

ALESSANDRIA & MONFERRATO

One land, a thousand stories



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AGENZIA TURISTICA LOCALE
della provincia di Alessandria

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■ INFO

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Vineyard Landscape of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato

www.paesaggivitivinicoli.it



Il Monferrato degli Infernot

www.ecomuseopietracantoni.it

The Sacred Mounts of Piemonte and of Lombardia

www.sacri-monti.com



Parco e Sacro Monte di Crea

www.parcocrea.com



Where we are

How to find us

- exits from the A21, A26 and A7 motorways
- railway stations at Acqui Terme, Alessandria, Casale Monferrato, Novi Ligure, Ovada, Tortona and Valenza

www.alexala.it
www.provincia.alessandria.it

Alessandria is at the crossroads between regions, cultures and culinary traditions that have different origins but the same prestige. We have taken all the most precious elements of these different sources and have melded them together in a cradle of tastes, aromas and sensations that is rare, even for Italy.

We are in the south-east corner of Piedmont, at the centre of a triangle formed by the cities of Turin, Milan and Genoa, all three being easily reached by car, our district being criss-crossed by the A21 Turin-Piacenza, A26 Santhià-Genoa and A7 Milan-Genoa motorways.

Distances: cities

95km from Milan
 90km from Turin
 85km from Genoa

Distances: airports

150km from Bergamo Orio al Serio
 120km from Milan Malpensa
 110km from Milan Linate
 105km from Turin Caselle
 80km from Genoa Cristoforo Colombo



The region

Alessandria and Province

- 3560km² surface area, 435,000 inhabitants
- Mediterranean climate

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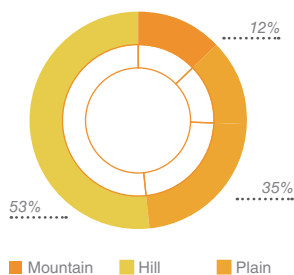
The Province of Alessandria has a surface area of 3,560km² and some 435,000 inhabitants. Its Mediterranean climate and geographic make up of **plain** (35%), **hill** (53%) and **mountain** (12%), gives visitors an ample choice when they come to experience the natural beauty of this special corner of Piedmont.

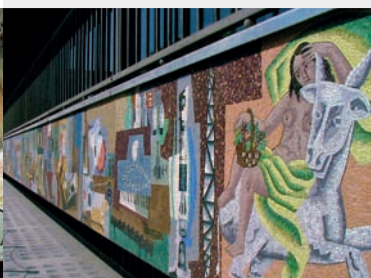
The pleasant weather of spring and summer makes this the ideal spot for people who are keen on sporting activities, whilst the autumn and winter are for those who enjoy the pleasures of the table, where good food and splendid wines come together in perfect harmony.

The district of Alessandria is not only an obligatory part of the journey between the Alps and the sea, but also has an important role in the cultural, artistic and economic health of the area. Plain, hill and mountain have strongly influenced what is to be found here; the plain between the hills of Monferrato and the Ligurian Apennines is deeply channelled by the Tanaro, Po and Scrivia rivers, those same Monferrato hills in the centre of the Province provide the foundations of the district's excellence in food and wine and there are four mountain communities in the Apennines themselves.

This, just by itself, merits a trip through this beautiful, harmonious countryside, the result of love and hard work by simple, honest country folk. A trip to savour all the flavours of the seasons and the re-awakening of the land in the spring.

Our district





ART, HISTORY AND CASTLES

Alessandria and district

Alessandria

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Studded with historic remains, Alessandria has few elements of settlements that existed prior to the town's founding in 1168, these being remodelled during the urban development that took place conditioned by the presence of the Tanaro and Bormida rivers.

In the peaceful centre of town you will find the remains of Palatium Vetus, the oldest seat of local government on the **Piazza della Libertà**, which was once in front of the mediaeval Duomo, pulled down by Napoleon. The actual 19th century **Cattedrale di San Pietro**, close by, has a bell tower whose height is only exceeded by that of the Torazza di Cremona.

Also on the Piazza della Libertà is **Palazzo Ghilini**, home to the Prefettura and the Province and designed in 1732, noted for its two atriums (the first being octagonal) and the splendid staircases. Next to Palazzo Ghilini is **Palazzo Cuttica** di Cassine (5,9) (home to the music conservatory) with two important balconies supported by figures and an upper floor in a rococo style with 18th century painting and enriched with imposing mirrors and contemporary over-door decorations; Palazzo Cuttica is also home to a series of museum collections from the **Civic Collection**, including the **Antiquarium di Villa del Foro** (1), the **Borsalino Hat Museum** (2), the **Gambarina Museum** (3), the **Science Theatre**, the **River Museum**, the **Percorso del Museo Civico**, the **Photography Collection** and the **Council Art Exhibition**.

The Sale d'Arte Comune provides the setting for the permanent display of "**Le Stanze di Re Artù**", a cycle of frescoes from the Torre Pio V at Frugarolo, executed between 1391 and 1402 by an artist from the court of the viscounty of Pavia.

The Battle of Marengo

Just a few kilometres from Alessandria is the district of Marengo (6) which on June 14th 1800 saw the decisive victory of Napoleon, which brought French rule to Piedmont. Marengo also gives its name to a gold coin and a number of recipes and is an undoubted must-see venue for those interested in Napoleon. An admirer of his marked the spot in the mid 1800s by building a fine villa, which has recently been restored and converted into the **Napoleonic Museum**.

Also of note is the 14th century Piovera Castle, once owned by nobility and now a stately home; the building is articulated with guard posts, bridges which cross the pleasing ditch and historic parkland. It is next to a mediaeval hamlet



1 Gambarina Museum



2 Cappello Borsalino



3 Villa del Foro Antiquarium

ART, HISTORY AND CASTLES

The building in fired brick of Palazzo Guasco dates back to the 18th century, and for the part still in private ownership, has a refined style very similar to Palazzo Ghilini.

For enthusiasts of contemporary architecture there is historic Fabbrica Borsalino (1857), which is now home to a part of the town's university. Not far from here are also the Taglieria del Pelo and the **Dispensario Antitubercolare** buildings, both designed in the 1950s by Ignazio Gardella. For fans of Gino Severini's compelling work in mosaics there is the façade of the Palazzo delle Poste e Telegrafiche (4), built at the end of the 1930s in the rationalist style.

On the left bank of the River Tanaro (8), is the Cittadella (open only for special events), built on the remains of the Bergoglio district; it was started in 1728 by Ignazio Bertola.

To see

Gambarina Museum (3), Cappello Borsalino (2), Villa del Foro Antiquarium (1), Post Office mosaic (4), Palazzo Cuttica (5,9), Marengo (6), Palazzo Comunale (7), bridge over the Tanaro (8)



4 Post Office mosaic



5 Palazzo Cuttica



6 Marengo



7 Palazzo Comunale



8 Bridge over the Tanaro



9 Palazzo Cuttica:

ART, HISTORY AND CASTLES

Acqui Terme and district

Acqui Terme

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Home to the Statielli tribe from Liguria, re-christened Aquae Statiellae by the Romans who were enthralled by its hot water springs, it was also an ancient and powerful bishopric and saw its peak in the late mediaeval period which left many splendid buildings like the **Duomo** in the fascinating Pisterna, the old part of the town. Overlooking the Pisterna is the Castle, a Bishop's residence even in the 11th century and now home to the **Archeological Museum** and the **Museum of the Maestri Ferrari**. As well as the rich heritage of religious buildings, there is the important building housing the spring for the **Fontana della Bollente**, from which the curative waters flow at a steady 75°C and which are used to this day in the spa establishment in the Bagni district, marked by the imposing remains of the Roman aqueduct.(1).

