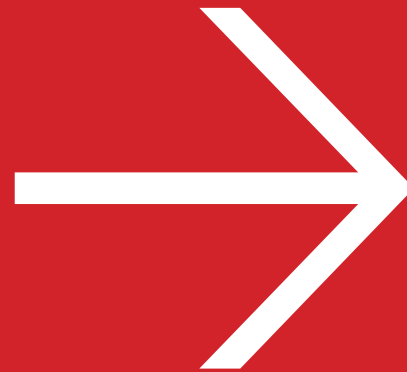


# ITALY

## 2019-20



MILAN  
FLORENCE  
TURIN  
LECCE  
GENOA  
PARMA  
BRESCIA  
ROME  
UDINE  
PARMA  
BOLOGNA  
FERRARA  
VERONA  
CAGLIARI  
BERGAMO  
NAPLES

EMILIA  
REGGIO  
SASSUOLO



# ITALY 2019-20

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**Italy** is the home of *calcio* and classy clubs of great tradition – many still playing in ageing communal stadiums from the pre- and immediate post-war eras.

The 1990 World Cup, played out when the ultra movement and all its imaginative terrace pageantry were at their height, seems a very long time ago.

Back then, **Milan** was the football capital of the world, the **Rome** derby was a ferocious affair between two high-ranking teams. **Sampdoria**, **Parma** and **Fiorentina** all made European finals.

**AC Milan** and **Internazionale** have since been sold to Chinese backers and struggle to fill the **San Siro**, one of football's great stadiums and most famous groundshares.

Breaking new ground, record (and current) champions **Juventus** built their own stadium on the outskirts of their home city of **Turin**. **AS Roma** are following their example in Rome. Each of their respective city rivals, **Torino** and **Lazio**, remain in arenas originally adapted for Olympic showcases.

A single-stadium groundshare arrangement also applies to two other cities, **Genoa** and **Verona**, whose title wins belong to the past.

**Napoli** have put in credible title challenges and reasonably healthy

## Welcome to liberoguide.com!

The digital travel guide for football fans, **liberoguide.com** is the most up-to-date resource, city-by-city, club-by-club, to the game across Europe and North America. Using only original photos and first-hand research, taken and undertaken over seven seasons, **liberoguide.com** has been put together to enhance every football weekend and Euro night experience. From airport to arena, downtown sports bar to hotel, **liberoguide.com** helps you get the best out of your visit to football's furthest corners and showcase stadiums.

crowd figures now date back several seasons.

Atalanta Bergamo have moved the goalposts, too, redeveloping their Mussolini-era stadium and qualifying for Europe three seasons running, including a first campaign in the Champions League.

The only other city where a single club is demonstrably worshipped is **Florence**, enraptured by Fiorentina despite a lack of silverware.



Just as many stadia have barely changed in decades, some attitudes seem stuck in the dark ages. Terrace racism goes on unnoticed and unpunished, a blight on the game. In need of their regular revenue, some clubs do little to rock the boat with their hard-core fans, the ultras.

Given Italy's huge distances – it's 1,200km between Turin and **Lecce** – visiting support is often scant. Only the most loyal make it as far as **Cagliari**, on the southern coast of Sardinia, closer to Tunisia than to mainland Italy. ➡

## ITALY 2019-20

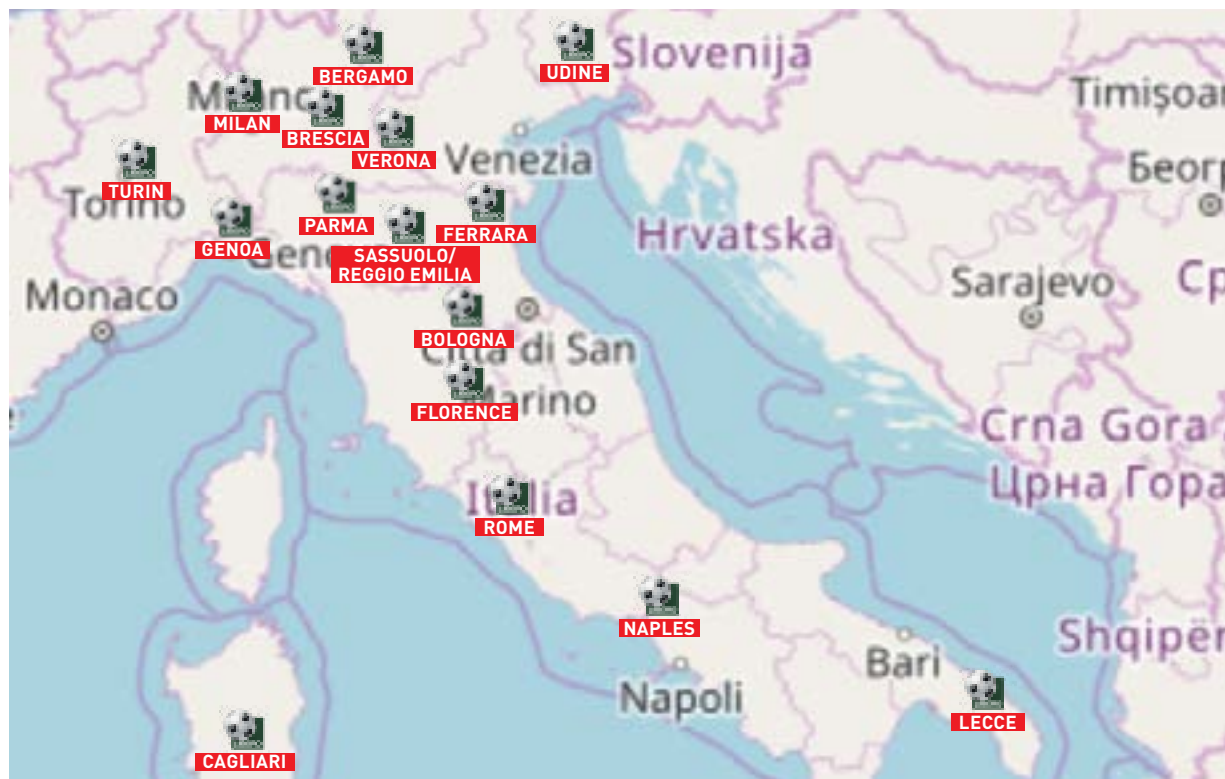
### CONTENTS

|                    |                          |                           |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1-3 Intro          | 17 Stadio Luigi Ferraris | 31 Stadio Olimpico        |
| 4 Bergamo          | 18 Genoa CFC             | 32 Lazio                  |
| 5 Atalanta         | 19 Sampdoria             | 33 Roma                   |
| 6 Bologna          | 20 Lecce                 | 34 Sassuolo/Reggio Emilia |
| 7 Bologna FC       | 21 US Lecce              | 35 Turin                  |
| 8 Brescia          | 22 Milan                 | 36 Juventus               |
| 9 Brescia Calcio   | 23 San Siro              | 37 Torino                 |
| 10 Cagliari        | 24 AC Milan              | 38 Udine                  |
| 11 Cagliari Calcio | 25 Internazionale        | 39 Udinese                |
| 12 Ferrara         | 26 Naples                | 40 Verona                 |
| 13 SPAL            | 27 Napoli                | 41 Stadio Bentegodi       |
| 14 Florence        | 28 Parma                 | 42 Hellas Verona          |
| 15 Fiorentina      | 29 Parma Calcio          |                           |
| 16 Genoa           | 30 Rome                  |                           |



# ITALY 2019-20

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## Station to stadium

Italy is well served by leading budget airlines **easyJet** ([easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com)) and **Ryanair** ([ryanair.com](http://ryanair.com)), from the UK and other parts of Europe, and within the country itself

**British Airways** ([britishairways.com](http://britishairways.com)) flies to some Italian 20 cities. Cash-strapped national carrier **Alitalia** ([alitalia.com](http://alitalia.com)) has a few routes left.

A cheap, extensive rail system is run by **Trenitalia** ([trenitalia.com](http://trenitalia.com)), competition provided on high-speed intercity lines by **Italo** ([italotreno.it](http://italotreno.it)). There is no national bus carrier, only random regional services.

Italy's extensive **network of motorways** ([autostrade.it](http://autostrade.it)) is interspersed by regular **toll gates**, priced about €9 per 100km. Payment is possible by credit card.

## Tables & trophies

The top four finishers of the 20-club **Serie A** gain access to the group stage of the Champions League. Fifth means the Europa League group stage, sixth, Europa League second qualifying round. The Italian Cup winners also qualify for the EL group stage.

**Serie B** consists of 20 teams, and those finishing between third and



eight make the promotion play-offs. Recently, the likes of Benevento, Pescara and Cesena have reached Serie A without setting the world alight during the regular season in Serie B.

The three lowest finishers in Serie A drop automatically to Serie B, whose top two clubs go up. The last promotion place is decided by play-offs between the next six finishers, unless the team finishing third has a 14-point margin over the one in fourth. As this is extremely unlikely, play-offs take place, first a one-leg preliminary round, the lower-placed teams away, then semi-finals and final of two legs.

Four teams drop down from Serie B to **Serie C**, the bottom three automatically. If the team finishing 18th has a minimum four-point lead over the 19th, they stay up. If not, 18th and 19th play off over two legs – or rather *playout* as Italians term such relegation deciders.

Categorised into three 20-team regional leagues (Girone A, B and C), Serie C is the last professional division – it's also referred to as **Lega Pro**.

Only each regional group winner goes up to Serie B, everyone else down to tenth (!!!) place reaches the byzantine play-offs. For these, the First Round is one match, any drawn games decided →





# ITALY 2019-20

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Torino FC tickets

by previous league position. Then come two-leg knock-outs.

Amateur **Serie D** consists of nine regional leagues, each with 18 clubs. Nine clubs drop from Serie C to D – the bottom-placed finishers, plus two decided by *playout* between those between 16th and 19th positions at season's end.

Serie D is the highest level of the **Lega Nazionale Dilettanti**, a network of amateur leagues stretching down six flights to the Terza Categoria. In theory, the lowliest village outfit can ascend to Serie A.

The Italian Cup, **Coppa Italia**, is less prestigious than its counterpart in England or France. It has no pre-

qualification process – of the 78 teams, the nine from Serie D are chosen by the Lega, usually the second-placed finishers from last season. The 24 from Serie C are the highest-placed non-promotees from the previous May.

Until the quarter-finals, each round is seeded but, unlike in Germany,



Match day at Juventus

in favour of the higher-ranked club, which gets home advantage. Ties are decided over one game, extra-time and penalties, apart from the two-legged semi-final. The final is usually played at Rome's Stadio Olimpico.

The winners are granted a berth in the Europa League – unless already through to the Champions League. If so, the runners-up do not qualify for Europe.

## Season's dealings

Serie A begins in late August and finishes in mid to late May. There's a two-week break in January.

Sunday is *calcio* day, though there are usually a couple of games on a Saturday, at 6pm and 8.45pm. Sunday is also staggered, usually with a game at 12.30pm and at least one marquee fixture at 8.45pm, straddling the main kick-off time of 3pm. Kick-off for midweek fixtures is 8.45pm, often with one game at 6pm.

Teams taking part in Champions League fixtures the following midweek often play league games on the previous Saturday rather than Sunday.

Serie B runs from late August to the third week of May, with play-offs and *playouts* into mid June. Most games are played on Saturday at 3pm, usually with one fixture on Friday evening and one on Monday evening.

## Entry level

Nearly all clubs distribute online, most via **TicketOne** (ticketone.it) and **VivaTicket** (vivaticket.it). Both also have hundreds of outlets across Italy.

You will need to provide ID details or, if going in person, show your passport. The same goes for purchases from the *biglietteria* at the stadium, often possible on a match day. Few club shops distribute tickets.

Re-sale agency **viagogo** (viagogo.it) is also very active in Italy.

The most expensive tickets (around €50-60) will be in the Tribuna Centrale, then Tribuna Laterale or Distinti (around €30-40). The cheapest (around €20) are behind the goals in the Curva, usually indicated Sud or Nord. This will be with the ultras. Away tickets are rarely sold on the day. Prices usually rise by at least 15% for games against the Milan giants or Juventus. **LE**



# ITALY 2019-20 Bergamo

*www.liberoguide.com/bergamo*

## Bergamo

Home of one of Italy's most enduring and now high-flying clubs, **Atalanta, Bergamo** is an affluent city in Lombardy divided into Upper and Lower Towns. Its local economy has benefitted from its status as a budget-air hub convenient for nearby Milan.

The team owes its origins to wealthy Swiss emigrés who founded a Foot Ball Club Bergamo in 1903 – although Atalanta were actually formed in October 1907.

Their first pitch was in via Maglio del Lotto by the railway lines, the other side of today's station. After World War I, Atalanta moved out to Daste, towards today's budget airport of Orio al Serio.

At the time there were two rival teams, Atalanta and Bergamasca, forced to play-off to access the Lombardy division of the Prima Categoria league in 1919. Atalanta won it but by the following February, the two clubs had merged, adopting black and blue as a symbol of the union.

Thus Italian football had another Nerazzurri to complement the ones in Milan.

In 1928, Atalanta moved to a new stadium north-east of town, first named after a Fascist martyr, Mario Brumana,



the **Stadio Atleti Azzurri d'Italia**, renamed and remodelled as the Gewiss Stadium in 2019.

Atalanta went on to play more than 60 seasons in Italy's top flight. Local rivalries around Lombardy include Brescia, Milan and Inter. The club offices are out in Zingonia, way out south-west of the city.

### Bearings

**Orio al Serio Airport** is 3.5km (2.5 miles) south-east of Bergamo, just outside the

city limits. It also serves Milan 45km (28 miles) away. An **ATB Airport bus** (every 20mins; €2.10/€3 on board, €5 with 24hr city transport) takes 20mins to reach Bergamo train station and then onto the High Town. The same company runs **city buses**, €1.25 a single ticket, €3.50 a day pass. A **taxi** (+39 035 451 9090) to town should cost around €15.

### Bed

The **Bergamo Tourist Office** ([visitbergamo.net/en](http://visitbergamo.net/en)) has a hotel-booking service.

Taking advantage of the early-morning budget-air traffic, locals have converted their flats for tourist accommodation, such as **Early Leaving Bergamo Airport**, the nearest lodging to the stadium. Airport transfer is included in the price.

A more conventional B&B is the **Accademia**, on via Baracca, halfway between town and the stadium, close to the equally affordable **Santa Caterina** on via Alberico da Rosciate.



Birreria Bergamo Alta

On piazzale Repubblica, the **Excelsior San Marco** is a traditional four-star while revamped four-star **Hotel Piemontese** offers a convenient bed opposite the station.

### Beer

Upper Town haunts near the funicular stop include **Tucans**, the **Fly Pub** and the **Birreria Bergamo Alta**, with seven beers on tap. Near the Basilica, **Pub Sant'Orsola** on the street of the same name shows sport a-plenty.

In the Lower Town, the key place is the evening-only **Ritual Pub** (via San Francesco D'Assisi 1), off the main drag from the station.

Near the station, the **Escondido** aka **Guarny** (viale Papa Giovanni XXIII) is a locals' spot that screens matches. **LG**





# ITALY 2019-20 Atalanta

[www.lib eroguide.com/atalanta](http://www.lib eroguide.com/atalanta)



## Atalanta

Competing for more than half-a-century in Serie A and enjoying purple patches in the late 1940s, late 1980s and now, **Atalanta Bergamasca Calcio** ([atalanta.it](http://atalanta.it)) have a long tradition but a near-empty trophy cabinet. Since 2016-17, La Dea ('The Goddess') have enjoyed remarkably good seasons, qualifying for Europe after nearly three decades.

Atalanta started out in 1907, merging with Bergamasca in 1920 and adopting the colours of black and blue as a symbol of the new union.

The club moved into a new stadium in 1928, today's 22,000-capacity **Atleti Azzuri d'Italia**, renamed and remodelled as the **Gewiss Stadium** in 2019. After gradual modifications – a roof over the East Stand and the disappearance of the running track – a new Curva Nord opened in 2019.

Atalanta fans occupy this end, also known as the Curva Pisani, on via Fossoli/piazzale delle Olimpiadi, and one half of the Curva Sud/Morosini (sectors S09-S17), while sectors DN4-DN7, DN9 are for away fans, accessed where piazzale Goisis meets via del Lazzaretto.

The main stand, Tribuna Centrale, is accessed via piazzale Goisis, while the cheaper Distinti Nord seats are between



the Curva Pisani and main stand. The facing Tribuna UBI Laterale on via Cesare contains both covered and uncovered seats.

### Transport

The best option is the pink **No.6** bus that not only stops at **Stadio** but goes around the ground; **Nos. 9A and 9B** stop at Stadio, on piazzale Goisis. These set off from **Porta Nuova**, at the far end of the main road (viale Papa Giovanni XXIII) that leads from the station. Turn right at the end for **Fermata 101**, by via Camozzi 28, beside the UGF Banca. **Bus No.3** runs to Stadio from the funicular stop in the Upper Town. No bus runs directly from the train station to the stadium, a walk of at least 30mins.

