

Friuli Venezia Giulia



Friuli Venezia Giulia is the hardest of the country's 20 regions to nail down, an overlooked and largely peripheral enclave that fits rather awkwardly into the modern Italian mix. But, unperturbed by the lack of fawning visitors, this far-from-boring northeastern corner has shrugged off the influences of numerous meddling outsiders and developed a flavour of its own.

While Friuli's culture may not be as internationally renowned as that of Rome or Venice, its underlying essence is no less potent, and this is reflected in its complex cuisine, ping-pong history and plethora of jealously guarded traditions. The region even has its own language, Friulian, a Romance tongue related to Ladin with about 600,000 native speakers and three different dialects.

One of Italy's five semi-autonomous regions, Friuli Venezia Giulia has its spiritual home in Udine and its administrative capital in Trieste. However, Trieste is a relative newcomer to this cultural melting pot, added in 1920. Friuli's early power was anchored in Aquileia (under Roman rule), Cividale del Friuli (under the Lombards) and ultimately Udine (under the Venetians).

Bordered by Austria, Slovenia and the Italian region of Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia is an eclectic region, and the physical terrain is equally varied, with the Giulie and Carnic Alps guarding the northern borders, Venetian-like lagoons in the south and a curious karst topography dominating the land around Trieste in the east.

Contrarians keen to draw up an alternative Italian wish list should include hiking around Tarvisio, some beach time in sunny Grado, a cup of Illy coffee in enigmatic Trieste and a world-class glass of white wine underneath the Venetian arches of Udine.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk along the star-shaped ramparts of heavily fortified **Palmanova** (p414)
- Seek out the literary ghosts of Joyce, Saba and Svevo in the Viennese-style cafes of **Trieste** (p409)
- Say 'good morning' in three different languages while hiking in the magnificent **Giulie Alps** (p423)
- Sample one of Italy's – and the world's – finest cured hams in **San Daniele del Friuli** (p422)
- Uncover a less-frenetic version of Venice in watery **Sacile** (p417)
- Unravel the intricacies of the Friulian language and culture in multifarious **Udine** (p418)



■ POPULATION: 1.2 MILLION

■ AREA: 7845 SQ KM

TRIESTE

pop 205,526

Grand but not spectacular, melancholy but not sad, historic but not legendary; Trieste is one of Italy's most cryptic cities, a nostalgic legacy of *Mitteleuropa* that served as Austro-Hungary's sole outlet to the sea until it was handed over to an ascendant Rome after WWI. Scattered across a thin karstic plateau and almost surrounded by Slovenia and the Adriatic, the city feels isolated and peripheral to the rest of the Italian peninsula – a nowhere land that has long served as an escape hatch for exiles, misfits and writers undergoing identity crises. James Joyce decamped here in the early 1900s and drafted the early chapters of *Ulysses*, while half a century earlier doomed Habsburg Emperor of Mexico, Maximilian I, constructed an ill-fated dream home, the rhapsodic Castello di Miramare on the coast 7km to the north.

With its chilling *bora scura* winds and curious lack of intimacy, Trieste rarely inspires on first viewing. Extra-savvy travellers seek out its famous *fin de siècle* coffee shops and dark buffet bars, joints where Joyce once sat along with hundreds like him dreaming of Dublin, New York or somewhere else. Trieste, as travel writer Jan Morris once opined, 'offers no unforgettable landmark, no universally familiar melody, no unmistakable cuisine, hardly a single native name that anyone knows', yet it

still somehow sticks in your memory. Maybe it's the bracing sea air and the all-pervading sense of isolation, or possibly it's the thought that – for better or worse – there's nowhere else remotely like it in Italy.

History

According to one misty legend, Trieste was founded by Japhet, son of the biblical Noah, while another legend grants founding-father status to Tergeste, a companion of Jason (of Argonauts fame). More prosaically, the Roman colony of Tergeste was established in 178 BC and rapidly became a wealthy port. The Goths, Byzantines and Lombards followed and, in 1202, the city fell to the Venetians. Trieste won its independence, but in 1382 voluntarily accepted the overlordship of Austria.

Trieste (along with Gorizia) and extensive territory in what is now Slovenia and Croatia were assigned to Italy after WWI and the region of Venezia Giulia was created alongside the region of Friuli (whose main cities are Udine, Pordenone and Cividale). Defeat in WWII saw most of Venezia Giulia pass to the then communist Yugoslavia, and Trieste (under Allied control until 1954) was made capital of the single mixed region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, much to the irritation (to this day) of the Udine and Friulian populace.

The 18th and 19th centuries were a prosperous era for the cosmopolitan Habsburg port. Sigmund Freud, James Joyce and Italo Svevo came here to think and write, while two of Verdi's operas (*Il Corsaro* and *Stefelio*) were premiered in the city. Trieste's cultural intricacies were revisited in 2001 in travel writer Jan Morris' evocative memoir *Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere*.

Orientation

The bus and train stations are at the northern edge of town. To the west lies the port and the Adriatic Sea and to the east rises the Carso plateau. The Borgo Teresiano centres on the photogenic Canal Grande. The vast Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia is the heart of the city, watched over from the southeast by the Colle di San Giusto and its 15th-century castle.

Information

Hospital (☎ 040 399 25 27; Piazza dell'Ospedale 1)

Mail Boxes Etc (☎ 040 76 40 55; Via San Francesco d'Assisi 15a; per 20min €2.50; ☎ 9am–1pm & 3–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat) Internet cafe.

OUR TOP FIVE SMALL TOWNS IN FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

- **Sacile** (p417) An attractive melange of rivers and gardens that serves as a tranquillity-seeker's alternative to Venice.
- **Tarvisio** (p423) Unheralded northeastern town sandwiched between the Carnic and Giulie Alps and close to the tri-point of Italy, Austria and Slovenia.
- **San Daniele del Friuli** (p422) Important centre of Friulian culture and proud purveyor of one of Italy's finest cured hams.
- **Muggia** (p412) Beguiling Venetian fishing village and the only Italian settlement on the primarily Slavic Istria peninsula.
- **Aquileia** (p415) One-time cornerstone of the Roman Empire that has laid bare its evocative ruins and intricate mosaics.

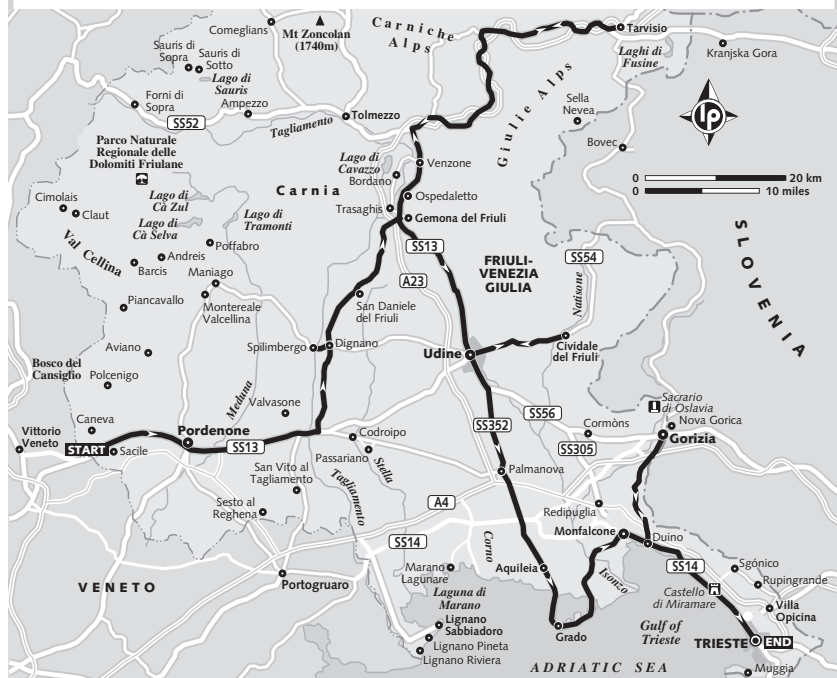
REGIONAL ITINERARY

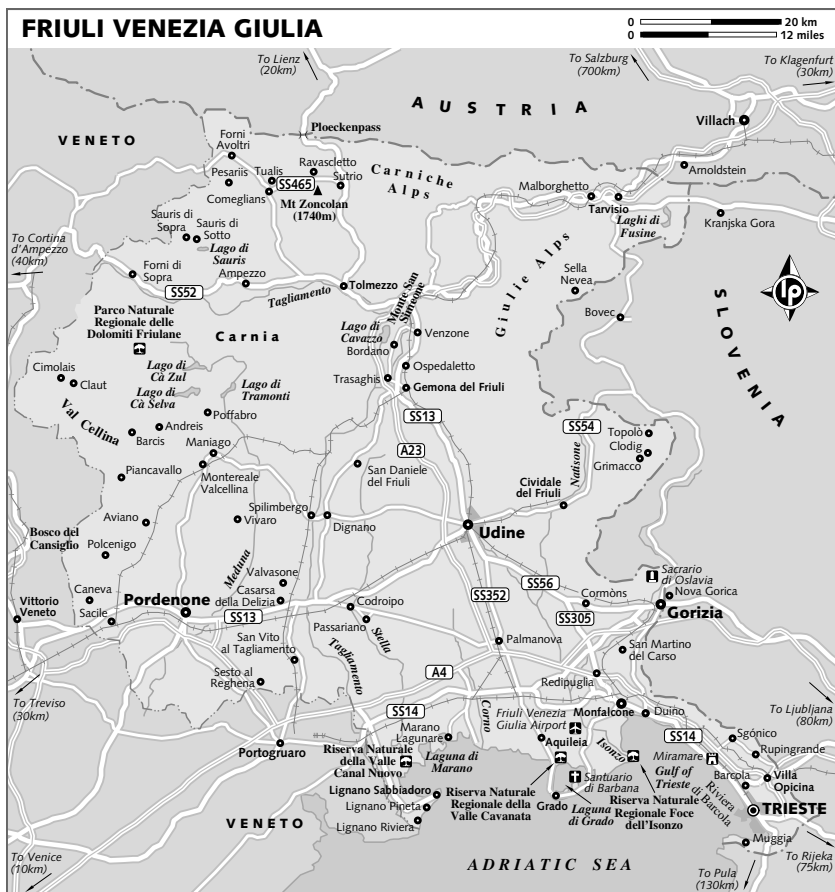
AN ITALY OF DISPARATE CULTURES

Two Weeks / **Sacile** / **Trieste**

If Europe has an axis point, Friuli Venezia Giulia is surely it; a complex fusion of different cultures – always perplexing but never dull – that arouses your curiosity like a cryptic crossword clue at the ancient gateway to *Mitteleuropa* (Middle Europe).

Start this two week cultural unravelment in diminutive **Sacile** (p417), a mini-Venice of willow-lined river banks and curvaceous Venetian arches, before moving onto stately **Pordenone** (p417); larger, more self-confident and veering culturally towards the east. Heading north next admire the intricate mosaics of **Spilimbergo** (p418) and the delicate hams of **San Daniele del Friuli** (p422) before reaching mountainous **Carnia** (p424), named for its erstwhile Celtic inhabitants, the Carnics, who decamped here in the 2nd century BC and enriched the valleys with their adroit iron manufacturing skills. For further fascinating cultural interchange base yourself in alpine **Tarvisio** (p423) where you can hike inadvertently across three different national borders and bid 'good morning' in German, Slovenian or Italian – or all three! Swing south next down to **Udine** (p418), as Friulian as Friuli gets these days, where a resplendent classically tinged piazza resonates with echoes of Venice and even Rome. Once a grandiose regional HQ, **Cividale del Friuli** (p422) to the east still broadcasts rare Lombard architectural influences, while **Aquileia** (p415) to the south is home to one of the most complete Roman settlements on the peninsula. **Gorizia** (p413) straddles the border with Slovenia and until the 1990s lay in the back-draft of Europe's divisive Iron Curtain. For the ultimate Friulian oxymoron, call in at **Castello di Miramare** (p411), a Gothic castle built for an Austrian archduke who ran away to claim the vacant 'throne' of Mexico. Confused? Wind up your wanderings in whimsical **Trieste** (opposite), a city so indecipherable that even ex-resident James Joyce refrained from writing about it.