Also of note is the **Gipsoteca Giulio Monteverde** art gallery at Bistagno, which houses numerous important sculptures by this artist.

To See

Acqui Terme: Roman aqueduct (1),
Montechiaro d'Acqui (2)

The Acqui district has many fine castles in villages like Morsasco, Prasco and Orsara Bormida. At **Cassine**, in the first weekend of September, is a fascinating **Mediaeval Festival** with displays, meetings and good food and wine.

Casale Monferrato and district

Casale Monferrato

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The important ruling families of this area (Aleramo, Monferrato, Paleologhi, Gonzaga and Savoia) left their rich imprint on this town, a local noble capital, in the form of the history and buildings with respect to the original mediaeval layout.

On the right bank of the River Po the Castello Paleologo defends the town with its imposing walls, which seems excessive today for a peaceful town like Casale. Building started in the 14th century and was later enlarged with four towers. On the other side of town the Cittadella, commissioned by Gonzaga to close the town walls, was finished in 1590 and subsequently destroyed by the French.

Besides the pleasing **Duomo** dedicated to **Sant'Evasio**, **San Domenico** and the synagogue, there are also a wealth of fine noble houses including **Palazzo Gozzani** di Treville, **Gozzani di San Giorgio**, **Palazzo Sannazzaro**, the Civic Tower and the **Palazzo di Anna d'Alençon**, a house dating from the late 15th century which has a fine internal loggia and wonderful frescoes.

In the Casale district, there are a number manor houses and fortified buildings; **the castle at Camino (4)** with its look-out tower and residential part which was enriched in the 1400s with a salon decorated by Pier Francesco Guala with paintings of the Scarampi dynasty (characters in the novel by Bandello). At a panoramic spot near the village of San Giorgio Monferrato is the Ricaldone castle, which dates back to the 10th century and was in the gift of the bishopric of Vercelli; the imposing façade can be traced back to baroque additions from the 1800s. Also worthy of note is the Castello Sannazzaro at Giarolo and Villa Vidua at Conzano.

ART, HISTORY AND CASTLES

Worthy of mention is the former Augustine convent of Santa Croce, with its façade by Magnocavalli from 1758 which houses the Civic Museum collection, the **Gipsoteca Leonardo Bistolfi** (3), dedicated to the artist's symbolist sculptures along with a collection of archaeological finds.

To see

Casale: Gipsoteca Bistolfi (3),
Camino: the castle(4)

Novi Ligure and district

Novi Ligure

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Dominated by the ruins of a 12th century castle, **Novi** is a town with a heavy Ligurian influence, as can be seen by the painted façades of many of the houses that belonged to the gentry and merchants – Novi saw a large exchange fair in 1626 – with a lot of trompe d'oeil architectural effects and mythical scenes being depicted, which has given rise to the term, the "painted town." Not far away is **Libarna** (5), the most developed Roman site in the whole Alessandria area which, being on the Via Postumia, was abandoned in the 7th century after barbarian invasions. The perfectly conserved remains include a theatre, amphitheatre, spa and forum, all linked by aqueduct and drainage systems for the residential houses, which were well decorated, some of which can still be seen. At some 400m above sea level the **Forte di Gavi** (6) dominates the Lemme Valley with its imposing star shape closed in by walling and angled bastions on the 17th century square fort.

To see

Libarna: amphitheatre (5),
Gavi: view of the Fort (6)



1 Acqui Terme: Roman aqueduct



2 Montechiaro d'Acqui



3 Casale: gipsoteca Bistolfi



4 The castle at Camino



5 Libarna: amphitheatre



6 Gavi: view of the Fort

ART, HISTORY AND CASTLES

Ovada and district

Ovada

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First mentioned in the founding documents for the Abbey at Spigno (991), from the beginning of the 13th century the town began to fall under the influence of Genoa, and several religious ceremonies are still today reminders of this, like the brotherhood processions which, twice a year, wend their way through the narrow streets of the town parading massive crucifixes. The hills surrounding the town are often crowned with castles and virtually every village boasts one (**Rocca Grimalda** (1), **Cremolino**, **Montadeo**). At Trisobbio, the castle has an imposing presence with arrow slits and a single castellated angular tower, the result of modernisation of the original 13th century building. Finally, there is the **Tagliolo Monferrato Castle** with its 10th century tower reinforced by the Genoese and then restyled by the D'Andrade family. **The Natural History Museum**, situated in the church of Sant'Antonio is dedicated to Giulio Maini, a noted local naturalist

To see

Rocca Grimalda: the Castle (1),
Spigno Monferrato (2)

Tortona and district

Tortona

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Founded in 120BC at the crossroads of Via Postumia and Via Fulvia, to which was added the extension of Via Emilia towards Gaul, Roman Dertona has left many reminders of itself in the urban landscape of **Tortona** and district, for example in the **archaeological sites** at Via Rinarolo and Via alle Fonti. Thriving by the time of the Imperial Roman era, it reached its peak in the early mediaeval period when it fought against Pavia over trading interests and was subsequently besieged and destroyed by Barbarossa in 1155, before coming under the influence of Milan. The Visconti started the construction of a new castle (4), enlarged over the years to become a stronghold before Napoleon had it knocked down.

In the nearby Curone Valley, the village of **Volpedo** is the birthplace of the pointillist **Giuseppe Pellizza**, who painted **Quarto Stato**. A trail has been dedicated to him which winds its way through various places of interest like the **Studio Museum** (5), next door to his birthplace which recreates the precise atmosphere of the artist's studio designed by him in 1888 and subsequently enlarged in 1896 to its present size with its excellent aspect towards the light which allowed the studio to have the same light as the exhibition room.

Inside the **Museo dello Studio** di **Giuseppe Pellizza** (5) are several original works in oils including the Portrait of his Father (1889-90) and Mother (1890), two self portraits in oils (1885) and charcoal (1901) and a sketch for San Luigino (1894), the final version of which is to be seen in the second side chapel on the left in the parish church of S. Pietro.

ART, HISTORY AND CASTLES

Finally the **learning museum** in the palazzo del Torraglio with a educational trail of panels displaying photographs and documents that look at the 'construction' of works of art.

To see
Tortona: the Castle (4)
Volpedo: inside Pellizza's studio (5)

Valenza and district

Valenza

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On the banks of the River Po near to where it is joined by the River Tanaro and right on the road between Genoa and Milan, "Forum fulvii quod valentinum" was how the Latin writer Pliny the second described **Valenza**. The probable origins of the town are certainly even earlier and may well go back to the Liguri tribe (10th century BC). Under Roman control from the 2nd century BC the town, thanks to its position on the Via Fulvia, flourished. It became an important strategic military town, but with Italian unity, lost its military status and instead developed new industrial activities. Around 1840 **Vincenzo Morosetti** started up a jewellery business; today it is considered the European capital for **gold and precious jewel craft working** (6); here jewellery is designed and created for markets all around the world.

