

# Trieste

Friuli Venezia Giulia · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



## Overview

Trieste sits where the Adriatic meets the edge of the Karst plateau, tucked into Italy's northeastern corner just a few kilometers from Slovenia. It belonged to the Habsburg Empire for more than five centuries and, after being declared a free port in 1719, grew into that empire's main gateway to the sea. That history still shapes the city: grand Habsburg-era squares open straight onto the water, the coffeehouses feel closer to Vienna than to Rome, and Italian, Slovenian, and Central European influences sit side by side in the streets and menus.

That mixed identity, plus dramatic scenery where limestone cliffs drop into the sea, makes Trieste a rewarding stop for travelers who want handsome architecture and a strong coffee culture without the crowds of Venice or Florence, a short drive or train ride away. *James Joyce* lived here for over a decade and began writing *Ulysses* during that time, and the poet *Umberto Saba* ran a bookshop that is still open today.

## When to visit

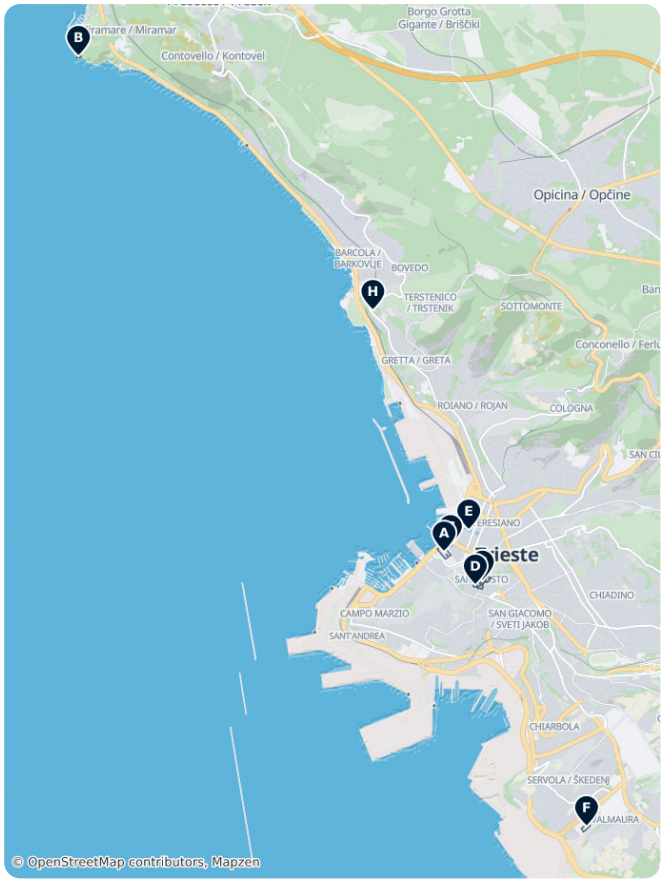
Spring and autumn are the most comfortable seasons for walking the city. Summers are warm and can turn humid near the water, and winters are cold, occasionally with the Bora, a powerful wind off the Karst plateau that can gust well over 100 km/h and disrupt ferries and walks along the harbor. Plan around the **Barcolana** regatta on the second Sunday of October — a Guinness World Record holder as the largest sailing race by number of boats, filling the Gulf of Trieste and turning the whole waterfront into a weekend-long festival.

| MONTH | CONDITIONS | DAY °C avg / max | NIGHT °C avg / min | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | Poor<br>Poor for sightseeing | 8° / 12°<br>Feels like 4° | 2° / -3° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| February | Fair<br>Fair for hiking | 9° / 14°<br>Feels like 5° | 2° / -3° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| March | Good<br>Good for hiking | 13° / 18°<br>Feels like 10° | 5° / 0° | Dry air · Calm winds |
| April | Good<br>Good for hiking | 17° / 23° | 9° / 4° | 12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds |
| May | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 21° / 26° | 13° / 9° | 14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds |
| June | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 26° / 31° | 18° / 13° | Humid air · Calm winds |
| July | Good<br>Good for the beach | 28° / 33° | 20° / 16° | Muggy, humid air · Calm winds |
| August | Good<br>Good for the beach | 28° / 33° | 20° / 16° | Muggy, humid air · Calm winds |
| September | Great<br>Great for sightseeing | 23° / 28° | 16° / 11° | Calm winds |
| October | Good<br>Good for sightseeing | 18° / 23° | 12° / 6° | 13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds |
| November | Fair<br>Fair for hiking | 13° / 18° | 8° / 2° | 14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds |
| December | Fair<br>Fair for hiking | 9° / 13°<br>Feels like 5° | 3° / -3° | Dry air · Calm winds |

Best months: May, June, September

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

## Top sights




Ⓐ Piazza Unità d'Italia is the natural starting point: one of the largest seafront squares in Europe, open on one side straight to the Adriatic and lined on the others with grand former government buildings from the Habsburg era.