### Tickets

Tickets are distributed at the **Atalanta Store** in town (via Tiraboschi 89), at the **stadium** (Mon 5.30pm-7.30pm,

Tue-Sat 9.30am-1.30pm, 3.30pm-7.30pm, match days) behind the Curva Sud on via Giulio Cesare, and through **VivaTicket** ([vivaticket.it](http://vivaticket.it)), **online** and at outlets such as via Pietro Paleocapa 8C near Bergamo station.

Remember that you need to show ID in order to purchase.

You'll pay around €50 for the best seats in the Tribuna Centrale, €25 for a seat in the Tribuna UBI Laterale opposite and €20 for a place on the Curva Sud or Pisani.

### Shop

The new **Atalanta Store** in town (via Tiraboschi 89) stocks all things black and blue, shirts, clocks and coffee cups, as well as a novelty range of Christmas replica shirts in fir-tree green.

### Bars

The best two bars are on **viale Cesare**, behind the Tribuna Laterale. In the wonderful **Bar Stadio** (No.16E), old locals leaf through the day's sports paper beneath black-and-white images of Atalanta in the post-war era. Across the road, built into a newspaper kiosk, a cabin-like **café** (No.15) is filled with Atalanta souvenirs.

On piazzale delle Olimpiadi, in the Villa Sport, pizzeria/restaurant **Garden** offers a full menu, including a Bergamasco special. **LE**



# ITALY 2019-20 Bologna

*www.liberoguide.com/bologna*



## Bologna

A one-club city, **Bologna** has celebrated more titles than Rome, Florence or Naples – but most were pre-war and the last came in 1964.

**Bologna FC** date back to 1909.

The game was first played here by international students, based in the city of Europe's oldest university. Among

their number was Antonio Bernabéu, brother of Santiago who would later transform Real Madrid.

Still under foreign influence, Bologna played a successful Danubian style, winning titles and moving to a new stadium, the Littoriale (later named Dall'Ara), built in 1927. It staged two games for the 1934 World Cup, including a classy duel between the Austrian Wunderteam and Hungary.

Under Hungarian coach Árpád Weisz, Bologna became Italy's top club in the run-up to war, before Weisz was murdered in Auschwitz. A plaque on stadium wall is dedicated to his memory.

The city's importance to the Italian game was recognised when Bologna was chosen as a 1990 World Cup venue. This was where David Platt scored his famous last-minute goal against Belgium.



### Bearings

Bologna's **Marconi Airport** 6km (3.7miles) north-west of town, connected by regular **BLQ shuttle** (€6, journey time 20mins) to the train station. The same **company** runs city buses (€1.30 single from tabacchi/€1.50 on board, €5 *giornaliero* day pass).

A **taxi** (+039 051 372 727) to the station should cost €15 plus baggage, €18 at night.

### Bed

**Bologna Welcome** has a room-booking service. Opposite the station stand upscale **Starhotels Excelsior Bologna** and four-star chain **Mercure Bologna Centro**.

Towards town, **NH Bologna De La Gare** offers late Sunday check-outs while on via dell'Indipendenza, **Hotel Internazionale** screens matches in the bar. On the same street, **Grand Hotel Majestic Già Baglioni** lives up to its billing while **Tre Vecchi** feels old-school. In the same Zan Hotel group, **Il Canale** on via Bertiera is more basic, as is nearby **Paradise Bologna**.

On via Galliera, the **Atlantic** offers three-star lodgings, also found on via della Zecca at **Albergo Centrale**. **La Magnolia B&B** at via Andrea Costa 45 has cheaper rooms halfway between town and the ground.

By the stadium at via Porrettana 31, **B&B Meloncello** is a smart studio more suited to culture seekers.

### Beer

Pubs abound in student-focused Bologna, particularly on and around **via Zamboni**, where you find **The Cluricaune** and nearby **Empire**.

Football-focused **Celtic Druid** sits on via Caduti di Cefalonia in the heart of town.

There's another pub hub between the Basilica and the western edge of the city centre. On via del Pratello, the **Birreria del Pratello** overflows with German brews while bohemian **Mutenye** schedules and follows TV matches.

Nearby, **BrewDog** on via San Valentino is the Bologna branch of this global Aberdeen ale chain. On via Paradiso, **The Irish Times** is the oldest pub in town, and puts up a maxi screen for big matches.

On the other side of the station, where via Serlio meets via Raimondi, the **Black Fire Pub** shows pay-TV games in HD.

Finally, opposite the station, **AB** is a simple bar that also sells BFC souvenirs. **LB**





# ITALY 2019-20 Bologna FC

*www.liberoguide.com/bologna-fc*



Stadio Renato Dall'Ara

## Bologna FC

**Bologna FC** ([bolognafc.it/en](http://bolognafc.it/en)) are a hallowed name in Italian football whose glory days came before the war. Success has been all too rare since – and relegation all too frequent.

Formed in 1909, Bologna were one of the first clubs to challenge the early Genoa-Milan-Piedmont hegemony.

In 1964, the Rossoblù faced Inter in a title play-off. Days before, the Milanese side had been crowned European

champions while Bologna had suffered the loss of long-term president, Renato Dall'Ara – the players couldn't attend the funeral. Led by captain Giacomo Bulgarelli, Bologna triumphed 2-0.

Bulgarelli also helped the Rossoblù to two Italian cups but Bologna would never again challenge for the title.

The **Stadio Renato Dall'Ara** was originally named the Littoriale after an elite rank of Roman soldier. A grand arena of classic red brick, it welcomed Mussolini for its opening fixture in 1927. Renamed the Dall'Ara after the club



Bologna FC Store

president who died before the 1964 title play-off, the stadium was modernised for the 1990 World Cup with the red brick, portico and Marathon Tower still in place.



Stadio Renato Dall'Ara

The home end, the Curva Bulgarelli, is on via Andrea Costa. Home fans also occupy the Curva San Luca opposite, while away fans are allocated sectors A and B alongside, the Curva Ospiti, accessed on via Menabue. Lateral seats in the Distinti provide a good view. Tribuna Coperta is the covered main stand.

### Transport

**Bus No.21** runs from the train station (on the right of the forecourt as you exit) to **Stadio**, a journey of about 15mins and a dozen stops. **Bus No.14** also runs along Andrea Costa, from central Rizzoli, while **No.20** from Rizzoli calls at the **Dello Sport** stop by the away end.

### Tickets

The club advises to buy tickets in advance, €60 (€70 on the day) for the Tribuna Coperta, €35/€40 in Distinti and €15/€18 in the Curva Bulgarelli. Under-18s are charged half-price.

If Milan, Inter, Juve or Roma are in town, then prices rise considerably.

Tickets go on sale two weeks ahead, **online** from the **club** or via **vivaticket**, either **online** ([bolognafc.it/en/tickets](http://bolognafc.it/en/tickets)) or from its local outlets, including at **Bologna Welcome** on piazza Maggiore.

On match days, the ticket offices on via Andrea Costa and piazza della Pace open 3hrs before kick-off.

In all cases, ID must be presented.

### Shops

The **Bologna FC Official Store** (Mon-Sat 10am-7.30pm, match days) at the stadium is on via dello Sport. In town, there's more Bologna merchandise at the **Macron BFC Store** (daily 10.30am-7.30pm) in the Galleria Cavour.

Bologna's recent second kit featured a red-and-blue sash created from 100 star BFC names.

### Bars

On via Andrea Costa, the **Pizzeria San Gennaro** (No.172) and **Ciclope** restaurant (No.190) stand either side of the stadium, with the fish-oriented **La Langouste** (No.210) further along.

Behind the Curva San Luca, **Billi Bar 1833** has been serving coffee and cakes since its name suggests.

On piazza della Pace, **Bar Maratona** displays a signed shirt while at via Porrettana 55, **Caffetteria San Luca** has a back restaurant and football chatter out front. **LB**





# ITALY 2019-20 Brescia

*www.liberoguide.com/brescia*



## Brescia

The second biggest city in Lombardy after Milan, 40 minutes away by train, industrial powerhouse **Brescia** sits behind the likes of Trieste and Vicenza in the all-time Serie A table. **Brescia Calcio** have never appeared in any major European competition.

And yet the very biggest names in the modern game – Pep Guardiola, Andrea Pirlo, Roberto Baggio, Gheorghe Hagi – have pulled on that distinctive inverted chevron shirt and strode out onto the pitch of the **Stadio Mario Rigamonti**.

The stadium stands way north of the historic town centre, easily accessed by the city's swish, contemporary metro network.



### Bearings

The nearest airport is budget hub **Bergamo Orio al Serio**, 50km (31 miles) north-west of Brescia. A direct **Flixbus** to **Brescia SAIA bus station** (€4 online) takes 50min.

**Milan's Linate** and **Malpensa** airports are 85km (53 miles) and 135km (84 miles) away respectively. The fastest **trains** from **Milan** to **Brescia** take 40 minutes (€13), regional ones (€7) 1hr. Brescia train and bus stations are alongside each other, on the southern edge of the city centre – for the

stadium, you'll need to take the **metro** (single €1.40, 24hr day pass €3).

**Buses** use the same tickets, available from machines at stops and stations.

**Radio Taxi Brixia** (+39 030 35 111) offer airport transfers.

### Bed

**In Lombardia** (in-lombardia.it) has an excellent online hotel-booking service for Brescia.

The nearest hotel to the stadium, the upscale **DoubleTree by Hilton**

**Brescia**, sits on viale Europa, a minute's walk from Mompiano metro station.

A number of pleasingly old-school, mid-range hotels dot the city centre, including the pre-war **Vittoria** near the metro station of the same name and the refined **Albergo Orologio**, just the other side of the Cathedral.

Handy for the station, the **Hotel Igea** on viale della Stazione belongs to the same era and, indeed, the same group, as the Vittoria. Across the road,

equally reliable and mid-range, the **Hotel Cristallo** comprises 24 en-suite rooms. Even closer to the station, right opposite, in fact, the **Albergo Astron** (+39 030 48220) is cheaper and more basic.

### Beer

Faux pubs with preposterous names – **Mr Allsopp**, **Brick Lane Old Time Club** – dot Brescia city centre, but there's a few drinking spots worth the bother. Just off piazza della Loggia, the **St Patrick Irish Pub** is more restaurant than pub (tablecloths?!?) but shows matches, serves Guinness and sets tables outside.

More pub-like and also with TVs, **Black Sheep** sits on via Tosio, convivial **Estrella** alongside creating a cluster of summer terraces. The student quarter, where via San Faustino meets contrada Pozzo dell'Olmo, a bar hub includes lively **66, Avenue** and evergreen bohemian drinkery **Bar da Franco** – the passing of whisky-sipping owner Franco Masserdotti in 2017 inspired testimonials in the local paper.

Across town, near Brescia's old ground, the **Antica Birreria Wührer** at viale della Bornata 46 is German-style beerhall, Irish Pub and beer garden in one, dating back to 1904. Tennent's, so revered in Italy, rubs beertaps with the likes of Augustiner and house Crystall. **LB**



# ITALY 2019-20 Brescia Calcio

[www.liberoguide.com/brescia-calcio](http://www.liberoguide.com/brescia-calcio)



## Brescia Calcio

For a club that's been around since 1911, **Brescia Calcio** ([bresciacalcio.it](http://bresciacalcio.it)) have plenty of room in the trophy cabinet. Four Serie B titles, including one in 2019, and an Anglo-Italian Cup achieved after a narrow win over Notts County hardly impress.

Roberto Baggio, Pep Guardiola and Gheorghe Hagi – who starred in that strange 1994 final win at Wembley – have all come to Brescia. Locally born Andrea Pirlo was nurtured here.

Yet no other club has played more seasons in Serie B.

With great local rivals Atalanta now flying high, owner Massimo Cellino, of Cagliari and Leeds infamy, has built a new training centre, renovated the crumbling **Stadio Mario Rigamonti** and got the Leonessa back into Serie A after eight years. How long the honeymoon will last is another matter.

Set way north of town, named after the Brescia-born member of the Grande Torino team killed in the Superga air crash of 1949, the Mario

Rigamonti is still a renovation in progress. First opened in 1959, it now holds 16,700, down from its previous 19,500, but twice as many seats are covered, 6,500.

Tubular metal is being used for the new Curva Sud, where 1,000 away fans are accommodated, in the same end as 3,500 home supporters. The fieriest Brescia support is in the Curva Nord, aka Andrea Toninelli, while the prime Tribuna Centrale has also seen an upgrade in its seating. Around it, on this west side of the stadium, nearest via Giovanni Novagani, is



the Tribuna Laterale Numerata. The sideline opposite is the Gradinata, Upper and Lower, Alta and Bassa.

### Transport

The stadium is by **Mompiano metro**. Walking out of Brescia main station, look for the tall blue metro sign to the right, head down the escalators and onto the train heading north towards **Prealpino**. Mompiano is six stops. From there, walk across **piazzale Kossuth** – the stadium is just ahead.

### Tickets & shop

Advance tickets are distributed through the new **club shop** (Mon-Sat 9am-1pm, 2pm-6pm) at via Solferino 51A (corner via Floriano Ferramola, near the station) and online through **TicketOne** ([ticketone.it/brescia-calcio-biglietti.html](http://ticketone.it/brescia-calcio-biglietti.html)). Replica tops with that signature inverted chevron, bedsheets and mouse pads are also sold in-store.

With Brescia in Serie A, availability on match days is tricky – **contact** [store@bresciacalcio.it](mailto:store@bresciacalcio.it) or +39 030 097 0832.

**Prices** are €24 for home and away fans in the Curva behind each goal, €32-€37 in the sideline Gradinata and €67 in the Tribuna Centrale.

### Bars

Several standard eateries are dotted around piazzale Kossuth and adjoining via dello Stadio. Superior **Le Rondinelle** has been serving quality pizzas – and main meat and fish dishes – since 1977. Rivals **L'altra Piedigrotta** and **Nuova Santa Lucia** are closer to the stadium.

The most bar-like option, just across from the stadium at via dello Stadio 33, the **Pura Vida Café** took over from **Champions** and focused on quality – Portioli coffee from Milan and two taps of decent beer, best partaken on the friendly little terrace. Closed on Sundays, though. **LD**





# ITALY 2019-20 Cagliari

[www.lib eroguide.com/cagliari](http://www.lib eroguide.com/cagliari)



## Cagliari

Capital of Sardinia, **Cagliari** is the only place to have landed the Italian title off the mainland. In the near 50 years since, flagship club **Cagliari** have maintained a regular presence in the top flight despite the lack of a regular home ground.

The **Sant'Elia** stadium, inaugurated for the first match after that 1970 championship win, was the base for England's group matches for Italia '90.

In 2017, the **Sardegna Arena** was put up beside it, while a permanent stadium is built instead. The quick-fix Sardegna Arena will be taken down in 2021-22.

Cagliari first played at via Pola, near the railway station. As a port city, the Sardinian capital was open to foreign influence and the first game was played between local students and Genoese sailors in 1902.

With the introduction of non-Sardinian players in the late 1920s, Cagliari made Serie B in 1931 before their golden

era of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although the Rossoblù haven't come close to a scudetto since, their recent long stint in Serie A has kept a fan base hungry yet loyal.

### Bearings

**Cagliari Elmas Airport** is 7km (4 miles) north-west of town, served by a **railway link** (€1.30, 7min journey time) every 20min to **Cagliari station**. A **taxi** (+39 070 400 101) should cost €20.

Public transport consists of the two-line **ARST Metrocagliari** network (€1.30



single), and bus and trolleybus network run by **CTM** (€1.30 single, €2 *integrato* ticket combined with a metro journey). The €3.30 *integrato* day ticket is valid for metro and bus.

Cagliari station is by the waterfront, close to the centre but a steep walk. The **Sardegna Arena** is further down the waterfront, a bus or taxi journey away.

### Bed

The **Cagliari Tourist Office** lists hotels.

The nearest lodging to the stadium is **Bed & Breakfast Elia's**, bright and contemporary. Also close is the four-star **Hotel Panorama**, with a pool and aptly panoramic restaurant.

In town, chic **T Hotel** on via Giudicati offers a spa while the mid-range **4 Mori** is convenient for port and station. B&Bs line **via Garibaldi**, where you find the upscale **Cagliari Boutique Rooms**.

At the budget end, **Hostel Marina** off via Manno is set in a former 16th-century monastery.

### Beer

Sardinian beer **Ichnusa** is brewed near Cagliari. Sample it around the **Old Town**, **Marina** and **Poetto Beach**.

To catch the match, try the Germanic **Bier Keller** on viale Trieste. Another option is Old Square, on corso Vittorio Emanuele II, Irish-themed with Sky TV. **The Cork** is in similar vein, on via Dante Alighieri.

Many brews are provided at **Il Merlo Parlante** (via Portoscalas 69) and the **Beer Garden** on via Angioy.

Locals gather at the **Antico Caffè** on piazza Costituzione. There's a prime view from hilltop cocktail bar **Libarium Nostrum** on via Santa Croce.

