



BERGAMO

ART CITY



MINI GUIDE OF THE CITY

SQUARES • MONUMENTS • HISTORY • THEATRES • CHURCHES
MUSEUMS • ARCHITECTURE • TRANSPORT • USEFUL INFORMATION

A visit to Bergamo is a journey between two towns, one on a hill, the other on the plain; two towns that are essentially different but linked, not only by history, but also by a dense web of streets, alleys and cobbled stairways. Bergamo is a people-friendly city thanks to its open spaces, the beauty and atmosphere of its attractions and the quality of life. For this reason it is a city well worth visiting, even without planning a precise itinerary. Our tour begins in the hilltop town, where we can savour the atmosphere of the historic centre and its monuments, and the lights and character of Piazza Vecchia, which recall Venice of old. It then continues in search of the beautiful views across the plain and towards the Alps from extraordinary panoramic positions on top of the Civic Tower (*Campanone* - Big Bell), the Rocca (Fortress) and the Gombito Tower.

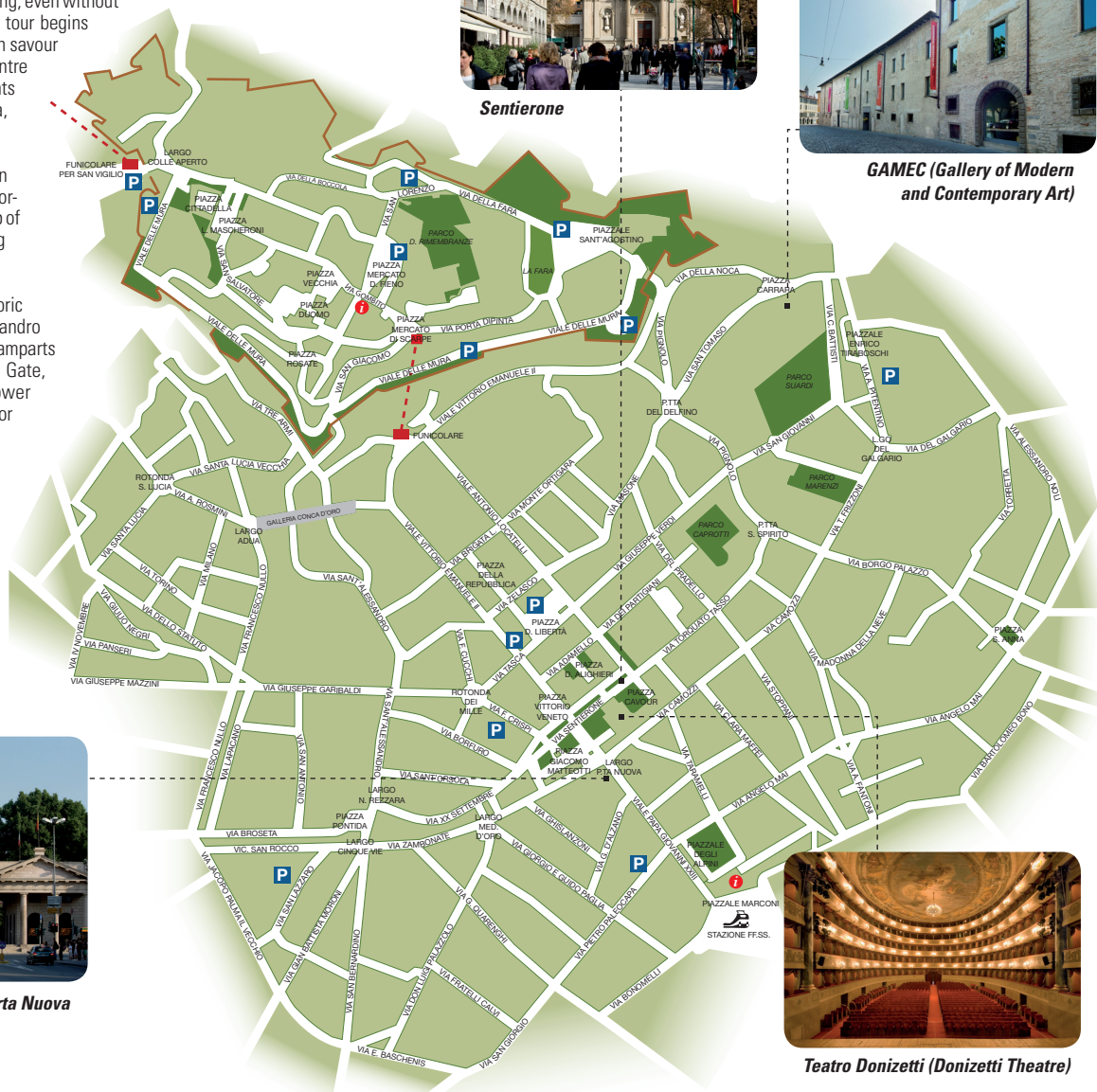
The old routes through the historic quarter of Pignolo or Sant'Alessandro and the road which, from the ramparts passing through Sant'Agostino Gate, descends to the centre of Lower Bergamo, are ideal itineraries for discovering the two facets of the city from a continuously changing perspective. But we should not forget the funicular which, on the one hand facilitates the connections between the two towns, and on the other offers a different and unique way of getting to know Bergamo.



Sentierone



GAMeC (Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art)



Largo Porta Nuova



Teatro Donizetti (Donizetti Theatre)



The towers and bell towers of Città Alta (Upper Bergamo)

Today one of the best places to admire Bergamo is from the terminal of Orio al Serio Airport. Visitors arriving by air have a first glimpse of the unique quality of the city, with its historic old town sitting majestically on the hill against the backdrop of the Alps. Once on the ground this view can be seen in all its beauty as the unmistakable outline of towers, domes and bell towers of Old Bergamo is revealed. But there is another way to have a complete view of the relationship between Bergamo and the surrounding area. As you make your way from the plain along one of the main roads that cross countryside dotted with businesses and houses, the city, which begins to take shape in the distance, appears like a gateway to the mountains.

Old Bergamo developed in a strategic location, at the entrance to the Seriana and Brembana Valleys, which both weave their way for about fifty kilometres between the mountains known as the Orobie Alps. This strategic location enabled the city to secure a monopoly on trade between the plain and the mountains, which lasted for centuries and was only lost during the last few decades with the construction of new road systems. It was probably these exchanges between protohistoric populations that originated in the first settlement on Bergamo hill. Recent archaeological excavations have in fact identified the presence of the fairly extensive community which developed between the VI and IV century B.C. The Roman city was built on the area oc-

cupied by the first Celtic village, which was most probably followed by a Gallic *oppidum*. This further confirms the fact that the hill complex of Bergamo was a natural meeting point between the economies of the plain and those of the mountain, which developed along a mountain path used since prehistory. Since that time, century after century, the hilltop city grew, developed and changed, but the centre remained in its original location. Although construction of the Venetian walls modified the appearance of the hill, it helped to emphasise this distinctive aspect. The Old Town remained on the hill, while Bergamo maintained connections with the rest of the area via the historic quarters that expanded along the routes leading to the plain and other Lombardy cities. This natural expansion did not occur to the detriment of the areas on the hill, but across the plain where, with clever planning, the modern city was created during the last century. Just how strong and important this relationship between Upper and Lower Town is can be seen by following the main street (Viale Vittorio Emanuele and its continuation to the railway station) and the adjacent road network where, between one beautiful view and another, the unique quality of the town is reinforced. Besides its monumental and artistic heritage, the magic of Bergamo lies precisely in this dual aspect which until now has well withstood the rapid growth that has occurred over the last fifty years and the consequent building expansion.

FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO THE "LORDS" OF MILAN

VI-IV century B.C.

First Celtic settlement on Bergamo hill.

197 B.C.

With the beginning of Roman colonisation, the hilltop settlement begins to assume the characteristics of the Roman city.

49 B.C.

Already a part of the military road network of Cisalpine Gaul, Bergamo is recognised by Rome as a *Municipium*.

568

After being attacked and destroyed by peoples from the North, the city is conquered by the Lombards.

Certain places, such as the Fara, owe their name to this presence.

774

The city passes under the rule of the Franks, but Lombard customs remain rooted in the population.

904

King Berengario hands over the jurisdiction of the city to Bishop Adalbert. The bishop, among other things, rebuilds the walls and city defences.

1098

After Episcopal rule, Bergamo becomes a free Commune, governed by Consuls. During this period the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore and the Palazzo della Ragione are built, together with numerous fountains, many of which survive today. Irrigation ditches and canals are constructed on the plain which lead to the development of flourishing activities.

1167

Bergamo joins the *Lega Lombarda* (Lombard League) against Emperor Frederick I. The league, which unites 16 communes, is sanctioned with an oath taken in the Abbey of Pontida.

1331

To put an end to the battles between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, King John of Bohemia is called to Bergamo. The "peace" however marks the end of the free Commune. This is the beginning of the rule of the Visconti, the "Lords" of Milan, over the city and surrounding area.

FROM THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE TO THE PRESENT DAY

1428

After the difficult and oppressive domination of the Visconti, Bergamo submits to the lion of St. Mark, when Venice begins to prevail in Lombardy after defeating the Milanese army at Maclodio. This marks the beginning of a close relationship between the two cities which persists for three and a half centuries.

1430

The new domination begins building the first structures, including the walls, known as the "*Muraine*", which incorporate a large part of the city's quarters in the Upper Town. The "new square" (which later becomes "Piazza Vecchia" - the Old Square) begins to take shape when the Venetian Palazzo del Podestà is built.

1561

Construction of the mighty wall defending the hilltop town begins. Work continues until 1588, and is followed by reconstruction of the castle on San Vigilio hill. Bergamo becomes to all intents and purposes a fortress city.

1593

The "*Strada Priula*", an important trade route and strategic link with Valtellina and Central Europe, is completed and opened.

1734

Construction work begins on a new fair on the plain in the area of the old Sant' Alessandro fair which included 350 shops.

1797

After Napoleon's forces enter the city and after the defeat of Venice, the Bergamo Republic is founded, which then becomes part of the Kingdom of Italy.

1814

After the fall of Napoleon, Bergamo passes under Austrian domination following the Congress of Vienna. As part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Bergamo becomes connected (1857) to the Lombardy rail network.

1859

On the morning of 6 June, Giuseppe Garibaldi enters the city at the command of the Hunters of the Alps. The people of Bergamo make an important contribution to Risorgimento struggles with 180 of them becoming part of the Expedition of the Thousand (1860).

1887

Lower Bergamo is connected to Upper Bergamo by the funicular railway, one of the first of its kind built in Italy.

Twentieth century

In the Twenties the town centre of Lower Bergamo is built in the area of the old fair, on the design of the architect Piacentini. In 1934 the Bergamo-Milan motorway is inaugurated, the second in Italy. In 1958 Angelo Roncalli, patriarch of Venice, is elected to papal office. Pope John XXIII, as he becomes, passes into Church history for having launched the second Vatican Council. At the end of the century, the Airport of Orio al Serio, at the entrance to the city, records growing development, becoming, at the start of the new millennium, one of the most important Italian airports with more than 6 million passengers a year.

The major part of the city's monumental and artistic heritage is preserved within the limited expanse of Upper Bergamo - an area which is no larger than a town quarter. The walls built in the sixteenth century during Venetian rule mark the boundary to this area, which is rich in history and signs of the past. It is precisely this concentration of sights that makes it easy for the tourist to explore the medieval streets and alleyways in the shadow of towers and bell towers and search out the most town's beautiful corners. The structure of the old city is based on the arrangement of Roman Bergamo with Via Gombito and Via Colleoni (formerly Corsarola) and Via San

Lorenzo and Via Mario Lupo following the line of the *Decumanus* and the *Cardo* respectively, and forming a crossroads at the Gombito Tower. The funicular from Lower Bergamo arrives inside the walls, facilitating access to the Upper Town. On the other side of town, just a few metres from Sant'Alessandro Gate, another funicular climbs to San Vigilio hill, from where there are splendid panoramic views. In 1913, the writer Hermann Hesse, Nobel prize-winner for literature, used this funicular (recently inaugurated at the time) to explore Bergamo hill. Dotted with gardens and vegetable plots, the beauty of this area and countryside has remained almost unchanged over the centuries.