A short trip north along the coast, Ⓑ Miramare Castle is a white limestone castle built in the 1850s for the Habsburg archduke Maximilian, with terraced gardens and sweeping sea views that make it worth the trip on its own.

On the hill above the old town, Ⓒ San Giusto Castle is a compact medieval fortress with the best panorama over the city and gulf, standing right beside Ⓓ Cattedrale di San Giusto, a cathedral built by joining two older churches, with faded mosaics inside from its earliest years.

Cutting into the neoclassical Borgo Teresiano district, the Ⓔ Canal Grande was dug so cargo boats could unload close to the warehouses that once lined it; the domed Serbian Orthodox church at its head is one of the best-known views in the city.

On the southern edge of town, Ⓕ Risiera di San Sabba is a former rice-husking plant that the occupying German forces converted into a concentration and transit camp during the Second World War, the only one of its kind on Italian soil. It is now a national monument and museum — a sober visit, but one of the most important sites in the city.

On the waterfront, Ⓖ Teatro Lirico Giuseppe Verdi is the city's grand opera house, an elegant theatre dating to 1801 and still in active use for opera and ballet.

For a wider view, climb to the Ⓗ Faro della Vittoria, a lighthouse and First World War memorial on a rise above the port, with one of the best lookout points over the city and the sea.

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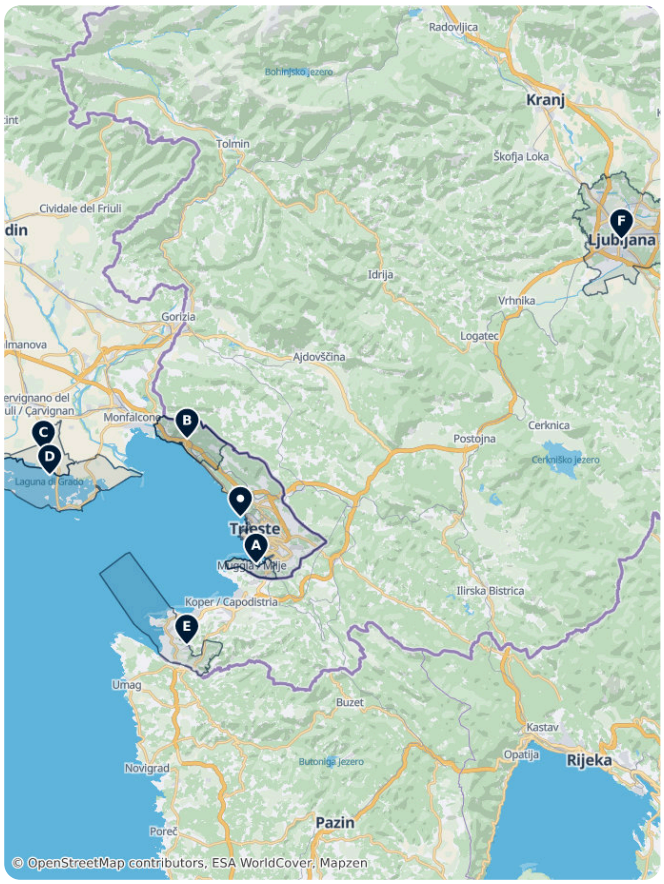
## What to experience

- **Order coffee like a local.** Trieste has its own coffee vocabulary, left over from its port-city past — a "capo in b" is a small cappuccino in a glass, not a cup. Try it standing at the counter of Caffè San Marco, a 19th-century literary café still furnished much as it was in Joyce's day.
- **Join the evening swim at Barcola.** On warm evenings, locals head down to the concrete platforms along Barcola to swim straight off the rocks after work, a ritual that runs all summer.
- **Walk a stretch of the Napoleonica Trail.** This flat path traces an old carriage route along the rim of the Karst plateau above the city, with steady views down over the gulf and none of the climbing a hiking trail would normally require.
- **Ride the historic tram to Opicina.** The Trieste–Opicina line climbs the escarpment behind the city on a route that mixes tram and funicular sections, with the view opening up over the gulf partway up.

