Road map key

- Motorway with dual carriageway or single carriageway, junction and toll gate, service area, toll barrier
- Primary route: four lanes, wide or medium, narrow; metalled
- Regional connecting road: four lanes, wide or medium, narrow; metalled
- Other important roads or roads of particular interest for tourists, other roads
- Important unmetalled road, road praticable with difficulty
- Motorway and roads under construction or planned, road tunnel
- Steep hill rising in the direction of the arrows (main roads only)
- Partial and total distances in kilometres
- E-27 A1 N.141 — European road number, motorway number, national road number or ex national road number
- Double track railway or high-speed-rail route, single track railway, tramway, rack railway or funicular
- Cableway, chair-lift, shipping line
- Ruins, castle, church, hotel, monument, battle-field, cemetery
- Civil airport, airfield, lighthouse, mountain pass with altitude (in meters), customs, golf-course, cave
- National, regional and provincial boundaries or other border
- Places of particular interest, places of considerable interest, places of interest
- Beautiful scenery (main roads only); natural park or nature reserve

Scale 1:250 000 0 2 4 6 8 10 km

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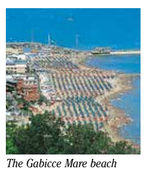
Urbino
0 100 200 m
Viale G. Di Vittorio
Viale A. Gramsci
Via Raffaello
Via Mazzini
Via Francesco di Giorgio Martini
Via Luciano Laurana
Via Matteotti
Via Cesare Battisti
Via Vittorio Veneto
Via Gian Paolo Lazzarini
Via Bramante
Via Giovanni Dupre
Via Don Minzoni
Via Lavagine
Via Gerardi
Via Mercatale
Via Fra Rosolino
Via Cesare Pecarelli
Via Sanzio
Via Raffaello
Via Della Stazione
Via Della Mura
Via Della Stazione
Via Della Mura
Via Della Stazione
Via Della Mura

THE MARVELS OF NATURE

The Sea

All the provinces of the Marche are on the Adriatic Sea and, on the coast, there are cities with ancient origins that have a long history as ports and markets trading. For travellers arriving from Rome along the Via Flaminia, the first town reached on the sea was Fano; Senigallia – at the mouth of the River Misa – hosts the *Fiera di Sant'Agostino*, a traditional fair which renews the age-old mercantile vocation of the city; originally a Picene port, Ancona later became a Greek and a Roman one; Numana was a rich Picene port, as well as Porto Sant'Elpidio and San Benedetto del Tronto, two coastal towns in the province of Ascoli Piceno and Fermo, were important Picene and Roman ports. Many of the coastal towns of the region are still active ports: Ancona is a large commercial port, while San Benedetto del Tronto, Fano, Civitanova Marche and Porto San Giorgio are the main fishing ports. This proximity to the sea has favoured the development of an excellent cuisine in the region and has led to the growth of the tourist industry since sea-bathing first came into vogue among the upper middle classes in the mid-19th century. Over the years bathing establishments, sports facilities and hotels have been built in the seaside resorts of the Marche, which, particularly after the Second World War, have welcomed millions of visitors from Italy and abroad. The coast of the Marche has numerous attractions for visitors, but the greatest of all are the fine, smooth sands, extending from Gabicce Mare, where the beach is overlooked by the Monte San Bartolo and the fortress of Gradara, southwards to Pesaro, Fano, Marotta, Falconara M., Porto Recanati, Porto Potenza Picena, Civitanova Marche, Porto Sant'Elpidio, Casabianca di Fermo, Pedaso, Porto San Giorgio, Cupra Marittima and Grottammare up to San Benedetto del Tronto, famous for its many tall palm-trees (about seven thousand), which give the town an exotic air. Known as "the velvet beach", the one in Senigallia is particularly famous and has been a tourist attraction since the 20th century. Near Ancona and the promontory of Conero, an offshoot of the Apennines forming the only headland jutting into the Adriatic between Istria and the Gargano promontory in Apulia, there are rocky coves where the seabed is visible through the clear blue water. On this stretch of coast there are hidden bays and the enchanting seaside resorts of Portonovo, Sirolo and Numana, which also attract visitors in spring, when Monte Conero is covered with broom, and the autumn, when it is mantled with the warm colours of the strawberry tree (*arbutus unedo*).


The Gabicce Mare beach

SPORT AT THE SEASIDE

The different types of beaches, and the proximity of the hills and mountains open up a whole range of sporting options, including sailing, golf, scuba diving, thrilling horseback rides, water-skiing and mountain biking. Then, there are the beach volleyball tournaments on the wonderfully fine sand and the opportunities for free climbing on the white cliffs rising sheer above the Adriatic. In Vallugola, Ancona, Portonovo, Sirolo, Numana and Pedaso, one can still enjoy spearfishing. Yacht ports are also plentiful: Gabicce Mare (Vallugola), Pesaro, Fano, Senigallia, Ancona, Numana, Civitanova Marche and San Benedetto del Tronto. The harbour of Marina di Porto San Giorgio with its 800 berths deserves a special mention for being the largest yacht port in the Adriatic.

