

## Verona walking tour

### START

- \* To get to the start of the walk, turn right out of hotel and Walk north-east on Via Guglielmo Marconi towards Via Luigia Poloni (350m)
  - \* Keep walking straight ahead and continue onto Via Daniele Manin (150m)
  - \* When you reach the end of the road, cross over and just off the crossroads you'll see Vicolo Miracoli on the left.
  - \* Turn left onto Vicolo Miracoli (120m)
  - \* Turn right onto Corso Cavour (5m)
  - \* Turn left (37m)
- \* Now you should be at the Gavia Arch where we will begin. (think arc de triomphe)

### 1. **Archo Gavia** – half of the 1st Century A.D.

Around mid 1st century A.D., The Arch was built to honour several members of the Gens Gavia, an illustrious family that may have been of Veronese origin. The site was chosen with care, on a road of great transit, the Postumia, at the margins of the plateau where the city could develop: the precise point where it rose is marked by a grey marble rectangle that is visible from the roadway. During medieval times the arch became a city gate and included the scala walls and Clock Tower of Castelvecchio. The entire base of the arch is under the level of the roadway, except for a corner that is visible from the castle moat. The Arch was one of the Roman monuments of Verona that was most widely studied and admired during the renaissance. In 1805, the French Military Engineers decreed its demolition, to improve the translatability of the course of military mule trains. The Arch stones lay for decades piled first in Citadella Square and later under the Arena arches. Finally the Arch was rebuilt, with its authentic pieces, in 1932, alongside Castel vecchio and facing the Adige, not far from its original location.

The construction is entirely of white Veronese stone, probably from the Valpolicella. Despite its vicissitudes, the Arch is one of the rare surviving examples, in our territory, of a meaningful type of construction in the history of Roman architecture. Although the arch was often cited in archaeological

literature and has been the subject of specific study, its architectural form and dating have continued to fuel lively discussion among scholars.

With the arch behind you, turn right and walk along the Corso Cavour until you reach a large old archway built into the wall (pedestrians only).

Walk under the arch and along the path to the bridge.

## 2. Ponte di Castelvecchio

Scaliger Bridge, also called the Ponte di Castelvecchio, is celebrated by historians as "the most audacious and wondrous works of the Middle Ages in Verona." Completed within three years, almost certainly between 1354 and 1356, was built by order of the Cangrande, which aims to ensure its stronghold on the river rising a separate escape (od'accoglienza relief) to the Tyrol, where his son Louis of Bavaria reigned. The name of the architect is shrouded in mystery. A document of 1495 indicates the Bevilacqua, who designed the castle may have designed the bridge. Some scholars have suggested instead, on the basis of the many similarities between the bridge of Castelvecchio and the Ship, a common authorship, attributed to John Ferrara and James of Gozo, but no documents support this theory.

The strength of the bridge allowed it to remain virtually intact through five centuries of history and the most severe spate. In 1802, after the Peace of Luneville, the French beat the tower, which stood on the left side of the river and removed or a large part of walled battlements. In 1824 they proceeded to the restoration of the main pylon, partially eroded by the course of the current, while ten years later the walls were restored and reopened the roads.

For the majestic medieval structure the end would come the evening of April 25, 1945, by the explosion of German mines. The reconstruction works began in February 1949, and was completed in 1951. The rebuilt bridge is very faithful to the original.

Whoever originally designed the bridge did a wonderful job. Prodigiously daring for the times, it was the right arch, with a span of nearly fifty feet, twenty-nine against twenty-four of the other two. The bottom of the article, up to four meters above the current ordinary was of white marble and red, the remainder of terracotta bricks. Also the two massive pylons. The major was enriched by fifteen Corinthian capitals and fragments of Roman bas-reliefs, whose presence has been, in past centuries, confirming the seniority held on site of a Roman bridge: this hypothesis, however, has never been confirmed in any feedback objective, neither archaeological nor documentary.

The bridge, whose internal path was longer than four hundred feet, and off more than seven, was equipped with battlements equipped with trenches, with slits in the pylons. At its ends, finally, two high towers.

Now we head to the main gate. Once you're back on the main road walk north-east on Corso Castelvechio towards Via Roma (8m)

Turn left onto Via Roma (290m)

Turn right onto Corso Porta Nuova (30m)

### 3. I portoni della brà – verona main gate and the clock of the count nogarola

You should be standing on the corner of Via dei Mutilati and Corso Porta Nuova. Ahead of you are two enormous arches looming over the street. When you're ready, make your way under the arches, keeping the road on your right.