Old Cagliari players frequent fish restaurant **La Stella Marina di Montecristo** (via Sardegna 140).

In summer, head for **Emerson** at Poetta or, at Cala Fighera, **La Paillote** with its own beach. Both are owned by ex-Cagliari star François Modesto. **LE**





# ITALY 2019-20 Cagliari Calcio

[www.lib eroguide.com/cagliari-calcio](http://www.lib eroguide.com/cagliari-calcio)



Sardegna Arena

## Cagliari Calcio

Forever linked with the landmark title win of 1970 and the iconic striker who helped achieve it, Luigi Riva, **Cagliari** ([cagliaricalcio.net](http://cagliaricalcio.net)) are the flagship club of Sardinia.

Founded in 1920, the Rossoblù have spent a third of their history in the top flight, first gaining promotion the very season that Riva came on board, 1963-64. Six years later, Riva's goals brought the Scudetto to Cagliari.

The title won at the Amsicora, the new champions then moved to the Sant'Elia. Controversial businessman Massimo Cellino acquired the club in 1992. Behind the scenes, chaos reigned. Along with a rapid changing of coaches, Cagliari saw the closure of the Sant'Elia followed by a long-running saga to find a new one.

Now Cagliari are back at the Sant'Elia complex, a rapidly erected **Sardegna Arena** opened in September 2017 to serve the club until 2021-22 while a new Sant'Elia is constructed alongside.

Incoming owner Tommaso Giulini, a Milanese entrepreneur, oversaw promotion back to Serie A in 2016, then the move into the Sardegna Arena.

Occupying the former car park of the Sant'Elia, the ground is an all-seater holding just over 16,000, 3,000 places covered in the main stand. Two tiers sit behind each goal, the Curva Sud and Curva Nord, away fans allocated a section of the Nord.

The new Sant'Elia will hold 21,000.



Cagliari 1920 Store

### Transport

**Bus No.6** runs from central via Dante, viale Regina Margherita and via Bonaria close(ish) to the station to the Sant'Elia/Sardegna Arena. From focal piazza Giovanni XXIII near the Opera House, you can also take **bus No.3**, journey time around 15-20min.

A **taxi** from Cagliari station shouldn't take more than ten minutes, the fare around €12.

### Tickets & shop

The club has two outlets, the main one at largo Carlo Felice 76, the **Cagliari 1920 Store** (daily 9am-8.30pm), close to the Old Square pub in town.

There's a smaller **shop** (Mon-Fri 9am-1pm, 4pm-8pm, Sat 9am-1pm) in the **piazza L'Unione Sarda** mall by Santa Gilla station, one stop/1.5km north of Cagliari main train station. Tickets (ID required) are sold as well as red-and-blue merchandise.

There are online sales through **TicketOne** ([sport.ticketone.it](http://sport.ticketone.it)), with



Sardegna Arena

outlets in town, including one at central via Pasquale Paoli 41.

For major fixtures, it's €30 to sit in the Curva Sud or Nord, €45 in the Distinti Laterale, a sideline seat towards the corner flags. You pay €70 nearer the halfway line in the Distinti Centrale.

The best seats are in the Tribuna Centrale, either Blu (€80) or Rosso (€100). Everywhere but either Curva, it's €15-€20 cheaper for women, under-18s and over-65s, and €15 anywhere for under-12s, availability willing.

For lesser opposition, prices drop down to €12 for a place in the Curva, and €10-€15 cheaper elsewhere.

### Bars

Over the Canale Palma by the Hotel Panorama, the **Café Etnico** (via Rockefeller 39) is a convivial spot serving light snacks, a 15min walk via pedestrian walkway from the stadium. Nearer the sea, Med-facing restaurants include the recommended **Quattro Mori al Mare** on via dei Navigatore. **LE**



# ITALY 2019-20 Ferrara

[www.liberoguide.com/ferrara](http://www.liberoguide.com/ferrara)



## Ferrara

**Ferrara** is a UNESCO World Heritage Site a half-hour train ride from Bologna. Tourists stroll its picturesque historic centre, around moated medieval Castello Estense.

Successive promotions thrust local club **SPAL Ferrara** into Serie A in 2017, a first since 1968.

Their stadium, a classic **Stadio Comunale** hemmed in by green-shuttered housing, opened in 1928.

In recent years, the club merged with nearby Giacomense to become SPAL 2013, at the initiative of incoming owners, laminate magnates the Colombarinis.

Recent success has seen a rapid rebuilding and expanding of the Comunale, now called **Stadio Paolo Mazza**, and further developed in 2018.

### Bearings

The nearest airport is **Bologna Guglielmo Marconi** is 51km (32 miles) south-west. The **Bus & Fly** service sets off from Arrivals every 2.5-3hrs, heading for **Ferrara station** near the stadium and

**viale Cavour** by the Castello Estense in the city centre. Journey time is 60min, single €16.

An **Aerobus** also runs every 11min from the airport to **Bologna station** (25min), tickets €6.

From there, the fastest **train** to **Ferrara** (€4.75) is every 1-2hrs and takes 30min. The slower service, same price, takes 45-50min.

From Ferrara station, the stadium is a 5-7min walk, the city centre 15min away. Local buses are run by **ami Ferrara**.

### Sebastian Pub



**Tickets** are €1.30, a *giornaliero* day pass €3.50, from newspaper kiosks.

**Radio Taxi Ferrara** (+39 0532 900 900) is a reliable local service.

### Bed

The nearest lodging to the stadium is the **Hotel Orologio**, a four-star close to the canal, with a spa, bar and restaurant.

On main **viale Cavour**, functional four-star **Hotel Astra** is still within easy reach.

Closer to town, **Hotel Touring** has SKY Italia in each room, a spa and quality breakfasts. Half- or full-board deals available.

On the main square, **Annunziata** is sleek and chic. Nearby, equally classy **Hotel Ferrara** fills a former 15th-century tavern.

Around the castle moat, the **Hotel de Prati** has been in the hospitality trade for nearly a century but doesn't feel dated or jaded.

Also on this side of the Castello, the **Hotel Europa** dates back to 1861 when it hosted royalty.

For something cheaper, the **Albergo San Romano** comprises 15 comfortable rooms between the castle and the canal.

### Beer

On **via San Romano** in the centre, **Birra Frara** purveys its own artisanal beers. The wonderful **Antico Cafè**, at **via Bersaglieri del Po 25E**, also offers lesser-known brews. This cosy, bare-brick hidey-hole shows its SPAL support with flags and team photos.

Anglophile corner bar **Il Molo** on **via Contrari** establishes pub credentials with football scarves and TV sport.

Beneath the Castle, **Birraria Giori** dates back to 1881, a bar/brewery set in a pretty gazebo, outside tables set on historic cobblestones. Opposite, the **Caffe Divino** specialises in rarer ales and fine wines.

**Main Street** sits on **viale Cavour**, with Paulaner and Sardinian Ichnusa on draught, and football screened.

Near the canal on **via Darsena**, **L'Archibugio** sets up a big screen outside on popular Serie A afternoons. Nearby, atmospheric waterside **Sebastian Pub** offers decent beer, quality pizzas and TV football aboard a vintage German sea trawler hauled all the way to Ferrara. **LB**





# ITALY 2019-20 SPAL

[www.lib eroguide.com/spal](http://www.lib eroguide.com/spal)



## SPAL

Promoted to Serie A in 2017, **SPAL Ferrara** are a grand old name in the Italian game though with little silverware to show for it.

Based at the fifth-oldest ground still operating in top-class Italian football, SPAL hark back to a long-lost era of communal stadiums in Italian town centres, hemmed in by residential buildings.

The Comunale was later renamed **Stadio Paolo Mazza** after the sporting director during the club's golden era.

In the wilderness for half a century, from 2016 SPAL managed to achieve two promotions in as many seasons,



necessitating the expansion of the Stadio Mazza from 7,000 capacity to, eventually, 16,000.

As workmen laboured to get the Stadio ready for August 2017, SPAL played their first home game at Bologna, a 3-2 win over Udinese crowned by a 94th-minute goal from Bologna loanee Luca Rizzo.

Having modified their ground to accommodate 1,500 away fans in the Curva Est along via Montegrappa, the Gradinata Nord on via Cassoli was rebuilt to contain 3,800 seats and a TV screen.

Home fans gather in the Curva Ovest on via Ortigara. VIPs are housed in the main Tribuna Sud on corso Piave. All stands are roofed. The total cost of this operation was €8 million, shared by SPAL and the municipality, the newly redeveloped stadium opened in September 2018 with a 2-0 win over high-flying Atalanta..

### Transport

The stadium is an easy walk from Ferrara station. Cross the road opposite, to corso Piave. Passing Bar Piave, you see the ground on your left.

### Tickets

Tickets are put on general sale **online** through **VivaTicket** ([spalferrara.vivaticket.it](http://spalferrara.vivaticket.it)) ten days in advance.

VivaTicket also distributes through Coop stores, tobacconists and bars in Ferrara. If tickets are left over on match day, they are distributed through the **Biglietteria Centrale** on corso Piave, which opens for two hours from mid-morning. ID must be provided.

For top opposition, advance **admission** is €35 in the home Curva Ovest and away

Curva Est, €50-€75 along the sidelines in the Gradinata Laterale and Centrale. Prices increase by €5 on match days.

For less attractive visiting sides, prices reduce to €23 in the Curva Ovest, and €32-€50 on the sidelines, again with a €5 levy on match days.

Ladies, over 65s and under 16s are charged around €10 in all sectors.

### Shops

The main **SPAL Store** is at via Voltapaletto 17 (Tue-Sat 9.30am-1pm, 3.30pm-7.30pm) near the cathedral. A **match-day outlet** also operates at corso Piave 28, behind the Tribuna Sud.

Replica shirts come in three varieties, starting with light blue and white stripes.

### Bars

Home fans gather at the **Bar Piave** (corso Piave 77), between stadium and station, with quality beers and burgers, and occasional DJs.

Closer to the stadium, the **Bar Fortezza** on the sidestreet of the same name has that match-day essential, a gazebo, but is otherwise standard-issue.

Best spot by the stadium is wonderful **La Coccinella**, where via Ortigara meets Cassoli. Decker out in blue and white, it runs a decent kitchen with a daily menu but is otherwise ideal for affordable pre-match drinks. **LB**





# ITALY 2019-20 Florence

[www.liberoguide.com/florence](http://www.liberoguide.com/florence)



## Florence

If Genoa or Turin is the cradle of the modern Italian game, then **Florence**, home of **Fiorentina**, is its historic source. Calcio Fiorentino, an early form of football/rugby, was played across 16th-century Italy. Piazza Santa Croce, where the game is still staged every June, was its Wembley.

Calcio is the Italian name for modern-day football, but Florence lacked the industrial drive of Turin for the sport to develop.

It wasn't until 1926 that Fiorentina were formed, at the instigation of Marquis Luigi Ridolfi, the first president. He was also head of the local Fascist Federation, seeking to propagate sporting excellence.

The embodiment of Ridolfi's dream was the groundbreakingly modernist stadium built by Pier Luigi Nervi. Still used by Fiorentina today, the later



renamed **Stadio Artemio Franchi** retains its 1932 look thanks to a kind refit for Italia '90. Ridolfi was also behind the **Coverciano** national training centre east of Campo di Marte. The **Museo del Calcio** there is worth a visit.

A World Cup venue in 1934, the **Comunale** witnessed Fiorentina win the title in 1956 and again in 1969. The current Fiorentina usually finish there or thereabouts – more often, thereabouts.

### Bearings

Underused **Florence Airport** is 8km (5 miles) north-west of town. **Vueling** has direct budget connections with Luton and Gatwick. A **Volainbus** (€6, €10 return, €1.20 extra for a day ticket) leaves every 30mins for Florence bus terminus via the main train station of **Santa Maria Novella** (journey time 20-25mins). **Ataf** also runs **city transport** of buses and trams (single €1.20, €2 on board, 24hr €5).

A **taxi** (+39 055 4390) from airport to town (15mins) should cost €20-€25.



Busier **Pisa** is 82km (50.5 miles) from Florence. A **taxi** (+39 050 541 600) to Pisa station is €10. An hourly **bus** (online €14) from Pisa airport to Santa Maria Novella takes 70min.

### Bed

The nearest hotels to the stadium are the two-star **Ungherese** on via Amici and the grandiose **Palazzo Lombardo** on via dei Mille.

Near **Santa Maria Novella**, lodgings run from two-star **Hotel Berna** to top-notch **Grand Hotel Baglioni Firenze**. The **Roma** is also convenient,

the **Lombardia** slightly cheaper. The sumptuous **Palazzo Gaddi Florence** on via del Giglio is where Milton composed parts of *Paradise Lost*.

The riverside **Balestri** on piazza Mentana is a nice mid-range choice while the two-star **Santa Croce** on via Dè Bentaccordi is also near the Arno.

### Beer

Expat magnet Florence is dotted with pubs. The first, near SMN station, was the **Fiddler's Elbow**, with big-screen football and happy-hour beers. Similarly sport-centric is **Lion's Fountain**

on piazza di S Pier Maggiore while **Finnegan** on via San Gallo is proudly Irish-owned.

The **Old Stove** on via Pellicceria covers all bases for pints and Prem coverage. The **Tartan Jock** on corso dei Tintori offers TV soccer as does the **James Joyce** (Lugarno Cellini 1) on the opposite riverbank. Perhaps the best is lived-in **Uncle Jimmy's** on via dei Pescioni, with a big screen.

Of the Italian bars, busy **FRiendS** at borgo San Jacopo 51 is set between No.27 and No.29. **LG**



# ITALY 2019-20 Fiorentina

*www.libero guide.com/fiorentina*



## Fiorentina

Champions only twice, **Fiorentina** (en. violachannel.tv) have an importance in the Italian game beyond the extent of their silverware. Flagship club of **Florence**, the Viola have a huge fan base, and a bitter rivalry with Juventus.

The Italian title of 1982 escaped Viola clutches thanks to a dubious penalty in Juve's favour. Fiorentina later sold their star talent, Roberto Baggio, to the Turin giants.

When film producer Mario Cecchi Gori became president, headline names arrived, in particular Gabriel Batistuta, 'Batigol', the fans' idol.

Huge wage bills led to bankruptcy. President Diego Della Valle formed a new club forced to play its way out of the fourth flight. They became **ACF Fiorentina**, and returned to Serie A in 2004.

Often challenging for Europe, even Europa League semi-finalists in 2015, Fiorentina remain a potent force but rarely a title challenger.

A superb example of pre-war stadium architecture, the **Stadio Artemio Franchi** was devised by star architect Pier Luigi Nervi with the 1934 World Cup in mind.

Refurbishments for the 1990 World Cup included a new lower tier and a sprucing up of Nervi's concrete.

Viola fans occupy both ends, the north Curva Fiesole considered the home one. Opposite is the Railway End, the Curva Ferrovia, with away fans in the settore ospiti (OS1-3, accessed through gates 13 and 14) at the Ferrovia end of the Maratona, the stand dominated by the



tower of the same name. The lower tiers of each sideline, Parterre di Maratona and Parterre Tribuna, suit neutrals.

### Transport

A **train** leaves Santa Maria Novella station for **Campo di Marte** every 15mins (€1.50), 5mins/1 stop away. It usually sets off from outer platform 18. At Campo di Marte, take the walkway towards the floodlights. This is the Ridolfi athletics stadium – the Stadio Artemio Franchi is behind.

### Tickets

The **Fiorentina ticket office** (Mon-Fri 9.30am-1pm, 2.30pm-6.30pm, from 9.30am match-day weekends) near the stadium at via Settesanti 28r/corner via Duprè offers advance and match-day sales.

Other outlets include the age-old kiosk in the city centre, **il chiosco degli sportivi** (Tue-Sat 10am-2pm, 3.30pm-

7.30pm, cash only), where via degli Anselmi meets via Pellicceria.

Online sales are distributed through **TicketOne** (ticketone.it).

ID is required in all cases.

For the most games, you pay €20 in the Curva Fiesole/Ferrovia, €40 in the Maratona, and €50-€55 in the Maratona Centrale, Tribuna Parterre and Tribuna Laterale. Prices rise for marquee opponents.

### Shops

At **Fiorentina Point** (viale Manfredi Fanti 85A) by the stadium, you can find original red-and-white Fiorentina shirts, laptop bags and Fiorentina earrings.

The **Fiorentina Store Duomo** (daily 10am-8pm) in town (borgo San Lorenzo 9R) has a smaller selection.

### Bars

On viale Fanti by the stadium, the **Bar Marisa** (corner via Carnesecchi) displays Batigol-era photos over the bar.

The splash from 'Stadio' after the '56 title win stands out amid the four walls of Fiorentina history in the **Pizzeria Da Graziano Stadio** (Fanti No.3er).

