

CITY OF AQUILA  
Department for Tourism  
and City Image Promotion



COMUNE DELL'AQUILA



Comune dell'Aquila



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IL SEGNO  
DELLA  
RINASCITA



L'AQUILA  
2026

Capitale italiana  
della Cultura

L'AQUILA



# Surroundings

The archaeological area of **Amiternum**, 11 km from L'Aquila, includes the remains of the ancient city, one of the most important of the Sabines, attested since the VIII century B.C., conquered by the Romans in 290 B.C. and seat of a prefecture. Known for being the birthplace of the historian Sallust, it preserves the theater and amphitheater of the Augustaeus period, a villa of the late imperial age with mosaics and frescoes, remains of the Via Caecilia and an aqueduct, while the early Christian cathedral of Santa Maria ad Civitatem is being excavated. Nearby there are the **catacombs of San Vittorino** (hypogeum of the church of San Michele Arcangelo).

**The necropolis of Fossa**, about 10 km from L'Aquila, is located in the Vestina area and refers to a village of fortified remains, dating from the eleventh to the eighth century B.C., which were found near the sepulchral complex whose use continued until the first century B.C. with the development of the ancient city of Aveja. Classified among the main necropolis areas in central Italy, covering an extension of 5000 square kilometers, it includes over 600 burials with pits, chambers and mounds where notable grave goods such as jewelry, pottery, weapons and burial beds carved in bone have been recovered. It is known as the "Stonehenge of Abruzzo", for its presence of menhirs symbolizing, as believed, the age and life path of the deceased. Just a few km from L'Aquila there's **the sanctuary of the Madonna d'Appari**, dated back to the thirteen century and nestled in an enchanting and picturesque naturalistic area, gifted with an exquisitely decorated interior.

A must visit **the Vera Springs** too, a naturalistic WWF oasis, and the **Stiffe Caves** placed within the Sirente-Velino Park, representing for their conformation a unique karst complex in Italy, partly still unexplored.



# Surroundings

Amiternum, theater



Map of L'Aquila



Stazione ferroviaria



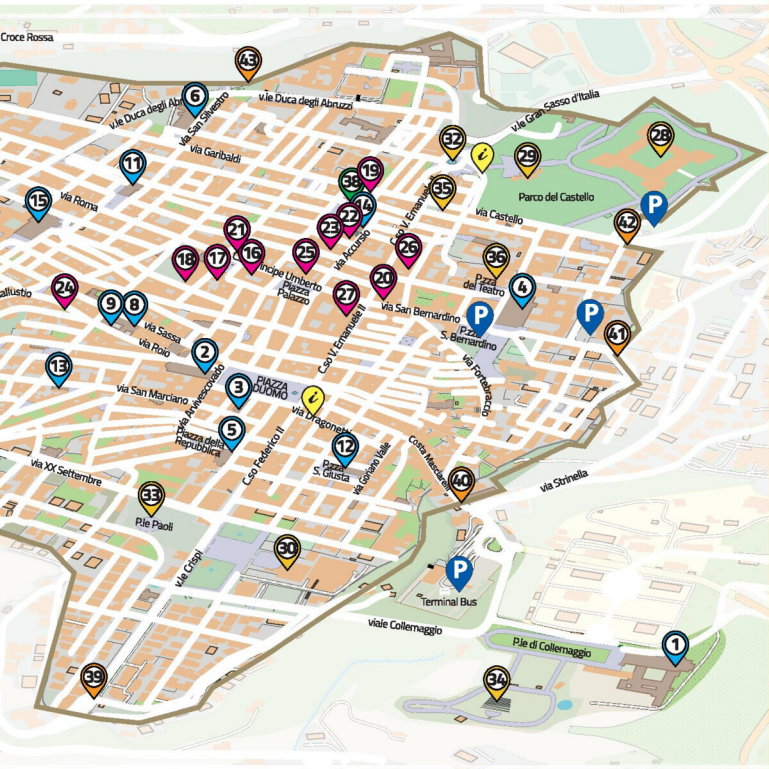
Informazioni Turistiche  
Tourist Information



Parcheggio  
Parking Area



Mura Urbiche  
Ancient city walls



# Legend



## Chiese/Churchs



- |                                           |                            |                          |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. S. Maria di Collemaggio                | 6. San Silvestro           | 11. San Pietro a Coppito |
| 2. Cattedrale dei Santi Massimo e Giorgio | 7. San Vito alla Rivera    | 12. Santa Giusta         |
| 3. Santa Maria del Suffragio              | 8. San Giuseppe Artigiano  | 13. San Marciano         |
| 4. San Bernardino da Siena                | 9. San Giuseppe dei Minimi | 14. Santa Maria Paganica |
| 5. Sant'Agostino                          | 10. Santa Chiara d'Aquila  | 15. San Domenico         |



