

# Feel the history

FERRARA  
CAPITAL OF THE  
RENAISSANCE

MAP

English



FERRARA AT THE TIME  
OF LUDOVICO ARIOSTO  
Discover the itinerary  
inside



Con il patrocinio del



COMUNE DI FERRARA  
Città Patrimonio dell'Umanità  
**FERRARA**  
FEELINGS



## Info

For up-to-date museum  
and monument  
opening times contact  
the IAT Tourist Office  
+39 0532 209370  
or check the website:  
[www.ferrara.info.com/en](http://www.ferrara.info.com/en)  
[www.ferrara.info.com/en/renaissance](http://www.ferrara.info.com/en/renaissance)



Ferrara info



Ariosto



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## The ceramics loved by the Este

Ladies, page boys and other court  
figures, along with deer, dogs and rabbits  
surrounded by cornices, medallions  
and religious and heraldic symbols  
and accompanied by a sophisticated  
collection of undulating or interwoven  
ribbons, crumpled leaves, meadows in  
bloom and dotted backgrounds: these  
are the delicate, decorative motifs typical  
of **Renaissance sgraffito ceramic** with  
unmistakeable colours – pastel nuances  
of yellow and green – that fire melts and  
blends into unusual chromatic effects.  
Duke Alfonso d'Este was a great lover of  
Ferrara sgraffito ceramics, so much so that  
he made it the main feature of his court  
table. The fascinating practice of engraving  
and the use of colours are still the main  
feature of this type of ceramic that, after  
four centuries, a group of ceramists from  
Ferrara are continuing to create using  
the same techniques and creativity of  
times gone by, in the workshops and  
laboratories of Ferrara and its surrounding  
area. But please remember, these are not  
handicrafts, they are genuine works of art.



Ferrara sgraffito  
ceramics



Castello Estense

## Itinerary At the Este court

The stones of Ferrara's **Castello Estense**  
still echo with the footsteps and voices  
of its former inhabitants. Its prison is  
where Ugo, son of Marquis Niccolò III,  
and Parisina, the marquis' young wife,  
died after they had had a secret love affair  
and where Giulio d'Este, half-brother  
of Duke Alfonso I, was imprisoned for  
53 years. Meanwhile, on the main floor,  
Lucrezia Borgia, prima donna of the 16th  
century, and her retinue celebrated the  
pomp of an era when Ferrara was one of  
the most splendid courts in Europe, as  
immortalised by Ludovico Ariosto in his  
epic poem *Orlando Furioso* and depicted  
by the artists of the great Ferrara school.  
Starting from this majestic symbol of  
Ferrara, with its four towers surrounded  
by a moat, elegant white balustrades,  
prisons and rooms for court games, and  
following **Corso Giovecca** takes visitors to  
**Palazzina Marfisa**, a magnificent example  
of a noble residence built by Francesco  
d'Este, son of Duke Alfonso I and Lucrezia  
Borgia. Nearby is **Palazzo Schifanoia**, a  
recently-restored "*Delizia*" conceived by  
Borso d'Este as a sublime place for *avoiding  
boredom*; its Salone dei Mesi boasts famous  
frescoes. Other stunning palaces on this  
route are **Palazzo Roverella**, **Palazzo  
Bonaccossi**, **Palazzo di Renata di Francia**  
and **Palazzo Costabili**, also known as  
Palazzo di Ludovico il Moro.

## At the table with Messisbugo

In Ferrara you can still savour the ancient  
flavours of the Renaissance every time  
you visit an inn. Culinary tradition finds  
noble origins in the cuisine of the Este  
family, when banquets were a time to  
come together and satisfy the palate,  
be entertained and consolidate public  
relations. In the Renaissance period,  
"*coppia*" ferrarese or twisted bread as it was  
known then, was fragrant and crisp,  
with crumbly tips and a soft heart. The famous  
chef of the Este court, Messer Cristoforo  
da Messisbugo, mentioned it in his book  
"*Banchetti, composizione di vivande e  
apparecchio generale*" (Banquets, Recipes  
and General Utensils for the Kitchen and  
the Table). Court master of ceremonies  
and responsible for the sophisticated  
banquets of Alfonso I d'Este and then  
Ercole II d'Este, his books also celebrated  
many other specialities that have been  
handed down to us – delicious **salama da  
sugo**, seasoned with wine and spices and  
served with mashed potatoes; **pasticcio  
di maccheroni** in a sweet short pastry  
case, **cappellacci** pasta parcels filled with  
pumpkin, once spicier than they are now,  
and **pampapato** to end on a sweet note...  
and the Renaissance is served.



