



# CITY WALK

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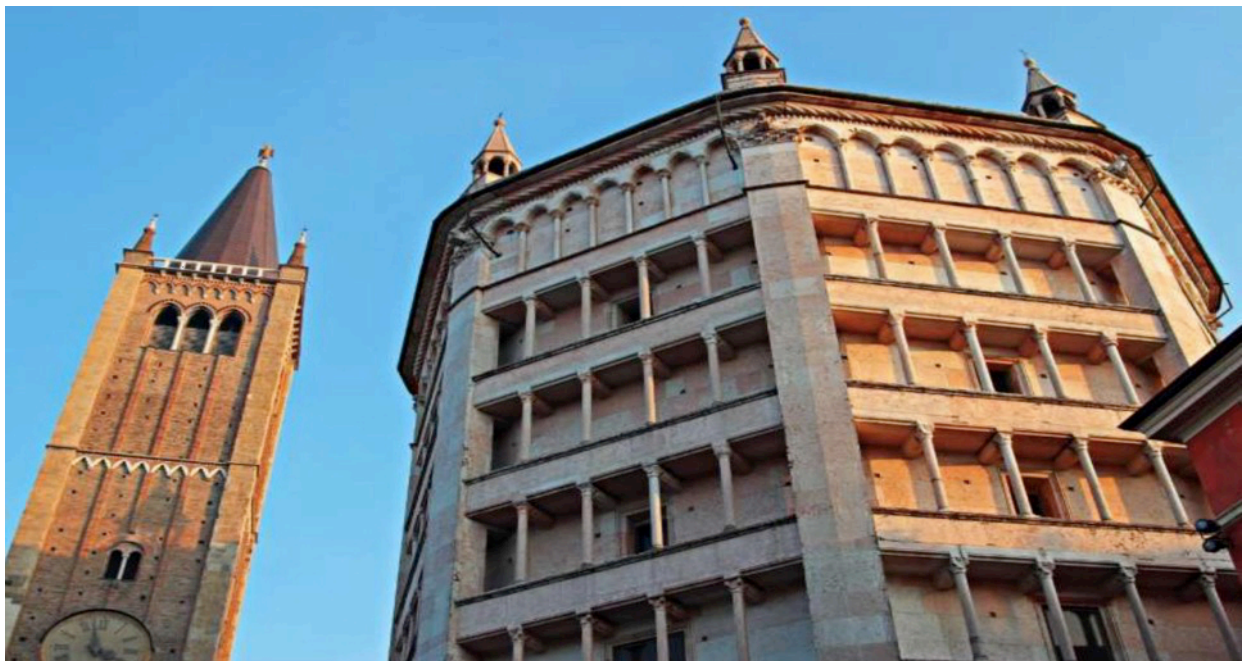
# PARMA



Those who say Parma say Parmesan cheese and Parma ham. Of course we will soon tell more about these delicacies, but the city itself first deserves all the attention. Because in addition to the culinary heritage, Parma can be proud of a fascinating history, which has made the city into a vibrant, atmospheric and sometimes even fairytale place. Particularly under the rule of the Farnese family, Parma grew into a stately city, with beautiful houses and monuments, artists of level and brilliant music. Fortunately, a large part of the atmosphere - and of the cultural heritage - has been preserved, so that you feel back in time in a few centuries.

On the previous picture you see, for example, the campanile, the bell tower, the Duomo, and the magnificent Battistery, Parma's great pride. Until 1606, Parma also had an eye-catching tower, with many different layers that seemed to have sprung from the fantasy of a dreamy artist, who seemed to have shaken some other frills out of his sleeve at each layer. Yet the tower is really built. With its more than one hundred and thirty meters he was a symbol for the city of Parma. That must have been an impressive sight. Perhaps the enormous height was calculated too optimistically by the artist who designed the tower, because in 1606 the tower collapsed. Unfortunately he has never been rebuilt, but fortunately Parma still houses enough other eye-catchers that you will discover during this City Walk, from the pastel-colored

Do you want to stay in Parma? A stylishly decorated room awaits you at B & B Al Battistero d'Oro, with a bed that looks so attractive that you can book a one-night trip to dreamland.



