



Town of
CHERASCO



CHERASCO

A TOWN OF HISTORY, CULTURE AND ART

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The history of Cherasco began in the autumn of 1243 when Marquis Manfredi Lancia, imperial vicar, and Sarlo di Drua, podestà of Alba, ordered the construction of the town on the plateau at the confluence of the Tanaro and Stura rivers, not far from the pre-existing village of Cheraschetto, which was probably of Ligurian origin and was known as 'Clarascum' in Roman times. The inscription that stood out on the pediment of the Gate of St Martin: "Clarasci portæ sunt Albæ viribus ortæ", was soon forgotten by the citizens of Cherasco, who as early as 1259 pledged their allegiance to Charles of Anjou, thereby acquiring their own legal status and independence from the municipality of Alba. In 1277, Cherasco joined the anti-Angevin league alongside Asti, Alba and Chieri, thereby reaffirming its status as a now free and independent commune. This independence came to an end as early as

In 1303, the town once again came under the rule of the Angevins, who were subsequently defeated in 1347 by Amadeus VI of Savoy. The people of Cherasco then surrendered to the victor.

In 1348, Luchino Visconti, Duke of Milan, having taken Asti and Bra, laid siege to Cherasco and occupied it. To enhance the town's already excellent defensive structures, he had the castle built there, which we can still admire today.

With the Treaty of Cambrai in 1529, which brought an end to the conflicts between Francis and Charles V, Cherasco returned to the House of Savoy, but the peace was short-lived. Caught between the Spanish and the French, the town suffered sieges and occupations in the years that followed.

In 1559, the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis brought an end to the bitter conflict, and Cherasco returned definitively to the House of Savoy under Emanuele Filiberto. A period of peace then began, characterised by a great deal of activity, particularly in the field of construction; churches were restored, houses rebuilt, palaces embellished, and the walls of the



The town was rebuilt according to the plans of the architect Ascanio Vittozzi, and the castle, which had been partly demolished, was restored. But war broke out once more, and this time it was compounded by the plague, which spread throughout Piedmont in 1630; Cherasco, spared from the contagion, hosted the court, which, with its entire retinue, had fled Turin. In 1696, when war was raging once more, Cherasco was granted the title of Countess of Narzole for military merit. In 1706, the court, having withdrawn from Turin which was under siege by the French, stayed in Cherasco once again. Years of peace followed, during which artists from Cherasco such as Sebastiano Taricco and Nicola Vercellone made their mark; churches and palaces were built and embellished, the hospital was rebuilt, and a charity hospice was established...

The 18th century was, however, to end once again with war: the French Revolution, having spread beyond its own borders, reached Piedmont; the French laid siege to Cherasco under the command of General Massena, and on 25 April 1796 the mayor handed over the keys to the town. A few hours later, Napoleon entered Cherasco and took up residence in Palazzo Salmatoris, where, on 27 April, in the presence of the plenipotentiaries La Tour and Costa di Beauregard, he dictated the terms of unconditional surrender. This was the last of the many peace treaties signed in Cherasco since its foundation, a distinction which earned the town the title 'Urbs firmissima pacis', which appears on the Cherasco coat of arms. The walls were demolished and replaced by the beautiful avenues that encircle the historic centre. Religious communities were suppressed, and some churches with adjoining monasteries were put to other uses. By the 18th century, Cherasco had ceased to play a leading role in history.

A TOUR OF THE TOWN

The town of Cherasco was once enclosed by a quadrangular walled enclosure measuring approximately one mile; two ring roads ran alongside the walls, one on the inside and the other on the outside, allowing the citizens to keep a close watch over the walls



Ancient plan of the town.

the same, and, in the event of danger, to rush swiftly to any point on the ramparts; a moat running along the outer ring road provided a further line of defence. The construction of the castle in 1348 further strengthened the town's role as a stronghold.

The statutes also tell us that the houses were almost always equipped, on the inside, with a courtyard, a vegetable garden and a well, which were intended to ensure self-sufficiency in times of need.

