



CITY OF VERONA

"[...] There is no world without Verona walls [...]"

Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare

The historic city of Verona was founded in the 1st century B.C. but saw its heyday in the 13th and 14th centuries under the rule of the Scaligeri family, who came to power in 1259 and ruled it for more than a century, achieving supremacy among the states of northern Italy and transforming the municipality into a *Signoria*. Verona also flourished as part of the Republic of Venice from the 15th to 18th centuries. Thanks to its long history, Verona has preserved a remarkable number of monuments from ancient times, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and is an outstanding example of a military stronghold. It is also a lively and elegant city, sitting by the Adige River and protected by the surrounding hills, rich in crenelated towers, bell towers, bridges spanning the river, courtyards and porticoes. It rightly boasts its Arena, the many palaces steeped in history, the spectacular Giardino Giusti, the works that so many artists have left within its walls and the forbidden love between Romeo and Juliet. There are countless reasons to love Verona.



CULTURAL HERITAGE

UNESCO DOSSIER: 797
PLACE OF INSCRIPTION: CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA
YEAR OF INSCRIPTION: 2000



CRITERIA FOR SELECTION: Thanks to its urban structure and architecture, Verona is a splendid example of a city that has developed progressively and uninterruptedly over 2000 years, integrating artistic elements of the highest quality from different time periods. It is also an outstanding example of a city that has been fortified in several stages, as is typical in European history.



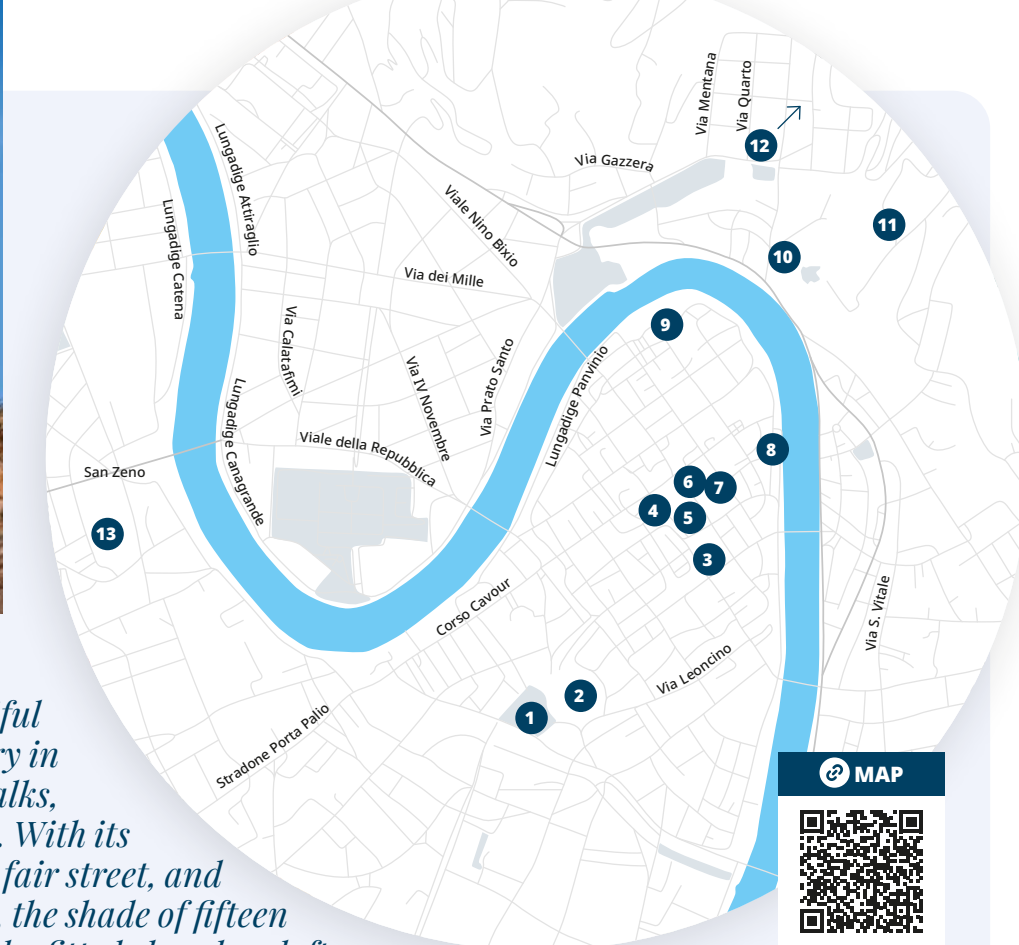
“Pleasant Verona! With its beautiful old palaces, and charming country in the distance, seen from terrace walks, and stately, balustraded galleries. With its Roman gates, 4 still spanning the fair street, and casting, on the sunlight of to-day, the shade of fifteen hundred years ago. With its marble-fitted churches, lofty towers, rich architecture, and quaint old quiet thoroughfares, where shouts of Montagues and Capulets once resounded [...]”