By the rugby ground on viale Paoli, **Rugbier** is a Bierstube, with Riegele lager from Augsburg and Bavarian specials. **LG**



# ITALY 2019-20 Genoa

[www.liberoguide.com/genoa](http://www.liberoguide.com/genoa)

## Genoa

Genoa, the cradle of the modern Italian game, is home to Serie A and city rivals **Genoa** and **Sampdoria**.

The Derby della Lanterna between them is named after the historic lighthouse once overseen by the uncle of Christopher Columbus. The fixture is played at the ground shared by the two clubs, the **Luigi Ferraris Stadium**.

The Genoa Cricket and Athletic Club were formed in 1893 by and for British expatriates. A certain James Spensley opened its football section and initiated the inaugural Italian Championship between Genoa and Turin. Spensley kept goal as Genoa won six of the first seven titles. Two of their competitors in the burgeoning top flight were Andrea Doria and Sampierdarenese, also local.

Originally based in Campasso on the city's western outskirts, the Genoa club moved to Marassi, on the east bank of the Bisagno river, where a ground was opened in 1911.

A regular stage for Italian internationals, it was renamed the Luigi Ferraris after a legendary Genoa player who perished in World War I. Andrea Doria played alongside, occasionally meeting Sampierdarenese in the Ligurian leagues.



Merged, then separated, then merged again as Sampdoria in 1946, this new club moved in to share the Luigi Ferraris with Genoa.

### Bearings

Genoa's **Cristoforo Colombo airport** is 7.5km (five miles) west of town, linked by **Volabus** (every 30-45mins, journey time 30-45mins) that calls at both main stations, **Principe** and **Brignole**, straddling the old town centre. Tickets (€6 on board, €5 online) include one onward journey.

Tickets for the **bus network and one-line metro** connecting the two stations are €1.50, or €4.50 for a 24hr pass. Brignole station is almost walking distance from the stadium.

A **taxi** (+39 010 5966) from the airport has a fixed rate of €7/€8 per person, with three people travelling.

### Bed

On piazza Verdi by Brignole Station, you'll find four-star **Hotel Moderno Verdi** and renovated three-star **Hotel Brignole**. A cheaper option, on nearby



via Vincenzo, is basic **I Capricci**. Nearer to the stadium on via Borgo degli Incrociati is stylish B&B **il Borgo di Genova**.

The many lodgings near Principe Station range from the historic, five-star **Grand Hotel Savoia Genova** to the family-run two-star **Hotel Balbi**. The nearby **Hotel della Posta** is similarly affordable. Even cheaper alongside is the Bernhoef, a basic bargain-basement find.

In the same family, style and location as the Savoia is the equally classic **Hotel Continental**, while more modest three-star **Vittoria** is tucked away in its own little square.

### Beer

Genoa nightlife is concentrated in little downtown hubs such as **piazza delle Erbe**, site of beer temple **28 Erbe**, and nearby **piazza San Bernardo**, site of contemporary **BaR MoReTTi**.

Near San Bernardo, **Mangiabuono** (vico Vegetti 3r) is a pesto-with-everything eatery run by a rugby-mad Anglophile.

Also recommended are the Bavarian **Hofbräuhaus** on via Boccardo and the friendly **Fabrique** bar with its Samp and Inter paraphernalia by the docks.

Pubs include the time-warp **Britannia** (vico Casana 76, signposted on via Roma) and the **Tartan Pub** (via Invrea 13). **LG**





# ITALY 2019-20 **Stadio Luigi Ferraris**

*www.liberoguide.com/stadio-luigi-ferraris*

## Stadio Luigi Ferraris

The **Luigi Ferraris**, known by its original name of the **Marassi**, is a grand old man of Italian football. This 35,000-capacity red-brick landmark by the dried-up Bisagno river is one of Europe's most enduring football arenas.

Occupied by **Genoa** since its opening in 1911 and shared by Sampdoria since 1946, the Marassi is where Italy have played many an international, before and after the war. It also saw action in two World Cups, the Spain-Brazil fixture of 1934 and four games for Italia '90. Here Costa Rica beat Scotland, and David O'Leary scored the winning penalty for Ireland over Romania in a shoot-out.

With one wooden grandstand opened in 1915 and a complete ground of 51,000 capacity created by 1934, the then Comunale began to look something like a modern-day stadium after a two-tiered stand was built in 1951.

With the stadium squeezed between the river, a prison and tight residential streets, further development wasn't considered until the World Cup of 1990.

The Marassi's present-day look dates from this 1989 revamp: the four solid corner towers in distinctive red, a higher pitch and a new upper tier.



Stadio Luigi Ferraris

Genoa occupy the Gradinata Nord, Sampdoria the Gradinata Sud, both sets of fans fill most of the ground except, of course, for the derby. In all cases but the derby, away fans are allocated one end of the main Tribuna nearest the Gradinata Nord, sectors OL3, TL5 and PL5. Access is through Ingresso 6 on via Monnet nearest the river.

### Transport

**Brignole station** is a 15-20min walk up along the Bisagno – head up via Canevari via the underpass, the other side of the station to the main forecourt. Several buses run via Brignole up the

east bank of the Bisagno to the **Monnet-Stadio** stop, and back via Brignole from the **Bobbio 5/Stadio** stop. On match days, circular buses **KM** and **SM** via Brignole run from waterfront piazzale Kennedy and Principe station respectively.

### Tickets

**Genoa** and **Sampdoria** have their own ticketing arrangements and distribute online through **TicketOne** (sport.ticketone.it). On match days, the botteghini stadio on via Monnet opens from 3-4hrs before kick-off. ID is always required.

### Shops

**Genoa** and **Sampdoria** have their own outlets. Near the stadium at via Casata Centuriona 4, the store **Off Side** proffers merchandise from both sides.

### Bars

By the river on via del Piano, the **Bar del Tifoso** (No.18) is a tiny spot for pre-match revelry.

Turning right into via Centuriona, the **Bar Vittorio** (No.7r) is a handy pitstop before you reach corso di Stefanis behind the stadium, where **Pizzeria Derby** (no.79) offers squares



of pizza slathered in pesto and **Edilio** (No.104) is a decent-quality restaurant specialising in fish.

Grandiose **Villa Piantelli** (No.8), once occupied by aristocratic Genoese families, is now a now multi-purpose cultural centre, tucked away in a hidden courtyard backed up to the stadium. The first-floor bar is decorated with pre-war photographs of Genoa and its football culture.

Most days of the week and before Genoa games, the **Little Club Genoa 1962** on via Clavarezza is also open. **LD**



# ITALY 2019-20 Genoa CFC

[www.liberoguide.com/genoa-cfc](http://www.liberoguide.com/genoa-cfc)

## Genoa CFC

Italy's oldest club, **Genoa Cricket & Football Club** ([genoacfc.it](http://genoacfc.it)) have a heritage dating back to 1893 – September 7 to be precise, when members of an expat social circle met at via Palestro 10.

That evening, mine-owner and British consul Sir Charles Alfred Payton and associates founded the Genoa Cricket & Athletic Club, revised to the Genoa Cricket & Football Club when the influential Dr James Richardson Spensley formed the soccer section four years later. They would adopt the red-and-blue quarters still worn today.

In 1898, Genoa won the first Italian championship in Turin, and then another six before Milan and Juventus came to the fore. It took the arrival of ex-Blackburn winger Willy Garbutt for Genoa's fortunes to swing back. As manager, the first of many in Italy known as 'Mister', Garbutt took Genoa to three more titles, returning to coach the club in the 1940s. Garbutt instigated fitness training, paid transfers and arranged matches with foreign opposition.

With heavyweight Czech striker Tomas Skuhravy, Brazilian Branco and popular libero Gianluca Signorini, Genoa snatched a fourth-place finish in Serie A in 1991 and went on a UEFA Cup run, past Liverpool, before coming up against Ajax in the semi-finals.

Despite the departures of Diego Milito and Thiago Motta, Genoa have maintained a top-flight spot – but too often only just.

A promising campaign under Gian Piero Gasperini saw Genoa finish sixth in 2014-15 – only to miss out on Europe through bureaucratic ineptitude.

### Stadium

Genoa have been playing at the same **Luigi Ferraris Stadium** since 1911, their fans occupying the Gradinata Nord.

### Tickets

Genoa distribute tickets from their **outlet** (Tue-Sun 10am-7pm) at via al Porto Antico 4 by the port. Online, it's through agency **TicketOne** ([sport.ticketone.it](http://sport.ticketone.it)), which also has outlets around Genoa, including at the **Mondadori store** (via XX Settembre 27r) and at **Duemila Grandi Eventi** (via Archimede 28/14), both in the Brignole/stadium area.

On match days, the **botteghini stadio** on via Monnet opens 3-4hrs before kick-off. In all cases, you need to provide ID to buy a ticket.

Prices are set at €20 in the Gradinata Sud, the Nord generally filled with Genoa ultras. It's about €30 in the Distinti, and €40-€80 in the main stand, the Tribuna.

### Shop & museum

The **Genoa Store & Museum** (Tue-Sun 10am-7pm) are located at the club's



city-centre HQ at via al Porto Antico 4 by the port.

The **shop** stocks T-shirts bearing the club's vintage badge, fishing hats, bottle openers, sunglasses and crash helmets, as well as kits of storied red and blue.

Across ten rooms and two floors, the **museum** (€5/€3.50-€4 reduced) covers 125 years of club history, from 'Mister' Willy Garbutt to the present day.

Divided into sections ('Games, shirts and players', 'Supporters'), this well conceived attraction also features a display of trophies and some 200 videos.

### Bar

Behind the Gradinata Nord on via Clavarezza, the **Little Club Genoa 1962** is a small bar decked out in souvenirs from the Pope's visit and the Anfield victory of 1992. It's open most weekday lunchtimes and before Genoa games next door. **LO**



GENOA CFC





# ITALY 2019-20 Sampdoria

[www.libero guide.com/sampdoria](http://www.libero guide.com/sampdoria)



## Sampdoria

Forever linked to the great side of the early 1990s that won the league and made three European finals, **Sampdoria** ([sampdoria.it/en](http://sampdoria.it/en)) are the result of a post-war merger between Andrea Doria and Sampierdarenese.

Both clubs dated back to the 1890s, often playing in rival championships, until a forced merger by the Fascist authorities in 1927 formed the united, and quickly disastrous, La Dominante Genova. Soon after, each reverted back to being a separate entity before another merger in 1946 created Unione Calcio Sampdoria. With it came a new shirt (and, subsequently, a new nickname, I Blucerchiati, 'The Blue-Ringed'), the blue of Andrea Doria combined with the white, red and black rings of Sampierdarenese.

Sampdoria also agreed a groundshare with Genoa at the **Luigi Ferraris Stadium**, one that remains in place today.



Sampdoria Point

Sampdoria were transformed by oil magnate Paolo Mantovani, who made a handful of wise investments in the 1980s. With stars Gianluca Vialli and Roberto Mancini up front, Srećko Katanec and Attilio Lombardo in midfield, Pietro Vierchowod in defence and Gianluca Pagliuca in goal, Samp went on to win their only scudetto in 1991 – in a league also featuring Maradona's Napoli and Baresi's Milan. A year later, Samp made it to the final of the European Cup at Wembley,

only to lose to Barcelona thanks to a memorable Ronald Koeman strike in extra-time.

Cup wins and European runs kept coming, but the era would be best remembered for the sudden death of Mantovani and the high-scoring tactics of Luciano Spalletti – tactics that ultimately led to relegation.

Derby wins under Marco Giampaolo endeared the coach to supporters but

further European appearances seem a long way away. Off the pitch, the club has passed to film producer Massimo Ferrero, whose Roma credentials have little convinced Samp fans of his suitability for the role as owner and president.

### Stadium

Their fans occupying the Gradinata Sud, Sampdoria have been groundsharing the **Luigi Ferraris Stadium** with Genoa since 1946.

### Tickets

General sale starts a week before the game. Sampdoria distribute tickets through **Sampdoria Service Center** (Mon 9.30am-1pm, Tue-Fri 10am-6.30pm, Sat 9.30am-1pm, Sun 10am-1pm) at via Cesarea 97r, near piazza del Cavalletto behind Brignole station. Hours vary for home and away games.

The club distributes online through **TicketOne** ([sport.ticketone.it](http://sport.ticketone.it)), which also has outlets around Genoa, including at the **Mondadori store** (via XX Settembre 27r) and at **Duemila Grandi Eventi** (via Archimede 28/14), both in the Brignole/stadium area.

On match days, the botteghini stadio on via Monnet opens 3-4hrs before kick-off.

In all cases, you need to provide ID to buy a ticket.

With the Gradinata Sud occupied by season-ticket holders, prices for a modest Serie A game are around €20 in the Gradinata Nord, €25 in Distinti and €30-€60 in the main Tribuna. For derbies and top opposition, prices will rise by about €5-€10.

### Shops

There are two main **Sampdoria Points**, one behind the Gradinata Sud at the **stadium** (via Casata Centuriona 20r), one at central **via Cesarea** 107r. Current away kit is the classic Samp rings on white, the third choice a disappointing grey. **LG**



# ITALY 2019-20 Lecce

[www.liberoguide.com/lecce](http://www.liberoguide.com/lecce)

## Lecce

Down in the heel of Italy, awash with Ancient Greek and Roman history, **Lecce** is near the main air and sea hub of Brindisi but often overshadowed by the regional capital of Bari.

Overlooked for Italia '90 – rivals Bari stumping up 125 billion lire for a new stadium to trump the then recently refurbished **Via del Mare**, home of **US Lecce** – the football profile of this pretty city remains modest. Though promoted in 2019, the Giallorossi have spent almost three times as many seasons in the third and fourth tiers as they have in the first.

Such are the divisional ups and downs of Italy's deep south, however, that the last derby di Puglia with Bari was in 2011.

Named after the road it sits on, a third of the way from Lecce's historic centre to the San Cataldo lighthouse facing Albania, the Stadio Via del Mare has also staged sundry international fixtures – Pelé scored a hat-trick for Santos here in 1967.

### Bearings

The nearest airport is **Brindisi**, 45km (28 miles) north of Lecce. A **SITA Sud bus** ([sitadustrasporti.it](http://sitadustrasporti.it)) runs every



2-3hrs to central Lecce, journey time 40min. Tickets are €6.50 from the **Bar Sandrino** at the airport or €8 on board. The terminus is at **piazzale Carmelo Bene**, aka **Foro Boario**.

Alternatively, a half-hourly **STP airport bus** runs to **Brindisi station** (10min), where an hourly **train** (€3) takes 30min to reach **Lecce Centrale** on the southern edge of town. Local trolleybuses head through or around

the historic centre – nothing runs the 3km north-east to the stadium.

Local **Cooperative Taxi Lecce** (+39 328 671 4428) charge €60 from/to Brindisi airport.

### Bed

There are no hotels near the stadium. Options on the nearest, eastern side of town include the business-friendly four-star **President** on via Antonio

Salandra, superior B&B **Ottavopino** on via Zanardelli – with attractive low-season prices – and, just outside the city ring, the **Hilton Garden Inn Lecce** on via Cosimo de Giorgi, with an outdoor pool, a restaurant and free parking.

Lecce's landmark hotel is the five-star **Patria Palace**, accommodating guests since 1850, with sun loungers at eye level to Santa Croce Church and



Patria Palace

cocktails in Danny's Bar. Alternatively, you can stay cheaply and cleanly by the amphitheatre at the **B&B LecceSalento** on via dei Mocenigo.

### Beer

No-one comes to Lecce for a knees-up but there's a couple of decent places just south of Santa Croce Church. The **Joyce Irish Pub** shows live games, serves decent food and stages live music. Nearby **Rubens Brasserie** also attracts sports fans and offers decent brews on draught.

There's more big-screen action across town at **Road 66** (via dei Perroni 8), with Tex-Mex food and outside tables, while **Casa Maialotti** a few doors down specialises in local wines, beers and meats – note the TV in the corner.

To sample local artisanal brews, **Malatesta Il Birrificio** ('South Italy Craft Beer') west of the historic centre at via Alfonso Sozy Carafa 29 offers six worthy of investigation – and sets up stalls at seaside spots and festivals all summer. **LE**





# ITALY 2019-20 US Lecce

[www.lib eroguide.com/us-lecce](http://www.lib eroguide.com/us-lecce)



## US Lecce

Alma mater of later Juventus and Chelsea coach Antonio Conte, **Unione Sportiva Lecce** ([uslecce.it](http://uslecce.it)) are the third iteration of a club that can trace its history back to 1908.

Playing in red and yellow since 1928, the Giallorossi are also symbolised by a she-wolf and an evergreen oak, *leccio*, native to the Mediterranean, the Curva Nord at the **Stadio Via del Mare** a riot of colour set against the clear blue sky of the Mezzogiorno. An arrow-straight road 10km east targets the Adriatic, Milan and Turin are 1,000-plus km north. Major football silverware has never come this far south, unless you count a solitary Serie B title in 2010.

But Lecce have had their moments. 1986 World Cup winner Pedro Pasculli starred in a Giallorossi side that finished ninth in a world-class Serie



Stadio Via del Mare



A in 1989, while Zdenek Zeman's devil-may-care Lecce recorded the second-highest number of goals and

worst defensive record to finish an entertaining mid-table in 2004-05.