The palm-lined promenade in San Benedetto del Tronto

THE MUSEUMS ON THE COAST

Those interested in the sea and maritime history may satisfy their curiosity in various museums: in Pesaro the *Museo della Marineria pesarese "Washington Patrignani"* and in San Benedetto del Tronto the *Museo del Mare*. In Cupra Marittima, you can visit the *Museo Malacologico Piceno*, and its fascinating display of shells from all over the world.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES LOOKING OUT OVER THE SEA

From the beaches of the Marche it is easy to travel inland up the numerous valleys to the historic towns, or to visit the old towns and villages on the heights overlooking the coast. There are medieval castles like Gabicce Monte, Casteldimezzo and Fiorenzuola di Focara and fortified villages like Mondolfo with Marotta, Falconara Alta with Falconara Marittima, Montemarciano with Marina di Montemarciano, Sirolo, Numana, Recanati with Porto Recanati, Potenza Picena with Porto Potenza Picena, Civitanova Alta with Civitanova Marche, Sant'Elpidio a Mare with Porto Sant'Elpidio, Porto San Giorgio with the Marina, Fermo with Torre di Palme, Cupra Alta (or Marano) with Cupra Marittima, Grottammare Alta with Grottammare and San Benedetto del Tronto with the Gualtieri tower.

PARKS BY THE SEA

The two regional nature parks on the coast of the Marche provide an opportunity to spend a holiday combining the joys of an unspoilt natural environment with the pleasures of the seaside. Between Gabicce Mare and Pesaro there is the **Monte San Bartolo Regional Park**, where it is possible to go for hikes and guided tours. The park comprises an area of wetlands of national importance and is the winter habitat of the herring gull, the Mediterranean gull and the cormorant. On the coast there are picturesque rocky coves with small beaches. The **Monte Conero Regional Park** includes woods of holm-oak and downy oak, and there are large areas of Mediterranean scrub. The park is an excellent place to see passage-migrants such as the long-legged buzzard, the honey buzzard and the marsh harrier. Numerous fascinating hikes are possible in the park and the coastal waters are ideal for boat trips. Another **Regional Nature Reserve is the Sentina**, between Porto d'Ascoli to the north and the Tronto river to the south. This is a land of sand and water, with sandbanks, salt marshes and wetlands that are home to 143 bird species.

The "Riviera del Conero"

THE MARVELS OF NATURE

The Mountains

The Marche region offers areas of natural beauty: the splendid Monti Sibillini feature in some places Alpine landscapes; the spectacular caves of Frasassi; and the forest-clad mountains in the Montefeltro area, forming a backdrop to craggy spurs. The most magnificent mountain landscapes in the Marche are to be found in the **Monti Sibillini National Park**, which is about 40km (25 miles) in length and extends into Umbria. From the summits of Monte Vettore (2,476 m), Monte Sibilla and Monte Priora – described by the poet Giacomo Leopardi as the "blue mountains" – to the valley of the Fiastrone and the Gole dell'Infernaccio, nature is combined with the legends of the *Sibyl*, a soothsayer who was said to have lived in a cave on Monte Sibilla, *Guerrin Meschino* (a character from the Carolingian epos) and *Pontius Pilate*, after whom the only natural lake in the Marche (Lago di Pilato, high up on Monte Vettore) is named. And at the foot of the mountains are scattered numerous towns and villages, each with its own church and, in many cases, a museum containing relics of its eventful past. A small part of the Marche, comprising the municipalities of Acquasanta Terme and Arquata del Tronto, lies within the borders of the **Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park**. On the border with Tuscany, the **Interregional Park of Sasso Simone and Simoncello**, in the Montefeltro region, is well known for the large beechwood of Pianacquadio. In the 16th century, on the rock of Sasso Simone, the Medici built a fortified town that was later abandoned because it was not easily accessible. There are many areas of outstanding natural beauty in the province of Pesaro and Urbino, such as the Cesane pine wood between Urbino and Fossombrone. Not far away are the massif of the Furlo, with its suggestive gorge, recently recognized as a national nature reserve; the Alpe della Luna, after Mercatello sul Metauro; and the area of Monte Catria and Monte Nerone, with its many gorges and natural arches. The province of Ancona also boasts the **Gola Rossa and Frasassi Regional Park**, with many rocky areas crossed by the two gorges of the same name, the habitat of golden eagles, peregrine falcons and eagle owls. Near Fabriano is the Centre of Environmental Education of Valleremita. Worth seeing in the province of Macerata are the Monte San Vicino with the ancient beechwoods of Canfaito, now a natural reserve; the maquis of Montenero in Cingoli and the valley of the Grilli that ends in the S. Eustachio Gorge, which is surrounded by the caves of the same name. Between the municipalities of Pieve Torina and Monte Cavallo, at the foot of the Monti Sibillini, is the **Montagna di Torricchio Nature Reserve**, recognized as a biogenetic reserve by the European Council. The Cistercian abbey of Chiaravalle di Fiastra is included in the other nature reserve, **Abbadia di Fiastra**, renowned for its agricultural landscape. The abbey has well preserved its medieval layout.
In the winter months everything embrace the traditions, the small villages become nativity scene towns. The snow-capped peaks welcome adults and children on the ski slopes, snow parks and refuges. The main ski resorts are: **Piani di Ragnolo** (Acquacanina), **Monte Prata** (Castelsantangelo sul Nera), **Pintura di Bolognola** (Bolognola), **Sarnano–Sassotetto** (Sarnano), **Frontignano di Ussita** (Ussita), **Forca Canapine** on Monti Sibillini, **Monte Piselli** in the **Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park**, **Monte Catria** in province of Pesaro e Urbino, **Montecopiolo** with two ski resorts in the Sasso Simone Simoncello Park area, **Monte Nerone** in province of Pesaro e Urbino.

