

PRATOTURISMO

Prato Area

Tuscany that lives

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VISITTUSCANY





Prato Area

TUSCANY THAT LIVES

Prato and its territory are an ideal destination for an authentic and exciting journey. A land rich in history, art, nature, spirituality, traditions, modernity, humanity and unforgettable flavors. Ancient people and famous people have traveled and lived in these places, they have left indelible traces both in the landscape and in the minds of the inhabitants. Tuscan people from Prato are

not like all the others, are the damned Tuscans of **Curzio Malaparte**: *“I am from Prato, I am content with being from Prato, and if I were not born in Prato I would not have come into the world. And I say this not because I am from Prato, and I want to smooth the chin to my Prato citizens, but because I think that the only fault of the Tuscans is that they are not all from Prato.”*

PRATO
CANTAGALLO
CARMIGNANO
MONTEMURLO
POGGIO A CAIANO
VAIANO
VERNIO





Prato inside the walls

ART AND HISTORY

With its wisely preserved and always lively historic center, Prato offers an original visit experience. The journey starts from the elegant and harmonious Church of Santo Stefano, the **Cathedral** of the city, embellished by the **Pulpit by Donatello**, a true architectural gem. Inside you can admire the cycle of **frescoes by Filippo Lippi** and the **Chapel of the Sacred Belt of the Madonna**, which houses the relic to which the people of Prato are particularly devoted. The itinerary continues with a visit to the **Cathedral Museum** and its rich collection, up to the refined and lively **Piazza del Comune**, overlo-

oked by **Palazzo Pretorio**, an imposing medieval building among the most original in Italy, which houses the homonymous museum. The journey through history proceeds and arrives in the large **Piazza delle Carceri** on which stands the imposing **Emperor's Castle**, the only evidence of Swabian architecture in central-northern Italy. On the same square is the harmonious **Basilica of Santa Maria delle Carceri**, designed by Giuliano da Sangallo, an architectural masterpiece of the early Renaissance. Do not miss a visit to the Churches of **San Francesco** and **San Domenico**, both of considerable artistic interest.

Through the alleys and squares you reach the **Textile Museum**, an expression of the city's textile history and one of the major European institutions dedicated to enhance the ancient and contemporary fabrics. The Museum is housed in the former Campolmi Factory, the largest industrial complex of nineteenth-century origin existing inside the walls, that today is a multifunctional space and cultural center always animated by events, workshops, conventions and exhibitions.





Prato outside the walls

CONTEMPORANEITY AND INFLUENCES

O utside the medieval walls of the city - well preserved - is a contemporary and dynamic city, full of surprises, rich in buildings of industrial archeology, contemporary art installations, works of street art and museum-parks. An itinerary that reaches its peak in the **Luigi Pecci Center for Contemporary Art**, re-

cently renovated and enlarged in its surprising structure that resembles an enormous flying saucer. Contemporary art has landed in Prato finding its most fertile land in this area. The Pecci Center is active at international level with a wide program of exhibitions and events in addition to the important permanent collection.

Visiting Prato is a journey in the journey, a city that has always been open to discussion and hospitality, hosts many foreign communities among which the most numerous of these is the Chinese one, the largest in Italy. In Via Pistoiese and its dense network of streets you meet faces, flavors, colors and sounds of the Land of the Dragon. Between January and February, **Chinese New Year** is celebrated with feasts and events that color the city.





