



RAVENNA

ITALY

Though at one time Ravenna had replaced Rome as the capital of the Western Empire, today few tourists to Italy know anything about the city. Even fewer take the opportunity to visit and explore. Ravenna is so easily overshadowed by the great cities of Florence, Genoa, Venice, and Naples and of course mighty Rome.

Ravenna sits on the coast of the Adriatic Sea in the northeastern region of Italy known as Emilia Romagna. The region is rich in agriculture, industry and history. With the draining of surrounding swamps and marshlands over the centuries the city moved a few miles inland. Nearly 100 years BC, in the early days of the Roman Empire, as the city remains today, Ravenna was connected to the Adriatic by a series of canals. Due to its strategic location Ravenna would become an important harbor and port and therefore, by default, a coveted prize for invaders.

At one time or another during its long history Ravenna has been conquered by or come under the rule of the benevolent Roman Empire and the barbaric Germanic tribes of the Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Lombards. Ravenna was ruled by the Polentani Dynasty then swept up by the Republic of Venice. She would be sacked by the French then absorbed into the Kingdom of Italy. In the 20th century the city was occupied by the Nazi Wehrmacht and finally ... liberated virtually intact by Italian partisans of the Garibaldi Brigade and the British 8th Army.

Ravenna has survived and often thrived despite the centuries of invasion, pillage and plunder. Today there are eight buildings in Ravenna that have been designated as World Heritage Sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). That is an astonishing fact for such a relatively small city, especially a city that has gone through so much turmoil. The people of Ravenna are justifiably proud.

HISTORY

Ravenna has a long and interesting history. It began as a fishing village with huts built upon stilts and little islands set in the nearly impassable tidal-flats and marshes of the peninsula's northeast coast along the Adriatic Sea. The settlement remained safe ... until the surrounding area was drawn into the Roman Empire in the 1st century BC.

It was from Ravenna that Caesar would march his legions south to Rome and with his famous crossing of the Rubicon, set events in motion that would result in civil war. Ravenna was rewarded with a new harbor and the town became the prosperous homeport of the Empire's powerful Adriatic Fleet.

In 402 AD Roman Emperor Flavius Honorius moved his capital from Rome to Ravenna. In 410 AD, Rome was sacked by Germanic Visigoths. The fall of Ravenna and the entire Western Empire would soon follow. Shortly afterwards, Theodoric the Great defeated the barbarians and ruled from Ravenna for many years. Ravenna became the regional capital of the Byzantine Empire on the peninsula and prospered accordingly.

Then events conspired with results that have lasted nearly 600 years yet have never drawn a single drop of blood. In 1829, sculpted by Stefano Ricci, the beautiful marble tomb and final resting place for the renowned poet and philosopher, Dante Alighieri, was unveiled in the Basilica of Santa Croce, the famous cathedral in Florence. Dante would now come to rest under the same majestic ceiling as Michelangelo. Florence wished to reclaim Dante, bring him home and regain the credit and accompanying prestige by once again recognizing the great man as a treasured son of that city.

Atop the great marble tomb, representing the city of Florence is a statue of a grief-stricken woman weeping over the marble casket, pleading to make amends with Dante. She should be weeping ... because the remains of Dante are not, have not and may never be in this gorgeous Florentine tomb.

Dante died in exile in Ravenna in 1321 shortly after completing his magnum opus, *The Divine Comedy*. He had angered the powerful leaders of Florence. Dante, under the threat of being publicly burned at the stake, was officially and eternally banished. In the years that followed his death Florence earnestly sought from Ravenna the return of Dante's remains. In the early 1500s Florence was finally able to get a Papal Decree issued by Pope Leo X, himself a Florentine, demanding the return of Dante. Ravenna reluctantly acquiesced to the Pope's authority and command.

The day soon came that the victorious Papal and political dignitaries of Florence, arrived in Ravenna to collect the remains of Dante. When the modest tomb was opened, it was empty! The City Fathers of Ravenna shrewdly theorized that the