CYCLE FROM THE COAST TO THE MOUNTAINS

Seaside or mountains? There is no need to choose! Explore Marche by bike, experiencing its environment, tradition and culture. Pedal from the coast to the mountains crossing gentle ridges and discovering the constantly changing scenery of Marche.
The **Marche Outdoor** project featuring circular cycle routes adopts the model of Michelangelo Pistoletto's Third Paradise, with an innovative interpretation of the landscape of Marche.

THE KEY TO GOOD HEALTH: SPA RESORTS

There are numerous spas specialized in the treatment of various ailments. In the province of Pesaro is the *Terme di Raffaello* in Petriano. In Genga, near the Frasassi caves, is the renowned *Terme di San Vittore*. Famous in the province of Macerata are the *Terme of Santa Lucia* in Tolentino and the *Terme di Sarnano*, close to the Monti Sibillini. In the province of Ascoli Piceno there are the new *Terme di Acquasanta* In the place of the same name, already known in Roman times for the waters flowing beneath the Via Salaria.

The Monti Sibillini covered with snow

A MIRACLE WORKED BY WATER AND TIME: THE FANTASTIC FRASASSI CAVES

The Frasassi caves (photo on the left) are in the heart of the Gola della Rossa and Gola di Frasassi Regional Park. They're one of the most interesting limestone caves in Italy. The Sentino river shaped the gorges of this park. After the discovery in 1971 of the *Grotta Grande del Vento*, the caves were opened to the public in 1974 and now attract thousands of visitors every year. With its fascinating series of small lakes, exquisite stalactites and gigantic stalagmites, the underground tour – comprising the lofty cavern called the *Abisso Ancona* (240m in height), the *Sala dei Duecento*, the *Sala delle Candeline*, the *Sala dell'Orsa* and the *Sala dell'Infinito* – is enhanced by the spectacular use of lighting.

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Archaeological Sites

According to Festus the name Picenum derives from the fact that the Sabines migrating towards Ausculum Picenum (present-day Ascoli Piceno) followed a woodpecker (*picus* in Latin), a bird sacred to Mars. That's the reason why they were called *Piceni* or *Picentes*. The discovery of various cemeteries scattered between the rivers Foglia to the north and Pescara to the south, in Abruzzi, has revealed the existence – from the eighth to the first centuries BC – of what is known as the **Picene culture**, which flourished in the area in central Italy bordering the Adriatic Sea until it until the Romans muscled in. The most important burial sites, with rich grave goods, have been found in Novilara (province of Pesaro), Numana and Fabriano (province of Ancona), Matelica and Pitino (province of Macerata) and Belmonte Piceno (province of Fermo). After being the site of a Bronze Age settlement and then an important Picene town, in about 390 BC, **Ancona** became the home of a group of refugees who arrived from the Greek colony of Syracuse, in Sicily; living side by side with the Picenes, they set up a thriving port that traded with the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The nearby town of **Numana**, an old Picene port, also had important trading relations with Greece. In the fourth and third centuries BC, the central and northern Marche up to Esino were occupied by the Gallic tribes known as the **Senones**. The most important settlements of this people – who produced splendid jewellery now exhibited at the *Museo archeologico nazionale delle Marche* – have been found in Arcevia and Senigallia. After the battle of Sentino the Romans and the Picenes defeated the coalition of Samnites, Etruscans, Umbrians and Senone Gauls. In the area between Camerino and Sassoferrato, the **Romans** occupied the territory of the Gauls, stressing its cultural distinctiveness by calling it *ager Gallicus*. Over the next two centuries they conquered the rest of the region, building roads, such as the **Via Flaminia**, which still links Rome to Fano, and the **Via Salaria**, which they used to transport salt from Porto d'Ascoli. Along them, the Romans founded colonies and municipia (provincial cities whose citizens had the privileges of Roman citizens), evidence of which is still clearly visible today in the grid plans of a number of towns (Pesaro, Fano, Senigallia, Jesi, Ascoli Piceno) and in the ancient monuments, such as *Trajan's Arch* in Ancona; on the Via Flaminia, the *Arch of Augustus* in Fano, *Vespasian's tunnel* (76 AD) in the Gola del Furlo, and bridges, such as *Ponte Mallio* in Cagli, *Ponte Grosso* in Pontericcioli (Cantiano area); on the Via Salaria, *Porta Gemina* and *Ponte del Solestà* in Ascoli Piceno. The equestrian group in gilded bronze found in Cartoceto di Pergola is particularly interesting, as it's the bronze sculpture attributed to Lysippus which was found in the waters off Fano and currently on display at the Getty Museum in Malibù, California. Numerous relics from Picene, Gallic and Roman times are to be found in the archaeological museums (Ancona, Arcevia, Urbino, Pesaro, Pergola, Cingoli, Urbisaglia and Ascoli Piceno) and the numerous archaeological parks (Fossombrone, Sassoferrato, Castellone di Suasa, San Severino Marche, Urbisaglia, Falerone and Cupra Marittima). Alongside the archaeological parks there are further archaeological areas: **Colombarone** in Monte San Bartolo Park, province of Pesaro and Urbino, **Fenice** in Senigallia and **Potentia** in Porto Recanati.

