A vibrant city

Five moments when Brescia changes pace

BRESCIA

Your (kind of) tourist guide



Index

A whole city of market stalls	4
The legendary event on the road	10
The opera steps out of the theatre	18
Follow the music. Then let yourself go	22
The Brescia aglow	28

Whether you're stopping off for a quick visit or staying in the city for a few days, you can explore Brescia by strolling through its streets and squares while admiring its monuments.

But there is another way to get to know the city: by returning, season after season, and letting yourself be guided by the rhythm of local life. Because the city takes on a different character at every time of year. The sights, sounds and smells, the food... They all change. And as they change, so too do the opportunities to experience it, revealing a different side to Brescia each time, yet one that remains true to itself.

In winter, in February, the city centre is filled with market stalls, fragrant foods and the sound of voices at the San Faustino Fair.

Between late spring and early summer, the roar of engines brings the city to life with the departure of the 1000 Miglia classic car race, and opera leaves the theatre to seek you out in the squares and under the arcades.

And then there is the summer, when the city's venues and squares are filled with the sound of Festa della Musica, a European celebration that Brescia has turned into one of the largest in Italy.

Finally, December arrives; as the cold sets in, the city twinkles with myriad lights, transforming the city centre into a huge open-air lounge decked out for the festive season.
In this short guide, we'll tell you about five times of the year when Brescia changes its sights, sounds and smells.

These are very different events. Some have long-standing roots, whilst others were established only a few years ago. Some invite you to wander without a specific destination in mind. One, however, has become a legendary on-the-road event.
All of them, without a doubt, will amaze you.

A whole city of market stalls

SAN FAUSTINO FAIR – FEBRUARY

1



You can hear it even before you see it. As you walk towards the city centre, all of a sudden, the buzz gets louder. Someone walks past you, holding a child by the hand. The air is filled with the scent of warm sugar, quickly followed by the aroma of roasted chestnuts and roast meat. It's the 15th of February. It's Saint Faustino's Day.



↑ **Every year on 15 February, the San Faustino and Giovita fair brings the centre of Brescia to life.**

Every year, the festival dedicated to the patron saints, Faustino and Giovita, winds its way through the heart of Brescia, from the Basilica dei Santi to the large squares in the city centre. Here, you simply have to go with the flow, slow down as you pass the market stalls, and accept that the shortest route is almost never the right one.

You can start from Via San Faustino and cross through the Carmine district to reach Largo Formentone and Piazza della Loggia. From here, the fair continues along Via X Giornate, Piazza Vittoria, Via Gramsci and Corso Zanardelli.

A long, lively procession of stalls, goods and people winds its way through the streets.



↑ **Bread and porchetta: a taste fit for a king but made for everyone to enjoy.**

Here you'll find clothes, toys, household goods and utensils you didn't even know you wanted – items that can solve problems you didn't even realise existed. You'll find stallholders chanting out their offers and customers haggling. Balloons trying to escape into the sky. Children who already have something but are already asking for more.

And then there's the food.

The **porchetta sandwich** didn't originate in Brescia, but the fair seems to have created a second home for it. You can tell by the queues, the crispy crust, and the paper that starts to get greasy even before you take your first bite. There is no pretence of elegance with this street food. You eat on the move, trying not to lose sight of your

friends and knowing that someone is sure to ask you to give them a bite.

The dessert most closely associated with the Brescia festival, however, is undoubtedly the ***tirapicio***.

Sugar, honey and treacle are mixed together using a hook. The confectioner rolls out the mixture, folds it over, and rolls it out again. The amber-coloured mass gradually becomes lighter in colour, transforming into shiny strands and finally into coiled sticks.

Just watching it being made is part of the experience. The procedure is repeated, precise and theatrical, whilst a small crowd gathers in front of the stall. Some people are waiting in the queue. Others claim they don't want to buy anything: they're usually the first to give in.



Persicata: little ingots of sweet peach.



The art of roasting chestnuts warms up autumn with bursts of flavour.

If you want to take home a flavour that's more typically Brescian, you can also look for ***Persicata***: peaches cooked with sugar until they reach a firm consistency, then cut into small pieces. It was created to preserve the scent of summer, when summer is long gone. And in February, this seems a particularly sensible idea. It seems that the poet Gabriele D'Annunzio was among its greatest admirers. Where can you find it? In the pastry shops.

