

BRESCIA

GUIDE FOR BOYS
AND GIRLS



Hello, here you are in Brescia!

If you chose to come – well done, you have excellent taste and you'll certainly be amazed by how beautiful the city is. On the other hand, if you're here because your parents decided (again!) to come for a tour, and you had to tag along (again!) like a shopping bag, this is the perfect guide for you!

In fact, this time you'll be the one giving your parents a tour: like a real guide, you can show them the secrets of Brescia (the ones you're interested in, too!). You'll meet pirates, tightrope walkers, an overturned ship and ancient, hidden civilisations.

What do you reckon? Shall we go?

Right then, you just have to pick one of the two routes we've designed for you: do you want WATER or AIR? In either case, we'll just say... enjoy Brescia!



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CONTRADA DEL CARMINE

SANTA MARIA DEL CARMINE

CONTRADA SANTA CHIARA

VIA DEL CASTELLO

VIA ELIA CAPRIOLO

PALLIATA TOWER

MOSTASÙ

VIA MAMELI

VIA S. FAUSTINO

CLOCK TOWER

VIA DELLA PACE

PALAZZO DELLA LOGGIA

VIA DANTE

TORRIONE INA

RHINCEROS

BROLETTO FOUNTAIN

VIA FRATELLI PORCELLAGA

FALLEN TOWER

PAVEHENT FOUNTAIN

FALLEN TOWER

OLD CATHEDRAL

TOURIST

iNFOPOINT

 *in* LOMBARDIA



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Book on a Tree Ltd



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Ma tu guarda!

Stories of Brescia

The podcast that takes you on an audio journey across the city. Each episode is a little exploration back in time, with surprising characters, iconic locations, and hidden fun facts, to discover Brescia as it was, as it is, and perhaps as it will be.

THE ANIMALS OF BRESCIA

An adventure among the streets of Brescia in search of the animals that tell its story: from the mysterious snake swallowing a man to the roaring of the Dragone river and the iconic Lioness.



UNDER BRESCIA

Did you know that Palazzo della Loggia rests on hundreds of wooden poles like a stilt house? Hidden under the streets and buildings of Brescia is an invisible world to be discovered...



THE CASTLE

In this episode we climb the Cidneo hill to explore Brescia's best-loved building, with all the treasures guarded within its walls: from memories of the zoo to the telescopes aimed at the stars.



Scan the QR code and listen to the episodes. Don't want to miss an episode? Click 'Follow' and you'll get a notification whenever a new episode comes out.

WATER ROUTE



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AIR ROUTE



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WATER ROUTE

01 Monuments A FOUNTAIN AMONG PIRATES

Our Water Route starts in front of a fountain, in the **BROLETTO** courtyard. Funny name, isn't it? 'Broletto' means 'little vegetable plot'. And it's true, there was once a garden here that belonged to the Bishop of Brescia. Try and imagine it: where you see the fountain, there was once a little field full of carrots and aubergines... careful, don't step on them!

When we talk about Broletto today, we don't just mean this ancient courtyard but also the palace you can see around you. It's a very important place for Brescia!

Inside, is the famous **SALA DEI CAVALIERI** (Knights' Hall): only a small, frescoed area remains today, which is not open to visitors, but it was once a huge hall where, in the 13th century, the heads of 500 families met to decide the fortunes of the city!

We thought it was a good idea to start our tour from such an important place.



Look around you:

There are some mascarons watching you from the loggia. Some of them in particular look like real pirates! They were carved with the sole purpose of **FRIGHTENING** anyone who dared to sneak into this place. (All right, it's a bit old-fashioned for a burglar alarm... but who knows, at the time it might really have frightened someone!)





Treasure hunt:

Take a walk around this courtyard. On one wall you can look for some ancient designs, for example, a peacock and... a tower with donkey's ears! Can you find them?



02 Monuments

ANCIENT ROMANS... IN THE BATH

Leave the Broletto courtyard and walk through the large Piazza Paolo VI.

There are two fountains here... and even two cathedrals! That's almost unique in Italy. To be precise, they are two **CO-CATHERDRALS**, and on this Water Route we're interested in the older one: the Old Cathedral, known to Brescians as **LA ROTONDA**, 'the round one' (do we need to explain why?).

You usually have to go up some steps to enter a church, but in this case we have to go down.

