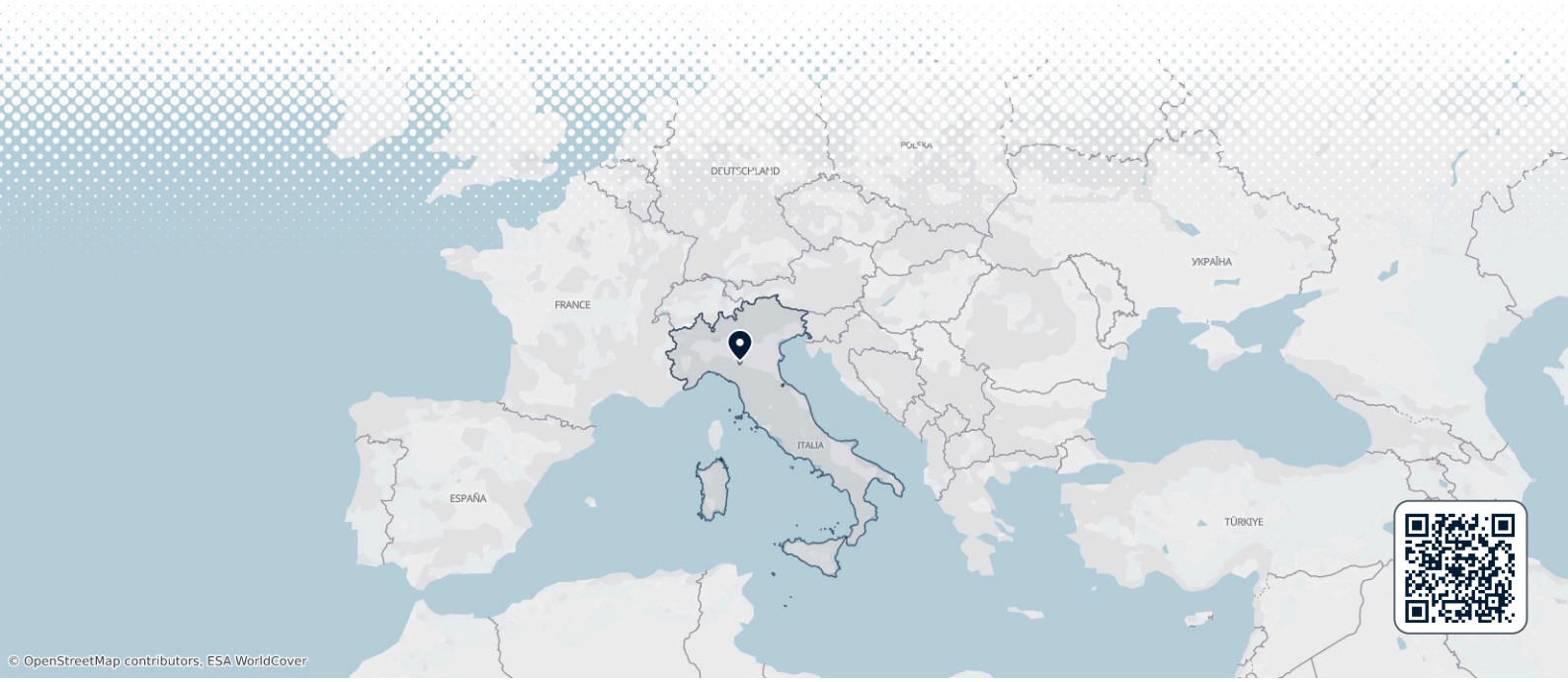


Parma

Emilia-Romagna · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Parma is a compact, prosperous city in the flat Po Valley, best known for two foods: Parma ham and Parmigiano Reggiano cheese. It is a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, and eating well is a big part of any visit. The historic centre is calm and walkable, and locals get around by bike.

The city also has a rich past as the capital of a small duchy. The Farnese and later the Bourbon dukes left palaces, churches and theatres. Painters *Correggio* and *Parmigianino* worked here, and music runs deep: *Giuseppe Verdi* was born nearby, and conductor *Arturo Toscanini* was born in the city. Parma suits a relaxed stay of two or three nights, with easy day trips to castles and food producers in the countryside.

When to visit

Spring (April to June) and early autumn (September and October) are the best times, with mild days for walking and cycling. July and August are hot and humid, with highs often above 30 °C. Winter is cold, damp and often foggy, but museums and churches are quiet.

The biggest event is the **Festival Verdi**, held each autumn, mainly in October. It stages Verdi's operas at the Teatro Regio and in the composer's hometown of Busseto, plus concerts across the city. Book tickets and rooms early if you plan to go.