The most important buildings were constructed along the main axis running from the Arco Porta Narzole to the Arco Belvedere, with the square at its centre, the Town Hall, the tower and, slightly to the right, the church of San Gregorio, which, as well as being the hub of religious life, was also the venue for the town's general assemblies. Today, only the castle remains of this important defensive structure, whilst tree-lined streets replaced the city walls at the end of the 18th century. The Roman castrum layout, however, has been preserved: a square plan with two major streets intersecting at right angles, dividing the town into four districts – San Pietro, San Martino, San Gregorio and Sant'Iffredo – whilst the other streets, running either perpendicular or parallel to the main ones, divide the districts into regular blocks measuring approximately eighty metres on each side.

For our artistic tour of the town, we shall therefore begin at the square dominated by the imposing town tower.

Town Hall and Town Tower

On the exterior façade of the Town Hall, which has recently been restored, one can see significant examples of the town's ancient and rich cultural heritage: Gothic arches, friezes and 15th- and 16th-century decorations, and an 18th-century fresco featuring a fantastic and original coat of arms of Cherasco depicting a young man and a young woman – the rivers Tanaro and Stura – whose feet merge at the confluence at the bottom of the valley. The town's authentic coat of arms, however, consists of a red cross on a white field. The tower, which has also recently been stripped of its rear plasterwork, features on its façade a precious and extremely rare lunary depicting a woodland scene in which, depending on the phases, the moon rises and sets. On the south side, following the restoration work, an elegant Baroque sundial has been revealed.



Belvedere Arch

The beautiful Palazzo Galli della Mantica leads us to the Triumphal Arch of the Madonna del Rosario, built between 1647 and 1688 to a design by Giovenale Boetto of Fossano, as a votive offering by the town for having been spared the plague of 1630–1631.

It is crowned by statues of the Madonna, a marble work by Saverio Franzi dating from 1832, and by the saints who promoted Marian devotion: Saint Iffredo, Saint Dominic, the Blessed Alano de Rupe and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, all in terracotta, which replaced the original wooden statues that had deteriorated over time. The side niches house the images of the patron saints of Cherasco: St Virginio and St Euflamia.



Church of St Augustine

The Church of St Augustine, built in 1672 by Boetto, like the Arco del Belvedere, features frescoes by Taricco and Aliberti.

The icon depicting the 'Massacre of the Innocents' was painted in 1661 by Bartolomeo Garavoglia of Livorno Vercellese, a pupil of Guercino. Of particular note are the wooden statues of the 'Christ at the Column' by the sculptor Plura of Lugano, the 'Risen Christ' by Clementi of Turin, the organ case featuring several caryatids, and the large, artistically carved entrance door dating from the 17th century.

Finally, the high altar is a true masterpiece of Baroque art.

Next to the church stands Palazzo Brizio della Veglia, a Gothic building dating from the 1400s with a façade featuring small arches and terracotta ornamentation.

On the other side of the square stands Palazzo Fracassi, which houses the historical artefacts relating to the Shroud's presence in Cherasco and Napoleon's visit, which were previously kept in Palazzo Salmatoris.



Church of the Madonna del Popolo

In Via Nostra Signora del Popolo, one can admire the splendid terracotta façade of the Church of the Madonna del Popolo, completed in 1702 to a design by the Cherasco-born painter and architect Sebastiano Taricco and under the supervision of the architects Crappa and Rocca (Rocha). Inside, the church is rich in works of art: on either side of the chancel are two wooden statues (St John the Evangelist and St Joseph) by Bonanate of Cherasco (mid-18th century); frescoes by Aliberti (1662–1739) above the entrance and above the high altar; in the chancel, two exquisite 'Adorations' by Pietro Metey (1728–1765) of Lyon, a restorer, originally from the Camaldolese Hermitage of Selva Maggiore; two paintings by Giovanni Claret (1599–1679); and further works by Taricco, Giuseppe Barotti and Operti, as well as the splendidly carved pews. Consecrated as a Marian shrine in 1988, it is now a destination for pilgrims from all over Italy.



Ancient Garden of the Somaschi Fathers



In the shadow of the dome of the Sanctuary of the Madonna del Popolo, the third largest in Piedmont, the Somaschi Fathers have tended a vegetable garden for centuries. Today, modelled on the ancient 'hortus conclusus', a beautiful garden has been revived: a space for contemplation and exploration dedicated to edible and ornamental flowers, tended by the Department of Agricultural, Forestry and Food Sciences at the University of Turin. A section of green space in the city's historic centre has been restored and integrated into the walking route through the old town that leads to the ramparts. An original and varied route that will guide visitors through a botanical display rich in dozens of different species.