Where in Parma?

The starting point of this walk is Piazza Duomo. Before you admire the grand monuments of this square, sit down at TCafe in the beautiful red Palazzo Dalla Rosa Prati, on the corner of Piazza



Duomo and Strada del Duomo. While enjoying a cappuccino or espresso, you can have the first sight of the Duomo and the Battistero, the baptistry, which can be found at the square, work for you.

The Baptistry is the striking octagonal building with turrets that has been decorating the city since 1307. If you see the castle-like structure, you would rather use a different function. You do not have to be a child to dream about rooms full of princes and princesses, or about Rapunzel who lets her long blond braids hang down the galleries.

Walk around the baptistry. The different doors all have a different decoration and all around you can see anthropomorphic figures in an almost uninterrupted circle, from beautifully developed aquatic animals (with waves) to an almost extraterrestrial being. You can also see the 'knee print of the devil'. The devil would have been furious and wanted to knock the baptistry from his place.

From the outside it is already a beautiful whole, but inside the baptistry is even more beautiful, with a beautifully painted dome with the months of the year, the four seasons and the constellations below. It is all the work of Benedetto Antelami. He worked out everything in detail, so that you can gaze with a lifted head all the time over your head. Just studying all months of the year is just as



sweet. Antelami symbolized each month with a previously important task that was carried out in that month. For example, you recognize September by picking the grapes, chopping the wood on December, January by slaughtering the pig and by June bringing in the wheat. Under the months, the corresponding constellation is always displayed.

Although the exterior of Parma's cathedral looks somewhat sober, you are awaiting a true spectacle of Renaissance art and Romanesque architecture. You hardly know where to look, such a large part of the church is covered with colorful frescoes. The most famous fresco can be found in the dome of the cathedral. It is by the hand of Antonio Correggio, who painted Mary at Heaven. His Assunzione della Vergine lets you look up breathlessly at the light, at Maria, at the swirling mass of angels and cherubs ...

You can imagine how impressive his work must have been at the unveiling. Correggio had therefore not opted for an easy way to paint the dome. According to Vasari, himself a painter, but above all biographer of the great artists of the Renaissance, Correggio was a perfectionist. Antonio Allegri, as he was baptized, was not so allegro, cheerful, but rather sober and modest. Sometimes a bit melancholy and turned in on itself. He also did not get his nickname because of a cheerful occasion or a striking external characteristic. Correggio is simply the village where he was born, about forty kilometers from Parma. Only at the age of thirty did Correggio move to Parma. He tried out new things, made designs that had never been shown before. That quickly earned him appreciation. An art historian even seems to have called him 'a master fallen from heaven', and Stendhal, who went out of his way in Florence after seeing all the beauty, was shaken to tears by Correggio's dome work in the Cathedral of Parma.

However, his clients thought the cup facade was just 'a frog pond'. They were furious and sent Correggio out of the alley after the dome had been completed - while he had also had to paint the rest of the church ... The priests of the Duomo felt that Maria was difficult to identify between all the other figures. And why does Jesus come out of the sky so inelegantly? Correggio was heavily insulted and left, with the money he had received for the decoration of the whole church. But not after he left a special souvenir: just above the altar is an angel with his legs wide. The one behind the altar has a full view of the noble parts of the little angel, which seems to be able to go on the altar. For example, Correggio raised a proverbial middle finger to the priests of the cathedral who could not appreciate his work. That must have hurt, especially because Correggio really was a great artist. Although he was far ahead of his time, many of his contemporaries were more than able to appreciate his work.

They saw the overwhelming beauty of the swirling vortex of colors, which immediately conjured up drama and spectacle. After all, it was not an everyday occurrence, Mary's assumption of the heavens, and Correggio really made a dramatic representation of it, with the apostles so impressed that they call and encourage each other to watch the event.