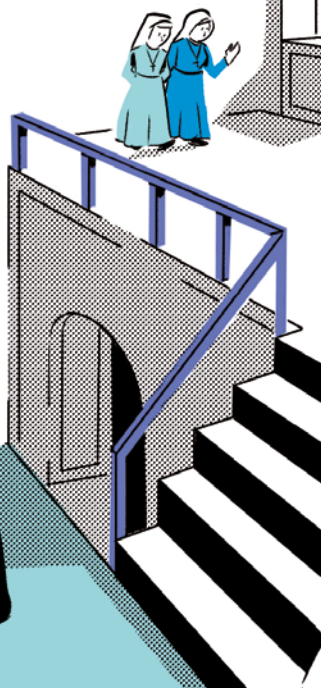
The **Old Cathedral** is set lower down than the square, which suggests that the city of Brescia was once at a lower level than it is today. Perhaps you're thinking, "Ok, fine... but where does water come into all this?". Well, it does...



Look around you:

If you head towards the back of the church, here and there you'll see some *windows* in the floor. Look through them for a glimpse of the remains of a civilisation that lived here a LOOOONG time before this church was built: the ancient Romans!

The Romans lived here in BRIXIA (the ancient name of Brescia) for centuries and they built baths, right under your feet. If you use your imagination you can still see them relaxing (they're speaking in Latin, what do you think they're saying?).

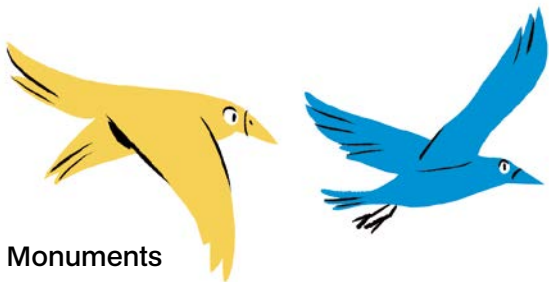




Treasure hunt:

In this case, we're hunting a real treasure. It's kept near the altar, and it's said to contain fragments of the Cross on which Jesus was crucified!





