

RIMINI



Rimini is like the Blues - it has a bit of everything, or at least that is what a famous Italian pop singer, Luciano Ligabue, has to say about it. And when we say everything, we mean everything. Whether you want to sleep in a tent or in a suite at the Grand Hotel, the 5-star hotel made famous by Federico Fellini, Rimini is a great destination. There are also many places of artistic and cultural interest; there are truly unique masterpieces from Roman times and the Renaissance period, or, there are 15 kilometres of shoreline where you can walk barefoot chatting with friends or meditating alone, as the mood takes you. In all there are 227 bathing establishments and 1100 hotels, plus excellent facilities for children. Rimini is full of innovation, a testing ground always ready to turn out new trends; street bars, happy hours, aperitifs served on the beach, dinner on the seashore, sports of the future (the “Next Games”) and nordic walking on sand. Above all there is a special atmosphere to get caught up in. “The Rimini Enchantment”. You will love it. It is the perfect place to make friends for life. Therefore, for those who only have a little time to spare but a lot of curiosity, this is the ideal handbook of things to do and see, together with the best itineraries to follow, a list of things you should not miss, the places dear to those who live in the area and, of course, a little of its history. But what a history! Naturally, from this small guide you will get a lot of stimulating input but it is up to you to go out and discover things firsthand. You will not be sorry. It will be the experience of a lifetime.

There is much to see and do while in Rimini: from the famous Bridge of Tiberius - built 2000 years ago – to numerous museums including the Fellini Museum celebrating life and films of one of Rimini’s most famous citizens.

Italians head for Rimini for their holidays, which must be the best recommendation. Located on the Adriatic Sea, it is a sophisticated, stylish city known for its lively take on life. Fabulous restaurants and trendy bars serve great food and wine, while miles of sandy beaches and clear seas attract families. Nightlife is lively and the old town provides a step back in time. Rimini is a city for everyone.

WHAT IS WORTH OF VISITING

Tiberius Bridge



Tiberius Bridge is a testament to the engineering know-how of the ancient Romans. Built 2000 years ago it has remained standing, despite the rigours of war and bombing. The secret is that its pillars rest on a single foundation. The bridge is a piece of the ancient Roman past and its five arches in white Istrian stone have been a part of the city scene since 14 A.D. (during the reign of Augustus). It was completed in 21 A.D. during the reign of Tiberius to mark (as it still does) the beginning of the Via Emilia. Today, after 2000 years in service it has still not been pensioned off.

Small boats bob on the waters beneath it and it is possible to take a trip on one of them to see the bridge from the water (information from Cooperativa Atlante, ph. 0541.54771).

Piazza Tre Martiri

The Piazza marks the position of the ancient Roman forum at the intersection of the Decumanus Maxima and the Cardo Romano. The forum was the centre of civic life for the Latin-speaking citizens of Rimini. At that time the square was much larger. On one side there is a statue of Julius Caesar whilst at the entrance to Via IV Novembre there is a stone pillar in memory of the speech Caesar made to his troops after they crossed the River Rubicon. Today the square is named "Tre Martiri" in honour of three partisans who died in 1944.



St. Augustine Church



In Via Cairoli. One of the pearls of the city's historic centre. It is worth a visit to admire the frescos decorating the apse and the bell tower chapel which depict episodes in the life of St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary. They were painted by masters from the fourteenth century Rimini school and, curiously enough, were brought to light from under eighteenth century stucco work and frescos by an earthquake in 1916. Although at first their value was not recognized, they were saved because there was a portrait of Dante among them.

Outside, the original Gothic style is still recognisable, although there is evidence of work done on the façade in the 18th century.

In Via L. Tonini 1, next to the Church of the Intercession (Chiesa del Suffragio), part of an eighteenth century Jesuit College (information tel. 0541.21482). The City Museum records Rimini's past existence and is a treasure trove of wonders and curiosities. Here you can admire the pieces of stone used as entrance tickets to the amphitheatre, statuettes of gladiators, numerous coins from the Roman era, magnificent mosaics, amphorae and tiles from the kilns used by the very first Rimini artisans. Then you can continue on to see exhibits from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. These include paintings by masters of the fourteenth century Rimini school, including the famous Pietà by Bellini depicting the lifeless figure of Jesus supported by four cherubs. There are also works by Agostino di Duccio, il Ghirlandaio, Cagnacci and il Guercino. Another section full of life and creativity is the area dedicated to René Gruau, a worldfamous graphic artist of the twentieth century.

The Arch of Augustus



Even somebody who has never visited Rimini may be familiar with the Arch of Augustus since it is often seen in books on the history of art, or in films and TV programmes. What can be said about it? Well, of all the surviving ancient Roman triumphal arches it is the oldest, dating from 27 B.C. It is 17 metres high, built in Istrian stone and erected here in Rimini by express wish of Emperor Augustus. In 1935 it was decided to demolish the buildings around it to give the construction a fitting setting as the city's Triumphal Arch. It would be a real shame to view it only from a car window while driving past. It is much better to approach the monument on foot in order to appreciate it from close up and to experience the emotions called forth by the divinities represented on the oval ornaments: Jupiter and Apollo facing away from the city and Neptune and Rome facing inwards. They represent the greatness of Rome and Augustus' power. The battlements on top were added in mediaeval times, around the X century.