After Correggio's departure, the church wanted to have the dome painting covered immediately. Fortunately, the Venetian painter Titian, who was already quite familiar at the time, managed to put

a stop to it. He, like many other artists, came to look at Correggio's dome. He was lyrical and said to the priest of the cathedral: 'If you would turn the dome and fill it completely with golden coins, to the edge, you still have not paid enough for a masterpiece when I see it here with my own eyes. '

An extra tip if you want to see even more of Correggio's beauty: also in the San Giovanni Evangelista behind the Duomo is the work of art in the dome of Correggio's hand.

From the Piazza Duomo, take the Strada al Duomo, the street between the red Palazzo Dalla Rosa Prati and the Palazzo Vescovile. Parma has a number of beautiful shops with history, such as Libreria Fiaccadori (at number 8a) and Oliva Stampe Antiche (at number 1). Turn right on the Strada Cavour, walk in the direction of the Torre di San Paolo and turn left before the tower onto the Strada Macedonio Melloni. On your left you will see Palazzo di Riserva (at number 4a), the former residence of Duke Ferdinand of Bourbon. Now the Società di Lettura & Conversazione is located there. At number 4c you will find the post office of Parma. Be sure to take a look inside; the counters are surrounded by colorful decorations in Art Nouveau style.

On your right you will find the Monastero di San Paolo (at number 3a), a former women's monastery where you can admire the beautifully painted Camera di San Paolo. The frescoes are by Correggio, who started here in 1519 by order of Mother Superior Giovanna Piacenza. She wanted to see her private rooms decorated and Correggio devoted herself to a pergola with little angels spitting through the greenery. Diana, the goddess of the hunt, is on the mantelpiece.

The Camera di San Paolo is open from Monday to Saturday from 13.10 to 18.50. A ticket costs € 2, - (children up to the age of 18 may enter for free).

The former San Paolo monastery is also the home of Il Castello dei Burattini, 'the castle of the puppets'. Here you will find one of the largest collections of theater puppets in all of Italy. The collection was compiled by doll collector Italo Ferrari and his son Giordano, who, in addition to puppets, also collected plays, scripts and sets for puppet theater. Italo Ferrari also made dolls himself and wrote special theater pieces for his creations, which he performed together with his relatives. Giordano put the dolls in a museum, which is officially called the Museo Giordano Ferrari, but which everyone in Parma knows as Il Castello dei Burattini. The collection of the puppet castle is impressive, with around five hundred puppets, some of wood, others of papier-mâché or of rubber. They wear beautiful costumes, all made by hand.

The Castello dei Burattini is open on weekdays (except Tuesdays) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., on weekends from 10.30 am to 6.30 p.m. Entrance is free.

Continue along the Strada Macedonio Melloni, cross the Strada Giuseppe Garibaldi and walk through the small park to the Palazzo della Pilotta. This palazzo owes its name to the fact that people used to play the ball pelote in the courtyard. Today it houses the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, the Pinacoteca Nazionale and the Teatro Farnese.

In the pinacoteca you stand face to face with masterpieces by Correggio, Parmigianino, Fra Angelico, Van Dyck and Canaletto. Beautiful is also the Marie Louise, the second wife of Napoleon, immortalized in marble by Canova. She refused to go with Napoleon to Elba and instead traveled to Parma in 1817, where she spent a lot of time. One of the most beautiful canvases in the Pinacoteca Nazionale is Parmigianino's *Schiava turca*. Parmigianino, which means so much as 'the little Parmesan', is a famous artist whose life is inextricably linked to Parma. He was born on January 11, 1503 as Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola. He only got his nickname when he was apprenticed to Correggio and had an exceptional talent for painting. Unfortunately, we do not know very much about this talented Parmesan. With his complicated poses and almost unnatural twists, he was one of the most important painters of Mannerism. He was less happy in his private life. He seems to have endured deep psychological crises before he died at the age of thirty-seven.