To see
Valenza: examples of the jeweller's art (6)



1 Rocca Grimalda: the Castle



2 Spigno Monferrato



3 Ovada



4 Tortona: the castle



5 Volpedo: inside Pellizza's studio



6 Valenza: examples of the jeweller's art

THE HOLY WAYS

Alessandria and district

Alessandria

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In the centre of Alessandria the church of **Santa Maria di Castello** (2) stands on the ancient castle grounds of the district of Rovereto, the first settlement of the town.

Its current late gothic style dates from its construction between 1476 and 1545. The triple façade is enriched with a renaissance doorway in stone. The church is home to a fine collection of works of art. Also visible are the remains of walls of two much earlier holy buildings; a church with large apse from the early mediaeval period (8th-9th centuries) and a second church from the Carolingian period (11th century). On the left hand side of the church are cloisters (145h-16th centuries), whose refectory has a large crucifixion fresco dating from 1520 by Timoteo da Vercelli. The **Cattedrale di S. Pietro** (1,6) was built between 1875 and 1879, replacing the Romanesque church pulled down by Napoleon I.

On the left of the neoclassic façade is the bell tower (106m). The interior is in a latin cross layout with three naves with frescoes almost all of which are attributed to Luigi Morgari. The cupola is decorated with the 24 patron saints of the towns of the Lombardy League. The chapel of San Pio V houses one of the few artefacts the town still possesses from the 14th century: the Madonna with Child, known as the Madonna dell'Uscetto. Renaissance works include the Pala con San Pietro by Callista Piazza (1546), two wooden sculptures attributed to Baldino di Surso (middle 15th century) and the crucifix kept in the first chapel on the right. From the same period comes the Madonna della Salve, patron of the city.

The church of **Santa Maria del Carmine** (14th century) has a gothic façade and exposed brickwork; of interest in the interior is a "stepped room" with cruciform pillars and a central polygonal apse.

To see

Alessandria: St Peter's Cathedral (1)
Alessandria: S. Maria di Castello (2)
Bosco Marengo: church of S. Croce (3)
Acqui: cathedral dell'Assunta (4)
Cassine: church of S. Francesco (5,7)
Alessandria: interior of cathedral of S. Pietro (5)

*In 1504, at Bosco Marengo, the future Pius V was born, who ordered the building of the **Santa Croce complex** (3). The church is a fine example of the counter-reformation style with a classic frontage, a single imposing nave and a fine collection of works of art including pieces by Giorgio Vasari (Adorazione dei Magi, Giudizio Universale, ten testament stories), a mausoleum dedicated to Saint Pius V, elaborate baroque decoration and 18th century marble altars. Of note also the two cloisters of the convent, the Chapter Room and the Sacristy, Museo Vasariano.*



1 Alessandria: St Peter's Cathedral



2 Alessandria: S. Maria di Castello



3 Bosco Marengo: church of S. Croce

THE HOLY WAYS

Acqui Terme and district

Acqui Terme

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The **Cattedrale dell'Assunta** (4) (1067), stands in the heart of the old town. Its Romanesque origins are still visible in places. A 17th century atrium with twin columns frames an important marble doorway (1481) by the sculptor Giovanni Antonio Pilacorte. The sacristy houses an outstanding triptych dedicated to the Virgin of Monserrat by Bermejo.

The old cathedral, the basilica of San Pietro, is one of the oldest in the country, built within an early Christian cemetery of the 4th century and renovated in a Romanesque style in the 11th century and subsequently used as a Benedictine abbey before falling into disuse before being reconsecrated and renovated in the 18th century. The central apse is mediaeval as are the polygonal smaller apses and the upper exterior walls above the central nave.

Not far away the old centre of the village of Cassine has an impressive collection of old sacred buildings including the **convent complex of San Francisco** (5,7); the church, in a gothic style dates back to the 13th century; to the side of the frontage is the entrance to the old convent where the access corridor is still extant and the chapter room has fine 14th century frescoes.

The abbey of Santa Giustina at **Sezzadio** was founded according to local legend by King Liutprando and dedicated to the martyr Giustina in 772 and subsequently enlarged in 1030 by the Aleramici, who entrusted it to the Benedictine order. The church still essentially has its 11th century form. The interior has three naves with frescoes from the Lombardy school (14th-15th century), as well as some remains of the Romanesque period. The square crypt is divided into three naves by two rows of pillars is thought to be the oldest part of the building. The mosaic floor in black and white marble has an inscription which records Otberto as the "repairer" of the church.



4 Acqui: cathedral dell'Assunta



5 Cassine: church of S. Francesco



6 Alessandria: interior of cathedral



7 Cassine: church of S. Francesco

THE HOLY WAYS

Casale and district

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The façade of the **Cattedrale di Sant'Evasio** (1), consecrated in 1107 was the subject of extensive restoration in the 19th century. The interior has kept the original Romanesque layout. Still intact is the main architectural gem, the narthex with its four stone arches supporting an imposing ceiling, a rare architectural form that links back to Islamic and Armenian designs.

Also inside the church is a large wooden crucifix with silver facing from the renana school (13th century) and bas-reliefs and fragments of mosaic flooring (12th century). On the right of the transept there is the chapel dedicated to S. Evasio, designed by Benedetto Alfieri.

The gothic frontage of **San Domenico** (1472) includes a renaissance doorway from the Lombardy school; inside there are paintings by Pietro Francesco Guala. With a relatively anonymous exterior, the Oratorio del Gesù has some very interesting elements inside; there is a panelled wooden ceiling (1505) and, among the many works of art, a precious 16th century polyptych with a gold background depicting S. Anna, the Virgin with Baby and Saints, an altar piece (1555) by Bernardino Lanino of the Circumcision of Christ and a canvas by Pietro Francesco Guala of the Virgine Assunta, as well as a Flemish tapestry from the 16th century.

Also well worth a visit is the **Jewish Temple** (2) (1595) in the heart of the old ghetto. In the prayer room with its imposing Torah Ark containing the Scrolls, the Piemontese rococo baroque style flourishes. Two floors also house the Museum of Jewish Art and History and of special interest is the section dedicated to modern Jewish art with works by Emanuele Luzzati, Roland Topor and Antonio Recalcati. The crypt is home to the Museo dei Lumi, where original works of art can be seen interpreting the theme of the Hanukkah lamps.

To see

Casale: Duomo di Sant'Evasio (1),

Casale: synagogue (2),

Ozzano: Parish church of S. Salvatore (3)

Outside town

Going west you come to Serralunga di Crea with its Sacro Monte Nature Park; the original project (1589) for a devotional path at Sacro Monte was enlarged to 23 chapels and five hermitages, all dominated by the Chapel of Paradise.

At Ozzano Monferrato the **parish church of San Salvatore** (3) retains its original Romanesque layout and an important and imposing tower.



1 Casale: Duomo di Sant'Evasio



2 Casale: Synagogue



3 Ozzano: Parish church of S. Salvatore

THE HOLY WAYS

Ovada and district

Ovada

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At Ovada, the church of **Nostra Signora Assunta** is a focal point for the town with its tall frontage, circular cupola and the twin bell towers. Inside the church there is a wealth of art treasures: the high altar (designed by Alessandro Antonelli 1798-1888) and the painting of The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa by Luca Giordano.

To see

Lerma: Church di S. Giovanni (4),
Cremolino: S. Maria della Bruceta (5)

Not far from the village of **Cremolino**, at the **Sanctuary of Santa Maria della Bruceta** (5) (11th century) tradition has it that in the ashes of a small chapel burnt down by the Saracens a perfect portrait of the Madonna on stone was found, now in the sanctuary. The locals rebuilt the chapel, which from that moment on was known as the "Bruceta."