Constructed by the Visconti family, 1389 – 1402 a.C., built along the medieval walls of Verona to connect the ancient countryside to the square. cross the border. Make your way under the arches, then stop and look to your left. Here you find the bust of the man who made Verona world-famous. It's Shakespeare.

The plaque next to him contains some sentences from his love tragedy Romeo and Juliet. Yes, we must recognise that Shakespeare played an important role in this city although he never actually visited Verona. He really never set a foot outside of England.

On the right of the door, there is the Museo Maffeiano.

Once you've read the plaque, continue straight, crossing the pedestrian crossing ahead, keeping the road on your right.



#### 4. **Piazza Bra**

Keep going straight.

You're now in Piazza Bra. Today this is the main square, but if you were here some centuries ago you would be at the border of the city, and find craftsmen working, soldiers walking up and down the walls and twice a year, at spring and autumn, the animal market. The word Bra derives from the German word 'breit', meaning large.

On your left, you have buildings dating back to different centuries. They used to be family houses when families had a high number of members. Today they have turned into coffee bars and restaurants.

#### 5. **King Vittorio Emanuele Statue**

As you walk, look to your right at the statue of the man on the horse.

That's King Vittorio Emanuele, the first king of Italy. You'll find his name in every Italian city. Sometimes in a street, or in a gallery, or again on a statue together with Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cavour. These four gentlemen helped bring about Italy's unification in 1861.

Behind the king's statue, on the other side of the garden is a building with columns, looking like a Greek temple. That's the city hall. It's a neoclassical building, but dates back to the early 1800s, making it a very recent building by Italian standards!

Continue straight, keeping the garden on your right.

## 6. l'arena – i century A.D.

By now I'm sure you've noticed the impressive ancient building on your right. Stop here while I tell you about it.

By the way, this is a good position if you want to take a good panoramic photo. Most tourists call it the Colosseum, Veronese shorten the name to 'the arena', but it's actually an amphitheatre built at the beginning of the first century AD. The arena is the Latin word for the sand put on the ground where the gladiators fought. It quickly and easily absorbed the blood during the fights. This building was used for fights between men, or fights between animals and men. No comments about the style of entertainment of that time.

In the 1st century AD, the Roman empire built over 200 amphitheatres. All cities of strategic importance would have had one. The next closest one from here was either in Milan or in Padua. You can imagine how many people from the neighbouring cities reached Verona to watch these terrible fights! In the fourth century, no more fights were allowed and with the coming of the dark ages, the amphitheatre was used as a shelter by criminals. Many stones were removed and reused as building materials. The arena originally had a capacity of thirty thousand people. Today the capacity is reduced to twenty-two thousand due to an earthquake in 1117 with the epicentre close to Verona, destroyed large parts of northern Italy, including the external ring of the amphitheatre.

You'll be able to see what remains of the external ring at the next location, so when you're ready, continue following the road around the amphitheatre.

In August 1913, the amphitheatre began hosting the opera season. Today every summer, in June, July, August and the first week of September there is still an opera season. Aida by Giuseppe Verdi is always on the program because it was the opera which started the first season. There are also modern concerts, about fifty every year, from the end of April till the middle of October. Altogether about one hundred performances. On this stage in 1972 Luciano Pavarotti performed Un ballo in Maschera. Singers love to perform on a 2000-year-old stage!

Keep walking around the amphitheatre.



## 7. Ala of the Arena

Stop here for a moment in front of that piece of an external wall.



Well, this is what survived after the earthquake of 1117. All the amphitheatres were built in the same way. Four concentric rings are crossed by radial walls. Here we are missing around 80% of the external wall. This wall used to have 76 arcades, only 4 survived the earthquake.

Take in the height of this wall, it's much higher than the arena. There were definitely statues on top at some point in time.

The blocks of marble stone were cut directly from the quarries north of Verona in an area called today Valpolicella, yes, the same name as the red wine produced here. Still today one can see the same quarries.

By the way, wine and stone are two products that play an important role in our economy, the same as 2000 years ago! Ready cut stones were transported down to the river Adige, eventually to here. Hard work I believe. It took 20 years to build the arena, a very short time for such a building.

Besides blocks of marble, bricks and river stones were also used. These last ones were employed more on the inside. River stones were considered poor material and not good for facades. Effectively if you look carefully at the external wall you see only marble stones. But where are the collapsed stones today? They were used as building materials for the city wall, foundations of houses, churches walls. A good example is just at the end of the street.

Now, continue clockwise around the arena. We'll be taking the next left into the street ahead.

## **8. San Nicolò all'Arena**

Turn left here into Via Anfiteatro.