Coppia  
ferrarese bread



Menorah

## Itinerary Crossing Jewish Ferrara

Surrounded by the lush greenery of  
the Herculean Addition is the ancient  
Garden of the Jews (*Orto degli Ebrei*),  
now the **Jewish Cemetery**, a place  
of contemplation and silence, where  
nature embraces the tombstones.  
Starting from here, we continue  
towards the centre as far as the  
**column** - made up of layers of Jewish  
gravestones from some old city  
cemetaries - on which the statue of  
Borso d'Este stands. Before the gates  
of the Jewish ghetto closed, Ferrara  
was safe and welcoming for the large  
community of Jewish refugees from  
other European countries. Walking  
around the streets of the Jewish  
ghetto means being immersed in the  
rich cultural dialogue between the  
Jews and the Renaissance period, an  
itinerary that meanders along charming  
mediaeval streets: **Via Mazzini**, the  
main road through the ancient ghetto,  
lined with largely-intact old buildings,  
**Via Vittoria**, with its palaces, ancient  
courtyards and charming gardens,  
mentioned in the novel "*Il Giardino dei  
Finzi-Contini*", and **Via Vignatagliata**.  
Nearby is **MEIS (National Museum of  
Italian Judaism and the Shoah)** which  
offers evidence of the age-old history of  
Jews in Italy, including the tragic events  
concerning racial persecution and the  
Shoah. The museum was established to  
promote the exceptional continuity of a  
prolific and uninterrupted relationship  
between the Jewish population and the  
city.

## Itinerary The wonders of Este art

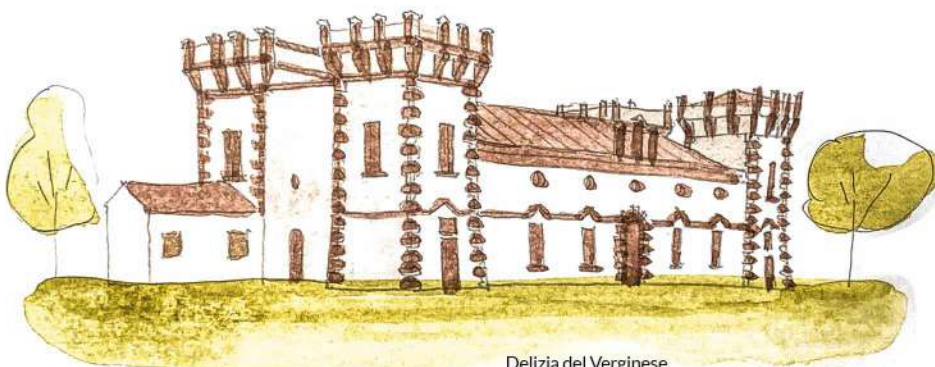
Renaissance art reflected the new  
centrality of mankind and his role in  
the world, an awareness that inspired  
artists, who used sacred and secular  
subjects in landscapes, architecture and  
portraits. One of the prime examples of  
Renaissance art is the cycle of frescoes  
in Salone dei Mesi in **Palazzo Schifanoia**;  
today, it can again be appreciated in  
all its beauty thanks to architectural  
restoration and new lighting. Inspired by  
the months of the year and the signs of  
the zodiac, the expressions, gestures and  
faces of the figures narrate a 550-year-  
old story. In the month of March, the  
mysterious *Vir Niger*, the black man,  
the last dean of the zodiac sign of Aries,  
accompanies Borso, Duke of Ferrara in  
1471, and his court, protected by the  
Gods of the Olympus sitting on celestial  
chariots. Equally impressive are the  
frescoes of **Palazzo Costabili**, with  
its magnificent 16th-century ceiling  
painted by Garofalo, and the frescoes  
in Sala delle Sibille e dei Profeti in  
**Casa Romel**. The works in the **Museo  
della Cattedrale** and the **Pinacoteca  
Nazionale** collection, housed on the  
main floor of Palazzo dei Diamanti, are  
particularly impressive. The latter offers  
an important exhibition of Renaissance  
art, spanning from Cosmè Tura to  
Dosso Dossi and including the dramatic  
paintings of Bastianino, which brought  
an end to the Este era in Ferrara.