In the Palazzo della Pilotta you will also find the oldest theater of Parma: the Teatro Farnese. The theater was completed in 1618, just in time for the visit of the Tuscan Grand Duke Cosimo de' Medici to Parma. Ranuccio Farnese, who was in charge of it at that time in Parma, wanted to impress Cosimo, as he wanted to introduce his son Edoardo as a marriage candidate for Cosimo's daughter Margherita. He did this, among other things, by having a new theater built, which was entirely made of wood and, moreover, was the first theater in the world to have the opportunity to change scenery. The theater had to be realized within a year. A record time in that time, but it worked. Unfortunately in vain, because Cosimo de' Medici had to cancel his visit to Parma because of illness. Luckily Farnese was able to ensure that his son could marry Margherita, but more importantly for Parma, he was perhaps the asset of the very beautiful theater. After extensive damage during the Second World War everything has been restored to its former glory as much as possible, so that the theater is still in use every now and then.

Another tip for the Palazzo della Pilotta: take a look at the Biblioteca Palatina, full of old books and reference books. Would you rather blow out in the green? Then take a step back from this route and walk over the Ponte Giuseppe Verdi to the Parco Ducale, which lies just on the other side of the Torrente, the river that runs through Parma. At Il Chiosco you will be ready for a caffè or a refreshing granita (shaved ice).





From the Palazzo della Pilotta you walk along Piazza della Pace to the Strada Garibaldi. On the site of this square once stood the palazzo of Marie Louise, which unfortunately was razed to the ground during the Second World War. A water feature now follows the contours of the building and where pillars once stood are now poplars. Impressive!

On the other side of the Strada Garibaldi you can visit the Museo Glauco Lombardi, where a beautiful souvenir of Marie Louise is kept. The case with inkwell, pens and stationery could almost be handled by her again. In the lid she kept the letters she received herself. Her deepest thoughts can also be found in the museum, in her travel diary, and on the piano is a work by Verdi, dedicated to Marie Louise.

You can also skip the museum and immediately turn right when you come from Piazza della Pace. If you fancy something tasty, you can get a creamy gelato at Ciacco (Strada Garibaldi 11). Admire the façade of the Teatro Regio while licking your ice cream. This theater, the great pride of Parma, was built for Marie Louise. When she arrived in Parma, the city did not yet have as much grandeur as now. Marie Louise was bored and therefore decided to have the plan built on a theater so that she could go out at night. Construction began in 1821. Eight years later, in 1829, the theater was festively opened, with a performance by Bellini's Zaira. One of the loyal visitors to the theater was Giuseppe Verdi. In honor of him, a grand theater festival is held every year in October in the Teatro Regio, the Festival Verdi.

Slightly further on the other side of the Strada Garibaldi is the Santa Maria della Steccata. In this church you might at first think that you have encountered a Correggio, just like in the Duomo. The figures that reach the sky in this dome, however, are painted by Bernardino Gatti. The work has much in common with that of Correggio, but sometimes lacks the fine elaboration and life-like details that Correggio was able to reproduce so perfectly. The Santa Maria della Steccata is also the final resting place of the noble Farnese family, which led to the Duchy until 1731. Carlos Hugo Bourbon de Parma, former husband of Princess Irene, is also buried there.

Cross Piazza della Steccata, next to the church, with a monument to Parmigianino, and walk past the beautiful display windows of Cappelleria Vender, a historic hat shop, to Piazza Garibaldi. Giuseppe Garibaldi, one of the protagonists during the Italian unification, stands at the center of this square. Behind him, the baroque tower of the Palazzo del Governatore extends skyward, with under the tower, on the façade, a large meridian and a beautiful statue of the Virgin Mary. A little lower, almost on the corner of Piazza Garibaldi and the Strada Cavour, you can see the 'mattone di Parma', a measure that was used in Parma in bygone times.

From Piazza Garibaldi take the Strada della Repubblica, a wide street with many shops. On your left (at number 2g) you will find Parma Color Viola, where it smells deliciously at the Parma Violet, the flower of Marie Louise which is now symbolic of the city. Bring a touch of Parma? With a bar of soap or a bottle of perfume, you can smell the scent of this purple flower every day at home. Follow another part of the Strada della Repubblica and take the Borgo Giacomo Tommasini on your right, with original shops. At Rural (at number 7) you can for example go for all kinds of goodies from the surroundings, from pasta to prosciutto. At number 8 is a pop-up store of the Milan Fornasetti. After this shop, turn left onto Via Nazario Sauro for even more small but fine shops. Be sure to step in at Cartasogno (number 23a). Nice appetite? At Bread (at number 18) they make buonissimi sandwiches, with original names and generous fillings. For fresh pasta (also to take away) go to Tortelli & Co (at number 37).