Valenza and district

Valenza

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The **Cathedral** is dedicated to **Santa Maria Maggiore** (3) and was probably built on an earlier place of worship; the building visible today was started in 1619 to replace the Romanesque duomo felt to be too small for the local population. The sober façade, which has the remains of a 13th century marble sarcophagus next to the doorway, was completed together with parts of the interior in 1890. Amongst the many works of art of note are a painting by Moncalvo dedicated to the Madonna of the Rosary (1620) and a painting by the Flemish artist Gozner depicting the Virgin and Saints. The cathedral has at the side a Museum of works of art.

To see

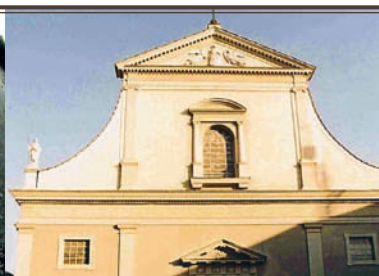
Valenza: S. Maria Maggiore Cathedral (6)



4 Lerma: Church di San Giovanni



5 Cremolino: S. Maria della Bruceta



6 Valenza: Cathedral

THE HOLY WAYS

Tortona and district

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In the town itself in the **cattedrale S. Maria Assunta e San Lorenzo**, (1574–end 1500s and end of the 1800s for the façade), the walls are covered with paintings (16th–17th centuries) and the ceilings with frescoes. The most important works of art are the Conversion of St Paul by Fiamminghino, the Martyrdom of St. Marziano and various works by Moncalvo. The church of **Santa Maria Canale** (11th and 12th centuries), with its basilica plan and three naves is a good example of Romanesque Lombard; inside there are several pieces including The Annunciation (1617) by Fiamminghino and a Sacred Family (16th century) from the Leonard school as well as interesting frescoes, one of St George and the Dragon (15th century) and the Prophets from the window of the presbytery (1570). There are many more old buildings in the area: **The Abbey at Rivalta Scrivia** (11th–15th centuries), whose church has a latin cross plan with an imposing bell tower at the centre.

The walls are decorated with many frescoes in the Lombardy style (15th–16th centuries), some of which are by Franceschino Boxilio. In the church of Santa Maria and San Siro at Sale, the peace treaty between Tortona and Pavia was signed in 1165. The church itself has three naves and is the result of significant reconstruction work during the 14th and 15th centuries. Dating from the 12th century the imposing Romanesque church of Santi Pietro e Paolo at Castelnuovo Scrivia has an interesting doorway with lunette window above and capitals decorated with Romanesque workings by Albertus at the time of Barbarossa. **The Romanesque chapel of Santa Maria** (4) (11th century) at Viguzzolo is just outside the old village and the central apse, still unaltered, has traces of frescoes with a Christ the Universal Ruler (11th century).

To see

Tortona: Madonna della Guardia (1),
Volpedo: Pieve di S. Pietro (2)

The Romanesque chapel of San Pietro

At Volpedo (2) (10th century) retains its ogive doorway in the frontage and original semicircular apse. The walls have many frescoes (15th century), including Christ the Universal Ruler, the twelve apostles, King David, the saints Cosma, Damian and Bartholomew, Virgin with Child and saints Giacomo and Agatha, attributed to Franceschino and Manfredino Boxilio.



1 Tortona: Madonna della Guardia



2 Volpedo: pieve di S. Pietro



3 Novi Ligure: Oratorio della Maddalena

THE HOLY WAYS

Novi Ligure e dintorni

Novi Ligure

Ufficio informazioni, viale dei Campionissimi 2
Ph +39 0143 72585 - Fax +39 0143 767657

innovando@comune.noviligure.al.it
www.comune.noviligure.al.it

At Novi Ligure, the **Oratorio della Maddalena** (3) is home to a noteworthy model of the Grief of Christ and a group in painted terracotta, created on site (16th century); a fine life-size composition of the Calvary scene carved in wood (end 16th century) can be seen in the apse.

The collegiate church of **Santa Maria Assunta** (4) (6th–7th century) has a baroque layout with mediaeval traces in the facade and the outer walls. Inside there are some splendid works of art from the Ligurian School of the 1600s and 1700s. In the right-hand chapel is a statue of the Virgin Mary in Tears. **Santa Maria della Pieve** (12th–13th centuries) and restored in 1678 has kept its original layout with three naves and the walls of the three apses are in brick and sandstone. The left-hand apse has a fresco dating from 1474 and signed by Manfredino Boxilio in which can be seen Oriana di Campofregoso, a noble lady from Novi.

At Gavi, the **church of S. Giacomo** (5) (1165) is a good example of Romanesque architecture notwithstanding the baroque additions of the 17th and 18th centuries. In the sloping facade there is an impressively deep doorway and a round window. Inside, the single columns support arches that support the curved baroque ceiling.

At Serravalle Scrivia, the interior of the **church of Santi Martino e Stefano** (6) (1239) is home to numerous works of art including the baptismal font (1486), the Madonna of the Rosary by Bernardo Montessoro, the Martyrdom of Saint Stephen (15th century) and a chapel dedicated to the Madonna Addolorata.

To see

Oratorio della Maddalena (3),
Collegiate Church di Santa Maria Assunta (4), Church of San Giacomo (5),
Church of Santi Martino e Stefano (6)

At Stazzano, the Santuario Nostra

Signora di Monte Spineto (1623–1630)

has its beginnings in history and legend; in 1155 in order to escape from an attack by Barbarossa, the local people fled to a nearby mountain, praying to the Madonna to save them and because of this started building a chapel. When there was a new invasion in the 1600s, the inhabitants hid themselves in the ruins of the old chapel and a dove, which had been flying around for a few days, settled on a whitethorn bush where a young girl then regained the power of speech.



4 Novi Ligure: Santa Maria Assunta



5 Gavi: San Giacomo



6 Church of Santi Martino e Stefano

GOLF AND WELLBEING

The Province's Golf Clubs

“

*The **Province of Alessandria** with its position between hills, plain and mountains, **offers innumerable opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment**, with pleasant walks in nature parks, trips in the mountains or a round of golf at one of the **six golf clubs or two practice courses** in the province.*

”

Golfing enthusiasts

who find themselves just passing through or those who have come here specifically looking for golf courses will be welcomed here by different areas of countryside that are still unspoilt.

Le Colline

Golf Club

Cassine

Strada Castelnuovo Bormida 2A 15016 Cassine
Ph +39 0144 715359
Mobile 333 3217304 · Fax + 39 0144 767007

www.golfclublecolline.it
lecolline@acquiterme.it

• **Course** / 9 hole, Par 72 • **Season** / February – December

• **Closed** / Monday (not public holidays)

How to find us

from Alessandria, head towards Acqui Terme and at Cassine turn off towards Castelnuovo Bormida, we are right after Cassine railway station.



ClubMargara

Golf Club

Fubine

Via Tenuta Margara 7 · 15043 Fubine
Ph +39 0131 778555/6 · Fax +39 0131 778772

www.golfmargara.it
info@golfmargara.com

• **Course** / 36 hole, Red Course, 18 holes, Par 72, Yellow Course, 18 holes, Par 72

• **Season** / February – December • **Closed** / Monday (not public holidays)

How to find us

Turin – Piacenza motorway, leave at the Felizzano exit and take the road on the left towards Fubine.