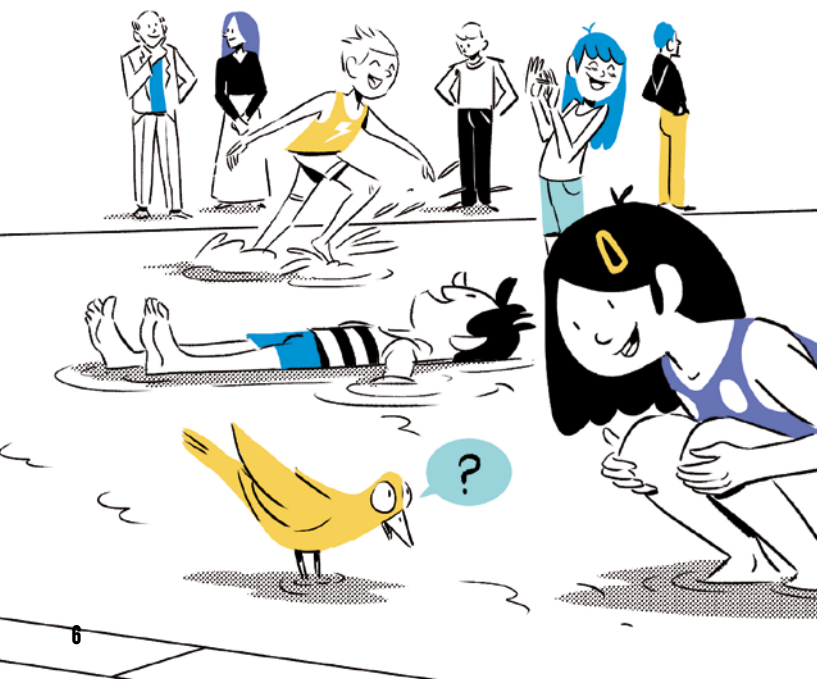
03 Monuments

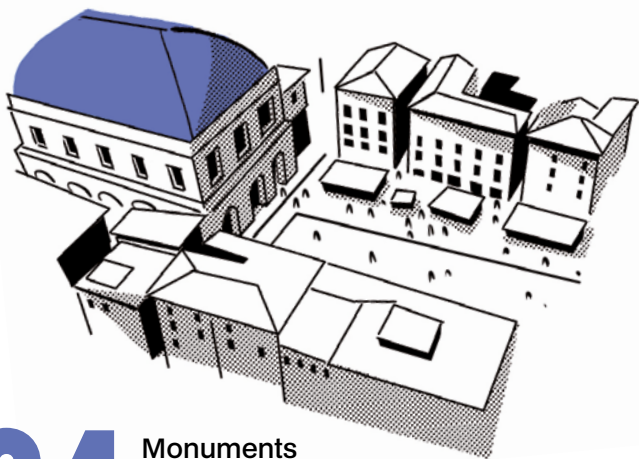
A REFLECTED CITY

When we mentioned the **BATHS** we were talking about **WATER** in the ancient world. Now it's time to move on to the modern world.

In Piazza Vittoria, there's a body of water that contributes to Brescia's image as a truly European city. It's the perfect place to let your parents have a rest, especially if they start puffing and saying they're tired.

The fountain set into the pavement in **Piazza Vittoria** has become a meeting place for families. During the summer children have fun playing and laughing among the water jets. Try and see the monuments reflected in the water: you'll find out it's fun to look at the surroundings from a different point of view!





04

Monuments

THE OVERTURNED KEEL

Talking of different points of view, walk towards Palazzo della Loggia and take a look at the roof.

Doesn't it look like the **OVERTURNED KEEL OF A SHIP**?

And not just from the outside: when you visit the wooden interior it feels like you're in the belly of an overturned ship, too!

Palazzo della Loggia was built by the Venetians when they conquered Brescia, a long time ago: it was supposed to be the seat of the government of Venice and, like the square,

embody the grandeur of the city. If you look closely, each column holding up the building is a **SINGLE PIECE OF STONE**... the columns are so heavy that the roads had to be reinforced in order to bring them here!

On the subject of reinforcements, there are 800 wooden poles holding up the building.

This is because the Loggia is built like a **STILT HOUSE**, and underneath it... flows a river! But we'll tell you more about that at the next stop.



Treasure hunt:

Walk around under the portico, where the city's covered market was once held. Hidden in one corner you'll find a female-looking statue. It's the famous *Lodoiga*, a so-called TALKING STATUE: when people wanted to complain about the city's rulers, they left messages with their complaints near the statue, as if Lodoiga herself had written them on behalf of the citizens of Brescia!

05 Monuments

ONE PLACE, THREE RIVERS

Our Water Route continues to the crossroads between Via San Faustino and Via Elia Capriolo.

So far we've asked you repeatedly to play with your imagination, but here you'll have to make an even bigger effort.

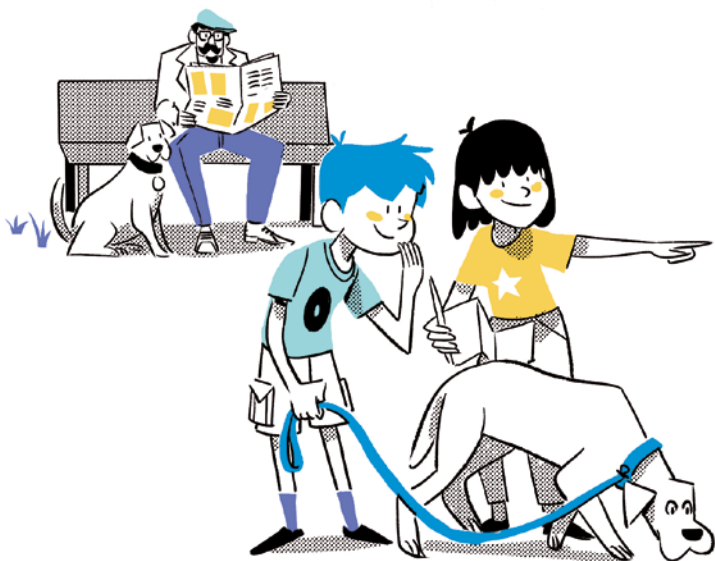
In this particular place, there's nothing to see, but once **THREE RIVERS** merged here: the Antico Garza, the Bova and the Celato.

You need to know that this area of Brescia was full of water courses and that was why it was chosen as the city's **INDUSTRIAL** area!

Mills, bridges and factories once stood here, a few steps from the centre. Can you imagine them?

If you're wondering where all those rivers are now, well, in modern times they were buried and now they flow right under your feet.