While a Settore Ospiti is sectioned off for away fans in the south-east corner of this two-tiered stadium bowl, few crews make it to Lecce in any numbers. Red-and-yellow is worn and waved with abandon everywhere – the sideline Tribuna Est can provide bright pageantry for those sitting in the premium Tribuna Centrale opposite. Capacity, with seats replaced before the 2019-20 Serie A campaign, is 31,500.

### Transport

Taxi or shank's pony. If the latter, walk straight up **viale della Libertà** from **via del Mare** in town. Allow 15min. Some of the stretch isn't particularly pedestrian-friendly, and with some drivers zipping down the coast, keep your wits about you.

### Tickets

Branches of **Banco Popolare Pugliese (BPP)** and, more numerous, **VivaTicket**, distribute from a week ahead. These include the main BPP office at **viale XXV Luglio 31**, by the

Castello in town, and the **Tabaccheria Buttazzo** (viale della Libertà 123), about a third of the way to the stadium. VivaTicket also offer **online sales** ([vivaticket.it](http://vivaticket.it)).

Of a typical Sunday, the **stadium ticket windows** operate 10am-6pm on the Saturday, and from 10am on match day. Take ID with you.

For most games, it's €19 for the Curva Sud/Nord and away sector (€8 for under-14s), €25/€10 on match days (not available for visiting supporters). A seat in the Tribuna Est is €25/€10 (match day €30/€14) and in the Centrale Inferiore, €35/€16 (€40/€20).

### Shops

Those snazzy red-and-yellow shirts are sold at an equally snazzy sports shop at **via Vittorio Emanuele II 35**, opposite the Gusto liberrima gourmet grocery, and the main **US Lecce Store by Salentinamente** (via Fabio Filzi 30) by piazza Mazzini, both in town.

### Bars

There's very little around the stadium itself apart from main roads and residential blocks. If you're desperate, the character-free **Kolbe Café** and its plastic outdoor seating sit by the Sportello SOS Sanità office at the roundabout on via Giovanni Paolo II about 500 metres from the stadium – but that's about it. **LD**



# ITALY 2019-20 Milan

[www.lib eroguide.com/milan](http://www.lib eroguide.com/milan)

## Milan

Fashion centre **Milan** has always been a glamorous football metropolis. Built on its two great clubs – **AC Milan** and **Internazionale** – the capital of Lombardy has been at the forefront of the Italian game for a century or more.

The venue they have shared for half that time is one of the world's great football arenas, the **San Siro**.

Behind the scenes, Chinese money is taking over these venerable institutions. Average attendances are up, from 40,000-plus in 2016-17 to 50,000-plus in 2018-19.

The San Siro replaced the venerable **Arena Civica**, opened in 1807, later named after revered football writer Gianna Brera. In the 1960s, the San Siro, AC Milan and Inter were in their pomp. The Inter icon was Sandro Mazzola, Milan's Gianna Rivera, and high society gathered for the big matches. This was echoed 25 years later, with key Dutch stars winning European Cups for Berlusconi's Milan, and Lothar Matthäus turning out for title-winning Inter. Milan was the centre of the football universe, confirmed by its hosting of the curtain-raiser for Italia '90.

Whether Chinese-run Milan can regain these glory days is another matter.



### Bearings

Milan has two airports. **Malpensa** is 48km (30 miles) north-west of town, a 45-minute journey to Centrale (€10) main train station on the half-hourly **Malpensa Express**. **Linate** is 8km (five miles) south-east of town, connected to M1 San Babila by regular **city bus 73 or X73** (€1.50, tickets from the Hudson News kiosk at the airport), journey time about 30 minutes.

Many budgets use Bergamo's **Orio al Serio** 45km (28 miles) from Milan, connected with Milano Centrale by **bus** every 30-60 mins, journey time 50 mins. Tickets are €10, €5 online.

Milan's **city transport** comprises three metro lines, buses, trams and trolleybuses. A single ticket is €1.50, a daily (*biglietto giornaliero*) €4.50.

Around the city centre, **RadioTaxi 02-6969** (+39 02 6969) is as good as any.

### Bed

Hotels near the San Siro also serve the nearby trade fairs. The closest is **B&B Hotel Milano San Siro**, a hostel-hotel hybrid, overlooking the stadium on via Achille. Also nearby and equally spanking new is the **Meliá Milano**, a high-design Spanish chain equipped with its own spa.

Long in place and also convenient are the four-star **Montebianco** and two three-stars close to each other, the **Hotel Oro Blu Milano** and **Hotel Lido**. Near Gerusalemme metro station, **UNA Scandinavia** is swish and business-friendly.

By Stazione Centrale is a cluster of convenient mid-range lodgings, two in the **Starhotels** chain, **Anderson Milan** and **E.c.ho**.

### Beer

Highly recommended is the **442 Sports Pub** at via Procaccini 61, with an interior of themed tabletops, football



Arena Civica



442 Sports Pub

scarves and TV screens. Also close to Gerusalemme metro, the **Offside Sports Pub** is worth a visit, with a wall of pennants, a large screen and terrace.

Walking distance from Duomo, the **Football English Pub** is hidden away on narrow via Valpetrosa, off via Torino. Amid the football paraphernalia are Hurst-era West Ham programmes and classic Panini stickers of old AC and Inter stars.

Close to Repubblica, **The Friends** is one of the better of the many other pubs in town. **LG**





# ITALY 2019-20 San Siro

[www.lib eroguide.com/san-siro](http://www.lib eroguide.com/san-siro)



San Siro

## San Siro

The **San Siro** ([www.sansiro.com](http://www.sansiro.com)) is home to **AC Milan** and **Internazionale**, city rivals who have shared the stadium for 70 years.

Milan president Piero Pirelli commissioned this iconic football arena in 1925 – no running track and with four stands making a rectangular shape around the pitch. Despite three major overhauls, the San Siro has not lost its shape, its style or its staying power.

Pirelli's San Siro was laid out like traditional grounds in England – perhaps the influence of Pirelli's formative years in contact with the English founders of his Milan club in the early 1900s.

After the war, Inter moving in to groundshare and the San Siro came back in style. In 1955, the stadium was revamped, given another tier and its distinctive candy-twist appearance around the outside.

For the 1990 World Cup, a plexiglass roof with distinctive red girders was

added, as well as a third ring. An all-seated capacity of 80,000 – and an official name of the **Stadio Giuseppe Meazza** – remain to this day.

Fans hang over the pitch in steep-sided tiers – you can smell the turf near the touchline. This intimacy provides one of Europe's liveliest atmospheres, with Milan in the Curva Sud, Inter in the Curva Nord.

### Transport

**San Siro metro** is on the **M5 line**, direct from Garibaldi, one change from Centrale. The station is by the stadium.



San Siro



### Tickets

The **biglietteria nord** ticket offices face gate 1. The circular building housing the **biglietteria sud** is by gate 14. There's another **biglietteria** by gate 7. To buy tickets, you must show ID.

**Inter** and **Milan** also have their own separate ticket arrangements.

The San Siro comprises three rings, 1 anello closest to the pitch and therefore priciest, 3 anello highest up and cheapest. Each sides is colour-coded, blue (blu, AC) and green (verde, Inter) behind each goal, red (rosso) and

orange (arancio) along the sidelines. There, a decent seat in the second row is about €40-€50.

### Shops

The **San Siro Store** (9.30am-6/7pm, match days 2hrs before kick-off, 1hr after final whistle) is accessed through gate 14. Merchandise of both clubs complements San Siro's own brand, MSS.

### Tour & museum

**Tours** in English and Italian (inc Museum €18, 6-17s €12, free under 6s) run every 30 mins (daily 9.30am-5pm, till 6pm in summer, variations on match days) from gate 8, where you'll find the **San Siro Museum** (€10), with shirts down the ages, trophies and life-size player models.

### Bars

On the Hippodrome side of the ground are two lively kiosks: **Chiringuito Milano**, offering chupitos and cocktails; and **Ortobello**, decorated with old records. Each has the feel of a pop-up bar, with sparky staff and clientele.

By the stadium, **Baretto 1957 Milano** displays the red star of Heineken and fills quickly on match days.

A short walk from San Siro metro, on via Federico Tesio, the **Old Tenconi Pub** is a fine choice, with several tap beers. Next door, **La Barchetta** is a classic Italian restaurant – booking advised.



# ITALY 2019-20 AC Milan

[www.liberoguide.com/ac-milan](http://www.liberoguide.com/ac-milan)



Cucina Milanello

## AC Milan

Prestigious **AC Milan** ([acmilan.com/en](http://acmilan.com/en)) re-entered the international arena in 2017-18. After years of mediocrity and managerial changes, not to mention one of the most protracted buy-outs in football history, the Rossoneri found a new owner/chairman in Chinese entrepreneur Li Yonghong, and a new coach in Gennaro Gattuso.

Average home gates even broke the 50,000 barrier.

But this is all relative. Milan dominated the Italian game from the late 1980s onwards, lifting six titles in just over a decade, as well as five of their overall haul of seven European Cups/Champions Leagues. Until the Spanish giants upped the ante, no-one was bigger than Milan. The stadium the club built in 1926, the **San Siro**, is and remains one of the finest arenas in the world, intimate yet capable of holding 80,000. The club they have shared it with since 1947, **Internazionale**, form half of a city rivalry like no other. See **San Siro**.

But Milan's last title was won in 2011. Plagued by severe debt, the club was eventually offloaded by long-term owner and sugar daddy Silvio Berlusconi, whose own political career had hit the skids. Star players were sold, gates dropped and Milan became mired in mid-table.

The Rossoneri, however, remain a class act – as illustrated by the sleek **Casa Milan** club HQ, with museum, shop and ticket office, at Portello.



### Tickets

Three weeks before match day, tickets go on **general sale**. Through the club, this is either **online** (tickets.[acmilan.com](http://acmilan.com)) or in person at the **Casa Milan** (daily 10am-8pm). Branches of **TicketOne agencies** ([sport.ticketone.it](http://sport.ticketone.it)) also distribute, including **Box Office Duomo** at piazza Duomo 1 and **Teatro Nuovo** on piazza San Babila in Milan.

On match days, leftover tickets go on sale at the **San Siro biglietterie** 3hrs before kick-off (see **San Siro**, also for **pricing**). With 80,000 capacity and average gates of 50,000, availability shouldn't be a problem, except for derby games with Inter. In all cases, ID is required. For further information, send an email to [eticketing@acmilan.com](mailto:eticketing@acmilan.com).

### Casa Milan

The **Casa Milan** is an all-in-one complex containing a store, museum, gallery and restaurant. Accessed through the lobby, the **Mondo**



**Milan Museum** (daily 10am-7pm, €15) is a disappointing display of trophies and videos – if you're going to visit one football museum, go to the one at the **San Siro**.

Round the other side of the building, the newly opened **Bistrot dello Sport** (bar daily 8/9am-8pm, restaurant Mon-Fri noon-3pm, Sat-Sun, match days also 7pm-11pm) replaces its inferior predecessor with 17 TVs and imaginative menus.

Next door are the modern **Milan Store** (daily 10am-8pm) and **ticket office** (see **left Tickets**), and a gallery area for Giovanni Cerri's striking portraits of Milan legends.

To reach the Casa Milan, take the M5 metro line to **Portello** – it's four stops from the San Siro.

The **Milan Megastore** (Galleria San Carlo, corso Vittoria Emanuele, daily 10am-8pm) is the club's city-centre outlet, near M1 San Babila towards Duomo. **LG**

AC MILAN





# ITALY 2019-20 Internazionale

[www.libero guide.com/internazionale](http://www.libero guide.com/internazionale)

## Internazionale

Achieving a Champions League place for the first time since 2011, **Internazionale** ([inter.it/en](http://inter.it/en)) are clambering back onto the international stage thanks to investment from the Far East.

Backed by €270 million of Chinese money from Suning Holdings, Inter are no longer dependent on former owner Massimo Moratti, the last of an old-school dynasty, who poured €1 billion of his own money into the club in the 1990s and 2000s.

Formed in 1908, Internazionale have spent their entire history in Serie A, winning it 18 times. The Nerazzurri have enjoyed several periods of dominance, most notably the Grande Inter side of the mid 1960s and the five-time title winners between 2006 and 2010. Each of these teams, under Helenio Herrera and José Mourinho, won the European Cup/Champions League.

Ground-sharing the **San Siro** with AC after the war, and backed by oil millionaire Angelo Moratti, Inter matched Milan for silverware. With mercurial manager Helenio Herrera installing a strict catenaccio system and midfield icon Sandro Mazzola pulling the strings, Inter won consecutive European Cups in the mid-1960s but gained a grim reputation for influencing referees behind the scenes.



The club's lack of involvement in the refereeing scandal of 2006 saw the Serie A title revert to them by default. A year later they won it outright – although with Juventus demoted to Serie B.

Incoming coach José Mourinho gained a title in his first season then, remarkably, won a historic treble in 2010.

With Juventus resurgent, managers of the quality of Claudio Ranieri and Roberto Mancini failed to make headway.

Under Luciano Spalletti, whose figurehead captain Mauro Icardi scored a hat-trick in the Milan derby, Inter managed to attract 60,000 crowds, eager to see a top-four Serie A finish.

### Stadium

Inter moved into the **San Siro** in 1947. Their fans traditionally occupy the Curva Nord. For transport and bar details, see **San Siro**.

### Tickets & shop

Tickets and merchandise are available at the **Inter Store Milano** (daily 10am-

8pm) at Galleria Passarella 2, near San Babila metro.

The **ticket office** inside has shorter working hours of Thur-Sat 10am-7pm.

Inter also distribute at the **San Siro ticket office** (Mon-Fri 9.30am-12.45pm, 2.15pm-5.45pm) near gate 14. **VivaTicket** ([vivaticket.it](http://vivaticket.it)) sell advance tickets at outlets across Italy. In central Milan, these include **Feltrinelli Milano Duomo** (piazza Duomo/Galleria Vittorio Emanuele) and **Mondadori Milano Duomo** (piazza del Duomo 1).



There should also be sales on the day at the San Siro ticket offices though availability will be scarce for the Milan derby and the visit of Juventus.

Online, you can purchase through the **club website** ([inter.it/en/biglietteria](http://inter.it/en/biglietteria)).

In all cases, **ID** is required for match-ticket purchase. For further information, **email** this contact form ([inter.it/en/contattaci](mailto:inter.it/en/contattaci)) or call +39 02 8294 2000 (Mon-Fri 9am-1pm, 2pm-6pm).

For major Serie A opposition, you pay €50 for a half-decent seat in the Primo Verde, Secondo Arancio or Primo Blu areas of the stadium. For lesser teams, **prices** drop to €25 in the Secondo Blu, €40 in the Primo Arancio and €50 for a good seat in the Tribuna Arancio. **LG**



# ITALY 2019-20 Naples

[www.lib eroguide.com/naples](http://www.lib eroguide.com/naples)



Bar Nilo



## Naples

If ever there was a one-club city, it's **Naples**. Everywhere you look there's a light-blue shirt. Maradona hasn't returned, but his former club **SSC Napoli** are enjoying their best spell since Diego took them to two titles 30 years ago.

Napoli put in a serious challenge for the Serie A title in 2017-18. Gli Azzurri have also revived the Italian domestic game, bouncing back from bankruptcy.



The triumph and demise of Diego took the city from communal ecstasy to despair. As everything unravelled and the club became bankrupt, film producer Aurelio De Laurentiis stepped in. The rest has been the stuff of movies, last-gasp promotion and a return to European football. All the script now requires is the Serie A title to set the **Stadio San Paolo** alight.

### Bearings

**Naples Airport** is 6km (3.5 miles) north-east of town, connected by the **Alibus** that runs every 20-30mins to

**Napoli Centrale station** (journey time 15min), terminating at the **port**. Out of the airport terminal, the bus stop is a signposted 5min walk. Tickets (€4 on board) are valid for 90mins, including an onward journey.

From Napoli Centrale, the stop is across from the main entrance. A **taxi** (+39 081 8888) should offer a fixed price to town – €16 to the station/centre, €23 to Fuorigrotta in the stadium area.

**Unico Campania** issues **TIC** tickets for the Metropolitana, buses and

a confusing array of trains. The Metropolitana is essentially one line, M1. M2 is run by Trenitalia, who provide old trains to **Campi Flegrei**, home of Napoli. The lines cross at **Garibaldi**, within the Stazione Centrale complex. Tickets and day passes are available at machines and newspaper kiosks. An **Orario** (€1.60) is valid for 90mins; the **Giornaliero** (€4.50) is a day pass.

### Bed

The **Naples Tourist Office** ([inaples.it](http://inaples.it)) has a **database of hotels**. The closest to the stadium is grandiose **Palazzo**

**Esedra**, its sleek look dating to the 1930s. Cheaper options nearby include mid-range, 15-room **Leopardi**, close to Campi Flegrei station, with a roof garden for breakfast in summer.

