

a balcony. It is the best work by the architect and goldsmith Nicolò Lionello, born in Udine around 1400. The entire ground floor consists of an open portico raised above steps. The statue of the *Madonna and Child* on one corner is attributed to the important Venetian sculptor Bartolomeo Bon (1448). On the opposite corner is a statue of *Justice*.

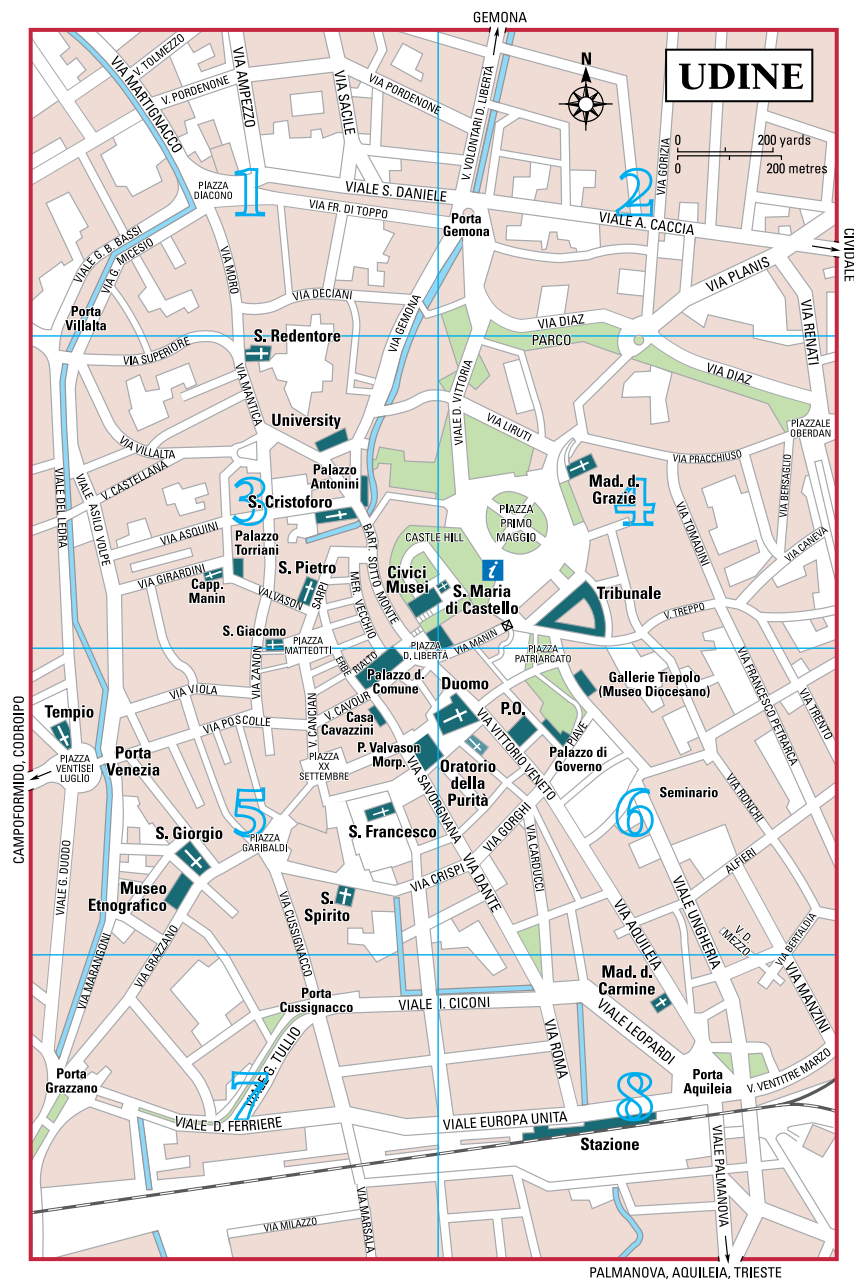
The **Porticato di San Giovanni**, at the back of the raised terrace opposite the Palazzo del Comune, has a delicate Ionic arcade dating from 1533 on either side of a deep archway in front of a domed chapel (which now serves as a war memorial). The decorative clock tower was designed by Giovanni da Udine (*see below*) around the same time. The *mori* which strike the hours on the bell (reminiscent of those in Piazza San Marco in Venice) were replaced in the 19th century. Giovanni da Udine was also involved in the design of the fountain here.