Another great classic you simply cannot miss?

Roasted chestnuts, of course!

A bit of history, whilst you treat your taste buds.

According to tradition, the city's two patron saints, Faustino and Giovita, appeared on the walls of Brescia during the siege of 1438, repelling the attacks by the Visconti troops and protecting the city.

The story is also depicted in the frescoes by Giandomenico Tiepolo housed in the basilica dedicated, as the name suggests, to the two patron saints.

The San Faustino Fair is a delightful blend of the sacred, the sweet and the profane.

The legendary event on the road

MILLE MIGLIA – MAY

2

Classic cars parade along the roads of the Mille Miglia.

The roar echoes through the city, bouncing off the buildings, heralding the arrival of a long line of cars designed with the ingenuity of a bygone era, as they are about to pass through Brescia. It's time for the Mille Miglia.







↑ The Mille Miglia comes to town: classic cars weave between centuries-old buildings as Brescia turns red.

© Gleaming bodywork, racing numbers and a history spanning a century.

The route through the city and the format of the event vary from one edition to the next, so it's a good idea to check the official programme before you come. But some places have always featured in the race: Piazza Vittoria, the historic centre and the streets leading out of the city.

In particular, Piazza Vittoria seems to have been designed as the perfect showcase for gleaming cars, race numbers and drivers in sunglasses. The rationalist architecture creates a geometric and monumental setting. Amidst it all, the cars bring curves, colours, chrome and personal stories.

You don't need to be a motoring expert. You can fall in love with a car without knowing how many cylinders it has.

What matters most is what surrounds

The timeless interior of a Ferrari 750 Monza.



the racing cars – the stories from days gone by that they can tell us.

The first Mille Miglia set off from Brescia on 26 March 1927. The route ran to Rome and back to the starting point, covering a distance of around 1,600 kilometres, which inspired the name, based on the imperial system of measurement.

The idea had come about a few months earlier.

Brescia had hosted the first Italian Grand Prix in 1921, but the new permanent circuit was subsequently built in Monza. This was a bitter pill to swallow for a city that had played a decisive role in the birth of Italian motor racing.

So Aymo Maggi, Franco Mazzotti and Renzo Castagneto decided to take action. Together with the journalist Giovanni Canestrini, they came up with the idea for a completely new race: a long-distance event that would cross Italy and put Brescia back in the international spotlight.

In short, they could have simply limited themselves to protesting. They preferred to create a legend. There's something about this that says a lot about the spirit of Brescia.

The historic speed race was held until 1957. Today, the 1000 Miglia is a regularity race reserved for classic cars. The roar of the engines, however, has remained the same.

Imagine the morning of 1927: a light drizzle, crowds packed along the road, mechanics bent over bonnets and reporters ready to take notes. The flag is lowered. The first engine revs up and disappears into the fog.

Ⓓ A plaque dedicated to Franco Mazzotti, one of the founders of the Mille Miglia.

Ⓓ The legend of the 'Red Arrow' is preserved and passed down at the Museo Auto Storiche Brescia 1927–1957.

Almost a century later, that same start takes place every year.

To explore this history (which is a collection of many different stories), you can visit the **Museo Auto Storiche Brescia 1927–1957**, housed in the ancient monastery of Sant'Eufemia, to the east of the city centre. Cars, photographs, documents and reconstructions take visitors through the different eras of the competition, with the museum open year-round.

Viale Rebuffone, which runs alongside Viale Venezia, also has a special connection with the Mille Miglia: it was the starting point for the very first edition. Today, the race still sets off from there, heading towards Rome, following a different route each year.