Around **Stazione Centrale**, hotels abound. A great budget choice is **B&B Viva Napoli** at via Bari 40. It's best accessed through the station via the complex containing the **Hotel Stelle**, a polished four-star.

Exiting the Stazione Centrale through the main façade, to your left, the **Starhotels Terminus Naples** provides four-star comfort, as does the **UNA Hotel Napoli** at the far end of piazza Garibaldi.

### Beer

The main pub hub is around the crisscross of streets in **Vomero**, near **Vanvitelli** metro. Closest to the station, **L'Oca Nera Irish Pub** puts football first. Pick of the pubs is the **Penny Black**, on via Alvino Enrico. In the same vicinity on via Giovanni Merliani, you'll find the most pub-like branch of the local **Murphy's Law** family.

The classic pizzerias of the Centro Storico include landmark **Da Michele** on via Cesare Sersale – always with queues out the door.

Don't miss daytime-only **Bar Nilo** (via San Biagio dei Librai 130), near piazza San Domenico Maggiore, a shrine to Diego Maradona. **LG**





# ITALY 2019-20 Napoli

[www.lib eroguide.com/napoli](http://www.lib eroguide.com/napoli)

## Napoli

The flagship club of the calcio-crazy city of Naples is enjoying their best spell since the heady days of Diego Maradona 30 years ago. **SSC Napoli** (sscnapoli.it) have become the neutral's favourite and at the forefront of the mini-revival of Serie A.

A first Scudetto since 1990 wouldn't go uncelebrated at the **Stadio San Paolo**, a huge, two-tier bowl of built in an area of extinct volcanoes known as Campi Flegrei.

Holding 85,000, the San Paolo was modified for Italia '90. A roof was added, lifted over the stands to allow a view of the hills beyond.

Capacity was then reduced to the current 55,000 after a terrible storm in 2001.

Today's San Paolo comprises two sweeping ends, home Curva A and home Curva B, Napoli ultras in each. Away fans in the Settore Ospiti are squeezed between B with main Tribuna Posillipo. Opposite, the Distinti along the sidelines allows for comfortable gawping at the pageantry at each end.

### Transport

**Campi Flegrei**, a 10min walk to the stadium across palm-lined piazzale Tecchio, is directly linked to **Garibaldi**



Stadio San Paolo

**(Napoli Centrale)** six stops away. At Napoli Centrale, head down to the lower level, and **platform No.2** for **Line 2/ direction Pozzuoli-Bagnoli-Formia** (every 10-15mins) at the far end. A newsagent at the top of the lower escalators sells single tickets (€1.30) that you should stamp in the little machine facing the shop. It's a 15min journey, mainly through tunnels.

### Tickets

In all cases, show ID to buy tickets. There are now two ticket outlets near the stadium: **Blu Point Sport** (Mon-Sat 9.30am-1.30pm, 4pm-8pm) beside the Caffetteria degli Azzurri (via Giambattista

Marino 15A); and the **1926 Napoli Shop** (piazza Gabriele D'Annunzio 32; Mon-Sat 10am-1pm, 4pm-8pm) behind the back of the stadium.

On match days until lunchtime, one of the bunker-like **botteghini** (usually No.3) opens for sales on the via Tansillo side of the stadium. Tickets are not usually sold from official outlets in the run-up to kick-off.

The club distributes **online** through **TicketOne** (sport.ticketone.it).

Average prices run from €30 in the Curva A/B to €90 in the Tribuna

Posillipo. A spot in the Distinti for €50 allows for comfort and a good view of the action on and off the pitch.

### Shops

There is one **official Napoli outlet** (daily 8am-9pm), located at **Centrale station**. At the stadium, you'll find **Blu Point Sport** (Mon-Sat 9.30am-1.30pm, 4pm-8pm) at via Giambattista Marino 15A; and the **1926 Napoli Shop** (Mon-Sat 10am-1pm, 4pm-8pm) at piazza D'Annunzio 32, behind the ground.

### Bars

Kiosks, huts and cabins dot piazzale Tecchio, the most convivial being the



Caffetteria Monnalisa



sunny terrace **Caffé Cumana** right by Mostra station.

Cafés are found along via Giambattista Marino and around piazza Gabriele d'Annunzio, where the **Caffetteria Monnalisa** (No.48) has a back bar plastered in Kodak images of Napoli stars.

For just a calcio-centric corner bar, nearby **Bar Azzurro** (via Tansillo 52) is decked out in Napoli iconography. Round the corner, the **Caffetteria degli Azzurri** (via Giambattista Marino 15A) by Blu Point sports a cool back-bar design displaying classic Serie A shirts. **LG**



# ITALY 2019-20 Parma

[www.liberoguide.com/parma](http://www.liberoguide.com/parma)



## Parma

Home of Verdi, ham and cheese, **Parma** has provided the perfect setting for a football soap opera played out at the **Stadio Ennio Tardini**, the venerable stadium just outside the historic city centre.

Three consecutive promotions have pushed the club raised from ashes of Parma AC, **Parma Calcio 1913**, from fourth tier to Serie A.

In 1913, the city celebrating the centenary of its great composer by forming a Verdi Foot Ball Club, playing in yellow and blue. It was merged into Parma Foot Ball Club later that year but it was only when local dairy company Parmalat put serious money in as sponsors that top coaches and world stars brought three major European trophies to this learned city in Emilia-Romagna.

It was locally born Calisto Tanzi who founded Parmalat in 1961 and Tanzi

who would be jailed for fraud when the company, and the club, collapsed in the early 2000s.

Seven local businessmen reformed and renamed Parma Calcio 1913 in 2015 before backing from Chinese group Desports helped the club compete at the highest level. The Italian consortium then bought back a controlling interest in 2018.

### Bearings

Parma's **Giuseppe Verdi Airport** is 2.5km (1.5 miles) north-west of town, connected by half-hourly **bus No.6** (€1.20, €1.80 on board) that takes 13min to reach **Parma train station**. **Radio Taxi Parma** (+39 0521 252 562) should cost around €10. The city centre is walkable though you'll need a **bus** (day ticket €3) if you're going from the train station right across town to the stadium.

### Bed

**Parma Welcome** ([parmawelcome.it](http://parmawelcome.it)) has an **English-language hotel database**.

Near the stadium, the **Grand Hotel de la Ville** is a five-star congress hotel with a gym and sauna.

Equally convenient **Parizzi Suites & Studio** on Strada della Repubblica comprises 13 neat suites with a destination restaurant. Right in town near Municipio, the

**Hotel Button** is a comfortable three-star while the **Toscanini** on the riverside boardwalk of the same name offers economy with a view. Even more affordable, the **Rubra B&B** lies across the water, by the main Ospedale Vecchio bus stop.

### Beer

Of the modest number of pub-like places in town, **Tonic** near Municipio offers Paulaner beer and live HD match action on a huge screen. Nearby, tucked down vicolo Poli, a favourite with fans and players alike, the **Trattoria del Tribunale** displays tasteful Parma FC iconography – plus hams by the hundredweight.

On the other side of piazza Garibaldi at via Goffredo Mamelli 9, the equally football-friendly **Mastiff Pub** is also known for its hamburgers.

By the river at via dei Farnese 2 the **Birreria Underground** takes its beers seriously, although pub décor only goes as far as a London Tube logo.

Slightly out of the centre at via La Spezia 51, the **Highlander Pub** is equally renowned for its range of beers. On main Strada Massimo d'Azeglio near Ospedale Vecchio, the **Tapas Pub** (via Massimo D'Azeglio 67) is another popular meeting place, with regular sports screenings. **LB**





# ITALY 2019-20 Parma Calcio

*www.liberoguide.com/parma-calcio*

## Parma Calcio

The resurrection of football in **Parma**, an opera-loving town which had seen its illustrious club go from European trophy winners to fourth-tier ignominy, is a plot to rival that of *La Traviata*.

**Parma Calcio 1913** (parmacalcio1913.com) may only be mid-table Serie A but the Milans of this world have returned to the **Stadio Ennio Tardini**, where Hernán Crespo, Faustino Asprilla and Gianfranco Zola wowed the crowd in the 1990s.

Created out of bankrupt Parma FC – survivors of a financial crisis that finished off the once-gilded Parma AC – the new outfit revived by local businessmen achieved three promotions in as many seasons.

Through it all, the stately gate has stood guard outside the 22,000-capacity stadium. Conceived by and named after the club president who never lived to see his stadium built, the ground has been modernised to keep pace with Parma's rapid revival.

The next stand due for a revamp is the Tribuna Est, popular with season-ticket holders. Home fans occupy the Curva Nord, renamed in honour of Matteo Bagnaresi, a Parma fan killed while travelling to a match in Turin.



Away fans are allocated half of the Curva Sud while the main stand, the Tribuna Centrale, aka Tribuna Petitot, has the club museum and Parma Store behind it.

### Transport

Three buses run to the stadium. **Buses Nos.8 and 11** go from the train station to Stadio, **bus No.9** from near the station (v.le Toschi) to Stadio p.le Risorgimento. Each takes 10-15mins, and runs every 15-30min.



Stadio Ennio Tardini

Walking from the centre of town would take around 15min, from the station a good 30min.

### Tickets

Tickets go on sale about ten days before each home game. Advance distribution is handled by **TicketOne**, online (sport.ticketone.it) and through its outlets such as at central piazza Ghiaia 33 and at the stadium ticket office. Note that for games against the big five, the Milan clubs, Rome clubs and Juventus, TicketOne does not sell online but in person – ID required at all times. Of a match weekend, the stadium

ticket office operates 10am-1pm on a Saturday and from noon on the Sunday.

**Prices** start at around €15 in the Curva Sud and Nord, €20-plus for the Tribuna Est and €35-plus for the Tribuna Centrale Petitot, averaging around €50 in this prime stand.


### Shops & museum

The **Parma Store** (Mon-Wed, Fri 3pm-7pm, Sat 9am-1pm, 3pm-7pm, match days) by the stadium entrance offers a whole range of souvenirs bearing the black cross of Parma. There's also a **store** (closed Mon) in town at via Mazzini 7.

Parma shirts down the ages, pennants and trophies are on view at the **Museo Ernesto Ceresini** (€5, closed Thur & Sun) by the stadium store.

### Bars

The **Bar Gianni** (viale Duca Alessandro 44) is not the closest pre-match bar, but displays classy black-and-white murals of Parma's golden era.

At viale Sette Fratelli Cervi 14, **The Red** is a wine bar and Parma fans' rendezvous – note the European final pennants. At via Zarotto 77, the **Bar Primavera** has a lovely shaded terrace. 



# ITALY 2019-20 Rome

[www.liberoguide.com/rome](http://www.liberoguide.com/rome)

## Rome

Regularly winning through to the knock-out rounds of the major European competitions, **Lazio** and **Roma** may not have claimed any scudetto silverware since 2000 and 2001 respectively but these **Rome** rivals are still major players at home and abroad.

Home for both is the **Stadio Olimpico**. Like Milan, Rome is a stadium-share city. Roma represent downtown Testaccio, Lazio the suburbs of Parioli and beyond. The Olimpico is north of the Vatican, near the Tiber.

AS Roma have plans for their own 60,000-capacity stadium in Tor di Valle in south-west Rome, on the site of a racecourse built for the 1960 Olympics.

### Bearings

The main airport of **Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino**, 35km (22 miles) south-west of the city centre, is connected by **Leonardo Express** train (€14, 30min journey time) every 15min to the main station of **Termini**. From Termini, trains leave from outer platform 28. Alternatively, a regular **SIT shuttle bus** (online price €6) takes 90min to reach via Marsala 5 outside Termini. A direct Fiumicino-Termini bus service is also provided by **Terravision** (online €5).

A **City Airport Taxi** from Fiumicino into town has a fixed fee of €48.



Lesser-used **Ciampino Airport** is 12km (7.5 miles) south-east of town, served by the same bus companies to Termini, **SIT** and **Terravision** (online price €5, journey time 45min).

A **City Airport Taxi** from Ciampino has a fixed fee to the city centre of €45 but the standard rate you should find outside is €30.

Flagging down a taxi or finding a rank works out cheaper than calling one – such as **Radio Taxi** (+39 06 3570).

Rome's **transport system** consists of two metro lines, buses, trams and suburban trains. A **BIT single ticket** (€1.50) is valid for 100mins. A **24hr pass** (€7), **48hr pass** (€12.50) and **72hr pass** (€18) are also available.

### Bed

Convenient for the Olimpico, elegant three-star **Hotel delle Vittorie** sits near piazza Giuseppe Mazzini. Just the other side of the stadium,



Rome

the rooftop terrace of the **Hotel Farnesina** on the street of the same name provides a perfect post-match vantage point.

The other side of the Vatican, near Roma S Pietro station, upscale **Starhotels Michelangelo** is a four-star boutique lodging with a modern feel.

Central **Hotel Rome Garden** (via Nomenita 28) forms part of a local chain. Good for location and price,

**Hotel Raffaello** (via Urbana 3) is within easy reach of Termini.

### Beer

The **Druid's Den** (via di San Martino Ai Monti 28), Irish-owned **Finnegan** near Cavour metro, football-oriented **Highlander** (vicolo di San Biagio 9) and **Fiddler's Elbow** (via dell'Olmata 43) are typical of the expat genre.

Both close to Colosseo metro serving the Colosseum, **BrewDog Roma** brings Scottish craft to the

Italian capital while the **Shamrock Irish Pub** on via del Colosseo keeps adding to its mighty collection of football scarves, hanging over nine TV screens.

The **Bar San Calisto**, in the square of the same name in Trastevere, is a lived-in local with classic calcio and boxing iconography.

Nearby, **IVO a Trastevere** (via di San Francesco a Ripa 158) is a homely football hang-out.





# ITALY 2019-20 Stadio Olimpico

[www.liberoguide.com/stadio-olimpico](http://www.liberoguide.com/stadio-olimpico)



Stadio Olimpico

## Stadio Olimpico

All roads lead to Rome – or so it seems when you stride up the grandiose walkway to the impressive **Stadio Olimpico**. Stage for the Olympic Games of 1960, the World Cup final of 1990, Euro 2021 Group A games and a quarter-final, and many a major European final, the Olimpico remains the shared home of **Lazio** and **Roma**.

A 70,000-capacity bowl in Rome's green northern reaches, Italy's de

facto national stadium will soon be abandoned by Roma. Despite the green light given to the **Stadio della Roma** in December 2017, Roma's departure from the Olimpico is set for... 2023?

Until that day, Lazio fans will fill the Curva Nord with noise and colour, Roma fans the Curva Sud – and never the twain will meet.

In 1928, the national stadium was in nearby Flaminio, where Mussolini opened the Stadio del Partito Nacional Fascista. It then hosted the World Cup

final of 1934. A mile away across the Tiber, il Duce was planning a grand sports complex: il Foro Mussolini.

Although Mussolini's vast project never came to pass, the grand Fascist entrance remains, with its walkway and hallmark obelisk. An open bowl inaugurated in 1953, the 54,000-seater arena was surrounded by the Foro Italico sports complex.

Host of the 1960 Games, the Olimpico was overhauled for the 1990 World Cup. The result is pretty much as you



see today. Despite the sheer scale of the place – and a running track – on its night the Olimpico can be one of the loudest and most colourful football arenas in the world, as the Rome derby will testify.

### Transport

From **Ottaviano** station on **metro line A**, veer away from the Vatican in the distance and into via Barletta, for the **No.32 bus stop** in the middle of the street. The infrequent No.32 heads north, past the Flaminio Stadium, and after 15mins passes the Olimpico at the stop **LGT M.llo Diaz (De Bossis)**.

An easier journey might be to take regular **tram No.2** from **Ple Flaminio/P de Popolo** (metro line A) to the terminus at **Mancini**. You then just have to cross the bridge with the Olimpico ahead of you.

### Tickets

**TicketOne** ([sport.ticketone.it](http://sport.ticketone.it)) distribute tickets for Lazio and national games,



either **online** or from outlets around town. AS Roma organise their own online sales. Both clubs also have their own outlets – see **Roma** and **Lazio**.

In all cases, you need ID for purchase.

### Bars

On the city side of the river, by the No.2 tram terminus on piazza Mancini, **Pizzeria 'Il Derby'** allows you to gawp at autographed photos of Totti while your slice is being prepared.

A string of outlets hugs the river on the stadium side of Duca D'Aosta Bridge. These include friendly **La Pizza del Buongustaio**, the cabin-sized **River Café**, and the more bar-like **Big Stefano's**, with table football.

The liveliest fans frequent 'il River', drinking bottled Ceres (don't touch the draught) and gawping at the earlier Serie A game on the TV in a side area. **L9**



# ITALY 2019-20 Lazio

[www.libero guide.com/lazio](http://www.libero guide.com/lazio)



Lazio Style 1900

## Lazio

**SS Lazio** ([sslazio.it/en](http://sslazio.it/en)) may not earn much sympathy in many quarters because of the shocking reputation of their right-wing following, but the club has managed to keep up with Italy's best over the past two decades and counting.

