

Assisi

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Assisi (pronounced /əˈsiːzi/ or /əˈsiːsi/) (Latin: *Asisium*), is a town in Italy in province of Perugia, Italy, in the Umbria region, on the western flank of Monte Subasio. It is the birthplace of St. Francis, who founded the Franciscan religious order in the town in 1208, and St. Clare (Chiara d'Offreducci), the founder of the Poor Clares. Saint Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows of the 19th century was also born in Assisi.

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Comune di Assisi



Municipal coat of arms

History

Around 1000 BC a wave of immigrants settled in the upper Tiber valley as far as the Adriatic Sea and also in the neighbourhood of Assisi. These were the Umbrians, living in small fortified settlements on high ground. From 450 BC these settlements were gradually taken over by the Etruscans. The Romans took control of central Italy by the Battle of Sentinum in 295 BC. They built the flourishing *municipium* Asisium on a series of terraces on Monte Subasio. Roman remains can still be found in Assisi : city walls, the forum (now Piazza del Comune), a theatre, an amphitheatre and the Temple of Minerva (now transformed into the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva).

In 238 AD Assisi was converted to Christianity by bishop Rufino, who was martyred at Costano. According to tradition, his remains rest in the Cathedral Church of San Rufino in Assisi.



Location of Assisi in Italy

Country	 Italy
Region	Umbria
Province	Perugia (PG)
Mayor	Claudio Ricci (since May 2006)
Elevation	424 m (1,391 ft)
Area	186 km ² (71.8 sq mi)
Population (as of December 31, 2004)	
- Total	26,196
- Density	141/km ² (365/sq mi)
Time zone	CET, UTC+1
Coordinates	43°04'N 12°37'E
Gentilic	Assisani
Dialing code	075
Postal code	06081
Frazioni	see list
Patron	St. Rufinus
- Day	August 12
Website:	www.comune.assisi.pg.it (http://www.comune.assisi.pg.it)

The Ostrogoths of king Totila destroyed most of the town in 545.

Assisi then came under the rule of the Lombards as part of the Lombard and then Frankish Duchy of Spoleto.

The thriving commune became an independent Ghibelline commune in the 11th century. Constantly struggling with the Guelph Perugia, it was during one of those battles, the battle at Ponte San Giovanni, that Francesco di Bernardone, (Saint Francis of Assisi), was taken prisoner, setting in motion the events that eventually led him to live as a beggar, renounce the world and establish the Order of Friars Minor.

The city, which had remained within the confines of the Roman walls, began to expand outside these walls in the 13th century. In this period the city was under papal jurisdiction. The Rocca Maggiore, the imperial fortress on top of the hill above the city, which had been plundered by the people in 1189, was rebuilt in 1367 on orders of the papal legate, cardinal Gil de Albornoz.

In the beginning Assisi fell under the rule of Perugia and later under several despots, such as the soldier of fortune Biordo Michelotti, Gian Galeazzo Visconti and his successor Francesco I Sforza, dukes of Milan, Jacopo Piccinino and Federico II da Montefeltro, lord of Urbino. The city went into a deep decline through the plague of the Black Death in 1348.

The city came again under papal jurisdiction under the rule of Pope Pius II (1458-1464).



Piazza del Duomo, 19th century.

In 1569 construction was started of the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli. During the Renaissance and in later centuries, the city continued to develop peacefully, as the 17th-century palazzi of the Bernabei and Giacobetti attest.

Now the site of many a pilgrimage, Assisi is linked in legend with its native son, St. Francis. The gentle saint founded the Franciscan order and shares honors with St. Catherine of Siena as the patron saint

of Italy. He is remembered by many, even non-Christians, as a lover of nature (his preaching to an audience of birds is one of the legends of his life).

Assisi was hit by the devastating twin earthquakes that shook Umbria in 1997, but the recovery and restoration have been remarkable, although much remains to be done. Massive damage was caused to many historical sites, but the major attraction, the Basilica di San Francesco, reopened less than two years later.