The head of a Picene warrior from Numana

Gilded bronze from Cartoceto di Pergola

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARKS

Archaeology is a key part of the cultural heritage. The various provinces in the region are home to 7 archaeological parks: Forum Sempronii, in San Martino del Piano (Fossombrone) in the province of Pesaro-Urbino, Sentinum to the south of Sassoferrato and Suasa Senonum in **Castelleone di Suasa** in the province of Ancona, Septempeda in San Severino Marche and Urbs Salvia in Urbisaglia in the province of Macerata, Falerius Picenus, in Piane, 2 km from modern-day Falerone in the province of Fermo, and Cupra Maritima to the north of the village of Cupra Marittima in the province of Ascoli Piceno. These parks are also home to museums.

DRAMA IN THE OPEN AIR

Roman amphitheatre (1st century AD), Urbisaglia

In the Roman theatres and amphitheatres of the Marche it is possible to enjoy an amusing comedy by the Roman playwright Plautus or a compelling Greek tragedy.
During the summer, drama productions are housed in the 1st century AD Roman amphitheatre of Urbisaglia, in the province of Macerata, and the theatre in the Roman town of Falerio (modern Falerone, in the province of Fermo) dating from the 1st century AD. Both of these are located in archaeological parks with museums.

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Where Silence Reigns

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Marche region was dominated by the Byzantine exarchate north of Ancona and the Longobards of the Duchy of Spoleto to the south; it was then contended by the Empire and the Papal State until the latter gained control of the whole area. The long period of administrative uncertainty and the distance from the papal court in Rome favoured the spread of Benedictine monasticism into the region from Norcia, in Umbria, and Farfa, in Lazio. The monasteries and abbeys were built, above all, along the main Roman roads – the Via Flaminia and the Via Salaria – and the valleys leading from the Adriatic to the Apennines, such as those of the rivers Esino, Potenza, Chienti, and Metauro. The Benedictines from Norcia built the basilicas of *San Michele* in Lamoli, in the upper Metauro valley; *San Vincenzo al Furlo*, on the Via Flaminia; *San Firmano* in Montelupone, near the mouth of the River Potenza; and *Santi Ruffino e Vitale* in Amandola, near the River Tenna. The Benedictines from Farfa, on the other hand, settled in the area round Ascoli Piceno, arriving from Lazio along the Via Salaria; one of the most important abbeys they founded was *Santa Vittoria in Matenano*. The only abbeys belonging to the Burgundian-Cluniac tradition are *Santa Maria di Portonovo*, at the foot of Monte Conero, near Ancona, and *Santa Maria a piè di Chienti* in Montecosaro. In the Marche there are also two splendid examples of Cistercian abbeys where the mix of Romanesque and Gothic style is evident: the **abbey of Santa Maria in Castagnola** in Chiaravalle, founded by the monks of Clairvaux; and the **abbey of Chiaravalle di Fiastra**, near Urbisaglia, founded by monks from the abbey of Chiaravalle near Milan. Centrally-planned buildings include *San Ciriaco* in Ancona, built on a pre-existing Hellenistic temple dedicated to Aphrodite Euploia, and *San Giusto di Maroto* in Pievebovigliana. There are four churches built on the abbeys with Greek-cross plan of Byzantine derivation, three of which are situated fairly close to each other: *Santa Croce dei Conti* in Sassoferrato, *San Vittore delle Chiuse* in Genga and *Santa Maria delle Moje* in Maiolati Spontini; the fourth, in the Chienti valley, is *San Claudio al Chienti*, built on two levels with a façade flanked by two round corner-towers.

