



COMUNE DI FOLIGNO



# FOLIGNO

*A journey  
to the center of the world  
amidst nature, art, traditions and gastronomy.*

5

## THE MENOTRE VALLEY



VISITFOLIGNO

*A journey to the center of the world  
amidst nature, art, traditions  
and gastronomy.*

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Foligno is a blend of art, history, nature, gastronomy, quaint villages, unique paths and atmospheres.

This brochure guide leads you to the discovery of the wonders of our territory.

Texts, photos, and videos come together to provide an unforgettable experience.

Bon voyage!

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Photo on the cover: The Menotre Valley

# FOLIGNO

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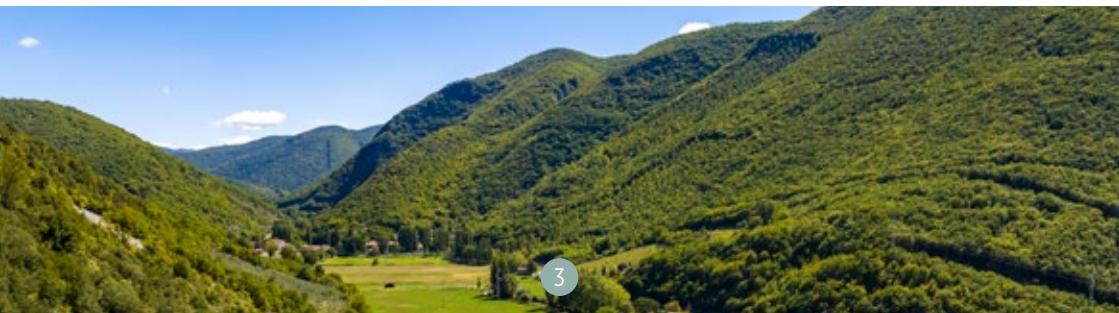
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*Waterfalls of the Menotre River*

## THE MENOTRE VALLEY



A visit to the Foligno area must include a stop at the **Menotre Valley**, one of the most spectacular areas in the entire Umbrian-Marchigian Apennines.

The itinerary may vary in duration depending on whether one wishes to focus on the natural aspect or explore the small villages and places of worship along the way.

The Menotre River, referred to as *flumen Guesia* in a document from 1067, is undoubtedly one of the natural elements that has greatly influenced the quality and life of the Foligno territory. An **ancient watercourse** that has allowed humans to enjoy its benefits for centuries.

Over the centuries, the Menotre Valley has been a heavily trafficked area, crossed by writers, pilgrims, armies, distinguished individuals, and common people traveling to or from the Adriatic coast. It remains a place where both nature and human activity have mostly

remained intact, preserving a sense of wildness and ancestral beauty that is precious and rare.

The Menotre Valley takes its name from the river itself, which, over the centuries, has shaped the profiles of Sasso di Pale and Mount Serrone. It winds through a very interesting area from a natural and landscape perspective. Here, one can admire rugged and evocative landscapes with lush vegetation of beeches, oaks, and holm oaks that host a wide range of endemic animal and plant species.

The Menotre River originates from the sources of the Favuella stream, at 800 m above sea level, near the village of Orsano (a mountainous fraction of the municipality of Sellano, 30 km from Foligno) and Mount Mareggia. Gathering the waters of the Piè di Cammoro and Carboneia streams, it flows towards Rasiglia. The force of the waters increases here due to the Capovena springs, located in the upper part of the town of Rasiglia, as well as Alzabovo and Venarella.

After passing through the towns of Rasiglia, Serrone, Casenove, Leggiana, Scopoli, Ponte S. Lucia, and Pale, the river forms the **Menotre waterfalls** with a series of cascades, then reaches the village of Belfiore and joins the Topino River in the Scanzano area.

Within the Menotre Valley, the **Altolina Park**, with its two entrances in Pale and Belfiore, is a true gem. The network of charming nature trails it comprises is characterized by a lush and gentle nature, with the Menotre entering and exiting, forming oases, waterfalls, streams, ravines, and caves.