## Day trips

Trieste sits close to both the wild Karst plateau above it and the Slovenian coast, so a rental car or a short bus ride opens up several good day trips.



- A Muggia (~20 min by bus or, in season, by ferry) — a small former Venetian port with a Venetian-Gothic town hall and cathedral on its main square, one of the few places on this coast that kept its own distinct identity outside Trieste.
- Grotta Gigante (~25 min by car or bus) — one of the largest tourist show caves in the world, a single chamber over 100 metres high.
- Duino Castle (~25 min by car or bus) — a clifftop castle above the sea in B Duino-Aurisina, where the poet Rainer Maria Rilke began his *Duino Elegies*; a scenic coastal path connects it back toward Trieste.
- C Aquileia and D Grado (~45–55 min by car, or by train plus local bus) — the first was a major Roman city and holds a UNESCO-listed archaeological area and an early Christian basilica with extensive mosaic floors; the second is a small lagoon resort town with a walkable old center and beaches.
- E Piran, Slovenia (~40 min by car or bus; bring a passport or ID card even though there is no routine border check) — a walled Venetian-era town on the Slovenian coast, with a bell tower and a central square that slopes down to the harbor.
- F Ljubljana, Slovenia (~1–1.5 hours by car, bus, or train) — Slovenia's small, walkable capital, with a hilltop castle reached by funicular and a lively riverside old town.

## Where to explore

Udine is the largest city in inland Friuli Venezia Giulia and an easy add-on to a Trieste trip, known for its arcaded main square and a castle hill with frescoes by Giambattista Tiepolo.

## Getting there

- **By air**: Trieste – Friuli Venezia Giulia Airport (TRS) is in Ronchi dei Legionari, about 30 km northwest of the city, with a limited schedule of flights to a handful of Italian and European cities; a shuttle bus and regional trains connect it to Trieste Centrale in roughly 40–50 minutes. Many travelers instead fly into Venice Marco Polo Airport, about 2 hours away by car or bus, or Ljubljana Airport in Slovenia, about 1 hour away, both of which offer far more international connections.
- **By train**: Trieste Centrale is the main station, with direct trains to Venice (around 2 hours) and Udine, plus connections on toward Vienna and Ljubljana.
- **By bus**: Long-distance coaches run from the bus station next to Trieste Centrale to Ljubljana, and to other cities in Friuli Venezia Giulia and along the Slovenian and Croatian coast.

## Getting around

- **Public transit**: Trieste Trasporti runs the city's bus network (plus one historic tram-funicular line up to Opicina); buy tickets in advance from tobacconists, newsstands, or the operator's app rather than expecting to pay the driver directly. Trieste Trasporti
- **Taxi**: Regular taxis wait at ranks around Piazza Unità d'Italia and the station; ride-hailing apps have limited presence, so a phone-booked or rank taxi is the more reliable option.
- **On foot / cycling**: The seafront and city center are flat and easy to explore on foot; reaching San Giusto hill or the district above it involves a steady climb, best avoided by taking a bus partway up. A coastal path connects the center to Barcola and on to Miramare and is popular with both walkers and cyclists.

## Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

**High**

The seafront and city center are flat and easy on foot; reaching San Giusto hill involves a steady climb, but a bus covers most of it.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

**Moderate**

A coastal path runs from the center to Barcola and Miramare, but the surrounding Karst plateau is steep and less suited to casual cycling.

## Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: Not for the city center, which is compact and largely pedestrian around the main sights — but a car pays off for exploring the Karst plateau and the coast toward Slovenia at your own pace.
- **Parking**: Several multi-story car parks sit just outside the historic center; on-street blue-line spaces are paid and metered, payable by app or at nearby machines.
- **Restrictions**: A limited-traffic zone (ZTL) covers parts of the historic center and is camera-enforced; check your hotel's access rules before driving in, since visitor exemptions vary.

# Food & drink

Trieste's kitchen carries its Austro-Hungarian and Adriatic past in equal measure: goulash, strudel, and boiled meats share menus with fresh Adriatic seafood and Italian pasta. **Jota**, a thick soup of beans, sauerkraut, and potato, is the classic cold-weather dish to look for.