**Castello San Vigilio
(San Vigilio Castle)**



Piazza Vecchia



**Fontana Contarini
(Contarini Fountain)**



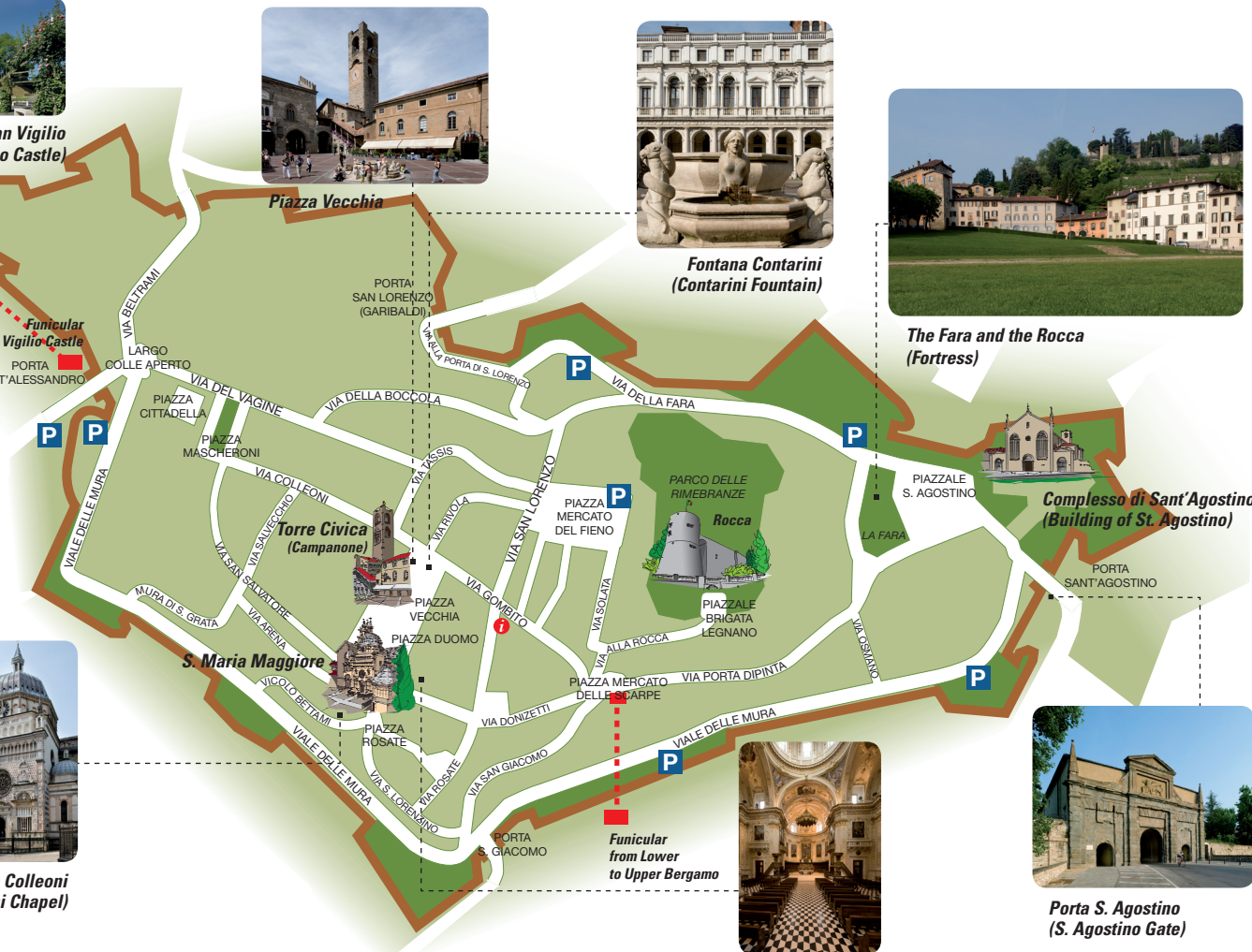
**The Fara and the Rocca
(Fortress)**



**Complexo di Sant'Agostino
(Building of St. Agostino)**



**Cappella Colleoni
(Colleoni Chapel)**



Duomo



**Porta S. Agostino
(S. Agostino Gate)**



San Giacomo Gate

THE WALLS AND THE GATES

When in August 1561 work began on the walls, General Sforza Pallavicino discovered he had made a mistake in his calculations. According to the original plan, simple defences were to be built against a sudden attack from the Spanish who had gained control of Milan, but this idea was abandoned and it was decided to build fortifications that were able to resist an army equipped with the most modern firearms of the era. As a result the walls, which should have been finished within a few months, were completed only in 1588. The work required enormous expense and the appearance of the city and the hill changed definitively. To make way for the fortification, almost a third of the houses were knocked down, one of the most important monasteries, the San Domenico Monastery, was demolished, and an entire quarter, San Lorenzo, which was crossed by the road leading to the Brembana Valley, was razed to the ground. Four gates were built along the walls, which extend for almost six kilometres, each corresponding to the main roads of communication with the surrounding area and other cities: Sant'Agostino Gate, with its beautiful marble fountain, situated on the road to Brescia and Venice; San Giacomo Gate, on the road to Milano; Sant'Alessandro Gate, on the road to Lecco and Como; San Lorenzo Gate, on the new road to the Brembana Valley and Valtellina (inaugurated in 1593).

PIAZZA VECCHIA

The architecture of Piazza Vecchia plays a subtle trick on the eye which makes the square seem larger than it really is. This area, the heart of political and administrative life of Bergamo and the surrounding area, began to take shape in the fifteenth century with the demolition of a group of houses that occupied the area in front of Palazzo della Ragione. It was at the beginning of Venetian domination that this central area acquired its Renaissance form and dimensions, above all when the building on the western side was transformed into the seat of the Venetian Podestà. In 1477, one of the best-known artists of the era, Bramante, was called to decorate the façade with frescoes. The square assumed its definitive appearance in 1604 with the construction, on the east side, of the Town Hall. This project was entrusted to the architect Vincenzo Scamozzi but, because of a lack of funds, the building was not completed according to the original design. Clad with white marble, the building today houses the Angelo Mai Civic Library, which preserves a very valuable heritage of parchments, illuminated codices, incunabula and archives that tell the history of the city. Today the appearance of the square is no longer as it was a few centuries ago. Bramante's frescoes have all but disappeared and only a part has been restored. Even the façade of **Palazzo della Ragione**, which dates back to the thirteenth century, has lost numerous coats of arms of Bergamo's rectors and "podestà" which previously decorated the façade. The lion of St. Mark, which dominates above the central balcony, was a symbol of Venetian domination for 350 years. Destroyed in 1797 with the arrival of the French, the current marble lion is a copy donated by the city of Venice in 1933. The arcade beneath the old municipal building acts like a filter between Piazza Vecchia, where civil power was concentrated, and Piazza del Duomo, the symbol of Episcopal power. The Cathedral, the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the Colleoni Chapel (the only secular presence - to a certain extent), the Baptistry and the Bishop's Palace overlook this beautiful square.

TORRE CIVICA (CIVIC TOWER) (CAMPANONE or BIG BELL)

A symbol of the medieval city, the 52-metre high Civic Tower not only offers from its two panoramic floors (accessed with an ultramodern lift) splendid views over the roofs of the historical centre and towards the Alps, but it also provides the perfect viewpoint for looking down onto Piazza Vecchia. It is in fact only from above that one can appreciate the balanced dimensions of this square, which is centred around the beautiful fountain donated in 1780 to the city by the Venetian Podestà Alvise Contarini. The tower is also known as the *Campanone*, or Big Bell, because of the large bell which, as well as announcing municipal council meetings, sounds over 100 times at 10 p.m. every evening to signal the old curfew when the gates of the city were closed.

Opening hours: November to February from Tuesday to Friday open with prior booking; Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 9.30-16.30. March to October from Tuesday to Friday 9.30-19.00; Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 9.30-21.30.

Info: tel. +39 035 247116.