## Edifici Storici/Historic buildings



- |                           |                                |                                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 16. Palazzo Margherita    | 20. Palazzo Fabbioni           | 24. Palazzo Dragonetti-De Torres |
| 17. Palazzetto dei Nobili | 21. Palazzo Pica-Alfieri       | 25. Palazzo Ciolina-Ciampella    |
| 18. Palazzo Camponeschi   | 22. Casa di Buccio di Ranallo  | 26. Palazzo Burri-Gatti          |
| 19. Palazzo Ardinghelli   | 23. Casa di Jacopo Notar Nanni | 27. Palazzo del Convitto         |



## Monumenti Storico-Artistici Historic-Artistic Monuments



- |                           |                               |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 28. Forte Spagnolo        | 31. Fontana delle 99 cannelle | 34. Amphisculture       |
| 29. Auditorium del Parco  | 32. Fontana Luminosa          | 35. Fontana del Nettuno |
| 30. Palazzo dell'Emiciclo | 33. Parco della Memoria       | 36. Teatro Comunale     |



## Musei/Museums



- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| 37. MuNDA | 38. MAXXI |
|-----------|-----------|



## Porte/Arches



- |                   |                     |                                 |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 39. Porta Napoli  | 42. Porta Castello  | 45. Porta di Poggio Santa Maria |
| 40. Porta Bazzano | 43. Porta Branconio | 46. Porta Rivera                |
| 41. Porta Leoni   | 44. Porta Barete    |                                 |

# How to get to surroundings

**Amiternum**, 11 km from L'Aquila, SS80 Dir.

**The catacombs of San Vittorino**, Via Pizzoli, 2, San Vittorino (AQ).

**The necropolis of Fossa**, 10 km from L'Aquila, Via S. Massimo d'Aveja, Fossa (AQ).

**The Vera Springs**, a naturalistic regional reserve; Vera River which touches Tempera (AQ).

**Stiffe Caves**, Via Del Mulino Stiffe, 2, Stiffe (AQ).

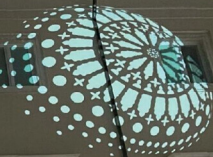
**Rocca Calascio**, with its legendary Castle located, at 1460 mt, among the highest in Europe.

**Santo Stefano di Sessanio**, a medieval village, noted as one of the most beautiful in the **Gran Sasso – Monti della Soga Park**.

**Corno Grande** is easily attainable from L'Aquila, following the indications for **Campo Imperatore**; it's easily reachable by the A24 (motorway direction L'Aquila-Roma) exiting at Assergi (AQ). In this location you can use cable car at Fonte Cerreto to reach the base of the mountain (see photo below).



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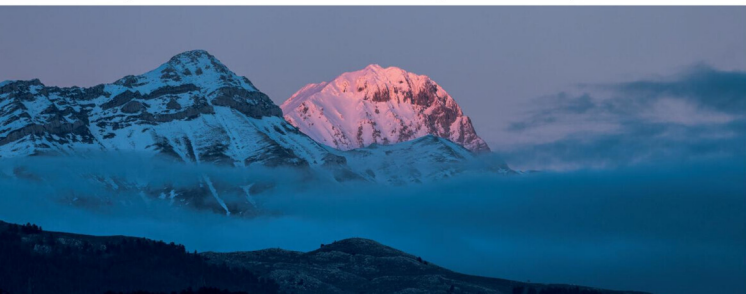
Tourist guide

# The town

L'Aquila, the Abruzzo County Seat, stands at the bottom of the Gran Sasso of Italy (Appennino's highest peak with its 2.912 mt), centered in the homonymous valley, and it's touched by the Aterno River. Three-quarters of the surrounding lands are mainly valuably protected for their naturalistic excellence.

Immediately next to this territory basin, populated since Prehistory, two important italic towns had their origins: Amiternum, founded by the Sabines, developed in the western area of the actual urban center, meanwhile Aveia, occupied by Vestini tribes, was set in the east side; both were lately conquered by Romans and inhabited until the early Middle Ages.