GOLF AND WELLBEING

Villa Carolina

Golf Club

Capriata
D'Orba

Loc. Villa Carolina 32 15060 Capriata d'Orba (AL)
Ph & Fax +39 0143 467355

www.golfclubvillacarolina.com
info@golfclubvillacarolina.com

♣ *course* / 18 hole, Par 72, 9 hole, Par 36, 3,225m
♣ *Season* / March – December
♣ *closed* / Monday (not public holidays), from April to October open all week.
How to find us
From the Milan – Genoa A26 motorway, leave at the Novi Ligure – Ovada exit and head towards Capriata d'Orba.



Il Golfino Practice Club

Practice course

Casale
Monferrato

Strada Provinciale Casale Pontestura 3/A
15033 Casale Monferrato AL
Ph +39 0142 408915

www.ilgolfino.it
ilgolfino@virgilio.it

♣ *course* / the driving range has 19 places (six covered) and there is a floodlit putting green with nine holes
How to find us
Leave the A26 motorway at the Casale Monferrato exit and take the Oggero road.



• Golf Club Villa Carolina



• Golf Club Le Colline del Gavi



• Golf Club Margara



• Golf Club Villa Carolina

GOLF AND WELLBEING

Le Colline del Gavi

Golf Club

Tassarolo

Strada Provinciale, 2 - 15060 Tassarolo AL
Ph +39 0143 342264

www.golfcollinedelgavi.com
info@golfcollinedelgavi.com

♣ **course** / 18 hole championship course, Par 73, 9 hole executive course, Par 31, 1,895m

♣ **Season** / February – December

♣ **losed** / Tuesday (not public holidays), from April to October open all week

How to find us

The Novi Ligure exit on the A26 link motorway Voltri-Sempione / A7 Milan – Genoa, direction Gavi and Tassarolo; Serravalle Scrivia exit on the A& Milan – Genoa, direction Novi Ligure



Golf & Country Valcurone

Practice course

Monperone

Strada Provinciale 108 - via Carona 1/a - Monperone AL
Ph +39 0131 784514 Fax +39 0131 784001

www.golfvalcurone.com
info@golfvalcurone.com

♣ **course** / 18 hole, par 72, 6,205m

♣ **losed** / Tuesday (not public holidays)

How to find us

From the Genoa – Milan motorway leave at Castelnuovo Scrivia; take the SP93 to the left, near Pontecurone take the SS10 towards Viguzzolo where you turn right into Viale Aldo Moro and continue on the SP98, then turn left on the SP99/Via Primo Maggio and head towards Tortona – Rivanazzano. At Castellar Guidobono take the Via Volpedo and stay on the SP108 until you reach Momperone. Distance from motorway exit: 19km.



• Golf Club Margara



• Golf Club Le Colline



• Golf Club Villa Carolina

GOLF AND WELLBEING

Serravalle Golf Club

Golf Club

Serravalle Scrivia

Via Monterotondo, 60 - 15069 Serravalle Scrivia
Ph +39 0143 62065 - Fax +39 0143 608504

www.labollina.it
golf@labollina.it

☛ **Course** / 18 hole, par 72

☛ **Season** / March – November

☛ **losed** / Wednesday; from May to September open all week

How to find us

On the A7 Milan – Genoa motorway leave at the Serravalle exit and we are under 1km from the Serravalle Designer Outlet.



La Serra

Golf Club

Valenza

Via Astigliano, 42 - 15048 Valenza
Ph +39 0131 954778 Fax +39 0131 928294

www.golfflaserra.it
golfclublaserra@tin.it

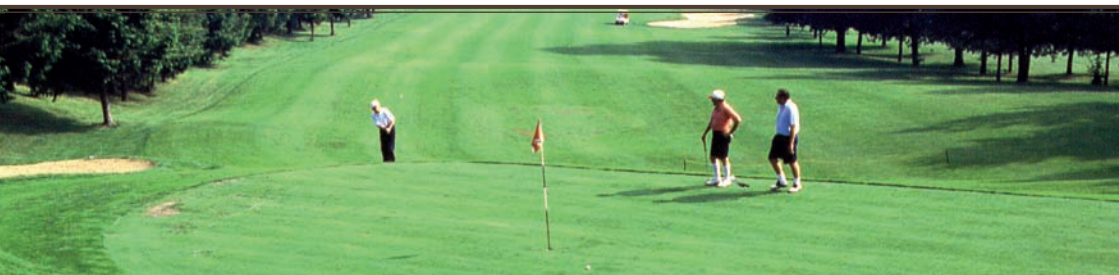
☛ **Course** / 9 hole, with twin teeing grounds

☛ **Season** / March – November

☛ **losed** / Monday (not public holidays)

How to find us

Leave the A21 motorway at the Alessandria est exit, turn left and after 2km turn right for Valmadonna. Before the railway underpass turn left into Via Fontanette and go straight on.



• Golf Club La Serra



• Serravalle Golf Club

GOLF AND WELLBEING

Wellbeing

Alexala

Piazza Santa Maria di Castello 14, Alessandria
Ph +39 0131 288095 - Fax +39 0131 220546

info@alexala.it
www.alexala.it

The Spas

Today's Acqui Terme has at its heart the “**Bollente**” square (4), where a spring pours out 540 litres of water a minute at a constant 75°C. This high temperature and the strong whiff of sulphur in winter means steam billows up and around the buildings and issues forth from drains in the streets to create an almost Dante-esque inferno.

The relaxing sensation that comes from taking the waters is without price, benefiting both the body and the mind. And still today, some two thousand years after the Romans, the spa water (salt, bromine, iodine, sulphur) has the same characteristics. Rain water filters down through the ground, heats up, enriches itself over some fifty years, a slow process that lends itself to therapeutic use, especially for rheumatic or arthritic disorders, for problems associated with movement (together with physiotherapy) and for respiratory problems.

Rehabilitation takes place through inhalation, atomising, spa baths, water gym activities with alternating periods in hot and cold water, an authentic part of our Roman heritage, all in a relaxing and professional atmosphere.

The jewel in the crown of this spa is the mud, created from a fine mixture of spa water with selected clays and locally applied at a controlled temperature of 47°C .

With the passing of the years, the Spa classified by the S.S.N. as being at the 1st superior level has been careful to renew itself, adding to the medicinal therapies a whole new range of beauty treatments, prepared for those people who want a relaxing break far from the hustle and bustle of the city. There is a whole **range of massages, shower treatments, mud beauty treatments (4) and hydro massage therapies** together with a range of cosmetics with a base of spa waters.

The facilities at the “Regina” centre in the Bagni district of the town include a spa pool, fitness centre and spa beauty centre and this sits alongside the **completely renovated Grand Hotel “Nuove Terme”** in the town centre whose re-opening with modern areas for treatment programmes, a spa pool and beauty centre, sets the highest possible quality standard both in terms of the welcome and of the professional assistance on offer.

Terme di Acqui spa

P.zza Italia 1
Ph +39 0144 324390
Fax +39 0144 356007
iat@acquiterme.it
www.comuneacqui.it

Beauty Fintess and Thermal Resort

Viale Einaudi 4,
15011 Acqui Terme—Zona Bagni
Ph +39 0144329074
www.reginaterme.com
info@superbenessere.it

Beauty Farm Grand Hotel Nuove Terme

Piazza Italia, 1-15011 Acqui Terme
Tel. +39 0144 329587
Fax. +39 0144 329064
www.antichedimore.com
beautyfarm.nuove.termes@
antichedimore.com

GOLF AND WELLBEING

In the province of Alessandria it is not unusual whilst walking across hills to be assaulted by the perfume and colours of **lavender** (1,3), **saffron** (2), **thyme**, **camomile**, **lemon balm**, **sage**, **mint** and many other herbs.

