

SHORT STORIES AT ONE WITH NATURE FOR CURIOUS TOURIST

Halfway between the hills and the sea, Russi tells us tales of **ancient memories**, gruesome **battles**, epidemic, heartquakes, **luscious mansions**, **illustrious people**, generous **patriots**, eminent statesmen and subdued delators. Russi, nestled between **two rivers**, reveals to **the shrewd of its fields** of **bright green**, **warm orange brick houses**, the colours of seasons and nature, the stunning beauty of its Villas and Churches.

Russi, **center of Romagna**, stuns the lovers of finer things with the fragrance of its **cuisine** and liveliness of its **wine**. Russi smiles to those who, gently, wish to explore it.

RIDE YOUR BIKE!



The best way to explore the territory and its abounding nuances is **through several cycling routes, at one with nature**, discovering **history-filled itineraries!**

In the surroundings areas you will find **ancient parish churches**, **manor villas**, true art gems set among the different colors of **agricultural textures** interspersed with **waterways**.

1 The Roman Villa



Set just outside Russi town centre, the Roman Villa is among the most representative and better preserved rustic villas in northern Italy. Found in the 50s and subject to continuous archaeological excavations, it presents an extent of at least 8.000 sqm, a spa previously found in 1939 and only recently discovered, and several parts of the whole complex still to be excavated. The Villa was, most probably, the main building of a vast land, producing food supplies for the roman fleet based, during the Augustan era, in Ravenna. The Villas greater development was between the 1st and 2nd century A.D.

During this period the Villa, of earlier construction, was decorated with mosaic paving and reached its ultimate layout, of a result of a comprehensive architectural project.

The different occupation stages of Russi's Roman Villa are linked to the events of the neighboring Ravenna. After a period of decadence, that matched the departure of the military fleet, the Villa was partially occupied when the imperial court moved to Ravenna (V and VI century) and then definitely abandoned in the Middle Ages. At the end for the VII century A.D., the area is mostly fallow while woods and waters are covering the territory: badger bones findings witness an environment full of running waters without human presence.



2 Cortina

Village in the municipality of Russi. Here the **Church of San Tommaso Apostolo** (Saint Thomas Apostle), rebuilt in 1920 is situated in the old oratory of St. Mary, built in 1621. A stone in the sacristy corroborates this fact.

A main marble altar (brought from the Church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna), with 3 side chapels dedicated the Mary and the Saints, subsequently a belfry was erected on its side, holding three bells forged by Brighenti of Bologna. In the 30s Romeo Mazzavillani, a painter from Ravenna, decorated the church interior.

3 Ancient Oratory of Santa Rosa da Lima

A small church built by Bonifacio Spreti in 1683.

Lamone River

Originating from Colla di Casaglia (1190 mt.) in the Borgo San Lorenzo municipality (Florence), crosses the Russi and Bagnacavallo countryside and flows in the Adriatic Sea between Marina Romea and Casal Borsetti (15 km north-east of Ravenna) its total length is approximately 90 km.

Among the romans was known as *Anemo*, quoted by Plinio the Elder (23-79 A.D.) in *Naturalis Historia*, then as *Amone*. After crossing *Faventia* was flowing east then heading north (beside the river, "via Faentina" was built). Entered the city of Ravenna joining the other river, the Padenna,

During Goth times (V-VI century), the stretch flowing across Russi was called *Rafanariae* (River of Ravenna), while after Godo (Goth's Ford), by the parish church of Santo Stefano in Tegurio was named *Teguriense*. Once in Ravenna, the river ran along the city walls to flow in the sea. At the beginning of the 10th century the river ceased to flow on its plain stretch, forming a new riverbed flowing on the western side of Russi, always towards Ravenna (*Lamone Teguriense*).

4 Palazzo San Giacomo



From a 1121 Canonical Monastery of Porto parchment, we assume there was a church dedicated to San Giacomo, while the first mention of the castle is in a 1155 document. The ancient name of Raffanara pointed out the place referring to a castle destroyed during the battle between Faenza and Ravenna. The Raffanara estate was bought in 1664 by Count Guido Carlo Rasponi, brother of the soon to be Cardinal Cesare. The expansion of the old building led to the creation of Palazzo San Giacomo, summer residence for the noble family of Ravenna. The interior, despite the damage, is probably the greatest example of noble decoration in Romagna between 17th and 18th century.

