.

At kilometre 20.8 a mountain-bike track of about 5 kilometres starts which crosses the nature oasis of La Digagnola (optional).

You go straight on, seeing the town of Sermide on the right. After 5 kilometres, you arrive at the beautiful church of S.M. Assunta. The attractive track meanders on to Quatrelle where you meet another group of religious buildings including the church of the Natività di Maria Vergine. You have arrived at kilometre 33.2 - your arrival point. Return taking the same route.

of precious works of art.

The list is long and we can only mention a few: the palazzo Ducale (the Dukes' Palace), larger than Versailles, home to such wonderful works of art and treasures that it deserves to be called a royal palace. The Palazzo Te (Te Palace), where the essential elegance of its structure contrasts with the frescoes inside, resplendent in colours and special effects.

But the whole of Mantova is like a quiet walk through history: piazza Sordello, immense and sumptuous; Piazza delle Erbe with its multi-coloured clock; the Rotonda of Saint Lawrence, a church created on the model of Saint Sepolcro, and the Basilica of Saint Andrew, a masterpiece by L.B. Alberti.

And then the arcades, where the wonderful, convivial custom of the "passeggiata" (stroll) takes place. Among our favourite museums and exhibitions is the one dedicated to Nuvolari, the flying man from Mantova and Learco Guerra, the human locomotive, modern sports heroes who "reeked" of oil, sweat and courage.

The very dense concentration of works of art in such a small area convinced one of the Gonzagas - Vespasiano - to go outside the walls to create the "ideal town". This is how Sabbionieta began, a jewel whose walls are still intact today, with its Duke's Palace full of frescoes, the original palazzo del Giardino, and the Olympic theatre where the visitor can experience the magical atmosphere of by-gone



formances.

Amongst the multitude of churches and abbeys, one that particularly deserves a visit is the abbey complex of S. Benedetto Po dating back to the time of Matilde with its basilica rebuilt by Giulio Romano, and the Sanctuary delle Grazie in gothic renaissance style on the banks of the Mincio; but other isolated and romantic buildings may become, in their own right, an original theme for exploring the province. The wonderful period of the Gonzagas finished with Vincenzo, but many events would still involve the town during the Austrian-Hungarian occupation under the rule of Marie-Thérèse of Austria, and then the revolts of the Risorgimento in which Mantova was a protagonist.

Living nature, perfumes and flavours

This land is not only epitomized by art and culture: the green stretches that mainly “embrace” the rivers are protected areas, rich in environmental value and a joy to nature lovers. So, here you find the Regional Park of the Mincio and the Regional Park Oglio Sud, the main parks from a dozen protected areas, each with its own special features.

Water, culture, borders, and the not so far away “capital” Milan, form the character of Mantova, which, as Dr. Dall’Ara, in his historical recollections, told us, mirrors the wine of the area: Lambrusco. Sparkling and sincere, without any frills and embroidery but also rather sharp and of an intense, almost purple colour, but above all light so that you could drink another

Alternative route

For those wishing to try out a rather more demanding itinerary, on the right side of the Po as far as the provincial border and back to Revere.

A fascinating trip in close contact with the great river.

Revere - Quatrelle - Revere

Departure and arrival point:

Revere pier

Type of road surface:

Mixed

Itinerary difficulty:

Easy

Length of itinerary: 66,4 Km

Percentage cross-country: 8%

Time: 4 hours

Assistance points:

Cycle repair shops at Sermide and Bonizzo di Borgofranco

Period of the year recommended:

Spring and autumn.

In the summer it can be very hot and there is no shade along the route.

You are advised to travel during the evening or morning when it is cooler.

Difference in level:

None



Take a boat from Porta San Giorgio to the Northwest of Mantova. There are two piers, one on the right and one on the left of the bridge. Car parks can be found on lungolago dei Gonzaga or via Mincio.

An attractive route of about 3 hours, the boat moors at the Società Nautica Ostigliese. You take the left-hand road, riding along the riverbank. At kilometre 6.5, leave the river bank turning right and turn left at the intersection.

The route continues along the river bank with beautiful views of the plain to the right and the river to the left.

At kilometre 12.6 the church of the Annunciazione di Sacchetta. After 200 metres the landing place of the Andes motor ships and the start of the Parco del Mincio.

At kilometre 16.5, keep to the left and after 400 metres, at the crossroads, go straight on. After 200 metres turn left into Via Mincio, at the crossroads turn left again, cross the bridge and turn right immediately. Continue along the riverbank and at kilometre 19.8 descend turning left at the intersection.

