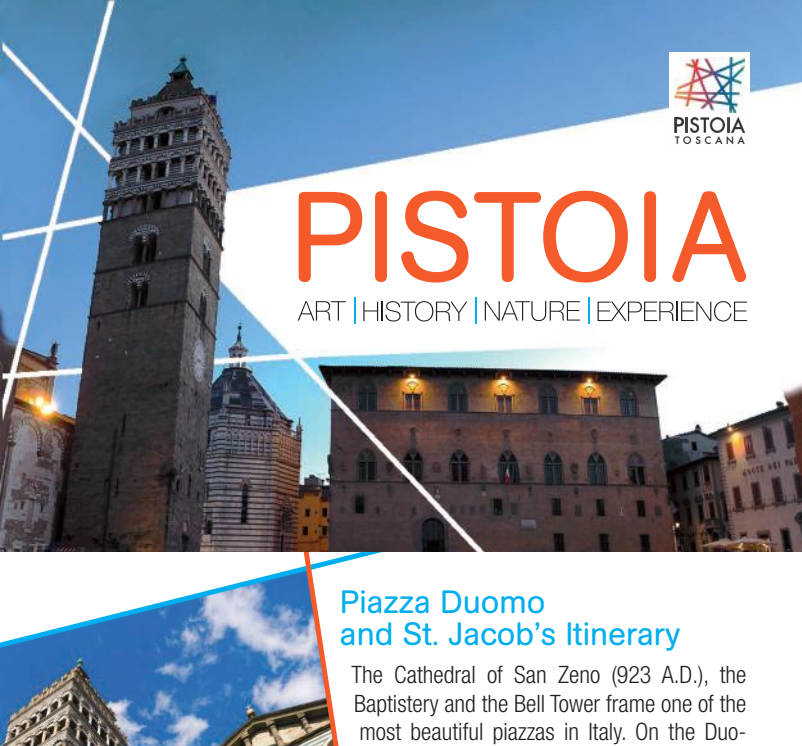


PISTOIA

ART | HISTORY | NATURE | EXPERIENCE



Piazza Duomo and St. Jacob's Itinerary

The Cathedral of San Zeno (923 A.D.), the Baptistery and the Bell Tower frame one of the most beautiful piazzas in Italy. On the Duomo's façade the patron Saint Jacob, clad in a pilgrim's cloak, is about to set out on his journey to Compostela. Follow St. James's route in the Duomo.

DO NOT MISS the Silver Altar: a masterpiece in embossed silver, on which Brunelleschi also worked, as a goldsmith.

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Palazzo of the Anziani (City Hall) and Antico Palazzo dei Vescovi

The sandstone facades, with arches, double-lancet windows and coats of arms, look suspended in time. Palazzo degli Anziani was once the seat of government and is today the town hall and Civic Museum.

Once a fortified residence, Palazzo dei Vescovi was the home of a powerful clergy.

DO NOT MISS the *Micco*, a bear with a chequered mantle, is the symbol of the city (Palazzo degli Anziani).



Underground Pistoia

The underground labyrinth winds for 650 visitable metres - there are 1200 in total - in the city below the city. No description could do justice to the fascination of a Pistoia underground.

You could almost hear the sound of the mills in motion, as well as echoes of the voices coming from the cloister and from the ancient hospital above.

DO NOT MISS the guided tour.

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Ospedale del Ceppo: Museum and Anatomical Theatre

Legend has it that Ospedale del Ceppo (13th century) was built on a withered root, miraculously blossomed again during the winter.

The magnificent glazed ceramic frieze on the façade portrays *Mercies and Virtues* by Santi Buglioni, while the roundels with the life of the *Madonna* are Giovanni Della Robbia's signature work.

DO NOT MISS the smallest anatomical theatre in Europe.



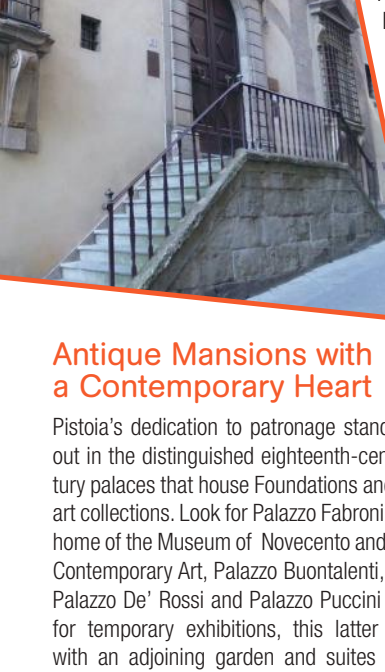
Palazzo Rospigliosi: Diocesan Museum and Museum of Embroidery

The white embroidery that embellished bridal trousseaus, favors and sacred vestments, originated in Pistoia in the 13th century.

Palazzo Rospigliosi, a home to the Diocesan Museum, also features the Museum of Embroidery, rich in examples of the delicate needlework art that made Pistoia renowned worldwide.

DO NOT MISS the precious Sozzifanti Empire style embroidered gown.

