

Montalcino

Montalcino is located on a hill about 567 meters high on the bank of the Orcia River, approximately 40 km to the southwest of Siena.

To reach the town, you can take SS2-Cassia, using the Torrenieri exit.

Of first Etruscan and then Roman origins, the town subsequently belonged to the territories of the Abbey of Sant'Antimo.

Its strategic position on the ancient Francigena Road allowed Montalcino to rapidly acquire the structure of a military city with large walls for defense, numerous towers, and a fortress - notwithstanding many sieges - that was never conquered.

Becoming a free commune under the Guelphs, Montalcino fought several wars during the medieval period against the Ghibelline faction and against neighboring Siena until 1361 when its people were made Sienese citizens.

And then when Siena was defeated by the empire of Charles V, Montalcino was taken back from the Republic of Siena and ultimately was annexed to Florence. The imposing 13th century Fortress stands out above the town.

The Fortress is designed in the shape of a pentagon with angular towers.

Inside there is a large courtyard for theater performances and other cultural events.

Also inside the Fortress is a wine shop where you can taste and purchase the famous Brunello wine (html file) - one of the few Italian red wines receiving the D.O.C.G. mark, a decoration of excellence.

At the entrance is the "Stendardo di Siena" painted by Sodoma.

Walking around the towers, you will enjoy a stupendous panoramic view

The heart of the town is the Piazza del Popolo, in which is the charming Palazzo Comunale, built between the 13th and 14th centuries, decorated with coats of arms showing its slender tower of bricks and stone and the large portico, which is called the "cappellaccio", and its loggia from the same period, which is called the "cappellone".

This was lengthened in 1400 by rounded arches made of bricks.

A little further on is the 13th-century Church of Saint Augustine - a romanesque/gothic structure, where you can enjoy frescoes showing episodes from the life of the Saint, notably those of Coro di Bartolo di Fredi

Next to the church is the Convent of Saint Augustine, its interior distinguished by two cloisters of the 14th century that host the Musei Riuniti Civico, Diocesano e Archeologico. You can also see the Crucifix made by the Sienese School of the 12th century, the miniature Atlantica Bible, paintings by Sienese artists, terracotta works, and numerous statues of painted wood. Also present is an archeological exhibit displaying evidence of human habitation in the area from Neolithic times to the Etruscans and finally to the Roman Era

Proceeding along the way, you find the Duomo, a neoclassic structure built on the site of the ancient Pieve di San Salvatore where you can see a number of architectural.

From the Duomo, you descend opposite the Church of the Madonna del Soccorso, patron saint of the city. The church was constructed in the first years of the 1600s and named "del Soccorso". Inside is preserved the very ancient "Tavola della Madonna" as well as other outstanding works.

