

# PARMA



Parma city guide

*by the students of 3<sup>^</sup>D – I.C. «Barilli» di Montechiarugolo – 2021/2022*

# THE HISTORY

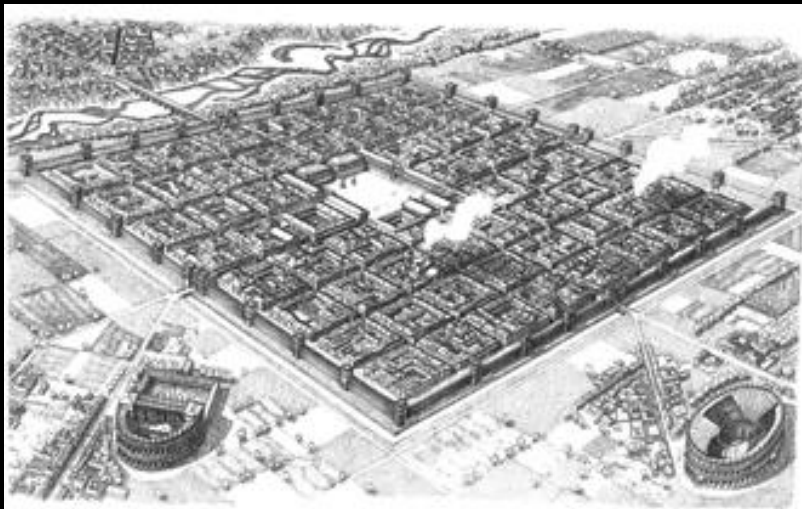




Parma, city, in the Emilia-Romagna region of northern Italy, on the Parma River, northwest of Bologna.

Founded by the **Romans** along the Via Aemilia in 183 bc, Parma was important as a road junction; its trade flourished, and it obtained Roman citizenship. It became an episcopal see in the 4th century and was later destroyed by the Ostrogoth king Theodoric.


The city was rebuilt in the Middle Ages and was ruled by its bishops from the 9th century. Parma enjoyed communal liberty in the late 12th and 13th centuries, until its involvement in the struggles between the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy in the early 14th century led to its subjugation by a series of lordships.

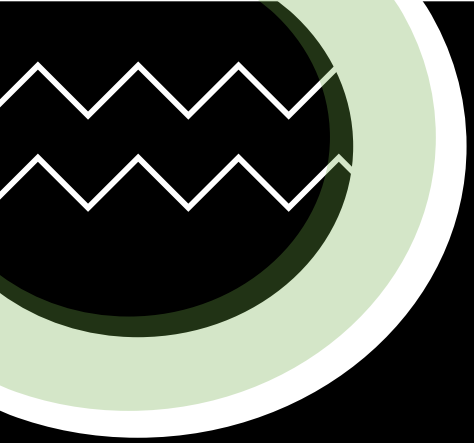


*Map of  
Parma  
roman  
city*



*Medieval  
Parma:  
the  
Cathedral  
and the  
Baptistry*





The most important period for Parma began in the 16th century, when **Pope Paul III** in 1545 detached Parma and Piacenza from the Papal States and gave them as a duchy (the ***Duchy of Parma and Piacenza***) to his illegitimate son, **Pier Luigi Farnese** (died 1547).

The Farnese family governed the city until 1731 and Parma changed radically during those years as symbolic buildings for the local aristocracy appeared here, such as the **Ducal Palace** and the **Palazzo Pilotta**.



*Palazzo della Pilotta*



*Palazzo Ducale*



# FARNESE FAMILY

The first of its most celebrated members was Alessandro (1468–1549), the future **Pope Paul III**.

**Pier Luigi** (1503–47), the first duke, was Paul's son by a woman whose name is unknown.

Pier Luigi's second son and successor, **Ottavio** (1542–86), made Parma his capital instead of Piacenza and continued his father's work of internal consolidation and the struggle against the feudal lords.

- The third duke, **Alessandro** (1545–92), Ottavio's son, was the most distinguished male member of the Farnese family.