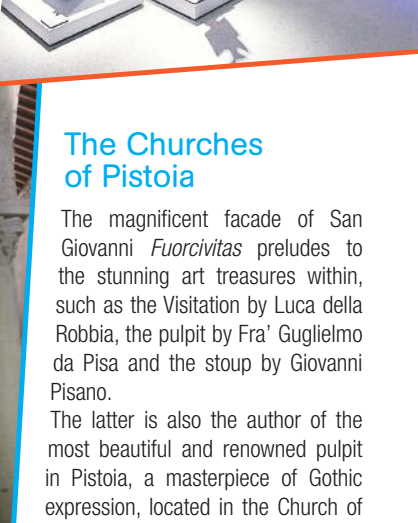
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Antique Mansions with a Contemporary Heart

Pistoia's dedication to patronage stands out in the distinguished eighteenth-century palaces that house Foundations and art collections. Look for Palazzo Fabroni, home of the Museum of Novecento and Contemporary Art, Palazzo Buontalenti, Palazzo De' Rossi and Palazzo Puccini for temporary exhibitions, this latter with an adjoining garden and suites for rent.

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The Churches of Pistoia

The magnificent facade of San Giovanni *Fuorcivitas* preludes the stunning art treasures within, such as the Visitation by Luca della Robbia, the pulpit by Fra' Guglielmo da Pisa and the stoup by Giovanni Pisano.

The latter is also the author of the most beautiful and renowned pulpit in Pistoia, a masterpiece of Gothic expression, located in the Church of Sant'Andrea.



Historic Libraries in Pistoia

The only Italian contender to the title of World Book Capital 2021 has two historical libraries, Forteguerriana and Fabroniana. Their halls smell of antique wood and fine paper and guard a heritage of centuries-old books, incunabula and documents.

Against the backdrop, the bright and contemporary New San Giorgio Library, inaugurated in 2007 by Nobel Prize winner Dario Fo, is an agora for people and ideas.



Marino Marini Foundation

Pistoian artist Marino Marini (1901-1980) became one of the trendsetters on the Italian art scene of the 20th century. He painted and sculpted his signature series of horses and knights, curvaceous Pomonas and circus jugglers, in bronze, terracotta and marble. His works are on show at the Marino Marini Foundation, which also provides a photo gallery and a children's library.

DO NOT MISS the gypsum gallery.

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Luigi Tronci Foundation, Beating Down into History

If all 800 percussion instruments in Luigi Tronci's collection could play together, you would hear the world's heartbeat.

The last and only Italian cymbal maker, a supplier to the world's top drummers, is a descendant of the Tronci family, the same who in 1700, together with the Agati family, started the Pistoian school of organ-making tradition.

DO NOT MISS a visit to the foundry.



The Paper Museum and the Old Benedetti Printer Works

In 1485 the Florentine printer Francesco Cenni moved to Pescia to print *La confessione di San Bernardino*. Local water was greatly sought after, as it helped produce paper of excellent quality. Five centuries later, the Paper Museum preserves and passes on the tradition of paper production, while the historic Stamperia Benedetti displays ancient typographic tools, presses and machines.

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The Art of Jorio Vivarelli and Villa Smilea

The need to "express something new and say it differently" and the deep empathy with humanity mark the art of Jorio Vivarelli, inspirer of the art of his time, over and above borders and cultures.

His fountains and bronzes are in Detroit (MI) and Philadelphia (PA) in the USA, as in his native Fognano. Villa Smilea in Montale, 11 km from Pistoia, houses a collection of his artwork.





Villa Rospigliosi in Lamporecchio

If you cannot imagine the sound horses' hooves make on the gravel, when pulling luxurious carriages, maybe you are not familiar with the Italian idiom that translates into "As comfortable as the Pope".

Villa Rospigliosi will help you fill the gap: the nobleman Giulio, who would have Bernini himself design his princely residence, was later to become Pope, Clement IX.

DO NOT MISS the *gourmet* restaurant.

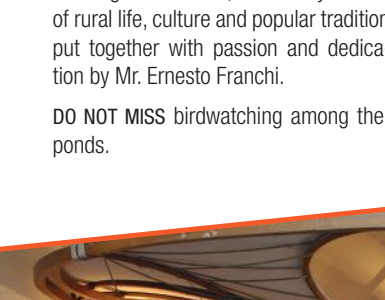


Villa La Magia and the Medicean Villas

Of the twelve Medici Villas, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, La Magia stands out in Quarrata. A former hunting lodge and grounds under the Medicis, it became a pleasure residence with the new owner, Pandolfo degli Attavanti.

A savvy host and patron, he turned the mansion into a venue for sumptuous parties and had the best artists add frescoes, gardens and art.

DO NOT MISS the Trucco Room, called so for the *trompe-l'oeil* artwork.



Casa di Zela Farmhouse Museum and La Querciola Wetlands

Towards Quarrata, flying herons and storks announce that La Querciola is close by. In the wetlands, biodiversity rules with 116 species of birds and 241 species of plants. Nearby, Casa di Zela Museum is a vintage farmhouse, with many exhibits of rural life, culture and popular tradition, put together with passion and dedication by Mr. Ernesto Franchi.