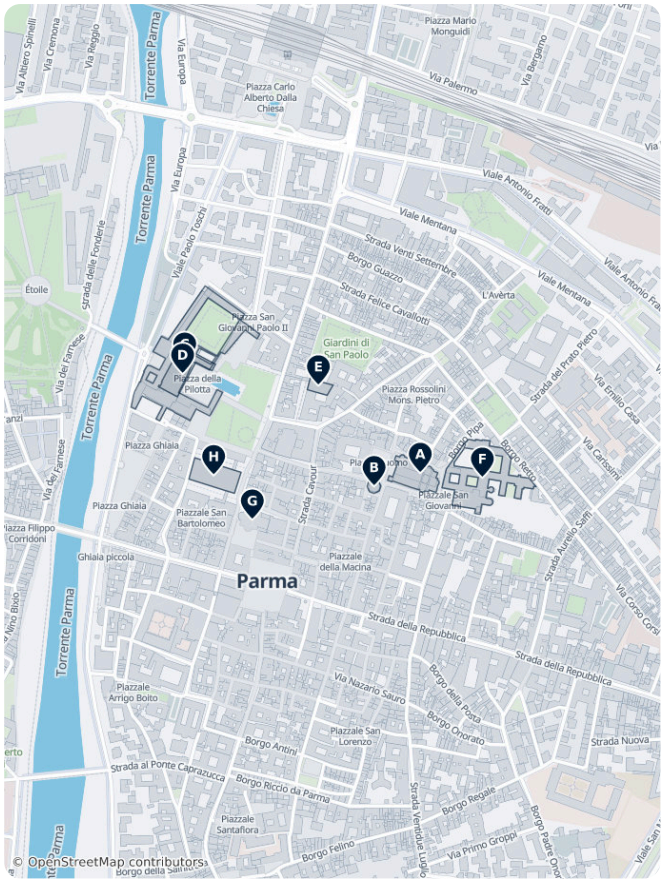
MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	8° / 13° Feels like 4°	0° / -4°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Good Good for cycling	10° / 16° Feels like 7°	1° / -4°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Great Great for cycling	15° / 21° Feels like 11°	4° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Great Great for cycling	19° / 24°	8° / 3°	Dry air · Calm winds
May	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 30°	13° / 9°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	29° / 36°	17° / 13°	Calm winds
July	Fair Fair for sightseeing	33° / 38°	20° / 16°	Humid air · Calm winds · Up to 8 days above 35°
August	Poor Poor for sightseeing	32° / 39°	20° / 16°	Calm winds · Up to 8 days above 35°
September	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 33°	15° / 11°	Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 27°	11° / 5°	Dry air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for cycling	13° / 19°	5° / -1°	Dry air · Calm winds
December	Fair Fair for cycling	8° / 14° Feels like 5°	1° / -3°	Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: May, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights

Most sights are in the compact centre, within a 10-minute walk of each other.



- **A** Parma Cathedral is a Romanesque cathedral from the 11th and 12th centuries. Inside, *Correggio*'s fresco of the Assumption fills the dome with a swirl of figures rising into the sky.
- **B** Parma Baptistery stands next to the cathedral. This octagonal tower of pink Verona marble was begun in 1196 by *Benedetto Antelami*, and its walls and dome are covered in carvings and medieval frescoes.
- **C** Palazzo della Pilotta is the huge, unfinished palace of the Farnese dukes. One ticket covers its museums. The National Gallery holds works by *Correggio* and *Parmigianino* and Leonardo da Vinci's small head of a young woman known as La Scapigliata. The ticket also covers the Teatro Farnese, the Palatine Library, the archaeological museum and the Museo Bodoni.
- **D** Teatro Farnese, inside the Pilotta, is a vast wooden theatre built in 1618. It was almost destroyed by bombing in 1944 and later rebuilt, and walking into it is a highlight of any visit.
- **E** Camera di San Paolo was the private room of a 16th-century abbess. *Correggio* painted its vaulted ceiling with playful children looking out through a trellis of leaves.
- **F** Abbazia di San Giovanni Evangelista is the Benedictine church just behind the cathedral. Its dome is another *Correggio* fresco, and the monks' old pharmacy is next door.
- **G** Basilica di Santa Maria della Steccata is a Renaissance church with frescoes by *Parmigianino*. The Farnese and Bourbon dukes are buried in its crypt.
- **H** Teatro Regio is the city's opera house, opened in 1829. Its audiences are famous for their love of Verdi and their strict judgement of singers.