DUOMO (CATHEDRAL)

Recent discoveries under the cathedral have revealed the presence of another two much older churches, both of large dimensions, which follow the perimeter of the current building: a palaeo-Christian cathedral and a Romanesque cathedral dedicated to San Vincenzo. Both buildings appear to have been magnificent and richly decorated, as the remains of seventh-century mosaic flooring and fourteenth-century frescoes testify. The current Duomo was built at the end of the fifteenth century and the architect Filarete contributed to the initial phase of the work. Finished at the end of the seventeenth century, the cathedral was dedicated to S. Alessandro. The final appearance of the building however was completed only in the nineteenth century with the construction of the dome; the façade dates back to 1866. It houses works by Gian Battista Tiepolo, Gio-

van Battista Moroni, Sebastiano Ricci and Andrea Previtali.

Opening hours: 7.30-11.45/15.00-18.30.
Info: tel. +39 035 210223.

BATTISTERO (BAPTISTRY)

The Baptistry, which complements the intimate atmosphere of Piazza del Duomo, has stood in its current location only since 1898. The building has much older origins and was erected in 1340 by Giovanni da Campione inside the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, which at the time was a baptismal church. When the rite of baptism was transferred to the Duomo, the Baptistry, besides having no further use, was considered too large for the Basilica. In 1660 it was dismantled and positioned in the courtyard where it remained until a couple of centuries ago. In 1856, it was rebuilt in the Canons' courtyard. However this destination was not satisfactory and it was finally placed in front of the Duomo.



Battistero (Baptistry)

Fourteenth-century statues depicting the Virtues can be found in narrow niches on the sides of the octagonal building, in the upper band of red Verona marble perforated with small columns. The baptismal font is located inside, while in one niche a statue of St. John the Baptist is the work of the same Giovanni da Campione, who also created the exquisite marble bas-reliefs depicting episodes from the life of Jesus.

Open only for baptisms.

Info: tel. +39 035 210223.

BASILICA OF SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE

With its rich historical and artistic heritage the Basilica is the most important building in the city, and it was once held in such esteem that it was known as the "Chapel of the city". When it was decided to build the church, partly to fulfil a vow made during an outbreak of the Black Death, the people of Bergamo chose a centrally located and easily accessed position on the site of the small church of Santa Maria.

Work began in 1137 according to the project of a little-known "Master Frido", whose effigy it is thought is represented by the bust of a bearded man which appears above the apse. The church, once used for baptisms, also served as a hall for civic assemblies. Towards the middle of the fourteenth century, Giovanni da Campione was given the task of building a monumental portal on the north side. He designed a porch supported by red marble lions, completed by a three-sided loggia featuring a statue of St. Alexander on horseback, to which a cusped tabernacle was added at the end of the century. The south porch is instead supported by white marble lions. The magnificent Romanesque interior, which should have been painted all over with frescoes - as certain parts testify - was later transformed by sumptuous Baroque decorations. Over the centuries the "*Consorzio della Misericordia Maggiore*" (Consortium of the Maggiore Misericordia) enriched the Basilica with amazing works of art. Of particular interest are the spectacular marquetry panels in the choir created between 1522 and 1555 from drawing by Lorenzo Lotto, and the Baroque confessional by Andrea Fantoni.

Opening hours: from November to March 9.00-12.30/14.30-17.00; Sunday and public holidays 9.00-12.45/15.00-18.00.

From April to October 9.00-12.30/14.30-18.00;
Sunday and public holidays 9.00-12.45/15.00-18.00.

There is no admittance during services
(weekday Mass: 7.45; 10.00 / Sunday Mass: 11.00; 12.00).
Info: tel. +39 035 223327.

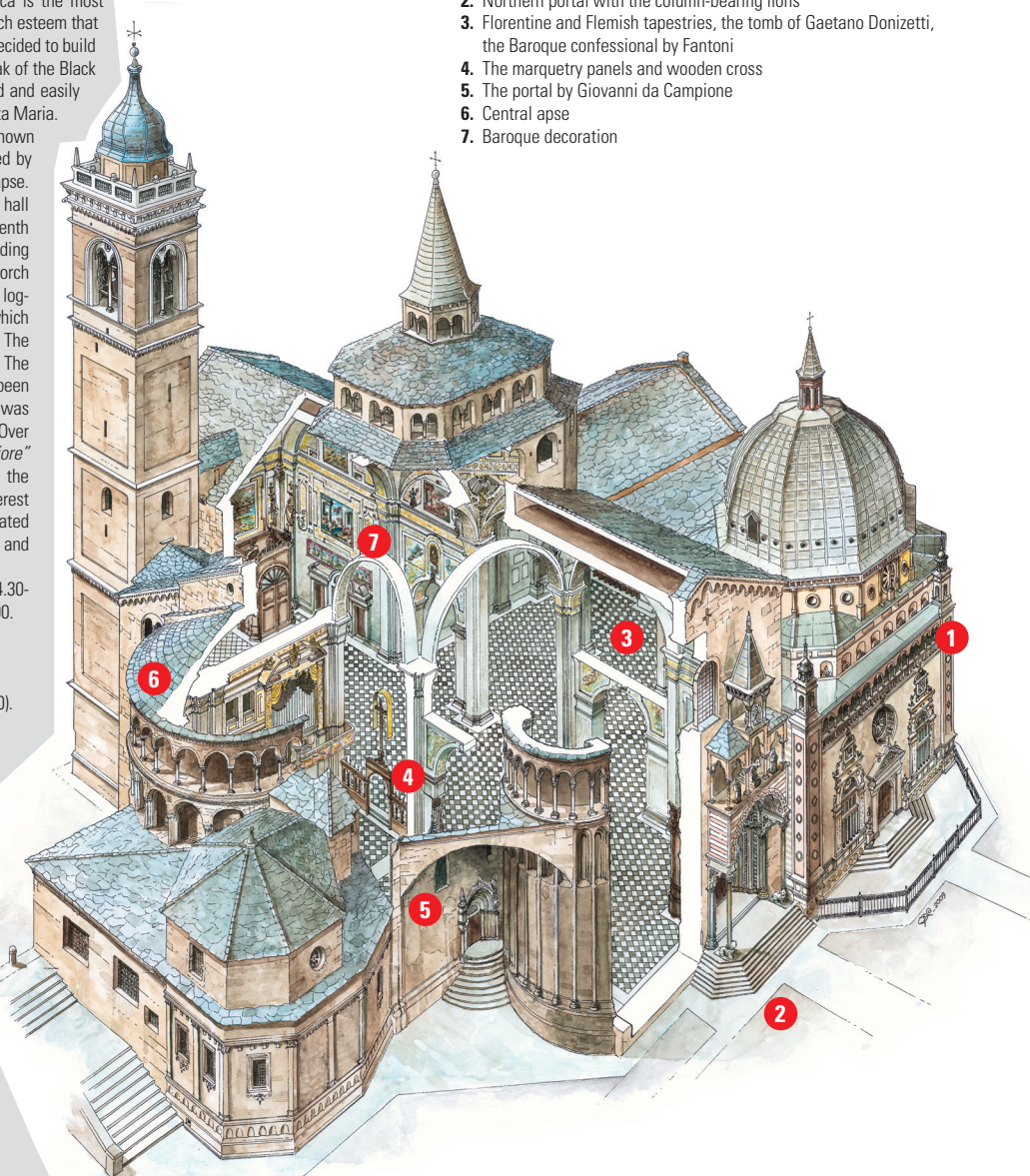
CAPPELLA COLLEONI (COLLEONI CHAPEL)

The famous *condottiero*, Bartolomeo Colleoni, did not hesitate in demolishing an apse of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore to build his own tomb. Once he had chosen one of the most prestigious locations in the city, he commissioned (1470-1472) one of the best-known artists of the time, Giovanni Antonio Amadeo, to create a work which is today considered a masterpiece of Lombard art, and not just of the Renaissance period. In the cramped area of Piazza del Duomo, the façade, with exuberant decorative and chromatic power, seems to be vying for attention with the sumptuous decorations of the Basilica.