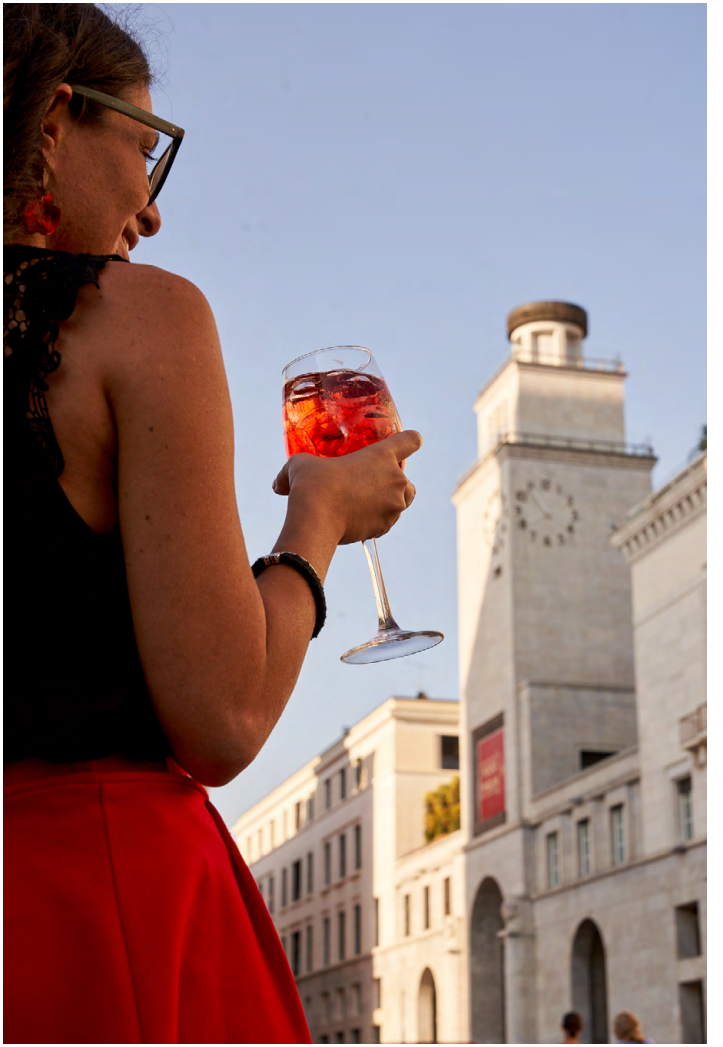


Ⓓ Sip a Pirlo, and let the roar of the engines fade into the distance...

Fancy rounding off the day with another great classic? Well then, order a *Pirlo*!

Still white wine, bitters, soda water, ice and the essential lemon zest create the quintessential Brescian aperitif. The soda water fizzes briefly as it is poured into the glass. The roar of the engines grows a little fainter.

They have one thing in common: the colour red! The red of the bitters that brings the aperitif to life and the classic red of the legendary racing cars.



The opera steps out of the theatre

OPERA FESTIVAL – JUNE

3

It's usually you who goes into the theatre. During the Festa dell'Opera, when spring in Brescia gives way to summer, it's the opposite: the music comes out of the theatre to find you. You might come across a soprano under a portico, a choir in a church, a quartet in a courtyard, or stumble upon a famous aria whilst crossing a square. For a day, Brescia becomes a stage spread across the city, and opera loses all sense of distance. You don't need to know the libretto. You don't need to put on a serious face. All you have to do is listen.



↑ Opera steps out of the theatre and into the city.

The route naturally begins at the city's cradle of opera, the **Teatro Grande** on Corso Zanardelli, and then winds its way through the old city centre. In Brescia, the distances are short – perfect for pleasant walks.

From the Teatro Grande, for example, you can easily reach Piazza della Loggia, Piazza Paolo VI, the Santa Giulia complex, the Capitolium, churches, palaces and courtyards – all of which are part of the festival. Choose a few events and leave room for chance encounters.

The Opera Festival constantly plays on contrasts.

A solemn melody might drift across a square full of passers-by. A performer in full costume might sing just steps away from the tables at a café. A piece originally written for a grand theatre might resonate with someone who has never seen a full-length opera.

In this way, opera becomes more accessible, yet without compromising its timeless quality.



The ancient Roman Theatre still provides a stage for shows and performances.



The Opera Festival spills out into the courtyards, beneath porticoes and throughout the city.

© AGENZIA NEWREPORTER



A toast with Franciacorta wine at the astronomical clock, before the curtain rises.

Even restaurants, bars and patisseries can become part of the show with menu items inspired by the composers, arias and characters. Dishes, desserts and cocktails vary from one edition to the next, so don't look for one thing in particular: be open to surprises.

