

Sulmona

Sulmona is a beautiful little city, situated in the valley of the Gizio, in a large basin formed by the junction of that river with several minor streams.

It is known for being the Ovid native town, of whom there is a bronze statue in the square Piazza XX Settembre.

Ovid, repeatedly alludes to Sulmona, and celebrates its salubrity, and the numerous streams of clear and perennial water in which its neighbourhood abounded.

Its territory was fertile, both in corn and wine, and one district of it, the Pagus Fabianus, is particularly mentioned by Pliny, for the care bestowed on the irrigation of the vineyards.



The history is really rich and we would give visitors the chance to discover it on their own. So, as follows, we just give some important notes.

Sulmona was one of the principal cities of the Peligni, as an independent tribe, but no notice is found in history before the Roman conquest.

The first mention of Sulmona occurs in the second Punic war, when its territory was ravaged by Hannibal.

Then it was occupied by Domitius Calvinus, but citizens who were favourably affected to Julius Caesar, opened their gates to his lieutenant Al. Antonius as soon as he appeared before the place.

Nothing more is known historically of Sulmo, which however appears to have always continued to be a considerable provincial town.

Sulmona became a free commune under the Normans. Under Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, the town received an aqueduct, one of the most important construction of the era in Abruzzo; the emperor made it the capital of a large province, as well the seat of a tribunal and of a fair, which it however lost with the arrival of the Angevines. Despite that, it continued to expand and a new line of walls was added in the 14th century.

In the 16th century a flourishing industry of paper was started.

In 1709 the city was razed to the ground by an earthquake. Much of the medieval city was destroyed with some exceptions. It recovered in the 19th thank to the creation of a

railways hub.

During World War II, due to its strategic position, the town suffered heavy damages, but the old city has been mostly restored.



Sulmona hosts a lot of churches and palaces of great interest as : Cattedrale di San Panfilo which is the city's cathedral built on the site of a Roman temple, Palazzo Annunziata and Chiesa di SS Annunziata. Into the palace a fine museum showing the roman history of the city. The church is an example of Baroque architecture and has an enchanting interior and bell tower.

The largest square is Piazza Garibaldi with a baroque fountain.

A Palio, style medieval festival and horse race known as Giostra Cavalleresca, takes place here every year in the Summer.

At Easter, crowds gather to witness the Madonna che scappa (Madonna who runs away). This ceremony involves the procession of a statue of the Madonna, who is carried across the square while the bearers run to encounter a statue of the resurrected Christ on the other side of the square.



Nowadays, Sulmona is the home of the Italian confectionery known as confetti. These are delicious sugar coated almonds and are traditionally given to friends and relatives on weddings and other special occasions. The local artisans also colour these candies and craft them into flowers and other creations.