Opening hours: from November to February 9.00-12.30/14.00-16.30; from March to October 9.00-12.30/14.30-18.00; from November to March closed Monday.

Info: tel. +39 035 210061.

1. Colleoni Chapel; inside, eighteenth-century frescoes by Tiepolo
2. Northern portal with the column-bearing lions
3. Florentine and Flemish tapestries, the tomb of Gaetano Donizetti, the Baroque confessional by Fantoni
4. The marquetry panels and wooden cross
5. The portal by Giovanni da Campione
6. Central apse
7. Baroque decoration



PALAZZO DEL PODESTÀ (PALACE OF THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE OR GOVERNOR)

Originally the residence of the Suardi-Colleoni families (from whom it derives the name of "Domus Suardorum"), the Palazzo del Podestà was the seat of the Podestà (Chief magistrate or Governor) and various municipal functions from the beginning of the thirteenth century to the first half of the sixteenth century. It is connected by a footbridge to the adjacent Palazzo della Ragione, in which, during restoration work after the devastating fire of 1513, the architect Pietro Isabetto created a single magnificent room, which became known as the Sala delle Capriate. Utilised in dif-



Palazzo del Podestà

ferent ways under Venetian domination and Austrian rule, during the last century, the Palazzo del Podestà became used for purposes which were not in keeping with its historical importance. During restoration and renovation work lasting fifteen years carried out by the Municipal Authority, extremely important discoveries were made regarding the history of the city. Beneath the building Roman remains and structures were uncovered, including a mighty wall and the remains of workshops, which enabled the definitive location of the area on which the Roman Forum stood to be determined.



Teatro Sociale (Theatre of Society)

TEATRO SOCIALE (THEATRE OF SOCIETY)

In the spring of 2009, two centuries after its inauguration in 1808, the Teatro Sociale reopened to the public with a rich calendar of shows and performances by great artists. This was made possible thanks to exemplary restoration work carried out on this exquisite building. The theatre was designed by Leopoldo Pollack, a pupil of Piermarini, who rose to great fame after building the Arch of Peace in Milan and the Villa Reale in Monza. On the initiative of a group of aristocrats who formed a "society", Pollack used an area occupied by a part of the Venetian Palazzo del Podestà destroyed by fire. The new theatre provided 1300 seats, with 88 boxes arranged in three rows and a gallery which were elegantly decorated by local artists (Bonomini and Querenza). The theatre ran successfully for several decades until, having entered into competition with the Riccardi Theatre (the current Donizetti), which was preferred because of its location on the plain, it began to decline in popularity; it was however used for operas until 1929. It closed definitively after World War II, and began decaying to such a degree that little hope remained of it ever being restored to its original theatrical vocation. The "miracle" instead did happen and Upper Bergamo is now able to offer a genuine theatre.

Info: contact the IAT Tourist Offices (see page 19).

Address: Via Bartolomeo Colleoni.

CITADELLA (CITADEL)

The Cittadella is the remaining part of a fortification built by the Visconti family when they imposed their rule

on Bergamo. A fortress was originally built on the hill of San Giovanni (where the Seminary stands today), to which a large building ("Hospitium Magnum") was added, to be used for the garrison, armoury and storerooms. This complex was used however more for guarding the city than for defending it against external enemies. The Cittadella then became the residence of the Venetian military commander but its large rooms continued to be used to store cereals and as a warehouse. Under the French and Austrians, its military use continued, but the building began to decay progressively. It underwent renovation work between 1958 and 1960, during which time part of the building was restored to its original state. It today houses the **Enrico Caffi Museum of Natural Sciences** and the Civic Archaeological Museum.

The **Museum of Natural Sciences** is noted for its extremely old fossils, including that of a 700,000 year old deer discovered in 2001 in Val Borlezza, and one of the oldest flying reptiles ever found, dating back to approximately 220 million years ago, discovered in a quarry in Cene in the Seriana Valley.

The **Archaeological Museum** preserves discoveries from Bergamo and Bergamo province dating from prehistoric times to the late Middle Ages. Frescos from a *Domus Romana*, found in via Arena in Upper Bergamo are of particular interest.

The **Lorenzo Rota Botanical Garden** is located short distance from the Cittadella, alongside a Venetian powder magazine.



Entrance to the Archaeological Museum

It features many native, exotic, Mediterranean, aquatic and carnivorous plants, and offers a beautiful view over Città Alta (Upper Bergamo). Piazza Mascheroni lies between the Cittadella and the houses of the historical centre. Dominated by the Torre della Campanella (Small Bell Tower) with clock and unusual Slav-influenced cusps, the square dates back to 1520 when, under the name of Piazza Nova, it was built as a centre for commercial activities. Trading took place under a loggia which was later incorporated in an eighteenth-century building. A marble well-curb sits over a well in the centre of the square. It is supplied by water from a large cistern which was built after construction of the walls to guarantee abundant water reserves in case of siege.

Museo Civico di Scienze Naturali Enrico Caffi (Enrico Caffi Civic Museum of Natural Sciences)

Opening hours: October to March from Tuesday to Sunday 9.00-12.30/14.30-17.30. April to September from Tuesday to Friday 9.00-12.30/14.30-18.00; Saturday and Sunday 9.00-19.00.

Info: tel. +39 035 286011.

Museo Civico Archeologico (Civic Archaeological Museum)

Opening hours: October to March from Tuesday to Sunday 9.00-12.30/14.30-17.30; April to September from Tuesday to Friday 9.00-12.30/14.30-18.00, Saturday and Sunday 9.00-19.00.

Info: tel. +39 035 242839.

Orto Botanico Lorenzo Rota (Lorenzo Rota Botanical Garden)

Opening hours: March and October 9.00-12.00/14.00-17.00. April to September 9.00-12.00/14.00-18.00; Saturday Sunday and public holidays 9.00-19.00. Closed from November to February.

Info: tel. +39 035 286060.

Address: Scaletta di Colle Aperto.