- Alessandro was succeeded in 1592 by his son **Ranuccio I** (1569–1622), who had been regent since 1586.
- Ranuccio's son and successor, **Odoardo I** (1612–46), was ambitious and impulsive, and he engaged in inconclusive campaigns and diplomacy during the Thirty Years' War.
- His eldest son, **Ranuccio II** (1630–94), who succeeded him in 1646, inherited a heavy financial and diplomatic burden.
- **Francesco** (1678–1727), son of Ranuccio II and his successor in 1694, attempted to save the fortunes of the state and of the dynasty, now in utter decadence, by his economic and diplomatic initiative, but his only important success was the marriage of his niece Elisabetta (see Isabella) to Philip V of Spain in 1714.
- The last Farnese of the male line was **Antonio** (1679–1731), duke from 1727 to 1731.



The government of the Farnese family lasted until the family's extinction in 1731, when it passed to the **Spanish Bourbons** in the person of Don Carlos (the future Charles III of Spain). Except for one brief interruption, the Spanish Bourbons controlled the duchy until 1808, when it was formally annexed to France as the *département* of Taro.

Parma was under French influence after the Peace of Aachen (1748). Parma became a modern state with the energetic action of prime minister **Guillaume du Tillot**. He created the bases for a modern industry and fought strenuously against the church's privileges.

The city lived a period of particular splendour: the **Biblioteca Palatina** (Palatine Library), the **Archaeological Museum**, the **Picture Gallery** and the **Botanical Garden** were founded, together with the Royal Printing Works directed by **Giambattista Bodoni**, aided by the Amoretti Brothers as skilled and inspired punchcutters.



*The Galleria Nazionale (Picture Gallery)*



*The Biblioteca Palatina (Palatine Library)*



*Il Archeological Museum*



# NAPOLEONE BONAPARTE AND MARIA LUIGIA

The name of **Napoleon** is also linked to the city of Parma. From 1793 the great military commander began his Italian campaign and by the end of the century he had conquered many different regions including the city of Parma.

Shortly afterwards, he commissioned his second wife **Maria Luisa of Hapsburg-Lorraine** to govern Parma, and she maintained her influential power until her death in 1847.

Upon her orders, houses were constructed in Parma and old neighborhoods were rebuilt. Maria Luisa also turned her hand to the cultural development of the city: it was on her orders that the **Teatro Regio** of Parma was founded.

The *Maria Luisa of Hapsburg-Lorraine Museum* located in via Garibaldi tells the story of this woman governor.

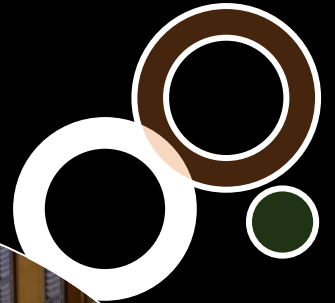
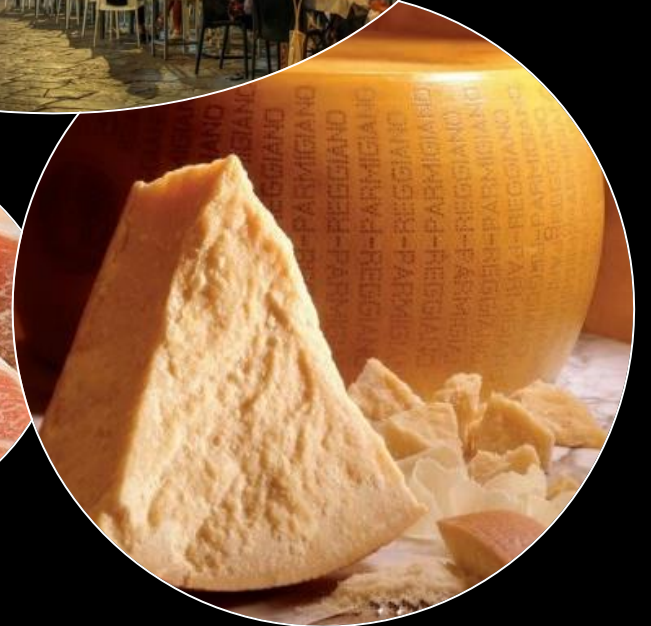




In 1860 Parma was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy and the period of development and peace began.