Adriani Civic Museum - Palazzo Gotti di Salerano



The 17th-century Palazzo Gotti di Salerano houses the 'G.B. Adriani' Civic Museum, featuring a magnificent portal and a fine entrance door. In some of the rooms, frescoed by Taricco between 1672 and 1681, are displayed documents relating to local and Piedmontese history, various ancient artefacts (statuettes, amphorae, cinerary urns), a collection of medals and a remarkable numismatic collection (Greek, Roman, Italian and foreign coins). The collections, donated by G.B. Adriani of Cherasco – a distinguished historian of the last century – are of extraordinary importance for the history and reconstruction of local culture. In the palace's main hall, the Piedmontese Senate held its regular sessions during the siege of Turin in 1706.

It has recently been expanded to include two new rooms, each dedicated to an illustrious figure from Cherasco: the multi-talented artist Sebastiano Taricco and Italy's first Bersagliere, Giuseppe Vayra. Both are situated on the ground floor of the building.

Palazzo Salmatoris

Built in the early 17th century and subsequently embellished, extended and remodelled on several occasions, the palace is the town's most historically significant building: it was here that the peace treaty of 1631 was signed; the Shroud was deposited in its halls after being removed from Turin in 1706; it was here that Napoleon Bonaparte imposed the armistice of 1796 on the Piedmontese; and its halls were chosen on several occasions as a residence by the House of Savoy.

The Salmatoris family died out in 1822 and the palace changed hands several times before

a mill was installed (now on display in the newly restored section). Palazzo Salmatoris was partially acquired in the 1980s by the Town of Cherasco: restoration work has made it suitable for use as an exhibition venue. Since the 1990s, it has hosted exhibitions of contemporary and modern art, featuring artists such as Picasso, De Pisis, Ligabue, Campigli, De Chirico, Guttuso, Morandi, 'From Picasso to Fontana', Chagall, Miró and Magritte, Casorati, Carrà and Sironi, to name but a few of the major figures. It is now an important cultural centre and a venue for high-calibre art exhibitions.

Sala Reviglio: within the 17th-century palace, a permanent exhibition has been dedicated to the great Cherasco-born painter Romano Reviglio (1928–2008).



Porta Narzole Arch

The Porta Narzole Arch was built at the end of the 18th century but never completed, modelled on and mirroring the perspective of the Madonna del Rosario Arch. New walls were designed and built in 1610 by the architect Ascanio Vittozzi, when the use of artillery changed the very concept of defence. At that time, the town took on a 'star-shaped' layout, as Borgonio had drawn for the 'Theatrum Sabaudiae'.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the walls were finally demolished and avenues were laid out to mark the boundaries of the land they had occupied.



Church of St Peter

Retracing your steps and turning onto Via della Pace, you come out in front of the Church of St Peter: it is the town's oldest monument (13th century), built using materials from the church and castle of Manzano. In keeping with a very common practice, the inhabitants of Cherasco used materials from various sources; thus, the façade features Roman tombstones and funerary sculptures (from Pollenzo or finds from Cherasco itself), early medieval sandstone (from the original church in Manzano), alongside classical Romanesque or Gothic elements (a loggia with blind arches, green majolica cups).

The church has undergone subsequent alterations, such as the removal of the side walls (the chapels were built in the 18th century) and the opening of the main doors and square windows on the sides. The interior has been completely rebuilt, yet it preserves a valuable fresco in the bell tower dated 1488 (but

(probably much older) depicting a crucifixion, and the four large canvases in the chancel and choir (the work of Giovanni Taricco, nephew of the more famous Sebastiano, and Giuseppe Ellena, both from Cherasco).



Visconteo Castle and Viale dei Platani

The castle, built by Luchino Visconti in 1348, was an imposing square-shaped building, with towers at the four corners and a smaller one above the entrance featuring a drawbridge. It was renovated in 1910 and is now privately owned.

To the right of the castle, visitors can enjoy a lovely stroll along the Viale dei Platani. The view over the hills of Novello, La Morra and Vergne is splendid.



