

Ferrara The Walls



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|---|--------------------------|---|---|------------------------|---|
| A | Porta Paola | ♿ | E | Punta della Montagnola | ♿ |
| B | Chiesa di San Giorgio | ♿ | F | Torrione del Barco | ♿ |
| C | Punta della Giovecca | ♿ | G | Ex Fortezza | ♿ |
| D | Torrione di San Giovanni | ♿ | | | |

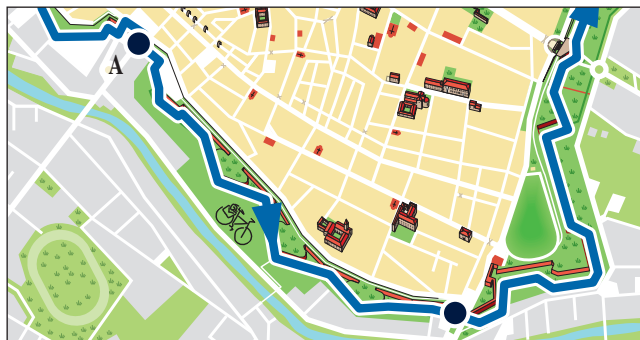
The city walls of Ferrara stretch for almost nine kilometres around the city, are to a large extent still intact and, as such, are among the most important in Europe. They were built in varying stages and at different times and represent a sort of open-air museum of military art. At the same time, they are set in immense parklands with trees and greenery and now offer somewhere peaceful to relax and meet friends. It is possible to travel along their full length either on foot or by bicycle up high on the ramparts or by following the lower sections.

For those on bicycle, it is easy to cover the entire perimeter and visitors on foot, should they wish, can simply choose the different sections they wish to see.

The 16th century ramparts

Start: Piazza del Travaglio. You can easily reach here from the city centre on foot by taking Corso Porta Reno or Via San Romano.

Finish: Via Porta Romana. Take bus number 2 to return to the centre.



This tour starts from **Porta Paola (A)** that was designed and built in 1612 by Giovan Battista Aleotti and dedicated to Pope Paul V who was pontiff at that time. Like all the city gates in Ferrara, it was rechristened with a more republican name during the time of the French occupation. *Porta Reno*. Accordingly, this statuesque entrance to the city bears one name on the outer side and another (different) name on the inner.

Heading eastwards, you will come across a section of the walls that while very old, was heavily modified in the late 1600's on the orders of Duke Alfonso II. There are four ramparts that have replaced the previous towers. The San Lorenzo rampart (Baluardo di San Lorenzo) has very simple lines and is followed by the **Baluardo di San Pietro**.

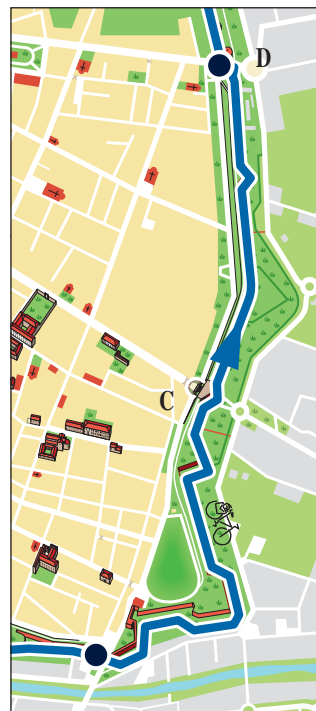
The form of this second rampart is of typical "Ace of Spades" design. You will next meet the **Porta San Pietro** that was walled up in the 16th century and very recently re-opened to improve communication with the centre. Here you will also find a sloping section that allows you to change from rampart to ground level or vice versa.

Two more sections of rampart follow and are of the same design as the second. The **Baluardo di Sant'Antonio**, in front of which a path has been opened to allow communication with Po di Volano cycle path. Looking city wards from this rampart you can see the ancient *Convent of Sant'Antonio in Polesine* that is easily recognised by its bell tower. Lastly is the **Baluardo dell'Amore**. At the end of the rampart you will come out on to a busy road not far from the **Church of San Giorgio (B)**, see Itinerary 3).

From San Giorgio to San Giovanni

Start: Via Porta Romana. You can get here by taking bus number 2 from the centre.

Finish: Piazzale San Giovanni. Take bus number 1 to return to the centre.