## Triumphs and tournaments

Imagine skilful hands moving across Este  
velvets, sewing the history of the pomp  
and ceremony of an era in which every  
noble palace in Ferrara took part in the  
great celebrations for the **Palio di San  
Giorgio**. Today, as then, citizens dress in  
lavish clothes as they prepare to parade  
through the city streets and take part in  
races, challenges and tournaments in its  
squares. The entire city brings to life an era  
rich in pomp and splendour for a timeless  
celebration. It is a competition between the  
eight *contrade* or districts of Ferrara, made  
up of the four quarters inside the mediaeval  
walls and the four hamlets located outside  
them. The same atmosphere of the past  
returns to life during the **Renaissance  
Carnival**, an historical commemoration of  
celebrations held by the Este in the 15th  
and 14th centuries. It is a step back to the  
times of Duke Ercole I d'Este and Lucrezia  
Borgia, with period masks, dances and  
celebrations in the historical palaces, flag  
wavers, jugglers, spectacles  
and banquets.



A detail of the fresco in Salone dei Mesi  
in Palazzo Schifanoia



Delizia del Verginese  
(Portomaggiore)

## Itinerary Ferrara at the time of Ludovico Ariosto

We discover Ferrara walking in the  
footsteps of Ludovico Ariosto, thanks to  
an itinerary that narrates the city's most  
hidden treasures. It touches on those sites  
so rich in history, but less well known than  
others, frequented by the poet during his  
long stay in the city. The palaces where  
he studied, surrounded by academics and  
humanists; the intimate and familiar places  
and the official ones where Ariosto worked  
when he was at the service of the Estense  
family in 16th-century Ferrara and, in later  
years, the places he frequented when he  
became a court playwright fulfilling his  
dream, right through to those where he  
chose to spend the last years of his life,  
busy writing *Orlando Furioso*, the epic  
poem that made him famous. We begin  
at **Palazzo Schifanoia** with the seasons  
and signs of the zodiac of Salone dei Mesi  
that so enchanted the poet, and then  
continue the **Monastero del Corpus  
Domini**, the monastery that houses the  
tomb of Lucrezia Borgia. We continue  
along the streets where Ariosto lived –  
**29 Via Giuoco del Pallone** and **15 Via  
del Carbone** – visiting **Palazzo Paradiso**  
along the way. Now home to the Biblioteca  
Ariostea, it houses the funeral monument  
to Ariosto. We reach the imposing  
**Cathedral** of Ferrara to see characteristic  
**Via Adelardi** that runs alongside it. Here,  
to this day, stands "*Al Brindisi*" inn – known  
at the time as "*Hostaria del Chiuchiolino*"  
– frequented since 1435 by historical  
figures, including Ariosto himself. The  
imposing Volto del Cavallo portal leads  
to **Piazza Municipale** from where we  
continue as far as **Este Castle**. From here,  
we take **Corso Ercole d'Este** where we  
can see the ashlar of beautiful **Palazzo  
dei Diamanti**. The itinerary ends with  
two sites that recall Ariosto, elliptical-  
shaped **Piazza Ariostea**, that has a statue  
dedicated to the poet at its centre, and  
**Casa Ariosto**, the house he owned and  
where he wrote the last version of *Orlando  
Furioso*. You can learn more about Ariosto's  
story by downloading the 10-episode  
podcast, using the QR code on the map.