### GIOVANNI DA UDINE

The painter Giovanni (1489–1561), born in Udine, showed an aptitude for drawing at an early age. He received his early training from a local Udinese master before moving to Venice to study under Giorgione, and afterwards to Rome, where he was the pupil of Raphael. It was then that his career took off and the debt he owes to Raphael is enormous, not only in terms of artistic inspiration, but also because it was Raphael who got him the jobs and commissions he needed, and helped him make his name. Giovanni was in Rome in the heady days of the first two decades of the 16th century, just as the great discoveries of the Baths of Titus and the Domus Aurea of Nero were made. Seeing the ancient Roman frescoes preserved in these hitherto undiscovered ruins changed everything for him: he stopped being merely a mediocre version of Raphael and began a great career as a decorative painter. He is best known for his *grottesche*, reworkings of the frescoes he saw in the Roman digs—swarms of delicate figures, mythical people and animals, garlands of rich vegetation, all wound colourfully into a cursive decorative design, usually against a plain white ground. They were called *grottesche* (plural of *grottesca*) because they came from *grotte*, or underground vaults, the form in which the Roman remains survived. For the last two decades of his life Giovanni returned to his native city, where he worked mostly as an architect.

At the front of the raised terrace are two tall **columns**, one with a statue of *Justice* (1614) and the other with the Lion of St Mark (1539), symbols of the city's civic values and allegiance to Venice. The latter column was toppled by the French during the Napoleonic era but put back in the late 19th century.

Between the columns are two **statues of colossal giants**, who seem very pleased with themselves. They were meant to represent Hercules and Cacus but they are always known to the Udinese as 'Floean' and 'Venturin'. The fig leaves are much later additions, appended in the 20th century.



## CIVIDALE DEL FRIULI

This quiet little town of cobbled streets (*map B, B2*), lined with houses with overhanging eaves, is delightfully well preserved and extremely interesting. The old town walls still partly survive on two sides of the gorge of the Natisone, a deep river of aquamarine water straddled by the old town. The river once marked the meeting-point of Venetic and Celtic cultures. In fact, the name of the Friuli is derived from the Roman name of the settlement here, *Forum Julii* (it was probably founded by Julius Caesar). Numerous treasures from the period when it was the first Lombard duchy in Italy are preserved in its two excellent museums, and the Tempietto Longobardo is one of the most venerable chapels in all Italy. Despite the fact that Cividale is a very small place, it is sometimes surprisingly difficult to get one's bearings.

### HISTORY OF CIVIDALE

Cividale became a *municipium* in the Augustan age. It was an episcopal seat in the 5th century and an important fortress under the Lombards. In the 8th century its name was changed to *Civitas Austriae* and it became the seat of the Patriarch of Aquileia, a position it retained until 1031. From the 16th century onwards it was subject to the Venetian Republic. It was damaged by aerial bombardment in the First World War and badly shaken by earthquake in 1976. Today it is a tranquil small town of some 12,000 inhabitants.

## PIAZZA DIACONO & CORSO MAZZINI

In the centre of the old town is the spacious, cobbled **Piazza Paolo Diacono**, once the main market square of Cividale. It is named after Paul the Deacon (c. 723–799), author of the *Historia Langobardorum*, the history of the Lombards. The piazza has several caf  s including the attractive Caff   Longobardo, with reliefs and a double loggia on its fa  ade and with tables outside and rooms upstairs. Another house here is traditionally taken to stand on the site of the birthplace of Paul the Deacon. The central fountain is surmounted by an 18th-century statue of Diana, brought here from the Villa Manin in Passariano (*see p. 31*).

The main street of the historic centre of Cividale is **Corso Mazzini**, which follows the line of the Roman *cardo*. It leads south out of Piazza Diacono past the Caff   del Corso, which is lively in the early evenings with people drinking spritz and eating chunks of *frittata* (thick omelette) stuffed with *sclopit* (*see Local Specialities, p. 41*)



Detail of the frescoes on Palazzo Levrini-Stringher.

On the left at no. 24 (corner of Via Cavour) is **Palazzo Levrini-Stringher**, with an arcaded porch and remains of early 16th-century frescoes on the fa  ade attributed to the Venetian artist Marco Bello. The subjects are a mixture of sacred and profane, with *Venus and the Three Graces* facing Via Cavour and a *Madonna and Child* and figures of saints on the Corso Mazzini side. The chemist's shop on the ground floor has a charming little 19th-century room.

## PIAZZA DEL DUOMO

Corso Mazzini ends in Piazza del Duomo, on the site of the ancient Roman forum, with the 16th-century **Palazzo de Nordis** (its fa  ade decorated with masques), home to the Galleria Famiglia di Martiis ([palazzodenordis.it/galleria-de-martiis](http://palazzodenordis.it/galleria-de-martiis)) with a collection of modern and contemporary works including two pastels by Toulouse-Lautrec, Italian Novecento works by Virgilio Guidi and Mario Sironi, and an eclectic collection of international artists including Victor Vasarely, Karel Appel and Graham Sutherland, as well as Afro (Afro Basaldella, 1912–76, born in Udine). Between Palazzo de Nordis and the duomo is an arcaded palace which is the seat of the Museo Archeologico (*described below*). Facing the duomo is the 14th-century brick **Palazzo Comunale**, with the pointed arches and mullioned windows typical of Gothic public buildings. It sports a defaced Venetian Lion on its fa  ade and a statue of Julius Caesar stands outside it.