DO NOT MISS birdwatching among the ponds.



The Da Vinci's Home and Museum

The genius of the Renaissance, the artist, scientist, architect and engineer who led the world to modernity, was born in Anchiano, not more than a hamlet of stone cottages on the outskirts of Vinci. The moral: no matter how tough the odds are, genuine talent finds a way to spread wings and fly high.

DO NOT MISS The digital *Last Supper* to interact with.

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Pistoia Zoological Garden

If even puppets do not have strings around here, there is no reason why animals must be kept in cages, either. The Zoological Garden of Pistoia has replaced enclosures with ranges and shelters reproducing natural habitats for 400 individuals of different species.

The visit includes free guided activities and highlights on bears, parrots, penguins, meerkats, otters and birds of prey.

DO NOT MISS the *gourmet* restaurant.

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Pinocchio Theme Park and Villa Garzoni in Collodi

Travel to the Land of Toys in Pinocchio's Theme Park in Collodi, born after Carlo Lorenzini's Tale. Meet the wise Cricket, the Cat and the Fox and the Terrible Dogfish. The Fairy with the Turquoise Hair will do the magic to turn many grown-up boys into real children again. Doesn't that sound like "happily ever after"?

DO NOT MISS Villa Garzoni's historic Garzoni Garden and the Butterfly House.

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The Historic Train Depot

Still in operation as a maintenance garage for vintage locomotives, the Historical Train Depot of Pistoia opens to the public on a few rare days. Make sure you mark them in red, as to enjoy a triumph of steam puffs, whistles, turntables and a single huge railway crane in action.

Here is the departure station to hop on the Porrettana Express and head to the Eco-Museum of the Pistoian Mountain.



The Porrettana Express

"All aboard!" calls the conductor as the old engine jerks and clatters into motion.

On the historic Trans-Appennine railway, travel is slow: breathe in the pure air from the window, while you ride past bridges, helical tunnels and picturesque villages in the green, such as Piteccio, Castagno, Corbezzoli, Sammommè and Pracchia.

DO NOT MISS the themed itineraries for grown-ups and kids.



The Eco-Museum of the Pistoian Mountain

The history of man and ice, iron and stone is told by the Eco-Museum of the Pistoian Mountains. Six themed outdoor trails testify to how man has obtained raw materials and energy from the forest over the centuries.

DO NOT MISS the ancient Madonna icehouse in Le Piastre, the Iron Museum in Pontepetri, the Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art in Popiglio.

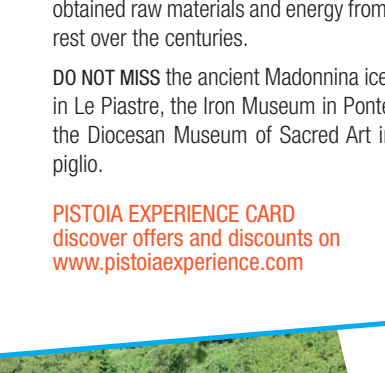
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The Suspension Bridge of Mammiano (The Ironworks Bridge)

For those who are not afraid of heights, the Mountain offers a breath-taking walk on the suspension bridge of Mammiano (or "delle Ferriere") in San Marcello Piteglio. It is an amazing single-span wire mesh walkway, supported by 227 metres of steel cables at a height of 36 metres on the bubbling river.

DO NOT MISS a selfie at sunset, waiting for the lights to turn on.



S.M.I. Museum and the Air Raid Shelters

A trip to the Museum of the Italian Metallurgical Society is a surprise even for those who have never considered industrial archaeology. The tour features a visit to the largest air-raid shelters in Europe: 1500 metres of rock-hewn tunnels designed to house 7000 people. The feeling of a journey back in time is vivid. Once you return to the future, it is exciting to meet the beech forests again.

DO NOT MISS the *gourmet* restaurant.

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The European Capital of Nurseries

"A generous land where plants take root and bloom in abundance"

This is how plants would describe Pistoia, if they could speak.

The European capital of nurseries and topiary art boasts over 1500 specialized companies. Some of them play a role in the cultural life by hosting conventions, concerts, arts and theatre events, dinners and green aperitifs. *Très chic.*



Montecatini Terme and Monsummano Terme SPA

Salus per Aquam: Health through water. The Romans were well aware of the healing power of the thermal springs that flow in Montecatini Terme and Monsummano Terme, in the Valdinievole. Whether you choose the citified scenario of the first or the natural caves of the second, it all comes down to the same result: your body and soul, regenerated and renewed, will thank you.



A Taste for Excellence

Pistoia offers a great many delicacies and specialties. Here is a list of the *must-taste* food experiences:

- Montalbano Wine and Oil PGI
- Pistoian Bread
- Raw Milk Pecorino cheese
- PGI Sorana Bean, a Slow Food Presidium
- Chestnuts from the Giamba Mill
- Pistoian "Confetti" (sugarcoated almonds)
- Chocolate glazed Panforte
- The Chocolate Valley
- The Abetone Blueberries
- The Waffles of Montecatini Terme
- The Brigidini of Lamporecchio
- Marini's Vinsanto DOC
- Coffee from Pistoia tradition of roasters