A centre of pilgrimage: the Sanctuary of the Santa Casa, Loreto

PILGRIM ROUTES

A growing number of visitors enjoy travelling on foot. One of this type of tourism, aiming at discovering the landscape and the environment at a slow pace, comprising a whole universe of locations, routes and memories centred around the *Marian Sanctuary of Loreto*. Today, you can travel a stretch of the Via Lauretana from Assisi to Loreto along a route divided into seven stages; you will pass through delightful and peaceful spots before reaching the Sanctuary dedicated to Our Lady of Loreto, the heart of religion and art in the Marche. Five of these stages involve municipalities in the Marche region: Muccia, Belforte del Chienti, Tolentino, Macerata, Montecassiano, Montelupone and Loreto. The **Cammino Francescano della Marca** follows in the footsteps of St Francis, retracing one of his journeys in southern Marche. Along the way, you will encounter wonderful large and small towns, Apennine villages and places steeped in spirituality such as old convents and splendid Gothic and Romanesque churches.

Tolentino, Basilica of St Nicola

A DANTEAN LOCATION: THE MONASTERY OF FONTE AVELLANA

Saint Romuald, the founder of the Camaldolese order, in 1006 constructed the abbey of *San Salvatore in Val di Castro*, near Fabriano, where he died in 1027, thereby inspiring the monks who built the monastery of Fonte Avellana, on the slopes of Monte Catria. In this secluded place deep in the woods, ideal for meditation – mentioned by Dante in the twenty-first canto of his *Paradise* – **Saint Peter Damian** took monastic vows in 1035; he also frequented the church of *Santa Maria di Portonovo* on the bay of Portonovo.

The Camaldolese monastery of Fonte Avellana

FRANCISCAN MARCHE

The Marche was heavily influenced by St Francis of Assisi and his presence can be traced back to 1208. In 1282, the province of Marca had 85 monasteries. St Francis has marked the cultural and religious history of the Marche.

PERFORMANCE AND CELEBRATION

Music and Theatre

Those wishing to get to know the Marche properly should not fail to visit the historic cities and ancient villages when concerts and plays are being staged. It is possible to enjoy **early music** in the Ancona province with the *Festival Cantar lontano,* in Urbino, there is an *International festival of early music* in July that combines courses specializing in the various instruments and in Loreto an *International choir festival* takes place in April. As regards **classical music** at an international level, in July and August, there are the opera season the *Sferisterio* in Macerata and the *Rossini Opera Festival* (ROF) in Pesaro, and the *Festival Pergolesi Spontini*, organized by the foundation of the same name in Jesi. Other events of interest are: in Ascoli Piceno, *Ascolinscena*, in winter, a festival of plays presented by amateur theatre companies from all over Italy; in Fermo the *International Violin competition "Andrea Postacchini"* and in the provinces of Fermo and Ascoli the *Armonie della sera,* a chamber music festival. Recanati pays tribute to the great tenor Beniamino Gigli twice a year with the *Commemorazioni gigliane* held in March on his birthday and in November to mark the anniversary of his death. In Senigallia, there is an *International piano contest* and in Grottammare the *Liszt Festival*. In recent years, numerous festivals of **light and contemporary music** have been organized: in Fano, in the summer the well-known *Jazz by the Sea* festival, in Macerata in June, *Musicultura*, a pop and folk festival, while in Senigallia during the summer the *Summer Jamboree* celebrates the legendary Fifties. In Ascoli Piceno and province the concerts of the *Ascoli Piceno Festival* are held during the summer; *Ancona Jazz*, the oldest jazz festival in the region; in San Severino the *San Severino Blues Marche Festival* is held in July and in San Benedetto del Tronto the *Festival Leo Ferrè* is held in June, in the Fermo area the *Sant'Elpidio Jazz Festival* in July and August and the *Music and theater chamber festival* in Camerino in August. Another important musical event is the *Adriatic Mediterranean Festival*, with its concerts, plays, exhibitions, meetings, films and initiatives involving artists from different countries to help spread a culture of peace and cooperation among people. There are numerous events related to **folk and popular music**: in August in Apiro there is the festival entitled *Festival internazionale del folclore Terranostra*; and in Monsano concerts featuring leading singers of popular and folk music take place. In Castelfidardo, the world capital of the accordian, an *International Accordion Award called PIF* using the accordion is held. In a region boasting 72 historical theatres, there is certainly no lack of events involving this art form. These include the seasons of **classical theatre** in Urbisaglia and Falerone, which last the whole summer; **Renaissance theatre** in Urbino in July and August; **avant-garde theatre** in Polverigi in June and Amandola; the summer season of the *Teatro alle cave* in Sirolo; from drama events of the *Gad National Festival* held in Pesaro to the festival known as *I teatri invisibili*, held in San Benedetto del Tronto in September. There is also a **dance**: *Civitanova Danza* in Civitanova Marche. Pesaro hosts every year the *Popsophia Festival*, showcasing contemporary philosophy.