Founded traditionally in 1254 under the name of Aquila, it was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt, from the Middle Ages to Nineteenth Century. The municipality area is the ninth most extended in Italy, meanwhile the town, with its 721 meters above sea level, stands between the highest national County Seats. Here takes place since 1294 the yearly Jubilee of Perdonanza Celestiniana, included in 2019 among the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



# The story



Mammut - Spanish Fort

The foundation, set off with a deed signed by Conrad IV in 1254, 20th May, happened after an act of rebellion between the surrounding castles (99 according to the tradition) who reacted against the feudalism imposed by the baronial norman-suevian aristocracy. The legendary number related to the origin of the town is represented in the Fountain of the 99 Spouts, one of the oldest monuments, just as the fourteenth-century Civic Tower clock knocked symbolically 99 times. Independent and provided with its statutes, it had a relevant economic development during the

XV century, becoming the second city of the Kingdom of Naples. Flourishing for trade and mainly in wool production, a university seat since 1458, the town saw the birth of one of the first typographies in Italy, (the third in Italy), by Adam from Rottweil, a pupil of Johannes Gutenberg himself, the inventor of the printed book. Having passed under the Spanish dominion during the sixteenth century, it experienced several changes in the following centuries and a breaking crisis provoked by the earthquake of February 2nd, 1703, with an estimated magnitude of 6.7 on the Richter scale, which caused about 6000 deaths. During the nineteenth century, it began to grow again, and a further great expansion since the Second World War. The earthquake of April 6, 2009, was followed by a relevant urban rebirth, partly still underway.

# Main monuments and places of interest

**Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio:** Built in 1288 at the behest of Saint Pope Celestine V (whose real name was Pietro del Morrone), it stands up in the place where he had a vision of the Virgin, set as the core of the Celestinian Forgiveness, a solemn catholic Jubilee yearly repeated on 28 August with the sacred opening of the Holy Door (long side on the left of the church). The white and pink stone façade is characterized by three finely carved rose windows and many portals with concentric arches. The interior, divided into three naves with arches standing on octagonal pillars, holds the remains of the Saint. The paintings on the right aisle (15th century), as well as the Mausoleum of the Saint (1517), the Gothic choir, and the monumental Baroque organ (XVII c.), are outstanding and noteworthy. The near Parco del Sole hosts the **Amphisculpture** by Beverly Pepper, a gift of the American artist, an exponent of land art (art inserted in the landscape).

**The Hemicycle Building** (1888), the seat of the Regional Council of Abruzzo, and the **Park of Memory** were realized in remembrance of the 309 victims of the 2009 earthquake. The **Cathedral of Saints Maximus and George**, with a nineteenth-century façade. The **Church of Santa Maria del Suffragio**:



# Main monuments and places of interest



a late-baroque masterpiece, was erected in memory of the victims of the Earthquake of 1703, as the inscription on the portal reports. The façade and the dome, attributed to Valadier, are outstanding as well as the painting by Teofilo Patini and the pipe organ inside. The **Church of Santa Giusta** (XIII c.) constructed by the citizens of Bazzano, one of the main castles contributing to the foundation of the city, which is still unusable after the 2009 earthquake, is worth a visit for the precious white stone façade hosting one of the most beautiful rose windows in the city, and the fountain with its crest of the Castle of Bazzano. The **Church of Sant'Agostino** with its wonderful façade, whose original structure dates back

between the XIII and XIV c., **Basilica of San Bernardino da Siena** (1454-1472): it is the highest expression of Abruzzo Renaissance architecture. The façade, with three orders, has an octagonal dome. The interior is embellished by a wooden coffer ceiling adorned with pure gold, realized during the eighteenth century, with inset paintings belonging to Girolamo Cenatiempo and the sunburst with the typical Bernardino's trigram (IHS) made with gold-coated Navelli chickpeas. On the right side, the noteworthy Vetusti Oliva chapel, with glazed terracotta sculpture by Andrea Della Robbia (1495-1500), next to the chapel of Notar Nanni, with a precious wooden sculpture by Silvestro dell'Aquila representing a Madonna and Child and the fifteenth-century Mausoleum of the saint, by the same