Church of the Madonna delle Grazie



Returning to the ramparts, one continues on to the Church of the Madonna delle Grazie (Madonnina), which, built in 1762 with an octagonal plan to a design by Nicola Vercellone, provided a definitive and exquisite setting for a very ancient pillar (13th century) bearing the venerated fresco of the Madonna, Jesus and St John.

Also worth noting is a stunning 'Crucifixion' in the style of Molinari, two paintings by Taricco and Operti, and a vast collection of ex-votos (125 in total, covering the period 1726–1927).

Segre Natural History Museum

The Natural History Museum, dedicated to the memory of Professor Giorgio Segre, has found a new home in the Chapel of St James in Cherasco since 2022. Set up using material from the 'Natural History Collection', donated some twenty years ago by the Somaschi Fathers to the Town of Cherasco – comprising around 250 birds, some thirty mammals, shells and local minerals – it complements the collection bequeathed by Professor Segre in 2005: fossils, thousands of shells from all over the world and minerals. It comprises two sections: a natural history section dedicated to molluscs, birds and mammals, and a geological section dedicated to minerals and fossils.

Museum of Magic

The Museum of Magic in Cherasco is Italy's leading museum dedicated to magic and illusionism. As they wander through its galleries, visitors can discover the history, the props and the key figures behind one of the most fascinating forms of entertainment: magic.

The Museum of Magic in Cherasco was founded on the initiative of Don Silvio Mantelli, better known as Mago Sales, who over the years and whilst travelling the world collected material and objects belonging to the great magicians of history. The museum is housed in a former nursery school that has been renovated and adapted for this purpose; it comprises 18 thematically organised, scenically designed galleries, a theatre used for magic shows, and a library entirely dedicated to the subject of magic, containing over 19,000 volumes available for study and research. The museum tour is a veritable journey in which both children and adults are actively engaged in a fairy-tale setting.

You will discover the ancient origins of magic and illusionism, the main tools of magicians, the various forms of magic shows, the figures who have shaped the history of magic, and the links between magic and the occult.

For information and bookings, please visit the dedicated website: www.museodellamagia.it



Synagogue of Cherasco

The synagogue owes its charm to the determination with which a small, oppressed community – forced to live together in a cramped and congested area – expressed its desire for dignity and its conviction in its faith, reserving the most noble place and the most attentive care for a cluster of rooms and using the resources available to it for this purpose. Like all synagogues built before the Emancipation, the Cherasco synagogue does not have a façade visible from the street, but is situated within an 18th-century building, in the area of the former ghetto. It is situated on the top floor in accordance with an ancient precept: indeed, nothing may be built above places of worship. It is accessed through an unmarked wooden door and is situated at the top of a simple staircase. The vestibule features a hand-washing basin, surmounted by a marble plaque commemorating the donation made by the De Benedetti brothers in 1797. To the side of the entrance door is the alms box. Continuing up a small flight of steps leads to the small women's gallery, screened by a simple wooden grille. The prayer hall, with a quadrangular plan, is lit by four large vertical windows, arranged along the south and east walls. The windows, which were originally intended to be screened by curtains, are surmounted along the entire perimeter of the wall by inscriptions in Hebrew framed by floral decorations

. Of particular interest are four mirrored wall sconces, dating from the 18th century, which were intended to amplify the light of the candles. The wooden chandeliers also date from the 18th century. Wooden benches, possibly dating from the 17th century, are arranged along the walls. The floor is laid with square black-and-white tiles, whilst the ceiling is finished in white and light blue stucco. At the centre of the hall, as is traditional, stands the tevah: an octagonal, canopied structure made of carved and painted wood. The tevah in Cherasco features simple ornamentation; the canopy, supported by slender, plain twisted columns with Corinthian-style capitals, lacks elaborate decorative elements. Situated in the centre of the hall's east wall, the Aron is made of wood and has a more intricate design: the decoration on the doors consists of three fluted half-columns, which recreate the shape of the Tablets of the Law, whilst on either side are carved two fluted half-columns from which small flames emerge; the whole is surmounted by a small porthole with coloured glass. In non-Reformed synagogues, the women's prayer area is separated from that of the men. Often the women's gallery is situated on a raised platform, but the two areas may also be adjacent, separated by a partition known as a mechitzah (literally, 'divider'). The women's gallery in Cherasco is raised and screened by a simple wooden partition.

