

INGLESE

Throughout 8000 years the Veneto has accumulated some of the greatest historical and cultural treasures of man. The oldest artefacts come from the region around Verona and consist of thousands of stone incisions, to be found along the eastern coast of Lake Garda. Rome gradually absorbed the Veneto, eventually transforming it into a province in the 1st century B.C. The most visible trace of the Roman presence in Veneto is unquestionably the Arena in Verona.

The population of the Veneto began around 7000 years ago, and intensified during the Bronze Age, firstly in the hills around Verona, along the eastern coast of Lake Garda and near the river courses of the zone. Around 1000 B.C. the Paleo-venetian civilisation developed a true culture in the territory of Este, and established links with other distant peoples such as the Greeks, Etruscans, Celts and other Transalpine races.

The Venetians quickly established a strong ethnic, cultural and political identity, and to preserve this they formed an alliance with the Romans in the 3rd century B.C. to confront the barbarian threat. This alliance led to important construction within the infrastructure and organisation and edification of urban centres. The Veneto then became completely absorbed in the Roman Empire during the 1st century B.C.

The Veneto played a highly important role during the Great War of 1914-18 when the Italo-Austrian front, which had earlier stretched from the uplands of the Asiago and Dolomites as far as the hills of Gorizia, withdrew after the defeat at Caporetto (24th November 1917) to Monte Grappa and Piave, that is until the borders of the plain: a front line which was decisive for the whole conflict. The armistice was signed on 3rd November 1918 at Villa Giusti in Padua.

A world heritage site for its art and a sporting paradise thanks to its natural variety: Veneto is a natural gym for all sports at every level, always in complete safety. Here the concept of a holiday is adapted for all its various requirements, from the classic sightseeing itineraries to the fulfilment of the visitors' particular passion. Each region or geographical area has its own distinct environment and climate.

The only sporting vacation with a seasonal limit is the beach holiday: 100 km of coast offering everything from windsurfing to sailing, kitesurfing to scuba diving, in addition to thermal swimming pools, riding, beach volleyball, tennis courts, football, basketball, volleyball, golf and minigolf. The same wide choice applies to the lake and mountain areas, and with less influence of the passing of the seasons.

The mountains of the Veneto, from the Dolomites to Lessinia, offer in winter traditional alpine pastimes such as ski-ing and ice-skating, while the summer turns the areas into places for excursions and trips, on foot, by horse, or mountain bike, with the possibility of rafting and sport fishing. Finally there are the thermal baths for alternating relaxation with all types of sporting activities and excursions.

The marvellous slopes of the Veneto's mountains are the most well-known destination for winter sports. From the Dolomites to Lessinia there are hundreds of ski resorts, and thousands of kilometres to ski or snowboard suitable for every level and for all disciplines. The bright lights and sophistication of Cortina, the tranquility of Asiago, the prehistory of Monte Lessini: a winter experience for all tastes.

Around the end of the 18th century the term 'Veneto' was used to designate a territory much larger than that we know by this name today, which comprised also Friuli, and parts of Trentino and Lombardy. Today the boundaries of the region contain seven provinces and a vast range of natural landscapes and climates within a polygon of around 210 km in length. The Veneto is the eighth largest region in Italy.

Thanks to the many links connecting this region to the rest of Italy and to other countries, reaching Veneto is very simple: by plane to one of the airports in Veneto, train, bus or private car. In addition to the famous Marco Polo airport in Venice, which is the main international airport in the region, the airports list in Veneto also includes Verona Valerio Catullo airport and Treviso airport, often referred to as Venice-Treviso, served by many low cost airline companies.

Everyone thinks the most beautiful villas in Veneto are the ones built by Palladio. But this is

only partly true, since some of the most spectacular and majestic villas in Veneto were designed by others.

In 2014 a journalist from the prestigious Financial Times, referring to some villas he was visiting, wrote that '*these early examples of classical Renaissance architectures make Palladio lovers go weak at their knees*'.

Vicenza is widely, and with justification, known as *la città di Palladio*. However, he was the central figure in an urban fabric that stretches back to antiquity and forward to Neoclassicism. Basing his works on intimate study of classical Roman architecture, Palladio became the inspiration for a movement without parallel in architectural history. Vicenza, birthplace of this movement, retains many of Palladio's original buildings.

