

Travel 35 Padua

For arriving to Padua, take the flight to an airport nearby, like Venice or Bologna or Milan and then the train, bus, car, etc.

The first thing to visit, is the old building of the university, which is at the Ox-building, Palazzo del Bo. The name Ox, Bo, comes from the building's origin in 1200, where at this place there were a market for oxen.

The University is the most prestigious thing, that Padua had and has. It was important for a simple reason:

- it was the only university where the Roman Church couldn't impose its will.

It was protected by Venice. Venice were the only Italian power, that could stay in "opposition" to the Pope's Rome.

It was in Padua where scientific researches started seriously. All others universities in the pass only did studies to teach the Bibles or to teach laws, like Paris, Bologna, Oxford, etc.

It was in Padua, where science indeed started.

Good and intelligent students from everywhere in Europe had to studied in Padua.

Visit the rooms where the names of these famous alumni are written. You will surely find ones from your country.



Galileo's and Copernicus's university: Padua's univ.

After the visit of the university, take a break and a long rest in Café Pedrocchi. It is just outside the university.

It is the Café Pedrocchi, that is called the café without doors. It has and had doors, but they were modern doors, of glass. For the local population, that meant, that without wooden door, then no doors.

It's an historical café, not because of its age, it is only from 1850, but because of the many things inside:

- The White, the Red and the Green Rooms. The Green room is for the poor. i.e., without obligation of buying anything, but with the permission of free newspapers.
- The statues of Belzoni of the antic Egypt.
- The French writer Stendhal, was regular customer in Pedrocchi.
- A bullet of the Austrians soldiers against the students in 1848.
- The museum of Risorgimento.

Few words on Giovanni Battista Belzoni, 1778-1823. The greatest Paduan.

If you visit the British Museum, or the House of Sir Soane in Lincoln's Inn Fields in London, you will encounter the name of Belzoni.

Who was Belzoni?

Belzoni was the person, who started the interest for the archaeology. Before him, the vestiges of the antic were considered as nothing. The antic stones were used for new buildings, the Romans buildings in London were used to build the Summerset House, the Colosseum in Rome were used as mine stone for new buildings for centuries.

Belzoni was born in Padova, in Portello (the prostitutes zone) in 1778. He said that his father was an important bishop from Rome.

Belzoni was 200 cm tall. Why later, its nickname the Great Belzoni.

He escaped the fury of Napoleon, when every young man had to serve him to kill people in wars.

Belzoni saved his life by fleeing to Rome.

When Napoleon arrived to Rome, Belzoni fled to England.

He worked as "the strong man of the circus". He could carry 6 persons on its arms.

He married an Irish beauty, Sarah Bane, that assisted him everywhere.

Why is he famous?

Belzoni arrived in Egypt in 1812 for presenting the Pasha Ali a machine, that pumped water from rivers up, for irrigation.

He remained in Egypt and started the adventurous work of finding antiquities for export. At that time a total free activity.

Archaeology was considered a fast way to get rich, assumed that valuable discoveries could be sold to reaches, and interested people.

Belzoni made many discoveries, and transported many antiquities to Europe, among others, those at the British Museum (his name is engraved at the foot of the statues) and the best Egyptian sarcophagus ever found, the sarcophagus of Sety, in Sir Soane House.

This glorious Paduan ended his life mysteriously, in 1823, near Timbuktu, now in Benin.

He died there, because he had a vision, that he could discover a great treasure of Timbuktu.

He never returned.

Two of his statues are in Café Pedrocchi, many others at the Museum Eremitani of Padua.

It is interesting to read his letter from 1820 to the mayor of Padua, where he strongly desired to give some statues to the city of Padua, as a reconnaissance towards his city.

The answer from the mayor's were never arrived.



Café Pedrocchi

After Pedrocchi go to Palazzo della Ragione, which is the architectural master piece of Padua, from 1218.

Around the Ragione there are two squares, the Piazza della Frutta and the Piazza delle Erbe, where fruits and vegetables are sold.

Fruits, Vegetables. And meat?

The meat is inside the Palazzo della Ragione. Very interesting to see, beautiful and historical. Buy something there.

The two squares communicate through a little tunnel.

At this tunnel there is a corner, called Canton dee Busie, which in local language means Corner of Lies.

Also at this corner, there is the template of the legal dimensions of the Paduan brick, the Paduan tile, etc.

Ask the local bar, if you cannot find them.

HERE YOU REALLY HAVE THE FEELING OF HOW WELL ORGANIZED LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGE WAS.