Police station (☎ 040 379 01 11; Via Tor Bandena 6)
Post office (Piazza Vittorio Veneto 1; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat)
Regional tourist office (☎ 040 36 52 48, 800 016044; www.turismo.fvg.it, in Italian; Via Rossini 6; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri)
Trieste tourist office (☎ 040 347 83 12; www.trieste-tourism.it; Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia 4b; ☎ 9.30am-7pm) See also www.triestecultura.it.

Sights

COLLE DI SAN GIUSTO

Often overlooked in favour of Trieste's emblematic Castello di Miramare, the sturdy 15th-century **Castello di San Giusto** (☎ 040 30 93 62; Piazza della Cattedrale 3; admission €5; ☎ 9am-7pm) sits atop a strategic hill where it was built

by the city's Venetian rulers over older fortifications. The castle contains a recently renovated museum and armoury with a raft of exhibits, including suits of armour and other weapons. You can also wander around the walls and pop into the **Lapidario Tergestino** with its modest jumble of statuary and architectural fragments.

The **Basilica di San Giusto** (☎ 8am-5pm), completed in 1400, is the synthesis of two earlier Christian basilicas in a blend of the Ravenna and Byzantine styles. The interior contains 13th-century frescoes and a mosaic from the same period depicting St Justus, the town's patron saint. The Virgin and Child and the Apostles appear on another wonderfully preserved 12th-century mosaic.

One intriguing feature of the basilica is the chapel, known as the Escorial Carlista, containing the tombs of nine members of the Spanish royal family. After a dynastic struggle in Spain in the 1830s, Carlos V fled and set up the 'Carlisle' court in Trieste, which survived until 1874. The last Spanish royal interred here was Francisco José de Habsburg, as recently as 1975.

The **Civico Museo di Storia ed Arte ed Orto Lapidario** (History & Art Museum & Stone Garden; ☎ 040 31 05 00; Piazza della Cattedrale 1; adult/child €3.50/2.50; ☎ 9am-1pm Tue-Sun) unites a host of mostly Roman antiquities unearthed in and around Trieste and Aquileia. The more delicate items of Roman, Greek, Egyptian and prehistoric art and artefacts are spread over two floors, while the Orto Lapidario (Stone Garden) is a potluck assembly of more weather-resistant stone finds. Take bus 24 from the train station.

BORGIO TERESIANO

Austrian town planners, at the behest of Empress Maria Theresa, designed much of the elegant city centre area north of Corso Italia in the 18th century. The stately **Canal Grande** marks the northern end of the harbour. Reflecting centuries of religious tolerance, the mosaic-laden Serbian Orthodox **Chiesa di Santo Spiridione** (1868) lies juxtaposed with the enormous neoclassical Catholic **Chiesa di Sant'Antonio Taumaturgo** (1842). On the Via Roma bridge stands a life-sized **statue of James Joyce**.

At the south edge of the *borgo*, take time for the **Civico Museo Teatrale Carlo Schmidl** (☎ 040 675 40 72; Via Rossini 4; adult/child €3/2; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun), housed in the grand Palazzo Gopcevič. It retraces the history of theatre and music in Trieste to the 18th century, with an engaging collection of historical instruments on the 1st and 2nd floors and a collection of signatures of such greats as Gioacchino Rossini, Giuseppe Verdi and Giacomo Puccini.

AROUND PIAZZA DELL'UNITÀ D'ITALIA

Embracing the Adriatic, the vast public domain of **Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia** exhibits an elegant triumph of Austro-Hungarian town planning. It is said to be the biggest square opening on to a waterfront in Italy.

The **Museo d'Arte Orientale** (☎ 040 322 07 36; Via San Sebastiano 1; adult/child €3/2; ☎ 9am-1pm Wed & Sat), in an 18th-century town house, contains

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EURO

The **FVG Card** (www.turismo.fvg.it; 24hrs/48hrs/one week €15/20/29) gives free admission to all civic museums, free transport in Udine, Lignano and on the Udine-Cividale del Friuli train, and numerous discounts in the region's shops, spas, beaches and parks. The cards can be bought at any FVG tourist office or at various hotels and travel agents (see the website for the full list).

an eclectic collection of Chinese porcelain and Japanese prints, drawings, musical instruments and weaponry.

Behind Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia rise remains of the **Roman theatre** (Via del Teatro Romano), which was built between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. Concerts are held here occasionally during summer. The **Arco di Riccardo** (Via del Trionfo) is an earlier Roman remnant, one of the old town gateways, dating from 33 BC. Nearby, the baroque **Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore**, next door to the minute Romanesque **Basilica di San Silvestro**, is a cavernous church whose main point of interest is the tiny painting by Sassoferrato of the *Madonna della salute*.

Memories of Trieste's Jewish heritage are preserved at the **Museo della Comunità Ebraica Carlo e Vera Wagner** (☎ 040 63 38 19; Via del Monte 5; adult/child €5/3; ☎ 4-7pm Tue, 10am-1pm Mon, Wed, Thu-Sun), which has a small exhibition of liturgical items, textiles, documents and photographs. To the northeast lies the city's huge **synagogue** (☎ 040 37 14 66; Via San Francisco d'Assisi 19; admission €3.50; ☎ 10-11am Mon-Thu, 10am-noon Sun by guided tour), one of the biggest in Italy (and heavily damaged during WWII).

AROUND PIAZZA VENEZIA

Baron Pasquale Revoltella (1795-1869) would be pleased. He not only left his three-storey neo-Renaissance mansion to the city, but also his private collection of then-contemporary art. With this and a hefty financial bequest from Revoltella, the **Museo Revoltella** (☎ 040 675 43 50; www.museorevoltella.it; Via Diaz 27; adult/child €6/4; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon) was born in 1872. The city expanded the collection into two neighbouring buildings. Revoltella's house retains the atmosphere and furnishings of the baron's time. The baron's flamboyant taste fills the gaudy



JAMES JOYCE & TRIESTE

'Think you're escaping and run into yourself. Longest way round is the shortest way home'

James Joyce, *Ulysses*

Stifled by life in gloomy Dublin, James Joyce escaped to Trieste in 1905 with a contract to teach English at the local Berlitz language school. Aged 23 and accompanied by his lover (and later wife) Nora Barnacle, the precocious yet still unpublished Irish writer arrived in a city that was living through the twilight years of the anachronistic Austro-Hungarian empire.

It was a halcyon era. Replete with German-speaking aristocrats and Futurist intellectuals such as Sigmund Freud and Umberto Saba, Trieste was a cosmopolitan city and the young Joyce wasted no time getting involved in its fertile artistic scene. Perennially poor and unable to afford a full-time office, the wistful Irishman was forced to spend the bulk of his writing hours sitting in the atmospheric *fin de siècle* cafes and bars allowing the surrounding street-theatre to trigger his imagination.

Ever the linguist, Joyce quickly mastered the local Triestine dialect, which he used at home with his two young children and utilised in various newspaper articles and essays. During the day he taught English classes and plotted various business ventures that rarely reached fruition, while at night he drank heavily and slowly set about drafting the text of his first two groundbreaking novels, *Dubliners* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Joyce made occasional visits to Dublin and Rome (which he hated), but he remained in Trieste until 1915, when the outbreak of WWI forced him to relocate to Zurich in neutral Switzerland. He returned after the war to a changed city on the verge of incorporation into Italy. He was unimpressed by the brash new order and quickly made tracks for Paris.

Despite Joyce's decade-long residency in Trieste, he always refrained from using the city as a backdrop in his books. Instead Trieste acted as a form of prism through which the exiled Irishman viewed his native Dublin and the numerous curses of his childhood. Local characters and mannerisms were skillfully manipulated and adapted; Trieste-based writer and former pupil Italo Svevo became the model for Leopold Bloom in the novel *Ulysses*, while the musicality and colour of the Venetian-influenced Triestine dialect resurfaced in a bastardised form in 1939's *Finnegan's Wake* (in which the city is referred to as 'Tarry-Easty').

To recreate the peculiar atmosphere of Joycean Trieste you can follow a specialised walking tour that leaves on pre-arranged dates from the tourist office (p404) in Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia. The tour visits the Berlitz school, half a dozen of the author's former residences, the tiny Joyce museum, some key bars and cafes, and the iconic statue of the Irishman that now overlooks the Canal Grande. Alternatively, the same walk can be done solo with a map-and-audio set provided by the Trieste tourist office.

rooms, with their chandeliers, gilded plaster, silk wallpaper and gold curtains. His collection of 19th-century Italian paintings and marble sculptures of nudes is on show here. The modern section, Palazzo Brunner, holds a more extensive assemblage of late 19th- and 20th-century works by Triestine, Italian and international artists. Highlights include Urbano Nono's arresting statue group, *Belisario*, and the huge canvas *Beethoven* by Balestrieri Lionello.

The **Civico Museo Sartorio** (☎ 040 30 14 79; Largo Papa Giovanni XXIII 1; adult/child €5/3; ☎ 9am-1pm Tue-Sun), in another villa, offers a varied collection of art, applied arts and jewellery. During restoration work, beautiful ceiling frescoes, some

dating to the late 18th century, were uncovered, along with remains of the mosaic floor of a Roman house (*domus*).

The **Museo Civico di Storia Naturale** (☎ 040 675 86 58; 3rd fl, Piazza Hortis 4; adult/child €3/2; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm Tue-Sun) displays a musty array of stuffed animals and bones. Literature fans can poke about documents and other memorabilia linked to two great 20th-century novelists in the **Museo Joyce & Svevo** (☎ 040 359 36 06; 2nd fl, Via Madonna del Mare 13; admission free; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Sat, also 3-7pm Thu).

THE WATERFRONT

Barely 100m from Piazza Venezia stands the waterfront **Acquario Marino** (☎ 040 30 62 01; Riva

Nazario Sauro 1; adult/child €4.20/2.10; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-1pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar), where you can view some of the denizens of the Adriatic deep, as well as tropical fish. The former **fish market** (1913), which fills the southern half of the building, is being developed as a future exhibition space. The waterfront ends at the **Lanterna**, a disused 19th-century lighthouse.

RISIERA DI SAN SABBA

The San Sabba rice-husking plant sounds like a harmless location, but in 1944 the Germans, with local Fascist help, built a crematorium here and turned it into Italy's only extermination camp. It is believed 20,000 people perished here, including 5000 of Trieste's 6000 Jews. Yugoslav partisans closed it when they liberated the city in 1945, and 20 years later it became a national monument and **museum** (☎ 040 82 62 02; Via Ratto della Pileria 43; admission free; ☎ 9am-7pm). Take bus 8 from the train station.

Activities

For a dip, head for the modern **Aquamarina** (☎ 040 30 11 00; www.2001team.com, in Italian; Molo Fratelli Bandiera 1; adult/child pool admission €6/4.70; ☎ 7.40am-10.20pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 10.20am-6.20pm Tue & Thu, 7.40am-7.40pm Sat, 7.40am-1pm Sun), near the Lanterna. Activities and treatments include aquaerobics classes, a gym, saunas and Turkish baths.

Tours

Trieste by Bus (☎ 040 4 41 44; adult/child under 10yr €5.20/free) city tours depart from in front of the train station and take 2½ hours. They operate in summer and other peak periods like Easter and around Christmas and New Year.

The tourist office offers a handful of guided or self-guided (with audio) walking tours including a James Joyce tour (see the boxed text, p407). Ask for a free map.

Festivals & Events

The first Sunday of May sees the running of one of Italy's biggest running events, the **Maratona d'Europa** (www.bavisela.it), while the **Barcolana** (www.barcolana.it) is a major sailing spectacle (with thousands of sailing boats filling the gulf around Trieste) on the second Sunday in October.

Sleeping

Many midrange and top-end places slash their rates on weekends.

