

Pontremoli

Culture
Landscape
Hospitality

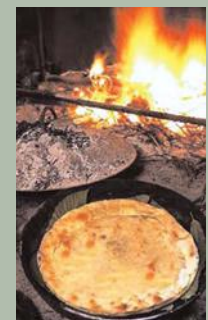
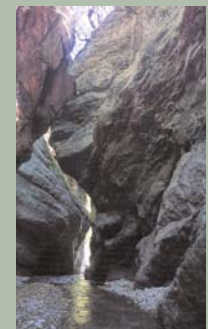


Foto: Walter Massari



Town Hall: 0187.460111 www.comune.pontremoli.ms.it
 The Statue Stele Museum - The Piagnaro Castle: 0187.831439
 Tourist Office: 0187.833309
 APT Massa Carrara: 0585.240063
 Public borough Library: 0187.830134
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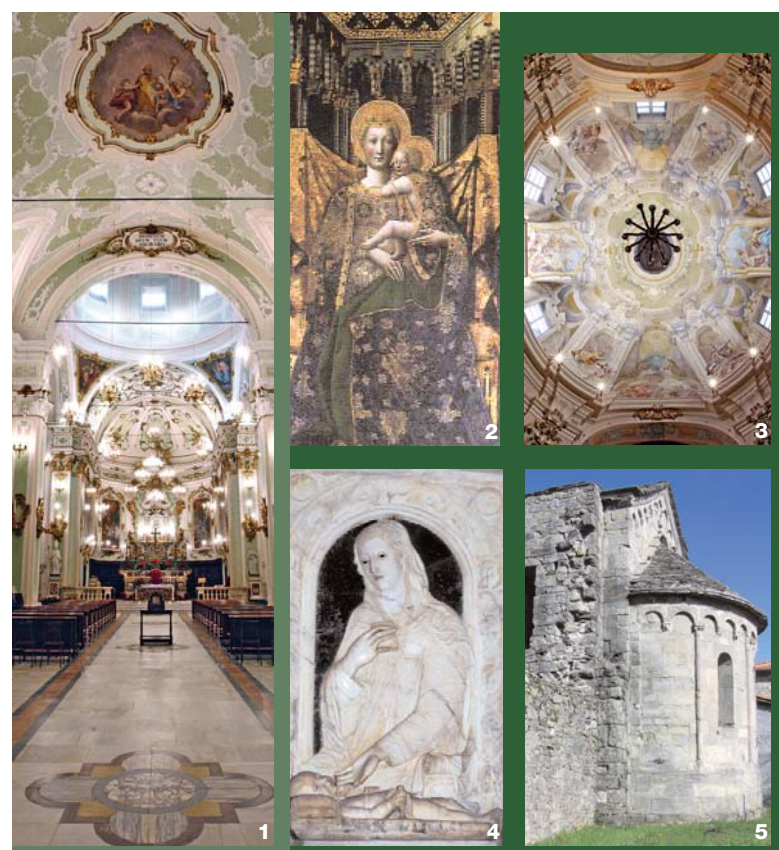


The old town of Pontremoli, limited by the Magra river and the Verde stream on one side and protected by the castle nestled on the Piagnaro hill, owes its importance to the strategic position at the foot of the Apennines in a part of Tuscany stretching between Liguria and Emilia (two regions), along the Francigena Road.

Pontremoli was a "key point and entrance" to the mountain passes that during the Middle Ages allowed the shortest and most convenient road link from Continental to Mediterranean Europe. It is remembered, at the end of the Xth century, as Sigerico broke his journey in Pontremoli back from Rome. Then Pontremoli was a city-state until the beginning of the XIV century before been ruled by different seignories interested in gaining the control of the roads.

The town was rich enough for its trading and tallages, but only in 1650, when Pontremoli was under the Tuscan Grand Duchy's rule, its social growth was considerable and its economy blooming. Many families, who got their wealth doing trade in the sea port of Leghorn, manufacturing and exporting goods to the north of the Peninsula, built palaces and villas and changed the ancient and austere churches according to the new baroque style.

Pontremoli was the seat of the bishop from 1787 to 1987. Napoleon assigned an important administrative role to the town; the Restauration gave at first Tuscany and then Parma Dukedom, ruled by Maria Luigia, the command of Pontremoli. At the time of the Unification of Italy, Pontremoli was part of Massa Carrara province. During the Liberation from the Nazi, local people played a prominent part and this territory was free from oppression only on 27th April as the German troops tried to hold out against the American soldiers before their final defeat.



- 1 Our Lady of the Assumption, the Cathedral (XVIIth century)
- 2 The Virgin and Child (XVth century) in SS. Annunziata's church
- 3 The frescoes in the ceiling in Nostra Donna's church
- 4 The marble bas-relief of the Virgin and Child by Agostino di Duccio (XVth century)
- 5 The apse in St. George's (XIIIth century)





The Piagnaro castle and the Statue Stele Museum



The labyrinth in St. Peter's



The sacristy with wooden carved furniture (XVIIth century) in St. Annunziata's



Garibaldi Street
The Pinocchio monument



The "Tifoni" mountain hut



The "Piscio waterfall" from Pracchiola



The Bancarella Book Prize

Traces of Pontremoli and Lunigiana Valley ancient story can be seen in the Piagnaro Castle which houses the Statue Stele Museum with a collection of prehistoric sculptures, carved in sandstone from the third millennium BC, by a population who lived in this area before the Apuan Ligurian people.