MUSEO DONIZETTIANO (DONIZETTI MUSEUM)

Before visiting this museum we suggest walking down Via Donizetti to see the plaque on the front of the noble Scotti family residence, which states that the great composer died here in 1848, and visiting Donizetti's tomb in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore.

The museum is housed in Palazzo della Misericordia, which overlooks Via Arena, one of the most striking streets of the old town. It is located in front of the Church and Monastery of Santa Grata where a community of Benedictine nuns live in seclusion. The largest Baroque building in Bergamo, it assumed its current appearance in the seventeenth century; inside, however, it preserves a fifteenth-century courtyard. The museum is located in a vast room on the first floor, which is elegantly decorated by Vincenzo Bonomini. It displays relics of the great musician, who composed more than 70 works, including *Elisir d'Amore* (1832) and *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835), as well as documents, mementoes and portraits; a piano is among the most valuable items.

To complete this Donizetti itinerary we suggest a short walk outside the gates along Borgo Canale, which once meandered between the vegetable gardens on the other side of the walls. The house where Gaetano Donizetti was born in 1797 to a very poor family is at no. 14.

Opening hours: June to September from Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays 9.30-13.00/14.00-17.30; October to May from Tuesday to Friday 9.30-13.00; Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 9.30-13.00/14.00-17.30.

Info: tel. +39 035 4284769.

EX CONVENTO DI SAN FRANCESCO (FORMER CONVENT OF SAN FRANCESCO)

Accessed from Piazza Mercato del Fieno, which was once much smaller, the monastery of San Francesco was the largest and most important religious complex in the medieval city, and was the object of donations and bequests. Established in the thirteenth century and completed in the sixteenth century, it features two large cloisters. The first cloister is also known as the sarcophagus cloister (*delle arche*) because it features nineteen thirteenth-century tombs of local families, while the second, also known as the well cloister (*del pozzo*), offers a beautiful view towards the Orobic mountains. Suppressed at the beginning of the nineteenth century and later transformed into a barracks and then a prison, the complex suffered serious

damage. The great church was used as a storehouse and today only the frescoed apse remains. Between 1935 and 1939 the convent underwent radical restoration and rebuilding work to transform it into a school. Currently the former monastery houses the city's Historical Museum.

Opening hours: June to September from Tuesday to Friday 9.30-13.00/14.00-17.30; Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 9.30-19.00. October to May from Tuesday to Sunday 9.30-13.00/14.00-17.30.

Info: tel. +39 035 247116.

ROCCA (FORTRESS)

According to certain theories regarding the layout of Roman Bergamo, the Campidoglio (Capitol) was located on the hill of Santa Eufemia. When the city came under



The Rocca (Fortress)

the control of the *Signoria*, thus putting an end to the free Commune, King John of Bohemia commissioned a fortress to be built on the site. This area, which in medieval times was defended by a tower or castle, was strengthened by the Visconti and then by the Venetians who erected a round keep in the middle of the fifteenth century. After the walls were built, the fortress became an arsenal and housed the first gunpowder factory. Partly transformed into an elegant residence by the French, under the Austrians it housed a barracks and then a prison. When the Municipality purchased the complex, in 1927-28, it underwent radical restoration work. Initially, the building was turned into the *Scuola dei Bombardieri* (Bombardiers School); it then housed antique relics which were transferred to the Archaeological Museum,

and was later fitted out as the Museum of the Risorgimento. Today, the building's vocation as a museum has remained unchanged although in the wider context of the Museo Storico (Historical Museum) and with a different layout.

Opening hours: June to September from Tuesday to Friday 9.30-13.00/14.00-17.30; Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 9.30-19.00. October to May from Tuesday to Sunday 9.30-13.00/14.00-17.30.

Info: tel. +39 035 221040.

FLIGHTS OF STEPS

The flights of steps in Bergamo have the names of "Paradiso", "Santa Lucia Vecchia" "More", "Ortolano", "Fontanabrolo", "San Martino", "Scorlazzino" and "Scorlazzone". There are about ten flights of



The Fontanabrolo steps

steps and alleyways that climb the sides of Bergamo hill. These are what is left of the dense network of medieval connections between the plain and the hill and the routes into the once numerous fields and vegetable plots. Flanked by dry stone walls or hedges, a walk along these routes reveals previously unseen views of the Upper Town and across the plain. These flights of steps and alleyways are perfect for visitors who wish to take a peaceful country walk or a romantic stroll. Among the most accessible are those that descend from Borgo Canale.

THE HILLS

Bergamo sits on the last offshoots of a hill system that extends from east to west for about six kilometres, beneath the undulating peaks of Orobic mountains. In the thirteenth century a castle was built on the highest point above the city, possibly on the site of a Roman

tower. The fortification was extended and transformed by the Venetians who added four round towers at the same time as they built the walls. A funicular runs from Città Alta (Upper Bergamo) to the top of **San Vigilio** hill, from where it is possible to explore the extraordinary surrounding area. Buildings of great importance, such as the old monasteries of Astino and Valmarina, are found among the villas, old farmsteads converted in delightful residences, garden and vegetable gardens, little valleys and wooded promontories. The hills, which are protected and valorised by the Parco Regionale dei Colli di Bergamo (Regional Park of the Hills of Bergamo) cover an area of approximately four thousand hectares and feature recently built cycle paths for exploring the area. The head office of the Park Authority is located in the old monastery of Valmarina.

Info: tel. +39 035 4530400.

ACCADEMIA CARRARA AND GAMEC (MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY)

An extraordinary story of passion for culture and the arts lies behind the foundation of the **Accademia Carrara**. It was the idea of Count Giacomo Carrara to establish the Art Gallery, to which he gave his all. Unfortunately he did not get to see his dream come true because he died before it was completed in 1810. Built in neoclassic style on the design of Simone



Andrea Mantegna, Madonna with Child

Elia, the Accademia Carrara possesses nearly two thousand paintings, collections of sculptures and rich archives of drawings and prints, making it one of the most important galleries in Italy. Some of the best-known artists displayed include Titian, Raphael, Tiepolo, Mantegna, Bellini, Botticelli, Lotto, Canaletto and Guardi, and numerous works that testify the age-old relationship with Venice. **GAMEc, the Modern and Contemporary Art Gallery**, can be found on the other side of the road from the Carrara building, in two former convents. Designed by Vittorio Gregotti and inaugurated in 1991, the Gallery has an exhibition area of 1,500 square metres dedicated to contemporary art in all its forms, and also offers temporary exhibitions and educational and cultural activities. The heart of the museum is the Manzù collection, made up of sculptures, paintings, drawings and etchings of the great artist from Bergamos. The Raccolta Spajani (Spajani Collection) has forty or so works of masters from the 20th century, and the Stucchi Collection preserves the works of Italian and European artists from the fifties. The Gallery also displays works by contemporary artists such as Alviani, Basilico, Garutti and Cattelan.