In Veneto generally autumn or winter are the best seasons for a visit to one of the historic city centres, though winter does not present any particular limitations, while summer is certainly the best time for a seaside visit. The mountains are recommended in summer for their location, for sports and sightseeing, and in winter for ski-lovers. Lake Garda is in a category all by itself: thanks to its warm climes it can be enjoyed in all seasons of the year.

The city of Vicenza and the Palladian villas of the Veneto is a serial site including the city of Vicenza and twenty-four Palladian villas scattered in the Veneto area. Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1994, the site initially comprised only the city of Vicenza with its twenty-three buildings attributed to Palladio. Twenty-one villas located in several provinces were later included in the 1996 site extension.

The protection of the Site UNESCO is guaranteed by several legal measures of protection. The Palladian buildings in Vicenza and the Palladian Villas listed in the property are all protected under the Decreto Legislativo 42/2004, Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio: a safeguarding measure which ensures any activity on the site must be authorized by the relevant Soprintendenza. According to that, special protection plans applied to all the buildings ensure careful preservation.

The UNESCO office, set up inside the Municipality of Vicenza, takes care of technical and

administrative aspects and is charged with the monitoring of the site Management Plan. Given the site's complexity, the general coordination is shared between the Ministry of Culture and the Veneto Region, while the Province of Vicenza coordinates provinces and municipalities in a synergetic relationship between institutions.

Andrea di Pietro della Gondola, known to history as "Palladio," was born in 1508 in Padua. He moved to Vicenza, a city that he had always felt connected to, at a very young age. Here he trained as a stonemason and later on as an architect. In Vicenza he met Giangiorgio Trissino, a noble humanist who became his main mentor for his architectural education.

The role that initiated Palladio as the Architect of the city of Vicenza in 1546, was the creation of the Palazzo della Ragione, the so called Basilica. Whilst in Vicenza Palladio mainly designed buildings for the city's aristocracy, in Venice he was commissioned major religious works. The villas, however, were built in the vast Venetian countryside where the local aristocracy established itself.

Andrea Palladio died in 1580 in the outskirts of Vicenza. At the time he was working on the city's Teatro Olimpico and on Villa Barbarano's temple in Maser. However, his heritage defeated both time and space. Palladian architecture reached England and the United States to then become an architectural point of reference and inspiration for buildings in new independent nations.

In 1560 Palladio received his first commission for a work in Venice itself. Then, in 1570, following years of preparation, he published in Venice the masterwork that ensured his place in architectural history, *I Quattro Libri dell' Architettura* [*The Four Books of Architecture*]. The book set out his architectural principles as well as practical advice for builders. The work was subsequently translated into every European language.

The famous Andrea Palladio 'only' arrived in the middle of 1500. He completely revolutionised the concept of a villa: for the first time he combined business with pleasure by designing Italian mansions that were no longer just agricultural in scope, but also magnified the wealth and moral virtues of the owners. Palladian style villas are of extraordinary architectural beauty, inspired by the Greek and Roman classicism, but also perfectly functional for working the fields.

Two of his greatest masterpieces were born in this period, today among the most beautiful and famous villas of Veneto: Villa Almerico Capra in Vicenza (called La Rotonda), and Villa Barbaro Volpi in Maser (simply called Villa di Maser). In the following centuries Palladio's architecture style became a real 'fashion' and was taken as a model for many architectural buildings of the European and Anglo-Saxon world, including even the White House in the United States.

If you wish to visit more than one villa a day, we suggest you to plan an itinerary for Palladian villas by car and for each area: one day for the villas of Riviera del Brenta, one day for the villas in Vicenza, one day for the villas in the province of Treviso. Some villas are in locations which cannot be reached by train or through other means of public transport, but are surrounded by beautiful landscapes and can be reached by following convenient cycle paths.

Since immemorial time mountain holidays in Veneto are an all year round experience due to the myriad of possibilities they offer. Mountains in Veneto, rich in legends and past, art and tradition, are not limited to high season but offer exciting possibilities at each time of the year. With its strong and pastel colours, the gentle and sharp profiles, the landscape of mountains in Veneto touches the heart of both artists and everyday visitors.