Lazio were founded in 1900 by Luigi Bigiarelli, adopting the light-blue-and-white colours of the Greek flag. A fan base grew in Rome's green-belt northern outskirts.

Lazio struck up a bitter rivalry with Roma but moved in to groundshare the **Stadio Olimpico** when it opened in 1953.

From 1992, tomato-sauce millionaire and financier Sergio Cragnotti transformed the club, bringing in Paul Gascoigne, Alen Bokšić and, most of all, Giuseppe Signori. 'Beppe' was the hero of the Curva Nord, his 20 goals a season pushing Lazio into a title-challenging role, and back into Europe.

As club president, Dino Zoff hired adventurous tactician, Zdenek Zeman,



as coach. Lazio finished runners-up, then third, as the salary bill spiralled. Still after that elusive title, Zoff brought

in Czech star Pavel Nedved and young defender Alessandro Nesta. It took the cool head of coach Sven-Göran Eriksson to sell Signori to win the Italian Cup and make the UEFA Cup Final, both in May 1998.

Keeping inspirational Roberto Mancini up front, Cragnotti then spent millions on Christian Vieri, Marcelo Salas and Sérgio Conceição, only to lose the title to Milan by one point. Compensation came with winning the last European Cup Winners' Cup, 2-1 over Real Mallorca, in 1999.

Eriksson sold Vieri for midfielder Juan Sebastián Verón and found the right balance. Trailing until the last game of 1999-2000, Lazio took advantage of a Juve slip-up to take the title at the death. Cragnotti had got his crown.

Finances remained shaky. Cragnotti resigned halfway through the 2002-03 season, and Lazio only bounced

back thanks to the coaching skills of Roberto Mancini.

Fiscal uncertainty, an exodus of star players and a match-fixing scandal then dominated the headlines, not to mention crowd trouble.

Winning another Italian Cup in 2019, the third in ten years, Lazio have consistently made the knock-out stages in the Europa League.

### Tickets & shop

Of the handful of **Lazio outlets** in and around Rome, the one at **via Guglielmo Calderini 66C** is closest to the stadium, near piazza Mancini by the No.2 tram terminus. Considering the club's stature, **Lazio Style 1900** (Mon-Sat 10am-8pm, Sun/match days) is very modest indeed, stocking a few replica shirts and Lazio-branded knick-knacks. It also acts a **ticket office** (Mon-Sat 10am-7pm, Sun/match days).

Tickets can also be bought **online** through **TicketOne** ([ticketone.it/ss-lazio-biglietti.html](http://ticketone.it/ss-lazio-biglietti.html)) and from its outlets around Rome.

The Lazio faithful gather in the Curva Nord, where tickets are around €20. Along the sidelines in the Tribune Tevere and Monte Mario, they rise to €40-€60. For under-16s, prices are €10-€15 cheaper. For lowly opposition, online tickets can drop to €10, even for adults. **LG**

LAZIO





# ITALY 2019-20 Roma

*www.liberoguide.com/roma*

## Roma

Totemic one-club captain Francesco Totti may have retired but **AS Roma** ([asroma.com/en](http://asroma.com/en)) are still leading contenders in the Italian game. For four seasons running, the Giallorossi achieved a top-three spot in Serie A and made the knock-out stages in Europe.

In 2017-18, Roma reached the semi-finals of the Champions League for the first time in three decades. Shortly before, the green light was given to the **Stadio della Roma**, a new stadium at Tor di Valle in south-west Rome, out towards Fiumicino airport.

A 52,500-capacity Colosseum-inspired circular arena, the club's new home was due to open for the 2020-21 season, just under a decade after the gradual takeover of Roma by Boston-born billionaire James Pallotta. The earliest current relocation date is now 2023.

The move will leave eternal city rivals Lazio as the sole tenant of the **Stadio Olimpico**, after a groundshare that dates back to the stadium's opening in 1953.

Set on the site of the Tor di Valle racecourse, alongside Mussolini's model district of EUR, the new stadium will form part of a leisure complex known as Roma Village. While the arena will take the inspiration for its exterior design from the Colosseum, around it will be a



mock of the Spanish Steps and a huge screen for live projections of the match. Inside, Roma hope to recreate the Curva Sud of Olimpico lore.

### Tickets & shops

There are seven Roma stores (!) in and around Rome.

The two main ones both also operate as ticket outlets. The **AS Roma Store** (daily

10am-7pm) at **piazza Colonna 360** in the Tridente area of town contains a ticket office (10am-6pm, match days vary) on the upper floor, the walls decorated with classic images from Roma history. Note the rare shot of the line-up of Serie A winners from 1941-42.

Downstairs, items such as branded jeans, crash helmets and skateboards bear Roma's emblematic wolf logo. Currently,

the second kit is white with red-and-yellow markings, the third choice black. There's also a line in retro tops from the Falcão era.

A smaller store/ticket outlet is found at **via del Corso 26-27** (Mon-Sat 10am-8pm), near the piazza del Popolo.

Match tickets are usually put on sale three or four weeks before the game.



The club has its own **English-language online distribution service** ([asroma.com/en/tickets/buy-tickets](http://asroma.com/en/tickets/buy-tickets)) that sells up to 1hr before kick-off. Roma also distribute through **VivaTicket** ([vivaticket.it](http://vivaticket.it)), online and at scores of their outlets throughout the city. One is **The Fans** football store, near Termini station, at via Merulana 9.

In all cases, ID is required for purchase.

The home end, the Curva Sud, is usually sold out. In the Curva Nord opposite, a seat is €25, reduced price €18 for over-65s and under 14s. Along the sidelines, in the Tribune Tevere and Monte Mario, it's €60/€42, rising to €80/€60 in the prime spots. **L9**

ROMA



# ITALY 2019-20 Sassuolo/Reggio Emilia

[www.liberoguide.com/sassuolo-reggio-emilia](http://www.liberoguide.com/sassuolo-reggio-emilia)



## Sassuolo/ Reggio Emilia

It is the miracle of **Sassuolo**. From 2013-14, the smallest town in Italy to be represented in Serie A since the war has rubbed shoulders with Milan, Rome and Turin. **Sassuolo Calcio** ([sassuolocalcio.it](http://sassuolocalcio.it)) even qualified for the group stage of the Europa League in 2016-17.

Home games take place 30km from Sassuolo at the 20,000-capacity **Mapei Stadium-Città del Tricolore** on the outskirts of **Reggio Emilia**.

Sassuolo fans occupy the Curva Sud, away ones the Curva Nord. The Tribuna Ovest contains the press and VIP seats, with Tribuna Est on the opposite sideline. Centrale Superior has the best spots – Est Laterale the cheapest.

### Transport

The nearest airport is **Parma** 50km (31 miles) away, 2.4km (1.5 miles) from



Bar Luana

Parma station, connected by bus No.6 (€1.20/€2 on board, every 30mins, 15min journey time). The **train** from Parma to Reggio Emilia (€2.90) takes 15mins.

A Reggio Emilia **taxi** (+039 0522 452 545) charges €55 to/from Parma Airport, and €40/€51 between Sassuolo and Reggio Emilia.

The stadium is on the north-eastern outskirts of town, with its own stop, **Reggio Stadio Giglio**, on the **Reggio**

**Emilia-Guastalla regional FER rail line**, 5mins/2 stops from Reggio station. It runs hourly during the week, four times a day at weekends (12min journey time).

**Local buses** in Reggio Emilia require a €1.50 ticket from a machine, €2 (exact change) on board.

At weekends, the **No.5** runs every 30mins from downtown Teatro Ariosto, which stops at via Duo and via Ruini near the stadium. A **taxi** from the station should cost about €12.

### Bed

The only hotel near the stadium is the four-star, business-oriented **Cristallo**, across the main strada Tangenziale. In town, the two-star **Ariosto** (via San Rocco) 12, +39 0522 437 320) is convenient for the bus to the stadium. The four-star **Hotel Posta** by the main square is historic. The four-star **Europa**, stands by the disused Stadio Mirabello, home of Reggiana until 1995. Convenient **San Marco** is a three-star directly opposite the station.

### Tickets

**Viva Ticket** ([vivaticket.it](http://vivaticket.it)) provides **advance sales**, **online** and through outlets such as **Kukkuma Bar/Tabacchi** in the I Petali complex by the stadium and the **Tabaccheria Panciroli** at via Panciroli 21A in the city centre.

On **match days**, a **biglietteria** operates by the stadium car park.

ID must be presented.


Average **prices** are €10 in the Tribuna Sud (home) and Nord (away). It's €20-€30 in the Tribuna (Est), and €25-€55 in the main stand, Tribuna Ovest. For the most attractive opposition, prices rise to €30 behind the goals and €30-€105 along the sidelines.

Admission is **reduced** for women, over-65s and, amazingly, under-30s.

### Beer

In **Sassuolo**, the **Bar Luana** by the Enzo Ricci stadium at piazza Risorgimento is decked out in green-and-black scarves, shirts ('Sasol') and souvenirs.

Apart from outlets at the **I Petali** mal, there are no bars at the stadium.

The nearest café is sleek **La Nave** (via Gramsci 1), in a little hub of shops where main roads meet. Also here are café/bakery **L'Antica Macina** and superior restaurant **Trattoria del Buontempone**. 





# ITALY 2019-20 Turin

[www.lib eroguide.com/turin](http://www.lib eroguide.com/turin)

## Turin

Home of Italy's most successful club as well as its most revered, **Turin** is a football city steeped in myth and tragedy. **Juventus** and **Torino** both gained new stadia in modern times, Juve's an all-seater on the northern outskirts.

With strong local support, Torino played at the **Stadio Filadelfia** from its opening in 1926. Unveiled nearby seven years later, the **Stadio Benito Mussolini** was later named the **Comunale**.

The Filadelfia hosted the great Torino side of the 1940s, decimated by a plane crash into the Superga Basilica outside town. The Filadelfia was later abandoned, only recently revamped for training games.

Torino moved to the nearby Comunale, reconfigured for the 2006 Winter Olympics, then for football. In 2016, it was renamed the **Stadio Olimpico Grande Torino** in honour of the fallen side.

Juve adapted the unloved and distant **Stadio delle Alpi**, scene of the epic Italia '90 semi-final between England and West Germany. The successful **Juventus Stadium** set the precedent for a club-owned arena in a land of crumbling municipal sports grounds. In 2017, it was renamed **Allianz Stadium**.



### Bearings

**Turin Airport** is 16km (ten miles) north of town, a short drive to the Juventus Stadium. An **express train** (€3.70) runs every 30mins to Dora station towards the city centre, journey time 20mins. A **taxi** (+39 011 5737 or +39 011 3399) to town should cost €40 and take 30 minutes.

The main train station is **Porta Nuova**, south-east of the centre. From there, trams run to Juventus or Torino. **Public transport** consists of a metro, trams and buses. A single ticket is €1.50, a day pass €5.

### Bed

By the Juventus Stadium, the **Hotel Master** is a handy three-star. Also close on via Verolengo, the family-run **Hotel Castello** is set in a 17th-century building. Slightly closer to town from there, the **Hotel Residence Sporting** shares space with the Maffei Sports Centre, its pool, tennis courts and football pitches.

By the Olimpico, the **Hotel Gran Torino**, the former **Cairo**, displays classic Toro shirts in the lobby.

Nearby, the **B&B Stadium** provides affordable comfort.

**Porta Nuova train station** is surrounded by hotels. One of them, on via Carlo Alberto, is elegance itself, with a gourmet restaurant: the **Grand Hotel Sitea**.

### Beer

The Po-side strip of bars, the **Murazzi**, between the bridges of Umberto I and Vittorio Emanuele I, is the main nightlife hub.



Of the pubs, on corso Vittorio Emanuele II, **Murphy's** (aka 'Six Nations') has rugby as its focus but screens soccer, too. Alongside, the **Shamrock Inn** is another favourite, while over the road nearer Porta Nuova, the **1870 Huntsman** has TV screens and pool. Nearby, behind the corso, the **Jumping Jester** opens by day, when tables fill with diners.

Near Porta Susa station, the **Isle of Skye** has a full range of Tennent's beers as well as Sky HD. In another hub of sport-friendly faux pubs between piazza Castello and the Mole tower, the **Shakespeare** at via Giambattista Bogino 3A puts calcio first. **LD**



# ITALY 2019-20 Juventus

[www.liberoguide.com/juventus](http://www.liberoguide.com/juventus)



Allianz Stadium

## Juventus

**Juventus** ([juventus.com/en](http://juventus.com/en)) now dominate the Italian game, as they did in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Eight straight scudettos have been interspersed with two Champions League finals, and defeats to the two Spanish giants in 2015 and 2017.

Juventus can also point to the ongoing success of their self-owned arena, rare

in Italy where ageing state-run stadia are the norm. Being built around the 41,500-capacity **Allianz Stadium** is the J-Village of a training centre, office, hotel and concept store. Italian football is at last joining the 21st century.

The adjoining Area12 mall contains a Juventus megastore, while a Juventus Museum was opened in 2013.

The compact stadium comprises the home Tribuna Sud on corso Grosseto

and Tribuna Nord on via Druento, behind each goal, Tribuna Ovest and Est Centrale on strada Comunale di Altessano by the Area12 mall contain the best seats along the sidelines. Visitors are allocated the north corner between the Nord and Est stands accessed through via Druento.

### Transport

The Juventus Stadium is north of town. On match days, **tram No.9** runs from **Bernini** on Turin's metro line before



returning all the way back to Porta Nuova station. **Tram No.3** from piazza Repubblica runs close by.

### Tickets

Tickets go on general sale via **TicketOne**, either **online** ([ticketone.it/juventus-fc-biglietti.html](http://ticketone.it/juventus-fc-biglietti.html)) or at **outlets** throughout Italy. In central Turin, these include the box office of the **Teatro Colosseo**, via Madama Cristina 71.

For an average Serie A fixture, it's €35 (€20 under-16s) for a seat in home Tribuna Sud, or Tribuna Nord, €65 (€35) for a better seat in the Tribuna Nord, while prices in the sideline Tribuna Est or Ovest range from €75-€120 (€40-€60).

On match days, there are two **ticket offices** by ingresso C, one by ingresso B and three by ingresso D, E and F on via Druento.

### Shops

The main **Juventus Store** (daily 9am-9pm) is by the club museum. It's the largest of its kind in Italy, with shirt-printing and retro tops galore. In town, there's a **Juve store** (daily 10am-7.30pm) on the corner of Garibaldi and XX Settembre by the Garibaldi stop on the No.4 tramline.

### Tours & museum

Behind the Tribuna Est, the **Juventus Museum** (Mon, Wed-Fri 10.30am-6pm, Thur-Sun & hol 10.30am-7.30pm, match days from 9am-10.30am) costs €15, €12 reduced. Trophies sit backlit on wall after wall while the club history is told in film, photo and football shirt form.

**Stadium tours** (Mon, Wed-Fri 11am, 12.30pm, 2.45pm, 4.15pm, Sat, Sun & hol every 30min) can only be purchased as part of a combined museum ticket (€25/€20 reduced).

### Bars

On strada Comunale di Altessano, by via Sansovino, **L'Elite** features photos of the stadium while **New York** opposite is filled with TV screens. Nearer the stadium at strada Altessano 146, **Alby** and neighbouring **Millegusti** are standard choices.

By the ground in the **Area12 mall**, you'll find eateries such as the **Old Wild West** and **Wiener Haus**.





# ITALY 2019-20 Torino

[www.liberoguide.com/torino](http://www.liberoguide.com/torino)

## Torino

Taking the bull of Turin as their symbol, disgruntled members of Juventus met in December 1906 to form **Torino** ([torinofc.it/en](http://torinofc.it/en)). Among them was coach Vittorio Pozzo, who led Torino for ten years before his World-Cup winning stint as national team manager.

It was Pozzo who helped form the Grande Torino side of the 1940s, lighting up Torino's beloved old **Campo Filadelfia**. Before a fifth title, a plane carrying the team flew into the hilltop Basilica of Superga outside Turin. Pozzo had to identify the bodies.

The Granata later moved from Filadelfia to groundshare with Juve at the **Comunale**, pipping their city rivals to win an emotional league title in 1976.

Revived and rebuilt for the Winter Olympics of 2006, and converted thereafter for use as a football ground by Torino, the Comunale became the **Stadio Olimpico Grande Torino**, holding 28,000.

The Marathon Tower distinctly rises high over the home end, or Curva Maratona (or Curva Nord, yellow). Visiting fans are allocated a section between the opposite Curva Primavera (green) and the Distinti Granata (red). The best seats are found in the Tribuna Granata, suitably also named the Tribuna Grande Torino.



Stadio Olimpico Grande Torino

The nearby **Filadelfia**, meanwhile was revamped and reopened in 2017 as a club HQ and training ground.

### Transport

Arriving into Porta Nuova station, turn left into via Sacchi, and cross the tram tracks for the **No.4 stop**. It takes 10-15 mins to reach the rond-point of San Gabriele. Walk right down via Filadelfia – left takes you to the old Toro stadium.