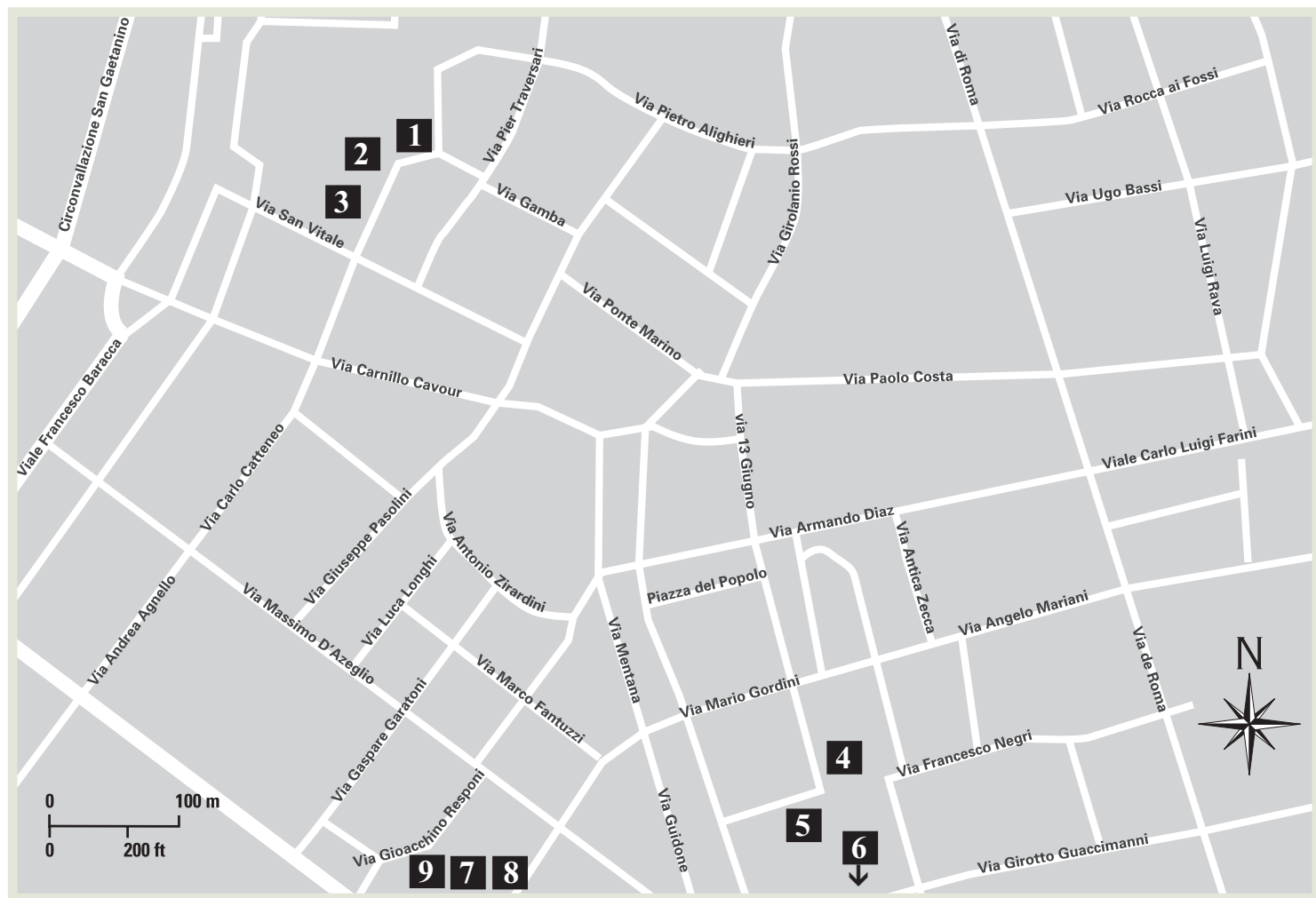
body of Dante must have resurrected to join his spirit in heaven. The Papal and political representatives of Florence departed Ravenna empty handed.

Over three hundred years later, in 1865, workmen accidentally discovered a false wall in Ravenna's Basilica de San Francisco. Behind the wall was a large, old wooden box covered with dust. The workmen sat the box on a carpet and opened it. Accumulated dust gently settled upon the carpet. Inside the box were human remains and a note that read "This is the body of Dante Alighieri". Someone swept up the dust from the carpet, put it in a small sack and eventually sent it to the National Central Library of Florence. Mistakenly believing

they possessed mortal remains, the "Ashes of Dante" were a proudly displayed in Florence to the 1929 World Congress of Librarians.

In 1999, six-hundred and seventy-eight years after the poet's death, workers in the Library of Florence found the small sack of dust that had been misplaced for decades among ancient manuscripts and old books.

Today Ravenna still holds and protects the treasured remains and reputation of one of history's preeminent authors and philosophers, their beloved adopted son, Dante Alighieri.