Coffee is treated with particular seriousness here — Trieste has been one of Italy's main coffee-importing ports for two centuries, and several historic roasters and blenders are still based in the city. Outside town, look out for an *osmiza*: a farmhouse on the Karst plateau that opens seasonally to sell its own wine, cured meats, and cheese directly to visitors, marked by a branch or wreath hung at the gate.

## 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.

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## Safety & health

Trieste is one of the safer Italian cities for travelers, with little of the aggressive pickpocketing found in bigger tourist centers; ordinary caution around the train station and in crowds during the Barcolana weekend is enough. Take a severe Bora wind warning seriously if one is issued during your stay — gusts can exceed 100 km/h, and locals avoid the exposed waterfront and steep streets near the sea until it passes.

## History

Trieste's fortunes have always followed whoever controlled its port. The hill now occupied by San Giusto Castle was settled from Roman times onward, and the ruins of a Roman theatre still sit at its foot. The city's modern shape dates to 1719, when the Habsburgs made it a free port, triggering a boom that filled the flat land below the old town with the neoclassical streets around Piazza Unità d'Italia and the Canal Grande.

That status ended with the empire's collapse after the First World War, and the following decades were harder: during the Second World War, occupying German forces ran Risiera di San Sabba as a concentration and transit camp, the only one of its kind in Italy. Trieste's future stayed unsettled for almost a decade after the war, disputed between Italy and Yugoslavia, before it was returned to Italy in 1954.

## Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

**CURRENCY**
**EUR €**

**EMERGENCY**
**112**

**ELECTRICITY**

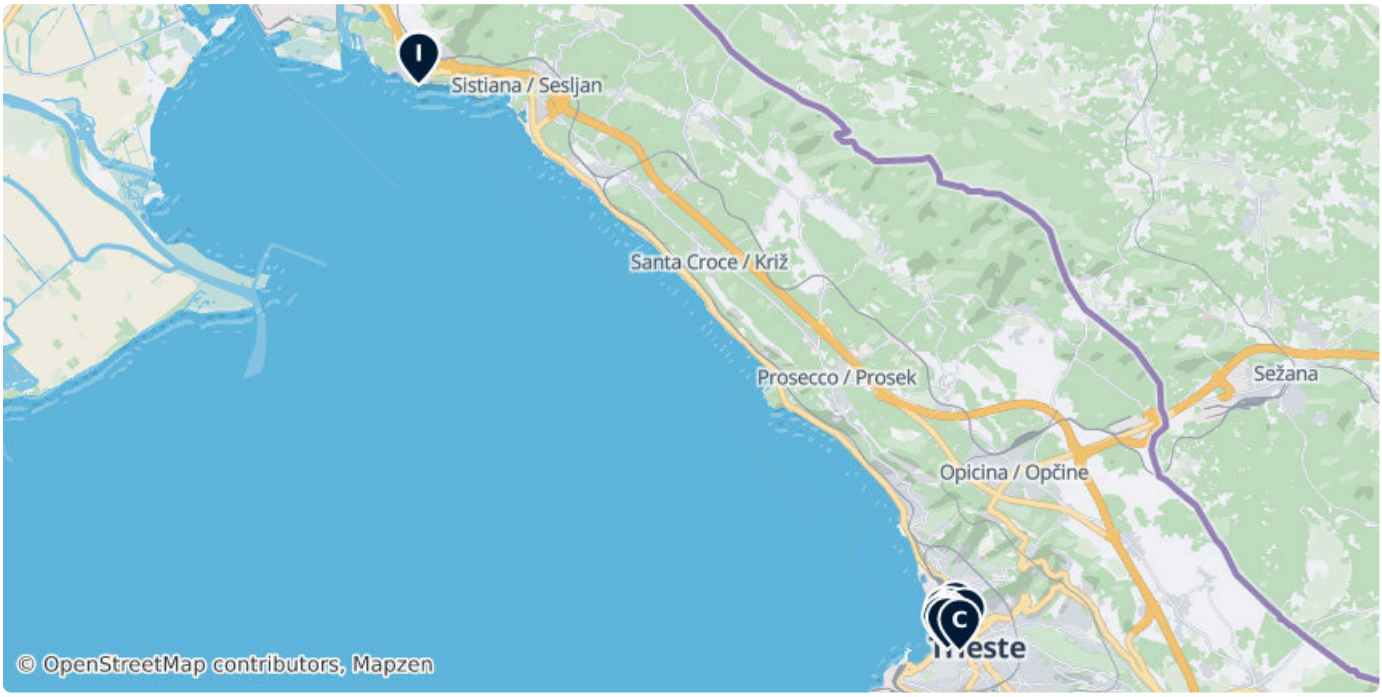
Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