Do you have a big appetite? Then take a detour off the route and keep following the Via Nazario Sauro. At the end of this street, cross the Strada XXII Luglio and continue on the Borgo Onorato. At number 12 you will find Enoteca Da Lino, a cozy wine bar where you can enjoy huge planks with cold cuts alongside a glass of wine, with pancetta, culaccia, stroghino, mortadella and more delicious types of meat in addition to the famous Parma ham. Da Lino is open from Tuesday to Sunday for



lunch from noon to 3 p.m. From Monday to Sunday you can also go for dinner, from 6.30 pm to 11 pm (on Monday from 7 pm).

From the Via Nazario Sauro, turn right into Borgo San Silvestro and walk past Piazzale San Lorenzo. Admire the colorful facades in this quiet part of the city. Take the Borgo Emmo Valla on the right, which after the intersection with the Borgo Giacomo Tommasini turns into the Borgo Antini. Follow the Borgo Antini until the Strada Farini and turn right here.

The Strada Farini is a nice shopping street, with in between a number of coffee bars and ice cream parlors (such as Cremeria Emilia at number 29). Trattoria del Tribunale is highly recommended for the big appetite. You will find this traditional trattoria with torta fritta (fried dough flakes) and tortelli (the stuffed pasta characteristic of Parma and surroundings) on the menu, in the Vicolo Politi, a side street of the Strada Farini.

On the corner with Via Ferdinando Maestri you will not only find a colorful fruit and vegetable shop, but also a special piece of Parmesan history. This shop is located in the Torre del Pidocchio, the 'Tower of the Luis'. In the past, this tower was part of the city gate and farmers who came from outside had to wash themselves well, so that they could enter the market clean and louse-free. On the side of the tower you can still see a picture of a louse, just around the corner in Via Ferdinando Maestri. Can you find him?

Continue along the Strada Farini until you reach Piazza Garibaldi again, with Portici del Grano on your right. Cross the square, cross the Strada della Repubblica and take on your left the Borgo Sant'Ambrogio (Google Maps calls this the Vicolo Sant'Ambrogio). At number 2, on your left, you will find Pepèn, where since 1953 the tastiest panini of Parma has been made. At least taste the carciofo (with ricotta, spinach, artichoke and Parmesan cheese), but also try the local specialty: a tartina (piece of bread) with horse tartare and spicy pesto. There has been a long line of locals every afternoon since the opening. You can not wish for a better guarantee for good food, although this does mean that you sometimes have to be patient before you can satisfy your hunger. Slow street food, but definitely worth the wait!

Continue on the Borgo Sant'Ambrogio, turn left and walk via the Piazza Cesare Battisti to the Strada Cavour. Turn right and follow the Strada Cavour. At Pasticceria Provinciali (at number 23) you can go for a sweet pastry, at Gelateria Novecento (at number 24) you can get a nice ice cream. Then turn right and follow the Strada al Duomo to Piazza Duomo. Here we conclude the route with a golden restaurant tip. To the left of the Duomo, on the corner of Piazza Duomo, the Strada del Consorzio and the Borgo XX Marzo is Ristorante Angiol d'Oro (with an entrance just on the other side, on Via Scutellari 1). A must is the Carbonara all'Angiol d'Oro, a kind of do-it-yourself carbonara with a beautiful whole egg yolk that you must mix through the spaghetti yourself.





## MUSEI DEL CIBO

### GOLDEN CHEESE & AWARDED HAM

Of course you have to taste Parmesan cheese and Prosciutto di Parma, Parma ham in Parma. You can of course do so at one of the many culinary addresses in the city, but those who want to know more can also go on the hills around Parma.

Alice from ExploraEmilia is happy to take you to one of the family businesses where cheese or ham has been made for generations.