On your right, there is San Nicolò church. Stop for a moment and look at its wall.

You'll see lots of stones reused from the arena, but you'll also notice stones belonging to graves. One is particularly nice, it's on the left of the window. It represents a garland and is for sure a Roman stone. This kind of odd decoration has very often been reproduced by artists during the Renaissance.

Let's start walking. Stay on the right hand side of the street.

Along the wall, you'll notice some more Roman decorated stones. At the end of the church wall, some metres under your feet are the archeological remains of the Roman walls. You can't see them of course. But back in Roman times, you would be at the border between the city and the countryside. This means that the amphitheatre was built outside the city, simply for a question of public order. And the Piazza Bra, today downtown, was a point where crowds would assemble.

Continue to the front of the church.

## **9. Facade of San Nicolo all'Arena**

Stop for a moment once you reach the facade of the church and take a look.

You'll notice that the size of it is bigger than the church. Well, this facade didn't belong to the building. It was added just after World War 2. It belonged to another church which doesn't exist anymore due to being bombed. Only the facade survived the bombs and was dismantled and added here to this church, which had been previously left unfinished. Again a good example of recycling, don't you think? Let me tell you, the city is full of recycled stones.

It's also interesting to know that the church was built here together with a monastery in the 12th century exactly over the Roman city walls but in a special position. At the corner, where the walls met. Just try to imagine, the Roman rests are underground!

Ok, let's keep moving. Continue walking down via Anfiteatro.

## 10. **Piazza Nogara**

You've reached Piazza Nogara.

Stop for a moment and have a look to your right at the building with the round windows. It's the site of a bank. Once you've had a good look, continue straight along via Anfiteatro as it becomes via Stella.

The architect of the building is Carlo Scarpa. This project involved the construction of a new building on a site obtained by demolishing two small buildings between the bank headquarters on one side and a residential building on the other side. Both buildings had been built between the two wars. Owing to regulations, the authorization for demolition and reconstruction was subject to the approval of the Monuments Protection Authorities.

Carlo Scarpa had the ability to elaborate projects and interventions in ancient and valuable contexts, thanks to his ability to read the pre-existing architectural context. It may seem a simple situation, but it's not. All buildings in the ancient part of the city are under the protection of the Bureau of Ancient Heritage. If one wants to restore or make changes to any of these buildings, they need the approval of it. It's not an easy situation.

Along via Stella, you'll find good coffee-bars, bakeries and delicatessen shops

where you can stop for an excellent cappuccino with a small sweet. Feel free to pop into any of the shops. Let yourself be inspired by the smell. But if it's over 11 o'clock don't order a cappuccino, only tourists do. It's already time for the aperitif!

If you do go for a coffee, try to sit in a coffee bar on the right side. In this way, you can enjoy the view of the ancient palaces in the street. These buildings have beautiful marble gates and framed windows dating back to the past centuries. If you sit on the left side your view will be on the palaces built after World War 2. It means around the fifties and sixties...not really fantastic facades!

When you're done, just continue along via Stella. We'll be turning left into 'via Capello' in a few minutes.

## 11. **Left into 'Via Cappello'**

Turn left into 'via Cappello' and keep going.

This can be quite a busy street. Besides being one of the main shopping streets of Verona, not far from here there is the most famous house of Verona, the Capulet's House, Juliet's House. It's the brick building at no. 23. Between 10:30 am and 6:00 pm I tell you, it's not the best time for the visit. I recommend coming outside of these times, as your visit will be much more enjoyable.

## 12. **Balcone di Giulietta**

Here on your right at number 23 is Juliet's House.

If the gate is open, enter the courtyard of this medieval house. Otherwise, stay here outside while I tell you more.

The house was restored at the beginning of the last century after many requests by visitors after they read Shakespeare's drama.

If you stand with your back to the entrance, the facade with the famous balcony is on your right. You'll notice here windows of different epochs. Why are they so different?

Now try to find a good place to stand for a few minutes and I'll tell you why.

Most of these windows and also the pieces of the balcony are parts of palaces that collapsed during earthquakes, floods and other natural events. They are valuable and beautiful recycled stones, carefully sorted out and re-employed with the restoration. As I mentioned, in Verona as well as in other parts of the country it has always been natural to recycle. Why throw away something which could have a good function again? So nothing is fake, it's simply rehabilitated.

The story of these unhappy lovers is much older than Shakespeare's tragic drama. It dates back to a popular literary tradition handed down over the centuries and translated into English by Arthur Brooke. This was the source used by Shakespeare who gave the story such emotional power and psychological depth and still nowadays inspires artists.

