



Rapallo



1 THE ANCIENT CASTLE ON THE SEA

Built on a cliff surrounded by the sea, at the end of the promenade, and connected to the mainland by a narrow bridge, the Castle is the symbol of Rapallo, closely linked to the history and the legends of the town. It was built in 1549, after the sack of Rapallo by the Turkish ships, guided by the notorious pirate Dragut.

In the years it was used for different purposes and also as a prison for a long time; after the recent restoration, nowadays it is the venue of the most important exhibitions and conventions in town. During the traditional fair in July, it is lit by a fake fire during spectacular fireworks.



2 THE TOWN HALL

The present location of the Town Hall was once the main hospital, close to the Church of the Augustines. The Swiss mercenaries of Carlo VIII sacked it in 1498 and stole from the church a canvas of Perin del Vaga. In the XVII century the building was used as a stage for profane plays, censored by the Genoese Senate, and during the French revolution as an army camp.

In the XIX century the building became again a hospital until the definitive restoration to its original structure, after which it was chosen as the seat of the Municipality.



3 ST. GERVASIO AND PROTASIO CATHEDRAL

The origin of the church dates back to the end of the 4th century. During the centuries, the church underwent many changes, from Romanic and Gothic influence to a more classical Lombard one, so nowadays it has a characteristic mix of styles. It features a marble neoclassical façade with a bronze portal by Arrigo Minerbi and Pietro Bolla (1957). The two central panels show the Virgin Mary holding an icon to her chest which she will leave to the people of Rapallo. The bell tower was built by the architect Storace in 1753 and successively decorated. The interior, divided into three aisles, hosts many works of art.



4 THE CIVIC TOWER AND SAINT STEPHEN CHURCH

Saint Stephen's Church is the oldest rural church of the original village: it was built in fact before the year one thousand on the primitive residential area. Nowadays it is governed and maintained by the "Mortis et Orationis" Confraternity, called the "Blacks" Brotherhood like its garments colour, that obtained the church during the 17th century, and that gave it the name "Blacks Oratory". The Civic tower was built in 1473 next to Saint Stephen's Church as a symbol of civil freedom and it is the oldest civil monument in town. According to a 12th century document, it was where justice was administered and town life was decided.



5 THE WHITE ORATORY

The Whites' Oratory, built during the 16th century is so called because of the garments colour of the Brotherhood governing it. It has a single aisle and a small bell tower and holds many pieces of art: a few Ligurian processional crucifixes; an 18th century organ within a baroque structure; a wooden statue by Maragliano (St. Sebastian), highly interesting because of its anatomic perfection; a painting named "Madonna col bambino e santi", whose author remains unknown (Domenico Piola or Domenico Fiasella).

6 THE MONASTERY OF CLARISSE

It is a 17th century monumental building, deconsecrated in 1912. Part of the previous Church of Santa Chiara di Montefalco and of the relative convent are used today for cultural purposes: the ancient chapel has been transformed in a 250-seat theatre, the Auditorium of the Clarisse. The parish church marble altar, built in 1772, was moved to the Saints Gervasio and Protasio's Cathedral. The rest of the complex houses the "Attilio e Cleofe Gaffoglio" Museum that contains precious jewellery, ivory, porcelains, sculptures and paintings (info: call.+39 0185.234497).

7 VILLA TIGULLIO WITH THE LACES MUSEUM AND THE INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY

Villa Tigullio is the ancient house of the Spinola family. It is surrounded by a green park and it lies on a wide field, with a magnificent view of the Tigullio Gulf and Portofino Cape. It houses the International Library, with its rich collections of precious volumes and historical local newspapers, and the Lace Museum, containing an exceptionally broad range of rare and precious laces. The lace craftsmanship is a tradition of our town, where women have been making laces since the XIII century and where the lace production reached its peak in the XVI century (info: call.+39 0185.63304).



8 THE SANCTUARY OF MONTALLEGRO

The Sanctuary was built at the top of a hill where the Virgin Mary, beloved Patron Saint of the town, appeared to a peasant in 1557. The Sanctuary hosts an icon, called the "Dormitio Virginis", left from the Virgin Mary in the place where she appeared. The beautiful marble façade was designed by the architect Revelli, the vaults are painted by the Genoese Nicolò Barabino and walls are covered with thousands of ex-votos demonstrating the great devotion of the citizens to the Virgin Mary. The sanctuary can be reached in 7 minutes by cableway, the only one in Liguria, from where you can enjoy a spectacular panoramic view on the gulf at 600m. altitude.



9 VALLE CHRISTI ABBEY RUINS

The monastery of Valle Christi ruins lie in the hills of S.Massimo, at the back of the town. Parts of the church like the apse, the transept and the spire bell tower survive in a solitary and still intact environment, creating one of the most enchanting views of Rapallo. The complex was built in the 13th century in French-Gothic style. Originally it was owned by Cistercian nuns, then it became property of the Clarisse nuns. Pope Pio V suppressed it in 1568 and it was abandoned. The ruins became public property and now are used as an open air theatre, a picturesque location for important evening plays and concerts in summer.



10 SAN MICHELE DI PAGANA CHURCH

San Michele is a hamlet that lies on a small gulf and includes three small villages: Trelo, Prelo and Pomaro. It is one of the most enchanting places in all the Ligurian coast and its beaches are the best for swimming and lying in the sun in a beautiful landscape. The baroque parish church goes back to the beginning of the XII century and, in the left aisle, holds a canvas by Van Dyck, painted when the artist was compelled to flee from Genoa after a mortal duel: the picture represents the Crucifixion with Saint Frances and Saint Leonard.