**Tram No.10** runs from Porta Susa station to corso Agnelli, the main street that runs parallel to the Stadio Olimpico. This is closer to the stadium and also allows access to the club shop.

### Tickets

The main **ticket office** is on corso Sebastopoli (Mon-Fri 10am-1pm, 2pm-6pm and 2hrs before kick-off). Both

the club and **VivaTicket** ([vivaticket.it](http://vivaticket.it)) distribute **online**. On match days, windows at the stadium open 2hrs before kick-off. You must provide valid ID before purchase.

For lesser opposition, the cheapest tickets in the Curva Maratona or Primavera start at €10, rising to €15 in the Distinti Granata. A decent seat in the Poltroncine Granata is €30, €60



in the Tribuna d'Onore and €90 in the Tribuna Grande Torino. For A-category opposition, prices rise at least 20%.

### Shop

The main Toro outlet is in the city centre, the **Granata Store** (closed Sat-Sun) at piazza Castello 10. It's hidden away in an arcade, opposite door 9.

### Bars

The nearest outlet to the stadium is a kiosk on corso Sebastopoli directly opposite the main ticket office, the **Bar-Paninoteca Olimpico**, with tables outside, and bottled beers.

Close by, where **corso Agnelli** meets **corso Sebastopoli**, the **Serafina** is a contemporary version of a classic retro Italian café/eaterie.

By the Filadelfia stadium, the **Piatto Sprintvia** is the best choice of pre-match imbibery, one part bar, one part restaurant, decorated with archive photos of the Grande Torino side of the 1940s, plus framed shirts. **L9**



# ITALY 2019-20 Udine

[www.lib eroguide.com/udine](http://www.lib eroguide.com/udine)



## Udine

Set in Italy's far north-east, close to Slovenia, the Adriatic and the Alps, **Udine** is the main city of Friuli. With Germanic and Slav influences, Friuli has its own language and its own wine. Udine is home to Moretti beer. The brewery once owned the club, who first played at Stadio Moretti.

This club, now **Udinese Calcio**, are Italy's second oldest, formed in 1896. The opening of the **Stadio Friuli** in 1976, north-west of town by the motorway that links Venice with Austria, shifted focus away from Moretti Park.

Reopened in 2016, the stadium is the second in Serie A to be owned by the club who play there. A sponsorship deal with car firm **Dacia** helped pay for it.

In the top flight since 1995, Udinese have no immediate local rivals. Most



away trips are a trek – Udine to Lecce is 1,200km.

### Bearings

**Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Airport** aka 'Trieste Airport', is close to Udine 44km (27 miles) away. Bus **No.E51** runs every 1-2hrs, taking 1hr to reach the bus terminal in Udine, near the train station on via Europa Unità, 2km south of the city

centre. Tickets (€4.75) are sold from the machine or at the info desk in Arrivals.

Udine is served by **local buses**. A ticket (*biglietto orario*) is €1.25 from the main office opposite the train station, or €2 on board. A **day pass** (*giornaliero U-24*) is €4.35. **Taxi Udine** (+39 0432 505 858) charges €15 from the train station to the stadium.

### Bed

The regional **Tourist Office** ([turismofvg.it](http://turismofvg.it)) has a room-booking function.

Two three-star hotels are located opposite the station: the **Principe** used by Italian rail staff; and the **Europa**. Also close to the station on piazzale Giobatta Cella is the **Hotel San Giorgio**, with rooms in the €100 range.

On via Giosuè Carducci, you find upscale lodgings at the **Ambassador Palace**. Under the same umbrella, the **Friuli** on viale del Ledra and **Astoria** on piazza XX Settembre offer mid-range comfort in downtown locations. For a quality stay, **Al Vecchio Tram** is a designer spot on via Brenari.

Convenient for stadium and city centre, **Hotel Suite Inn** on via di Toppo is more four-star than three.

### Beer

Udine is the historic home of **Moretti**.

**Al Vecchio Stallo** on via Viola is a lovely rustic spot decked out in vintage paraphernalia. The excellent **Osteria Pierimortadele** is on via Bartolini near the Udinese store. It's real football hang-out – though without a TV.

**The Black Stuff** on via Gorghi is Udine's leading pub, with sport screened and decent food served. The bare-brick, more restaurant-like **I Piombi** on via Manin attracts a discerning but pub-seeking crowd – with TV football, too. Also central, **Il Delser** at via Cavour 18 has football on TV and a party feel on Saturday nights.

North of the centre, **Bire** at piazzale Osoppo has its own beers and a large TV. Nearby at viale Volontari della Libertà 12, **Old Pub** keeps the focus on Serie A. **LB**





# ITALY 2019-20 Udinese

[www.libero guide.com/udinese](http://www.libero guide.com/udinese)



## Udinese

**Udinese** ([udinese.it/eng](http://udinese.it/eng)) are the *Zebrette*, the Little Zebras, their black-and-white stripes representing Udine since 1896.

Mired in the lower reaches of Serie A since the retirement of the prolific Antonio Di Natale, Udinese at least now have their own stadium. The **Dacia Arena**, the former **Stadio Friuli**, was unveiled in 2016.

Di Natale bowed out the same year, after scoring a goal every other game over 12 seasons. Striking partners, including Alexis Sánchez, came and went, each time Udinese selling on at a profit.

Behind this policy is Giampaolo Pozzo. Udinese's long-term owner has a football empire, stretching from Granada to Watford.

When Italy's bid to host Euro 2016 fell through, Pozzo went ahead and built the club a new stadium all the same.



Dacia Arena

Behind a sleek, diamond-patterned exterior, the Dacia Arena puts football at the focus, the old running track removed and stands up close to the pitch.

With the Curva Nord and Tribuna Est ready for 2015-16, and the Curva Sud unveiled that December, capacity reached 25,000.

Away fans are allocated sectors Q1/2 and R1/2 in a corner of the Curva Sud nearest the main Tribuna Centrale.

Home fans are in the Curva Nord. Seats in the Distinti Centrali are more affordable than those in the Tribuna Centrale (Nord/Sud).

### Transport

Two buses serve the stadium from Udine station: the **No.9** to the north side of the ground; and the more frequent **No.2** to **piazza Rizzi**, which drops you by the Bar allo Stadio at the church square. You'll see the floodlights behind the bank by the bus stop.

Both take about 15mins from the station and both skirt the historic centre. A taxi should cost about €15.

### Tickets

The main **ticket office** is by the **Macron Store Udinese Calcio** (Tue-Sat 10.30am-12.30pm, 3pm-7pm, match days) at the stadium.

**TicketOne**, which distributes **online** ([ticketone.it/udinese-calcio-biglietti.html](http://ticketone.it/udinese-calcio-biglietti.html)), also has a couple of **outlets**

around Udine. One is near the old ground at via San Rocco 148, **Edicola Zulian Daniele**.

Tickets are also available at the stadium on match days for a €5 levy. In all cases, ID is required for purchase.

Standard prices for the Tribuna Centrale and Laterale along the sidelines are €35-€50, €25 for the Distinti and €15 in either end, the Curva Nord and Sud.

### Shop

At the **Macron Store Udinese Calcio** (Tue-Sat 10.30am-12.30pm, 3pm-7pm, match days) at the corner of the Curva Nord/Distinti, souvenirs include bandanas, baseball caps and frilly pennants. Second kits are currently Tango orange.

### Bars

Outlets surround **piazza Rizzi** just behind the Carnera sports hall. Best is supporters' hangout **Bar allo Stadio** (via delle Scuole 6), decorated with images of Antonio Di Natale, signed shirts and hooped evidence of Celtic's visit here.

On the other side of the church, **Trattoria Nuovo Fiore** is a pleasant osteria with a terrace. Nearby, tucked down narrow via Milano, at No.7, homely **Osteria da Dalia 3.0** serves affordable local wines and tasty eats.



# ITALY 2019-20 Verona

[www.liberoguide.com/verona](http://www.liberoguide.com/verona)



Hotel Torcolo



Caffè Anselmi

## Verona

The lesser-known of Italy's cross-city groundshares is **Verona** – the top-flight derby between century-old **Hellas Verona** and upstart rivals **ChievoVerona** is a fleeting phenomenon.

Chievo represent the suburb of the same name, 4km west of town tucked inside the river Adige. Their fairytale rise from park football to Serie A was even backed by a local cake company. With Chievo losing their top-flight status in 2019, this rather odd city rivalry, the Derby della Scala, won't be reenacted in 2019-20 – Hellas have bounced back into Serie A.

The stage for both is the **Stadio Bentegodi**, home of Hellas since it opened in 1963, and renovated to stage Belgium's group games for Italia '90. By then, Chievo had already moved in, soon after gaining professional status. The first Serie A derby came in 2001.

Hellas fans occupied most of the Bentegodi, particularly their own Curva Sud, while Chievo's were allocated the traditional away end, the Curva Nord. Both sets fly yellow and blue flags, the colours of the city of Verona adopted by both clubs.

Chievo play the role of happy underachievers. Hellas and their notoriously right-wing have a bigger gripe with Veneto rivals Vicenza.

### Bearings

**Verona Villafranca (Catullo) Airport** is 5km [3 miles] south-west of Verona, connected by **ATV Aerobus** (€6) to Verona train station every 20mins, journey time 15mins. ATV also runs the city **bus network** – it's €1.30 for a single ticket (€2 on board), €4 for a day pass. A **taxi** (+39 045 532 666) from the airport should cost about €26-€30 to town.

### Bed

The **Verona Tourist Office** (tourism.verona.it) has a **hotel-booking service**.



Halfway between station and stadium and walking distance to either, the **Hotel Piccolo** and adjoining **Martini** on via Giulio Camuzzoni are part of the mid-range **Hotels Verona group** that also includes the nearby **Porta Palio** on viale Galliano. Across from it on via Longhena, the **Hotel San Marco** is a spa hotel with pool.

In town, tourist magnet Verona has plenty of hotels, though all might be booked for summer's opera season. All within a short walk of the Arena are four-star **Colomba d'Oro** (via

Cattaneo 10), the standard **Sanmicheli** (via Valverde 2), the comfortable **Bologna** (piazza Scalette Rubiani), the low-cost **Albergo Trento** (corso Porta Nuova 36) and **Hotel Torcolo** (via Cattaneo 11). The **Hotel Europa** (via Roma 8) is a handy three-star in the same convenient vicinity.

### Beer

Once an unpretentious football pub, the **Re Carlo da Barca** (via Carlo Cattaneo 12/corner vicolo Disciplina) has upped the ante on its gastronomic offering while keeping its fine beers and TV

sports. Nearby **Hartigan's**, tucked inside a courtyard off vicolo Disciplina, is the main Irish bar.

Also big on beer is the **Caffè Anselmi** on piazza delle Erbe while, alongside, **bloom** provides plenty of screen action and outdoor seating. Equally upscale is **Vini Zampieri** (via Alberto Mario 23), with fine wines and football paraphernalia.

Finally, don't miss a peek into the **Patagonia** (via San Nicolò 43), an ice-cream parlour themed after Argentine football. **LG**





# ITALY 2019-20 Stadio Bentegodi

[www.libero guide.com/stadio-bentegodi](http://www.libero guide.com/stadio-bentegodi)

## Stadio Bentegodi

Opened in 1963 and now showing its age more than five decades later, the **Stadio Bentegodi** is shared by **Hellas Verona** and **ChievoVerona**, occasional Serie A rivals.

Named after the local patron who backed Hellas more than a century ago, the Bentegodi is over the river from the town centre, in the western district of Borgo Milano. The original Bentegodi, where Hellas Verona first played in the early 1900s, was a field near downtown piazza Cittadella, a short walk from the Arena.

Between 1915 and 1928, Hellas played at Porta Palio, near the riverside hotel of the same name, then moved back to the original Bentegodi after a merger with two other local clubs.

When the new Bentegodi was being built, Hellas had only spent one brief season in Serie A but the civic pride dictated that a modern, municipal sporting arena should complement the historic one in the main square.

All-seated with a running track, the 42,500-capacity Bentegodi was modern and progressive, a step ahead of the Comunale stadia built under Mussolini. Its curtain-raiser was a Serie B game between Hellas and Veneto rivals Venezia shortly before Christmas 1963. Attracting record crowds during Hellas



Stadio Bentegodi

Verona's title-winning season of 1984-85, and used by Chievo a year later, the Bentegodi saw a number of renovations before the 1990 World Cup, namely a new pitch and extensions to the roof and third tier.

Capacity is currently just over 30,000 but Chievo rarely take up more than a quarter of the seats, Hellas rarely more than half.

The stadium comprises four tiers: tribuna/curva superiore; poltrone; poltronissime, and parterre.

The Curva Sud is the home end for Hellas fans, the Curva Nord on via Leonardo da Vinci is for Chievo's. Press and VIPs are allocated the Tribuna Ovest alongside piazzale Olimpia. Tribuna Est offers cheaper sideline seats.

### Transport

The nearest bus stops are **piazzale Olimpia/via Palladio**, served by Nos.11, 12 and 13 that run every 15-20mins from Porta Nuova main train station leaving from platform C near the stream to the right of the forecourt. Bus Nos.11 and

95 also serve Chievo and the No.90 links with focal piazza Brà. Walking from the station takes 15-20mins –follow the left-hand side of the stream up as far as via Fra Giocondo, then turn left.

### Tickets

Each club has its own ticket outlets, either in person or online. Both sell at the ground on the day. ID is required.

### Bars

The main bars around the stadium – the **Stadio, Olimpia, The Den pub** and



**Bentegodi**, all behind the Tribuna Est on the stretch of piazzale Olimpia between via Fra Giocondo and via Sansovino – are Hellas strongholds.

Just round the corner on **via Sansovino**, at No.20, lounge bar **Atipico** is a contemporary revamp of the lovely old café that once stood here.

Near the via Palladio bus stop en route to the stadium from the station, the **Corner Café** offers quality coffee and Italian football glossies. **LG**



# ITALY 2019-20 Hellas Verona

[www.libero guide.com/hellas-verona](http://www.libero guide.com/hellas-verona)



## Hellas Verona

Italian champions in 1985, **Hellas Verona** ([hellasverona.it](http://hellasverona.it)) gained promotion to Serie A in 2013, 2017 and 2019. Despite a long history and significant fan base, the club has spent far more seasons in Serie B than in the top flight.

After a solitary cup final appearance in 1976, a golden decade began with the

arrival of coach Osvaldo Bagnoli. Hellas hit the heights, leading Serie A for a few rounds in 1982-83 – and staying there in 1984-85. With 1986 World Cup stars Hans-Peter Briegel and Preben Elkjaer, Hellas steamed ahead, beating Napoli and Milan. A draw in Bergamo sealed the title. This was the first season that league referees were chosen at random, a factor cited by many as the reason for a topsy-turvy table free of dubious influence.

Hellas subsequently flopped in Europe, financial woes resulting in relegation and two changes of name. Worse was to follow in 2007 – not only with relegation to Serie C1 but a subsequent season at the bottom of the lower flight.

Hellas scaled back up to Serie B, gaining Serie A status in 2013. After relegation in 2016 and 2018, Hellas bounced back both times.



### Stadium

Hellas have played at the **Stadio Bentegodi** since its opening in 1963, occupying the Curva Sud on via Fra Giocondo (gates/cancello 18-19). For the bigger games, Hellas fans take up most of the 37,000 capacity.

### Tickets

During the week before the game, tickets go on general sale through **Vivaticket**, both **online** ([vivaticket.it](http://vivaticket.it)) and through outlets such as **Boxoffice Verona**, near the Arena at via Pallone 16. The **two club shops**, at the out-of-town **ADIGE0 mall** (via delle Nazioni 1) and near the Arena at **via Cattaneo 2**, also distribute.

From 11am on match days, tickets are distributed from the Hellas Verona Ticket Point at Parcheggio A at the Bentegodi.

In all cases, ID is required.

Bought in advance, a ticket for a standard Serie A game is €40-€65 in the Poltronissime seats, €25-€32 in the Poltrone and €18 behind the goals in the home Curva Sud and away Curva Nord.

Prices are reduced for women, over-60s and under-16s, by about €10-€15. Under-14s are charged €2. For match-day sales, prices rise by about €2-€5.

### Shops

The Hellas Store is at **via Cattaneo 2**, on the corner with via Oberdan. There's also a **larger outlet** at the **ADIGE0 mall** (via delle Nazioni 1) south of town.

Kits come in various combinations of blue and yellow, with variations of T-shirt including images of the Stadio Bentegodi and a composite image of Hellas in the 1980s.

### Bars

Around the stadium, the main bars, behind the Tribuna Est on the stretch of piazzale Olimpia between via Fra Giocondo and via Sansovino, are all Hellas-focused. The main one is **Stadio**, immediately facing the stadium, covered in Hellas scarves and images of the Bentegodi in its 1990 pomp.

On the corner of Sansovino, **Olimpia** also displays Hellas support while at the other end of piazzale Olimpia, the modest **Bentegodi** is another popular pre-match spot. **LD**