RAVENNA PLACES OF INTEREST

1 The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia was constructed in the early 400s AD. It has stunning mosaics that UNESCO called "artistically perfect". The mausoleum houses the sarcophagi of Aelia Galla Placidia, regent of the Roman Empire in the early 400s, her husband, Emperor Constantius III, Emperor of the Western Roman Empire in 421 and her son Valentinian III, made Emperor of Western Roman Empire in 425 AD ... at the age of six.

2 The Basilica of Saint Vitale is one of the best preserved and most representative examples of Byzantine architecture and art in the world today. The church displays amazing mosaics relating to numerous themes taken from the Hebrew Bible or that which Christians refer to as the Old Testament. Other mosaics represent Emperor Justinian I with his court

and his Empress Theodora with her attendants.

3 The National Museum of Antiquities is in the former Benedictine Monastery of the Saint Vitale Basilica. The museum has an interesting array of artifacts that span the period from the Roman Empire and early Christianity through to the ascendancy and dominance of Byzantine rule.

4 Dante's Tomb is the final resting place of the internationally famous Italian poet and philosopher, Dante Alighieri, author of "The Divine Comedy". Before this tomb was built Dante was laid to rest in the vestibule of the adjoining Basilica of San Francisco.

5 The Archiepiscopal Chapel was built as a private prayer sanctuary under the direction of Archbishop Peter II in the late 400s. The ceiling mosaic of Jesus depicts him as a warrior with a lion and a snake under foot. In the 1500s the

master artist Luca Longhi, from Ravenna, added paintings.

6 The Baptistery of Neon (Battistero Neoniano) was built in the late 300s AD. This octagonal shaped baptistery is the oldest known structure in Ravenna. The beautiful mosaic on the domed ceiling depicts Jesus, John the Baptist and the twelve disciples.

7 The Arian Baptistery was built in the late 400s under the direction of Teodorico the Great, King of the Ostrogoths, the Germanic tribes that had conquered Italy during that period. The beautiful mosaic depicts John the Baptist as he is baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River.

8 The Basilica of Saint Apollinare Nuovo is another of the beautiful chapels built under the direction of King Teodorico the Great in the late 400s. This chapel has been re-dedicated and renamed numerous times over the centuries. As usual in the churches of Ravenna, this basilica is adorned with beautifully crafted mosaics depicting Christ and the disciples.

9 The Mausoleum of Teodorico, King of the Germanic Ostrogoths, is the only known tomb to a “barbaric” king. The king designed the tomb himself before he died in 526. The remains of the king have long been removed. It is believed by some that his remains now rest in the town of Pavia, near Milan in northern Italy.

Beyond Ravenna

Ferrara is a small town a few miles to the northwest of Ravenna. Due to the fact that the town is virtually unknown to tourists Ferrara has been able to maintain its Medieval and Renaissance feel. The Schifanoia Palace, with its amazing frescoes, was built for the Estes Dynasty who ruled the area from the 1200s to the 1500s.

Cesena, a few miles south of Ravenna, is a beautiful town straight out of the Middle Ages. The countryside becomes a bit more rolling and hilly. Sitting atop one of the hills, Cesena can be seen from miles away. The Malatestiana Library, one of the oldest in all of Italy, has numerous ancient manuscripts on display.

Serenissima Repubblica di San Marino (The Most Serene Republic of San Marino) is just a few miles further south from Cesena. Setting high upon a mountain overlooking the entire countryside, San Marino claims to be the oldest continual republic in the world. There are three amazing forts atop Mount Titano.

Bologna, the regional capital, lies a few miles west of Ravenna. The “Old City”, laid out on the grid of its earlier Roman foundation, is still a wonderful representation of the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque periods. Many of the city’s fortifications and towers still remain. Bologna claims its Alma Mater Studiorum as being the oldest university in Europe.



SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Ravenna and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of the organized Shore Excursions. For Information concerning tour content and pricing, consult azamaracruises.com or contact the on-board Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Bargaining: Most items have fixed prices, but it may be possible to get a discount on a large purchase.

Tipping: Generally a 10% service charge is added to restaurant bills. It is normal to offer a 5% tip to the waiter in addition to any service charge. For taxi drivers, a 5-10% tip is acceptable.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Italian cuisine varies greatly from region to region and mother to mother. It is well known for its freshness, simplicity and taste. The Emilia-Romagna region is known for its hardy recipes. The pork and pastas of the region are said to be the best in all of Italy.