BUDGET

Ostello Tergeste (☎ 040 22 41 02; www.ostellotergeste.it; Viale Miramare 331; dm/d incl breakfast €14/20; ☎ reception 7am-11.30pm) This HI hostel by the sea, 7km northwest of town, is a next-door neighbour to Castello di Miramare (see p411). Dorms house between four and 20 beds and have peek-a-boo views (amid the bunk beds) of the sea. Take bus 36.

Hotel Portacavana (☎ 040 30 13 13; www.hotelportacavana.it; Via Felice Venezan 14; s/d without bathroom €35/50, with bathroom €50/65) Well furnished journeyman hotel with clean facilities and marble bathrooms (in some rooms). Service isn't as touchy-feely as higher-starred establishments, but the price is right and the location handily close to everything.

MIDRANGE

Hotel James Joyce (☎ 040 31 10 23; www.hoteljamesjoyce.com; Via dei Cavazzani 7; s/d €85/130; ☎ ☎) This place is less about *Ulysses* and more about sparkling modern rooms, great central location and ultra-smooth service – all in a historic 18th-century old town building, no less.

Hotel Milano (☎ 040 36 96 80; www.hotel-milano.com; Via Carlo Ghega 17; s €95-118, d €130; ☎ ☎ ☎) The dark patterned carpets and heavy drapes give the Milano a melancholy Trieste feel, but there's a lighter mood to be found in the welcoming staff, ample (for Italy) breakfasts, and huge sparkling bathrooms. The Milano is handily located 400m from the train station and within shouting distance of the Zampolli ice-cream store.

ourpick Albergo Alla Posta (☎ 040 36 52 08; www.albergopostatrieste.it; Piazza Oberdan 1; s €98-110, d €130-155, tr €155-175; ☎ ☎) This stylish place combines a pleasant old-world feel with state-of-the-art amenities. The rooms are restfully decorated in neutral tones. First-floor rooms have a timeless, classic feel, while those on the upper floors are more determinedly modern, with designer touches (such as Philippe Starck beds).

L'Albero Nascosto (☎ 040 30 01 88; www.alberonascosto.it; Via Felice Venezan 18; s/d €90/135; ☎ ☎) It's easy to miss, but you'd be foolish if you did. This unexpected hideout in a restored *palazzo* in the old town offers rooms (and longer-term apartments) with a clean, bright yet characterful sheen. The whitewashed rooms have easy chairs and large comfortable beds. Complimentary breakfast is in the 'taverna' downstairs. It's not over-fancy but it works.

TOP END

Grand Hotel Duchi d'Aosta (☎ 040 760 00 11; www.grandhotelduchidaosta.com; Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia 2; s/d Mon-Thu from €188/292, s/d Fri-Sun from €140/212, ste €460-660; P ☒) There's been a hotel of sorts on this prime site since Roman times. Several incarnations and countless centuries later the 'Duchi' remains Trieste's grandest and most stylish pile. Many bigwigs have graced its refined antique-clad rooms, including Admiral Nelson, Casanova, Bob Dylan and Francis Ford Coppola. It's pricey unless you can bag one of the weekend deals. The adjoining Harry's Grill is equally spiffy.

Eating

RESTAURANTS

Circus (☎ 040 63 34 99; Via San Lazzaro 9b; meals €10-15; ☒ 8am-10.30pm Mon-Sat) A rather quirky hangout for sometimes over-serious Trieste, Circus lives up to its colourful name with a vaguely big-top decor mixed with old-time movie paraphernalia. It's a great lunch stop with its ample *panini* (€4 to €5), huge bowls of salad (€5) and a selection of nicely priced *primi* (first courses). The atmosphere's cool but not haughty.

Trattoria al Nuovo Antico Pavone (☎ 040 30 38 99; Riva Grumala 2; meals €25-30; ☒ Mon-Sat) Fresh fish in many forms, along with regulation pasta, adorn the menu at this cosy harbour-front trattoria.

Mascalzone Latino (☎ 040 31 33 32; Via Cavana 12; meals €30; ☒ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) Just arrived from down south and been flummoxed by all that bratwurst and beer? Fear not, Napoli's never far away. Run by native Neapolitans, this colourful old town *palazzo* replicates the spirit of Campania right down to the decorative lines of washing strung up from the rafters. At table level it's all about pizzas, pasta and paper cones full of chunky chips.

Antica Trattoria Suban (☎ 040 543 68; Via E Comici 2d; meals €40-50; ☒ lunch & dinner Wed-Sun, dinner Mon, closed Aug) In the family since 1865, Suban is a Trieste legend that acts as a kind of regional kitchen in microcosm. Don't miss the *jota* soup, succulent meats and delicious Hungarian desserts. It's pricey and outside the centre, but sometimes you've just got to say, 'what the....?'

BUFFETS

Buffets are to Trieste what tapas are to Seville. Don't leave town without trying one. Expect lots of boiled bacon, sausages and beer. A

classic is *cotto caldo con kren* (a boiled slab of ham served with horseradish).

Buffet Al Spaceto (☎ 338 3394447; Via Belpoggio 3a; snacks €1.80-3; ☒ 8.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-3pm Sat) Locals gather here for a few glasses of local wine and delicious little snacks, including tiny *panini* with various fillings.

ourpick Buffet Da Pepi (☎ 040 36 68 58; Via Cassa di Risparmio 3; meals €15-18; ☒ Mon-Sat) One of Trieste's signature buffets, Da Pepi has been concocting traditional boiled meats, cold cuts and beer since – oh – 1897. All kinds of pork joints are produced here, served up with sauerkraut, hot mustard and *kren* (a tangy horseradish).

Buffet Rudy (☎ 040 63 94 28; Via Valdirivo 32; meals €18-20; ☒ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat) Come to Rudy for a lesson in Triestine *gnocchi* that is nothing like the familiar pasta-covered potato balls you get in Rome or Turin. Resembling a big dumpling made from potato or bread (you choose), these Friulian classics are served in a tangy goulash sauce. Cancel that dessert.

Buffet Da Mario (☎ 040 63 93 24; Via Torrebianca 41; meals €18-22; ☒ Mon-Sat) Fried squid, and sardines; Trieste is by the sea just in case you'd forgotten.

Buffet Da Siora Rosa (☎ 040 30 14 60; Piazza Hortis 3; meals €20-25; ☒ 7am-9.30pm Mon-Fri) Opened before WWII by Mrs Rosa Caltaruzza – a portrait of whom still graces the wall – the family-run Siora Rosa is still one of the best and most traditional of Trieste's buffets. Sit at the bar to sample sausages, sauerkraut and other Germanic offerings, or pasta.

CAFES & PATISseries

Caffè San Marco (☎ 040 36 35 38; Via Cesare Battisti 18; ☒ 8.30am-11pm Tue-Sun) Young bloggers mix with 90-year-old former children of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at this dark mahogany haven where dexterous waiters balance coffee cups on silver trays and nothing much has changed since 1949 – or even 1909. The only thing missing is the atmospheric fug of cigarette smoke – a kind of blessing in disguise.

ourpick Caffè Tommaseo (☎ 040 36 26 66; www.caffetommaseo.com; Riva III Novembre; meals €22; ☒ 8am-12.30am) Is it just the hallucinogenic effects of the cappuccino or did you just see James Joyce over there scribbling in a notebook, or Sigmund Freud twitching behind a newspaper, or Umberto Saba polishing off a prosciutto *panini*? Virtually unchanged since its 1830 opening, the belle époque

COFFEE CULTURE

The inveterate newspaper-rustling coffee-sippers of *Mittleuropa* (and that includes Trieste) owe their habit to scimitar-brandishing Turkish infidels. When the Turkish hordes appeared at the gates of Vienna in July 1683, they weren't just hauling gunpowder. In between bombarding the Austrian capital, the troopers would brew themselves a hot cuppa. When they hurriedly broke off the siege under Polish cavalry assault in September, they left sacks of the stuff behind. Not bad at all, the Viennese thought, and so began the habit of a lifetime. As Austrian-controlled Trieste became a free port in 1719, it was only natural that it should also become the main gateway for the empire's coffee imports.

Coffee was thus a big part of Trieste's commercial life by the time the city was absorbed by Italy after WWI. In 1933, Francesco Illy (a former Hungarian officer in the Austro-Hungarian army) set up his own coffee business. He had arrived in Trieste during WWI. In 1935, he invented the prototype for modern espresso-making machines and a vacuum-sealed packing system that allowed his burgeoning company to export all over Italy.

Francesco's scientist son Ernesto, today the company's president, set up research deals with several universities and over a few years has turned a national brand into an international hit. One of his two sons, Riccardo (born 1955), has been Trieste's mayor and, between 2003 and 2008 was Friuli Venezia Giulia's president.

Tommaseo with its moulded ceiling and Viennese mirrors is full of literary ghosts that often play tricks with the tired, delusional or over-cafeinated.

Caffè degli Specchi (☎ 040 36 57 77; Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia 7; ☎ 7am-9.30pm) This veritable hall of mirrors (*specchi*) first opened its doors back in 1839 and, despite some modern updates, has been feeding the addictions of Triestine coffee-quaffers ever since.

Caffè Torinese (☎ 040 63 60 46; Largo della Barriera Vecchia 12; ☎ 7am-7.30pm Tue-Sun) Numerous writers sought inspiration at compact Caffè Torinese loaded up on the incomparable Illy.

La Bomboniera (☎ 040 63 27 52; Via XXX Ottobre 3a; ☎ 9am-1pm & 5-8pm Tue-Sat, 9am-2pm Sun) This is a historic pastry shop – one of many that grace the city.

Gelateria Zampolli (☎ 040 36 48 68; Via Carlo Ghega 10; ☎ 9.30am-midnight Thu-Tue). For the city's best gelati served by impossibly slim *ragazze*, hit Zampolli. There is another branch at Viale XX Settembre 25a.

Drinking

Triestines mix bar-hopping with nights at the opera. Expect a more refined late-night atmosphere here. In summer, low-key action concentrates in come-and-go bars along the waterfront from behind the train station up to Miramare. Otherwise, a handful of pubs, bars and clubs are scattered about town.

La Caffetteria del Borgo (☎ 040 77 45 12; Via Malcanton 6; ☎ 7am-2am Tue-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun, 7am-2pm

Mon) A hip place to start the night (or drop by for coffee during the day), the atmosphere here is made all the homier by the timber furnishings and stone floor.

Viale 39 (☎ 040 36 72 72; www.viale39.com; Viale XX Settembre 39a; ☎ 10pm-3am Wed-Sat) A breeding ground for lounge lizards and bright young things, Viale 39 has multiple personalities as long as you're a snappy dresser. Recline on cushioned sofas with an aperitif or get up and dance at Monday's Latin American Noche Caliente (Hot Night) or Friday's Valentino.

Mandracchio (☎ 393 9706005; Passo di Piazza 1; ☎ 11pm-5am Mon, Wed, Fri & Sat) If Viale 39 doesn't close late enough for you, finish the night here and dance until dawn, with Italian hits on Friday and the latest in international DJ dance numbers on Saturday.

Entertainment

The **Teatro Verdi** (☎ 040 672 21 11, 800 054525; www.teatroverdi-trieste.com; Riva III Novembre 1) opera house is a mix of Milan's La Scala and Venice's La Fenice (both architects had a hand). It first opened in 1801 and was refurbished between 1992 and 1997 at a cost of US\$18 million.

The Slovene side of Triestine life finds expression at the **Teatro Sloveno** (☎ 040 63 26 64, 800 214302; www.teaterss.it; Via Petronio 4), southeast of the centre. **Casa della Musica** (☎ 040 30 73 09; www.casadellamusicatrieste.it; Via Capitelli 3) puts on various performances, from jazz quartets to solo acts of all types.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Friuli Venezia Giulia airport (TRS; ☎ 0481 77 32 24; www.aeroporto.fvg.it; Via Aquileia 46), aka Ronchi dei Legionari or Trieste Airport, is 33km north-west of Trieste, near Monfalcone. Direct daily flights to and from Munich, Frankfurt and London Stansted, and less-frequent services to and from Belgrade and Tirana arrive here.