Before we leave, you have for sure noticed people going toward the statue of Juliet and caressing her breast. It seems to bring good luck! Feel free to spend some time here. If you're going to be a while, you can close off the tour. When you're done, come back to the entrance and start the tour by choosing "Resume".

Otherwise, if you prefer to keep going, head back onto the street and turn right to continue along via Capello.

### 13. **Back to 'Via Capello'**

We are now going towards the heart of ancient Verona. The street we are walking on gets its name from Juliet's medieval house, by the way, an excellent example of a tower house. If you were here during Roman times you would be walking on the Cardo Maximo, that's to say on one of the two main streets that crossed the Roman City and met in the forum, at Piazza Erbe.

Along the side streets, both left and right you meet two more streets with restaurants for a tasty meal and excellent wine. The rest of the buildings are part of the shopping commercial area which developed especially around the late fifties.

Keep going.

#### 14. **Piazza Erbe.**

One of the most beautiful squares in Italy is a collage of Palaces, statues and towers from different periods.

Stop here for a moment.

What's the meaning of Piazza delle Erbe? It means herbs, vegetables, fruits, grains, spices - in one word, the commercial heart of the city. There used to be a market in Roman times and in the middle ages, and there is still a market today, but with souvenirs. The market where one could do the daily shopping has gone, unfortunately, but the square still has the large umbrellas like in the past, and the buildings painted with frescoes bring us back to the feeling of the past.

Turn to face the square.



On the square rise three towers, a typical sign of the middle ages. The first one on the far right used to be the prison tower and was connected to the ancient city hall already in the 12 century.

The next tower is the highest in medieval Verona, the Lamberti tower, as it was a possession of the Lamberti family. It was not as high in the 12 century and you can see that if you carefully look at its perimeter walls. The highest part of the clock was elevated in the 14 century.

The third tower on the square is on the far left of the square, close to Palazzo Maffei, the beautiful baroque white palace at the end of the square. It was the first clock tower of Verona.

The building directly behind you made out of brick and with vaults used to be the chamber of commerce in the middle ages. Its name was Domus Mercatorum, that's to say the House of Merchants.

The third tower on the square was the first clock tower of Verona. It's close to Palazzo Maffei, the beautiful baroque white palace at the end of the square.

Now, cross the street and enter the market. Then please stop by the small white marble canopy and observe carefully the right pillar, the one with slots marked on the stone.

These were the measures of that time. Here merchants would come and measure the different goods. In this way, it was correct for all the sellers and for all the buyers. Clever, don't you think? There is also a chain and most people think it was to let criminals stand for a certain number of hours, clearly visible to anyone as a shame. No, this was not the purpose. The round chain was simply a measure.

Ok, let's keep moving. Make your way along the street, under the arch to the left of the Lamberti tower.

Look up please as you go. There is something hanging under the arch. It's whalebone and was the symbol of the chemists that had their shops in this area.

Keep going along this street, towards the second archway.

## 15. **Piazza Dante (or piazza dei Signori).**

In medieval times was the place that hosted the court of the Scaligeri family. Here we found a statue of Dante Alighieri.

Pass under the second arch and you are finally in Piazza Dei Signori. Stop for a moment once you reach this elegant square. The buildings on this square used to be public buildings.

I'll go through some of them now.



The building on your right is the ancient city hall. It has a beautiful wall with strips made out of stone and terracotta. This is the original one, the facade in Piazza Erbe was remade in the 1700s following the taste of the time.

The yellow building in the far left corner with the loggia was the seat of the city council under the Venetian government.

The building directly ahead made out of brick belonged to the family who ruled the city in the 1200s and 1300s. Its name is Della Scala.

The facade of the Scala family residence bears the Venetian lion with wings. This building, together with the white building to the right of the arch, became the seat of the Venetian rectors for almost the next 400 years, until the arrival of Napoleon. During this time, Verona enjoyed an extended period of peace. We must not forget that people used to live more during wartime than in peace.

Let's move towards the palaces of this family. Continue through the square and through the archway straight ahead, that's to the right of the brick building.

The square is also called piazza Dante by the Veronese. In fact in the middle of the square rises the statue of Dante Alighieri who spent almost eight years of his life in Verona. I'm not going to tell you who Dante was, I'm sure you already know. But I remind you of the name of the book he wrote, the Divine Comedy. This book is divided into three books again, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Most of Paradise was written here. In some high schools, pupils are supposed to read all three books. I read all of them with the help of the teacher as it's written in old Italian. There are lots of interesting stories.