The Roman Amphitheatre

Only the ruins of the Amphitheatre (II century A.D.) on the seaward side of the city are visible today. It could accommodate over 12.000 spectators. The Amphitheatre was only discovered in 1800 because a convent and other buildings had been erected on the site. You can obtain information about a guided tour at the City Museum.



The Malatesta Temple



In Via IV Novembre. A passionate love story is at the origin of the Malatesta Temple (1450), a masterpiece of the Italian Renaissance. It was a love affair between Sigismondo and a young woman, Isotta Degli Atti, who first became mistress and later his third and last wife. Sigismondo had the building work carried out (first by altering and then demolishing an existing Franciscan church) with the idea that it should become a mausoleum for himself and Isotta. With its magnificent white marble façade, designed by Leon Battista Alberti, a giant in the history of architecture, the Malatesta Temple contains a

series of side chapels housing various treasures: the Crucifix by Giotto, a fresco by Piero della Francesca and a bas-relief of angels blowing their trumpets on a blue background. The peculiarity of the Malatesta Temple is that, although it was erected in a period when Renaissance philosophy was at its height, glory is not given to God alone, as was the custom, but also to a man, in the person of Sigismondo, a man who later fell into disgrace, with the result that his dream, this project, was never finished. It is, however, a splendid unfinished work.

WHAT TO DO IN YOUR LEISURE TIME

Beaches



Rimini has some 15km of beach making it the largest beach resort in Europe. When I was there in mid-May I nearly had it all to myself as the season hadn't kicked in then (there was quite a stiff breeze off the sea). Altogether there are 227 bathing establishments offering 40,000 sun umbrellas which are everywhere you look.

Life on the beach

There are two hundred and fifty beach establishments, all well cared for and regularly renovated. The philosophy is that life on the beach goes on day and night. It begins at dawn when people go walking along the water's edge and finishes well into the night after dinner, barefoot on the sand. The idea is that you can do anything on the beach, yoga lessons, needlework courses, sandcastle competitions and piadina making.

Beach establishments organize many kinds of events for adults and children. To put it briefly: the emphasis is on enjoyment.



Guaranteed water quality



The seawater quality in Rimini is probably under tighter control than anywhere else in Europe. For many years the Emilia Romagna region has monitored and controlled our "marine resource". Every week a report on the state of the sea is issued (www.arpa.emr.it/daphne).

Every year since 2000 Rimini has been awarded the Blue Flag. This important award is conferred by the FEE (www.feeitalia.org). It takes into consideration only the quality of the water, but also cleanliness, facilities for the disabled, green areas and the quality of life in general.

Boat trips



Not only are there excursions on land, from Rimini there are also boat trips to be enjoyed. Motorized vessels leave the port at all hours of the day. There are various companies operating on different routes. You can spend an enjoyable day or evening discovering other places along the coast or platforms for the extraction of methane gas or visiting areas of the sea where mussels are farmed. On board, passengers are offered a snack or a dinner of "pesce azzurro" (fish, mostly sardines, anchovies and mackerel).

Music is always provided and sometimes dancing.

If you wish you can choose "a day out with the fishermen" leaving at dawn and trying your hand at deep sea fishing (for information IAT tel. 0541.56902).

Healthy living on the beach

You will not need to hire a personal trainer to take courses in various types of light and natural fitness routines. From June to August many beach establishments offer lessons in yoga, bio gymnastics, bio-energetica, tai chi ch'uan, mandala on the beach, belly dancing, breathing techniques and new energy. To join a group it is only necessary to be in the chosen place at the beginning of the lesson (for information Turisport tel. 0541.787643).



The best thing of all is that the sports activities (together with the various facilities:

warm showers, changing rooms, books and newspapers to read, games, entertainment, childcare) on the beach are all free. Everything is included in the daily price of an umbrella and sun lounger.

These prices compare very favourably with the rest of Italy (according to various consumer associations). One advantage for tourists is that there is no entrance fee to go onto the beach. You can enter for free and only if you decide to stop in a particular place do you have to ask the bathing attendant for a sun lounger. In Rimini there are also free beaches with toilets and life guards: the area near Piazzale Boscovich; the area at San Giuliano in front of the harbour; the area in Marebello between beach areas 105 - 106 and 107 - 108; the area in Miramare between beach areas 139 and 140, and from 150 up to the Thalassotherapy Centre and then from the area reserved for the Air force to the boundary with Riccione; the area in Torre Pedrera around the end of Via Tolemaide.