A dessert might be named after a hero or heroine. A cocktail can translate a duet into flavours. A dish can be a riot of colours and dramatic compositions.

For the toast?

There's nothing better than **a glass of Franciacorta**, with its bubbles rising swiftly and elegantly to the surface.

Curtain! A round of applause!

Follow the music. Then let yourself go

MUSIC FESTIVAL – JUNE

4

Music flows through the streets and transforms the city.

One morning in late June, the city wakes up to this: a speaker leaning against a wall, cables criss-crossing the pavement, and musicians having their first rehearsals. A microphone crackles; the sound engineer gestures for silence. It's the moment when an ordinary square becomes a stage. The city is getting ready for it all to begin.



The **Festa della Musica** is about to fill the streets of Brescia's city centre with a festive atmosphere.

For one day, the city becomes one huge open-air concert. Stages, designated areas for street performers, courtyards, libraries, bars, parks and cultural spaces host both professional and amateur musicians. Rock, jazz, pop, rap, electronic music, folk, choirs, orchestras and sounds from much further afield all coexist just a few streets away.

There's no single set route.

You can set off on foot from Corso Zanardelli and make your way to the iconic Piazza della Loggia, then on to Piazza Paolo VI, with the Old Cathedral and the New Cathedral, and then on to Piazza del Foro, with its Roman ruins, and finally to the lively Carmine district.

Alternatively, you can cycle to the stages in the different areas of the city, taking care in pedestrian areas and around crowds.





©Music knows no boundaries: a concert beneath the arcades of Palazzo della Loggia.

⊙ Within Brescia's historic walls, a DJ performs a soundcheck.

The official map helps you find your way... although it's often your instinct that charts the best route!

Follow a bass line bouncing off the 18th-century façades. Stop to listen to a choir, even though it wasn't on the programme. Cross a square whilst a band is doing a soundcheck. Change direction because you hear a voice coming from a little side street.

Music reshapes the landscape.

A portico provides shelter from the sun and amplifies the sound, just like a speaker. A narrow street blends the concert in front of you with the one just starting round the corner. As evening falls, the Castle can be transformed into a spectacle of light and rhythm: ancient walls, electronic basslines and a crowd dancing on Cidneo Hill.

The past remains in its place, marvellous and monumental.

It is the present that swirls around it, turning up the volume.

The **Carmine district** is the ideal place in which to get lost. The neighbourhood is full of streets, small squares, bars, shops and cultural venues. Its layers of history coexist with different communities, languages and customs. During the festival, this openness to new influences becomes immediately visible and audible.

You can move from a singer-songwriter to a percussion group, from an acoustic concert to a DJ set. Just a short distance and everything changes.

⊙ **A jazz band performing in the heart of the historic centre.**

⊙ **There is always time for a little refreshment at the panoramic viewpoint of Brescia Castle.**





© WE LOVE CASTELLO



↑ **When music takes over the city, even the walls seem to play.**

At some point, of course, you start to feel hungry.

Bread with *salamina* (pane e salamina) is perfect for days like this.

To go with it, you can choose a **craft beer** brewed in the Brescia area. In recent years, independent breweries have sprung up in the city and the surrounding province, producing a wide variety of styles: light, easy-drinking beers, as well as hoppier, darker, sour varieties or beers made using locally-sourced ingredients.

The Brescia aglow

CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY – DECEMBER

5

A festive evening among the decorated streets of the city centre.

In December, the centre of Brescia takes on a new glow. It's almost Christmas and the city has already donned its finest. Wrap up warm and treat yourself to a long stroll once the sun has set. Watch as the festive lights play across the contours of the historical façades, the shop windows in the pedestrianised streets, the restaurants and bars, and the remains of ancient civilisations that seem to want to join in the present-day celebrations. Wander through the squares, which become rooms without ceilings: starting with the city's 'living room', Piazza della Loggia.





Markets, lights and squares: Christmas sparkles through the streets of Brescia.

Markets, installations, shows and events vary from year to year. Before you set off, you can check the city's Christmas programme. Or you can just go with the flow, one step at a time, street by street, district by district.

Brescia is a city where people are accustomed to work, schedules and things to do. During the Christmas period, it allows itself a slower pace. People step out of the shops, stop to chat, and look up at the lights. Some are looking for a present. Some have already completed their mission and are now simply enjoying a stroll.