Moving in Veneto region is fast and easy thanks to the excellent road network - the region is crossed by seven highways – and the local public transport: from Venice you can reach Verona and Cortina d'Ampezzo in about two hours, one hour to Padua and Treviso. If you prefer a more exclusive solution, you can book comfortable private transfers to/from any area of the region.

Getting around Venice.

In the historic centre of Venice there are no cars or roads, only boats. Public transport, the famous vaporetti - water bus, offer fast connections to/from all areas of the city and the islands of the lagoon. If you plan to use public transportation frequently, you should buy time tickets, which are better value than a single journey.

Veneto also means thermal spas: in fact it is the largest thermal field in Europe, and unquestionably the location where the culture of health and wellbeing has reached its highest level. The Euganean Spas are situated a few km from Padua, and include Abano - the record-holding spa in Italy, and consequently among the highest-quality resorts in Europe. This area represents the biggest thermal spa complex in Europe, as well as the oldest.

Venetian food and wine is also famous for its specialities which have as common denominator the tradition and love for the territory.

It is in this region that, throughout history, civilizations and people from different cultures have met, creating an incredible mix of cultural, social and gastronomical fusions. And the typical food is one of the main features and reason for pride of the region.

The single dish which is more or less common to the entire region is polenta: yellow or white, soft or thick, it may be found with fish (along the Adriatic coast), with typical salami and vegetables (in the countryside), cooked in wine (in Verona), or with white or red grilled meat (in the hill zones). Venetian dishes make use of 'humble' ingredients and are marked by flavours not particularly strong.

To fully complete the identikit of the Veneto there are the traditions of its people: all of which have origins lying far back in time, yet play a key role in the life of today. In addition to the dialect, every corner of the Veneto has its customs. These may be connected to magic and superstition, or are revived through sacred processions, fairs, games and parades bringing alive the history of the city or individual village.

Lake Garda, Lake Fimon, the lakes of Cadore and Agordino and all the other lakes, big and small, dotted around the mountains are one of the natural wonders of our region: bodies of water that reflect the beauty of the lights and colors around them, of the monuments and traces of the past that man has left on these shores. The most important lake in Veneto is certainly Lake Garda, whose eastern shore lies in our region.

The sea around Veneto is among the clearest in the Mediterranean. Here the seaside

resorts have well-kept beaches and attractive squares, nature all around and first-order facilities. More than 100 km of coastline and family-friendly beaches: with sport, entertainment, cultural activities and refined food and wine, our resorts are destinations that can attract all types of holidaymakers.

Second in beauty only to Venice, Verona is one of the top places to visit in Italy: attractions, exhibitions and a rich calendar of events can give the visitors many ideas to organize a memorable stay. Her image is indissolubly linked to the Arena, imposing symbol of her Roman pedigree for almost 2000 years, and today home to its world-famous opera performances.

One of the best cities in Veneto, Padua is elegant and lively and a nice place to see. It is home to one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Europe, making it one of the most stimulating cultural centres in Veneto. During the stay in Padua there are beautiful places that cannot be missed: the Scrovegni Chapel, the Civic Museums of the Hermits, the Pedrocchi Cafe, Prato della Valle, the Saint Anthony's Basilica and the Botanical Garden.

Vicenza, the "City of Palladio", is another one of the best places to visit in Veneto: fabulous places in the streets of the historic centre and in close proximity to one another in a harmonious blend of architectural styles and historical periods. Andrea Palladio made Vicenza his adoptive city and had a major impact on the city's appearance giving it places like the Palladian Basilica, the Olympic Theatre, Palazzo Valmarana, the Loggia del Capitano and villa La Rotonda, just to name a few.

One of the best ways to visit the Venetian villas is by going on a bike ride and cycling along some of the most beautiful cycling routes in Italy amidst nature. You can admire the beautiful landscapes surrounding the villas from a privileged point of view and make your way to these ancient residences by taking your time, feeling the same sense of wonder that the ancient Venetians felt centuries ago. Spring is also the best season to organize wonderful bike tours in Veneto.