## Ludovico Ariosto, the poet of the *Orlando Furioso*

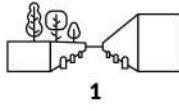
Let me introduce myself: Messer Ludovico  
Ariosto in person, "chivalric poet" and, for  
many years, functionary of his Lordship  
Cardinal Ippolito I d'Este and then of Duke  
Alfonso I d'Este in the early 16th century.  
I am also the poet who wrote *Orlando  
Furioso*, the epic poem that is one of the  
most important of chivalric romance  
and today considered the encoder of  
romantic literature. I worked on it for  
over thirty years, with great passion, in  
this magnificent city - Ferrara - which I  
consider my home. I was born in Reggio  
Emilia on September 8, 1474 and aged 9  
moved with my family - my father Niccolò,  
my mother Daria and my nine siblings - to  
Ferrara, to 29 Via Giuoco del Pallone. I  
lived there for my entire adolescence  
and later, between the ages of twenty  
and twenty-five, I enjoyed what was,  
undoubtedly, the most carefree period of  
my life, when I entered the court of Ercole  
I in 1498. There I was treated like part  
of the family and could focus on writing  
poetry in vernacular, my greatest passion.  
In 1528, when I was over fifty years old,  
I became part of the *Consiglio dei 12 Savi*  
(Council of 12 Wise Men) and started  
directing the first repertory theatre in  
Europe, the *Sala Grande di Corte*, under  
the patronage of Alfonso I d'Este. Located  
inside Palazzo Ducale, the wooden theatre  
hosted the rich theatrical activity of the  
Este court until December 31, 1531, when  
the entire building was destroyed by a  
terrible fire. Nearing the end of my life, this  
was a difficult blow for me to overcome. I  
passed away in Ferrara on July 6, 1533 and  
now rest in the rooms of Palazzo Paradiso,  
home to Biblioteca Ariostea, the library  
named in my honour, in a beautiful funeral  
monument designed in 1612 by the  
architect Giovan Battista Aleotti.



Ludovico Ariosto



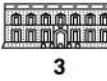
## Itinerary Ferrara, an ideal city



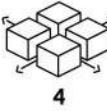
**Corso Ercole I d'Este**  
This leads from the castle to Porta degli Angeli, without business premises, it is flanked by beautiful Renaissance palaces.



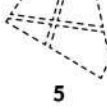
**Palazzo di Giulio d'Este**  
A monumental Renaissance palace designed by the architect Biagio Rossetti.



**Palazzo dei Diamanti**  
Covered in about 8,500 pink and white marble ashlars, it is considered one of the masterpieces of the Renaissance and was once home to Sigismondo d'Este.



**Quadrivio degli Angeli**  
The crossroads overlooked by Palazzo Prosperi Sacrati, Palazzo Bevilacqua, Palazzo Turchi di Bagno and Palazzo dei Diamanti.



**Herculean Addition**  
An urban plan commissioned by Ercole I d'Este and created by the genius of Biagio Rossetti, who made Ferrara the first modern city in Europe.



**Palazzo Prosperi Sacrati**  
This is the oldest palace in the Herculean Addition. Mentioned in the poems of Carducci, it has a magnificent monumental portal.



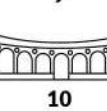
**Parco Massari**  
This is the biggest public park within the walls and has two ancient Lebanon cedars at the entrance.



**Palazzo Massari**  
The last important building constructed in the Este era.



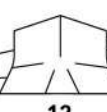
**Tempio di San Cristoforo alla Certosa**  
This is one of the most original works of the Renaissance in Ferrara.



**Certosa Monumental Cemetery**  
The city's main burial site within the walls of Ferrara, it houses the tomb of Duke Borso d'Este.



**Porta degli Angeli**  
The only gateway to the city, it can also be visited internally.



**The Walls**  
The city centre is surrounded by 9 km of walls, which combine monumental beauty and a green park, which can be covered on foot or by bicycle.



**Parco Bassani**  
Once an Este game reserve, these 1,200 hectares of green are now a city park dedicated to the writer Giorgio Bassani.

## Itinerary At the Este court



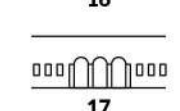
**Castello Estense**  
A majestic symbol of Ferrara with its four towers, elegant white balustrades, prisons and rooms for court games and entertainment.



**Corso Giovecca**  
This ancient road is flanked by numerous buildings and places of historical importance.



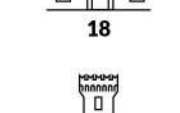
**Palazzo Roverella**  
A magnificent 16th-century palace.



**Palazzina Marfisa d'Este**  
A magnificent example of a noble residence built by Francesco d'Este.



**Palazzo di Renata di Francia**  
A residence of the Este family designed by the architect Pietro Benvenuto degli Ordini.