CHERASCO ORANGE FLAG

Italian Touring Club



Cherasco is part of Cherasco is twinned with Cherasco has been part of Cherasco since July

In 2007, it was awarded the 'Orange Flag', the tourism and environmental quality mark for inland destinations awarded by the Italian Touring Club on the basis of rigorous quantitative and qualitative assessments

in collaboration with the Piedmont Region's Department of Tourism. The Orange Flag is a guarantee of quality for tourists and a tool for promoting inland destinations. Very few towns in Italy can boast this accreditation: it is awarded only if the town meets specific criteria relating to the development of quality tourism, such as the promotion of cultural heritage, environmental protection, a culture of hospitality, access to and usability of resources, and the quality of accommodation, catering and local specialities.

CHERASCO IS TWINNED WITH

Villars-sur-Var, France
Möckmühl, Germany
Piliscsaba, Hungary
Cefa, Romania
Aksakovo, Bulgaria

CHERASCO IS PART OF

ATL Langhe
Monferrato Roero

Wine-growing landscapes of
Langhe, Roero and Monferrato

Barolo Route
and the great wines of the Langhe

OUTDOOR CHERASCO



The **CHERASCO OUTDOOR** project includes 8 different routes, ranging from short walks around the historic centre to longer

to explore Cherasco's numerous hamlets; they can be covered on foot or by bike (including e-bikes).



THE ROUTES

THE KISS TRAIL

4.5 km hike

THE CORNO TRAIL

Hiking • Mountain biking 7.8 km

AMONG THE FARMHOUSES

Mountain biking 20.2 km

CYCLING WITH NAPOLEON

MTB 18–24.1 km

ROCCE AND CRYSTALS TRAIL

Hiking • Mountain biking 3.9 km

TANARO LOOP

Hiking • Mountain biking 2.6 km

CHERASCO – LA MORRA

Hiking 12.7 km • Mountain biking 14.5 km

CHALK ITINERARY

Mountain bike: 15.2 km

CHERASCO

HISTORIC CENTRE

MAIN SIGHTS



1. CHURCH OF SANT'IFFREDO – This is an 18th-century reconstruction of a much older place of worship. It currently hosts exhibitions and musical events.

2. ADRIANI MUSEUM - Housed within the 17th-century Palazzo Gotti di Salerano, in halls frescoed by Taricco, it holds documents relating to local and Piedmontese history, artefacts from the Roman era, a collection of medals and a remarkable numismatic collection.

3. SANCTUARY OF THE MADONNA DEL POPOLO – It features a distinctive Baroque terracotta façade. Its vast octagonal dome is the third largest in Piedmont.

4. ARCO DI PORTA NARZOLE – Begun at the end of the 18th century, it remains unfinished.

5. PALAZZO SALTATORIS – Known as the ‘Palace of Peace’ in memory of the historic treaty between Napoleon and the House of Savoy; it once housed the Holy Shroud in the splendid small room frescoed by Taricco. It is currently used for exhibitions and conferences.

6. CHURCH OF ST AUGUSTINE – The finely carved portal (17th century) is particularly beautiful.

7. CHURCH OF ST GREGORY – Recently restored as a venue for exhibitions, conferences and concerts. Its Romanesque bell tower is beautiful.

8. TOWN HALL - CIVIC TOWER – It features Gothic arches and 15th- and 16th-century decorations. Adjacent to it is the distinctive Civic Tower, dating from the time of the town's foundation, which bears a precious lunar calendar.

9. BELVEDERE ARCH – Built between 1647 and 1688 as a votive offering by the town for its deliverance from the plague of 1630.

10. CHURCH OF SAN PIETRO - Dating from the time of the town's foundation (1200), only the façade and bell tower retain their original appearance. The small square in front is charming, with its typical cobbled paving.

11. VISCONTEO CASTLE – Built in 1348 by Luchino Visconti. Restored since 1910, it is now privately owned. It overlooks the picturesque Viale dei Platani, also known as Viale Napoleonico.