BOAT

Ferries use the **Stazione Marittima** (ferry terminal; Molo dei Bersaglieri 3) in town. **Agemar** (☎ 040 36 37 37; Piazza Duca degli Abruzzi 1a) sells tickets for the twice-weekly car ferry to and from Durres in Albania (deck seat one way low/high season €60/80).

From mid-June to late September, **Samer & Co Shipping** (☎ 040 670 27 11; www.samer.com) has motorboats to and from Grado, Lignano and points along the Istrian coast in Slovenia and Croatia.

BUS

National and international services operate from the **bus station** (☎ 040 42 50 20; Via Fabio Severo 24). Runs include Udine (€5.10, 1½ hours, at least hourly) and destinations in Slovenia and Croatia such as Ljubljana (€11.60, 2¾ hours, once daily Monday to Saturday), Zagreb (€14, five hours, once daily Monday to Saturday) and Dubrovnik (€57.65, 15 hours, once daily). Bus services to Belgrade in Serbia (€55, 10 hours, two days a week) and Sofia in Bulgaria (€64, 16½ hours, daily) are operated by **Florentia Bus** (☎ 040 42 50 20; www.florentiabus.it). Both services originate in Florence.

TRAIN

The **train station** (Piazza della Libertà 8) serves Gorizia (€3.80, 50 minutes, hourly), Udine (€6.70, one to 1½ hours, at least hourly), Venice (€9.20 to €13.50, two hours, at least hourly) and Rome (€69.80, 6½ to 7½ hours; most require a change at Mestre).

Getting Around

Bus 30 connects the train station with Via Roma and the waterfront, bus 24 goes to and from Castello di San Giusto, bus 36 links Trieste bus station with Miramare, and Villa Opicina is served by tram 2 or bus 4. A single ticket (valid for one hour's travel) costs €1.05 (all-day ticket €3.50).

Bus 51 runs to the airport approximately every 30 minutes between 4.30am and 10.35pm from Trieste bus station (€2.85, one hour). Buses are operated by the Gorizia-based **APT** (Azienda Provinciale Trasporti Gorizia; ☎ 800 955957; www.aprtgorizia.it, in Italian).

Shuttle boats link the Stazione Marittima with Muggia year-round (one way/return €3.40/6.35, 30 minutes, six to 10 boats sail daily), Barcola (€2.05, 20 minutes, five or six daily) and Grignano (€3.45, 55 minutes, five or six daily) from mid-April to mid-October. Contact **Trieste Trasporti** (☎ 800 016675; www.triestetrasporti.it, in Italian).

AROUND TRIESTE

Miramare & Duino

The **Castello di Miramare** (☎ 040 22 41 43; www.castello-miramare.it; adult/EU citizen 18-25yrs/child €4/2/free, audioguide €3.50; ☒ 9am-6:30pm) is a curious place, a fanciful neo-Gothic remnant of the hyperactive imagination of Archduke Maximilian of Austria who deserted Trieste almost as quickly as he adopted it in 1864 to take up the obsolete crown of Mexico (see the boxed text, p412).

One of the castle's main draws is its almost creepy authenticity. Much of the downstairs area has been preserved as it was during Maximilian's brief stay, including his cabin-like ground-floor bedroom (designed to resemble a ship) and peaceful library with its full complement of marble busts and original hand-picked books.

Upstairs, the magnificent Throne Room (never used as such) is plastered with portraits of Habsburg royalty. Also on this floor is a suite of rooms used by the similarly cursed Duke Amadeo of Aosta and his family in the 1930s, and furnished in the then in-vogue art deco style. Amadeo was appointed Viceroy of Ethiopia by Mussolini in 1937, and five years later died in a British POW camp in Kenya.

New Zealand troops were the first to reach the castle at the end of WWII. British units then set up HQ here, replaced by American forces from 1951 to 1954.

The castle, set in 22 hectares of **gardens** (☒ 8am-7pm Apr-Sep, 8am-6pm Mar & Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Feb), bursts with colours and scents of rare and exotic trees. A keen botanist, Maximilian had heated greenhouses built. Today they house **Parco Tropicale** (☎ 040 22 44 06; www.parcotropicale.it, in Italian; adult/student/child incl guide €6.50/5/3.50; ☒ 10am-6pm Mar-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Feb), where tropical butterflies,

MAXIMILIAN & MIRAMARE

It was a life that began with a fanfare of Austrian promise but ended more like the finale of a tragic Italian opera. Born in 1832, Habsburg archduke Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph – younger brother of Austrian Emperor Franz Josef – grew up in the flourishing cultural capital of Vienna, jewel of the still-powerful Austro-Hungarian Empire. He initially made his name in the Austrian navy rising by the age of 22 to the rank of Commander in Chief, a post that brought him to the burgeoning Adriatic city of Trieste. A free port since 1719, Trieste at the time was in the throes of a mini-economic and cultural revival, and Maximilian in his new authoritative role played a large part in moulding its revitalised naval infrastructure.

Adopting the city as his permanent home in the 1850s, the archduke set about building a house fit for a Habsburg. Scouring the rocky Adriatic coastline, he chose a small promontory of land 7km north of Trieste and commissioned Austrian architect Carl Junker to design a fantastical castle he subsequently christened Miramare.

Work began in 1856 on a 22-hectare plot that also included extensive landscaped gardens (Maximilian was a keen botanist). The following year, the archduke married his second cousin, Princess Charlotte of Belgium, and looked forward to a life of domestic bliss encased in his eclectic new home. But other more ominous voices were calling.

In 1864, with the house barely finished, Maximilian, at the behest of French leader Napoleon III, accepted an offer to become Emperor of Mexico, a country undergoing a period of bloody civil strife. It was a fateful decision. Mexican conservatives in collusion with the expansionist French army had recently dethroned the indigenous republican president, Benito Juárez, and instituted a new order. The well-meaning but gullible Maximilian proved to be a useful pawn in promoting their reactionary monarchist ambitions.

Maximilian left Miramare for Mexico City in 1864 and he was never to return. A reasonable man with liberal ideas, he ultimately satisfied neither the conservative monarchists nor the progressive Mexican republicans (who refused to accept a foreign emperor in principal) and when, with US backing, Juárez forced French troops to withdraw in 1866, he was held up as an undesirable scapegoat.

Captured in May 1867 by republican forces, the noble if naive Maximilian refused to repent and, despite pleas from numerous European leaders, he was executed by Juárez's re-established government the following month. Stricken with grief, his wife Charlotte returned briefly to Miramare before going clinically insane. She spent the rest of her life in Belgium convinced that Maximilian remained alive and adamant that she was still the rightful Empress of Mexico. Miramare, meanwhile – the dream home that got lost in a Mexican nightmare – has remained almost exactly as she and her misguided husband left it.

hummingbirds, parrots and other bright birds disport themselves.

The waters here constitute the Riserva Naturale Marina di Miramare (a nature reserve) and swimming is forbidden. The **visitor centre** (☎ 040 22 41 47; www.riservamarinamiramare.it, in Italian; ☎ 9am–12.30pm & 2.30–6.30pm Apr–Sep, 9am–12.30pm & 2–5pm Tue–Wed & Fri–Sun Oct–Mar), in the Castelletto (Little Castle), opposite the Parco Tropicale, has tanks containing live fish, sponges and other local marine residents. The Castelletto, a mini version of the main digs, was where Maximilian lived while waiting for his dream home to be completed.

Fourteen kilometres northwest along the coast from Miramare stands the proud **Castello di Duino** (☎ 040 20 81 20; www.castellodiduino.it; adult/student/

child 6–16yrs/child under 6yrs €7/4.50/3/free; ☎ 9.30am–5.30pm daily Mar–Sep, 9.30am–5.30pm Wed–Mon Oct, 9.30am–4pm Sat & Sun Nov–Feb), a privately owned 14th- and 15th-century bastion filled with all sorts of artworks and curios and surrounded by a verdant garden. The Prague poet Rainer Maria Rilke was a guest here in 1911 and 1912. Take bus 41 from Piazza Oberdan.

Muggia

Five kilometres south of Trieste lies the fishing village of Muggia, the only Italian settlement on the historic Istrian peninsula. Slovenia is just 4km south of here and Croatia (the peninsula's main occupant) a score more. Muggia, with its 14th-century castle and semi-ruined

walls, has a Venetian feel. Boats sail between Muggia and Trieste (see p411).

Muggia has eight hotels and some B&Bs should you wish to stay, including the simple but sparkling, portside **La Bussola** (☎ 040 27 12 66; www.labussoladimuggia.it; Via Manzoni 5; s/d €50/70; ☹). Rooms are spacious but spartan, with parquet floors. Some look straight over the port.

Il Carso

Completing Trieste's catalogue of weirdness is **Il Carso** (Karst in German), its distinctive hinterland shoehorned between Slovenia and the Adriatic that has lent its name to the geological classification of landscapes across the world characterised by soluble limestone or dolomite rock known as 'karst'. Like other karst areas, the Il Carso plateau is comprised of a white calcareous tableland riddled with caves and doline (sinkholes created when caves collapse), also known as *foibe*.

The most impressive natural feature here is the gaping chasm of the **Grotta Gigante** (☎ 040 32 73 12; www.grottagigante.it in Italian; adult/child 6-16yrs/child under 6yrs €9/7/free; ☹ 50min guided tours half-hourly 10am-6pm daily Jul-Aug, half-hourly 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Jun & Sep, hourly 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Mar & Oct, hourly 10am-noon & 2-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb) near Villa Opicina, 5km northeast of Trieste. At 107m high, 280m long and 65m wide, the 'giant grotto' is one of the continent's largest accessible caves – St Peter's Basilica in Rome could fit inside. Nearly 500 steps lead you down into its eerily lit vault replete with stunning stalagmites. Take bus 42 from Piazza Oberdan, or tram 2 – the scenic choice that has covered the 5.2km journey since 1902 – to Villa Opicina, then bus 42 to the cave.

Local flora (best seen in spring) buds and flowers at the **Carsiana Giardino Botanico** (☎ 040 22 95 73; adult/child €3/2; ☹ 10am-1pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm & 3-7pm Sat & Sun late Apr-mid-Oct) in Sgònico. You will see everything from local oaks to various types of rhododendron. Take bus 42 from Trieste to Prosecco and change onto bus 46.

Local ethnographic tradition comes to life at the **Casa Carsica** (☎ 040 32 71 24; Rupingrande 31; admission free; ☹ 11am-12.30pm & 3.30-6pm Sun & holidays Apr-Nov) in Rupingrande, north of Villa Opicina. The plateau's most important folk festival, **Nozze Carsiche** (Karstic Wedding), is held every two years for four days at the end of August, 2km southeast of Rupingrande in a 16th-century fortress in **Monrupino**.

GORIZIA

pop 36,034 / elev 86m

To view its modern incarnation, you'd never guess the turmoil of Gorizia's convoluted past, or its erstwhile position, not just at the border between two different cultures, but two missile-toting global ideologies (until 1991 Gorizia was Italy's main window over the Iron Curtain).

The origin of the town's name is Slovenian though much of its history since 1500 has been under Austrian occupation. At the outbreak of WWI it was not uncommon to hear as many as five different languages – German, Slovenian, Friulian, Italian and Venetian – gossiping in its main square. Under Rome's jurisdiction since 1920, Gorizia these days is a peaceful place that still displays evidence of its Slovenian and Friulian roots. The Slovenian border crossing – a formality since the country's entry into the Schengen area in December 2007 – bisects the edge of the town.

Armed with a lucid if limited cache of sights, Gorizia makes a worthwhile day trip from Trieste or Udine.