This area offers a **rich variety of medicinal herbs**, which are grown and cared for with complete respect for the environment with no chemical or synthetic products being used for their cultivation.

These medicinal herbs are then used in the preparation of essential oils for the wellbeing of the mind and the body, for cosmetics, herb teas and flavourings for food.

The **therapeutic virtues** of the waters of Aquae Statiellae have made the town a **spa centre in constant use over the centuries**. The Romans loved the springs and built around them to create a thriving town, as witnessed by the imposing Roman aqueduct in the Bagni district.

Photographs

Lavender (1,3), Saffron (2)
Acqui: the Bollente spring (4),
water gym (5), mud baths (6)



1 Lavender



2 Saffron



3 Lavender



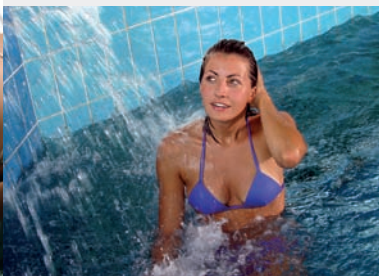
4 Acqui:The Bollente Spring



5 Water gym



6 Mud baths



7 Pool

NATURE AND SPORT

Sport

Alexala

Piazza Santa Maria di Castello 14, Alessandria
Ph +39 0131 288095 - Fax +39 0131 220546

info@alexala.it
www.alexala.it

Wander around this area, along the **paths and wooded tracks** of our valleys, **surrounded by the rustling of a million leaves and the infinite colours of a land that is throbbing with life**, breathe in the heady **perfume of rare flowers**, this will be a pleasure that will stay long in your memory.

There are so many **walking** opportunities, as there are for mountain biking or pony trekking, in our Parks and Nature reserves; the Po River Park, the Scrivia district, the Capanne di Marcarolo Park, the Sacro Monte di Crea Park. All the relevant maps are available at our local tourism offices (IAT) or online at the province of Alessandria site (www.provincia.alessandria.it/sentieri/index.htm).

At the various stables and equestrian centres and also as guests at agriturismos, horses and horse riders will find the warmest welcome and the chance to combine their sport with finding out about this area; a week spent on horseback can work so well with attending food and tasting workshops.

Cycling enthusiasts will find here hundreds of kilometres of different routes, for both those who want speedy roads and those who prefer climbing up and down our hills and the mountains of the Apennines. No one however should miss a stopover at the **Museo dei Campionissimi** (2) in Novi Ligure, which is dedicated to those two heroes of Italian road racing, **Fausto Coppi and Costante Girardengo**. A full range of touring maps and leaflets for trips of varying difficulty are available from the local tourism office (IAT), showing the roads on which the two champions practiced and raced. (www.piemonteciclabile.it).

At Caldirola, in the Curone Valley, there is a themed park dedicated to fans of **downhill Biking**, with lifts and breathtaking descent tracks, where visitors can also try their hand at **bobs with wheels** (www.terradicolori.it).

Fans of old-fashioned sports should make sure they get a chance to watch some of the local sports like tamburello and pallapugno, really old disciplines that preceded modern tennis and have links to the national game of the Basque region, pelota. From March to October, along the streets or in the squares of villages and towns, little white balls weighing more than 100g are sent more than 80 metres being served by just a clenched fist. The excellent availability of footballs pitches, volleyball courts and athletic tracks makes it possible in Alessandria to organise sport master classes, pre-season programmes and get-togethers for both small and large sports groups.

Photographs

View from Monviso (1), Museo dei Campionissimi (2), Val Borbera Adventure Park (3), Il Gorzente (4), An orchid (5), the Sacro Monte di Crea Park (6).



1 View from Monviso



2 Museo dei Campionissimi



3 Val Borbera Adventure Park

NATURA E SPORT

Natura

Alexala

Piazza Santa Maria di Castello 14, Alessandria
Ph +39 0131 288095 · Fax +39 0131 220546

info@alexala.it
www.alexala.it

Our local natural resources are attractive and can be enjoyed in protected areas and with the help of equipped sites in the parks. Fans of ecocycling and bird watching or general visitors will love our three parks in the province.

The Capanne di Marcarolo Nature Park. This straddles the border between Piedmont and Liguria, on the actual geological border between the Alpine and Apennine systems and was created to safeguard a major environmental treasure. There are a number of nature trails along the banks of the (man-made) Lavagnina lakes or walkers can make their way up the slopes of Mount Tobbio and enjoy breathtaking views over the Ligurian Sea. Of much importance is the presence of many types of reptiles and amphibians; there are eight species of snake and, in the disused mines, the rare geotritone, a lizard that lives in complete darkness. The Park's wonderful streams and brooks are home to a type of trout and freshwater prawns, now quite rare and only seen in a few waterways.

The Park is also the nesting ground for different species of birds and an important stopping-off point on migratory routes. Amongst the birds of prey, the most important is the short-toed eagle that feeds mainly on reptiles. Numbers are dwindling but here a number of couples nest and it has been adopted as the symbol of the protected area.

The Sacro Monte di Crea Nature Park and Leisure Area (6). This park was created next to the Sacro Monte di Crea, an ancient spiritual centre that is made up of 23 chapels and five hermitages, starting at the Sanctuary of the Virgin where worship is linked, in popular tradition, to the arrival of St. Eusebio in the 4th century. The nature features of the Park are of great interest, especially for the presence of rare flora and fauna, even "out of area" for the hills of Monferrato.

Capanne di Marcarolo Nature Park
Frazione Capanne di Marcarolo
15060 Bosio
Ph & fax 0143 684048

Study and documentation centre for history and local culture
(summer opening)
Palazzo Gazzolo
Via Cesare Anfosso, 2
15060 Voltaggio
Ph 010 9601512
info@parcocapanne.it
www.parcocapanne.it

Sacro Monte di Crea Nature Park and Leisure Centre
Cascina Valperone 1
15020 Ponzano Monferrato (AL)
Ph 0141 927120 Fax 0141 097014
www.parks.t/parco.sacro.monte.crea/
www.parcocrea.it
parcosmcrea@reteunitaria.piemonte.it

Documentation Centre for Sacred Hills, Calvaries and Devotional Centres in Europe: www.sacrimonte.net



4 Il Gorzente



5 An orchid



6 Sacro Monte di Crea Park

NATURE AND SPORT

In the Park headquarters there are learning centres (including a multifunction classroom and library) next to the observation areas and close by the protected areas. Nature and devotional trails sometimes share the same paths going up the slopes of the hills, on the northern side are spectacular views of the Monferrato and Vercelli areas of the River Po.

The Protected Area System of the River Po: the river park of the Po and Orba (2). The countryside changes dramatically from mirrored rice fields to the rolling hills of Monferrato, and is rich in history with much of the protected land once being the “Grange”, the country residence of the Cistercian Abbey of Lucedio, the first to develop rice fields in Piedmont.