Parma – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning

App Store · Google Play

Scan to download the app

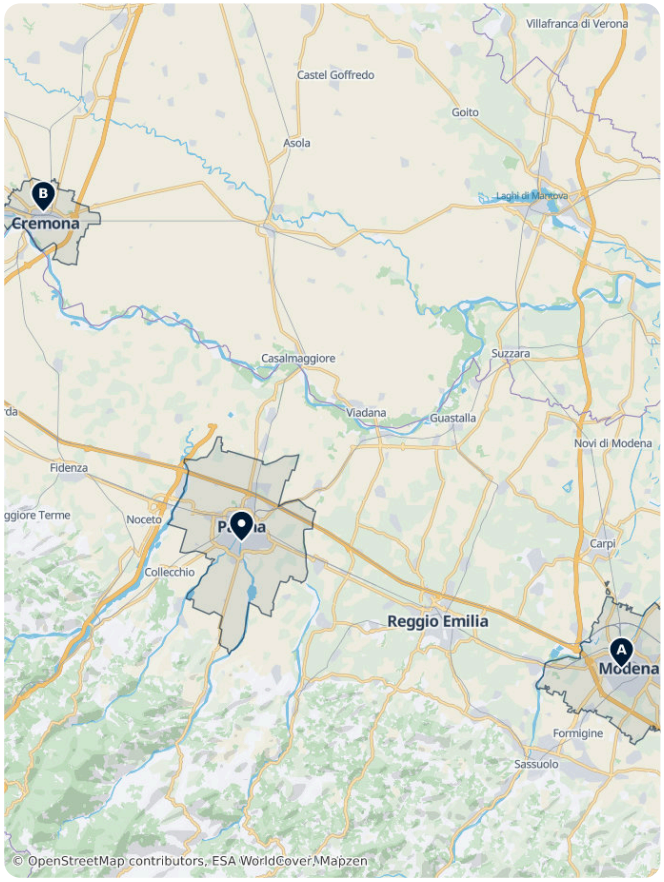
What to experience

Parma's character comes out in its music and its slow, local rhythm.

- See an opera at the Teatro Regio: the season runs mainly from winter into spring, and during the Festival Verdi in autumn. The audience in the upper gallery is known across Italy for cheering or booing singers loudly.
- Tour the opera house: guided visits take you through the auditorium, the boxes and the foyer when there is no rehearsal.
- Ride a bike with the locals: rent a bike and follow the cycle paths along the river and through the Parco Ducale, as residents do.
- Walk the walls of the old fortress: Cittadella, the five-sided Farnese fortress, is now a park. Locals come to jog, walk dogs and sit on the grass bastions on summer evenings.

Day trips

The countryside around Parma is full of castles, ducal palaces and the farms that make its famous foods. Most trips are easiest by car. Listed from closest to farthest:



- **Colorno** (≈20 min by car): the dukes' summer palace, the Reggia di Colorno, with large formal gardens.
- **Fontanellato** (≈25 min by car): a small town around a moated castle, the Rocca Sanvitale, with a room painted by *Parmigianino*. The Labirinto della Masone, a huge bamboo maze, is just outside town.
- **Torrechiara Castle** (≈25 min by car): a 15th-century castle on a hill above the vineyards and ham-curing towns of the Langhirano area. Its rooms are covered in frescoes.
- Ⓐ Modena (≈30 min by train): a city with a UNESCO-listed Romanesque cathedral and museums about Ferrari. Traditional balsamic vinegar is made in the villages around it.
- **Busseto** (≈40 min by car): Verdi's hometown, with his theatre, his patron's house and, nearby, the farmhouse where he was born.
- Ⓑ Cremona (≈1 hour by train or car; direct trains are few): the home of violin-making, with a violin museum and the Torrazzo, a very tall medieval bell tower.

Where to explore

Parma sits on the old Roman road, the Via Emilia, which links the main cities of Emilia-Romagna by fast, frequent trains.

- Along the Via Emilia: Modena and Bologna, the regional capital.
- Further east: Ferrara, Ravenna and the beach resort of Rimini.
- Across the Po river in Lombardy: Cremona.

Getting there

- **By train**: Parma is on the main line between Milan and Bologna. Regional trains reach Bologna in about 1 hour and Milan in about 1 hour 15 minutes, and some Frecciarossa high-speed trains stop here too. The station is a 15-minute walk from the centre. Book on Trenitalia.
- **By air**: Parma Airport is small, with a few seasonal flights, mostly to Italian cities, London and a few other European cities. Bus line 6 runs to the station and centre in about 15 minutes. See Parma Airport.
- **Main gateways**: most international travellers fly to Bologna Airport, then take the Marconi Express shuttle to Bologna station and a train to Parma, about 1.5 hours in total. Milan's Linate and Malpensa airports are about 2 to 3 hours away by train.
- **By car**: the A1 motorway between Milan and Bologna has a Parma exit a few minutes from the city.

Getting around

- **On foot**: the historic centre is flat and compact. You can walk to every main sight.
- **By bike**: cycling is part of daily life in Parma, and many locals bike everywhere. Bikes are a good way to reach the Cittadella and the parks.
- **By bus**: city buses are run by TEP. You can tap a contactless bank card or phone on the reader when you board; the €2 fare covers all rides within 80 minutes. Tap separately for each person. Tickets are also sold at tobacconists and in the TESEO app. See TEP.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The flat, compact historic centre puts every main sight within a 10-minute walk.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Parma is flat and has a strong cycling culture, with cycle paths along the river and through the parks.