The **Accademia Carrara** will remain closed for extensive renovation work until the end of 2011, but a selection of the works are on display in the Palazzo della Ragione building in Upper Bergamo. **Info:** tel. +39 035 399677.

Address: Piazza Giacomo Carrara, 82.
Gamec. Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday for the permanent exhibition 10.00-13.00/15.00-19.00, variable opening hours for the temporary exhibitions. **Info:** tel. +39 035 270272. - www.gamec.it
Address: Via San Tomaso, 53.

MUSEO DIOCESANO D'ARTE SACRA ADRIANO BERNAREGGI (ADRIANO BERNAREGGI DIOCESAN MUSEUM OF SACRED ART)

The sixteenth-century Bassi Rathgeb building, which was donated to the Diocese, houses the museum, which was named after Mons. Adriano Bernareggi, the Bishop of Bergamo, who collected works of art, cult images and church relics from the Thirties onwards of the XXth century. The

museum tour is divided into chapters and themes which offer the visitor the opportunity to discover extraordinary artefacts that are closely linked to the history of Bergamo and the Church in Bergamo.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday 9.30-12.30/15.00-18.30.

Info: tel. +39 035 248772.

Address: Via Pignolo, 76.

PORTA NUOVA

The wide-set buildings of Porta Nuova, in the heart of modern Bergamo, is actually a gate that was built when it became necessary to make a wide opening in the medieval walls of the "Muraie". This was carried out in conjunction with the inauguration of "Strada Ferdinanda" (today Viale Vittorio Emanuele) in 1838 and, for the occasion, two Neoclassical buildings, or propylaea, were built on either side to house the tollhouse. The new gate and the surrounding gardens were designed to complement the beautiful views of Città Alta (Upper Bergamo). Later on the road was extended down to the railway station which opened in 1857.

TEATRO DONIZETTI (DONIZETTI THEATRE)

Named after the great composer on the occasion of celebrations commemorating the centenary of his birth in 1897, the Donizetti Theatre stands on the area where, during the old Saint Alessandro fair, performances were held on a wooden make-shift stage that was erected and dismantled each year. In 1786 the entrepreneur Bortolo Riccardi built a permanent theatre, the plan of which was maintained throughout the various renovations and facelifts. The façade, designed by architect Pietro Via, was built in 1897 and, at the same centenary celebration, a monument to Donizetti surrounded by a pond and garden was inaugurated. In 1934 the theatre became the property of the Municipality of Bergamo. Among the many performances it offers, the Donizetti Theatre hosts prestigious events such as the Bergamo Jazz Festival, the Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli International Piano Festival of Bergamo and the Gaetano Donizetti Music Festival of Bergamo.

Info: tel. +39 035 4160611.

Address: Piazza Cavour, 15.

THE WORKS OF LORENZO LOTTO

Bergamo is home to numerous works of art by the great Venetian artist Lorenzo Lotto, who spent twelve intensely active years in the town. The churches of San Bartolomeo on the Sentierone and Santo Spirito in the piazza of the same name, both in Lower Bergamo, feature two splendid altarpieces which were created during this time. These are two large paintings with the same subject: Madonna and Child with Saints (the painting in San Bartolomeo is also known as Pala Martinengo). Another beautiful altarpiece, also depicting the Madonna and Child with Saints, is found in the small church of San Bernardino in via Pignolo. A cycle of frescoes by Lorenzo Lotto can be found in the Chapel of the Church of Our Lady in San Michele al Pozzo Bianco in Città Alta (Upper Bergamo).



*Madonna and Child with Saints
in the San Bernardino Church*

EX CHIESA DELLA MADDALENA (FORMER CHURCH OF THE MADDALENA)

On the edge of the main shopping area, the former church of Maddalena (Mary Magdalene) is a small gem of fourteenth-century architecture which has been cleverly restored. It was opened in 1336 by the brotherhood of the "Disciplini Bianchi di Maria Maddalena" as the church to an adjoining hospital. After the hospital was closed, the church was used for various purposes and even ran the risk of being demolished. The restoration work uncovered original frescoes, including a cycle depicting the life of Mary

Magdalene which was painted around the mid-sixteenth century by Giovanni Battista Guarinoni d'Averara. The church can be visited with a guided tour or during conventions and events.

Info: contact the Tourist Office IAT (see page 19).

Address: Via S. Alessandro, 39/b.

SPAZIO VITERBI (VITERBI ROOMS) PALAZZO DELLA PROVINCIA (PROVINCIAL AUTHORITY BUILDING)

The nineteenth-century Provincial Authority Building features not only numerous interesting sculptures by Giacomo Manzù in the courtyard and along the large entrance stairway, but also exhibitions of the artistic heritage of the Province of Bergamo, which are displayed in the large rooms that were created on the fourth floor after the building was meticulously restored. The area covers more than two thousand square metres, half of which is dedicated to the exhibition area and the remaining part to the promotion of cultural events, conferences and workshops involving the arts, culture, social life and associations. It is a place that is "open" to the territory, which has become a reference point for the Bergamo community. In 2007 this new area was named after the scientist from Bergamo Andrea Viterbi.

Info: tel. +39 035 387111; +39 035 387604.
www.provincia.bergamo.it
segreteria.cultura@provincia.bergamo.it
Address: Via Tasso, 8.

VIA XX SETTEMBRE

Previously known as Contrada di Prato, this street connects the Sentierone (where the ancient Saint Alessandro fair was once held) with Borgo San Leonardo, which many years ago was the heart of commerce and trade of the town and surrounding area. Here, merchandise from the port of Venice was stored in the warehouses of the district, which then in turn travelled on to Milan or Valtellina. Today, Via XX Settembre together with Via Sant'Alessandro and Via Sant'Orsola are pedestrianised and at the heart of city's shopping area.

HOW TO GET HERE

By air

The International Airport of Orio al Serio is just 5 km from Bergamo and 45 km from Milan. It is connected to many Italian and European destinations, and is known for its large number of low-cost airlines. The Airport Bus service runs daily to and from the airport every 30 minutes and the journey takes about 20 minutes.

Bergamo Airport, Orio al Serio

Via Aeroporto 13, Orio al Serio
Tel. +39 035 326323
www.orioaeroporto.it.

By car

The Bergamo exit is on the A4 Milan-Venice motorway. It is advisable to park your car in Bergamo Bassa (Lower Bergamo) and use public transport to reach Bergamo Alta (Upper Bergamo)

By train

Bergamo railway station is directly connected to Milan, Lecco and Brescia (with connections for Lake Garda, Verona, and Venice). The journey times for Milan-Bergamo and Brescia-Bergamo are approximately one hour; the journey from Lecco to Bergamo takes about 40 minutes. Trains depart almost every hour. The station is located in Lower Bergamo and is connected to Città Alta (Upper Bergamo) by bus, which departs about every 10 minutes.

