

You can start your tour of the historical city centre from the Arezzo railway station. In the gardens just opposite the station main entrance you will find a modern copy of the Etruscan bronze *Chimera* – a symbol of the city and memento of its origins – which was discovered during the urban renovations of the 16th century.



Contemporary buildings line both sides of rectilinear *Via Guido Monaco*; however, even there you will probably notice monuments from the 19th century, like the *Statue of Guido Monaco* (1882), the inventor of the modern musical notation system, in the homonymous square, and, further up on the left, the *Petrarca Theatre* (1833).

Rectangular *Piazza San Francesco* is the geographical centre of the city, with the *Statue of Vittorio Fossombroni* (1863), a statesman and intellectual who lived from 1754 to 1844. The *Church of San Francesco* is one of the most important landmarks of the city, and dates back to 1290. Its simple, unfinished brick façade is characterized by a central rose-window displaying *Honorius III approving the Regula of Saint Francis* (1524). The church is famous for being a treasure trove of frescoes painted in its single Gothic nave (e.g., on the right side, the noteworthy *Annunciation* by Spinello Aretino, from the second half of the 14th century) and in its lateral chapels (e.g., the Renaissance *Annunciation* by Luca Signorelli in the Tarlati Chapel). In the presbytery, the fresco cycle named *The History of the True Cross* (1452-1466) by Piero della Francesca is without any doubt the most important work of art of the city, and is well known at both national and international level.



Via Cavour leads to *Corso Italia*, one of the most representative roads of medieval Arezzo with important building like *Palazzo de'Bacci* and *Palazzo Altucci*. On the right side, the *Pieve di Santa Maria* is the most important Romanesque church of the city. Built in the 11th century and later modified by Giorgio Vasari in the 16th century, the church is flanked by its iconic bell tower (1330), adorned with

forty double-arched windows. Of great interest are the allegoric bas-reliefs on the architrave of the central portal (13th century) showing the twelve months of the year. The interior has three naves divided by columns, an elevated presbytery and a crypt; its severe atmosphere is brightened by eighteen lateral double-arched windows. The most noticeable art pieces contained in the church are the paintings by Pietro Lorenzetti (1320) above the high altar.



To see the magnificent Romanesque apse of the church, just proceed to *Piazza Grande* through *Via di Seteria*. The *Piazza* has an irregular shape and is surrounded by important buildings from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, including, next to the Pieve's apse, *Palazzo della Fraternita dei Laici*, with its harmonious mix of Gothic structures and Renaissance decorations and statues. Your attention will also be captured by the long façade of the *Palazzo delle Logge* designed by Giorgio Vasari (1573-1581). Today, its portico is crowded with restaurants and small shops.



If you walk under the portico down *Via Vasari*, you will end up in the last stretch of *Corso Italia*, where you can admire further examples of medieval architecture, such as *Palazzo Camaiani-Albergotti* and *Torre della Bigazza* (14th century). At the junction with *Via dei Pileati*, on the left stands *Palazzo Pretorio* (first half of the 14th century), which was conceived as home to the civic government and now hosts the city library. Its façade is covered with the coats of arms of the highest offices of Arezzo. Following *Via dei Pileati*, and then turning left on *Via dell'Orto*, you will reach another essential cultural institution of the city, the *Accademia Petrarca*, housed in the poet's birthplace. The collection of books, coins and paintings of the *Accademia* is open to visitors.



Turning back to *Via dei Pileati*, you cannot help noticing a huge green area on the right. It is the *Passeggio del Prato*, with the *Monumento al Petrarca* (1928) and the *Medici Fortress*. From these pentagonal defensive structures, recently restored to the form conceived by Antonio da San Gallo il Giovane (1538-1560), you can enjoy a wonderful view of the city, the Arno valley and the Casentino.



In front of the park, the *Duomo* is finally in line of sight. The access is from the homonymous square, adorned with the *Statue of Ferdinando I* (1595), promoter of the reclamation of the Chiana valley. The Duomo is the result of different and overlapping historical layers, ranging from the 1277 to the early 20th century. The Gothic style of the façade, for example, is a late reinterpretation by Dante Viviani (1901-1914); similarly, the hexagonal bell tower dates back to 1857-1859. The austere and solemn interior is characterized by three high naves. The vaults of the central one are richly decorated with frescoes from the 16th and 17th centuries. The church contains a wide variety of art pieces, including the double-arched window near the *Ciuccio Tarlati Chapel*, on the right side of the building, whose glass was realized by Guillaume de Marcillat (*Cacciata dei profanatori dal Tempio*, 1520); the *Arca di San Donato*, a marmoreal urn in the presbytery with many bas-reliefs by various artists (1369); the fresco *San Girolamo penitente* by Bartolomeo della Gatta (1448-1502) in the second room of the sacristy; the fresco *La Maddalena* by Piero della Francesca on the left nave, near the sacristy; and the ceramics by Andrea della Robbia (1435-1525) in the *Madonna del Conforto Chapel*, a large space divided in three naves on the left side of the church.



Adjacent to *Piazza del Duomo* is *Piazza della Libertà* with *Palazzo dei Priori*, which hosts the present administration of the city. The crenellated palace was built in 1333; its façade has two rows of windows and is interrupted by a mighty quadrangular tower (1337). Moving toward the right side of the building, you will enter *Via Ricasoli*; the short road soon widens into *Piazza di Murello*; at the intersection, on the right side, stands *Palazzo Albergotti* (1793), and, on the left side, the *deconsecrated church of San Sebastiano* (14th century). The square is characterized by the *statue* (1822) of *Ferdinando III di Lorena* (1769-1824), another promoter of the reclamation of the Chiana valley. Moreover, it is home to the *Episcopal Seminary* of the city. Turning right onto *Via di Sasso Verde*, you will reach *Piazza Fossombroni*, the end-point of our tour of Arezzo. The small *church of San Domenico*, designed by Nicola Pisano and built in 1275, hides its façade behind the linden of the square. What makes the church one of the most important landmarks of Arezzo is the crucifix by Cimabue (1265), in the presbytery, which is considered one of the major masterpieces of 13th-century art. Going back to the station, you can make a little detour to reach the *Museum of Casa Vasari*, a building bought by the artist in 1540 and painted with many frescoes.



This tour is just a small selection of the numerous places of interest around the city. Not far from the station, for example, you can visit the *Roman amphitheatre* (1st-2nd century) and the *Archaeological Museum*. A full list of the city attractions can be found at <https://www.visitarezzo.com/en>.