Driving

- Car: not for the city itself, which is small and best on foot or by bike. A car is very useful for the castles, villages and food producers in the countryside, which buses serve poorly.
- Restrictions: the historic centre is a limited traffic zone (ZTL) controlled by cameras, active during the day. Hotel guests may drive in only to drop off luggage, and the hotel must register your plate in advance.
- Parking: use the car parks around the edge of the centre and walk in. Street parking inside the ring of boulevards is mostly paid.

Food & drink

Parma's food is the main reason many people come. Try **Prosciutto di Parma** and Parmigiano Reggiano, and look for culatello, a prized cured ham from the lowlands along the Po. Typical dishes include tortelli d'erbetta (pasta filled with chard and ricotta), anolini served in broth, and torta fritta, puffy fried dough eaten with cured meats. Local wines are sparkling Lambrusco and Malvasia from the nearby hills.

For eating out, head to the streets around Strada Farini, which fill with people for aperitivo in the evening, and to the trattorias of the Oltretorrente district across the river. Many visitors also join a morning tour of a Parmigiano Reggiano dairy or a ham-curing house in the countryside, which usually needs booking in advance.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Pizza Margherita
Thin-crust pizza topped with tomato, mozzarella, and basil, invented in Naples and still best there.

DINNER

Spaghetti alla Carbonara
Pasta with egg, cured pork cheek (guanciale), pecorino cheese, and black pepper, a Roman classic.

Risotto alla Milanese
Creamy saffron-infused rice dish from Milan, often served alongside braised veal shank.

Lasagna · Lasagne al Forno
Layered baked pasta with ragu, bechamel, and cheese, a staple of Emilia-Romagna cooking.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Prosciutto and Cheese · Prosciutto e Formaggio
Cured ham paired with regional cheeses, a common antipasto plate found nationwide.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Gelato
Dense, slow-churned Italian ice cream, traditionally lower in fat and air than American-style ice cream.

Tiramisu · Tiramisù
Layered dessert of coffee-soaked ladyfingers and mascarpone cream, dusted with cocoa.

DRINKS

Espresso · Caffè
A short, strong shot of coffee drunk quickly, usually standing at a bar counter.

Wine · Vino
Italy is one of the world's largest wine producers, with regional styles from Piedmont's Barolo to Tuscany's Chianti.

Aperol Spritz
A bittersweet orange aperitif mixed with prosecco and soda water, a staple of the early-evening aperitivo.

Parma – Plan Your Trip

Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.

3M+ downloads · **4.6 stars** · **15 years of trip planning**

App Store · Google Play

Scan to download the app

Safety & health

Parma is a safe city with low crime. Take normal care with bags and phones in crowded places and at the railway station. The area around the station can feel quiet and less pleasant late at night.

Bike theft is common, so lock any rented bike to something fixed with a strong lock. Tap water is safe to drink.

History

The Romans founded Parma in 183 BC on the Via Emilia. Piazza Garibaldi, the main square, still sits on the site of the Roman forum. In the Middle Ages the city grew rich and built Parma Cathedral and Parma Baptistery, which still dominate the religious centre.

In 1545 Pope *Paul III* created the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza for his son, from the Farnese family. The Farnese ruled for almost 200 years and built Palazzo della Pilotta and the Cittadella. Later the Spanish Bourbons took over. After Napoleon's fall, his widow *Marie Louise* of Austria ruled the duchy from 1816 to 1847. She was popular, and she built Teatro Regio. Her life is told in Museo Glauco Lombardi.

Parma joined the new Kingdom of Italy in 1860. In 1922 the working-class Oltretorrente district held barricades against fascist squads for several days. Allied bombs hit the city hard in 1944; the open lawns of Piazza della Pace, next to the Pilotta, cover ground where bombed buildings once stood.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