### AURISINA, SISTIANA AND DUINO

At Aurisina (*map B, C3*), between the Adriatic coast and the highway north of Miramare, you will find the **Cimitero Austro-Ungarico**, a beautifully kept graveyard with the headstones of slightly under two thousand soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army, who perished between here and Monfalcone during WWI. At the little port of **Sistiana**, the Roman *Sextilianum*, with a harbour for private boats and places to eat on the shore, is the entrance to the **Falesie di Duino Nature Reserve**, through which the *Sentiero Rilke* walking trail leads in c. 30mins to **Duino** itself, a fishing village with dramatic karstic cliffs and a ruined Castello Vecchio. The imposing Castello Nuovo, on a rocky promontory above the sea, was built in the 15th century on the remains of a Roman tower (which has been partly reconstructed). The poet Rainer Maria Rilke stayed here as a guest of Marie von Thurn und Taxis in 1910–14, and wrote his famous *Duineser Elegien* or *Duino Elegies*, a series of ten powerful, mystical poems, published in 1923. In a letter Rilke describes the castle as being 'piled up against the sea like a bastion of human existence, staring out through its many windows at the vast expanse of water'. Since 1983 part of the castle has been occupied by the United World College of the Adriatic, one of 18 international schools preparing students between the ages of 16 and 19 for the IB Diploma. The United World Colleges were founded in 1962 with the aim of 'making education a force for peace and sustainability'. The *Sentiero Rilke* (Rilke Trail) traces the poet's favourite walks along the rocky coast.

#### Rilke in Duino

Which of the angelic hosts would hear me  
if I cried aloud? Besides, if one were suddenly  
To take me to its bosom, I would perish  
From its greater strength, as is ordained. For what is beauty but  
The beginnings of a beast? To which we acquiesce, in wonder  
that it spurns its power to destroy us.  
And every angel is a beast.

Duino Elegy I (Tr. A.B.)

In the karstic hills above Duino is the open-air **Museo all'Aperto del Monte Ermada**, where you can see the emplacements of the Austro-Hungarian defensive line, constructed here following the sixth Battle of the Isonzo in 1916, when Italian victory expelled Austria from Monfalcone and forced her troops to regroup here. Limestone caves used by the soldiers as places of refuge are part of the experience.

Further north, opposite Duino's cemetery, is the **Grotta del Mitreo** (*open on Sat*), a cave in the hillside which under the Romans became a centre for the worship of Mithras. A short way further along the main highway, the **mouth of the River Timavo** emerges from an underground course of over 38km: the six springs have been sacred since Roman times and the present church of San Giovanni in Tuba is thought to stand on the foundations of an ancient shrine.

## MUGGIA

Muggia, across the bay south of Trieste (*map B, C4*), is an authentic little fishing port, the only Istrian town that has remained within the Italian border. For centuries a faithful ally of the Venetian Republic, it retains a remarkably Venetian atmosphere (and the streets are called *calli*). The harbour, with its fishing boats, is also used by yachts, and there are several simple fish restaurants here. The 14th-century castle rises above it. Near the inner basin (or *mandracchio*) is the main piazza with the **duomo**, a 13th-century foundation with a 15th-century Venetian Gothic three-lobed façade clad in white stone. Its large rose window bears a central roundel of the *Madonna and Child*. Inside there is a bronze Crucifix by the local sculptor Ugo Carrà. The Town Hall, with a huge Venetian Lion, as also on the piazza, as is the Palazzo dei Rettori (rebuilt after a fire in 1933), once a palace of the patriarchs of Aquileia, who controlled the town in the 10th century. An archway opposite the Town Hall leads into the heart of the old town, with its narrow streets. There is a particularly pretty Venetian Gothic palace at Calle Oberdan 25. Also in Calle Oberdan, at no. 14, is the **Archaeological Museum** (*at the time of writing open on Sat*), with finds from Muggia and the wider region. Of particular interest is the material from the Castellieri di Elleri and Santa Barbara necropolis. A representative collection of works by the Muggia-born sculptor Ugo Carrà (1908–2004) is held at the **Museo d'Arte Moderna** at Via Roma 9.

View of the Trieste shipyard, seen from the Muggia ferry. The port of Trieste handles tens of millions of tonnes of cargo a year.