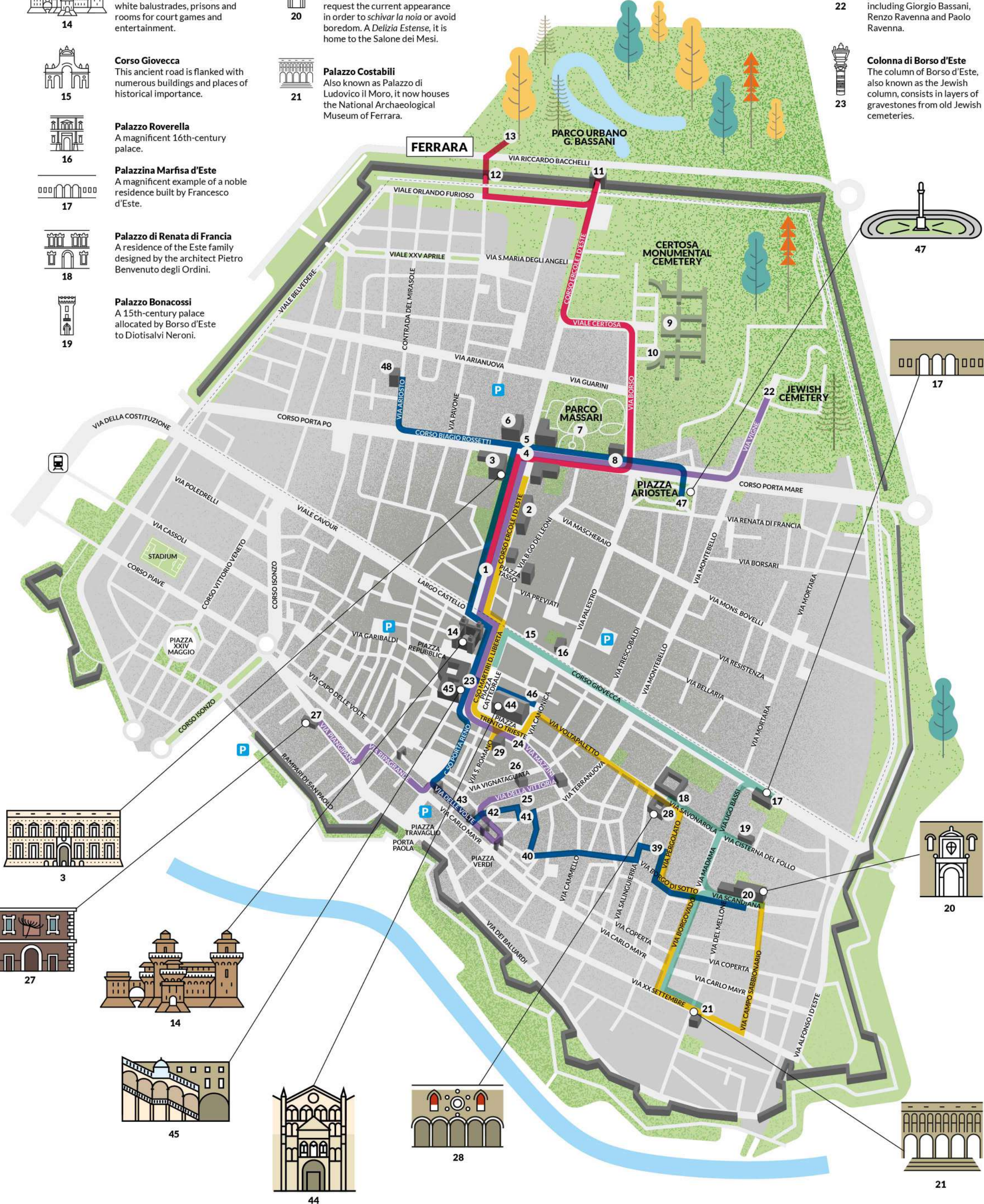
**Palazzo Bonacossi**  
A 15th-century palace allocated by Borso d'Este to Diotisalvi Neroni.



**Palazzo Schifanoia**  
It was Borso d'Este, first marquis and then duke of Ferrara, to request the current appearance in order to *schivar la noia* or avoid boredom. A *Delizia Estense*, it is home to the Salone dei Mesi.



**Palazzo Costabili**  
Also known as Palazzo di Ludovico il Moro, it now houses the National Archaeological Museum of Ferrara.