From the village of Pale, the Menotre water flows in and out of the rock, descending to the town of Belfiore, captivating the visitor immersed in a timeless dimension. In short, it's a corner of Umbria not to be missed.



*Waterfall of the Menotre River*

## THE VIA FLAMINIA AND THE MENOTRE VALLEY

Built by Consul Gaius Flaminius in 223 B.C., the Via Flaminia originally passed through Vescia, following a foothill route still identifiable today, located opposite the church of San Nicolò and ascending towards Belfiore.

Traveling along Belfiore in the eastward direction, the road encountered the current remains of **Carpineto**, near which, in 1888, numerous human remains were unearthed beneath large tiles, along with pots and jewelry.

At this precise location, the Menotre River receives the Acqua Viva stream. The road then ascended through a rocky path across the Altolina, where, before reaching Pale, the remains of an extraordinary hydraulic structure can be found, likely a **Roman aqueduct dating back to the 3rd century B.C.**

Beyond Pale, the road, along a still visible route, skirted the slopes of Sasso, following a flat course. In the area of Ponte Santa Lucia, the road left the Menotre Valley. From 170 B.C. onward, the Flaminia no longer traversed the Menotre Valley but followed that of the Topino River towards Nocera.

In the late antique period, the road was then shifted from the left bank to the right, starting to intersect the Menotre Valley around Vescia, where it crossed the river on a still-existing bridge.

## HISTORY

The history of the Menotre Valley is ancient and its natural sanctity was soon recognized and chosen by Eastern hermit monks and later by Benedictines, who eventually settled permanently in these areas. The **sacredness and the water** that so profoundly characterize this territory have always been significant attractors for human life and activities.

According to the scholar from the city of Foligno, L. Jacobilli, the Menotre River flows “with great charm and bringing much utility.” Indeed, activities that, thanks to the powerful driving force of water, emerged over the centuries as true excellences in the region were primarily related to the processing of wool (fulling mills), cereals, and oil.

Later on **paper** production became prominent, reaching a high level of excellence.

Around these productive centers and for their defense, during the medieval period and subsequent centuries, small rural settlements and fortifications were established, such as the village of Pale, enclosed within the walls of the original ancient castle.

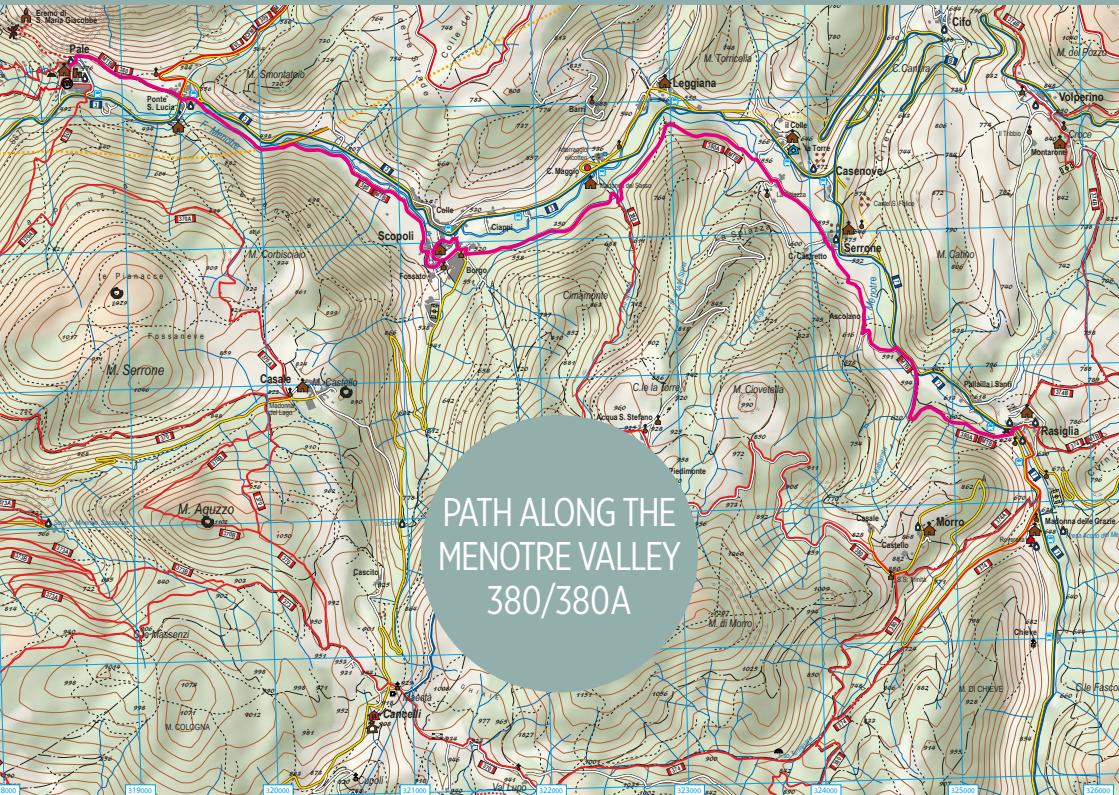
The abundance of water and the constant flow of the river throughout the year also favored the development of the “industrial profile” of the Menotre Valley in more recent times. This region has been ideal for tobacco factories, mechanical workshops, pasta factories, woolen mills, cement factories, rope factories, match factories, washed oil factories for broom treatment, terracotta and brick kilns, as well as lime kilns. In 1895, thanks to the wealth of water resources, a hydroelectric plant was established in Pale to provide power for the city and the Foligno territory.