During the Second World War the town was heavily bombed, but the inhabitants of Parma, lovers of culture, reconstructed the city and all her important architectural buildings.

Today Parma is a quiet corner of Italy where the wonderful smell of ham wafts through the air and Parmesan cheese is venerated!



# Famous natives of Parma

Famous natives of Parma include the architect and sculptor **Benedetto Antelami**, the painters **Correggio** (Antonio Allegri) and **Parmigianino** (Francesco Mazzola), the music conductor **Arturo Toscanini**. The printer and typeface designer **Giambattista Bodoni** worked and died here.



The image captures the grand interior of the Teatro Regio in Parma, Italy. The theater is a semi-circular auditorium with multiple tiers of ornate balconies, each adorned with intricate gold leaf carvings and decorative elements. The seats are upholstered in deep red velvet. At the top of the theater, a large circular dome is painted with a fresco depicting a celestial scene, surrounded by a decorative border. The overall atmosphere is one of classical elegance and historical grandeur.

# TEATRO REGIO

**TEATRO REGIO** is the opera house of the city of Parma and is considered one of the most important traditional theaters in Italy. Although it is less known internationally than the Milanese SCALA and the FENICE of Venice, it is considered by opera enthusiasts to be one of the theaters par excellence of the great Italian opera tradition.

Commissioned by Maria Luigia and designed by Nicola Bettoli, the Regio theatre was built between 1821 and 1829 on the site of the Benedictine convent of St. Alessandro.



The neoclassical atrium leads to the elliptical stalls, decorated by G. Magnani in 1853, surrounded by four tiers of boxes and the gallery. Of notable interest is the visit to the internal structure among equipment, sets, rooms, ceilings and the beautiful curtain. Every year the opera season and the festival VERDI take place, in which internationally renowned artists play.

The image shows the interior of the Teatro Farnese, a circular wooden theater. The theater features multiple tiers of wooden seating, a stage at the bottom, and a curved wooden balcony with arched openings. The ceiling is a complex wooden structure with several bright spotlights. The text "TEATRO FARNESE" is overlaid in red, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image, with a white horizontal line underneath it.

# TEATRO FARNESE

The Farnese theater, a wooden work by Giovanni Battista Aleotti, was commissioned by Ranuccio I Farnese in 1618 to celebrate the stay in Parma of Cosimo II de 'Medici and was placed in the Pilotta Palace, transforming the original armory. The inauguration took place in 1628 on the occasion of the marriage between Margherita de Medici and Duke Odoardo Farnese.

The theater became an example for the uniqueness of some of its solutions: from the mobile stage structure to the machines for moving characters from above, and again for the ingenious system for flooding the auditorium in order to stage naumachia. In 1732, after the last performance, the theater went into a slow decline, up to almost total destruction during the Second World War.

The reconstruction carried out in the 1950s took place according to original designs: the wooden parts, once completely decorated, were left in their natural state to highlight the few original ones recovered.



# PARMA CATHEDRAL AND BAPTISTERY





The **Cathedral**, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, can be considered one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Italy. It was erected by the heretic bishop Cadalus, who later became antipope Honorius II. Destroyed by an earthquake in 1117, it was rebuilt and completed in the 12th century.

The interior of the Cathedral is shaped on a Latin cross. The ceiling and walls are frescoed in the Mannerist style. A 16th century red Verona marble staircase leads up to the transepts where, on the right, is the famous relief of the Deposition by Benedetto Antelami, one of the finest examples of Romanesque sculpture.

The great void of the dome was frescoed by Renaissance painter Antonio da Correggio in 1526.



