

HISTORICAL RE-ENACTMENTS IN ITALY - SUMMER 2019

Every summer in Italy there are a wide range of Palios, local patron saint feasts and historical re-enactments that bring out the colours, smells, taste, costumes, pride and sheer joy of the local communities in celebration of an illustrious past still very much cherished today. Here is a selection:

PALIO DI FABRIANO

Fabriano, Marche Region, 16-24 June 2019

www.fabrianopalio.it



The “Palio di San Giovanni Battista” is a festival that recalls the 14th Century, a time in which Fabriano experienced its golden age. To pay homage to the Saint Patron, the four districts of Fabriano (called “porte”) take parts to different challenges (e.g. popular games, creation of artistic flower carpets, archery...). The final challenge, called “Sfida del Maglio”, takes place on the 24th of June. In this contest the four blacksmiths of each “porta” have to craft a perfect key starting from a rough iron bar. If the key is well-made, it would fit in a key-hole which unlocks a mechanism which let the banner of the winning “porta” rise to the sky. The winning blacksmith will be awarded as the best blacksmith in Fabriano for the whole year. In the “Hostarie” of Fabriano representing each “porta” or district the visitors can taste a real Medieval feast, served by waiters dressed in typical costumes and entertained by Medieval music .

LUMINARA AND RACE OF SAN RANIERI

Lungarno, Pisa (Tuscany); 16 June 2019

www.pisaunicaterra.it

The **Luminara of San Ranieri** in Pisa is considered one of the major events of the summer of the city and of the entire region. On the evening of the 16th June (the eve of the Patron Saint festivity, San Ranieri) the Luminara of San Ranieri in Pisa lights up the Lungarno and the heart of the city. Thousands of wax candles, set in clear and white glasses and fixed then onto wooden white-painted frames, highlight the outline of the palaces, of the bridges, of the churches and of the towers reflecting the river.

THE PALIO OF SIENA

Siena (Tuscany); 2 July and 16 August 2019

www.comune.siena.it

Everyday life grinds to a halt as Siena celebrates its most ancient and sacred ritual: horses and riders representing ten of Siena’s seventeen contrade, or districts, race around the ring of tufo rock that covers the Piazza del Campo. On 2 July and 16 August the long afternoon begins in the heart of each contrada with the blessing of the horses, followed by the historical parade to the piazza. Finally, there is the race itself: the victorious contrada bears the banner triumphantly to the Provenzano Basilica for the “te deum” thanksgiving to the Madonna or to the Madonna.

MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL IN MONTERIGGIONI

Monteriggioni, Siena

4-7 July & 12-14 July 2019

www.monteriggionimedievale.com



The theme of the festival, is “Being a woman in Dante’s times”. The two weekends of the festival feature a variety of events. As usual, the festival is distinguished by events which bring the past to life: re-enactments of ancient military techniques, medieval everyday life, crafts and

trades, along with jesters, acrobats, itinerant theatre performances and jugglers. The festival takes place in the wonderful Monteriggioni castle, completing the medieval atmosphere. Open every day from the afternoon to late evening.

QUINTANA OF ASCOLI PICENO

Ascoli Piceno (Marche); 13 July and 4 Aug. 2019



www.quintanadiascoli.it

Every year, the city of Ascoli Piceno hosts the historical **Quintana**, a re-enactment of medieval practices and traditions. The participants walk in procession along every “sestiere” (city quarter), dressed in Medieval costumes and followed by flag bearers and archers.

FESTA DEL REDENTORE - FESTIVAL OF THE REDENTORE

Venice (Veneto) – 20-21 July 2019

www.veneziaunica.it

The **Festival of Redentore** is one of the most popular events in Venice. It is celebrated each year on the third Sunday of July. The festival itself dates back to the year 1576, and is named after the church Redentore that was designed by Palladio and resides on the island of Guidecca. Venice was suffering from a terrible plague, and the Republic's senate voted to build a temple on the Guidecca Island in honour of Christ the Redeemer, and the Venetians promised to go there every year on the third Sunday of July, if the plague stopped. Traditionally, the Venetians celebrate this day by having dinner on the Saturday night while watching an incredible display of fireworks that light up the skies over Venice for an hour or more.

PALIO DEI NORMANNI DI PIAZZA ARMERINA

Piazza Armerina (Sicily); 12 - 14 August 2019

www.feditgiochistorici.it

Plutia (the old Piazza Armerina) is home to the most ancient medieval event in Southern Italy which takes place every year from August 12-14 in honour of Madonna Maria SS. Delle Vittorie. The event is a re-enactment of Sicily being conquered in 1060 by the Normans, led by Ruggero of Altavilla. At the end of the event, the whole procession parades through the main streets, triumphantly displaying the city flag along with its winners.

LA TORTA DEI FIESCHI,

Cogorno and Lavagna (Genoa, Liguria); 13 Aug. 2019

www.tortadeifieschi.it



On 13th August in San Salvatore di Cogorno takes place the "Addiu du Fantin", a medieval reconstruction of the bachelor party of Count Opizzo Fieschi with dances, antique music, flags games and knights. One day after, 14th August, not far away in Lavagna, takes place the medieval reconstruction of the marriage of Bianca De' Bianchi with Opizzo Fieschi, better known as "Torta dei Fieschi" (Fieschi's Cake): a giant wedding cake, prepared for the occasion by local confectioners, is distributed to all participants in the event.