12. CHURCH OF SAN MARTINO – Its simple façade is embellished with a marble bas-relief depicting St Martin, dating from before 1588, a fragment of an ancient Lombard pluteus and terracotta decorations.

13. SYNAGOGUE – A testament to the Jewish presence in Cherasco, recently restored (*visits by appointment or on designated days*)

14. SANCTUARY OF THE MADONNA DELLE GRAZIE – With an octagonal plan, designed by Nicola Vercellone, the reconstruction provided a definitive and exquisite setting for the ancient votive pillar.

15. "GIORGIO SEGRE" NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM – Since 2022, it has been housed in the Church of San Giacomo. The museum comprises a collection of thousands of shells, fossils, minerals, mammals and birds, bequeathed by Professor Giorgio Segre and resulting from the legacy of the Somaschi Fathers.

16. MUSEUM OF MAGIC - The Museum of Magic in Cherasco is one of Europe's leading multimedia museums dedicated to magic and illusionism.

Tourist Information

INFORMATION FOR TOURISTS



TOURIST INFORMATION



TOURIST INFORMATION



Where to eat



Where to stay



Useful Information

TOURIST OFFICE - TOWN HALL

Via Vittorio Emanuele, 79
Tel. +39 0172 427050 - +39 0172 427052

www.comune.cherasco.cn.it
www.turismoeventicherasco.it
turistico@comune.cherasco.cn.it

- Opening hours: Monday and Friday 9.00–12.30
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9.00–12.30/14.30–16.30
Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 9.00–12.30/15.00–18.30
(closed from mid-December to the end of February)
- Guided tours of the historic centre by appointment

FULLY EQUIPPED CAMPERVAN AREA

FREE PARKING, water, waste disposal, lighting, electricity. Piazza Giovanni Paolo II (Carabinieri station).

E-BIKES and MTBs – Hire and sales

Idea bici, Via Conti Petitti, 16, Roreto di Cherasco
– Tel. +39 0172 495864, +39 338 6420588
www.idealbici.com

GOLF CLUB

Via Fraschetta, 8 – Cherasco
Tel: +39 0172 489772
www.golfcherasco.com

Chauffeur-driven car hire, car hire with driver, taxis

- **Tassone Bartolomeo**, Via Monfalcone 30 – Cherasco, +39 0172 489274
- **Lamberto Michele**, Roreto di Cherasco, +39.336.248185
- **Roggero Massimo**, Cherasco, +39 335 7069166
- **Franco Viaggi**, Via Lunelli 7 - Cherasco, +39.0172.489746

TAXI

Lamberto Michele

Roreto di Cherasco (5 km from the centre)
+39.336.248185 • maicol0850@gmail.com

COACH

From Bra to Cherasco, **Line 4**
For timetables, visit www.viaggisac.com

ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING STATION

- **Piazza Lagorio** (Old Town)
- **TESISQUARE**, Via Savigliano, 48 – Roreto di Cherasco
- **Tdimar Spa**, Via Cuneo, 24 – Roreto di Cherasco

MOTORWAY

The town of Cherasco can be reached **via the A6** Turin–Savona **MOTORWAY** (Marene, Cherasco exit), continuing on the new A33 (Cuneo–Asti), or **via the A21** Turin–Piacenza **MOTORWAY** (Asti Est exit, Alba–Cuneo state road).

RAIL

Turin–Bra / Ceva–Savona line

AIRPORTS

- **Turin Caselle** 70 km • **Levaldigi** 20 km
- **Orio al Serio** 228 km

LOCAL POLICE

Via San Pietro, 41 Tel. +39 0172 427080

PHARMACIES

- **San Gregorio**, Via Giuseppe Garibaldi 21, Cherasco Tel. +39 0172 487048
- **Antica Farmacia dell'Arco**
Via Vittorio Emanuele 6 – Cherasco
Tel. +39 0172 489104
- **Farmacia Vignati**, Via Bra 39 – Roreto (5 km from the centre)
Tel. +39 0172 495128
- **Dr Rossi's Parapharmacy**
Via Vittorio Emanuele 65 – Cherasco
Tel. +39 0172.488231

OUT-OF-HOURS MEDICAL SERVICE Continuity of Care Service

Via Ognissanti 30 – Alba
Tel. +39 0173.316316