NIGHTLIFE

Street bars



You can take a stroll about 6 o'clock in the evening to have an aperitif along with the first little groups. From then onwards there is a constant stream of customers until late at night. Not everyone knows that street bars were born on the Riviera. It happened that large numbers of young people would come together to chat and have a drink outside the bar, on the pavement.

The idea caught on. The street bar became something between a pub and a disco, a popular formula because it is a place where it is easy to make new friends, in fact many people go there to do just that. There is always a DJ to provide good music, but it never gets too loud.

You can go there for a quick drink and if you get bored in one place you can continue on to another. In Rimini the most well-known street bars are in Marina Centro along Viale Vespucci or along the stretch of promenade leading to the port.

The old fish market

Wine cellars, pubs, little restaurants, tables outside and candlelight - the area around the Old Fish Market, in the heart of the historic centre of town, could be called the Montmartre of Rimini. It's where the local young people meet to enjoy the nightlife which enlivens its little mediaeval squares and romantic alleys.

They dine under the stars in an age-old square or have a drink chatting under a white colonnade. All of this goes on in the Old Fish Market (adjacent to Piazza Cavour) with its eighteenth century marble counters. Many trends were started here and then exported to the rest of Italy: finger food, mini-portions in small glasses or on decorated spoons. If you want to go to a place where you can meet people and make friends, then the Old Fish Market is the right place to go all year round. It immediately became fashionable after faculties of the University of Bologna were established in Rimini, which brought about 6000 students from all over Italy to Rimini (www.polorimini.unibo.it).

An interesting fact is that in the picturesque Piazzetta Gregorio da Rimini there is the oldest book shop in town: the Libreria Riminese (in summer open also in the evening) and at no. 4 is the house where Giovanni Pascoli (1855) lived when he was at grammar school.



Places for ballroom dancing



There must be a reason why "Romagna Mia" is one of the most popular Italian songs ever played! Even the Polish Pope, John Paul II used to whistle it. So it just shows that the passion for ballroom dancing is really quite widespread and if you think that it is a pastime for the over forties, think again. In recent years more and more young people have been flocking to ballroom dancing schools on the Riviera and it is no longer a novelty to find that this kind of dancing is coming back into fashion with a vengeance. "With respect to other kinds of dancing, there is more physical contact and you can talk to your partner," say aficionados. Anyway, you will have a nice evening out pirouetting to waltzes, polkas and mazurkas. In most places, if you arrive a bit early, you will generally find some one willing to teach you. You can ask for a list of these dance halls (to find the most convenient address) from any IAT (Tourist Information Office).

Blue Line

The most intelligent way of travelling around to enjoy the nightlife is on the Blue Line, the bus that takes dance addicts right to the door of the Riviera discos just like a private chauffeur. Indeed, the Blue Line is the most famous night transportation in Italy. Every night from about ten o'clock to six o'clock in the morning there are various routes covered by these multicoloured buses from the terminus in Piazzale Kennedy to all destinations of Rimini nightlife.



Tirelessly they cover the territory up to 60 km from the sea into the hills around Riccione, Misano and Cattolica. Today we hear a lot about road safety, young people driving under the influence of drink and licences being withdrawn, however, Rimini had already found an alternative to this need for mobility over 20 years ago! The first Blue Line bus went into operation in 1986 and since then the service has been used by a total of 5 million passengers over the years. These gaily-coloured buses with loudspeakers blaring pop music are usually loaded with young and very young people between the ages of 15 and 26. Sometimes on board there is a DJ deck or cappuccinos and pastries on offer. Nobody would hazard a guess as to how many lives or just how many licences have been saved in this way. The service is only operative in the summer except for some special occasions such as long weekends or New Year's Eve (www.bluelinebus.com).

Discotheques



Within an area of just a few kilometres you will find some of the most exciting discotheques in Europe. After a short period of waning popularity, disco clubs are now making a very definite comeback. The latest development is to go there not just after midnight. The majority of discos have been transformed into fascinating places where you can have dinner in a refined atmosphere, maybe overlooking the city lights and the surrounding hills as at the famous

Paradiso Club. Or, perhaps you would prefer to gaze at the moonlight reflecting on the waves during a meal at Rock Island, a club built on stilts over the sea at the end of Rimini wharf. There are also lounge clubs with quiet areas where you can talk. To put it briefly, there is such an abundance of choice in Rimini by night (in the municipal area alone there are 23 discotheques, 52 pubs, around 800 bars and restaurants open in the evening) that everyone can find a suitable venue with the kind of company he or she prefers at any particular moment: from house music to Caribbean rhythms, from live music to techno, from a revival of the 70s, 80s (the current trend is a 90s revival) to... baby dance! Most of the more spectacular discos are concentrated on the high ground around town, perched on top of hills not far from each other: *Paradiso, Pascià, Prince, Byblos, Villa delle Rose, Cocoricò, Echoes...* just to mention some of them. Yes, food. Where shall we go out for dinner? There are over 800.