Bergamo Railway Station

Piazza Guglielmo Marconi
Tel. +39 035 247950

Trenitalia

Tel. 89 20 21 (call center)
www.trenitalia.com

By bus

The journey from Milan Lampugnano, Cadorna and Piazza Castello to Bergamo Bus Station with the Trasporti NET Nord Est company takes about one hour with smooth flowing traffic conditions. The connection from Milan Cadorna, Central Station and Lampugnano to the Orio al Serio Bergamo airport is run by Autostradale and the journey time is about one hour with smooth flowing traffic conditions. For both companies, buses depart approximately every 30 minutes. It is advisable to estimate a travel time of 2 hours as there is often intense traffic. There are other public transport companies operating between Bergamo and other towns in the province. The bus

station and ticket office is located in Piazza Marconi next to the train station.

Regione Lombardia

www.trasporti.regione.lombardia.it
Trasporti NET Nord Est company
Free phone: 800-90.51.50 (7 days a week from 7.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m.).
www.nordesttrasporti.it

Autostradale

Tel. +39 02 33910794 / +39 035 318472
www.autostradale.it; www.busitalia.it

SAB-SAV-ZANI

Tel. 800 139393 (for land lines only)
Tel. +39 035 289000 (for mobile phones)
ADDA TRASPORTI - AUTOGUIDOIVE
Free phone: 840 620000

Tel. +39 0373 204012

SAI

Tel. +39 0363 397250/255
www.saiatolinee.it

LOCATELLI-TBSO

Tel. +39 035 319366
www.autoservizilocatelli.it

TEB

Tel. +39 035 226667
www.teb.bergamo.it

HOW TO GET AROUND

By car

Bergamo has a large area that is closed to traffic around the main shopping streets (Largo Belotti, via XX Settembre, Largo Rez-zara, via Sant'Alessandro), while in Upper Bergamo this area covers almost the entire old city. On Sundays and public holidays, Città Alta is closed to traffic from 10 a.m. to noon and from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., and in the summer months this restriction also extends to Fridays and Saturdays from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Municipal Police

Via Coghetti 10 - Tel. +39 035 399559

By public transport

ATB (Bergamo's public transport company) runs the urban bus services and funicular railway between Lower and Upper Bergamo and between Upper Bergamo and San Vigilio. Special priced tickets are available for tourists. The no. 1 bus starts at the railway station and travels up to upper Bergamo. The funicular railway can also be used to reach Città Alta (Upper Bergamo). The journey only takes a few minutes, passing through a tunnel in the outer Venetian wall and arriving in the heart of the old city, in Piazza Mercato delle Scarpe. Visitors wishing to reach the top of San Vigilio Hill can use the panoramic funicular which begins near San Alessandro Gate (just outside Colle Aperto).

ATB Point

Largo Porta Nuova
Tel. +39 035 236026
www.atb.bergamo.it

Bergamo by bike

The city and province of Bergamo offer itineraries of striking beauty. Cycle path information: www.comune.bergamo.it/page/Infomobilità
A.R.I.Bi: www.aribi.it
"Italia in bici"
website: www.italiainbici.it
Bike Sharing: Bike rental, purchased from the ATB infopoint in Porta Nuova, you can "borrow" a bike from one of the Bergamo's bike stations and drop it off at another. The procedure is simple and fully automated. www.atb.bergamo.it
www.bicincitta.com
Tel. 800 910.658 (Free phone).
It is also possible to rent bicycles from:
Ciclostazione dei colli
(Colli bike station)
Ciclostazione 42
www.pedalopolis.org

Taxi

Radio Taxi: Tel. +39 035 4519090
P.le Marconi-Stazione:
Tel. +39 035 244505
Via Sentierone: Tel. +39 035 242000
Chauffeur-driven cars can be hired from:
Aclass: Tel. +39 035 314545
www.aclass.it
Airport Car Service:
Tel. +39 035 3844411
www.aircarservice.com

TOURIST SERVICES

I.A.T. Tourist Office Lower Bergamo

Piazzale Marconi (near the Station)
Tel. +39 035 210204
turismo1@comune.bg.it
www.comune.bergamo.it

I.A.T. Tourist Office Upper Bergamo

Via Gombito, 13 (Gombito tower)
Tel. +39 035 242226
turismo@comune.bg.it
www.comune.bergamo.it
Turismo Bergamo
Orio al Serio Airport
in arrivals area
Tel. +39 035 320402
orio@turismo.bergamo.it
www.turismo.bergamo.it

Gruppo Guide "Città di Bergamo"

(Bergamo City Guides)
Tel. +39 035 344205
www.bergamoguide.it

Tourist Guides AGIAT

Tel. +39 035 0601917
www.bergamotourguides.eu

"Bergamo su & giù"

Tourist Guides Assoc.

Tel. +39 346 8122006

www.visitorbergamo.info

For Guides not registered with associations

www.provincia.bergamo.it/turismo

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

Comune di Bergamo

(Bergamo City hall)
Piazza Matteotti, 27
Tel. +39 035 399111
www.comune.bergamo.it
Assessorato alla Cultura e Turismo della Provincia di Bergamo
(Council for Culture and Tourism for the Province of Bergamo)
Via Borgo Santa Caterina, 19
Tel. +39 035 387604
www.provincia.bergamo.it
segreteria.turismo@provincia.bergamo.it

EMERGENCIES AND HOSPITALS

Ospedali Riuniti (Hospital) – Bergamo

Largo Barozzi, 1
Tel. +39 035 269111 (switchboard)
www.ospedaliriuniti.bergamo.it
Guardia Medica - Bergamo
(Out-of-hours Medical Service)
Via Croce Rossa, 2 - Tel. +39 035 455511
Health emergency 118

SOS

Carabinieri 112
State Police 113
Fire Services 115
Road assistance 803116
Traffic Police: Tel. +39 035 276300
Municipal Police: Tel. +39 035 399559

THEATRES

Teatro Donizetti

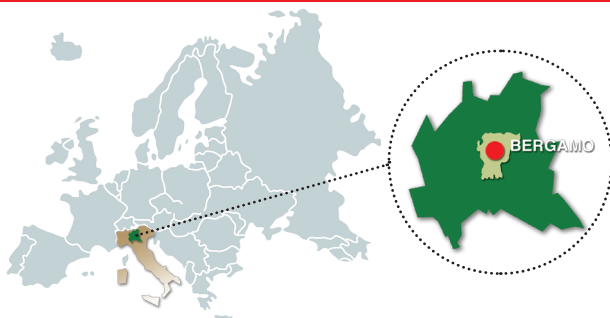
Piazza Cavour, 15
Tel. +39 035 4160611
www.teatrodonizetti.it

Teatro Sociale

Via Bartolomeo Colleoni
Info: contact the I.A.T. Tourist Office

Creberg Teatro Bergamo

Via Pizzo della Presolana
Tel. +39 035 343251
www.teatrocreberg.com



PROVINCIA DI BERGAMO



COMUNE DI BERGAMO



Camera di Commercio
Bergamo

TURISMO
Bergamo