Charles Dickens, in his travelogue *Pictures from Italy*, enthusiastically invites the reader to discover the beauty of Verona.

Start discovering Verona from the wide and bright **1 Piazza Bra**, with its *liston* – the pavement for strolling – and cafés, overlooked by **Palazzo della Guardia**, which hosts exhibitions, and on the east side **Palazzo Barbieri**, where the town hall is located. The square is dominated by the symbol of the city, the **2 Arena di Verona**, the world’s largest open-air opera house, which can be visited when no events are taking place. Built just outside the city walls in the 1st century A.D. to host gladiator fights, it was also used for military purposes over the centuries. Today it is a concert venue and can hold up to 22,000 spectators. Continue your walk along Via Anfiteatro, just in front of you, and reach **3 Juliet’s House** in Via Stella at the corner with

Via Cappello, where you will find the bronze statue of Shakespeare’s heroine and the balcony of the famous love scene with Romeo. Expect large crowds at all hours. Turn left in Via Cappello to reach **4 Piazza delle Erbe**, the central hub where all the main streets of historic Verona converge, with the **Fountain of Madonna Verona** at its centre. The square is overlooked by the Romanesque **5 Palazzo della Ragione**, with its distinctive tufa and terracotta-tiled walls and triple lancet windows typical of palaces built in the Middle Ages. The square is adjacent to the very elegant **6 Piazza dei Signori**, where the statue of Dante Alighieri stands out. Not far away are the **7 Arche Scaligere**, a monumental Gothic-style funerary complex of the

Scaligeri family. Take a stroll along **8 Via Sottoriva**, an intimate, arcaded street with medieval charm, where you will find excellent taverns. From here, take Via Duomo to easily reach the **9 Duomo**, with its 16th-century altarpiece of the *Assumption* by Tiziano, the painter’s only work in Verona. Now you can take the **10 Funicular** and climb up **11 Colle San Pietro**. Alternatively, you can drive to the city’s other hill, called **12 Torricelle**, to enjoy a spectacular view. Back in the city, from the Duomo cross the Adige river twice to reach the **13 Basilica of San Zeno Maggiore**, one of the most beautiful expressions of Romanesque art in the city and stay for dinner in the lively neighbourhood of the same name.



SAN ZENO MAGGIORE

“[...] We leave our luggage at the station for three hours and head along the main road, through the city and the fortifications, towards San Zeno Maggiore. This ripple of hills, the sometimes steep, sometimes sloping walls, the sometimes so slight differences in height of the fortifications. Such subtle sensitivity completely hidden from the profane eye. The portal of a fortress, divided into three parts, astonishes us with its acroterion and magnificence.”

Meine Reise in Italien, Walter Benjamin

The Basilica of San Zeno Maggiore, dedicated to the city’s patron saint, is not to be missed. A masterpiece of Romanesque art, this basilica, which has had a civil as well as religious role over the centuries, looks sober and linear, with a splendid façade characterised by a prothyrum resting on two marble lions and rich symbolism related to the mysteries of faith. The bronze portal, visible from inside the church, is spectacular, with 48 square panels telling various stories, from the Old Testament to the miracles of Saint Zeno. The interior is dazzling in its beauty and grandeur, with its inverted wooden ceiling and, in the apse, Andrea Mantegna’s altarpiece, celebrated for its uniqueness: a triptych from 1459 that combines painting, sculpture and architecture to represent sacred scenes.



"VERONA IS A PRECIOUS CITY: HERE THEY LAY PINK HEMS ALONG THE GREY STREETS, SOUND MARBLE SLABS WHERE YOU WALK, LIKE VENETIAN FOUNDATIONS. THE DOMINANT COLOUR IS A HUE BETWEEN PINK AND IRON RED, ONLY THE GREEN GOLD OF A BAROQUE PALACE STANDS OUT. IN THE BACKGROUND IS THE WARM TOPAZ OF SAN ZENO, WHILE

THE PALE ROMAN REMAINS HAVE THE COLOUR OF A CLOUD, OR MOONLIT WATER."