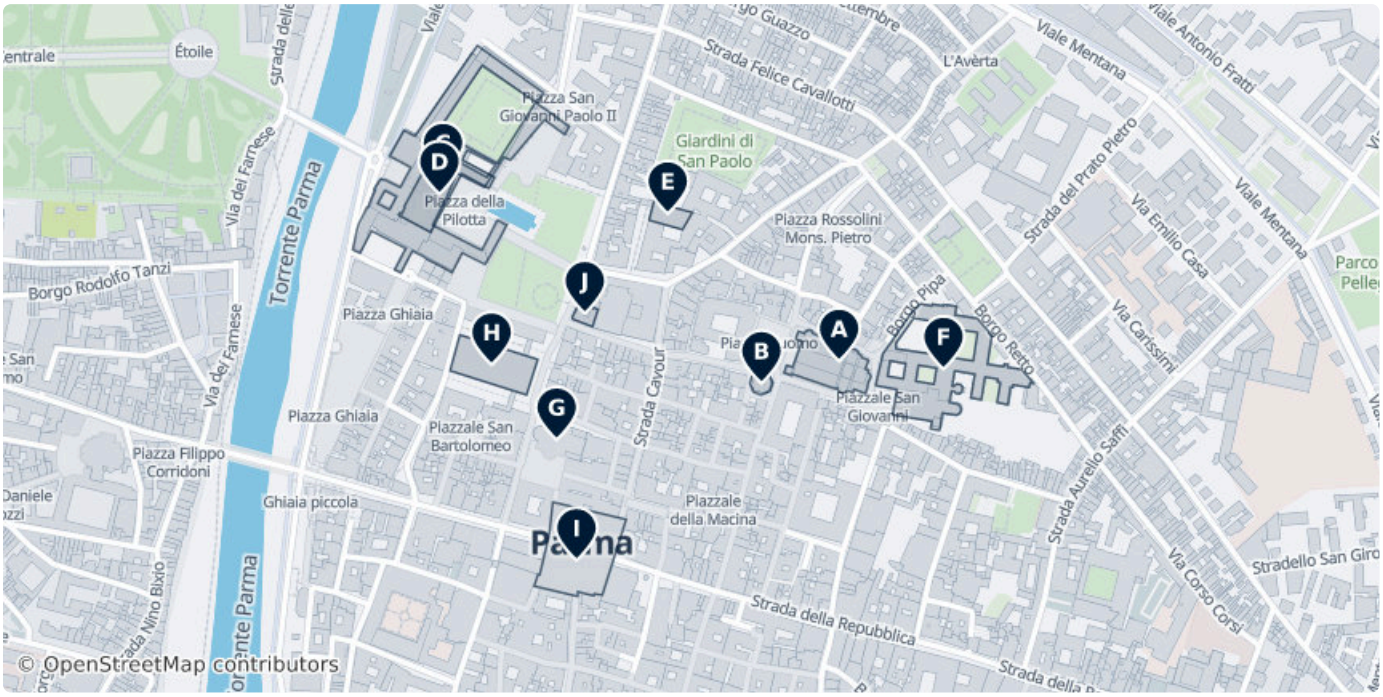
Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

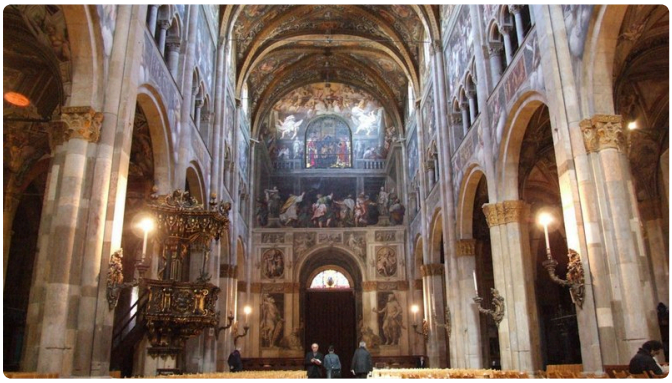
LANGUAGES
Italian

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Parma's Unmissable Treasures

Parma's highlights sit within a short walk of each other. The Romanesque cathedral and Antelami's pink marble baptistery share one square, while the vast Farnese palace of the Pilotta holds a wooden Renaissance theatre and the city's main art gallery. Correggio's frescoes fill the cathedral dome, San Giovanni Evangelista and the Camera di San Paolo, and the Teatro Regio keeps Parma's opera tradition alive.





A Parma Cathedral

Romanesque cathedral whose dome is covered by Correggio's huge fresco of the Assumption of the Virgin.

Piazza Duomo 1, 43121 Parma PR, Italy.
(44.80327, 10.33144)

+39 521 235 886



B Parma Baptistery

Octagonal baptistery of pink Verona marble begun in 1196 by Benedetto Antelami, with carved portals and a frescoed interior.

1 Piazzale Battistero, Parma 43121, Italy
(44.80306, 10.33039)

Mo–Su 10:00–18:00

piazzaduomoparma.com/la-piazza/battister..., 0521 208699



C Palazzo della Pilotta

Huge unfinished Farnese palace that now holds the National Gallery, the Teatro Farnese, the Palatine Library and the archaeological museum.

13A Piazza della Pilotta, Parma 43121, Italy
(44.80504, 10.32613)



D Teatro Farnese

Wooden Renaissance theatre built in 1618 inside the Pilotta, rebuilt after wartime bombing and visited on the Pilotta ticket.

Strada alla Pilotta, 43121 Parma PR, Italy
(44.80486, 10.32608)

complessopilotta.it/teatro-farnese, +39 0521 233617



E Camera di San Paolo

The private dining room of a 16th-century abbess, with a vaulted ceiling painted by Correggio.

Vicolo delle Asse, 43121 Parma PR, Italy
(44.80467, 10.32914)



F San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma

Benedictine abbey church behind the cathedral, with a dome frescoed by Correggio and an old monastic pharmacy next door.

Piazzale San Giovanni, 43121 Parma PR, Italy
(44.80320, 10.33283)



G Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Steccata

Renaissance church on a Greek-cross plan, with frescoes by Parmigianino and the tombs of the Farnese and Bourbon dukes.

