

Historical and architectural information

Palazzo Comunale is a conglomeration of buildings that were constructed for various reasons in different periods. The portico with marble columns acts as a unifying element. The Palazzo Comunale consists today of eight ancient Palazzos. The Torre dell'Orologio now stands proudly in the centre of the façade of Palazzo Comunale, an ancient clocktower that was used for public address.

Palacio Urbis Mutinae (the City palace) (1)

Palacio Urbis Mutinae is the old Modena city palace. It dates back to 1046 and was where the bishop-count met with his administrators.

Palatium Vetus (the Old palace) (2)

In 1194 Palatium Vetus (the Old palace) was built, decorated with Guelph merlons and a tower.

Palatium Novum (the New palace) (3)

The site that today houses the Galleria Europa and the Caffè Concerto (Literary Café) used to be the Palatium Novum (the New palace), built in 1216 to meet the needs of the ever-growing municipal authority offices.

Palazzo della Ragione o dei Notai (4) (palace of Reason or Notaries)

The main buildings saw the addition of others (such as Palazzo della Ragione or dei Notai) and between 1600 and 1800 these were united by a portico designed by Raffaele Rinaldi, called Il Menia (1616), built under the Palazzo della Ragione.

Palazzo in Contrada Scudari (5)

A second portico was added under Palazzo Vecchio in 1627, which was completed in 1825 with the last additional section in the direction of Via Castellaro.

Palazzo a levante dell'Arengario (6) (palace to the west of the Clocktower)

Palazzo della Spelta e Nuova Dogana (7) (palace of Grain and New Customs and Excise building)

Palazzo del Marchese poi Palazzo del Massari (8) (Massari Palace, formerly Marchese Palace)



Between Piazza Grande and Via Castellaro stands the statue of the Bonissima, a medieval statue of a woman whose name is said to come from **Bona Estima**, the city's weights and measures office.



Acetaia Comunale (The Municipal Vinegar Factory)



Information

Tourist Information Office (IAT)
Piazza Grande 14 - 41121 Modena - +39 059 2032660
info@visitmodena.it - www.visitmodena.it

What can you visit

- A. Sala della Torre Mozza (Mozza Tower room)
- B. Camerino dei Confirmati (Chamber of the Confirmed)
- C. Sala del Fuoco (Fire room)
- D. Sala del Vecchio Consiglio (Room of the Old Council)
- E. Sala degli Arazzi (Tapestries room)
- F. Sala dei Matrimoni (Wedding room)

Opening hours

The Historical Rooms are open to visitors

- From Monday to Friday open from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm;
- Saturdays (non-holiday) from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, and at 2:00 pm (a brief guided tour is provided);
- on Sundays and public holidays, the historic rooms are visitable at 3.15pm, 4.00pm, 4.45pm, 5.30pm, 6.15pm (a brief guided tour is provided);

The Municipal Vinegar Factory

Located under the roof of the Palazzo Comunale, it can be visited through guided tours in Italian provided by the Consorzeria dell'Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Spilamberto on Fridays at 3.30 PM and 4.30 PM, and on Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays at 10:30 AM, 11.30 AM, 3.30 PM, and 4.30 PM.

An English-language guided tour is available on Saturdays at 2.30 PM.

Reservations are mandatory online at www.visitmodena.it or at the IAT Tourist Information Office in Piazza Grande 14.

Info and ticket reservations at

www.visitmodena.it



Palazzo Comunale Sale storiche



Historical rooms

Sala della Torre Mozza (A)

On the first floor of Palazzo Comunale, to the right of the Reception, visitors can access the Sala della Torre Mozza (Mozza Tower room), where they can see the ancient medieval civic tower, used as a lookout and defensive post. The most important documents were also kept here and death penalties were carried out at its top. The size of the tower decreased after it was damaged in the 1501 earthquake, and it was finally and drastically demolished in 1671. This room is decorated with paintings and sculptures by twentieth-century artists. This ancient tower can be seen in the processional banner painted by Ludovico Lana (1633) on show in the Sala del Vecchio Consiglio (Room of the Old Council).