Palazzo della Ragione



Palazzo della Ragione

The zone around the Palazzo della Ragione is the historical centre. Find the Piazza dei Signori, which is the Square of the Lords, but for the locals Paduans it means the Square of the Rich.

Life was divided in the Middle Age: places for the poor and places for the rich still exist, but here even the name makes the distinction.

In Piazza dei Signori there are many bars during the night.



Piazza dei Signori

Some history.

At the end of Piazza dei Signori there is a column with a Winged Lion, called Colonna Marciana, after Saint Marcus of Venice.

It has said before, that the Medieval Padua were built by the ruler family Carrara.

In 1405 they were dethroned by Venice and Padova's independence ended.

Since that sad day, when you are in the old Venician territories, you will always find a Marcus Column, in every town: in Italy, in Slovenia, in Croatia, in Bosnia, in Macedonia, in Greece, etc.



The Cathedral of Padua

From the Cathedral zone, which is very old and charming zone, take Via Dante, direction to Ponte Mulino to see the old wall, one of the city gate, with the river.

Very charming.

Continue on the same direction to visit the Chiesa dei Carmini. A very old, traditional Catholic church. Visit it.

Take Via dei Carmini to the Capella degli Scrovegni, to see Giotto's mural paintings.

It can be difficult to visit the Capella degli Scrovegni, because the paintings of the master Giotto are much protected now.

Find an appointment before the visit.

Few words on Giotto and Scrovegni.

- Scrovegni was a super-rich family, that got their fortune in financial market, at that time usuries, 1300. For discharge them from their sins, they build a church.
- Giotto, from Firenze, were, at that times, the most known artists, and he got the job. The paintings of Giotto in Scrovegni are the Mecca of all the

painters. For example, Diego Rivera thought, that the only way to do good paintings, were by learning from Giotto here in Padua.

After Scrovegni chapel, that is built in the ancient Roman Arena, go to see the museum of Eremitani. It is few meters here from.



Museum of Eremitani

Then, take the main street of Padua and return to the university and Pedrocchi. Take Via Roma in the same direction.

Real History:

When Italy was created in 1860, it was imposed by the central government in Rome, that the main street in all Italian cities should bear the name Via Roma.



Via Roma, ex Via dei Servi, in front of the church of Santa Maria dei Servi, 1340.



Altar Dell'Addorata in Chiesa dei Servi

At the end of Via Roma, you arrive to a huge square, Prato della Valle (the meadow without grass).

In the middle, there is a canal, previously a lake, that was used for games with boats, and gondolas.



Prato della Valle with Saturday's market



The remains of the lake of Prato della Valle

Prato della Valle is a beautiful square with many beautiful old houses. On its South corner, there are the Foro Boario, designed by Andrea Palladio and the church of Santa Giustina, which is a pearl as a Renaissance church.



Entrance of Foro Boario designed by Palladio

The world knows Andrea Palladio. He's considered as the architect, that has influenced the world architecture most of all. He was born in Padua in 1508, at Borgo della Paglia, few hundred metres from Prato della Valle.

Only few works of him exist in Padua, because the city already was built finished at his time.

The Foro Boario (the place where animals were sold/bought) is one of the few work of him in Padua.



Entrance of Foro Boario and the Church of Santa Giustina

After the visit of Prato della Valle, walk up to Giardino Botanico. The Botanic Gardens is the first of all botanic gardens. It is now listed in Unesco Heritage. It is a pearl.



Orto Botanico

From Orto Botanico walk towards the famous Church of del Santo (the saint without a name).

The Paduans are very proud of this church.

It is very impressive, both from outside, as well from inside.

It is dedicated to Santo Antonio da Padua, 1195-1231, born in Lisboan in 1195 and dyed in Padua in 1231.

He started his career as soldier in North Africa.

Later, he moved to Rome and then to Padua, and to Bassano del Grappa where he conducted a life as hermit.

At his dead, children from Bassano, made a procession in the city, calling "the saint is dead, the saint is dead,". That why is known as the saint without a name.



Church of the Saint Antonio da Padua

The story of the children is important, because in all catholic churches, there is a statue with a monk dressed in brown with a child in his arm. It is the statue of Saint Antonio of Padua.

He's probably the most known saint in the catholic world. Catholics pray to him for countless requests. Here an example, a true story:

- A friend of mine had lost her wedding ring. She went to the church and prayed Sant'Antonio to help to find it.
- Few days later, as she ordered her child toys, she saw a yellow light: wedding ring.

After Saint Antonio you can make a walk to Pontecorvo to see the impressive Old Gate of Padova.

Then you can return to the centre by taking Via San Francesco. It is an old street with many interesting building, antiquaries and of course churches.

The end of travel 35