The most interesting of the three books for a 16-year-old pupil is the Hell of course!

## 16. **Santa Maria Antica**

Once you're through the arch, stop here in the small courtyard. Here you'll find another treasure of Verona.

To your right is where the rulers of Della Scala had their private church. The name of this chapel is the Santa Maria Antica. Antica because the chapel was built on the ruins of a previous temple. Close to the chapel, behind a precious iron gate supported by a high marble wall, there is the private cemetery of the lords with their graves. Three sarcophagi are covered by rich baldachins, the other tombs are on the floor.



Walk closer to the iron gate and you'll notice a very small ladder inside each quatrefoil.

It was their coat-of-arms. The same symbol is visible under the sarcophagus over the entrance of the chapel. Two crowned dogs are holding a ladder in their paws. Here is buried Cangrande Della Scala who died at the age of 37, poisoned.

When you're ready, continue walking in the same direction you've been going, with the chapel on your right.

## 17. **Romeo's House**

At the end of the street, stop and look right. The brick building on the corner to your left is Romeo's house. It's a private house and is not open to the public.

Now cross the road, enter in via Santa Maria in Chiavica and continue along the street.

Have you noticed how many small restaurants and coffee bars there are along this street? No? Some don't even look like places to eat, sometimes the entrance is hidden, so it's possible to miss them.

Continue, past the small church on your left and cross the road. Keep going,

until you reach the end of this street.

## 18. **Via Sottoriva**

You've now reached via Sottoriva, a street with arches. You'll be turning left here, but before you do, look to your right.

You might see locals with tables outside where it's a pleasure to sit and have something to eat or drink, especially on those hot days when the temperature rises.

And now let's turn left and walk under the arcades.

The name Sottoriva indicates a street close to the river. In fact, behind the buildings on your right flows the river Adige. Along the road on the right side are several short alleys leading to the river. Some of them still bear the ancient name of Vò, which means in the direction of the river. It was in this area that the millers lived. On the ground floor were the storehouses, and above the shops and the apartments for the family. Because of the extreme proximity to the river, the road was often flooded. The last flood was in 1882. The wall along the river was completed by the end of 1890. Via Sottoriva remains one of the most interesting medieval streets near the river!

## 19. **Behind Santa Anastasia Church**

Just ahead of you is the back of the Santa Anastasia Church. I'll tell you more about it when we go past the main entrance later on the tour.

As you go, look out for a small marble plate on the right side, before going under the arcades of the house. The line indicates the water level of the last flood in 1882. You can imagine the damage it caused!

Now pass under the arcades of the pink house and turn immediately right.

## 20. **To the Adige River**

Go upstairs and head over to the riverside and make sure you have a good view.

Now head over to the riverside and make sure you have a good view.

For a city built on a river, it was a great fortune from an economic point of view, but I think that most of the world's beautiful cities have always been those situated on riverbanks. In Verona, this advantage is increased since the river does not merely cross the city, as most rivers do, but it embraces the city in a long and wide meander.

On the other side of the river is an area called Saint Peter's Hill.

It's there that a small group of people settled down already in the 9th century BC. They probably chose the area up there to be able to control the plain. I'll remind you Verona lies about 60 metres above the sea, and in case of danger, they could easily organise themselves.

Can you see the big building on top of the hill, the one that looks like a castle? It's actually an Austrian military barrack, one of the many built in Verona during their 50 years of government in the 19th century. It's currently being renovated as a museum at the time of this recording.

Below it is a grey austere building. That's a monastery built in the 1300s over the Roman stones of a theatre. The Romans built it 25 years before Christ for performances as comedies and tragedies. Today only a part of the theatre has still survived after more than 2000 years.

??? Once you've had a good look, continue along the riverbank, keeping it on your right. ???

## 21. Castel San Pietro e il Teatro romano – I century A.D.

Now climb up to the castle to see amazing views over the city.

Continue onto Scalinata Castel S. Pietro - take the stairs.  
Then onto Vicolo Botte, take the stairs.

Continue onto Scalone Castel S. Pietro (stairs)

Turn left to stay on Scalone Castel S. Pietro (170m)

Turn left onto Piazzale Castel S. Pietro, destination on right.

The hill is located in a strategic position. It was inhabited since Roman times of Verona and continued to be inhabited during the barbarian invasions from Albino and Rosamund, by Pepin, by Berengar, King of Italy. On the ruins of the fortress built by Berengar between the end of the century IX and the beginning of X, and at the old Romanesque church of San Pietro in Castello - which gave its name to the hill - Giangaleazzo Visconti built Castel San Pietro in 1398. The building dominated from Verona and lasted just over four hundred years: it was blown up in 1801 by French soldiers - after the Treaty of Luneville - abandoned the left of the Adige to retire in the right. Finally, in 1840, the Austrians demolished the remains of the Visconti castle, together with the church.