**LANGUAGES**
Italian

**TAP WATER**
**Safe to drink**

# Trieste's Unmissable Gems

Trieste showcases a distinctive architectural legacy shaped by its history as the Austro-Hungarian Empire's primary port. This selection highlights the vast Piazza Unità d'Italia, Europe’s largest seafront square, and the Roman Theatre dating back to the 1st century AD. Architectural landmarks include the eclectic Lloyd Triestino Palace and the mosaic-adorned Government Palace. Religious sites like the Serbian Orthodox Saint Spyridon Church reflect the city’s multicultural roots, while the Molo Audace pier extends 246 meters into the Adriatic Sea.






## A Molo Audace

Molo Audace is a pier located on the shores of Trieste, Italy right in the centre of the city, a few steps from Piazza Unità d'Italia and...

1 Molo Audace, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.65160, 13.76730)



## B Piazza Unità d'Italia

Largest seafront square in Europe featuring pedestrian-friendly cobblestone paving and historic architecture with views of the sea.

7 Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.65005, 13.76777)

Mo–Su 09:00–18:00

+390403478312



## C Roman Theatre

Ancient Roman archaeological ruins of a historic theater that illustrate the area's architectural and cultural heritage.

14 Via di Donota, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.64913, 13.77178)

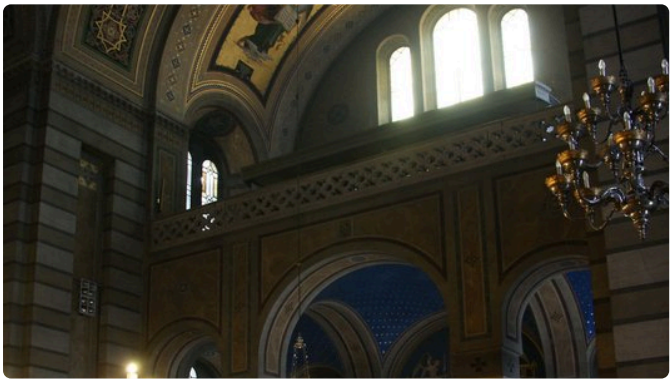
comune.trieste.it



## D Lloyd Triestino Palace

19th-century palace originally built as the headquarters of a shipping company, featuring eclectic architecture and elaborate sculptures.

1 Via dell'Orologio, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.64992, 13.76670)



## E Saint Spyridon Church, Trieste

Saint Spyridon Church is a Serbian Orthodox church in Trieste, Italy.

9 Via Santo Spiridione, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.65146, 13.77333)

comunitaserba.org



## F Greek Orthodox Church of San Nicolò dei Greci

The Greek Orthodox Church of San Nicolò dei Greci, Trieste, Italy, is a historical Greek Orthodox Church built in 1784-1787 and re designed...

2 Via San Nicolò, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.65153, 13.76942)

comgrecotrieste.it/vw_Page.php



## G Duino Castle

Historic 14th-century castle perched on cliffs overlooking the sea, featuring medieval architecture, a scenic park, and cultural heritage connections.

33 Frazione Duino, Duino 34011, Italy (45.77184, 13.60387)

| | |
|---|---|
| Mar-Oct Mo–Su | 09:30–16:00 |
| Nov-Feb Sa–Su | 09:30–16:00 |

castellodiduino.it/en/, +39040208120



## H Duino Castle

Duino Castle is a fourteenth-century fortification located in the village of Duino, located in the municipality of Duino-Aurisina, near...

Castello di Duino, 34011 Duino Aurisina, Italy (45.77208, 13.60369)

castellodiduino.it, +39 040 20 81 20



## I Duino Castle

Duino Castle is a fourteenth-century fortification located in Duino, near Trieste, Italy, on the cliffs overlooking the Gulf of Trieste.

33 Frazione Duino, Duino 34011, Italy (45.77184, 13.60387)

castellodiduino.it, +39 040 208120



## J Government Palace

Historic palace featuring Renaissance and Vienna Secession architectural styles, originally serving as the seat of the Austro-Hungarian imperial lieutenancy and now housing regional government offices.

8 Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.65067, 13.76801)

prefettura.it/trieste/, +390403731111



## K Carlo VI d'Asburgo

18th-century stone monument commemorating Emperor Charles VI, who established Trieste as a free port in 1719. The statue stands on a high pedestal in Piazza Unità d'Italia, depicting the monarch pointing toward the sea to symbolize the city's maritime commerce.