Information

Post office (Corso Verdi 33; ☹ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat)

Tourist office (☎ 0481 53 57 64; www.gorizia-turismo.it; Corso Italia 9; ☹ 9.30am-6.30pm)

Sights

BORGIO CASTELLO

Gorizia's main sight is its **castello** (☎ 0481 53 51 46; Borgo Castello 36; adult/child €3/free, exhibitions €4-9/free; ☹ 9.30am-1pm & 3-7.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 9.30am-6pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) perched, rather like Trieste's, atop a knoll-like hill. It was restored in the 1920s after suffering serious damage in WWI.

Beneath the main fortress and within the castle walls huddle two museums that couldn't have less to do with one another. The **Museo della Grande Guerra** (☎ 0481 53 39 26; Borgo Castello 13-15; adult/child €3.50/free; ☹ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) tells the gory and tragic tale of WWI trench warfare on the Italian-Austrian front, with a life-size stretch of trench, and photos of Gorizia at war.

The **Museo della Moda e delle Arti Applicate** (Museum of Fashion & Applied Arts; ☎ 0481 53 39 26; Borgo Castello 13-15; admission incl with Museo della Grande Guerra; ☹ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) presents a far prettier picture, with a collection of the finery of the well-to-do of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Don't miss the coquettish, brick-and-white wash 14th-century Romanesque **Chiesa di Santo Spirito**, near the castle.

PIAZZA TRANSALPINA

Don't arrive expecting another grandiose Italian piazza. Transalpina is better known for its Cold War notoriety: the wire fence between Italy and the former Yugoslavia (now Slovenia) once ran through the middle of this rather utilitarian public space. It was finally pulled down in 2004 when Slovenia joined the EU. With Schengen now replacing the Iron Curtain, a sleepy police car along with an economical hotel (see below) are the only real sights worth logging.

OLD TOWN

The grand **Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio** (Piazza della Vittoria; ☎ 8am-noon & 3-7pm), which was built from 1654 to 1724, lords over the town centre with a broad brush stroke of Eastern mystery, topped as it is by onion-shaped domes.

Inside Gorizia's 18th-century **synagogue** (☎ 0481 53 21 15; Via Ascoli 19; ☎ 6-8pm Tue & Thu, 4-7pm Mon, Fri & Sat, 10am-1pm Sun Apr-Sep, 5-7pm Tue & Thu, 4-7pm Mon, Fri & Sat, 10am-1pm 2nd Sun of month Oct-Mar) is a modest exhibition dedicated to the history of the Jewish presence in Gorizia.

Palazzo Coronini Cronberg (☎ 0481 53 34 85; www.coronini.it; Viale XX Settembre 14; admission €4; ☎ Tue-Sun) is not only a sprawling 16th-century residence jammed with antiquities and art, it is also set in lush gardens that are free to visit. **Palazzo Attends** (☎ 0481 54 75 41; Piazza De Amicis 2; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) is worth a visit for the mansion and the regional 20th-century art.

Sleeping & Eating

Albergo Alla Transalpina (☎ 0481 53 02 91; www.hotel-transalpina.com; Via Caprin 30; s/d from €50/70; (P)) There are no iron curtains in front of the windows these days in these uniquely positioned digs overlooking the Italy-Slovenia border on Piazza Transalpina. The 30 rooms are light and airy, with parquet floors, and there's a good restaurant attached. In summer you can take breakfast in the garden.

Al Falegname (☎ 0481 54 73 90; www.alfalegname.it; Via Maniaco 2; meals €25; ☎ closed Sun) Dedicated carnivores in particular will appreciate this place, which specialises in beef, along with local sausages and big fat *canerdeli*, or bread gnocchi.

Trattoria Blanch (☎ 0481 8 00 20; Via Blanchis 35; meals €25-30; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Mon, lunch Tue, closed late Aug-late Sep) Set among fields, this wonderful country-house trattoria with a leafy garden is located 1km north of the centre of Mossa (a village 5km west of Gorizia and known as a

centre of asparagus production). It has been in the same family since 1904, and specialises (in season) in game and mushrooms.

Cafes are plentiful on Corso Italia, the main street in the new part of town, while the old-town streets below the castle and around the covered **food market** (Via Verdi 30) are the best places to find trattorias.

Getting There & Away

The **train station** (Piazzale Martiri Libertà d'Italia), 2km southwest of the centre, has regular connections to and from Udine (€3.25, 25 to 40 minutes, at least hourly) and Trieste (€3.80, 50 minutes, hourly). **APT** (☎ 800 955957; www.aptrgo.rizia.it, in Italian) runs buses from the train station to Nova Gorica bus station (€1, 25 minutes).

PALMANOVA

pop 5500 / elev 26m

Shaped like a nine-pointed star – although you'd need an aeroplane to prove it – Palmanova is a defensively designed town-within-a-fortress built by the Venetians in 1593. Once common throughout Europe, these urban monoliths were known as 'star forts' or *tracce italiane*. So impregnable were the town's defences that Napoleon used and extended them in the late 1700s, as did the Austrians during WWI. To this day the Italian army maintains a garrison here.

From hexagonal Piazza Grande, at the star's centre, six roads radiate through the old town to the defensive walls. A grassy path connects the bastions and three main *porte* (gates): Udine, Cividale and Aquileia. Head along Borgo Udine to uncover local history and weaponry from the Venetian and Napoleonic eras in the **Civico Museo Storico** (☎ 0432 92 91 06; Borgo Udine 4; adult/child €2/1.50; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm Thu-Tue), inside Palazzo Trevisan. The museum also acts as a tourist office and has information on secret-tunnel tours that wind beneath the city walls.

The **Museo Storico Militare** (☎ 0432 92 35 35; Borgo Cividale Dongione di Porta Cividale; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Tue-Sat, 9am-noon Sun Apr-Sep, 9am-noon & 2-4pm Tue-Sat, 9am-noon Sun Oct-Mar) is inside Porta Cividale. The military museum traces the history of troops stationed in Palmanova from 1593 to WWII.

The family-owned **Albergo Ristorante Roma** (☎ 0432 92 84 72; www.hotelromapalmanova.it; Via Borgo Cividale 27; s/d/tr from €40/60/70; (P)) is a simple but perfectly comfortable 34 room hotel with a

TV room, restaurant and parking. There's a good pizza place opposite.

Cafes stud central Piazza Grande, including **Caffè al Municipio** (☎ 0432 92 83 42; Piazza Grande 1), a bright airy place full of wine-quaffers and Monet reproductions. **La Campana d'Oro** (☎ 0432 92 87 19; Borgo Udine 25b; meals €35; ☞ lunch & dinner Wed-Sat, lunch Mon) is known for more delicate cooking, with fish and meat options such as goulash and smoked goose breast.

Regular buses link Palmanova with Udine (€2.20, 25 to 30 minutes) and Aquileia (€2.20, 30 to 40 minutes). They leave from Via Rota, just inside the walls.

AQUILEIA

pop 3500

Friuli, peripheral? Not 2000 years ago. Founded in 181 BC, Aquileia was once one of the largest and richest cities of the Roman Empire, with a population as high as 100,000 at its peak. Levelled by Attila's Huns in AD 452, the city's inhabitants fled south and west where they founded Grado and Venice. A diminished town rose in its place in the early Middle Ages with the construction of the present basilica, and Aquileia was ultimately instrumental in spreading Christianity throughout central Europe. Conferred with a Unesco World Heritage listing in 1998, the area still guards one of the most complete (and unexcavated) Roman sites in Europe.

A small town with large mosaics (including the largest Palaeo-Christian mosaic floor in Europe), Aquileia lies at the eastern end of the Venetian plains. Guided tours of its extraordinary Roman sights are organised by the **tourist office** (☎ 0431 91 94 91; www.aquileiatourismo.info, in Italian; ☞ 9am-5pm) or you can wander at will – and for free.

Sights

The entire floor of the Latin cross-shaped **basilica** (Piazza Capitolio; ☞ 9am-7pm), rebuilt after an earthquake in 1348, is covered with one of the largest and most spectacular Roman-era mosaics in the world. The 760-sq-metre floor of the basilica's 4th-century predecessor is protected by transparent glass walkways, allowing visitors to wander above the long-hidden images, which include episodes from the story of Jonah and the whale, the Good Shepherd, depictions of various sea creatures and birds, and portraits of, presumably, the wealthy Roman patrons of this early Christian church.

Equally remarkable treasures fill the basilica's two **crypts** (admission adult/child €3/free). The 9th-century **Cripta degli Affreschi** (Crypt of Frescoes) is adorned with faded 12th-century frescoes depicting the trials and tribulations of saints, while the **Cripta degli Scavi** (Excavations Crypt) reveals more mosaic floors in varying states of preservation. Images include birds, goats and foliage, as well as more peculiar subjects such as a lobster in a tree and a fight between a tortoise and a chicken. Images here were destroyed or badly damaged by the erection of the basilica's 73m-high **bell tower** (☞ 9.30am-1.30pm, 3.30-6.30pm), built in 1030 with stones from the Roman amphitheatre.

Scattered remnants of the Roman town include extensive ruins of the **Porto Fluviale** (River Port; Via Sacra; ☞ 8.30am-1hr before sunset), the old port, which once linked the settlement to the sea. Also free to visit are the partially restored remains of houses, road and the standing columns of the ancient **Forum** on Via Giulia Augusta.

Locally excavated statues, pottery, glassware and jewellery are displayed in the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (☎ 0431 9 10 16; Via Roma 1; adult/EU citizen 18-25yrs/child €4/2/free; ☞ 8.30am-2pm Mon, 8.30am-7pm Tue-Sun), one of northern Italy's most important collections. One intriguing artefact is the gilded bronze head of an emperor dating from the 3rd century AD.

Aquileia's **Museo Paleocristiano** (☎ 0431 9 11 31; Piazza Pirano; admission free; ☞ 8.30am-1.45pm) exhibits early Christian mosaic floors and tombstones from the surrounding ruins.

Sleeping & Eating

Our pick **Ostello Domus Augusta** (☎ 0431 9 10 24; www.ostelloaquileia.it; Via Roma 25; dm/s/d incl breakfast €15.50/23/38; ☞ ☞) Relaxed and friendly, this gleaming hostel has 92 beds shared between rooms sleeping two to six people. It's a real bonus in such a small town.

Hotel Restaurant Patriarchi (☎ 0431 91 95 95; www.hotelpatriarchi.it; Via Giulia Augusta 12; s €52-58, d €88-96; ☞) This sizable three-storey choice is a stone's throw from the basilica and is the best place in town. Rooms are mostly spacious and some have views of the basilica. The restaurant has a good wine cellar and tasty fish dishes. Half-board rates are available.

Getting There & Away

Regular SAF buses link Aquileia with Grado (€1.60, 15 minutes), Palmanova (€2.20, 30

minutes, up to eight daily) and Udine (€3, 1½ hours).

GRADO

pop 8900

Another latent Friulian surprise is the tasteful beach resort of Grado, 14km south of Aquileia, spread along a narrow island backed by Venetian-like lagoons (without the buildings) and linked to the mainland by a causeway. Complementing the spacious beach is a maze-like medieval centre, crisscrossed by narrow *calli* (lanes) and dominated by the Romanesque **Basilica di Sant'Eufemia** (Campo dei Parriarchi) and the nearby remains of a 4th- to 5th-century church **mosaic** (Piazza Biagio Marin). Belle époque mansions, beach huts and thermal baths line the cheerful beachfront. From October to April, the place is dead. May onwards, it's anything but.

Small *casoni* (reed huts), built for fishermen during winter, dot the tiny islands surrounding Grado. In summer some can be visited by boat (2½ hours, adult/child €15/8); the **tourist office** (☎ 0431 87 71 11; www.gradoturismo.info, in Italian; Viale Dante Alighieri 72; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3-6pm) has details. Many of the islands are protected nature reserves and are off limits.

On the first Sunday in July, a votive procession, with a statue of the Virgin Mary on board, sails from Grado to the **Santuario di Barbana** (☎ 0431 8 04 53), an 8th-century church on a lagoon island. Grado fishermen have done this since 1237 when the Madonna of Barbana saved their town from the plague. Boats link the sanctuary with Grado (adult/child return €4/2.50, three to eight times daily from April to October, and twice daily on Sunday from November to March).

