



The Ancient Gates of Sulmona - a circular walking tour

Porta Romana (1428): Located at the point where the old and the new walls meet, on the western side of the city, the Porta Romana gate was badly damaged in the earthquake of 1706. On either side of the gate however there are some well-preserved remains of the original walls. This gate was so named because it served as the exit towards the direction of Rome

Porta Bonomini: The earthquake of 1706 destroyed all but the piers of this gate however it continued to be used as a principal gateway up until the Second World War. It is named after one of the districts of the city.

Porta Molina: At one time known as the "Porta Sant'Andrea", this is the smallest of the city's gates and the only one that has kept its wooden doors.

Porta Filiamabili: This is no longer considered a real gate because it lies inside the new walls and is in close proximity to the newer Porta Sant'Antonio. Because of this it was never dismantled. It is named after one of the districts of the city.

Porta Sant'Antonio (18th century): Although it was originally built in the 15th century, Porta Sant'Antonio retains only the original entrance arch; the whole building was severely compromised and rebuilt after the 1706 earthquake. The name comes from the fact that the nearby church of the Madonna del Carmine, was once dedicated to the saint from Padua.

Porta Santa Maria della Tomba (15th – 16th century): This is the most recent of all the city's gates and is located behind the church of the same name. The inside is decorated with a Baroque lunette fresco depicting the Pietà.

Porta Napoli (1338): The largest and most important city gate was built at the behest of Queen Giovanna 1 of Naples. For this reason the workmanship is attributed to artists of the Neapolitan court. At the beginning of 20th century this gate was still adjoined to the city's walls on both sides.

Porta Pacentrana (1376): This gate was in reality called 'East Gate' due to its orientation but its current name is translated as the Gate to (the village of) Pacentro as this is how the Sulmonesi came to refer to it.

Porta Saccoccia (14th – 15th century): This gate's curious name translates as 'Shoulderbag' which in the local dialect indicates pockets. It is lower now than it was previously because of some repair work dating back to 17th century and also due to the big earthquake of 1706.

Porta Japasseri (14th – 15th century): This ancient gate has been almost entirely lost as a result of the earthquake of 1706. Little of it remains however allegedly the doors (or parts of them) were in place right up until the 1950's. In contrast the area close to Porta Japasseri retains a substantial part of the old walls, complete with a tower (now a Bed & Breakfast establishment) and strengthening arches. It is named after one of the districts of the city.

Recommended route:

- *Starting from outside of Porta Romana, climb the steep steps to your right up Discesa Porta Romana towards Porta Bonomini at the top.*
- *Take Via Quatrario on your right towards Porta Molina (careful not to miss it as it is off to the right at the end of the slightly wider section of Quatrario before Via Mario Trozzi) and then continue along to the end of Quatrario. Skirt around the small park and then go through Porta Filiamabili.*
- *Continue down the slope (Via Giovanni Amendola) to Porta Sant'Antonio which joins the busy Circonvallazione ring-road.*
- *Double back on yourself and take Via Manlio D'Eramo up past the Post Office and turn right at the top by the Aqueduct along Corso Ovidio.*
- *Take the next right into Piazza Plebiscito and pass by the left-hand side of the church and down to Porta Santa Maria dell Tomba.*
- *Double back again and take the first main right onto Via Panfilo Serafini just at the corner with the restaurant 'Da Gino'. Follow this road all the way along until you reach Via della Cona and then turn left and immediately right so that you are back on Corso Ovidio. Porta Napoli is ahead of you and can be clearly seen at this point.*
- *Turn back down Corso Ovidio to Piazza Garibaldi. Cross the square and take the road Via Leopoldo Dorrucchi to Porta Pacentrana. At this point turn right along Via Probo Mariano all the way to the end where you will find Porta Saccoccia.*
- *Retrace your steps back to Piazza Garibaldi and then turn right up the slope called Via Marselli, turning right at the top. Proceed through Largo Palizze and take Via Morrone across Via Giovanni Pansa to a small piazza at the end. Take the right turn (Via Costa del Contadino) which takes you down a steep slope to Porta Japasseri. This is the only gate not to retain the shape of an actual arch so don't be fooled!*
- *Here you climb up the slope at the other side and take the first left Via Japasseri up to Piazza Santa Monica. From here turn right along Via Solimo until you exit onto Corso Ovidio. Cross the street and take the first turn down the hill towards Porta Romana.*

This download is available from the blog section of www.welcometosulmona.com where you will also find colour pictures of the various gates and a Google map to assist you.