On the area of the castle, the Austrians began in 1851 the construction of barracks-fortress which is still visible: the work was completed in 1856. Note with regret that the Simeoni: "Excavations of the castle were discovered many prehistoric and Roman records that some were lost. So you lost any opportunity to study the remains left in the people who founded this hill Verona, and to know what you stood in the Roman monuments".

Property of the City of Verona since 1932, the building is not open to the public, because it has become ruined by time and neglect of men. For many years there have been discussions about what to do with the building. The site is popular: from the esplanade in front, overlooking the Roman Theatre and Stone Bridge, you can enjoy a magnificent view of the city.

When you're done, retrace your steps back to the bridge.

## 22. Along Via Ponte Pietra

Turn left to walk away from the river, then take the first right to continue along Via Ponte Petra.

Today Via Ponte is a small but busy charming street. Artisans work in their shops and laboratories creating carpets, dresses, flowers, compositions,

scarfs, and jewellery. Cafès and Osterias are busy all the time. Sometimes, early in the morning, when the light of the sun reflects on the facades it's easy to meet painters reproducing views on their canvas.

Don't walk in the middle of the road as most tourists do in this street. It's not pedestrian, so try to keep to the right.

You are now in one of the oldest parts of Verona. By now I'm sure you have already realized the city has had many influences over the centuries. In fact, if the Romans were the founders, after them and for a long long time, the area was under the northern people's influence. Following that was a period when the rulers, the lords Della Scala made Verona a powerful city economically and politically. A great time of peace and economic development is the one under the Venetian rulers. 400 years without war, as I mentioned before.

## 23. The Roman bridge Ponte Pietra

You are now on the Roman bridge Ponte Pietra, erected 89 B.C. Stop in the middle of the bridge by the white recycled Roman stone on the left.

From here you can enjoy one of the most beautiful panoramas of the Veronese hills. In front on your right, between the two churches on the hill are the medieval walls, like the ones you saw in Piazza Bra.

In front of you, on your left, on the top of the hill is a round building. Today it's a church, but it used to be one of the many Austrian fortresses built around the city in order to control military the territory. There over 50 fortresses, in three large circles around the city and outside, today in the suburban area. Most of them are empty. If your eyes are good, you might be able to make out another fortress, to the right of the round one.

Feel free to snap some photos and spend some time here.  
When you're done, retrace your steps back through the arch.

## 24. Frescoed House

Ahead of you is a small street between the building on the left, with the long

balcony, and the yellow building. It's called vicolo Fontanelle.

Before you cross the street and continue along the vicolo, look up at the building with the long balcony. Under the roof is a band of monochrome frescoes describing the different activities of the family that lived here. Merchants, the part of the society without a title, but very wealthy, used to have the facades of their houses painted in order to tell others the story of their families.



Let's keep moving. Continue along vicolo Fontanelle. Fontanelle means fountains. It's an ancient name which tells us that there were ducts or installations here for the water supply of the city. In the Roman epoch, the city used to have three aqueducts that brought water to the Domus, rich one-story Roman houses.

## 25. Santa Felicita

Stop here for a moment in front of the large three-storey house at the corner on your left.



It's a very ancient tower house, one of the first houses built after the earthquake of 1117. Here different styles mix up in a few square metres with a final elegant result. On the wall the original romanesque window, though today walled up, is still recognisable at the first floor and co-exists together with a typical Venetian window, certainly inserted not before the 1600s.

Let's keep moving. Continue in the same direction you've been going.

The next building at number 10 is again a private one so we can't go inside, but it would be interesting to see what is behind this tiny entrance!

And what's now here at number 8, Santa Felicita? It was a church but today it's a restaurant. In Verona, you'll find an interesting number of churches that have turned into restaurants, coffee bars, private apartments and one is even a theatre.

Keep going towards the end of the street.

## 26. Right into Via Ponte Pietra

Turn right here into Via Ponte Pietra

The modern building on your left is the public classical high school. Founded

in 1804 under Napoleon's government, it's one of the oldest classical high schools in the Veneto region. The current structure dates back to the sixties and for a city where one can find two thousand-year-old buildings, this one is really very young.

The pink renaissance palace on your right shows colourful frescos under the roof, but you should imagine that the entire facade was once decorated.

