

## **"The itinerary of Santa Giulia" from Mantua to Brescia along three rivers**

Santa Giulia is a little known but varied path, rich in many naturalistic and cultural points of interest. The path starts in Tuscany and, crossing Emilia Romagna, reaches Lombardy and in the end the town of Brescia.

The name of the Cammino comes from a legend according to which, in the Lombard period, the remains of Santa Giulia, who lived in the 3rd century and was the patron saint of the town of Livorno, were transferred from the Island of Gorgona, in front of Livorno, to Brescia where the convent of Santa Giulia was built.

It is precisely on the trail of this peculiar voyage that the Cammino di Santa Giulia was created, along a path that touches six historical churches named after Saint Giulia.

In this publication we will describe the Lombard part of the Cammino: the path that, crossing the Po river at Guastalla, reaches Brescia, covering about 135 km through the provinces of Mantova, Cremona and Brescia.

It should be noted that the first part, from Guastalla to the Po river, is not very easy. Once reached the river however, the path follows for the most part the banks of three rivers - the Po, the Oglio and the Mella - and secondary roads that are easily walkable and that offer wonderful views of the landscape.

### **From Dosolo, walking along the Po and the Oglio rivers**

The first part of the path is particularly beautiful and easily walkable. It starts from Dosolo, in the province of Mantua, and initially follows the banks of the Po river along a secondary road, crossing poplars and agricultural areas.

Continuing towards the north-west, we reach S. Matteo delle Chiaviche, where we cross the Oglio river and we enter the Parco Regionale Oglio Sud.

At San Matteo it is possible to admire the awesome drainage system built in the 1920s by Piero Portaluppi. Today the plant, pumping the waters of the tributaries into the Oglio river, is the headquarter of the "Centro di interpretazione e documentazione dell'Ecomuseo di Viadana, Commessaggio, Dosolo e Gazzuolo" (Center for the documentation of the Ecomuseum of Viadana, Commessaggio, Dosolo e Gazzuolo)

For more information, please contact: tel 0375/42109, Consorzio di Bonifica Navarolo.

We suggest to stop in Gazzuolo where it is possible to admire the arcades dating back to the Gonzaga era: built in the early years of 1500 by will of Ludovico Gonzaga, the arcade is 120 meters long and is formed by thirty arches, supported by marble columns, each one characterized by a different architecture and decoration.

Along the way, when in Marcaria, nature lovers can visit the natural reserve of the Torbiere di Marcaria where many bird varieties have settled, including a colony of herons; for more information please visit:

[http://www.ogliosud.it/pun\\_dettaglio.php?id\\_pun=1957](http://www.ogliosud.it/pun_dettaglio.php?id_pun=1957)

### **From Pralboino to Brescia along the Mella river**

At about 50 km from Campitello di Marcaria, near Pralboino, we reach the third river along this path, the Mella river, that will accompany us to Corticelle Pieve and from there to Brescia. It is a very pleasant stretch, because it develops on secondary roads with little traffic, has lush vegetation and beautiful views of the nearby mountains.

## **Brescia: the Cathedrals and the Monastery of Santa Giulia**

Once in Brescia, we immediately notice the awesome Castle characterizing the skyline of the town. The medieval fortress is located close to the town center and therefore it is a constant presence wherever you move.

You can start visiting the city right from its centre, from the two cathedrals. The Duomo Vecchio (the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta) and the Duomo Nuovo (the Winter Co-cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta), are one next to the other in Piazza Paolo VI.

The Duomo Vecchio, built early in the 11th century, is one of the most important examples in Italy of Romanesque church with a circular plan.

For detailed information on accessibility, please visit this [link](#)

Starting from 1604, next to the Duomo Vecchio, the Duomo Nuovo was built on the area where once the early Christian church of San Pietro de Dom was. The church was completed two centuries later. Its imposing dome is the third largest in Italy after that of San Pietro and Santa Maria del Fiore. For more information on the accessibility of the Duomo Nuovo, please visit this [link](#)

Inside both cathedrals there are "QR code" signs that, scanned with a smartphone, allow you to open a link with historical-cultural information, in four languages.

Further north, in Via San Faustino, there is the church of San Faustino and Santa Giovita built at the end of the 6th century by Bishop Onorio and dedicated to the patron saints of the town.

For more information, please visit this [link](#)

## **The "Falcone d'Italia"**

Close to the Church of San Faustino and Santa Giovita, walking along Via del Castello, you reach the fortress called "Falcone d'Italia" for its location dominating the town: the Castle is one of the largest fortresses on the peninsula. This is perhaps the least accessible area of the town.

For more information in order to plan a visit of great interest even for people with mobility impairment, please visit:

[www.turismobrescia.it/it/content/slow-tour-4](http://www.turismobrescia.it/it/content/slow-tour-4)

## **"Santa Giulia" Museum**

For those who want to start a journey through the history, arts and spirituality of Brescia, we suggest to stop at the Benedictine monastery of Santa Giulia, at the foot of the castle. Founded by Desiderio, a Lombard king, and his wife Ansa in 753 a.D., in an area rich in archeological heritage (ruins of Roman domus were also found here), the monastery is a surprising place of historical memories over the centuries, and starting from 2011 it has been added to the List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The site consists of several buildings: the church of San Salvatore, the church of Santa Maria in Solario, the Chorus of the Nuns and the church of Santa Giulia of the 16th century. The visit to the museum starts from the basement of the monastery, where it is possible to retrace the history of the people living on the territory around Brescia from the first settlements of the Copper Age until the Romanization. The oldest archeological finds date back to the third millennium b.C. and witness the moment when men acquired mastery in agriculture and handicraft .

The Roman age is documented in all its aspects, both public and private. The so-called "domus di Dioniso" and "domus delle Fontane", with their frescoes, mosaics and furnishings of daily life are worth a visit.

If you want to listen to the audio guide of the museum, please visit the following [site](#)  
For information on accessibility, please visit the [following site](#)

### **Before leaving**

For those who choose to take this path, we suggest to visit the site of the Compagnia di Santa Giulia: <http://www.camminodisantagiulia.it/index.html>  
(only in italian language).

The site provides detailed information on the path, on how to download the gpx tracks of each stage (about 25 km long each) and how to find contacts and other details.

For more information about the accessibility of sites and routes in the town of Brescia, we suggest you to visit the Slow Time Association website: [www.slowtime.it/index.htm](http://www.slowtime.it/index.htm) (only in italian language).