Sleeping & Eating

Grado Promhotels (☎ 0431 8 29 29; Riva Zaccaria Gregori 9; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 3-6.30pm) can book you into hotels and apartments. Hotel prices rocket in August especially.

ourpick Albergo Alla Spiaggia (☎ 0431 8 48 41; www.albergoallaspiaggia.it; Via Mazzini 2; s/d from €54/108, half-/full-board per person from €63/68; ☎ Apr-Oct; P ☎) An archetypal beachfront establishment, the Spiaggia's late-1920s, whitewashed facade has an attractive retro-feel that has recently come back into vogue. Sparkling blue and white rooms exude cleanliness while curvaceous

sea-facing balconies are adorned with funky tables and director's chairs.

Ristorante Tre Corone (☎ 0431 8 56 39; Calle Toso 4; meals €25; ☎ 6.30-10.30pm, closed Tue) The old town is a tranquil haven away from the trendy beach and this eating escape fits the bill amid the intimate piazzas and pots of geraniums. Try the pizza and pasta standards or choose something more adventurous from the blackboard specials.

Getting There & Away

Buses run between Grado and Udine (€3.55, 1½ hours, 12 daily) via Aquileia.

AROUND GRADO

Riserva Naturale Regionale della Valle Cavanata

(☎ 0431 8 82 72; www.parks.it/riserva.valle.cavanata; ☎ 9am-12.30pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 2-6pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun & holidays Apr-Sep, 9am-1pm Tue & Thu, 10am-4pm Sun & holidays Oct-Mar) protects a 1920s fish-farming area and extraordinary birdlife in the east of the lagoon. More than 230 bird species have been observed, including the greylag goose and many wading birds.

Further east, the final 15km stretch of the river Isonzo's journey into the Adriatic flows through the **Riserva Naturale Regionale Foce dell'Isonzo**, a 2350-hectare nature reserve where visitors can bird-watch horse ride, cycle or walk around salt marshes and mud flats. Reserve passes are sold at the **visitor centre** (☎ 0432 99 81 33; www.riservanaturalefoceisonzo.it; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 9am-5pm Fri-Wed) in Isola della Cona in the reserve.

LAGUNA DI MARANO

At the head of the Adriatic, sandwiched between the beach resorts of Grado and Lignano, Italy succumbs to nature – in particular birdlife – in the Laguna di Marano. Buildings here are reed huts rather than terracotta palaces and the area is accessible by a couple of gravel roads.

Pretty **Marano Lagunare**, a Roman fishing port that was later fortified, is the only settlement on the lagoon shore. Peace and quiet is ensured by two nature reserves – the 1377-hectare **Riserva Naturale della Foci della Stella**, protecting the marshy mouth of the river Stella and reached by boat, and the **Riserva Naturale della Valle Canal Nuovo**, a 121-hectare reserve in a former fishing valley. The **visitors centre** (☎ 0431 6 75 51; Via delle Valli 2; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), in a fisherman's reed hut, is shared by the two reserves.

LIGNANO

Relatively modern by Italian standards, Lignano is one of northern Italy's premier beach resorts and makes a sunny, if crowded, escape for those who've had their fill of pious Renaissance churches. Occupying the tip of a peninsula facing Laguna di Marano to the north and the Adriatic to the south, **Lignano Sabbiadoro** (Golden Sands) is the easternmost of the three resorts. **Lignano Pineta**, 1km south, went up in the 1950s, while **Lignano Riviera**, the newest of the three at the mouth of the river Tagliamento, is marketed as the most nature-friendly.

There are tourist offices in **Sabbiadoro** (☎ 0431 7 18 21; www.aplignano.it; Via Latisana 42) and **Pineta** (☎ 0431 42 21 69; Via dei Pini 53; ☹ Jun-Sep). Hotels (around 135) and holiday flats abound. There are also three camping grounds. Check the www.lignano.it website, on which you can do everything from booking a hotel or an umbrella on the beach to buying a boat.

In Sabbiadoro, portside **Hotel La Goletta** (☎ 0431 7 12 74; www.hotelgoletta.it; Viale Italia 44; s €33-43, d €66-86; (P)) is a reasonable choice. Some of the neutrally decorated, tile-floored rooms look virtually right over the marina.

The young and restless of Udine descend on Lignano on summer nights.

Lignano Sabbiadoro is linked by bus to Udine (€5.10, 1½ hours, many daily).

PORDENONE & AROUND

Pordenone

pop 51,300

'Pordenone': you see the royal blue station sign as your *treno* stops halfway between Venice and Trieste, but the name barely registers. Just another wayside Italian town, you assume, with narrow, chaotic streets and too many Fiats. Or is it?

Scenda (get off), and proceed 400m or so to the helpful **tourist office** (☎ 0434 52 03 81; Via Damiani 2c; ☹ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) and you'll learn that Pordenone is actually rather historic and grandiose.

Pedestrianised, cafe-lined Corso Vittorio Emanuele II draws in an elegant curve between Piazza Cavour and the *duomo* (cathedral) and is lined by an almost unbroken chain of covered *portici* (porches).

The bare Romanesque-Gothic facade of the **Duomo di San Marco** (Piazza San Marco; ☹ 7.30am-noon & 3-7pm) betrays signs of frequent changes down

the centuries. Inside, among the frescoes and other artworks, is the *Madonna della misericordia*, by the Renaissance master Il Pordenone (1484-1539). In defiance of the other-worldly, the **Palazzo del Comune** (Town Hall) stands facing away from the *duomo*. The 13th-century brick structure has three Gothic arches and some Renaissance additions, like the loggia and clock tower (what an enormous timepiece!).

Opposite the Palazzo del Comune is the medieval **Palazzo Ricchieri**, in whose richly decorated upper rooms is the city's modest **Museo d'Arte** (☎ 0434 39 23 11; Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 51; adult/child €3/2; ☹ 3-7pm Tue-Sat, 10am-1pm & 3-7pm Sun). Its collection of Friulian and Veneto artists ranges from the 15th to the 18th centuries. The main interest lies in the building itself (timber ceilings and remains of 14th-century frescoes).

There is a dozen sleeping options including clean, central **Hotel Montereale** (☎ 0434 55 10 11; www.hotelmontereale.com; Via Montereale 18; s/d €42/65; (P) ☹ ☹ ☹). **La Vecia Osteria del Moro** (☎ 0431 2 86 58; Via Castello 2; meals €35-40; ☹ Mon-Sat), just off the Corso near the Comune, is a vaulted den offering a fine mixed-meat grill, *baccalà* (cod) and various snacks.

Pordenone is on the Venice-Udine train line. Frequent services run to and from Udine (€3.80, 30 to 40 minutes). From Venice (Mestre) trains run about every half-hour (€4.95, 1¼ to 1½ hours). **ATAP** (☎ 800 101040; www.atap.pn.it) runs buses to the surrounding towns.

Sacile

pop 19,400

The so-named *Giardino della Serenissima* (Garden of Serenity) is another of those sweet Friulian secrets; a mini-Venice whose centre is formed by two islands standing amid the willow-lined Livenza river and canals. Indeed, Sacile took much of its early artistic and architectural inspiration from the Most Serene Republic of Venice, a characteristic reflected in the typically Venetian town houses and palaces that, despite various earthquakes and WWII bombings, still line the tranquil waterways. Of the many, the impressively frescoed **Palazzo Ragazzoni-Flangini-Billia** is worth a peek.

Sacile's 15th-century **Duomo di San Nicolò** dominates pivotal Piazza Popolo and boasts a faintly visible 9th-century fresco. The adjoining 62m *campanile* (bell tower) is topped with a bronze angel.

The annual August **Sagra dei Osei** (bird festival) has been held since 1274 and is one of the oldest festivals in Italy. Look out for exhibitions, a market and a (bird) song contest.

Overnighters need look no further than **Hotel Due Leoni** (☎ 0434 78 81 11; www.hoteldueleoni.com; Piazza Popolo 24; s/d €92/120; ☹ ☹). You can choose from bright rooms overlooking either the main square or the river in this understated Venetian marvel that is guarded – as the name implies – by two lions. Adding value is an ample breakfast buffet, small gym and sauna-steam room.

Pedrocchino (☎ 0434 7 00 30; Piazza IV Novembre 4; ☹ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch only Sun) is a beautiful lunch or dinner spot with a classic Sacile garden and a menu dominated by fresh fish. Colourful dishes come laid out like impressionist paintings. The only trouble is the expense.

Sacile is on the main train line between Venice (€4.60, one hour) and Udine (€5.50, 45 minutes)

Spilimbergo

pop 11,700

You could mark out a line between ancient Aquileia and modern Spilimbergo in tiny decorative stones. The former is the keeper of some of the best preserved Roman mosaics in the world, while the latter is where the art is still diligently practiced at a world-renowned mosaics school. The **Scuola Mosaicisti** (☎ 0427 20 77; www.scuolamosaicistifriuli.it, in Italian; Via Corridoni 6; ☹ 8am-noon & 1-4pm Mon-Fri) was founded in 1922 and has a public gallery documenting the history of this ancient art and its manifestation in present day Friuli. Guided tours can be arranged for €5 or for free with a FVG Card (see the boxed text, p405)

Spilimbergo's cobbled Corso di Roma is flanked by arcaded houses and intriguing lanes. The 14th-century **Duomo di Santa Maria Maggiore** (Via Dante 3; ☹ 8am-noon & 2.30-7pm) is a Romanesque-Gothic mongrel and offers a west entrance with seven rose-coloured windows that look like so many portholes. Admire the 13th- and 14th-century frescoes depicting Bible scenes and the magnificent 15th-century organ decorated by Il Pordenone.

Just behind the *duomo* rises the brooding carcass of the **Castello** (Piazza Castello; ☹ 9am-12.30pm), a medieval fort whose 15th-century **Palazzo Dipinto** (Painted Mansion) attracts particular attention with its frescoes.

Behind the frescoes lies the excellent **Ristorante La Torre** (☎ 0427 5 05 55; Piazza Castello; meals €40; ☹ Tue-Sat, lunch Sun). The fort was raised by the Spengenberg clan, a German family that arrived in Friuli in the 11th century and gave its name, in altered form, to the town. By the old town's **east tower**, sip wines and snack on pasta at the hip **Enoteca La Torre** (☎ 0427 29 98; Via di Mezzo 2; ☹ 10.30am-2.30pm & 5pm-midnight Wed-Mon).

For sleeping and eating, skip the town and head 10km to the west to the farming town of Vivaro, where you'll find **Agriturismo Gelindo dei Magredi** (☎ 0427 9 70 37; www.gelindo.it; Via Roma 16; d €70; ☹ ☹ ☹). Spacious, quiet rooms (some with kitchens) and elegant, fresh local cooking are the order of the day. There are orchards, family flats, a pool and more.

UDINE

pop 98,360 / elev 114m

Few people outside Italy have heard of Udine, an enviably rich provincial city shoehorned into the country's little-visited northeastern corner less than 15km from the border with Slovenia.

The spiritual capital of Friulian culture, Udine gives little away in its utilitarian Italian suburbs. But, encased inside the peripheral ring road lies an infinitely grander medieval centre; a dramatic melange of Venetian arches, Grecian statues and Roman columns.

Information

Hospital (☎ 0432 55 21; Piazza Santa Maria della Misericordia 15) About 2km north of the centre.

Internet (per hr €2.40; ☹ 8.30am-11pm) Inside the bus station.

Libreria Carducci (☎ 0432 50 27 86; Piazza XX Settembre 16; ☹ Mon-Sat) Travel guides and maps aplenty.