Palladio became the greatest architect of all time thanks to his evocative atmosphere: everything here echoes his name, from the basilica of Piazza dei Signori, appropriated from

the Middle Ages to create something truly special, to the celebrated Teatro Olimpico, whose own setting touches the emotions more than the plays themselves, and the dozens of villas which transform the concept of living within space.

Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, the Dolomites preserve some of the top places to visit in Italy and that you must see in Italy. Located in Veneto, Trentino and Friuli the Dolomites offer fabulous scenery all year round and a wide range of outdoor activities. With small villages and internationally known locations such as Cortina d'Ampezzo, the 'Pearl of the Dolomites', the Dolomites offer many ideas for what to see in the Veneto region.

Of ancient Cimbrian origins, the Altopiano di Asiago, also known as the Seven Communes, is one of the most elegant in the whole of Veneto, and one equipped with the best facilities for the provision of winter sports and recreational and cultural activities in general. A mountain which, with its height of over 1000 m is suitable for all, especially for those seeking natural beauty and tranquillity.

Today more than ever, we feel the need to return to everyday habits and enjoy areas close to where we live, whilst still visit new places and rediscover the pleasure of simple things and share them with those we love. One can find unusual things to do in Veneto, original and suitable for everybody and also all budgets, with the aim of respecting the environment and nature, but also traditions and local inhabitants.

The garden has always been one of the main elements of the Venetian villa ever since its origins, taking as much importance as the architectural structure of the villa itself. Conceived initially as places to get some fresh air and rest, as well as being part of the outdoor area dedicated to agricultural activities, over time the gardens of the Veneto villas became a symbol of the wealth of nobility.

Particularly from the beginning of the sixteenth century, the creation of the spectacular gardens of Palladian villas was guided by philosophical and religious ideals, aesthetic taste and principles of botany. But the practical side was never missing: water was used efficiently, with minimum waste. Beauty and pragmatism, 'business' and 'pleasure': a combination that gave life to real masterpieces of architecture and landscape.

We must start from a historical fact: in the 1400s, the Venetian nobles began to take an interest in the countryside because trade with the Serenissima by sea began to weaken. So the rich families of the lagoon bought land in the countryside and turned it into farmland. But they also organised it in a 'business' way and devoted it to the most various production scopes. This was a complex activity: this is how the Venetian villa in Veneto was born.

A villa is a countryside residence for nobles, functionally located close to farming activities but at the same time expression of the owner's wealth: to design and decorate it, the greatest artists and architects were commissioned, including Andrea Palladio, Paolo Veronese, Gianbattista and Giandomenico Tiepolo. There are over 4,000 villas built everywhere, even in the hills.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the 'villa life' reached its maximum splendour. In this period the villas of Veneto were often brought to life with celebrations, games, plays, romantic liaisons and secret affairs: the maximum splendour they would reach before the beginning of decadence. In 1797 the Serenissima fell apart with the Treaty of Campoformio and a long period of decline for the nobility began. Many villas were abandoned.

The best time to visit a Palladian villa is from March to the end of October, but visits are generally possible almost all year round except for part of the winter. Before travelling, we suggest you to check the opening times and days on the website or the social media channels of the villa that you are interested in: many villas are in fact private residences still inhabited by the owners, and they can only be visited on certain days and at certain times.

The hills of Berici, often called mountains, are situated just a few kilometres from the artistic city of Palladio. One place worthy of a visit is without doubt the Fimon lake, a small yet exquisite triumph of flora, fauna and history where the boat trip along the 'Archaeological Tour of the Fimon Valley' makes the most of your time. Among the villas in the area the masterpiece is La Rotonda of Andrea Palladio.

The first Venice film festival was in 1932 and enjoys the distinction of the oldest film festival in the world: large projections, celebrity guests and unique festivals enliven the historic Palazzo del Cinema of Venice. The Venice International film festival offers variable dates between August and early September. From the point of view of the critics, the most important award is the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale, considered one of the most prestigious film awards.

The International Art Exhibition in Venice plays a prominent role in the sector events and is a major exhibition that for more than a century brings the best of the international art scene to Venice. The history of the Venice Biennale began in 1893 when the city council decided to set up a Venice Biennale international art exhibition. The Biennale of Venice invited major Italian and foreign artists, each with a maximum of two works that had never been exhibited in Italy.