## Itinerary Crossing Jewish Ferrara



**Jewish Cemetery**  
The cemetery is the resting place of many figures including Giorgio Bassani, Renzo Ravenna and Paolo Ravenna.



**Colonna di Borso d'Este**  
The column of Borso d'Este, also known as the Jewish column, consists in layers of gravestones from old Jewish cemeteries.



**Via Mazzini**  
The main road in the ancient ghetto where the shops and old buildings have largely retained their original structure.



**Via Vittoria**  
With small palaces, internal courtyards and charming balconies, the road is mentioned in the novel *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (Il Giardino dei Finzi-Contini).

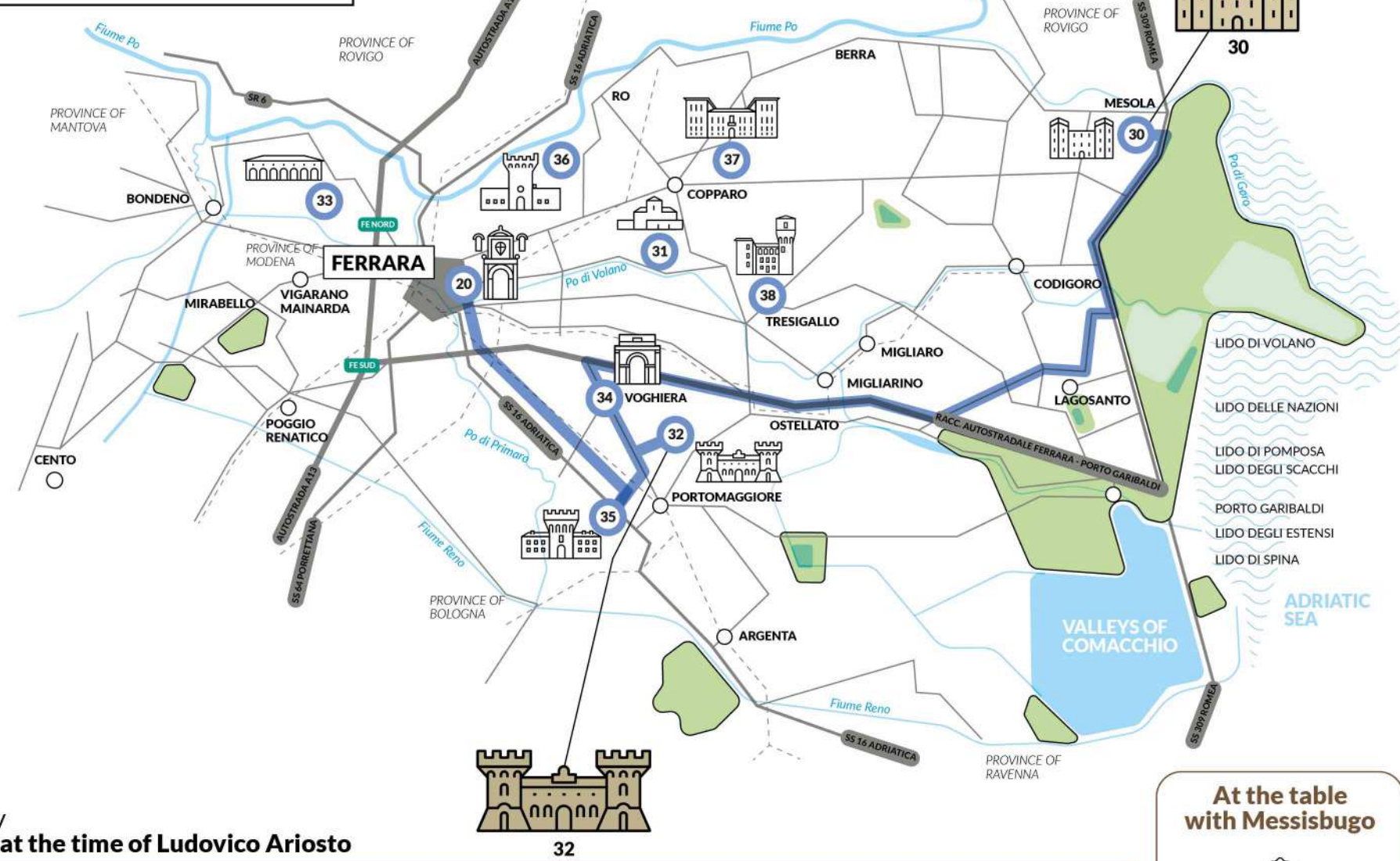


**Jewish Ghetto**  
The mediaeval quarter of Ferrara preserves the memories of one of the oldest Jewish communities in Italy.