Do you want some proof? Go to the last stage of the route, and you'll have it.





06 Monuments

THE SECRET TRAPDOOR

I hope your parents aren't tired, because they still have to make one final effort!

Take them to the Church of Madonna del Carmine.

While they're busy admiring the rich and lavish interior, look for a little circular trapdoor

attached to a string, near the entrance.

Pull on the string and open the trapdoor.

Then put your ear close to the hole in the floor: you'll hear the greeting of Brescia's rivers as they gush below.



BONUS

The Water Route ends here, but if you haven't had enough, you can go and admire the magnificent Fontana dei Fiumi, the Fountain of the Rivers, next to the PALLATA TOWER.

And that's where the Air Route starts!

FROM WATER TO AIR

WARNING: the Air Route is so-called because it invites you to look up in the air to admire the city's most famous vertical monuments. Warn your parents in advance, so they won't complain about neck ache or dizziness after walking with their noses in the air for so long!

AIR ROUTE

01 Monuments THE PALLATA TOWER

Let's go!

This route starts where Brescia's **MEDIEVAL WALLS** once stood.

And as we know, where there were walls, there were usually towers, too.

No sooner said than done: the famous Pallata Tower is right in front of you!

We don't really know what it was used for. Some say it was a prison. But can you see the smaller turret on top? Well, some people think that's where the city's **TREASURE** was kept!

No one is sure where the tower got its name, either, but it's thought that **PALLATA** derives from *palizzata*, or 'palisade' :

this is because the tower was built like a real stilt house. Yes, it's built on top of the water! Because many rivers flowed under this part of the city (and they still do!). One of them ran right past here. It was known as the **DRAGONE**, because from inside the walls the crashing of its waters sounded like the angry breath of a dragon.





Treasure hunt:

If you move towards the right side of the tower, you'll find the magnificent Fontana dei Fiumi (the Fountain of the Rivers). The two figures on the bottom represent the area's two most famous rivers: the Mella (on the left) and the Garza (on the right). Although other academics tend to think they represent Brescia's two LAKES: Garda and Iseo. In any case, one thing is for sure: there's no lack of water on the Air Route!



02 Monuments

THE SEVERED NOSE

One little stop to pay homage to the most famous bearded face in the city: the *Mostasù dèle Cosére*.

A legend links this statue to the long struggle between the **GUELPHS** and the **GHIBELLINES**. The former supported the Pope, the latter the Emperor, and they beat each other non-stop until the 14th century!

When Emperor Arrigo VII came to Brescia, he announced that he would cut the noses off all the Guelphs! But his anger was calmed by one of the Pope's representatives (and payment of a large sum of money!).

So Arrigo had to be content with cutting the noses off statues. That's why Mostasù still has a hole in the middle of his face today.

(Of course, it's just a legend... but at least it lets you give your parents a history lesson!)



03 Monuments

THE FIRST SKYSCRAPER

Let's leave the Middle Ages behind: it's time to change era! Now you're about to enter the heart of 1930s Brescia: Piazza Vittoria.

This space was created by demolishing part of the Medieval city centre, to make room for a place that better represented the spirit of Italy at the time.

At street level you'll see long porticoes full of elegant bars... But remember: you're on the Air Route, so raise your eyes and look up!

To the left of the Post Office building you'll see the big tower known as Il Torrione (the Big Tower), because it's so high. Of course, 57.25 metres might not sound like much to you, but when it was built this was a record height – which is why it is still considered to be Italy's **FIRST SKYSCRAPER**, and one of the very first in Europe! Not bad, is it?



Look around you:

On the Revolution Tower you'll see a red standard that says MILLE MIGLIA. This commemorates Italy's most famous vintage car competition, a race that starts and finishes right here in the city of Brescia!

If you look at the opposite side of the square, instead, you'll see another tower: the Revolution Tower, with its distinctive asymmetrical clock... although this isn't the only clock tower we're going to see.

But no spoilers! For now, let's get closer, because our tour continues right underneath the tower.