Among the subjects represented in these family palaces, one could find The Judgement of King Salomon, The Sword of Damocles, The Labors of Hercules, the Days of the week, the Planets, and the Roman Emperors for example.

Unfortunately the frescoes are exposed to atmospheric agents, smog, acid rains and more. The result is what you see before you.

Once you've had a good look, keep going.

## 27. via Abramo Massalongo

Turn left onto via Abramo Massalongo and stop for a moment.

On your right at number 7 is the elegant Palazzo Emilei-Forti with the balconies. All palaces bear the name of the families that owned the building. That's why some palaces bear even three names, from the first owner to the last one.

On your left is the neoclassical Palazzo with columns on the first floor. It was an early Dominican convent. Today, after rebuilding, it's the seat of the music conservatory and high school of music. It's dedicated to Felice dall'Abaco, a Veronese cellist who became a Konzertmeister in Munich where he spent most of his life.

Above each arch of the facades are represented famous men of the past. On the left those of the Roman time, the famous Vitruvius, Macro, Catullo, Cornelio, Plinio. On the right the modern ones like Maffei, Panvinio, Fracastoro, Sanmicheli, Noris. We call them modern for a simple reason, they were born after 1492!

Keep going.

## 28. Santa Anastasia

Here on your left is the entrance Santa Anastasia, the most relevant Gothic-style religious temple in the city. Please stop here for a while.

It was built near the small Dominican San Pietro on the left which is no longer a religious temple. Between the two churches stands the sarcophagus of Guglielmo di Castelbarco, a gentleman very close politically to the Scalas I mentioned earlier. He had the right to be buried here as he helped a lot with the construction of Santa Anastasia.

The place chosen is very close to Scala's palaces. It's very likely that this church was the meeting point for religious services between the lords and their friends. When the Scala Lords lost their power, the next governors didn't finish the decoration of the facade, symbolically, in order not to reaffirm the Scala's power.

I highly recommend a visit to the church if it's open. If you plan on spending some time inside, you can close off the tour. When you're done, come back to this spot and start the tour again by choosing Resume.

Otherwise, if you prefer to keep moving now, with the church entrance behind you, make your way down the road called Corso Santa Anastasia.

## 29. Along Corso Santa Anastasia

Continue along the Corso Santa Anastasia.

This is the ancient Roman decumanus, which means you are walking on the ancient main street. 4 metres below are the Roman stones. This is the most ancient road in northern Italy. It started from Genova, crossed the Padana plain, through Verona and ended up near Trieste. It connected northern Italy from sea to sea. It was upgraded by the Romans in the second century B.C, meaning it already existed before they reached this area during their

European expansion. As the Roman empire was divided into regions, this was the 10th region.

At that time this area was called Venetia et Histria, named after the Veneti, the ancient name of the people who settled the coasts around 1200 BC. This is where the name Venice comes from.

### 30. Veronese gastronomy

Keep going.

Just after house number 16 on the left you'll find an iron gate with a large courtyard behind. This is the back of the Scala Family palaces. The entrance bears two marble pillars like the ones you saw at their private cemetery.

We'll soon reach Piazza delle Erbe, and on the way I would like to tell you something about the Veronese gastronomy. The greatest delicacies of our region are those prepared according to ancient recipes. The ancient tradition has been revisited today and the result are delicious recipes.

Gnocchi, made of white flour and mixed with mashed potatoes is a robust, yet delicate dish. It's delicious with a ragu sauce, or a simple tomato sauce and parmesan, or simply with butter and parmesan cheese. There is also a sweet version with spices, but I think it's more a winter recipe. Gnocchi is tastier if paired together with a good red wine. An example? A glass of Valpolicella Ripasso or Bardolino.

Risotto all'amarone. You can't leave Verona without having tried it. This risotto has a dark red-violet colour due to the fact that it's cooked with wine. If you don't like wine you should try a risotto with red chicory and Monte, a Veronese cheese. Or risotto All'Isolana. This one is very rich as it's cooked with three different kinds of meat. There are risottos with vegetables too. They are usually prepared with the vegetables of the season.

Keep going. I'll tell you more about Veronese food in a bit.

### 31. De Rossi Bakery

On the left, at number 3 is an excellent bakery. Stop for a moment at the entrance. It's a great place if you want to try some sweet products.

On the left is a small bronze plate telling you that this is a historical shop. Walking through the city, if you notice such plates, it means you are by an old shop or a restaurant with a high reputation.

Ok, let's keep moving. Just continue going straight.

We are still walking along the Roman Decumanus and in fact, at the end of the street, you can see a white wall with small arches, well that's the facade of the Roman gate. Now you have the perception of the size of Verona 2000 years ago.