3 Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, Trieste 34121, Italy
(45.64950, 13.76802)

## L Museo teatrale Carlo Schmidl

Housed in the 19th-century Palazzo Gopcevich, this museum documents Trieste's theatrical and musical history from the 18th century to the present. The collection features historical musical instruments, stage costumes, and extensive archives dedicated to the city's performing arts heritage.

4 Via Gioacchino Rossini, Trieste 34132, Italy
(45.65291, 13.77049)

museoschmidl.it

# Karst Wonders and Caves

The Trieste Karst plateau is defined by its dramatic limestone geology, featuring thousands of caves, sinkholes, and vertical shafts known as abysses. This collection highlights significant subterranean sites, from the archaeological Duino Mithraeum, housing an ancient Roman altar, to the Grotta delle Torri di Slivia, known for its massive stalagmite towers. Many sites, such as the Grotta dei Partigiani, hold historical significance from World War II, while the numerous abysses around Basovizza showcase the region's characteristic vertical karst formations.






## A Grotta delle Torri di Slivia / Pejca v Lazcu

A deep karst cave featuring massive stalagmite formations known as "towers." It reaches a depth of 101 meters and is accessible via a guided descent of 200 steps.

Raccordo Autostradale A4-Trieste, 34011, Italy (45.76551, 13.65445)



## B Grotta delle Torri di Slivia / Pejca v Lazcu

Located in Duino-Aurisina, this cave is famous for its large stalagmite groups. The cave system is a significant example of the region's complex underground drainage.

34011, Italy (45.76590, 13.65450)



## C Duino Mithraeum

The Duino Mithraeum is a Mithraeum located near Duino, in the province of Trieste, north-eastern Italy.

34011, Italy (45.78431, 13.59795)



## D Grotta dell'orso / Gabrovška pečina

A cave near Gabrovizza where remains of the prehistoric Cave Bear (Ursus spelaeus) and Neolithic artifacts have been discovered by archaeologists.

34010, Italy (45.73251, 13.72608)

## E Grotta dell'Acqua / Vodnica

Also known as the Grotta di Boriano, this cave is situated directly on the border between Italy and Slovenia and was historically used for its internal water source.

34011, Italy (45.77037, 13.71928)

## F Pozzo di Basovizza

A natural vertical shaft typical of the Basovizza karst area, frequently utilized by local groups for speleological training and vertical rope techniques.

34149, Italy (45.65182, 13.85754)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/72

## G Valska Jama - Grotta dei lavandini

A karst cave located near the village of Slivia, characterized by unique limestone erosion patterns and rock formations.

6223, Slovenia (45.80499, 13.67282)

carsonascosto.blogspot.com/2010/03/grotta-del-lavandin...

## H Abisso Plutone / Jamendol

A deep vertical abyss reaching approximately 120 meters into the limestone plateau, located within the wooded terrain near Basovizza.

SP19, 34149, Italy (45.65006, 13.85792)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/59

## I Pozzo presso la Dolina dei Druidi

A natural shaft located in the immediate vicinity of the Dolina dei Druidi, a large and prominent karst sinkhole.

34149, Italy (45.65225, 13.86116)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/2679

## J Abisso di Basovizza

A significant vertical karst formation near Basovizza that drops nearly 100 meters, showcasing the dramatic subterranean topography of the region.

34149, Italy (45.65116, 13.85779)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/130

## K Grotta a SE della Dolina dei Druidi

A small cave opening located to the southeast of the Dolina dei Druidi, part of a cluster of karst features in the Basovizza area.

34149, Italy (45.65095, 13.86234)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/5189

## L Grotta presso l'Abisso di Basovizza

A minor cave entrance situated in close proximity to the larger Basovizza Abyss.

SP19, 34149, Italy (45.65111, 13.85737)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/4896

## M Baratro a N di Basovizza

A vertical karst chasm located in the northern sector of the Basovizza woods.

34149, Italy (45.65187, 13.86068)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/636

## N Grotta dei Partigiani / Partizanska jama

A historic cave that served as a clandestine refuge and field hospital for Yugoslav partisans during the Second World War.

SP19, 34149, Italy (45.65338, 13.85648)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/689-Caverna_presso_Basovizza

## O Pozzo di Sisifo

A technical karst shaft used by speleologists to study the vertical drainage systems of the Trieste plateau.