The region is especially famous for three products. The first is Parma Prosciutto (prosciutto crudo, dry-cured ham). The entire process, exactly as it has been done for the past two millennia, can take anywhere from nine months to one year. Anyone who has tasted the real thing will tell you it is well worth the wait. The second internationally famous product to come from the Emilia-Romagna region is Balsamic Vinegar or Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena. It is aged in chestnut and oak casks from 12 to 50 years with some vintages aged as long as 150 years. Needless to say, the expensive, richly flavored and highly concentrated vinegar is never poured from its tiny bottle. Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena is added to recipes and salads drop by drop. The third famous product that is exclusive to this region is the wildly popular and delicious Parmigiano Reggiano. This fantastic cheese is aged from one to two years. For every pound of cheese eight quarts of milk is required. This cheese is truly one of the fundamental ingredients of Italian cuisine. Here are some wonderful local favorites. Piadina Romagnola is the favorite unleavened flat bread of the region. It is often covered with ham, cheese and greens then folded over and eaten as a sandwich. It is a popular quick snack usually served hot from one of the ubiquitous street vendors. Passatelli is a beef broth soup with cheese dumplings that are made by combining bread crumbs, Parmigiano Reggiano, butter, lemon zest, nutmeg and eggs. Ragu Bolognese is made with whole tomatoes or paste, onion, celery and carrot, red wine, cream, finely chopped pancetta, butter, olive oil, ground beef and beef stock. Penne al Forno con Gamberi e Funghi is baked pasta with shrimp, thinly sliced mushrooms, Parmigiano Reggiano, flour, milk, butter, nutmeg and Cognac. Pasta Farcita con

Pollo is ravioli stuffed with a mixture of Parmigiano Reggiano, finely chopped chicken, cooked spinach, prosciutto and eggs and served with a cheese, nutmeg, cream and butter sauce. Zucca Arrosto al Balsamico is roasted butternut squash with a Parmigiano Reggiano, balsamic vinegar, sage and olive oil glaze. Minestra di Zucca is a rich butternut squash soup made with chicken broth, nutmeg, bay leaf, butter and cream.

Vineyards have been grown in Italy since the Bronze Age, 3,000 BC. Every region of Italy produces a number of very good quality wines. Some of the favorites of the Emilia-Romagna region are: Albana di Romagna, a sweet white wine. Trebbiano, a fine white table wine that is often served with grilled seafood. This wine is also the base for many brandies. Lambrusco is an ancient dry red wine that is perfect with the local cuisine. Locally this wine is not as sweet as the Lambrusco that is produced for export. Sangiovese is a mellow red wine that traces its origins back to the 1600s. Legend has it that the wine was first produced by monks near the town of Saint Angelo. A visiting nobleman praised the wine and asked the monks its name. The problem was the monks just grew the grapes and made the wine. It never dawned on them to name it. The story goes that, to avoid embarrassment, the monks made up the name on the spot and the dignitary, pleased with his wonderful discovery, departed none the wiser. The number of casks that the nobleman took with him is purely conjecture.

SHOPPING

There are great cafes and shops all over Ravenna. Shopping hours are generally from 9:30am to 12:30pm and 4:00pm to 8:00pm Monday thru Saturday. Most shops are closed on Thursday afternoons.

Value added Tax (VAT), is added to most purchases. Visitors who spend over a certain amount may be entitled to re-claim some or all of the tax paid, however, regulations and conditions governing the refund of VAT are subject to change and RCCL cannot guarantee the cooperation of local authorities.

LOCAL CURRENCY

The unit of currency in this port is the euro. There are 8 euro coins with a common face. On the reverse, each member state contributes a design. There are 7 euro notes. All euro coins and notes are legal tender in member states. Foreign currency and Traveler's checks can be changed at banks and most major hotels. Most major credit cards and Traveler's checks are widely accepted. Small shops and restaurants may accept cash only.

TELEPHONE FACILITIES

Most public telephones take local coins and/or telephone cards which can be purchased at the Post Office or Tobacconists.

A coin or telephone card may be required to dial these access numbers:

AT&T: 800.172.444

MCI: 800.90.5825

TRANSPORTATION

Taxis can be quite expensive even over short distances. A few taxis will be available at the pier. It is important to negotiate a fare before departing. In order to rent a car you must be at least 18 years old and have had your driver's license for over one year. If you are ticketed, police are authorized to collect the fine on the spot.

TOURIST INFORMATION

The Tourist Information Center is located at Via Salara, 8, Ravenna.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Yes • Si

No • No

Good Day • Buon Giorno

Good-bye • Arrivederci

Thank-you • Grazie

You're Welcome • Prego