*Pale*

## A JOURNEY TO DISCOVER THE MENOTRE VALLEY

Let's outline the route of this splendid excursion through nature and culture, noting that the same itinerary can be taken in both directions. The route is suitable for walking, mountain biking, or driving, with parking available in the villages encountered between Belfiore and Rasiglia.

If you prefer **to walk or bike**, refer to trail number **380 and 380A** registered in the regional cadastre, marked with white and red signage. It can be completed in stages and in both directions, covering approximately 12.5 kilometers with a 500-meter elevation gain, taking around 5 and a half hours.



If starting from Foligno, to reach the Menotre Valley, head to the **Church of Miglio in San Paolo**.

The church is located at a crossroads from which two paths lead to the Menotre Valley: the left one heads towards the villages of **Vescia, Scanzano, and Belfiore**, while the right one ascends directly into the mountains, passing through “Corta di Colle,” reaching the panoramic SS77 road.

After crossing the town of **Colle San Lorenzo**, you arrive in **Pale**.

If entering the Menotre Valley from below, the Altolina parking lot in Belfiore serves as an entrance to the Altolina Park. From Belfiore to Pale, follow the Menotre through the park, and with the second leg, reach Rasiglia and its springs.



Belfiore

## BELFIORE

Probably established with the descent from the populations of the surrounding hills, particularly from Ravignano, the village of **Belfiore** rises in an extremely picturesque landscape, dominated by the Sasso di Pale and the Menotre Waterfalls cascading down from the towering Pale Castle above

Together with Vescia and Pale, thanks to the power of water, Belfiore was, until very recent times, a significant production center. In the early 20th century, the area counted 42 productive plants, including ten olive mills, seven grain mills, a pasta factory, a woolen mill, three mechanical workshops, as well as cement, rope, match, and lime kiln factories. Between Belfiore and Pale, **ten paper mills** were also active.

The **Palazzo degli Unti**, belonging to one of the most eminent families of seventeenth-century Foligno's patriciate, transformed into a paper mill in the 19th century. The parish church, dedicated to the



*Belfiore*



*Belfiore*

Assumption, dates back to 1683. The **Church of San Nicolò de Bello Flore**, documented since 1138, houses works by Noel Quillerier (1594-1669), Giovan Battista Michelini (1604-1679), and Tommaso Nasini (†1746).