To keep warm, you can hold a cup of hot chocolate in your hands whilst sitting in one of the cafés in the city centre.

Or you might opt for some mulled wine, which tempts you to stay out for a little while longer.

Christmas is also the season for *Bossolà*.

This is Brescia's traditional Christmas cake: light and fluffy, rich in butter and vanilla, and easily recognisable by its circular shape. It requires careful preparation and several batches of dough: even the bakers know that good things can't be rushed. Its name has been linked to the image of the *bés 'mbesolàt*, the

A glass of mulled wine, with its heady aroma, to warm you up in winter.



Snow blankets the vineyards and paints the landscape white.



© CONSORZIO FRANCIACORTA

coiled snake. A circular shape associated with continuity, rebirth and good fortune. The *Bossolà* thus brings to the table something even older than Christmas decorations.

It doesn't need much fanfare.

Once it's cut, the amazing smell does the rest!

You can enjoy it for breakfast, after lunch or during a break in the city centre. Break off a chunk and look outside. Corso Zanardelli sparkles; Piazza della Loggia seems to hold the light, whilst the cold remains just beyond the window.

Merry Christmas!

Brescia's Bossolà is as soft as a cloud, scented with vanilla and lemon zest.



Ma tu guarda,
Brescia to listen to!

A podcast that takes you on a journey of discovery of the many cities within the city, revealing what's hidden in plain sight.

A City in Perfect Harmony



For one day, Brescia moves to a different beat: its squares become stages, music spills through its narrow streets and the entire city turns into one extraordinary instrument.

In this episode of Ma tu guarda, Brescia da ascoltare!, we experience the Festa della Musica (Music Day) from the first soundcheck to the final note, through concerts, dancing and aperitifs.

Scan the QR code and listen to the episodes. Click 'follow' to make sure you don't miss a single episode – you'll get a notification every time a new one is released.

INFOPOINT

Via Trieste 1 / Piazza Paolo VI
Tel. +39 030 3061266
Monday – Friday 9 am – 7 pm
Saturday – Sunday 9 am – 5 pm

Piazzale Stazione
Tel. +39 030 3061240
Monday – Friday 9 am – 7 pm
Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Piazza del Foro
Tel. +39 030 3749916
Monday – Sunday 10 am – 6 pm

Ask for information at:
info@brescia.eu
Whatsapp +39 342 6058111

Your guide to the city:
www.brescia.eu

Get the complete list of InfoPoint in Brescia and its surrounding area at:
infopoint.brescia@provincia.brescia.it

Information about Brescia and its surrounding area:
www.visitbrescia.it

visit brescia

COMUNE DI BRESCIA

Brescia, La Tua Città Europea.

MINISTERO DEL TURISMO
REPUBBLICA ITALIANA

With the contribution of

inLombardia | Regione Lombardia

BRESCIA

A vibrant city

Your (kind of) tourist map

Five moments when Brescia changes pace

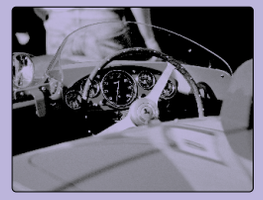
1 San Faustino Fair

On 15 February, the fair animates the historic centre. Among the main streets are: via San Faustino, piazza Loggia, largo Formentone, via X Giornate and piazza della Vittoria.



2 Mille Miglia

The route and exact dates vary from one edition to the next. Please visit the 1000miglia.it website for up-to-date maps, dates and timetables.



3 Festa dell'Opera

The Opera Festival takes place in June. The Teatro Grande, piazza Paolo VI, Castello and Carmine are the main venues, alongside historic sites such as the Roman Theatre.



4 Festa della Musica

Dates and venues vary from one edition to the next, coinciding with the summer solstice. Visit festadellamusicabrescia.it for maps and timetables.



5 Christmas in the city

The events take place from December through to early January. Piazza Vittoria, piazza Paolo VI, piazza della Loggia and corso Zanardelli are among the main landmarks of Christmas in the city.



In the city, you can try Brescia's De.Co. products, such as Pirlo, Bossolà and Persicata, but don't miss the chance to taste other local specialities, from craft beer with "bread and salamina" to a glass of Franciacorta DOCG.