Main sights

Churches

- The Basilica of San




The nave of San Rufino

Francesco d'Assisi (St. Francis) is a World Heritage Site. The Franciscan monastery, il Sacro Convento, and the lower and upper church (*Basilica inferiore e superiore*) of St Francis were begun

Assisi, the Basilica of San Francesco and Other Franciscan Sites*

UNESCO World Heritage Site



State Party  Italy

immediately after his canonization in 1228, and completed in 1253. The lower church has frescos by renowned late-medieval artists Cimabue and Giotto; in the upper church are frescos of scenes in the life of St. Francis previously ascribed to Giotto and now thought to be by artists of the circle of Pietro Cavallini of Rome. The Basilica was badly damaged by the earthquake of

September 26, 1997, when part of the vault collapsed, killing four people inside the church and carrying with it a fresco by Cimabue. The edifice and was closed for two years for restoration.

- Santa Maria Maggiore (St. Mary the Greater), the earliest extant church in Assisi.
- The Cathedral of San Rufino (St. Rufinus), with a Romanesque façade with three rose windows and a 16th-century interior; part of it is built on a Roman cistern.
- Basilica of Santa Chiara (St Clare) with its massive lateral buttresses, rose window, and simple Gothic interior, begun in 1257, contains the tomb of the saint and 13th-century frescoes and paintings.
- Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli (St. Mary of the Angels), which houses the Porziuncola.
- Chiesa Nuova, built over the presumed parental home of St. Francis

Type	Cultural
Criteria	i, ii, iii, iv, vi
Reference	990 (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/990)
Region**	Europe and North America

Inscription history

Inscription 2000 (24th Session)

* Name as inscribed on World Heritage List.
(<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>)

** Region as classified by UNESCO.
(http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/?search=&search_by_country=&type=&media=®ion=&order=region)

Other landmarks

The town is dominated by two medieval castles. The larger, called

Rocca Maggiore, is a massive presence meant to intimidate the people of the town: it was built by Cardinal Alborno (1367) and added to by Popes Pius II and Paul III. The smaller of the two was built much earlier, in the Roman era. However, not all of it stands, and only a small portion and three towers are open to the public.

UNESCO collectively designated the major monuments and urban fabric of Assisi as a World Heritage Site.

Culture

Festival Calendimaggio, May 1st-5th: re-enactment of medieval and renaissance life in the form of a challenge between the upper faction and the lower faction of the town. With processions, theatrical presentations, flag-weavers and dance.

Assisi Embroidery is a form of counted-thread embroidery which has been practised in Assisi since the 13th century.

Today the town has many groups coming to enjoy the simple peace of St. Francis. One such group has restored an 11th century room and added altars to the world's religions. Pilgrims come from many countries to the Assisi East West Retreat Center in Piazza San Rufino in the spirit of St. Francis to sit and be in peace.

Saints of Assisi

Assisi was the home of many saints. They include:

- Agnes of Assisi
- Clare of Assisi
- Francis of Assisi
- Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows
- Rufinus of Assisi
- Vitalis of Assisi

Frazioni

Armenzano, Capodacqua, Castelnuovo, Costa di Trex, Colle delle Forche, Morra, Palazzo di Assisi, Paradiso, Passaggio d'Assisi, Petrignano d'Assisi, Pieve San Nicolò, Porziano, Rivotorto, Rocca Sant'Angelo, San Damiano, San Gregorio, Santa Maria degli Angeli, Santa Maria Lignano, San Vitale, Sterpeto, Torchiagina, Tordandrea, Tordibetto, Viole.

Twin cities



-  Bethlehem, Palestinian National Authority
-  San Francisco, United States

Photo gallery



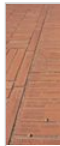
The complex of Santa Chiara from outside the city.



A street in Assisi



The Temple of Minerva in *Piazza del Comune*



The Matto



Another view of
Mattonata

The *frazione* of
Santa Maria degli
Angeli

Façade of the
Basilica of *Santa
Maria degli Angeli*

Assisi Str

External links

- 360 Assisi (<http://www.360tuscany.net/?area=Assisi&mapArea=Assisi>) - Map, Guide & 360° Pictures
- Assisi OnLine (<http://www.assisionline.com/>) (Ita-Eng-Fra-Deu-Spa)

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| Communes of the Province of Perugia | Assisi | Hilltowns in Italy |
Hilltowns in Umbria | Castles in Italy

Hidden categories: Articles to be expanded since June 2008 | All
articles to be expanded

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