For centuries, the *Madonna di Belfiore*, a wooden statue from the 13th century, was kept here. Sold to private individuals in 1947, it was reacquired by the State and is currently displayed in the National Museum of the Duchy, located in the Albornoz Fortress in Spoleto.



Church of San Nicolò de Bello Flore

Near San Nicolò, in the direction of Scanzano-Vescia, you'll find the **Majesty of Saint Anne**, a beautiful votive shrine with frescoes attributed to the Foligno painter Pierantonio Mezzastris (dates 1457-1506).



*Majesty of Saint Anne*

### ! FUN FACT

Legend has it that Cristina of Sweden, during her stay in Pale in 1652, looked out over the valley, saw the magnificent garden of Villa Elisei (now almost disappeared), and asked for the name of the village below. Upon learning that the name of the village was Fragnano, she remarked that such a beautiful place could not have such an unattractive name and declared that from that day forward, it would be called Belfiore. This name change is documented to have occurred during that period.

*Altolina Park - Waterfall*

## THE ALTOLINA PARK AND THE MENOTRE WATERFALLS

The park trail (marked with specific signs as **Red Route – The Menotre Waterfalls**) offers one of the most beautiful nature experiences in the entire area. The natural path of the Menotre River creates continuous attractions, from oases in the woods to waterfalls, gorges, and even some of Italy's most beautiful karst caves.

From the Altolina parking lot, you ascend through a very pleasant initial stretch among olive trees. After a short uphill section, approximately 10 minutes into the walk, you encounter **the first and most significant waterfall** of the Menotre River.

Continuing the journey, you cross some stretches of path carved between rocky walls, pass through the gorge called **Forra dell'Altolina** (380 m), and encounter other smaller waterfalls (a larger one just below the walls of the historic center of Pale).

It takes about half an hour from the parking lot below the village of Pale to reach the top, excluding the obligatory stops in front of the marvels encountered along the way.

One of the most enchanting stretches of the route is the “**Velo della**



**Sposa**" (Veil of the Bride), a waterfall that appears to take on this specific form.

The park also includes the stunning **Grottoes of the Abbess**. These cavities consist of various chambers, the most famous being the Chamber of the Little Lake, which has a circular shape and a height of 8-9 meters. Stalactites hang from the dome-shaped ceiling, and in the center, there are stalagmitic pillars forming 4-5 perfectly shaped columns.

A passage leads to the "Chamber of the Columns on the Ground," where you can observe a stalagmite in the shape of a lion, numerous stalactites resembling drapes, and imposing central columns.

In 2017, another large cavity was discovered, named "**La Gola del Cervo**" (The Deer's Throat): a hall over 100 meters long with huge stalagmites, diverse limestone formations, and geological stratifications (not accessible to inexperienced visitors).



The opening is scheduled from May to September and can be accessed with a guide.



*Grottoes of the Abbess - Pale*

The park, sheltered by dense woods, is home to numerous **wild animals**, including hedgehogs whose spines are not hard to find. Falcons are also frequently spotted. When the haze clears, the summit of the mountain offers a wide panorama of the Umbrian mountains, extending from Mount Subasio in the north to the mountains of Spoleto in the south. From above, you can observe the extensive olive groves that, thanks to a particularly mild climate in this part of the Apennines, find an ideal environment, often intermingling with the thermophilic woods of holm oak and cork oak.

For those who decide to tackle the beautiful uphill path through the Altolina Park that ends in the village of Pale, right in the center of the Castle, a break will surely be needed upon arrival to refresh before continuing the journey.

In Pale's castle, you can take a seat at the small taverns' tables to savor local products and fascinating travel stories.



*Pale Castle*



Pale Castle

## PALE CASTLE



Inhabited since the Iron Age, in the medieval period, Pale passed from the Monaldi family to the possessions of the Abbey of Sasso Vivo. Located at the foot of Mount Pale, around the year 1000, it was a “villa without fortifications,” but in the 15th century, the Trinci family equipped it with defensive walls.

Part of its walls in the center of the village is well-preserved, along with two towers, one square and the other cylindrical.