34149, Italy (45.65269, 13.86136)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/5848

## P Grotta 9° di Capodanno

A karst cave discovered during a winter exploration in the Gropada area, featuring typical limestone galleries.

34018, Italy (45.61692, 13.88692)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/5190

## Q Grotta di Funfenberg

A cave located near the border area, contributing to the extensive network of subterranean passages characteristic of the Trieste Karst.

34018, Italy (45.61606, 13.88696)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/5349

## R Grotta del Bufalo

A cave near Aurisina where paleontological excavations have uncovered evidence of prehistoric human activity and animal remains.

34011, Italy (45.74686, 13.69517)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/1365

## S Grotta delle Perle

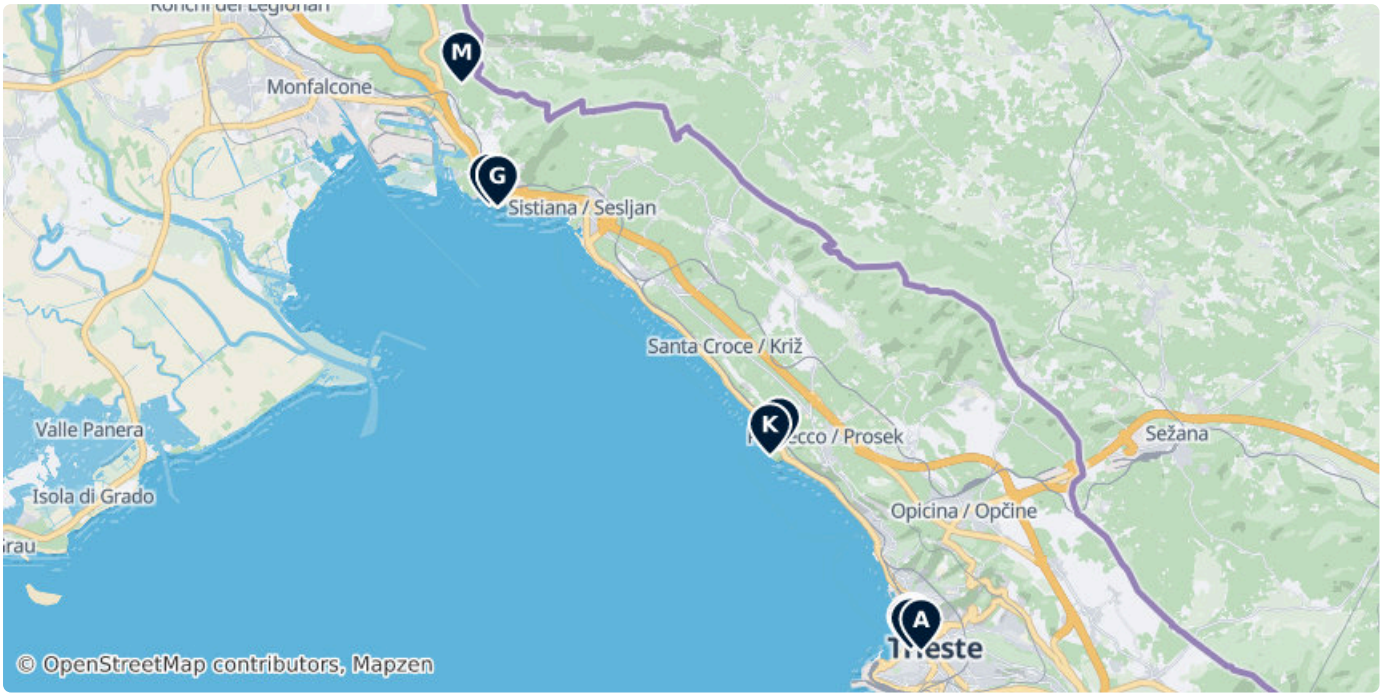
Named for its "cave pearls" (pisoliths), which are small spherical calcium carbonate formations created by the constant dripping of mineral-rich water.

34016, Italy (45.70769, 13.81581)

catastogrotte.fvg.it/569

# Historic Architectural Gems

This collection highlights the architectural evolution of Trieste and its surroundings, spanning from the 1st-century Roman Theatre to the opulent 19th-century palaces of Piazza Unità d'Italia. Key sites include the Government Palace with its Vienna Secession mosaics and the eclectic Lloyd Triestino Palace. Further along the coast, the medieval Duino Castle and its older ruins stand on limestone cliffs, while various monuments commemorate the city's significant Austro-Hungarian and maritime history.