The main floor is decorated throughout with beautiful frescoes and few remains of the stucco fireplaces. Many architectural elements were lost following extensive demolition at the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1947 the property was passed on to the seminary of Faenza and, in 1975 passed on the municipality of Russi. The building underwent anti seismic, safety and restoration works. From 1957 to 1966 the artist Matia Moreni had his studio here. Guided tours are held periodically.



Pezzolo

Village in the municipality of Russi located between Russi and Chiesuola. Mentioned by Cardinal Anglico, in the 1371 statistics document under the name of *Villa Pezzoli et Boccaluci*. It was a meeting point of the Carbonari secret society members during the *Risorgimento*. Pezzolo's many villas contributed to its life and history, among those we remember: villa Rosa, villa dei Leoni, villa Venturi or Cannatieri, villa Zaccaria, villa Morigi, villa Babini/Venturi and villa "La Lontanuccia".

5 Chiesa di Santa Maria (Church of St. Mary)

A popular legend tells the story of a farmer while working with his plough, hit a stone breaking it in two. Blood started pouring from the stone. Truth or legend? The only evidence of this episode are two stones located in two niches behind the main altar.

The church first appearance is dated 1183. The actual church is dedicated to the nativity of Mary, built in 1807, restored in 1878, then 1949, and several works were made during the last decades.

Chiesuola

Village in the municipality of Russi, on the left side of the Montone river.

6 Chiesa di San Sebastiano

The church, built in 1904 and dedicated to St. Sebastian is built on the foundation of the old Orioli Oratory that dates back to the 16th century circa. Even Beata Margherita Molli used to visit this Oratory. Destroyed during World War II, was rebuilt in 1948. Its belfry, with commemorative stones for the fallen of all wars, was opened on the 25th of April 1950.

Montone River

Originating near San Benedetto in Alpe, reaches Forlì and then flows through the plains towards Ravenna where receives the Ronco river originating the Fiumi Uniti (United Rivers) that flow into the Adriatic sea. For centuries the river Montone, mainly in the plains, was navigable; Giovanni di Mastro Pedrino tells us that Pandolfo III Malatesta, traveling to Milan, boarded from Forlì to Schiavonia on the 13th of March 1425 toward Russi.

In the 13th century the river was led to flow under the western walls of Ravenna. Today the road "Circonvallazione San Gaetanino" retraces perfectly the path of the old waterway. Standing on the riverside looking toward south-east, on a clear day you can see the hillside landscape of San Marino and Bertinoro.

San Pancrazio

Village in the municipality of Russi, stretches between the drain of Via Cupa and the Montone river. Well known for its parish. The church is very old, tradition wants it was built in 437 A.D. at the times of Galla Placidia, the consecration dates back to 1058. Villa dei Principi Chiaramonti nephews of Pope Pius VII and the Museum of the Rural Life in Romagna also belong to San Pancrazio territory.

7 Museum of rural life in Romagna

Strongly wanted by the village of San Pancrazio, displays the hemp and weaving system as a permanent exhibition. Other specimen relate to "wheat and bread", "silkworm", "milk and cheese", "pork and wine". About these essential chapters of civilization, many video documentaries and photoshoots were made.



8 Parish Church of San Pancrazio

According traditional beliefs, this parish was built by Galla Placidia (daughter of the emperor Teodosio the Great) in the year 437 A.D., but the only document stating its existence dates 963 A.D.

Different studies date its construction between the 7th and 9th century. Well preserved until 1944, war destroyed a big part of it including the apsis. Is the oldest parish church of the area, counting three naves with beaked pillars from the base to the top: despite being half rebuilt, it is still an important example of ancient religious architecture.



9 Dragoni Villa

Godo

Village in the municipality of Russi, in the ancient documents goes by the name of Santo Stefano in Tegurio (even the parish is named for the first time in 963 A.D. document is dedicated to te Saint). Throughout its territory there are still some interesting private villas.

10 Parish Church of Santo Stefano in Tegurio



The name of Santo Stefano in Tegurio is probably referred to the old riverbed of the Tegurio (Lamone) river, that used to flow not far from the church side. The first document of its existence is dated 963 A.D. Restored, after the damage during World War II, is still quite similar to the original building, especially the central nave with beaked pillars, and stone columns with ancient capitals, the main side, decorated with pilaster strips clustering six small windows, is still original.