3B Via Alighieri Dante, Parma 43121, Italy (44.80252, 10.32765)

diocesi.parma.it/diocesi_2015/index.php



H Teatro Regio

Neoclassical opera house from 1829, the home of Parma's Verdi Festival each autumn.

5B Piazzale Antonio Barezzi, Parma 43121, Italy (44.80324, 10.32678)

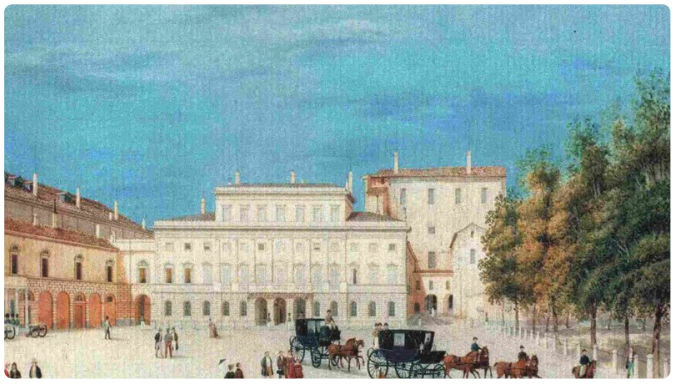
teatroregioparma.it, +39 0521 203911



I Piazza Giuseppe Garibaldi

Parma's main square on the site of the Roman forum, lined by the Governor's Palace and the Town Hall.

1c Piazza Giuseppe Garibaldi, Parma 43121, Italy (44.80138, 10.32792)



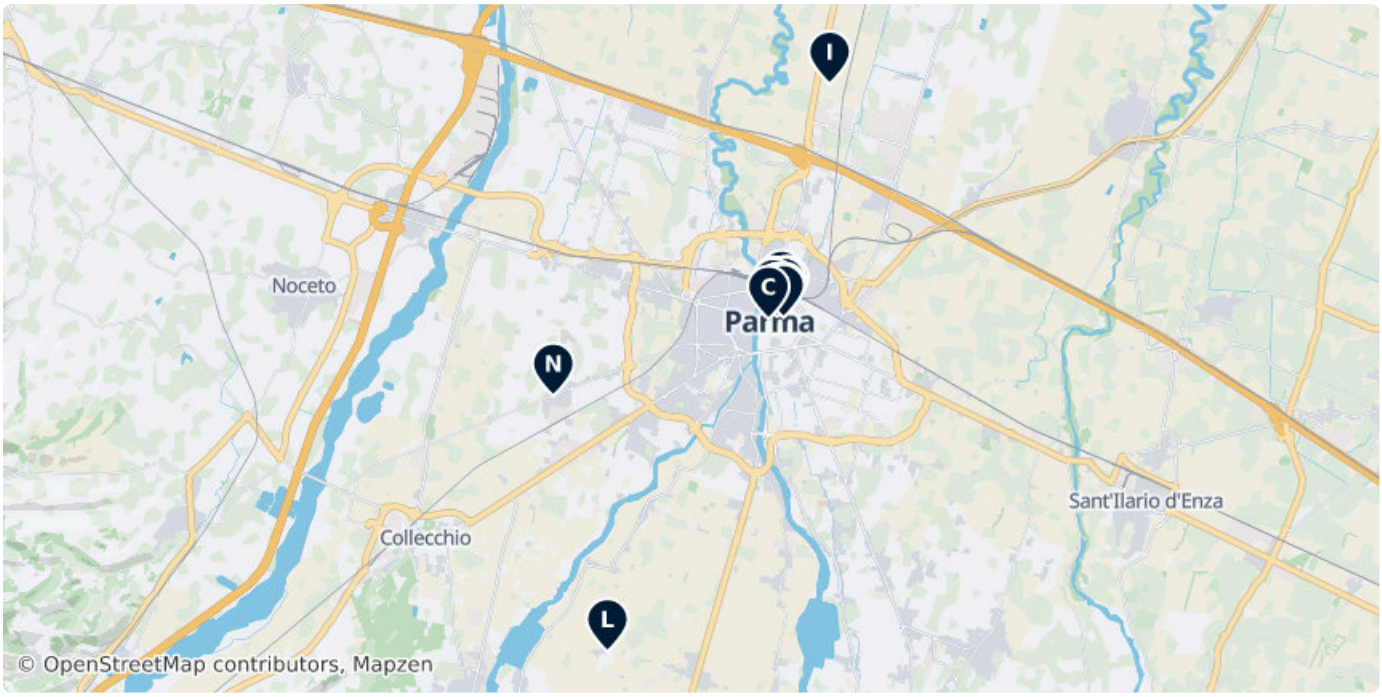
J Museo Glauco Lombardi

Museum devoted to Duchess Marie Louise, Napoleon's second wife, who ruled Parma after 1815.