## A Roman Theatre

Ancient Roman archaeological ruins of a historic theater that illustrate the area's architectural and cultural heritage.

14 Via di Donota, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.64913, 13.77178)

comune.trieste.it



## B Lloyd Triestino Palace

19th-century palace originally built as the headquarters of a shipping company, featuring eclectic architecture and elaborate sculptures.

1 Via dell'Orologio, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.64992, 13.76670)



## C Piazza Unità d'Italia

Largest seafront square in Europe featuring pedestrian-friendly cobblestone paving and historic architecture with views of the sea.

7 Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.65005, 13.76777)

Mo–Su 09:00–18:00

+390403478312



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Historic palace featuring Renaissance and Vienna Secession architectural styles, originally serving as the seat of the Austro-Hungarian imperial lieutenancy and now housing regional government offices.

8 Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.65067, 13.76801)

prefettura.it/trieste/, +390403731111



## E Palazzo Pitteri

Historic 18th-century palace featuring baroque and rococo architectural styles with cultural and historical significance.

2 Via Pozzo del Mare, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.64942, 13.76761)



## F Duino Castle

Historic 14th-century castle perched on cliffs overlooking the sea, featuring medieval architecture, a scenic park, and cultural heritage connections.

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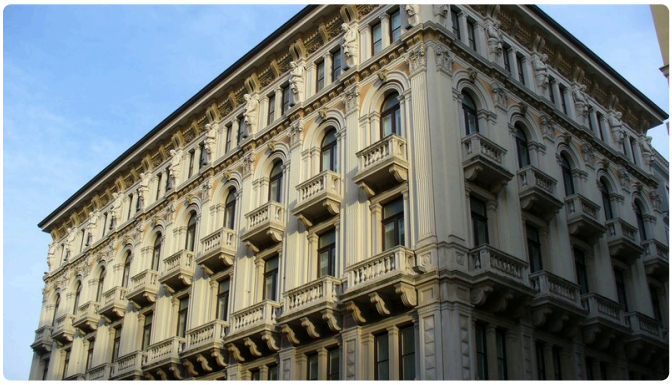
## H Carlo VI d'Asburgo

An 18th-century stone monument dedicated to the Holy Roman Emperor who established Trieste as a free port in 1719.

3 Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.64950, 13.76802)



## I Palazzo Modello

Historic 19th-century palace notable for its eclectic architecture, built between 1871 and 1872 and designed by Giuseppe Bruni. It played a role in the urban redevelopment of its square and has served various functions including hotel and office spaces.

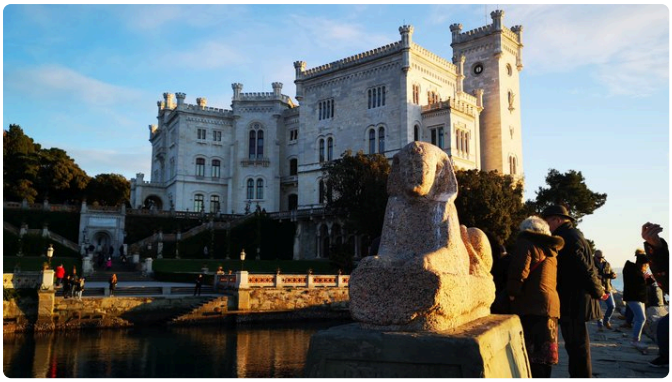
2 Capo di Piazza Gianni Bartoli, Trieste 34121, Italy (45.64995, 13.76882)

Mo–Su 09:00–19:00

## J Monumento al Duca D'Aosta

A commemorative monument dedicated to Amedeo of Savoy-Aosta, located near the Miramare Castle grounds.

(45.70490, 13.71561)



## K Sfinge

A second-century BC Egyptian sphinx carved from pink granite, positioned on the pier of Miramare Castle.

34136, Italy (45.70317, 13.71179)

## M Casali Flondar (ruderi)

Archaeological remains of a historic rural settlement located in the vicinity of Duino.

34070, Italy (45.80597, 13.58964)

## L Castello Vecchio di Duino / Stari grad

Eleventh-century ruins of the original fortification at Duino, perched on a rocky spur overlooking the Adriatic Sea.

Duino 34011, Italy (45.77230, 13.60057)

castellodiduino.it

## DATA SOURCES

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