# Main monuments and places of interest

author. **Spanish Fort** (also known as the sixteenth-century Castle and home of the MUNDA): built according to the most modern defensive techniques of the time, as a warning “ad reprimendam audaciam aquilanorum” set after a revolt, as written on the inscription on the majestic portal. Surrounded by a moat and structured with four huge bastions, it is located within the homonymous urban park, where the **Auditorium of the Park**, designed by Renzo Piano, is located, next to the **Luminous Fountain** by Nicola D’Antino (1934). **Palace Margherita** (XIII-XVI c.): historic municipal residence, named after Margaret of Austria, who sojourned there for a long time. On the left side



stands the Civic Tower, the only surviving element of the fourteenth-century Palazzo del Capitano; at its base, the first example of the city crest. **Churches of San Pietro da Coppito** (XIII c.) and **San Silvestro** (XIV c.): both have, in addition to the eminent façade and the bell tower, rich interior decorations, as well as a copy of the painting The Visitation of the Virgin by Raphael in the Branconius chapel, in the church of San Silvestro, the original painting being currently located in Prado. **Fountain of the 99 Spouts** (1272): artwork by Tancredi da Pentima, stands on the side of the city’s early foundation. It has 93 masks and 6 single spouts symbolizing, according to tradition, the 99 castles that contributed to the birth of L’Aquila. Not far away is the **Church of San Vito alla Rivera** (XIII c.).



# The Celestinian Forgiveness

The main cultural and religious event is the Celestinian Forgiveness, included in the list of the UNESCO Intangible Heritage, a yearly jubilee falling from August 23rd to 29th, taking its name by the Bull of Forgiveness, the charter issued by Celestino V the day after his papal coronation on 29 August 1294 in S. Maria di Collemaggio, as to grant a plenary indulgence to anyone passing through the Holy Door of the Basilica, between the vespers on 28 and 29 august, six years before the Jubilee of Boniface XIII (1300). The celebration, with its rich program of cultural events, reaches its climax in two moments: the opening ceremony, on August 23, when the Fire of Morrone reaches L'Aquila following the itinerary taken by



Celestino V from the Hermitage of Morrone, near Sulmona, and the Historical Parade on August 28, conveying the precious parchment from the Municipal residence to the Basilica di Collemaggio. The edition of 2022 saw the historic presence of Pope Francis, the first pontiff in history to preside over the solemn ceremony of the Holy Door opening.

# Culture

L'Aquila is home to two important museums, **MUNDA** and **MAXXI**. The **National Museum of Abruzzo** ([museonazionaleabruzzo.it](http://museonazionaleabruzzo.it)), located in front of the Fountain of the 99 Spouts, hosts a selection of artworks from the Middle Ages to the modern age and has an archaeological section with finds from the sites of Amiternum, Aveia and Peltuinum. Remarkable are the splendid Beffi Tryptich (1410-1420) and artworks by Saturnino Gatti, Francesco Paolo Michetti and Teofilo Patini. The **MAXXI** ([maxxilaquila.it](http://maxxilaquila.it)), located inside **Palazzo Ardinghelli** (see photo below), an architectural jewel of the Baroque age, includes art collections, architecture and photography, with temporary and permanent exhibitions, research projects and educational and creative workshops. The town also comprehends prestigious cultural institutions, such as in particular, the **Teatro Stabile d'Abruzzo**, the Abruzzo Symphonic Institution, the Concert Society "B. Barattelli" and I Solisti Aquilani, performing interesting musical and prose seasons. Noteworthy are "*Cantieri dell'Immaginario*", a series of shows taking place in July, and "*Jazz in L'Aquila*" which is scheduled in the first September weekend.



# The Gran Sasso

The main massif of the Apennines, with its 2912 mt peak of the Corno Grande, represents the third largest protected area in Italy, with the presence of the Gran Sasso – Monti della Laga Park covering an area of over 140 thousand hectares, and including a vast ski area, structured with 41 km of slopes and 11 ski lifts. It offers considerable hiking opportunities. Among the most breathtaking itineraries, is the crossing from Campo Imperatore to Lake Prowidenza and Prati di Tivo. In Fonte Cerreto there's an adventure park. The astronomical observatory in Campo Imperatore is worth a visit, too. There is also the Hotel Campo Imperatore, whose structure, built in the thirties following the design by the engineer Vittorio Bonadè Bottino, known for being the prison of Benito Mussolini between 28 August and 12 September 1943 until his liberation by the German troops, is now closed because it is undergoing renovation. There is also the Gran Sasso bridleway, a 300 km circular route around the massive, equipped with resting areas. Spellbinding are the fabulous many villages nestled in the district. In particular, a symbol of Abruzzo is Rocca Calascio, with its legendary Castle located, at 1460 mt, among the highest in Europe, and Santo Stefano di Sessanio, which preserves the integrity of a fortified medieval village. The excellence of the territory products includes the Navelli saffron, truffles, legumes (St. Stefano's lentils), as well as meats, cured meats, dairy products, liqueurs (gentian), and confectionery bakery. The bread-making is a relevant tradition, too.



The Gran Sasso