Strada Carlo Pisacane, 43121 Parma PR, Italy (44.80373, 10.32803)

Parma's Sacred Sites

Parma’s religious landscape is defined by architectural masterpieces spanning the Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance periods. The Romanesque Cathedral and the pink marble Baptistery form the city's spiritual heart, while the Basilica of Santa Maria della Steccata showcases classic Greek-cross design. These sites house significant artworks, including Correggio’s illusionistic frescoes and Parmigianino's Mannerist paintings. Beyond the city center, the Cistercian Abbazia di Valserena and the Romanesque Pieve di San Geminiano offer insights into the region's long-standing monastic and rural ecclesiastical traditions.





A Parma Cathedral

Parma Cathedral is a Roman Catholic cathedral in Parma, Emilia-Romagna, dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Piazza Duomo 1, 43121 Parma PR, Italy.
(44.80327, 10.33144)

+39 521 235 886



B San Paolo

San Paolo is a former convent in central Parma, Emilia-Romagna, northern Italy.

7A Vicolo delle Asse, Parma 43121, Italy
(44.80464, 10.32936)



C Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Steccata

The Shrine of Santa Maria della Steccata is a Greek-cross design Renaissance church in central Parma, Italy.

3B Via Alighieri Dante, Parma 43121, Italy
(44.80252, 10.32765)

diocesi.parma.it/diocesi_2015/index.php



D San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma

San Giovanni Evangelista is a church in Parma, northern Italy, part of a complex also including a Benedictine convent and grocery.

Piazzale San Giovanni, 43121 Parma PR, Italy
(44.80320, 10.33283)



E San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma

San Giovanni Evangelista is a Mannerist-style, Roman Catholic church located on Piazzale San Giovanni, located just behind the apse of the...

5A Piazzale San Giovanni, Parma 43121, Italy
(44.80284, 10.33257)

F ex Chiesa di San Ludovico

A deconsecrated neoclassical church featuring a facade by architect Niccolò Bettoli, now used as a venue for cultural exhibitions.

2B Borgo del Parmigianino, Parma 43121, Italy
(44.80424, 10.32930)



G San Francesco del Prato, Parma

San Francesco del Prato is a Gothic-style, Roman Catholic church, now deconsecrated, located on Piazzale San Francesco #4 in central Parma,...

Strada del Prato Pietro, 43121 Parma PR, Italy (44.80484, 10.33381)



H Parma Baptistery

The Baptistery of Parma is a religious edifice in Parma, northern Italy.

1 Piazzale Battistero, Parma 43121, Italy (44.80306, 10.33039)

Mo–Su 10:00–18:00

piazzaduomoparma.com/la-piazza/battister..., 0521 208699



I Abbazia di Valserena

13th-century Cistercian abbey with a Gothic church, currently housing the University of Parma's Communication Study Center and Archive (CSAC).

(44.85639, 10.34746)



J ex Chiesa di Santa Elisabetta

A deconsecrated Catholic church in the city center featuring Renaissance and Baroque architectural elements.

9a Borgo Retto, Parma 43121, Italy (44.80453, 10.33283)



K Oratorio Immacolata Concezione

A 16th-century Catholic oratory located near the San Francesco del Prato complex, known for its decorated interior.

4 Strada Pietro Del Prato, Parma 43121, Italy
(44.80459, 10.33384)



L Chiesa di San Pietro Apostolo

A neoclassical Catholic church located in the Vigatto district south of Parma.

(44.72613, 10.27554)



M Chiesa della Santissima Trinità

Historic Catholic church, also known as Trinità Vecchia, with 16th-century origins and a 19th-century reconstruction.

(44.80614, 10.33194)



N Pieve di San Geminiano

A 13th-century Romanesque parish church in Vicofertile featuring a notable 12th-century carved baptismal font.

(44.78482, 10.25803)

Parma Parks and Gardens

Parma's green spaces are close to the historic centre. The Farnese dukes laid out the Parco Ducale across the river, and their pentagonal Cittadella fortress is now a public park. The university's botanical garden and the lawns of Piazza della Pace next to the Pilotta give quiet breaks between sights.





A Parco Ducale

Large Farnese-era park west of the river, with tree-lined avenues, statues, a pond and the ducal palace.

79A Parco Ducale, Parma 43125, Italy (44.80617, 10.31942)

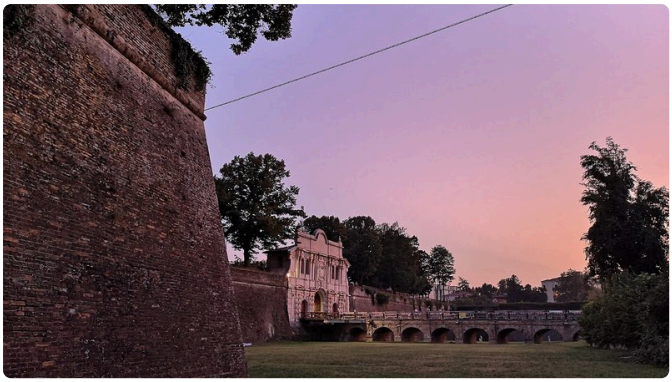
turismo.comune.parma.it/it/canali-tematici/scopri-il-territ...