Besides the River Po, the Protected Area System includes where three rivers, the Sesia, Tanaro and Scrivia, merge to create a favoured place for many migrating birds who use the banks of the rivers for their nesting places.

The Cascina Belvedere Visitors’ Centre is an environmental educational and research centre and studies the “rice growing environment” of the Grange of Piobetta (where rice cultivation can be traced back to 1123 and where Bronze Age remains have been found). In the Ghiaia Grande Reserve many aquatic birds make their nests.

The Park offers activities and programmes that allow visitors, through real contact with the protected area, to understand the natural environment and to learn about the various ecological, environmental and naturalistic aspects of the Park along with the effects of human activity.

The Eco-museums. If you want to sample an unusual approach to nature, the land and the people who live there, then visit an eco-museum that is the badge of a local community that looks after its land and demonstrates its identity through culture, fairs, traditions and respect for the environment.

Cascina Belvedere

Strada Statale 494 Km. 70
27030 Frascarolo (PV)
Ph 0384 84676 Fax 0384 84754
servizio.vigilanza@parcodelpo-vcal.it
centro.visita@parcodelpo-vcal.it

Headquarters and Visitors’ Centre

Via Marconi, 18
15062 Bosco Marengo (AL)
riserva.orba@parcodelpo-vcal.it

River info

Freecall 800 269052

The Stazzano Civic Museum of Natural

History was founded in 1980 on the initiative of the Nature Club of Stazzano, which since 1974 has worked for the conservation and preservation of the area. The Museum, recently renovated, has an excellent natural history collection including fossils and minerals and the most important herb collection in the province of Alessandria.

Museum opening hours:

Saturday 15.00 – 18.00
Thursday 21.00 23.00
Sunday (June to September)
15.00 – 18.00
Free entrance

Villa Gardella, via Aldo Fossati, 2

15060 Stazzano
Ph 0143 65815 0143 65303 (Council)
grupponaturalisti@interfree.it



NATURE AND SPORT

The Cascina Moglioni Ecomuseum. Cascina Moglioni is home to an educational workshop in which old agricultural implements, which were once in daily use on the mountains of Marcarolo dai Cabané, are on display for both study and trying out. There is also guest accommodation and visitor centre with a multimedia exhibition to introduce visitors to the Oltregiogo area.

Not to be missed is the traditional cattle fair of Sant'Isidoro and the August Holiday Fair of the Madonna dell'Assunta.

The Cantone Stone Ecomuseo. This museum records and hands on the story of cantone stone and its innumerable uses such as in wine cellars, sculpture and architecture but also for tools and paths, to guarantee that future generations know about the tenacity and capacity of the Monferrato people.

The **Infernot** are small rooms and chambers dug out of cantone stone, a sort of annex to the cellar without light and ventilation and often to be found under the houses, courtyards and often the roads of our hills. They are truly works of art, architectural masterpieces, born out of the tradition and knowledge of the local smallholders and farmers, dug out during the long winters not by simple miners but by Monferrato sculptors, true artists who have virtually all remained anonymous.

The Cascina Moglioni Ecomuseum

Parco Capanne di Marcarolo
Ph and fax 0143 684777
www.ecomusei.net
iecomuseo.cascinamoglioni@
parcocapanne.it

The Cantone Stone Ecomuseum

Via Barbano Dante 30 Cella Monte
Ph 0142 488161 Fax 0142 489962
www.ecomuseopietracantoni.it
info@ecomuseopietracantoni.it

The Nature Astronomical Observatory

organises themed conferences and guided night sky watching sessions both with the naked eye and the telescope.
Strada Ca'Simone-Cascasco
Ph and Fax 0131 876253
info@astroambiente.org
www.astroambiente.org

To see

Frazione Torre Isola (1), The Po and Orba Park (2), Voltaggio (3)



2The Po and the Orba park

3 Voltaggio

THE TASTE TRAILS

Superb flavours and tastes

Alexala

Piazza Santa Maria di Castello 14, Alessandria
Ph +39 0131 288095 - Fax +39 0131 220546

info@alexala.it
www.alexala.it

A journey in tastes with taste, looking for local produce and specialities and flavours from times gone past that still live on in our area and that give life to genuine cooking that is able to give unique and unforgettable sensations.

In this area you can try, with the help of local producers and restaurateurs who every day dedicate their lives to continuing the grand traditions of our local cuisine, our remarkable heritage of wonderful foods and splendid wines.

Typical dishes

Agnolotti or **ravioli**? Well it depends where you are and the local secrets and traditions of the different areas of the province, some are made with stew, some with roast meat and then there are the tiny ravioli from Gavi. If you are in Alessandria there are small gnocchi made with vegetables and cheese then boiled having been rolled in flour, taking the name of **rabatòn**, and then there are the corsetti of Novi.

There are dishes born out of history, like **pollo di Marengo**, whose recipe goes back to the time of Napoleon, to **bolliti misti**, boiled meats served with traditional green, red and white sauces and "bagna cauda" whose main ingredient, the humble anchovy, shows the area's links to the historic Salt Road.

Then there are lots of dishes based on mushrooms and game, those that use salted fish like **stoccafisso all'acchese** and **anchovies** with green or red sauces.

The influence of Liguria has produced in some parts of the province a real passion for **focaccia** (especially the softness of the focaccia from Novi, a genuine IGP product), which sits side by side with locally made bread and grissini from the renowned baker's shops.

To try

Montebore (1),
Filetto baciato from Ponzone (2)



1 Montebore



2 Filetto baciato from Ponzone

THE TASTE TRAILS

Good cooks always turn to herbs to make their dishes unique and flavoursome and some of the finest herbs come from the upper Orba Valley, the Erro and the Bormida di Spigno rivers, these areas rivalling Provence in France for medicinal and aromatic herbs, grown on hillsides which aren't suitable for normal agricultural, using organic and bio-dynamic cultivation methods.

On the plain there is the strong culinary influence of the Longobards with dishes like risotto, **vegetables in vinegar and wine (carpione)** and frog meat.

To try

Corsetti (3), local products (4),
Farinata (5), Potato tart (6),
Amaretti (7)

Local specialities

Pleasing to the palate and memorable for their quality are the local cheeses. From the hills around Acqui Terme comes a cheese that provides stiff competition for the **robiola goats' cheese** from Roccaverano (whose production area shares its border with Alessandria) and all along the Piedmont Apennines the renowned **formagette (or robiola)** are produced and aged, with an unmistakeable taste due to the goats grazing on the lush, sunny meadows of the Orba, Erro and Bormida di Spigno valleys.

A truly unique product is **Montebore**, a historic conically-shaped cheese (70% cows' milk, 30% sheeps' milk) whose production almost vanished but then slowly came back to life under the DOP classification and is now one of the proudest symbols of the Curone and Borbera valleys.



3 Corsetti



4 Local products



5 Farinata



6 Potato tart



7 Amaretti

THE TASTE TRAILS

Amongst all the salamis, there is one that needs no introduction and that is the **filetto baciato from Ponzone**, a truly unique product of its type in the whole of Italy made by wrapping a seasoned fillet of pork with salami made from pure pork. Also much appreciated is the cooked salami from Tortona (free from polyphosphates and glutens, the testa in cassetta from Gavi, pancetta, the coppa from the Borbera valley (free from chemical preservatives), and the muletta monferrina (produced in the Casale area and hung for three months), the salami from the Curone Valley.