During the Middle Ages, Sigerico broke his journey in Pontremoli while he was walking along the Francigena Road back from Rome as can be read in a document written at the end of the Xth century.

Pontremoli was a city-state until the beginning of the XIVth century; the old town was defended against enemies by three fortifications: the Piagnaro Castle at the top of the homonym district, the Cacciaguerra Cortina a wall that separated the Guelf from Ghibelline district and the main central tower is still used as a belfry (the Campanone or Great Bell); Castelnuovo Fortress on the left side of the Magra river to defend the main entrance door to the town centre and the ancient wooden bridge that perhaps gave the name to the town (from the Latin "pons tremulus" meaning trembling bridge).

Pontremoli is a town with many bridges; some of them were made in mediaeval style, for example the two bridges on the Verde, the Cresa bridge upstream and the Casotto bridge or the town's coat of arms bridge



The Minucciano III Statua Stele

CULTURE

downstream and the old hospital bridge on the Magra river.

The tourists that walk along the streets in Pontremoli are pleasantly surprised by the artistic treasures inside the baroque palaces and by the large number of works of art in the churches.

Pontremoli, important for its strategic position along the Francigena Road, became a trading centre and an access to cross the Apennines.

Starting from the second half of the XVIIth century, Pontremoli had a great economic growth: many palaces were built for the local aristocracy, the existing churches were transformed and enriched and new ones were built.

The town got the title of "noble town" and from 1787 it was the seat of bishops for two centuries.

-Our Lady of the Assumption, the Cathedral, is worth a visit (XVIIth century). The façade is covered with marble slabs and an ancient wooden statue of the Virgin Mary, the People's Virgin Mary (XIIIth century) is worshipped there.

-A visit is recommended to St. Francis's (XIIIth century). This church shows how St. Francis of Assisi was loved. It has magnificent works as the bas-relief of the Virgin and Child by Agostino di Duccio (XVth century) and a Crucifixion recently attributed to Guido Reni.

-St. Annunziata's (XVth century), south of the town centre, is worth a visit for a polyptych of Genoese School (XVth century), paintings by Luca Cambiaso (XVIth century), a nice marble temple (XVIth century) and a sacristy with wooden carved furniture (XVIIth century).



The bonfire challenge: the former from the St. Geminiano patronal festival, and the latter the St. Nicolò stokers, the rival quarter, ready to light their own

LANDSCAPE

The medieval churches of St. Peter's, St. George, St. Nicolò, St. Geminiano's and the Nostra Donna's church built in the XVIIIth century, are very interesting.

The area surrounding Pontremoli can offer tourists picturesque natural resources as the pleasant streams, abounding in fish. Along the Gordana stream, there are the Giaredo Canyon a deep gorge everyone can easily discover walking along a path starting from Cavezzana village. North of Pracchiola village, a shadowy path leads visitors to the "Piscio waterfall", it is a brook that some kilometres downstream flows into the Magra river.

Above Gravagna village, "the Groppo del Vescovo" is a rock formation coming out among the meadows, exactly on the border between Tuscany and Emilia. Lago Verde (Green Lake) spreads out not far from Cervara village. It is surrounded by fields and beech-trees in a valley crossed by the Verde river.

Many are the walking tours along the CAI paths: the GEA is a path that links the Apennine mountain tops above 1800 metres; the Francigena Road from Cisa Pass to Pontremoli town centre; the paths leading to Logarghena meadows and Orsaro mountain top in the Apennine. Besides the beauties of nature, there are unbelievable spots shaped by man as Groppadalosio Bridge, a magnificent arch built in the XVIth century at about sixteen metres above the Magra river.

As Pontremoli was built along an important road, hospitality is an important feature for the town.

Local cuisine is particularly appreciated; its origin comes from the blending



The path leading to the Giaredo Canyon

HOSPITALITY



Local D.O.P. Honey



A typical dish: Testaroli served with a pesto sauce

of genuine ingredients typical of the people who lived in Liguria and in Emilia with a "pinch" of Tuscan flavour. Testaroli are well known (a sheet of pastry cut in a lozenge shape baked in "testi" and served with a pesto sauce, olive oil and grated Parmesan cheese); vegetable pies (with chard, smashed potatoes, leeks, rice); venison with a strong flavour (many wild boars live in a natural state and are shot).

Typical dishes are the lamb bred in Zeri and chestnut flour. Cakes are very particular such as amor (the recipe for custard is a secret) and spongata.

Tourists can find quiet places everywhere, both in hotels, B&B surrounded by a pleasant rustic setting and in farms which offer local or own produce for farm stay holidays.

Many are the opportunities to have fun and to get to know about local history and traditions besides the Bancarella Book Prize, the events linked to the book tradition and stallholder booksellers.

The annual playbill at La Rosa Theatre offers an interesting choice of the best plays performed by Italian theatre companies and concerts that draw not only a local audience.



The town's coat of arms bridge (XIIIth century)



The Groppadalosio Bridge



Trout fishing