B Palazzo del Giardino

The ducal summer palace inside the Parco Ducale, with frescoed rooms open on guided visits.

3 Parco Ducale, Parma 43125, Italy (44.80784, 10.32232)



C Cittadella di Parma

Pentagonal fortress built for the Farnese in the late 16th century, now a public park with walks along the bastions.

Via Passo Buole, 43121 Parma PR, Italy (44.79209, 10.33183)



D Orto Botanico di Parma

The University of Parma's 18th-century botanical garden, with old greenhouses and specimen trees.

2 Via Linati, Parma 43121, Italy (44.79571, 10.32833)



E Piazza della Pace

Wide lawn beside the Palazzo della Pilotta, laid out on ground cleared by the 1944 bombing, with the Verdi monument.

9 Piazza della Pace, Parma 43121, Italy (44.80430, 10.32743)

DATA SOURCES

Map data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, ESA WorldCover, Mapzen
Data	© OpenStreetMap contributors, Wikidata, Wikipedia, Tripomatic, Official websites

IMAGE CREDITS

- Parma Cathedral — "Parma Duomo di Parma 002" by Mattana, pd
- Parma Baptistery — "Baptistry of Parma Ceiling" by Nauticashades / w:User:Nauticashades, cc-by-sa-3.0
- Palazzo della Pilotta — "Parma - monumento a Giuseppe Verdi" by ho visto nina volare, cc-by-sa-2.0
- Teatro Farnese — "Parma - Teatro Farnese" by karaian, cc-by-2.0
- Camera di San Paolo — "Deckenfresko im Nonnekloser San Paolo in Parma, Detail: Putti" by Antonio da Correggio, pd
- San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma — "Ingresso Antica Spezieria" by pensierarte, cc0
- Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Steccata — "Madonna allattante" by Pensierarte, cc-by-sa-3.0
- Teatro Regio — "Parma - Teatro Regio" by spaceodissey, cc-by-2.0
- Piazza Giuseppe Garibaldi — "Piazza Giuseppe Garibaldi" by Tripomatic user, cc-by-4.0
- Museo Glauco Lombardi — "Alinovi Palazzo Ducale-Pilotta" by Giuseppe Alinovi (1811-1848), pd
- Parma Cathedral — "Parma, Italy. Aerial view of Duomo and Battistero." by Carlo Ferrari, CC-BY-SA-3.0
- San Paolo — "Camera di San Paolo, Parma" by Antonio da Correggio, Public domain
- Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Steccata — "Basilica di Santa Maria della Steccata" by Pensierarte, CC BY-SA 3.0
- San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma — "Ingresso antica spezieria" by pensierarte, CC0
- San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma — "Ingresso antica spezieria" by pensierarte, CC0
- San Francesco del Prato, Parma — "This is the interior of the gothich church of San Francesco del Prato in Parma..." by Emilian1978, Public domain
- Parma Baptistery — "The painted ceiling of the Baptistry of Parma." by Nauticashades, CC-BY-SA-3.0
- Abbazia di Valserena — "OLYMPUS DIGITAL CAMERA" by Marcopaoloscotti, CC BY-SA 4.0
- ex Chiesa di Santa Elisabetta — "Lampadario Sonoro" by Pensierarte, CC0
- Oratorio Immacolata Concezione — "Oratorio dell'Immacolata Concezione (Parma) - ingresso" by Parma1983, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Chiesa di San Pietro Apostolo — "Chiesa di San Pietro Apostolo a Carignano (Parma)" by Simone Romanelli, CC BY-SA 3.0
- Chiesa della Santissima Trinità — "Chiesa della Santissima Trinità (Parma) - navate" by Parma1983, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Pieve di San Geminiano — "Pieve di San Geminiano (Vicofertile) - facciata" by Parma1983, CC BY-SA 4.0
- Parco Ducale — "Parco Ducale" by Ján Šipikal, cc-by-4.0
- Palazzo del Giardino — "Aetas Felicior" by Jacopo Bertoia, pd
- Cittadella di Parma — "Cittadella a Parma, ingresso monumentale e mura, 16-9-2019" by Fabrizio Marcheselli, cc-by-sa-4.0
- Orto Botanico di Parma — "Orto Botanico di Parma - garden" by Daderot., cc-by-sa-3.0
- Piazza della Pace — "Giardino piazzale Pilotta" by ho visto nina volare, cc-by-2.0

A free travel guide — not for sale. Travel guide generated with AI on November 17, 2026. Text and layout by Tripomatic, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0. Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the ODbL. Photos are under their own licences, as credited on this page.