Main post office (Via Vittorio Veneto 42; ☹ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat)

Police station (☎ 0432 41 31 11; Viale Venezia 31)

Tourist office (☎ 0432 29 59 72; www.udine-turismo.it; Piazza I Maggio 7; ☹ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun)

Sights

PIAZZA DELLA LIBERTÀ & AROUND

Dubbed the most beautiful Venetian square on the mainland, Piazza della Libertà appears like a Renaissance epiphany from the surrounding street maze. The graciously arched **Palazzo del Comune** (Town Hall), also known as the Loggia del Lionello after its architect (a

FRIULIAN FOOD

Friulian cuisine has been influenced by many cultures, but poverty has contributed the most. One typical dish, *brovada*, sees you eating turnips fermented with the dregs of pressed grapes (most often served with *muset*, a slightly spicy sausage), while *brodetto* (or *boreto*) is a mixed-fish soup. Otherwise, *gnocchi* (potato, pumpkin or bread dumplings) is popular, as are *cialzons* (variously spelled, a ravioli-gnocchi hybrid stuffed with everything from cheese to chocolate) or sausages and *bolliti* (boiled meats) dished up with polenta and *cren* (horseradish). *Jota* (of Jewish origin) is a thick soup of beans and sauerkraut.

Buffets are a Trieste phenomenon. The atmosphere in these eateries is more Hungarian than Italian, and you might well find yourself scoffing a goulash. In parts of the Carnia, villages populated in the Middle Ages by German migrants still offer items straight out of Austrian mountain menus, like *klotznudl* (dumplings stuffed with ricotta and pears).

For dessert, try a *gubana*, a pastry stuffed with almonds, raisins, pine nuts, candied orange, butter and sweet liqueur. Cividale and the villages of the Natisone river are the original home to this calorie cannonball.

White wines from the eastern hills of Friuli are considered among the country's tastiest and are best sampled in a *frasca* or *locanda* (rustic, family-run wine bar). Look for such whites as the Pinot Grigio or Tocai Friulano (nothing like the sweet Tokaji from Hungary that in 2007 lost the right to use Tocai in its name) from the Colli Orientali and Collio wine-making areas. Reds include Merlot and Pinot Nero and are good without having the excellence of the whites. A rarer red using strictly local grapes is the Refosco.

Coffee, the coda to any Friulian feast, can be drunk *à la resentin* (coffee in a cup rinsed with grappa). In Trieste they have their own names for the many Italian variants on coffee. A *capo in b*, for example, is the local version of the *macchiato*, in a glass.

goldsmith by the name of Nicolò Lionello), is a clear reminder of Venetian influence, as is the **Loggia di San Giovanni** opposite, which features a clock tower modelled on the one gracing Venice's Piazza San Marco. As in Venice, Moorish figures strike the hours.

The **Arco Bollani** (Bollani Arch), next to the Loggia di San Giovanni, was designed by Andrea Palladio in 1556 and leads up to the castle used by the Venetian governors. The way is lined by the Porticato del Lippomano, a late-15th-century portico raised along one of the city's former defensive walls.

The **castle** (built in the mid-16th century after an earthquake in 1511 destroyed the previous castle) houses the **Galleria d'Arte Antica** (☎ 0432 27 15 91; adult/child €3/1.50, Sun morning free; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sun), which has a handful of works by Caravaggio (there is a portrait of St Francis in room 7), Carpaccio (with a work showing the adoration of Christ's blood in room 3) and Tiepolo (several works in room 10). The bulk of the collection is dedicated to lesser-known Friulian painters and religious sculpture.

Admission includes a visit to the **Museo Archeologico**, also in the castle, with objects dating as far back as the Iron Age. The 12th-

century **Chiesa di Santa Maria del Castello** on the hill used to stand within the medieval castle walls and still boasts some frescoes inside.

CATHEDRAL & AROUND

Heading south from Piazza della Libertà down Via Vittorio Veneto, you reach Piazza del Duomo and Udine's 13th-century Romanesque-Gothic **cathedral**. Housed in a couple of chapels is the **Museo del Duomo** (☎ 0432 50 68 30; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon & 4-6pm Tue-Sat, 4-6pm Sun), among whose most interesting elements are the 13th- to 17th-century frescoes in the Cappella di San Nicolò. Across the street is the **Oratorio della Purità** (Piazza del Duomo), with a beautiful ceiling painting of the Assumption by Giambattista Tiepolo, and eight biblical scenes in chiaroscuro by Giandomenico Tiepolo on the walls. The building had been raised as a theatre in 1680 but the patriarch of Aquileia had it transformed 80 years later out of repugnance for such a devilish institution so close to the cathedral. Ask in the cathedral for a guided tour (free) of the oratory, which is otherwise generally not open.

South of Piazza del Duomo, the 13th-century **Chiesa di San Francesco** (Largo Ospedale Vecchio; adult/child €5/3.50; ☎ exhibitions 9am-noon & 3.30-7pm

UDINE

0 400 m
0 0.2 miles



INFORMATION

- Libreria Carducci..... 1 B4
- Castle..... 2 C3
- Main Post Office..... 3 A4
- Police Station..... 4 C5
- Post Office..... 5 C3
- Tourist Office..... 6 B3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Arco Bollani..... 6 B3
- Ambassador Palace Hotel..... 7 B3
- Cathedral..... 8 C3
- Chiesa di San Francesco..... 9 B4

CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DEL CASTELLO

- Castello..... 10 C3
- Galleria d'Arte Antica..... (see 7)
- Galleria d'Arte Moderna..... 11 A1
- Loggia di San Giovanni..... 12 B3
- Museo Archeologico..... (see 7)
- Oriatorio della Purità..... 13 C4
- Palazzo del Comune (Loggia del Lionello)..... 14 B3

SLEEPING

- Ambassador Palace Hotel..... 15 C4
- Astoria Hotel Italia..... 16 B4
- Hotel Europa..... 17 D5

EATING

- Al Cappello..... 18 B3
- Alla Ghiacciaia..... 19 B3
- Sbarco dei Pirati..... 20 B3
- Trattoria ai Frati..... 21 B2
- Caffè Confàrena..... 22 B3
- I Piombi..... 23 C3
- Osteria al Barnabiti..... 24 B4
- Pinocchio..... 25 C3

TRANSPORT

- Bus Station..... 26 D5

Tue-Sun) was once one of Udine's most striking churches. It is now used as a gallery and is open only during exhibitions.

GALLERIA D'ARTE MODERNA

The Modern Art Gallery (☎ 0432 29 58 91; Piazzale Paolo Diacono 22; adult/child Mon-Sat €3/1.50, admission free Sun; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sat, 9.30am-12.30pm Sun) was established in 1885 after a rich Udinese merchant left his estate to the city. Since then, the gallery has absorbed other collections as well. It features works by well-known 20th-century Italian artists, such as De Chirico, Severini and Morandi.

Sleeping

For farmhouse accommodation around Udine, contact **Agriturismo del Friuli Venezia Giulia** (☎ 0432 20 26 46; www.agriturismofvg.com; Via Gorgi 27).

Hotel Europa (☎ 0432 50 87 31; www.hoteleuropa.ud.it; Viale Europa Unità 17; s/d €58/92; P ☎) A standard close-to-the-station hotel, the Europa is economical, if a little musty, but close enough to negotiate with a heavy suitcase and no sense of direction (meaning you'll save on taxi fares). The rooms are large and the no-frills service is polite. The city centre's a not unpleasant 20-minute walk.

Astoria Hotel Italia (☎ 0432 50 50 91; www.hotelastoria.udine.it; Piazza XX Settembre 24; s/d from €76/131; P ☎) This green-shuttered, yellow, arcaded hotel is housed in a charming historic building on a quiet square in the old town. Rooms are a little compact but tastefully arranged.

Ambassador Palace Hotel (☎ 0432 50 37 77; www.ambassadorpalacehotel.it; Via Carducci 46; s/d €118/148; P ☎) This smart four-star choice provides a touch of understated elegance in a good central location. Spacious rooms boast parquet floors and heavy curtains. The singles are a little poky.

Eating

Several open-air cafes and restaurants are dotted around Piazza Matteotti and the surrounding pedestrian streets. Via Paolo Sarpi and its surrounding streets are lined with lively restaurants and bars.

Sharco dei Pirati (☎ 0432 2 13 30; Riva Bartolini 12; meals €20) Pots, pans, saws, clogs, saddles and other assorted knick-knacks hang from the walls and ceiling. Typical meaty Friulian fare fills the brief menu, popular with students and those on a student budget.

Trattoria ai Frati (☎ 0432 50 69 26; Piazzetta Antonini 5; meals €25; ☎ Mon-Sat) A delightful old-style eatery on a cobbled cul-de-sac and with tiny timber tables. Expect such local specialties as *frico* (a thick, succulent cheese-and-potato omelette), or *tagliolini* served with San Daniele ham.

Alla Ghiacciaia (☎ 0432 50 24 71; Via Zanon 13; meals €25-30; ☎ Tue-Sun) Once an ice factory, this is a pleasing spot to eat local cuisine with a meaty bent, especially if you grab a table by the narrow, burbling canal.

Al Cappello (☎ 0432 29 93 27; Via Paolo Sarpi 5; meals €30-35; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) Wine lovers should not miss this historic spot, where hundreds of tempting tipples are scribbled on the giant blackboard. Food is predominantly snacky, although with a few you could easily reach lunchtime saturation.

Drinking

Our pick Caffè Contarena (☎ 0432 51 27 41; www.caffecontarena.it; Via Cavour 11; ☎ 9am-2am Mon-Sat) An art deco fantasy with high ceilings and lots of polished timber, this is Udine's glamour-puss scene. The maxim in this stunning cafe beneath the arcades of Palazzo d'Aronco is sip coffee or cocktails and look good.

I Piombi (☎ 0432 50 61 68; Via Manin 12; ☎ 10am-2am) Head downstairs into what for centuries was the city's prison. A labyrinth of vaulted brick rooms host long timber benches that creak under the weight of beers, wine, food and a crowd of happy inmates.

Pinocchio (☎ 392 9958699; Via Lovaria 3a; ☎ 7pm-3am Tue-Sun) Hip Pinocchio boasts a sprawling bar, low lights and thumping music. Locals balance cocktails while eyeing each other up, although sometimes they are distracted by live acts. Cocktails cost €5, less during happy hour from 7pm.

Osteria al Barnabiti (☎ 347 1747850; www.barnabiti.com; Piazza Garibaldi 3a; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Thu, 10am-1am Fri & Sat) The first oddity is the bar itself, a series of giant old wooden lecterns with inkwells. Hang about for fine wines, or get into some of the harder stuff if you choose. Light meals, such as assorted cold meats and cheeses, are available to assist absorption.

Getting There & Away

From the **bus station** (☎ 0432 50 69 41; Viale Europa Unità 31), services operated by **SAF** (☎ 800 915303, 0432 60 81 11; www.saf.ud.it) go to and from Trieste (€5.10, 1¼ hours, hourly), Aquileia (€3, one

to 1½ hours, up to eight daily), Lignano Sabbiadoro (€5.10, 1½ hours, eight to 11 daily) and Grado (€3.55, 1½ hours, 12 daily). Buses also link Udine and Friuli Venezia Giulia airport (€3.55, one hour, hourly).

From Udine's **train station** (Viale Europa Unità) services run to Trieste (€6 to €7, one to 1½ hours), Venice (€8, 1¾ to 2½ hours, several daily) and Gorizia (€3.25, 25 to 40 minutes, hourly).

VILLA MANIN

Contemporary-art lovers will appreciate the exhibitions at **Villa Manin** (☎ 0432 90 66 57; Piazza Manin 10; adult/child €8/5; ☎ museum 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun), a villa in **Passariano**, 30km southwest of Udine. Home to the Venetian noble Manin family from the 1600s until as late as the 1990s (when the last count died heirless), which included the last of Venice's doges, the vast mansion is surrounded by 19 hectares of manicured gardens. Napoleon Bonaparte humiliated Doge Ludovico Manin by turning the mansion into his headquarters in mid-1797 and, in October, signing the Treaty of Campoformido, under which Venice passed to Habsburg Austria. Alight from a train on the Venice-Udine line at Codroipo and take a taxi (or, if you have the patience, one of the few SAF buses) for the five-minute, 3km, ride.