THE MARCHE, A MUSICAL LAND

In order to find out all about the great musicians it is necessary to visit the places where they lived and pore over the documents associated with them. In Pesaro there are *Gioacchino Rossini's house* and the *Museo nazionale Rossini*; in Maiolati Spontini there are the *Gaspare Spontini museum*, located in the place where the composer was born and last lived, his tomb and the *Parco Celeste Erard*, named after his wife; in Recanati a museum dedicated to the tenor *Beniamino Gigli* is housed in the Teatro Persiani. It boasts the largest collection of documents and memorabilia ever dedicated to an opera singer.

IT'S TIME FOR A SMILE

One of the best-known events is the *International Biennial Humour in Art* held in Tolentino in odd years, a traditional global appointment with satire and contemporary humour. In Grottammare a festival of humour entitled *Cabaret amore mio* is held in July and August. The *Theatres of the World*, the most important festival of children's theatre in Italy, takes place in Porto Sant'Elpidio in July, while the *National Festival of Theatre for Schools* is held in Serra San Quirico in April-May.

THE MARCHE AND CINEMA

For some time now important festivals, the only ones of their kind in Italy, have been held in the Marche. In June the *International New Cinema Festival* takes place in Pesaro; in July the *Libero Bizzari Italian National Documentary Festival* is held in San Benedetto del Tronto; in October the *Fano Film Festival* features independent cinema from Italy and abroad. In Ancona, in December, the *Corto Dorico Film Festival* features short, art-house and socially conscious films.

HISTORICAL THEATRES

With more than 70 historical theatres – it's easy to see why the Marche are known as the land of theatres – opera, symphony concerts, dance and drama are staged. Most of them are splendid examples of 18th- and 19th-century architecture. They range from large sumptuous ones, like those in Pesaro, Macerata and Ascoli Piceno to smaller ones notable for their original stage machinery such as the one in Offida, while others are miniature masterpieces, such as the theatre in Montegiorgio and the Teatro della Rocca in Sassocorvaro. In Jesi, the *Teatro G.B. Pergolesi* is well-known for the decoration of its ceiling by Felice Giani; the *Teatro Gentile* in Fabriano has the best acoustics of all the theatres in the Marche. A permanent exhibition featuring the history of the theatre has been opened in the *Teatro dell'Aquila* in Fermo. Other historical theatres are: *Le Muse* in Ancona, *Misa* in Arcevia, *La Vittoria* in Ostra, *La Fortuna* in Fano, *Comunale* in Cagli with its lavish neo-Baroque forms, *La Fenice* in Osimo and the *Mercantini* in Ripatransone.