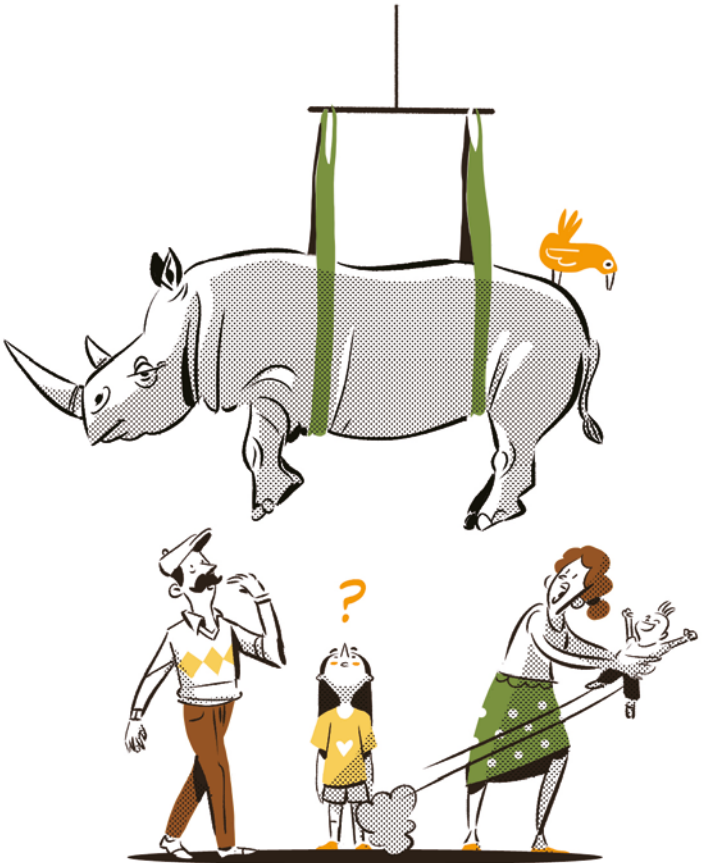
04 Monuments

THE HANGING RHINO

When you walk through the quadriporticus of Piazza Vittoria you'll see something slightly unusual: a rhinoceros hanging from straps. No, it's nothing to do with the 1930s, nor the Middle Ages. It's a more recent statue by artist Stefano Bombardieri.

The work is entitled *The Weight*

of Suspended Time, and it is a reflection on the fragile balance in which we live today — between humans and the environment. The artist has chosen to portray this concept with a large animal, to make you think: "Will it hold? And if so, for how much longer?"



05 Monuments

ON THE EDGE OF MEMORIES

And here we are in Piazza Paolo VI, where everything is double. Stand in the centre of the square and you'll find yourself between two fountains gushing in front of the two **CATHEDRALS**, and even two towers!

Well, no, you're right, you can actually only see one tower: the Pegol Tower, to one side of the New Cathedral. But there used to be one right in front of the entrance to the Old Cathedral. That tower no longer exists... it fell down in 1708. But it really was there at one time, and it was exactly the same height as the other one. Imagine this: since the two towers were exactly the same height, during celebrations a rope was stretched across between them, and tightrope walkers walked across, defying death.

If imagining this makes your head spin (or your parents' heads), you can always take a break in the bars behind you. But keep your eye on the clock: if it's about to chime the hour, you'd better set off again... There's still more to discover — and it might surprise you!



Look around you:

The impressive dome of the New Cathedral is 80 metres high, and it's the third largest in Italy after the ones at St Peter's in Rome and Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence!

Meanwhile, next to the Pegol Tower, you'll also see a historic balcony: this is the SHOUTING balcony (Balcone delle GRIDA), from which the government representatives loudly announced their decisions about the city.

Both the Pegol Tower and the balcony are part of the ancient BROLETTO PALACE.

(The Water Route starts in the courtyard of this palace: if you aren't tired of taking your parents around the city, when you finish this tour you can come back here and start the other one!)



06 Monuments

AN ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK



BONUS

This is the last time we'll ask you to look up, because then the route ends and you can give your neck a rest. But I promise you it's really worth it! In front of you is Brescia's famous Clock Tower: a 16th century astronomical clock that doesn't just mark the hours but also the lunar phases and even zodiac signs. All in one single mechanism. Incredible, isn't it?

If the clock is about to chime, look up at the Clock Tower: Tone and Batista will tell you what time it is by striking the bell between them. The two automative figures were built in the 16th century and since then they have never stopped striking the hour for the citizens of Brescia and the tourists passing through Piazza della Loggia. Anyone who knows the city well calls them by an affectionate nickname, *i macc de le ore* – 'the mad chimers'. And now that the route has ended, you know Brescia really well, too!