**MEIS (National Museum of Italian Judaism and the Shoah)**  
Established to bear witness to the two thousand years of events that have marked the presence of Jews in Italy and promote the prolific and uninterrupted relationship between Jews and the city.

### MAP OF THE PROVINCE OF FERRARA



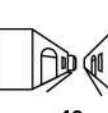
## Itinerary Ferrara at the time of Ludovico Ariosto



**Palazzo Schifanoia**  
Wanted by Borso d'Este "to avoid boredom", this Building houses the Salone dei Mesi, the cycle of frescoes showing the seasons and the signs of the zodiac that enchanted Ariosto.



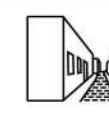
**Monastero del Corpus Domini**  
The 15th-century monastery houses the tomb of many illustrious figures of the Este family, including Alfonso I and his wife, the renowned Lucrezia Borgia.



**Via Giuoco del Pallone**  
This street boasts several houses that once belonged to Ariosto. When he came to Ferrara in 1482, Ludovico and his family moved into number 29.



**Palazzo Paradiso Biblioteca Ariostea**  
The 14th-century rooms of the palace are home to the ashes of Ariosto, housed in a precious marble funeral monument designed by the architect Giovan Battista Aleotti.



**Via del Carbone**  
This mediaeval street winds its way around charming vaults and crossroads with other mediaeval streets, like Via Ragno and Via delle Volte – this is the heart of the Jewish Ghetto.



**Via delle Volte**  
In the mediaeval centre of the city, its name comes from the numerous suspended walkways and arches dating back to the 13th and 14th centuries.



**Ferrara Cathedral**  
Built from the 12th century onwards, the beautiful Cathedral dedicated to Saint George Martyr bears the marks of all its historical periods, spanning from the Romanesque to the Gothic era.



**Piazza Municipale**  
At the time of Ariosto this was the courtyard of Palazzo Ducale. The entrance to the square is dominated by the Volto del Cavallo, a portal with the statues of Niccolò III and Borso d'Este.

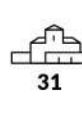
## Itinerary The landscape of the Delizie



**Palazzo Schifanoia**  
A *Delizia Estense* built within the city walls of Ferrara that is home to the Salone dei Mesi, with frescoes commissioned by Borso d'Este.



**Castello di Mesola (Mesola)**  
Four imposing towers and embattled walls make the castle a building that is halfway between a fortress and a *Delizia*.



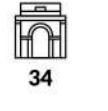
**Villa della Mensa (Sabbioncello San Vittore)**  
A 15th-century villa commissioned by Bartolomeo della Rovere.



**Delizia del Verginese (Portomaggiore)**  
This villa was transformed into a ducal residence in the early 16th century by Alfonso I d'Este.



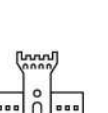
**Delizia della Diamantina (Vigarano Pieve)**  
A splendid estate known as Diamantina due to one of the emblems of the House of Este, the diamond.



**Delizia di Belriguardo (Voghiera)**  
Commissioned by Niccolò d'Este, it was the first of the famous *Delizie Estensi*, the family's most lavish and sumptuous summer residence.



**Delizia di Benignante (Argenta)**  
A splendid example of the sober and refined elegance of Ferrara's architecture during the Renaissance.



**Delizia di Fossadalbero**  
The palace where Ugo, son of Marquis Niccolò III, secretly met Parisina, the marquis' young wife, for one of the most infamous stories from court life.



**Delizia di Zenzalino (Copparo)**  
A prestigious villa and one of the showpieces of Duke Borso.

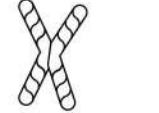


**Palazzo Pio (Tresigallo)**  
A 16th-century palace belonging to the nobleman Alessandro Feruffino, captain of the guards of Duke Alfonso I d'Este.

### At the table with Messisbugo



Pumpkin capellacci



Coppia ferrarese



Salama da sugo



Pasticcio ferrarese



Pampapato