

**Destination: Pistoia** - The Ancient Palazzo dei Vescovi: Archaeological route and Tactile Museum, the walls, the Fortress of S. Barbara. *We also advise visits to: Quarrata* - The historic villages.

## The Archaeological route in the Ancient Palazzo dei Vescovi



The historic palace was the Bishop's residence from the 11<sup>th</sup> century to 1786 and is an important example of civic mediaeval architecture in Pistoia. Some restoration work on the building led to the purely accidental discovery of two Etruscan funerary stones dating from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.; this was followed up by an excavation campaign that led to the discovery of pottery shards and the remains of buildings dating from Roman times and the early Middle Ages. The various elements that were found (over 45.000 fragments) make up some really informative "archives" that form the largest data bank to exist on the ancient and early mediaeval history of the city: fragments of black glazed and grey clay ceramics, numerous fragments of stamped earth and important testimonials of Roman glass. There are also numerous examples of mediaeval type ceramics as well as some important and priceless examples of archaic majolica. Panels displaying explanatory texts accompany the entire route.

Twenty years after its initial arrangement, the Archaeological Route in the Ancient Palazzo dei Vescovi in Pistoia is still extremely up-to-date, thanks to the excavation methods used and the display quality; it is still an efficient work instrument and a reference point for the scientific community and visiting schools (from the primary schools to the university).

## The Tactile Museum in the Ancient Palazzo dei Vescovi

Apart from hosting the equipped archaeological route and the Museum of the Cathedral of S. Zeno, this historic palace

contains a permanent exhibition that has also been conceived and designed to allow the blind to discover the city. Apart from a tactile map of the old city centre, this section contains several representative scale models of some of Pistoia's monumental buildings: the City Hall, the Basilica of the Madonna dell'Umiltà, the Cathedral and Baptistery and a series of carefully selected didactic panels and materials.

The didactic route includes the historic connections between the various phases in the development of the city as well as the various stages in the construction of the monuments; theoretical learning is therefore made easier thanks to concrete spatial representations.



The materials available in this section therefore also enable experimentation and information on the city through touch. This cognitive opportunity is also extended into the rooms of the Cathedral Museum next door.

### How to get there:

*by car, from the Pistoia motorway exit: keep to the right and continue as far as the roundabout. Take the third exit, going past the Infopoint structure and then turn left at the railway bridge. Turn right at the end of the road into Via IV Novembre; carry straight on here and then take Via Cellini, the second road on the left, to reach the free Cellini car park. A shuttle service leaves from here for the old city centre (tel. 800 277825, active from 6.40am to 8.30pm); get off at the bus stop in Piazza Garibaldi. From here take Via Panciatici on the left and continue straight on as far as Piazza del Duomo.*

*by train: all the destinations on the itinerary are a 10/15 minutes walk away from the station.*

**Info and reception:** Ancient Palazzo dei Vescovi - Piazza del Duomo - Pistoia - tel. 0573 369272 - 0573 369216 (telephone exchange of the Cassa di Risparmio di Pistoia e Pescia)

**Opening hours and prices:** Tues Thurs and Fri 10am-1pm and 3-5pm - guided visits on prior reservation for a max of 20 people - we advise visitors to contact the structure directly for prices

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## The city walls of Pistoia



For centuries the city walls of Pistoia clearly separated the city from the surrounding countryside and represented a particularly important architectural, urban and social element.

Pistoia's development over the centuries can in fact be traced by observing the concentric growth of its three rings of walls, parts of which can still be seen in the urban layout. Very few traces of the first circle, dating from the 8<sup>th</sup> century, remain today: it most probably ran along the inner side of the Via Pacini, Via Palestro, Via Cavour, Via Buozi, Via Curtatone e Montanara, Via Abbi Paziienza and Via delle Pappe of today. The second ring of walls was instead raised in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The new ring of walls ran from S. Maria Ripalta to the Hospital of Ceppo, went around Via Chiappettini and Via Trenfuni of today before proceeding to include the Churches of S. Bartolomeo and S. Pier Maggiore; it then returned westwards along the tracks of Corso Amendola, Fedi and Gramsci. Part of this ancient ring of walls can still be seen today in Via Borgo Al-

## The Fortress of S. Barbara



In 1331 the Florentines started work on the construction of a fortress, which had the function of controlling the city and preventing any attempts of internal rebellion from

the people of Pistoia. Only the great tower or "donjon" survives today of this first fortress, which was dedicated to St. Barnabus and probably built on a square plan. This ancient fortified complex was totally transformed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century at the wish of Cosimo I de' Medici. Designed by Nanni Ungaro, the new fortress was smaller in size and created to resist the shots of the newly invented firearms. It was given the name of Saint Barbara in honour of the Patron Saint of bombardiers. Cosimo I commissioned the architect and engineer Bernardo Buontalenti to consolidate and enlarge it once again in 1571. This new structure not only incorporated the earlier fortifications, but was also linked to the third ring of walls around the city. After having resisted the attacks

## We also advise visits to:

The suggestive historic villages of **Tizzana**, **Lucciano**, **Buriano**, **Montorio** and **Montemagno** in the hills of the Borough of Quarrata are well worth a visit. One of the most suggestive of these is the mediaeval village of Tizzana, probably founded in Roman times and of strategic importance in the 13<sup>th</sup> century when it was Pistoia's defensive stronghold against the Florentines.

# THE HISTORY OF PISTOIA AND ITS TERRITORY

banese. The last ring of walls, completed with towers, dates instead from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the architect Sanmarino was entrusted with the task of strengthening these walls so as to be able to resist the new techniques of war; this was when the bastions of Porta S. Marco, Porta al Borgo, Porta Lucchese (the city gates) and some intermediate posterns were carried out. Today much of this third ring of walls can still be seen along Viale Matteotti, Viale Arcadia and Via delle Mura urbane.

### How to get there:

*on foot, from Piazza del Duomo: the I.A.T. office of the "Abetone, Pistoia, Pistoia Mountains" Tourist Board stands on the ground floor of Ancient Palazzo dei Vescovi. We advise you to follow the site of the ancient city walls using the indications printed in the folding maps of the city that can be found free of charge at this office.*

**Info and reception:** Abetone, Pistoia, Pistoia Mountains Tourist Board - I.A.T. Pistoia - Via Roma, 1 - Pistoia tel. 0573 21622

**Opening hours and prices:** I.A.T. Pistoia - 9am-1pm and 3-6pm - as this is an open-air route it is advisable to visit these sites by day and in fine weather - entrance free

of Pope Urban (Barberini) VII's troops in 1643, the fortress gradually fell into disuse. The building was abandoned and dismantled between 1773 and 1774 at the orders of Pietro Leopoldo of Lorraine, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and successively converted into a military barracks, a military prison and recruiting office; last, but not least, it was where many young patriots from Pistoia were shot to death during the Nazi-Fascist repression.

### How to get there:

*on foot, from Piazza del Duomo: take Via Roma and carry straight on into Via Panciatichi to reach Piazza Garibaldi. Turn left here into Corso Fedi. Carry straight on and then take Via Porta Carratica on the right. From here take the first left into Via Campo Marzio and carry straight on as far as Piazza della Resistenza. Cross the park to reach the fortress (a 10 minutes' walk).*

**Info and reception:** Fortress of S. Barbara - Piazza della Resistenza - Pistoia - tel. 0573 24212

**Opening hours and prices:** open daily 8.15am-1.30pm closed on Mondays - as this is an open-air route it is advisable to visit these sites by day and in fine weather entrance free