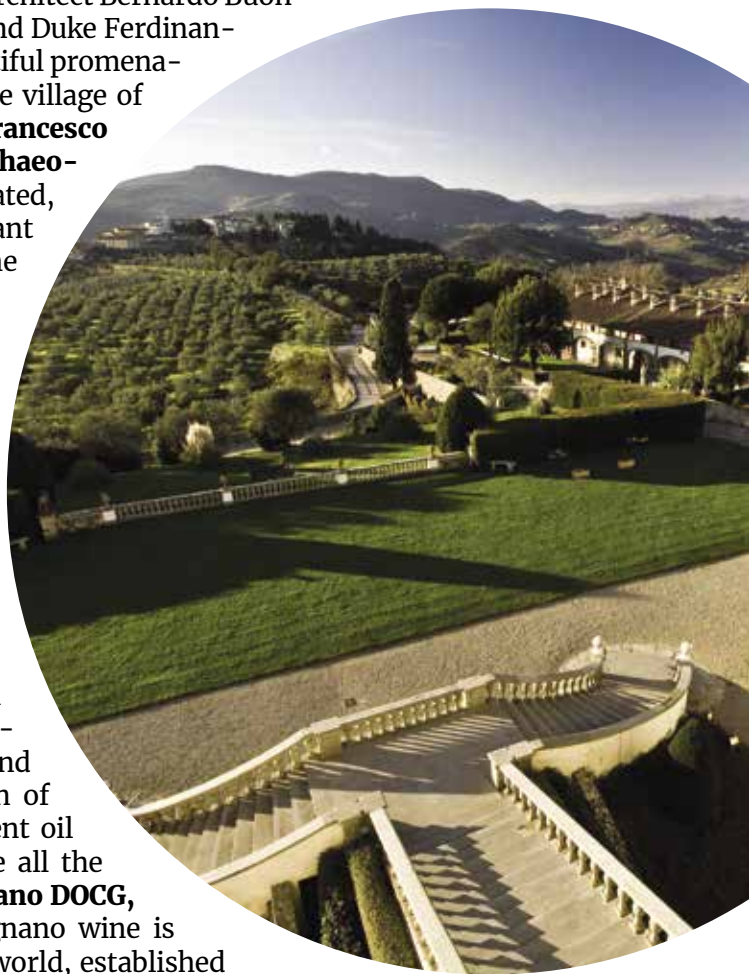
Poggio a Caiano and Carmignano

MEDICEAN MUNICIPALITIES

Leaving Prato heading south, flanking the large park of the **Cascine di Tavola**, a beautiful agricultural estate built by Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1477, we reach the Municipality of Poggio a Caiano with its splendid **Medici Villa “Ambra”**, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Villa, commissioned by Lorenzo de’ Medici to Giuliano da Sangallo, was enriched by the works by Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, Franciabigio and Allori. It was the Medici summer residence and the scene of important events in their dynastic history. The

Villa is home to the **Museum of Still Life** which exhibits paintings permanently, from the late sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, among which numerous works by Bartolomeo Bimbi depicting the fruits produced in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Works that are still the subject of historical and botanical researches by various universities for the recovery of disappeared fruit and vegetable varieties. Do not miss a visit to the beautiful gardens of the Villa which host numerous and rare plant species together with the historic terracotta statues.

The journey continues towards Carmignano, where it is possible to admire the **Visitation by Pontormo**, a masterpiece and emblematic work of the first Florentine mannerism, kept in the Parish Church of San Francesco and San Michele. An exciting landscape of vineyards and rolling hills leads to Artimino, a village that houses the wonderful **Medici Villa La Ferdinanda**, also known as the one with One Hundred Chimneys, Unesco World Heritage, built by the architect Bernardo Buontalenti by order of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de 'Medici. A beautiful promenade joins the Villa to the village of Artimino, where the **Francesco Nicosia Etruscan Archaeological Museum** is located, which houses important Etruscan finds from the **Montefortini Tumulus**, the **Necropolis of Prato Rosello** and the **archaeological area of Pietramarina**. Nearby numerous historic sites such as the Romanesque Parish Church of S. Leonardo (10th century) and the splendid Abbey of S. Giusto al Pinone, are worth a stop. The landscape denotes the strong wine and olive growing vocation of the area where excellent oil is produced and above all the fine wines of **Carmignano DOCG, DOC and IGT**. Carmignano wine is the oldest DOC in the world, established in 1716 by the Grand Duke Cosimo III de 'Medici. Among vineyards and olive groves stand out the imposing fig trees that allow the production of the famous Carmignano dried figs every year.



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Vaiano, Vernio and Cantagallo

BISENZIO VALLEY

The itinerary proceeds in a suggestive Tuscany, between mountains, valleys and woods; it is Bisenzio Valley, with the municipalities of Cantagallo, Vaiano and Vernio. A journey that winds from the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines to the Prato plain. An ideal place for walks, hiking, horse riding, mountain biking and relaxing gastronomic stops. The Valley is crossed by the **Route of Wool and Silk**, a path that connects the cities of Bologna and Prato and allows to admire a wild and unspoiled nature. A unique naturalistic experience is the limestone **Calvana** massif, with

its rounded peaks, that offers the suggestion of a karst environment, rich in caves, sinkholes, springs and extensive grasslands that have numerous spectacular panoramic points. The Bisenzio Valley in the Middle Ages was a border area marked by the system of fortifications that has monumental remains in the **Cerbaia Fortress** in Cantagallo and in the **Vernio Fortress**. In the area there are churches of considerable artistic value such as the **Abbey of Vaiano** with the adjoining Museum of Sacred Art and further north the **Montepiano Abbey** in Vernio.