Around Parma you can also indulge your culinary heart at the Musei del Cibo, first and foremost the Museo del Parmigiano, where you can learn all about this precious cheese. There is also a museum for the Prosciutto di Parma. Has your hunger not been satisfied enough? There is also a pasta and wine museum, a museum for the salame di Felino, a special sausage from Felino, and a museum with the tomato in the leading role.

We will tell you more about the two main products from the Parmesan cuisine: the Parmigiano Reggiano and the Prosciutto di Parma. The first production of Parmigiano Reggiano, Parmesan cheese, probably dates back to around 1200. In Bocaccio's Decamarone - written in 1348 - there is already talk of 'a mountain of grated Parmesan cheese, from where maccheroni and ravioli, cooked in capon broth, roll down' .

Since 1934, the production of the parmigiano has been strictly supervised. That year, the Consorzio del Formaggio Parmigiano Reggiano was founded, an institute that oversees the quality of the cheeses. The Consorzio unites around five hundred small cheese farmers, producing 2.9 million cheeses annually. All these Parmesans have been awarded the DOP label (Denominazione di Origine Protetta) since 1996, which means that they are made according to traditional recipes, with milk from freely circulating cows that have only eaten grass and hay in pastures in a defined area (the provinces). Parma, Modena, Reggio Emilia and a number of smaller areas in the provinces of Mantova and Bologna).

For one Parmesan cheese, weighing about thirty-eight kilos, no less than six hundred liters of milk are needed! You can imagine that a lot of cows have to be milked for that ...



In the case of cheese making, the same production techniques and the same artisanal care must of course always be used - otherwise the cheese will not receive a quality mark and will be worth much and much less. This care is pretty intensive, especially when you consider that a Parmesan cheese is first put in a brine bath for a small month (with salt from the Mediterranean Sea) and then, after drying, has to mature one and a half to two years. And do not think now that the farmers do not have to worry about it anymore. No, every cheese must be turned once every four days during the first half of the year, and then every week and a half. So there is a huge investment on the shelf among cheese farmers.

The fact that the cheese is so valuable is also apparent from the fact that the Italian bank Credito Emiliano manages, in addition to vaults full of gold, safes full of Parmesan cheese. Since the cheese has a fixed value, he may even serve as collateral for a loan. Credito Emiliano owns over one hundred and thirty million euros in Parmesan cheese, spread over some 440,000 cheeses. That a mountain of Parmesan would be worth so much, Bocaccio would not have dared to dream of.

In addition to the cheese, the famous ham Parma's is also very proud. Prosciutto di Parma is made from the rear sirloin of the pig. In addition, salt, air and - above all - a lot of time is used. Furthermore, nothing is added to the meat, no spices, no sugar - all pure nature.

The process from hind leg to famous ham starts with the cutting away of some pieces of skin and fat, giving the ham the characteristic 'chicken leg' shape. Then the meat is rubbed with sea salt. That is a careful task, which listens closely. The ham has to absorb exactly enough salt for preservation. At the end of the process, the ham has lost more than a quarter of its weight in moisture, causing the taste to concentrate. The meat becomes soft and the characteristic flavor and aromas of Parma ham come forward.

After salting, the ham is placed in a cold store with a humidity of eighty percent for about a week. After this initial cooling, excess salt is removed, after which the ham is given a second layer of salt, which remains for about two weeks. By adjusting the temperature and humidity of the storage room, the salt master ensures that the hams absorb exactly enough salt for the refined, slightly sweet taste. Then the hams hang for seventy days in a refrigerated room with a regulated temperature.

Then they are moved to well-ventilated areas with large windows, which are opened when the outside temperature and the humidity are favorable. This period, in which the hams enjoy the aromatic breezes, is crucial for the development of the taste of the Parma ham. The air in the gently



rolling hills around Parma is unique: dry, but with an aromatic breeze from the Apennines, creating perfect conditions for drying the hams. This is the big secret of the quality of the ham!

At the end of this phase, which lasts at least three months, the surface of the ham is dried and hardened. For the final drying, the dried-on exterior of the ham is first softened with a mixture of lard and salt. Finally, the ham is moved to a dark, basement-like room. Here the hams are dried for at least another year, some even thirty months. To eventually almost melt on your tongue ...

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