

Parma: Italian Capital of Culture 2020.

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Parma is the **Italian Capital of Culture 2020**. After the buzz around Matera designation as European Culture Capital last year, another one of Italy's most overlooked art cities will be able to display its cultural riches to the world thanks to this prestigious honour. Art exhibitions, concerts, and conventions will take place over the whole year so that visitors will be able to experience everything that Parma's rich history and culture have to offer.

The *Manifesto* explaining the philosophy of this event very eloquently states what visitors are going to find: a culture that beats (the) time. An eclectic cultural heritage spanning from the city's Roman roots to the present day and looking to the future, embracing the Renaissance and Baroque eras while remembering its popular tradition and Verdi's operas. Parma is many cities in one to discover at your own pace unbothered by modern life's maddening rush. It aims at combining memory and innovation through the many events of this year, while not losing sight of its people.

The **Parma 2020** general programme is extraordinarily rich. Four large sub-programmes, each one deeply interwoven with the others, are the backbone of the city's cultural offering. Leaving aside from the main one centred on Parma itself, the one called "The energy of the territory" involves the whole Parma province in over 150 events, while the "Emilia 2020" programme moves the spotlight over the neighbouring provinces of Piacenza and Reggio Emilia. The last one is exclusively dedicated to the dissemination and sharing of academic knowledge involving the University of Parma, one of the oldest universities in the world.

One of the first stops for tourists arriving in Parma must be the Palazzo della Pilotta, built by the ruling Farnese family in the 16th century. The complex houses the National Archaeological Museum, the Museo Bodoniano, the Biblioteca Palatina, the Teatro Farnese, and the Galleria Nazionale di Parma. It will be hosting four art exhibitions during the year, retracing the history of the city through its art. More science-inclined art lovers should visit the contemporary art gallery Galleria Centro Steccata and its *Art and Science - From Parmigianino's alchemy to Duchamp and beyond* display. Parma, as told by Stendhal, will be the focus of the exhibition titled *Charterhouse of Parma. The city dreamed by Stendhal interpreted by Carlo Mattioli*. Better suited to those looking for a thought-provoking reflexion on how media influenced our perception of time, there is the *Time machine. Visual experimentation with time* exposition. *Man's signs* is dedicated to Parma native Franco Maria Ricci, a great interpreter of the Italian style and designer of the nearby Labirinto della Masone, one of the world's largest labyrinths. There the nature of labyrinths will be explored through the words and works of Umberto Eco and Jorge Luis Borges.

Music and opera are a huge part of Parma's history. The relationship between Opera and the birth of the Italian national identity will be the main subject of the "Opera!" display. However, the beating

heart of the musical programme will be the **Teatro Regio**, and its season of symphonies and operas. The Arturo Paganini Philharmonic, which played during the inauguration, will play throughout the year regularly, while the **Festival Arturo Toscanini** will celebrate the work of the conductor born in Parma. Finally, various events, the chief one being **Cibus**, will be focused on Parma's world-famous food products.

During the inauguration, President **Sergio Mattarella** recalled the significance of culture and its role in helping us understand the present and build the future. Ending the speech he emphasised that "Parma has, as Capital of Culture, the great opportunity to strengthen and promote its roots, both to Italian visitors and to European ones that are also deeply involved in it".

Sources: Sky TG24, Parma 2020