Of medieval origins, the Municipality of Cantagallo is the gateway to the **Acquerino Cantagallo Nature Reserve**, an important naturalistic heritage where there are magnificent secular chestnut groves, real protected natural monuments. From the uncontaminated woods the route continues to the discovery of contemporary art with a stop in the small village of **Luicciana**, a hamlet of Cantagallo, which has been welcoming for years in the squares and on the facades of houses, frescoes, installations and sculptures by contemporary artists, giving life to a real outdoor museum. The Valley also preserves many testimonies of industrial archeology such as the former Meucci factory in Vernio, today the **Mumat Museum - Textile Machinery Museum**, which tells the story of the textile industry in the valley and the Factory-City in the village of La Briglia in Vaiano.





Montemurlo

VILLAS AND NATURE

The journey continues with destination Montemurlo where the beautiful and austere **Fortress** of the XIV century stands. In the main square of the charming historic village is the Parish Church of San Giovanni Decollato, which preserves remarkable historical and artistic features, including the **Madonna with Child by Francesco Granacci**. Montemurlo is known for the numerous **villas and farms**

that belonged to noble and powerful Florentine families such as the Pucci, Baldi, Ridolfi, Gucci and Pazzi. Among the most beautiful ones: the Villa del Barone, Villa Strozzi in Bagnolo, which today houses the farm where the famous Pinot Noir is produced, Villa Giamari and Villa Pazzi al Parugiano, owned by the Pazzi family. The Villas can be visited on special occasions and by reservation, but their architecture is also appreciable from the outside.

A short walk from the center of Montemurlo is the **protected natural area of Monteferrato**, a true oasis of biodiversity, where the “serpentine”, known as the green marble of Prato, once was mined and stood on the facades of the most important religious monuments of Tuscany and not only. Thanks to the particular composition of the Monteferrato soil, numerous varieties of wild orchids have developed; they are unique of their kind.





A land to be tasted

Prato and its territory offer an extraordinary and unique taste experience. An obligatory stop in the most traditional, innovative and experimental paradise for gourmands. The pastry chefs of Prato in fact win national and international awards and recognitions every year for their brilliant and innovative creations. An ever new pastry that finds its strength and origin in traditional desserts such as **Prato biscuits**, **Vernio zuccherini biscuits**, **Carmignano amaretti biscuits**, chestnut flour cakes from the **Bisenzio valley**, **Mantovana cake** and the famous **Prato Peach**. And then there is the

bread, the **Prato bozza** which, especially if made with **GranPrato flour**, the local cereal production chain, is beautifully crunchy and fragrant and goes perfectly with the tasty Prato cuisine. Perfect in combination with a unique and ancient product, the delicious **Prato Mortadella IGP**, a cured meat enriched by the famous **Alchermes liquor**. The area also produces an excellent wine, a veritable oenological jewel that local companies have been producing with care and passion for generations. The wines are **Carmignano DOCG**, **Barco Reale DOC**, **Vin Ruspo DOC**, **Vin Santo del Chianti DOC**, **Vin Santo di Carmignano** and **Pinot Noir**, born from a brilliant mistake.

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Also excellent **extra virgin olive oil** is produced on the beautiful hills of Montalbano, Filettole, Montemurlo and Vaiano and which is a fundamental ingredient of local cuisine. The taste Genius loci has fed in recent years

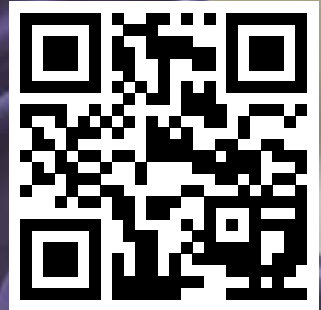
the initiative of many young people, who have started the production of excellent **craft beers**, many of which have already been nationally awarded. Another jewel is **Prato Vermouth**, a liquor dating back to 1750, one of the oldest in Italy, today a fundamental ingredient of new and surprising drinks created by the young and talented bartenders of the city. Do not miss a tour in the restaurants of Prato, the right way to discover all the tastes of the territory, from traditional dishes, wisely kept and preserved from historic places, to the most innovative and experimental cuisine created by skilled chefs able to surprise. The appointment to know the protagonists and taste the local products is **eatPRATO**, the festival of Prato taste, which is getting richer and more awaited every year.





**How to get here,
where to sleep,
where to eat,
parks, gardens,
nature reserves,
routes, events...**

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Tuscany



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The tourist area of Prato is made up of the municipalities of:
Prato, Cantagallo, Carmignano, Montemurlo,
Poggio a Caiano, Vaiano, Vernio

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