Also typical of the area are two smaller salamis; the cacciatore monferrino, which can only have a maximum weight of 400g and meant to be eaten within three months, this was created for the hungry hunter who needed handy sustenance whilst at his work! The other is the Mandrogne salami made from beef mixed with chopped pork lard, excellent boiled on cooked on the grill.

Pastries and sweets from the Alessandria area are produced in such different types and in such quantity that there is something for everyone, with each specialist shop offering a new surprise. Every town has its own tour de force, with recipes a closely guarded secret that are handed down from generation to generation. To underline this, Alessandria has been awarded the De. Co., “small pastries from Alessandria”, this being that the products made by the pastry chefs of the town are codified with a common denomination as part of the town's heritage; these include petit fours (cannoncini and bigné), traditional cakes like the Tartufata, local craft foods (like Polenta from Marengo, the Baci di gallina, the Mandrugnin, the Meardini with Rum and Marelli Amaretti), savoury pastries, quality ice cream and products that only use fresh fruit.

The windows of the pastry shops are packed with **baci di dama**, the most famous being from Tortona and Novi, with chocolate creams, the famous Giacometta, from the name of the companion of the carnival character

To try

Chocolate (1), Krumiri (2),
Peaches (3), Strawberries (4),
Dried mushrooms (5)



1 Chocolate



2 Krumiri



3 Peaches



4 Strawberries



5 Dried mushrooms

THE TASTE TRAILS

Giandua, with **canestrelli**, ring-shaped petit fours in puff pastry covered with sugar from Novi and Gavi.

Just about every town produces its own **amaretti**, from Acqui to Ovada, at Gavi (very soft with an unmistakable triangular shape), whilst Novi is renowned for its **chocolate** and nougat. At Casale Monferrato they have been baking **krumiri** biscuits for well over a century, made from a light pastry whose secret is jealously guarded, the shape being a “v” and these are exported all around the world in their distinctive tins.

The treasures of the soil

The varying nature of the soil in the province of Alessandria gives a **special richness** and variety to its local specialities.

The fields of the plain, hill and mountain have always been loved and cultivated with care, which has meant that the area has become well known for the quality of its production, particularly with regard to vegetables and fruit.

This cultivation of **fruit** and **vegetables** has remained unchanged over the years, so the quality shines through, such as in strawberries from Alessandria (from the Casalbagliano district) and from Castelletto d'Erro, the lovely baby strawberry from Tortona, the delicious and juicy peaches and apricots from Volpedo, the early cherries from Rivarone and the “bella di Garbagna” cherries, apples from the Curone Valley and chestnuts, Carla apples and beans from the Borbera Valley.

There is also the red turnip and the scorzonera, a type of bitter white and yellow root, from Casalcermelli, celery from Alluvioni Cambiò, pumpkins from Castellazzo Bormida, potatoes from Castelnuovo Scrivia, melons from Isola Sant'Antonio, garlic from Molino dei Torti and courgettes from Rivalta Bormida. All this wonderful local produce gives life and flavour to so many local dishes.

To try

Truffles (6,7), Chestnuts (8),
Mushrooms (9)



6 Truffles



7 Truffles



8 Chestnuts



9 Mushrooms

THE TASTE TRAILS

Wines

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White wines

Whilst principally known for the quality of its red wines, the Alessandria district has two whites which have found success and appreciation on dining tables all around the world: **Gavi DOCG** and **Timorasso DOC**.

Gavi is made from the Cortese grape, which is grown on slopes that are sheltered by the Apennines, in the parishes of Gavi, Novi Ligure and Serravalle Scrivia. This is a white wine that can be enjoyed still or sparkling, it has a delicate straw colour with a fresh, harmonious palate, which reaches its zenith in the sparkling form.

Timorasso is made from the grape that is indigenous to the Apennine valleys of the Curone, Grue, Ossona and Borbera rivers all of which enjoy long periods of sunshine. Grown in tiny quantities and kept alive by just a few producers, Timorasso started its re-birth in the late 80s thanks to those same producers who have managed to secure international recognition for this fine white wine. It is a well-structured wine, people say that it is "a white wine that is more like a red wine."

Other white wines for those who like their wine 'fresh' include the **Cortese dell'Alto Monferrato** and the **Colli Tortona Cortese**.

Red wines

Il Barbera or la Barbera? This is the grammatical dilemma that has always accompanied this great wine from Piedmont. There are those who want their red wine masculine, and potent, then there are those who prefer their reds a little more feminine, a little wilful, with a touch of the mother back in the farmhouse, crushing the soft bunches of grapes with her feet.

Il or la Barbera, take your pick; together with **Dolcetto**, these are the two grand wines that characterise this land, inextricably linked to the hills on which the vines are cultivated, be they the hills of Tortona, Monferrato, Piedmont and the denominations of Barbera del Monferrato, Dolcetto d'Acqui and Dolcetto di Ovada.

The other important red wine, often mistaken for a rosé, is **Grignolino**, which is to be found in the Casale Monferrato area, where the soil is perfect for its cultivation.

Other red wines from the province of Alessandria are **l'Albarossa**, **Croatina**, **Gabiano** and **Rubino di Cantavenna**.

Winemaking

White wines (1)

The wineries (2)

Our grapes (3)

Wine at table (4)

Grappas

Following the old peasant saying "never throw anything away" when talking about the produce of the earth, the grape stalks and skins of the grapes used to make the wines from Piedmont have always been employed in the distillation process that makes "branda", as the local dialect calls grappa. There are lots of distilleries in the Alessandria and Monferrato regions, often to be found close to a spring, used to cool the alcoholic vapours and because here grappa is made with the "discontinuous Piemontese method", with steam, this being the slowest but also the one that guarantees quality and better preservation of the original aromas of the grapes. In addition, the majority of the distilleries are still family-run who hand down their traditions and skills from father to son, some now being in the sixth generation of grappa making.

THE TASTE TRAILS

Aromatic wines

Brachetto d'Aqui and **Moscato d'Asti**, the first ruby red, the second a gorgeous golden straw colour that foams white when it is poured into the glass, remind one of the colours of Christmas, their light, sweet palate matching perfectly with sweets, pastries and fruit, either fresh or dried, making for that perfect moment of festivity and happiness to be shared with friends and family.

In its sparkling version, **Asti**, from the Moscato grape has now reached an international level of acceptance not only as the perfect pudding wine but also as an excellent accompaniment for stronger dishes, even spicy foods, in direct competition with other famous sparkling wines from Italy and abroad.

Passito wines

These are pudding wines that are enjoying more and more success, made from the best Brachetto, Moscato and Malvasia grapes that are laid out to dry in the open air until November, absorbing the last of the sun and the first foggy days, then pressed and left to ferment in their skins, a technique that was disappearing but is now returning in popularity, so much so that for Moscato Passito, "Strevi" is now a recognised DOC classification.



1 White wnes



2 The wineries



3 Our grapes



4 Wine at table

■ TRAVELLING



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ALEXALA was created with the specific aim of giving the province the tools with which the tourism potential of the area could be developed.

ALEXALA wants to make a positive contribution to the development of tourism in the Alessandria area using two specific routes.

On one hand create a **marketing oriented** tourism programme which is able to satisfy, or better, anticipate the requests and demands of today's tourists having always in mind **customer satisfaction**. On the other hand we try and promote **synergy between institutions** and **private businesses**.

The full programme of our initiatives is packed with meetings, events, exhibitions and shows. To be kept up to date and not miss anything visit our site:

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