PERFORMANCE AND CELEBRATION

Pageants

In the context of a region particularly rich in culture the Marche relives its past every year with horse races and historical pageants. Medieval festivals often group together different art forms such as dance, music and theatre to create a harmonious combination of tradition and creativity. In the province of **Pesaro and Urbino** a number of events are associated with the history of the noble families that used to rule the area. in Piandimeleto, in July, the *Palio dei Conti Oliva*, linked to the Malatesta, celebrates life at court. In Urbino the *Festa del Duca* takes place on the third Sunday in August; this is a pageant in 15th-century costumes, with parades and contests with medieval themes. in Mondavio the *Caccia al Cinghiale* (Boar-Hunt) takes place in August, reviving the favourite pastime of the local nobility. Medieval times are evoked in Gradara, where Francesca di Rimini and her brother-in-law, Paolo, are said to have fallen in love (this story is mentioned in Dante's *Inferno*) with the *Assedio al Castello*. In July, the town of Fano goes even further back in time as *Fano dei Cesari* revives the splendour of Ancient Rome with themed dinners, historical parades, chariot races and camps set up to accommodate Roman legionnaires. Three pageants feature games: in August in Cagli the *Palio dell'Oca* features a gigantic chessboard; on the first Sunday after Easter in Fermignano there is the *Palio della Rana* and on the first Sunday in September the *Gran premio del Biciclo Ottocentesco*. in Serra Sant'Abbondio the second Sunday of September brings the famous *Palio della Rocca*. In the province of **Ancona** the most famous pageants held in July are: Corinaldo on the third Sunday with the *Contesa del Pozzo della Polenta* with a parade in costume; Filottrano, where the *Contesa dello Stivale* commemorates an episode of the war between the town and the nearby city of Osimo; Offagna, where, during the medieval festival of the *Contesa della Crescia*, there is a contest involving a challenge with crossbow, bow, mace and spear; in Sassoferrato *Sentinum 295 BC - La battaglia delle Nazioni* Nazioni re-enacts a battle between Romans and Picenes on one side and Samnites, Senones, Etruscans and Umbrians on the other. In Fabriano on 24 June – during the commemoration of the city's patron saint, John the Baptist, to whom the *Palio* is dedicated – the local craft of wrought iron is celebrated in the final *Sfida del Maglio*; in Jesi, in May, the *Palio di San Floriano* recalls the subjection of the city to the nearby castles on the hills where Verdicchio wine is produced. In the province of **Macerata**, in Camerino, the *Corsa alla Spada*, in May, involves a trial of strength in which the competitors have to extract a sword from a log; during the first week in July, in the *Palio dei Castelli* in San Severino Marche the competitors run a race carrying high "towers" weighing up to 70 kilograms. In this period in Mogliano there is *Mogliano 1744*; in Montecassiano the *Palio dei Terzieri* takes place at the end of July; in Caldarola the *Giostra de le Castella* in August, San Ginesio has the *Battaglia della Fornarina* with the *Palio di San Ginesio* while *Castrum Samani* revives the original ambience of the old village of Sarnano. Curious 19th-century pageants are *Cingoli 1848*, in period costume with carriages, in August, and the *Disfida del Bracciale* in Treia. In **Ascoli Piceno**, on the first Sunday in August, there is the *Quintana*, in which more than a thousand participants tilt a heavy, revolving effigy of a Saracen. The other events of the province in August are: every three years, the village of Spelonga near Arquata del Tronto holds the *Festa Bella*, a re-enactment of the 1571 Battle of Lepanto; in Acquaviva Picena the *Palio del Duca – Sponsalia* is a historic re-enactment of a wedding in past times; in Amandola the *Canestrelle* is the historic re-enactment of the offering of wheat to the Blessed Saint Anthony; in Castignano, August brings street theatre performances, battles of the Knights Templar and scenes of everyday medieval life during the *Templaria Festival*. In the province of **Fermo** in the third week in July, Sant'Elpidio a Mare becomes *La città medioevo* and the *Contesa del Secchio* takes place on the second Sunday in August bringing to life medieval splendours. In August Servigliano celebrates the *Torneo Cavalleresco di San Clementino* and in Grottazzolina the *I Giorni Di Azzolino*. On 15 August in Fermo in the *Cavalcata dell'Assunta* ten knights in costume gallop through the streets of the town. As far as religious feasts are concerned, we must also mention *L'Armata di Pentecoste e Sciò la Pica* in Monterubbiano, commemorating the arrival of the Sabines in the Marche, and the spectacular fireworks of the *Cavallo di Fuoco* in Ripatransone on the first Sunday after Easter.

The Contesa del Secchio takes place on the second Sunday in August in Sant'Elpidio a Mare

The Quintana is held on the first Sunday in August in Ascoli Piceno

RELIGIOUS FEASTS

Over the centuries, the Marche has maintained a number of events linked to specific relieous feasts. The tradition of the Christmas nativity scene, with three dedicated museums in Macerata, Morrovalle and Tolentino, is still very much alive in the region. There are numerous artistic, mechanical and living nativity scenes displayed every year in extremely picturesque settings. The main episodes of the Passion are staged in Cantiano, Mogliano, Loreto (Villa Musone) and Pioraco on Good Friday. *Corpus Christi* is a day when there are splendid flower displays all over the region. In Loreto, on 9 December, at night there is a particularly fascinating feast to celebrate the *translation of the Holy House*. A number of religious events are also linked to the harvest festival, for example the *Cocco Festival* in Campocavallo di Osimo and the procession of the harvest baskets in Amandola.

CARNIVAL AND TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS

The town of Fano is home to the region's oldest and most prestigious Carnival: huge floats parade through the town streets and it ends with a bonfire topped by the main festival dummy. As well as the Carnivals of Ascoli Piceno, San Benedetto del Tronto, Fermo, Matelica, Macerata and *El Carnevalò* in Ancona, one of the best-known and most spectacular is the Carnevale di Offida held on two different days: *Lu Bov Fint*, on Carnival Friday and the *Stilata dei Vlurd* on Shrove Tuesday. Other traditional festivals include the *Feste del Covo*, held in Osimo in August and in Candia, a village close to Ancona, in September. Urbania organizes the *Festa Nazionale della Befana* on the Epiphany.

THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Historic Towns and Cities

In the Marche, the historic towns and cities – about a hundred, out of a total of 225 municipalities – are evidence of the cultural pluralism that has evolved over the centuries as a result of the fragmented historical development of the region. In the province of Pesaro and Urbino, the largest towns were at the height of their power in the Renaissance period: Fano and Gradara were governed by the **Malatesta**; **Urbino** was the scene of the humanist ambitions of Federico da Montefeltro; **Pesaro**, **Urbania** (formerly known as Castel Durante, it was famous for its production of maiolica) and **Senigallia** were ruled by the Della Rovere family. The history of **Ancona** has always been closely linked to its port, the second in importance to Venice on the Italian side of the Adriatic. The old part of the city is dominated by the Romanesque cathedral of *San Ciriaco*, while important buildings bear witness to the city's prosperity and growth in the 15th century. Just a few miles from Ancona, in the town of **Loreto** there is one of the most visited sanctuaries in Italy, where the artists *Melozzo da Forlì*, *Luca Signorelli*, *Bramante*, *Andrea Sansovino* and *Lorenzo Lotto* worked. Near Loreto is **Osimo**, a town of Roman origins. Inland from Ancona is the Esino valley dominated by **Jesi**, with its ancient walls. Further up the valley, the city of **Fabriano**, world famous for its paper production, has perfectly preserved its Medieval plan. In the province of Macerata is **Camerino**, which enjoyed a period of great economic and artistic importance in the 15th century under the Da Varano family. A few miles from Camerino is **Tolentino**, where the chapel of the *Basilica of San Nicola* contains some of the most outstanding frescoes by the 14th-century Riminese School. Nearby is the small town of **San Severino Marche** which, in the 14th and 15th centuries, became one of the European centres of international Gothic style thanks to the brothers Lorenzo and Jacopo Salimbeni. **Macerata** is rich in Renaissance, Baroque and 18th-century architecture. Southwards is **Fermo**, an important Roman colony and flourishing medieval city. Still further south is **Ripatransone**, a small but delighful town, with numerous archaeological relics and historic buildings. A few miles away **Offida**, with its intact walls, still has a *fortress* and the splendid abbey of *S. Maria della Rocca*. In **Ascoli Piceno**, Roman remains and medieval buildings are travertine -clad, the local stone, and testify to the city's glorious past, as does the Via Salaria, traces of which have survived, often blended with the medieval structures.

Porta Malatesta, Camerino

A view of Ascoli Piceno

Loggiato of St Francesco opening onto the piazza del Comune, Fabriano

CARLO CRIVELLI

In the 15th century Ascoli Piceno had a distinguished citizen, the Venetian artist **Carlo Crivelli**, who, with his followers, executed superb paintings featuring the splendidly arrayed saints local in the areas around Fermo, Ascoli and Macerata. From Ascoli Piceno, with its *cathedral*, *Pinacoteca* and *Museo diocesano* our search for Crivelli's works takes us to ancient, unspoilt towns and villages such as Montefiore dell'Aso in the province of Ascoli Piceno, and Massa Fermana in the province of Fermo, continuing to Monte San Martino (church of S. Martino) and Corridonia (parish picture gallery), Macerata (civic picture gallery) and Ancona (civic picture gallery).

Ducal Palace, Urbino

THE LAND OF THE DUKES

In the former Duchy of Urbino, ruled by the House of Montefeltro and from 1508 by the House of Della Rovere, there are various routes that allow the visitor to discover the places associated with the political and cultural history of the ducal family. Urbino, Pesaro, Urbania, Fossombrone and Senigallia still have their ducal palaces. Cagli, Mondavio and Sassocorvaro are on the route touring to the fortresses built to defend the duchy, largely rebuilt by the architect Francesco di Giorgio Martini for Federico da Montefeltro. The museums of Urbino, Pesaro, Urbania and Fossombrone and religious buildings, such as the monastery of Montefiorentino, where there is the splendid 15th-century chapel of the Oliva family, and the collegiate church of Mercatello sul Metauro, contain works of art commissioned to satisfy the refined tastes of the dukes.

HOUSE-MUSEUMS

The house-museums in the Marche help convey an understanding of the region's identity and culture. The main residences of illustrious citizens who brought global renown to their homeland are now open to visitors: the *Casa Museo* of Giacomo Leopardi in Recanati, the *Casa Natale* of Raphael in Urbino, *Casa Rossini* in Pesaro and the *Casa Museo* of Osvaldo Licini in Monte Vidon Corrado.

LORENZO LOTTO IN THE MARCHE

Lorenzo Lotto: The Archangel Gabriel. *Civic Museum of Palazzo Pianetti, Jesi*

In **Recanati,** the artist, who was born in Venice in 1480 and died in Loreto around 1556, painted the *Polyptych of San Domenico* (1508) and other splendid masterpieces, such as the *Transfiguration* (c. 1512) and an *Annunciation* (c. 1528), which are displayed at a *Pinacoteca Civica*. From Recanati, the visitor in search of paintings by Lotto can continue to the various towns and villages in the region where the artist worked until his last days: **Jesi**, where, in the *Pinacoteca*, there are works of outstanding importance for the