CIVIDALE DEL FRIULI

pop 11,600 / elev 138m

Small but historically important, Cividale del Friuli (15km east of Udine) is part of the region's cultural DNA. Founded by Julius Caesar in 50 BC as Forum de Lulii (which was ultimately condensed into 'Friuli'), the settlement reached its apex under the Lombards who first arrived in AD 568 and by the 8th century had usurped Roman Aquileia. Though it has long since passed the baton onto Udine in terms of cultural significance, Cividale is still poignantly picturesque and well worth a morning's quiet contemplation.

Splitting the town in two is the symbolic **Ponte del Diavolo** (Devil's Bridge) that crosses the emerald-green Natisone river. Rebuilt post WWI after being blown up by retreating Italian troops, the 22m-high bridge was first constructed in the 15th century with its central arch supported by a huge rock said to have been thrown into the river by the devil.

Cividale's most important monument is the **Tempietto Longobardo** (Longobardo Temple; ☎ 0432 70 08 67; Borgo Brossano; adult/child €2.50/1.50; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1pm & 3-7.30pm Sun Apr-Sep, 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-5pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Sun Oct-Mar). Also known as the Oratorio di Santa Maria in Valle, this church is the only intact surviving example of Lombard architecture and artwork in Europe. Dating from the 8th century AD, it's famous for its stucco work and frescoes. To the west, the 16th-century **cathedral** (Piazza del Duomo) houses the **Museo Cristiano** (Christian Museum) where the star attraction is the 8th-century Altar of Ratchis with its fascinating nave carvings. It was closed for restoration at the time of writing.

Also worth a look-over is the nearby **Museo Archeologico** (☎ 0432 70 07 00; Piazza del Duomo 1; admission €2; ☎ 9am-2pm Mon, 8.30am-7pm Tue-Sun) housing a collection of Roman and medieval sculptures and tombstones.

The **tourist office** (☎ 0432 71 04 60; www.cividale.net; Piazza Paolo Diacono 10; ☎ 9.30am-noon & 3.30-6pm), on a pretty square in the old town, has plenty of information on walks around the medieval core of Cividale, whose colourful, centuries-old houses, boutique shops and winding streets make such rambles rewarding.

The most enticing hotel is the peaceful **Locanda Al Castello** (☎ 0432 73 32 42; www.alcastello.net; Via del Castello 12; s/d €80/150; ☎) housed in a former Jesuit monastery set amid soothing green grounds, around 1km from the historic centre. It has its own restaurant.

Chow down on **cialcions** (a sweetish dumpling typical of the area) at **Al Monastero** (☎ 0432 70 08 08; Via Ristori 9; meals €25-30; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun) in the old town amid original frescoes and antique furniture. Central **Caffè Longobardo** (☎ 0432 73 01 60; Piazza Paolo Diacono 2) has low tables, a gurgling cappuccino machine and the *Corriere della Sera* to browse.

Private trains run by **Ferrovie Udine Cividale** (☎ 0432 58 18 44; www.ferrovieudinecividale.it) connect Cividale with Udine (€2.20, 20 minutes) at least hourly.

SAN DANIELE DEL FRIULI

pop 8000

There are two world-revered *prosciutti* (hams) manufactured in Italy: the lean, deliciously nutty (and more famous) Parma ham; and the dark, exquisitely sweet Prosciutto di San Daniele. It might come as some surprise to

find that the latter – Friuli Venezia Giulia's greatest culinary gift to the world – comes from a village of only 8000 people, where it is concocted in 27 special *prosciuttifici* (large industrial ham-curing plants) safeguarded by EU regulations. San Daniele's **tourist office** (☎ 0432 94 07 65; www.infosandaniele.com; Via Roma 3; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm Mon-Sat) has a list of *prosciuttifici* that accept visits (book ahead). For the best treats arrive in August for the **Aria di Festa**, a four-day annual ham festival when factories open their doors, musicians entertain and everyone tucks in.

Frescoes are another of San Daniele's fortes and you'll find some colourful examples etched by Pellegrino da San Daniele, aka Martino da Urbino (1467–1547), in the small Romanesque **Chiesa di San Antonio Abate** (Via Garibaldi). Next to the church, the **Biblioteca Guarneriana** (☎ 0432 95 79 30; Via Roma 1; ☎ 9am-1pm, 2.30-6.15pm Tue-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) is one of Italy's oldest and most venerated libraries and was founded in 1466. It contains 12,000 well preserved antique books, including a priceless manuscript of Dante's *Inferno*.

Hotel Alla Torre (☎ 0432 95 45 62; Via del Lago 1; s/d €62/94; (P)) is an unfancy but authentic Friulian sleeper situated on top of the hill that bisects the village centre. Clean, large rooms have private bathrooms and all of the main sights (and hams) are nearby.

You can buy all the ham your heart and stomach desire in **La Casa del Prosciutto** (☎ 0432 95 7422; Via Ciconi 22-24; ☎ closed Tue), where you can sit down for a full ham meal, or **Bar Municipio** (☎ 0432 95 50 12; Via Garibaldi 21; ☎ Sun-Fri), where they serve it wrapped around *grissini* (bread sticks). At elegant **Da Scarpan** (☎ 0432 94 30 66; Via Garibaldi 41; meals €35; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Mon, lunch Tue) you can sample your ham in more elaborate dishes, or indeed skip it altogether.

Three cycling itineraries (each 22km) lead cyclists through the hills around the village; ask at the tourist office. **Vacanze in Mountain Bike** (☎ 0432 94 10 44; www.bikelandia.it; Via Osoppo 97) organises bike tours.

Regular buses run to San Daniele from Udine (€2.50, 40 minutes), 25km to the southeast.

NORTH OF UDINE

Hit the extreme north of Italy's most northeasterly region and you'll find yourself surrounded by the Carnic and Giulie (Julian) Alps. Of the two groupings, the former is the

gentler and less foreboding range, with hills that stretch as far west as the Dolomites and as far north as the border with Austria. The loftier Giulie (named after Julius Caesar), meanwhile, are rugged, frigid peaks shared with Slovenia (the Triglavski Narodni Park lies just across the border).

Collectively the mountains, with their rich flora and characteristic villages, make for excellent hiking terrain with some of the loneliest and most scenic trails in Italy. Standing at the meeting point of three different cultures, multilingual skills can come in handy here. Hikers should be ready with a congenial *salve* (Italian), *grüss gott* (German) or *dober dan* (Slovenian).

On the way north from Udine make a pit stop in **Bordano**, home to one of Europe's largest butterfly centres with some 1500 species (500 of which are nocturnal). More than 400 species of tropical butterflies are bred at the **Casa delle Farfalle** (☎ 0432 98 81 35; www.casaperlefarfalle.it; Via Canada 1; adult/child €6.50/4.50; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-4pm Mar & Oct, 9.30am-noon & 2-5.30pm Apr-Sep).

Tarvisio & the Giulie Alps

The Giulie Alps are dramatic limestone monoliths that bear more than a passing resemblance to their more famous Dolomiti cousins. Though undergoing some recent development (including a cross-border ski-lift), the area is still relatively pristine and retains a wildness often lacking further west.

Tarvisio (population 5020; elevation 754m), wedged into the Val Canale between the Giulie and Eastern Carnic Alps, is the best base camp; it's an Alpine-walking and skiing resort 7km short of the Austrian border and 11km from Slovenia. The town is famous for its Saturday market that has long attracted day-trippers from Austria and Slovenia, but is also increasingly touted for its skiing; this is the snowiest (and coldest) pocket in the whole Alpine region. The **tourist office** (☎ 0428 23 92; www.tarvisiano.org; Via Roma 14) can furnish you with more details.

The main ski centres are at Tarvisio, with a good 4km run, and **Sella Nevea**, where the 2.6km Canin red run is the most satisfying. At the time of research, new cableways and chairlifts linking Sella Nevea with the Bovec ski resort in nearby Slovenia were due to open. For more details see www.sellanevea.net.

The **Laghi di Fusine** (Fusine Lakes) lie within mirror-signalling distance of the Slovenian

border and are perennially popular with hikers (in summer) and cross-country skiers and snow-shoers (in winter). The two lakes – Lago Superiore and Lago Inferiore – are ringed by paths and encased in the **Parco Naturale di Fusine**. For more adventurous walkers, there's a moderately challenging 11km hike up to the **Rifugio Zacchi** (☎ 0428 61195; dm €17–20; ☞ Jun–Sep) and across the face of Monte Mangart. There's a car park and small bar offering refreshments next to the lakes. Buses run up to five times daily from Tarvisio (€1.50, 15 minutes).

Tarvisio has some decent cheap sleeps, including **Hotel Haberl** (☎ 0428 2312; www.hotelhaberl.com; Via Kugy 1; s/d €50/70; (P)) situated right in the centre, with bright Alpine rooms, a sauna and a large outside restaurant and terrace that's ideal for watching the world go by. **Ristorante Adriatico** (☎ 0428 2637; Via Roma 59) is typical of Tarvisio's economical eating joints, with a set two-course meat or fish menu including wine for less than €20.

Trains connect Tarvisio with Udine (€7.25, 1½ hours, up to seven daily).

Tolmezzo & Carnia

The region known as Carnia is intrinsically Friulian (the language is widely spoken here) and named after its original Celtic inhabitants – the Carnics. Geographically, it contains the western and central parts of the Carnic Alps and presents wild and beautiful walking country flecked with curious villages.

Tolmezzo (population 10,600) is the region's capital and gateway. You can visit the four-storey **Museo Carnico delle Arti e Tradizioni Popolari** (☎ 0433 43233; www.carniamusei.org; Via della Vittoria 2; adult/child €4/3; ☞ 9am–1pm & 3–6pm Tue–Sun) with a rich display on mountain life and folklore, and stay in one of five hotels. The top pick is the central and pleasant **Albergo Roma** (☎ 0433 468031; Piazza XX Settembre 14; s/d €50/100; (P) ☑). SAF buses run from Tolmezzo to Udine approxi-

mately every hour (€3.10, 50 minutes) from the station in Via Carnia Libera.

Tolmezzo also provides access to **Ampezzo**, a small village 17km to the west with a huddle of centuries-old houses and the unexpected **Museo Geologico della Carnia** (☎ 0433 811030; Piazza Zona Libera della Carnia; ☞ 9am–noon Sat & Sun Oct–May, 9am–noon & 3–6pm Tue–Sun Jun–Sep), notable for its rocks and fossils. To the northwest, a minor road passes the plunging Lumiei gorge to emerge at the cobalt-blue **Lago di Sauris**, an artificial lake about 4km east of **Sauris di Sotto**. Another 4km on (up eight switchbacks) is the prettier **Sauris di Sopra**. This twin hamlet is a curious island of German-speakers (who call it Zahre), whose Tyrolean culture is also evident in their timber houses. The area is known for its fine hams, sausages and locally brewed beer (light and dark, the former with a hint of a Weizenbier flavour). There are several places to stay and lots of fine walking trails. **Albergo Ristorante Riglarhaus** (☎ 0433 86013; Fraz Lateis 3; s/d €44/66; (P)) acts as a cosy umbrella full of mountain charm and rustic food.

Close to the border with Veneto, **Forni di Sopra** is a popular ski resort that receives a heavy dump of winter snow. Forni is equally revered for its carpet of summer wildflowers and herbs; the latter are utilised in the local cuisine and are the central theme of the annual **Festa delle Erbe di Primavera** (Festival of Spring Herbs). There are numerous hotels in the town, including **Hotel Edelweiss** (☎ 0433 88016; www.edelweiss-forni.it; Via Nazionale 19; s/d €62/82; (P) ☑), a kid-friendly vista-laden place with gratis mountain bikes and plenty of other perks. The **tourist office** (☎ 0433 886767; Via Cadore 1) can fill in the information gaps.

Regular SAF buses from Tolmezzo service this region and stop in Ampezzo (€2.10, 35 minutes) and Forni de Sopra (€3.10, one hour and 20 minutes).

© Lonely Planet. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted.

In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above – 'Do the right thing with our content.'