

Visit of Padua*

Saturday March 15th, from 9.30 to 12.00

Itinerary

The following city attractions will be visited:

- **Palazzo della Ragione**

By going along via Oberdan, we enter piazza della Frutta, opening onto the northern side of Palazzo della Ragione. The "Salone" (Hall), 82 metres long and 27 metres wide, rises on a 14th-century loggia. It is the old location of the town tribunals of Padua, and it was the largest suspended hall in the world. The precise date of the original building is still unknown, but already in 1116 AD in the lower part of the building some public services were carried out.

The first building dates back to 1219, with the aim to host the tribunals and the financial offices, a role it carried out not only during the Age of the Communes, but also, although less frequently, during the Carrarese dominion and the entire Venetian domination, until 1797. The current shape is due to friar Giovanni degli Eremitani, who between 1306 and 1309 ordered the elevation of the great wooden vault and added the arcade and the loggia, thus covering the staircase.

The ground floor of the Salone hosts, like in the past, food shops, while on the southern and northern sides of the Palace in Piazza delle Erbe and Piazza della Frutta, the market is carried out.

- **The University Building and the Caffè Pedrocchi**

Walking back through the squares and along the Salone you can easily reach the old Palazzo del Bo. This is the main seat of the University, founded in 1222, that can name, among eminent faculty and scholars, astronomers Nicolaus Copernicus, who proved the sun to be the center of our planet system, and Galileo Galilei, anatomist and physicist William Harvey, who described blood circulation, and Gabriele Falloppius, philosophers Pomponazzi and Campanella, musician Tartini, writers Ugo Foscolo, Carlo Goldoni and Torquato Tasso, architect Leon Battista Alberti, Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, the world's first female graduate, and Giacomo Casanova.

In the Old Courtyard and in the Aula Magna you can still see students and professors' coats of arms. Very interesting the visit to the Anatomy Theatre, the oldest fix anatomy theatre in the world, the 14th century Medicine Room and the Room of the Forty with Galileo's chair.

A few steps further you can see one of the most important historical cafès, built between 1831 and 1836 by famous architect Giuseppe Jappelli in a mixture of neoclassic and neo-gothic styles, the Caffè Pedrocchi.

On the upper floor rooms and halls are decorated according to different themes and is now housed the Museum of the Risorgimento and Contemporary Time. Since its opening the "café without doors" welcomes eminent guests such as writer Stendhal, who named its desserts as some of the best he ever tried, as well as students who always spent hours in the reading room discussing all sorts of matters, sometimes producing innovative ideas, sometimes the revolution, as they did in 1848 during Asburgic domination.

* No fees are requested. A guided tour will be provided only for the city of Padua. People willing to visit Venice in the afternoon may profit from frequent train connections to Venice (30 min trip) starting from the Padua train station at 10 min walk from the School location.

- **Piazza dei Signori**

From Piazza della Frutta, by walking along via San Clemente, we get to Piazza dei Signori, a pearl of 15th-century elegance and the town sitting-room, thus called because here the “Palazzo della Signoria” used to rise, the Reggia of the Carraresi, the rulers of Padua from 1318 to 1405. Piazza dei Signori is enclosed on its two main sides by houses with arcades, elegantly enriched by terraces with old balconies in wrought iron, and delimited by the Church of S. Clemente and Palazzo del Capitaniato, with the (astronomical) Clock Tower, through whose colonnade we get to Corte Capitaniato and into the square by the same name, where the Castle of the Carraresi used to rise, the lords of Padua, and where now we find the building of Liviano, see of the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy, whose halls were painted by Altichiero. On the southern side the elegant Loggia del Consiglio or Gran Guardia stands out, the 16th-century building where the Maggior Consiglio Cittadino (Main Town Council) used to meet. By continuing left along via Monte di Pietà, where the homonymous Renaissance palace by architect G.M. Falconetto rises, we get to piazza Duomo.

- **Antenor's tomb and San Lorenzo Bridge**

By going back to via del Santo and turning left, in front of Palazzo Santo Stefano, the current location of the Province of Padua main offices, we find the tomb of Antenor, the legendary founder of the city of Padua. Not far from there, an underpass leads to the Romanesque bridge of San Lorenzo, whose framework, going back to the decade 40-30 BC, rests on two pillars and features three arches; it still preserves the inscription showing the names of the magistrates who were in charge of its building. Once the Naviglio Interno, then known as Flumesello, used to flow under the San Lorenzo Bridge.

- **Basilica of the Saint**

By walking along via Orto Botanico, we get to the Basilica of Saint Anthony, simply known as “Il Santo” (the Saint), the most important church in Padua and one of the most popular sacred monuments in the world. The Basilica, whose building started in 1232 in order to enshrine the tomb of the Franciscan monk Anthony, who died in Padua in 1231, rises in a place where already in 1110 there was a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which was then absorbed into the Basilica as the Chapel of the Madonna Mora. In 1229 the friars' monastery was built beside the little church, probably founded by Saint Anthony himself. The wide building features in its complex structure a peculiar merging of styles: Romanesque elements in the bell-shaped facade, Gothic elements in the plan of the aisles with their seven chapels, Byzantine elements in the eight domes covered in lead and Moorish elements in the two thin and slender belltowers.

Inside, styles multiply, and multiple eminent artists worked there, from Giotto to Donatello to the modern Annigoni.

- **Prato della Valle**

One of the biggest squares in Europe, of elliptic shape, with a central island (Memmia island) surrounded by a little channel crossed by 4 bridges. Along the channel, in the internal and external rings, there are 78 marble statues, dating back to the 18th century onwards, representing some popular characters that were in different ways connected to the city. During the Roman times, this area used to host a large theatre, the Zairo, and a circus for horse races.

- **Botanical Garden**

By walking along the southern side of Prato, we get to via Belludi, from which the Basilica of the Saint can be admired. Turning right and going along via Donatello, we get to the Botanical Garden of Padua, which currently covers a surface of almost 22 thousand square metres. Founded in 1545, it is the oldest university botanical garden in the world. It was established by the Senate of the Serenissima in order to grow medicinal plants, which then were the main "semplici", i.e. the medicaments directly coming from nature. For this reason, the first botanical gardens were called "Giardini dei Semplici".