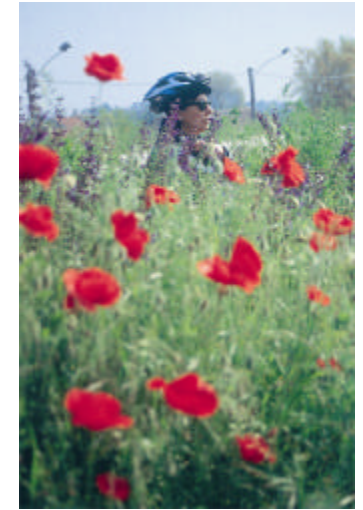
At kilometre 25.1, turn left entering Bagnolo San Vito. After 600 metres turn right into Via Virgiliana and go under the bridge. At kilometre 22.7, turn right and after 400 metres, on the left, a small section of dirt track begins.

Follow the track until you reach a small path on the right. Take this and continue along it for 700 metres until you reach the stop where you turn right. Enter the town and ride along Corso Garibaldi for about one kilometre until you reach the junction with Via Fondamenta, where you turn right. After 200 metres, leave the road and take the cycle track along the lake-side. Continue for 700 metres and you are back to the starting point (km 37.3).

to get up from the table.

The international fame of the local cuisine is well-deserved and very rich in culture, both of a popular and "palazzo", noble, nature.

Agnolini (a type of ravioli), or better still *agnoli*, but also *caplet* or *marubein*, little tortellini (a type of small ravioli) with a pork stuffing, served in a meat broth, become *sorbir d'agnoli* or *bevrinvin*. The peasant culture considered it an appetizer, served in a bowl with some Lambrusco. Because of its awful colour, it should be drunk standing up and facing the wall. The more famous "tortelli" (another kind of ravioli), with pumpkin reduced to a pulp, macaroons, Mantuan mostarda (fruit pickle) (made only from apples, and very spicy), some lemon peel, Parmesan cheese and nutmeg; served with butter and sage, or in a sauce. Still today – on Christmas Eve – the youngest and oldest members of the household join hands and "bless" the soup tureen full of tortelli, that must never be emptied while waiting for an unexpected guest or for the dear departed. Another original dish is "risotto alla pilota": Mantuan vialone nano rice cooked like a pilaf to which a ground mixture of pork is added, for connoisseurs. Hybrid dishes, on the other hand, are bigoli (a type of pasta) with sardines, the typical peasant soup or *capunsèi*, a kind of knodel reminiscent of German cuisine. Some of the favourite main courses are pike in sauce, mixed boiled meats with pickled fruit and stew. Desserts include the *sbrisolona* and the *caldi dolci* (hot cakes) to celebrate the dead made from a secret





recipe based on corn meal, two specialities linked with the great history of Mantova where there was a very high immigration of Swiss pastry chefs called by the great courts of Europe. In 1860, 50 were recorded in the census and to them we owe the creation of the *anello di Monaco* (Munich ring, a balancing act of a construction rising upwards and the *helvetia*, a sublime dessert made from marzipan, cream and zabaglione).

The salami and cold pork meats are a delight for connoisseurs: Mantuan salami with garlic, the "cotechini" (type of pork sausage) which people buy on the 15th August in the Sanctuary of the Grazie as they come out of the first mass of the day, the "salamella" with chopped soft, fresh pork and San Giorgio ham. Ideally these should be drunk with DOC ("appellation controlée") wines from the Garda and Garda Colli Mantovani hills, even if the finest wine production is associated with the Lambrusco DOC, with a more intense, purplish colour compared with the one from Emilia, but fresh and sincere. And we mustn't forget the Grana Padano Dop and Parmigiano Reggiano Dop Parmesan cheeses, both produced in the province of Mantova.

Tourist itinerary

A mixed itinerary travelling by boat and bike - you go down the Mincio to where it joins the Po, arriving at Ostiglia, where you must ask to land at the Ostigliese shipping company (società nautica Ostigliese). Then you travel along the left side of the river by bike. N.B. Find out about the timetables of the boats and about whether it is possible to moor at Ostiglia. Alternatively, you will have to moor at Revere from where you will have to cross a protected, but rather dangerous bridge.

Mantova - Ostiglia by boat and bike

Departure and arrival point:

Mantova, Porta san Giorgio

Type of road surface:

Mixed

Itinerary difficulty:

Easy

Length of itinerary: 37,3 Km

Time: 2,30 hours

Assistance points:

Various cycle repair shops in Mantova

Period of the year recommended:

Spring and autumn. In the summer it can be very hot and there is no shade along the route. You are advised to travel during the evening or morning when it is cooler.

Percentage cross-country:

5%

Difference in level:

None

How to get there:

By car: A22 Modena-Brennero, exits Mantova Sud and Mantova Nord, A4 Milan-Venice, exits Desenzano, Sirmione, Peschiera. By train: free phone no. 848888088. By bus: A.P.A.M. lines - Tel. 0376.327237