Camerino dei Confermati (B)

The Camerino dei Confermati (Chamber of the Confirmed), between the Sala del Fuoco (Fire room) and the Sala del Vecchio Consiglio (Room of the Old Council), is a small room decorated in 1770 by Giuseppe Carbonari with chiaroscuro busts by Girolamo Vannulli, depicting the painters who worked in the adjacent rooms: Bartolomeo Schedoni, Ercole dell'Abate, Francesco Vellani and Francesco Vaccari. Here can be found the Secchia Rapita (Stolen Bucket), the war trophy taken by the people of Modena from the city of Bologna in the Battle of Zappolino (1325). The tale is narrated in the mock-heroic poem "La secchia rapita" by Alessandro Tassoni and a copy of the trophy is on show in the Ghirlandina.

Sala del Fuoco (C)

The Camerino dei Confermati (Chamber of the Confirmed) leads to the Sala del Fuoco (Fire room), with its sixteenth-century fireplace by Gaspare da Secchia, where coals were prepared as heating for the market traders in Piazza Grande. This room was frescoed by Nicolò dell'Abate in 1546 with Stories of the Siege of Modena and the Second Triumvirate (43-42 B.C.). The same artist is attributed with the fragment of fresco showing Hercules fighting with the Nemean Lion. The coffered ceiling with the city coat of arms in its centre and the wooden frieze with ancient decoration are part of the busy series of motifs inspired by Roman antiquity.



Sala del Vecchio Consiglio (D)

On the opposite side of the Sala del Fuoco (Fire room) a door leads into the Sala del Vecchio Consiglio (Room of the Old Council). The seventeenth-century ceiling in this room was painted by Bartolomeo Schedoni and Ercole Dell'Abate in praise of good government and love for the fatherland. At the centre of the vault, a Genius holds up the world and sits astride an eagle (an allegory of the City Council and the Este Dukedom). Chiaroscuro scenes depicting episodes from the life of Saint Geminianus were painted by Francesco Vellani in 1766. The silk processional banner by Ludovico Lana from 1633 shows the Madonna of the Rosary, the Child and Saint Geminianus interceding to stop the plague in 1630. The carved wooden seats of the Conservatori (the elected city governors) were made in the mid-sixteenth century for the nearby Sala del Fuoco (Fire room) and moved into this room in the early seventeenth century.

Sala degli Arazzi (E)

The Sala del Vecchio Consiglio (Room of the Old Council) leads to the Sala degli Arazzi (Tapestries Room) designed by Cristoforo Malagola, called Il Galaverna, with eighteenth-century paintings on canvas that copy tapestries by Girolamo Vannulli and floral cornices by Francesco Vaccari. The paintings depict episodes from the Peace of Constance (1183), which brought an end to the dispute between the towns of northern Italy and Federico Barbarossa. The vault features a medallion of a breastfeeding Charity, inside a square of foreshortened imitation stuccowork by Francesco Vaccari, and an allegory of abundance is painted between the windows. The motto of Modena, Avia Pervia, is set into the wood flooring.

Sala dei Matrimoni (F)

The Sala degli Arazzi (Tapestries room) is followed by the Sala dei Matrimoni (Wedding Room), once used as an archive, its vault painted by Francesco Vaccari in 1767 featuring wide monochrome volutes around a central oval bearing the Modena coat of arms held up by two putti. It was completed by Giuseppe Carbonari. There is also a very fine, large, Murano glass chandelier in this room. The eighteenth-century console tables are in carved, painted, gilded wood. Armchair and chairs are upholstered in blue velvet with the City Coat of Arms. On the walls hang paintings by Adeodato Malatesta (1806-1891), the most important nineteenth-century painter from Modena, who for decades directed the local Academy of Art.