CAVALCATA DELL'ASSUNTA in FERMO (Marche)

Fermo – Le Marche - August 14-15 2019

www.cavalcadellassunta.it



The ten “Contrade” (quarters) of the medieval town of Fermo participate with 650 men and women in historical costumes to a horse race every year on 15 August (Ferragosto) in the centre of town. Flag bearers, side shows and food and wine will entertain the visitors.

MEDIEVALIS, MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

Pontremoli, Tuscany

21-25 August 2019

www.medievalis.org

“Medievalis” is the Medieval festival that occurs every year in Pontremoli in northern Tuscany. It re-enacts the concession of the status of free Municipality to Pontremoli in 1226 by Emperor Frederick II. For 4 days Pontremoli re-lives this event with groups of actors dressed as Medieval knights and dames, horse-drawn carriages, merchants all dressed in traditional costumes. There will be duels, falcon games, dinners with typical dishes of the 13th century and jousting tournaments and more.

BRAVIO DELLE BOTTI

Montepulciano, Siena

25 August 2019

www.braviodellebotti.com



The eight contrade, or districts, of Montepulciano compete to win a painted banner by rolling 80 kg barrels uphill along a 1,800 metre route. The route is chosen in advance, and there are eight starting points, set out in two rows. Each contrada’s barrel is placed in the position assigned to it by the lot that is drawn on the morning of the race. As the bell tolls in the Town Hall bell tower the umpire gives the signal for the race to start. Two men, the “pushers”, roll the barrels along the competition route, winding up through the evocative streets of the old town centre of Montepulciano to

the Cathedral churchyard in the Piazza Grande. In the days leading up to the race Montepulciano celebrates the traditional Candle Procession, with a parade through the beautiful city streets in period costume, illuminated only by torchlight.

PALIO DI ASTI

Asti (Piedmont); 1 September 2019

http://www.comune.asti.it/index.php?id_sezione=943

One of the oldest Palios in Italy, this colourful event sees 21 contestants relive the ancient tradition of the Palio in the historic centre of this charming Piedmont town, famous for its sparkling wine, the Asti spumante. In the days preceding the race, visitors can enjoy many collateral and preparatory events: the Palio of the Flag-wavers, the colourful flea market, the trials of the jockeys on the field. The Palio itself is a difficult challenge that requires strength, skill, passion and courage from all the participants, as only one of them will win possession of the crimson banner with the coat of arms of the city and the image of its Patron Saint.

THE MACCHINA DI SANTA ROSA PROCESSION

Viterbo (Lazio); 3 Sept. 2019

www.facchinidisantarosa.it



Each year the Medieval town of Viterbo in Lazio renews the festivities in honour of its Holy Patron Saint. The “Trasporto della Macchina di Santa Rosa” is a procession that takes place in the evening of September 3rd to commemorate the relocation of the body of Saint Rosa from the Church of Santa Maria del Poggio to the church of San Damiano (the Sanctuary of Santa Rosa). The “Macchina di Santa Rosa” is a gigantic structure, nearly 30 metres high, which is carried through the streets by a large team of strong local men.

HISTORICAL REGATTA

Venice (Veneto); 1 Sept. 2019



The heart of the Venetian rowing season is approaching with its series of regattas that will take place all throughout the summer. The tradition of the discipline traces back to the development of the city and the growth of its power among the maritime republics. During regattas, crews compete rowing along the Grand Canal as well as in Burano, Murano, Pellestrina, Malamocco, Mestre and along the Giudecca Canal. To witness these competitions is undoubtedly one of the best ways to

discover different sites of the Lagoon.

The most awaited event is surely the Historical Regatta that this year will take place on September 1st and that will be preceded by the historical parade on water: a masquerade of boats from the 16th century carrying the doge and the most prominent ministries of the Venetian Republic.

The competition is divided into four categories based on age and type of boat. The most famous of all is undoubtedly the champions' regatta, held on the Grand Canal, that has its finish line at the machina, a floating stage settled for the occasion in front of the Ca' Foscari Palace.

The Historical Regatta is in partnership with the Città di Venezia for the awareness campaign #EnjoyRespectVenezia. www.regatastoricavenezia.it

SAGRA DEL FUOCO – FIRE FESTIVAL

Recco (Genoa, Liguria) – 7-8 September 2019

www.sagradelfuoco.it

The celebrations in honour of the Our Lady of the Suffragio are known all over Italy, for the magnificence of the firework displays, which explode to illuminate the sky of Recco. It is the 7 quarters of Recco who challenge each other: they avail themselves of the best Italian masters of fireworks displays. During the same time the solemn procession of 8th September takes place through the streets of the town with the “Arca Argentea Suffragina” and the magnificent wooden Crucifixes of the Ligurian Brotherhoods.

QUINTANA OF FOLIGNO

Foligno – 14-15 September 2019

www.quintana.it



Foligno, in the heart of Umbria and Italy, is famous worldwide for the Quintana, the jousting tournament which in June and September renews the challenge among the knights of its ten “sestieri”. An exciting challenge where each knight, riding his own galloping horse, has to catch a series of rings (which gradually become smaller and smaller) hanging from a wooden statue called “Quintana”. It is a great feast of people, colours and passions, but also an accurate historical, scenic, iconographic and gastronomic reconstruction of the Italian Baroque.

NB: information is correct at time of publication

Stefania Gatta
Press and Communications Executive
Italian National Tourist Board – UK and Ireland