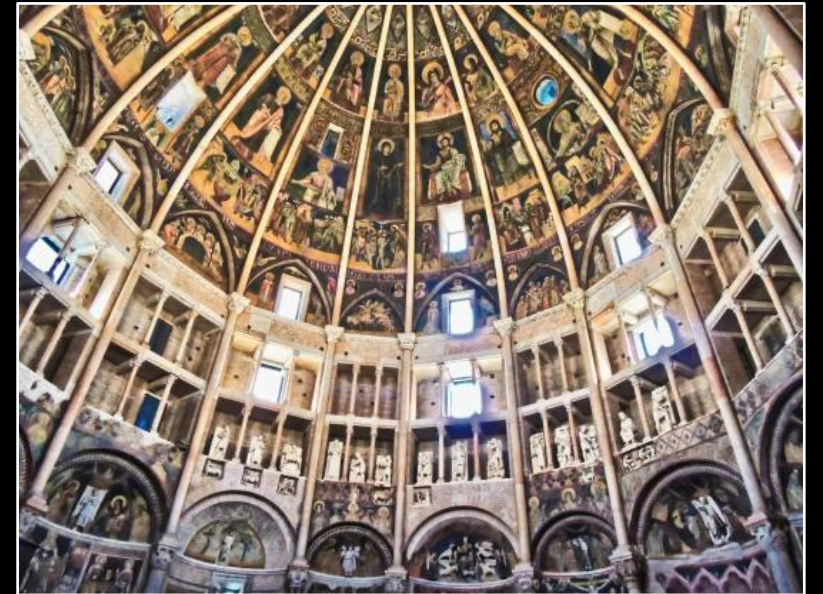




Built between 1196 and 1307, the pink marble Baptistery is a clear example of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic art in Italy. This octagonal baptistery built of Verona marble with four tiers of open loggias topped by a row of blind arches and crowning pinnacles, is certainly the most outstanding example of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic art in Italy.

Benedetto Antelami supervised its construction and executed almost all the decorative sculptures, typical of the medieval iconography. The lowest part of the baptistery is encircled by a zoophorus with bas-relief sculptures of animals, fabulous beasts, creatures from Hell, sea monsters, centaurs, mermaids, unicorns and Zodiac signs.

In the interior, a sixteen-sided polygon, are the notable sculptures by Benedetto Antelami depicting the Months, the Seasons and the Signs of Zodiac. Above the altar, in the semi-dome, is a Christ in Glory surrounded by the symbols of the four evangelists and two angels.





**Palazzo and Parco  
DUCALE**

**Parco Ducale** is a 208,700 m<sup>2</sup> historical park in Parma, located in the Oltretorrente district near the Parma stream. It was designed in 1560 and extended in the 18th century. Decorated with sculptures by J.B. Boudard, it was subsequently adapted to the French style.

After the Restoration, the new Duchess Maria Luigia commissioned the court architect Nicola Bettoli to partially restore the park, introducing new tree species, including the monumental plane trees planted around 1830 in the so-called Piazza dei Platani in the center of the great étoile placed in front of the building.

The Park plays host to the **Palazzetto Eucherio Sanvitale**, built in Renaissance style in 1520 by Giorgio Da Erba, and the Ducal Place.

**Palazzo Ducale**, built by the Farnese family as a worthy residence of representation and delights, took shape around a pre-existing castle dating back to the Sforza period.

The first Farnese nucleus dates back to 1561-64 on the project of Vignola. Very soon, however, the palace appeared too modest and between the end of the 1500s and the first decades of the 1600s it was enlarged by Simone Moschino and Girolamo Rainaldi, who gave it the current design with the foreparts and the lateral bodies. An extensive modernization was carried out by E.A. Petitot in 1767.

Inside, on the first floor, there are still rooms frescoed in different eras by important painters: Girolamo Mirola, Jacopo Zanguidi known as Bertoja, Agostino Carracci, Carlo Cignani.

The palazzo is currently the headquarters of the Italian Carabinieri.



...and now let's go to see Parma from the sky with [Google Earth](#)



# Sitography

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Parma-Italy>

<https://www.visit-parma.com/en/history-parma>

<https://www.parmawelcome.it/en/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montechiarugolo>