### 32. Wool market

As you walk, have a look on your right at number 12b. The large brick entrance leads people to the ancient wool market.

During the 13th century, there were 12 families in Verona involved in the wool business, one of the wealthiest industries. The number of a family at that time was at least between 70 to 80 people. Don't forget that even the servants lived together with the family. The best rough wool arrived from Scotland. Here it was treated, finished and finally brought here to the market.

### 33. The Pandoro story

Keep going.

At number 21 is Palazzo Melegatti. Mr Domenico Melegatti had a pastry shop here. In 1868 he started to produce the pandoro, a golden bread. It's the very typical Christmas Veronese cake on every Italian table at Christmas time. Domenico Melegatti baked a cake whose recipe goes back to Roman times and was reintroduced on the Veronese tables in the 1200s. Domenico made just some simple changes. As he baked it for Christmas time, his cake had the form of a pyramid with an eight-pointed star. He was a clever man and in 1895 presented the patent for this Christmas cake at the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce of the Italian Kingdom. Only in 1904 was the patent granted. To remind people of his successful story, when his palace

was restored, on the top of the roof, at the sides were placed two pandori like two obelisks.

Today the bakery of Domenico is no longer around. The production is done outside in an industrial area.

Another Veronese delicacy is the pearà, a sauce made out of bread, beef broth, marrow and pepper. It's usually served with meat and is a typical winter dish. But the oldest Veronese recipe is the Pastissada de Caval. It's horse meat, that's why today you almost can't find it on the menu of the restaurants. It's served with polenta, making it a winter recipe. In the summertime, you can find it served as cold-smoked sliced meat with rocket salad, sliced parmesan cheese, lemon juice and olive oil.

#### 34. Porta Borsari

Ahead is the elegant Roman gate Porta dei Borsari. Go through one of the two arches and stop to have a look from the other side.



This is just the inner side. The origin of the name is medieval and reminds us that here there were people with leather bags, the bursari, whose duty was to collect the “dazio” a tax for enter in Verona from merchants coming into the city from the countryside.

Once you've had a good look, continue in the same direction you've been walking, with the small square ahead on the left.

### 35. Veronese Wines

Turn left here just past the square and keep going.

We are coming to the end of our tour. Before I leave you I'd like to tell you

something more about another local product that you'll surely appreciate during your holiday; wine.

The area of the vineyards extends from Lake Garda along the hills north of Verona's territory to the border with Vicenza. You'll find two kinds of red wines. Valpolicella and Bardolino, and three white.

Under the Valpolicella, one can find the Valpolicella Classico. It's the one produced in the ancient and original area named Valpolicella. The Valpolicella Superiore is aged for one year. The Valpolicella Amarone is obtained from grapes left to dry on racks until January, then aged in barrels for five years. It's a dry wine. The correspondent sweet one is the Recioto. Both have a high percentage of alcohol. So it's advisable to drink them during a substantial meal. The last Valpolicella is the Ripasso. Try it and let me know what you think!

The name Bardolino derives from the town on the shores of Lake Garda. If you have time for a trip there you won't be disappointed. And maybe even a boat ride. Under its name, you will find four types of wine. Rosso, Chiaretto, Novello and a sparkling one too.

Soave is a medieval walled town, 30 km outside Verona, famous for its medieval castle, which is one of the most well preserved in Veneto, and for the wine that bears its name. The Soave wine is served at a temperature of 9-10 °C and goes particularly well with appetizers and fish dishes. Recioto di Soave is instead a dessert wine and its taste is fantastic with the Pandoro cake.

Lugana is a white wine produced between Lombardy and Veneto near the southern shore of Lake Garda, between the provinces of Brescia and Verona. The vine has been present in the area almost always. Some remains have been found near the pile-dwellings of Peschiera del Garda dating back to the Bronze Age.

The Roman poet Catullus, originally from Verona and owner of a villa in Sirmione whose ruins are still visible today, mentions the wine in his works.

36. We've now arrived back at the amphitheater and the end of the tour.

This is where I'll be leaving you. I hope you've enjoyed our walk today, and have discovered some of the hidden and not-so-hidden stories of Verona. I encourage you to explore further, as there is still much to uncover in this city. But for now, I recommend a rest and maybe a drink or a bite to eat in one of the many cafes and restaurants in this area.

If you are interested in finding out more about what Verona has to offer, tap my author profile and you'll find links to my website and social media pages. I would greatly appreciate it if you took a moment to rate the tour and leave a comment.

Enjoy the rest of your time in Verona and see you on another tour. Ciao!