This is how Leone Traverso describes Verona in *Immagini di città*: as a city of a thousand colours, which children will love. Children, we know, can often be more curious than adults. It is a good idea to take them to the **1 Museum of Castelvecchio**: nestled between the fortified Ponte Scaligero and the Arco dei Gavi. Built by Cangrande in the mid-fourteenth century, it is now – thanks to the work of architect Carlo Scarpa – the city's

most important museum, with three floors and 29 rooms full of paintings, sculptures and archaeological finds. There is also an area dedicated to weapons which usually fascinates children, with helmets, swords, halberds and much more. You can also go outdoors to enjoy the scenic patrol walkways and travel into the past. But Verona would not be Verona without the story of Romeo and Juliet's love. Head to **2 Romeo's House** first, an elegant little castle that cannot be visited, but has its own charm even when seen from the outside, and then to **3 Juliet's House**, with the famous balcony where so many come in pilgrimage. This 13th-century tower house was restored in 1936, while the bronze statue of Juliet sculpted by Nereo Costantini dates back to 1972. Take a breath of fresh air at the amazing **4 Giardino Giusti**, hidden among stately homes. You can visit the **20th-century apartment**, and children love wandering around the garden, walking along the cypress-lined avenue, admiring the fountains and mythological statues, contemplating the hedge maze and walking up the path into the grove. Your little ones will also enjoy the **5 Natural History Museum**, with animals, fossils and prehistoric items of important educational value. To finish your Shakespearian itinerary, you can visit **6 Juliet's Tomb** near the Lungadige: actually, it is just a sarcophagus from the Roman era located in the basement of the cloister of the **former Convent of San Francesco al Corso**. Now you can take the car and choose whether to go to the **7 Children's Museum**, with an area for experiential activities, or spend time at **8 Gardaland**, an amusement park with over 40 attractions and rides.



THE CITY OF VERONA in books

Reading suggestions to enter the heart of the city of Verona.

- **Romeo and Juliet**, William Shakespeare (1594-96). You cannot visit Verona without having read the immortal story of Romeo and Juliet (*The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* is the original title), narrated in the tragedy that William Shakespeare wrote between 1594 and 1596: one of the most widely read, performed and loved love plots in the world. The archetype of indissoluble but thwarted love has conquered all the readers who have read these pages over the centuries.
- **Pictures from Italy**, Charles Dickens (1846). A travelogue consisting largely of letters sent by the writer Charles Dickens to his friends during the time he spent in Italy, including Verona.
- **Meine Reise in Italien. Pflingsten 1912**, Walter Benjamin (1912). The writer travels to Italy immediately after

graduating from high school. He also lands in Verona.

- **Immagini di città**, Leone Traverso (1986). The translator and writer offers illuminating descriptions of some Italian cities, and Verona is one of them.
- **A Season with Verona**, Tim Parks (2002). The author decides to follow the Hellas Verona football club in the Serie A Championship: he starts in the city of Verona and travels all over Italy. The book tells us about Verona and its people, but is also about football fans in general, seen through their football faith.
- **Verona. Amor**, Francesco Mazzai (2009). An interesting volume of 35 short stories set in 35 places in the city of lovers. Their secrets and mysteries are revealed on the background of iconic locations and the love drama of Romeo and Juliet.
- **Questione di Costanza**, Alessia Gazzola (2019). "Verona is not my city. And palaeopathology is not my profession. Yet here I am. How could this happen, to me of all people? My name is

Costanza Macallè and I am not travelling alone on the plane that is taking me from Messina to the city in Veneto where my sister, Antonietta, already lives. I am with the being I care for most in the world: sixteen kilos of delight and torment called Flora." So begins the story of a woman who is ready to start a new life in Verona, with courage and, as the title says, perseverance.

• **Il gioco delle maschere**, Daniele Furia (2022). Carnival has just begun, but a tragic event spoils the celebrations: Dr Masiero is found dead in his flat, dressed in a traditional costume of the Verona Carnival. He will not be the only one to die that night. Assistant Inspector Miriam Sannino takes us through her investigations in Verona.

Children's books:

• **Non giurare sulla luna**, Chiara Rametta (2018). This is the story of Annabelle as she enters adulthood, but also of her family and her schooling, amidst difficulties and unexpected encounters. In the background, a romantic Verona inspired by Shakespeare's verses.