To follow this route that is outside the walls, take **Via Marco Polo** and turn left immediately under a 17th century sentry box above you. Follow along the **Baluardo di San Giorgio** that runs slightly downhill and then continue along a section that is surrounded by trees to the great **Baluardo della Montagna**. These two ramparts were built on the orders of Alfonso I in the mid -16th century and are of "Arrow Head" design. They are very similar to the other ramparts mentioned earlier but the corners of the tip tend to be sharp as opposed to rounded.

The **Baluardo di San Tommaso** demonstrates another variation in defences with its simple triangular projections. You will next come upon the **Doccile di San Tommaso**, a sort of brickwork duct that was intended to carry drain water away from the city without contaminating the moat. At **Punta della Giovecca (C)** (the same shape as the previous rampart but smaller) those who are up on the walls will be able to appreciate the *Piazzale Medaglie d'Oro*. This wonderfully elegant design with the **Prospettiva** archway in the background, offers a view along the length of Corso Giovecca that leads back to the city centre. For those at ground level, cross the first part of Via Pomposa – this long road goes all the way to the Abbey of the same name that is a masterpiece of Romanesque art located near the Adriatic coast. A little further along once stood the Baluardo di San Rocco. It was destroyed in the 19th century and its outline is now marked by a row of hedges. After passing the **Doccile di San Rocco** and the **Punta di San Rocco**, you will arrive at **Piazzale San Giovanni (D)**, dominated by a round defensive tower.



Punta della Giovecca

The “Angeli” walls (Le mura degli Angeli)

Start: Piazzale San Giovanni. You can get here by taking bus number 1 from the centre.

Finish: Viale Cavour. Take buses number 1,6,8,9,11 to return to the city centre.



The walls of the Renaissance city were designed by Biagio Rossetti and, to a large extent, still have their original layout. The defensive wall is hour-



The Walls

glass shaped, i.e. the lower part of the escarpment is slightly curved towards the interior until it reaches a centre piece and the upper part then curves outwards. The idea is simply to make climbing the walls very difficult. There are no ramparts, only semi-circular towers at regular distances apart. Some of these are still in their original positions but generally, only the foundations remain. Between the area outside the walls and the ramparts, runs a type of ditch that allowed troops and arms to be moved from one part of the defences to another without being exposed to the enemy.

The inner part is dominated by an immense parkland that houses the **Jewish Cemetery** and the **Charterhouse** complex.

At the **Punta della Montagnola (E)**, the walls bend towards the west and run alongside a mound like the one in the San Giorgio area. There is a short section where the walls lose their Rossetti design and this was because of modifications made when the church ruled the city. However, as you approach **Porta degli Angeli**, this passes. This gate offered access to the Barco hunting grounds that are now home to the **Parco Urbano “Giorgio Bassani”**.

Corso Ercole I d'Este lies facing the gate and will lead you back to the castle that you can see in the distance.

This section of the walls is the most shaded and features more nature. It goes all the way to the **Torrione del Barco (F)** that is a very interesting military construction. On reaching it, the walls turn south-west and continue until they meet up with the intersection of the two main roads of the present-day city. Corso Porta Po and Viale Cavour.



Porta degli Angeli

The Papal defences

Start: Viale Cavour. To get to the defences, take buses number 1,6,8,9,11 from the city centre.

Finish: Piazza del Travaglio You can easily reach the city centre on foot by taking Corso Porta Reno or Via San Romano.



This last section of the city walls has suffered the greatest loss of its original characteristics. It is easier at the start to follow the route using the footpath or cycle path on the other side of **Viale IV Novembre**. Once you have reached the junction with **Corso Piave**, you can then climb up on to the walls.

This area once housed a 17th century star-shaped **fortress (G)** that was virtually totally destroyed in the early period of the union between Ferrara and the Kingdom of Italy. In the meadowland below the ramparts stands a statue of Pope **Paul V** that was originally positioned inside the fortress.



Statue of Paolo V



The Walls, the 16th century bastions

The next ramparts are **Baluardo di Santa Maria** and **Baluardo di San Paolo** that are the only survivors of the five that surrounded the former military emplacement. The second rampart has a memorial stone to all those who lost their lives in the struggle for the unification of Italy.

There is a long section where the walls are no more and it is convenient to take **Via Fortezza** in front of Baluardo di San Paolo then turn immediately right into **Via Paolo V**. Next, cross **Piazza XXIV Maggio** that is overshadowed by the 20th century **Waterworks**. After crossing **Corso Isonzo**, go along **Via Podgora** and take **Via Rampari di San Paolo** that runs alongside the last walled section until you reach **Porta Paula (A)**.



Porta Paula