After the decline of the Trinci family in 1439, it remained the property of the Municipality and was used as a refuge for residents in case of danger. The castle, not being in a border area, had no strategic importance from a military point of view. However, it was a reference point for all the valley communities due to the economic power derived from activities exploiting the waters of the Menotre.

Due to the presence of the Menotre River, active wool processing plants (fulling mills), cereal mills, and, from the 14th century, the village

began to be famous for **paper production**. In its golden age, at the end of the 19th century, Pale could count on about ten active artisan paper mills. With the **Sordini family** in the last century, it even experienced industrial development. The integration of these buildings into the village, all now inactive, some modified and transformed for different uses, as well as the network layout of the plants, created a particular aspect of the village and the surrounding landscape.

The residential complex of Pale, within the castle desired by the Trinci, is characterized by the **Parish Church of San Biagio**, almost completely



Pale

incorporated into the structure of the ancient castle, preserving beautiful paintings and sculptures from the 15th and 17th centuries. Above the sacristy entrance is a seventeenth-century monumental organ, completed by the choir; facing it is the walnut pulpit, also of fine workmanship.

The **Elisei family** of Foligno had many properties here since the late 13th century, while in the late 17th century, the same family built a sumptuous palace, **Villa Elisei**, in the center of Pale, with an adjoining suspended garden rich in extraordinary botanical varieties. Its beauty attracted many important personalities of the time to Pale, including Christina of Sweden, Cosimo III Grand Duke of Tuscany, Anna Violante of Bavaria Grand Duchess of Tuscany, and Isabella of Spain. The palace, of which only a small portion remains, overlooked the current Piazza Elisei.







*Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe - Pale*

## HERMITAGE OF SANTA MARIA GIACOBBE



An indispensable part of this small and precious Umbrian experience is the ascent from Pale to the small Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe, an ancient construction embedded in the rock and visible, with attention, from the SS77.

The hermitage is reached on foot through a naturalistic path with 305 steps. The “**Sentiero del Pianello**” (marked with specific signs as the **Via dell’Eremo – Orange Route**), characterized by the **14 stations of the Via Crucis**, can be covered in about 30 minutes of uphill walking—a slightly steep and exposed path, but the beauty of the place and the landscape, once you arrive, make the effort worthwhile.

The Hermitage of Santa Maria di Giacobbe is one of the Therapeutic Frontier Sanctuaries of the Foligno mountains. Documented since 1296, the hermitage was inhabited until recent times. In addition to a small kitchen, the structure included a room (now used to store photos and ex-votos of devotees), a garden, and a well for collecting rainwater.



*Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe - Pale*



*Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe - Pale*



Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe - Pale

The last hermit died in 1963. Tradition tells that Maria di Giacobbe, one of the devout women who anointed Christ's tomb, retired here in penance.

From an artistic point of view, several well-executed frescoes dating from the 14th to the 17th centuries are preserved. In the church, whose vault is created in the rock, the figure of the Pantocrator Christ of the Sienese school from the first half of the 14th century dominates the space. Among the various frescoes is also a scene of the Coronation of the Virgin by Jesus attributed to Cola di Petrucciolo from Orvieto, a disciple of Giotto. The painting realized in 1507 as an ex-voto by Lattanzio di Niccolò Alunno, now in the Diocesan Museum of Foligno, comes from here. The canvas depicts Santa Maria Jacobi, one of the holy women who carried ointments to Christ's tomb, venerated in France (Camargue) and Ciociaria (Veroli).

To return to the Altolina parking lot and conclude the loop trail, descend from the hermitage to the walls where climbing is practiced and continue down the right path

The loop takes about 2 and a half hours to walk, including stops to admire the landscapes. The path is marked and clearly visible, suitable for hikers.



Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe - Pale

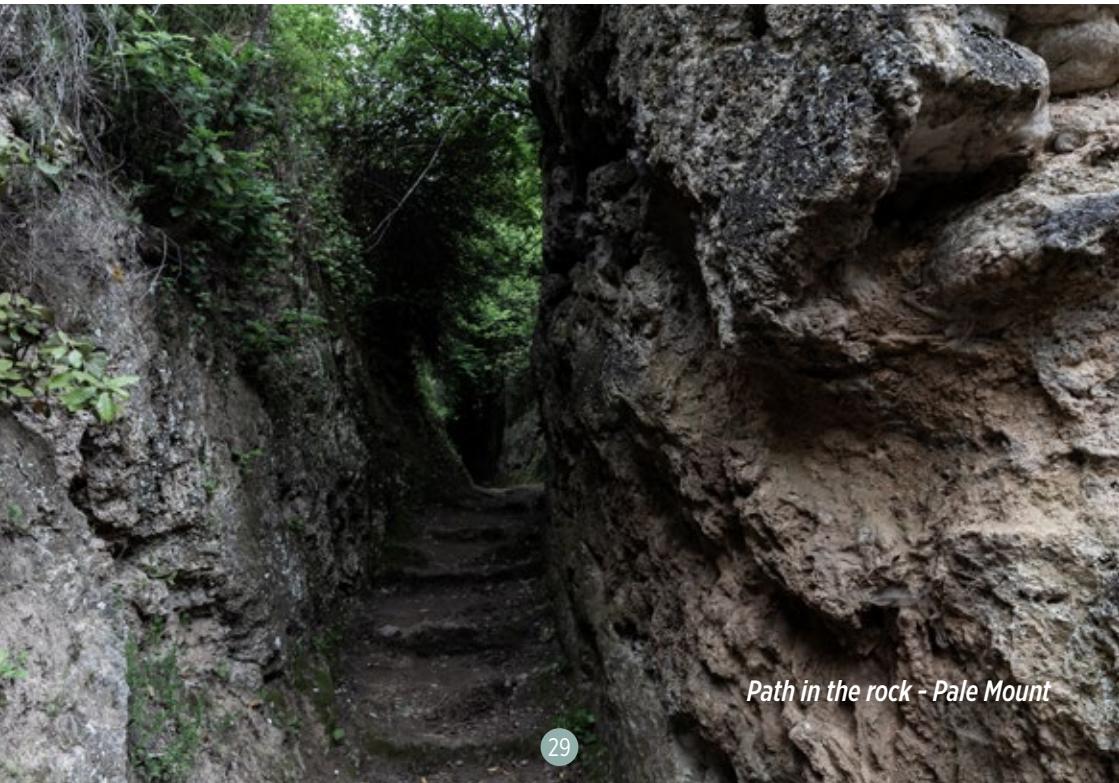


Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe - Pale

## MOUNT PALE

The **Sasso di Pale** is of great geological and paleontological interest. On the right side, descending towards Belfiore, you find all the Umbrian geological formations, including the Red Ammonite Formation, where fossils shaped like shells ranging in size from a few centimeters to several decimeters are exposed. The environment is typically rocky, limestone, with an interesting sub-Mediterranean type of vegetation. On Mount Pale, where ancient mountain routes passed (Via Plestina and Via Lauretana) connecting mountainous areas with the Menotre and Topino Valleys, the Umbria Archaeological Superintendent found **the remains of a pre-Roman hilltop sanctuary**.

The place of worship occupies the summit of the mountain, which features artificial cuts in the rock made to facilitate access to the sanctuary and to create small terraces as resting places for pilgrims.



*Path in the rock - Pale Mount*

The summit of Mount Pale is reached by passing through the village of **Sostino** (renowned in the Middle Ages as a “stop” location, which, among the mountains, offered a certain number of hotels and inns along the ancient Via Plestina).

In 1900, to commemorate the Holy Year of Redemption, a large cross, the **Cross of Pale**, was installed on the summit—a panoramic point of remarkable beauty, offering views of the central plains of Umbria to the south and west, and the Colfiorito plateau to the north and east.

### ! FUN FACT: THE CROSS OF PALE

On June 22, 1902, to commemorate the Jubilee Year of 1900, a monumental iron cross, 16 meters high and weighing 45 quintals, was erected on the “Sasso di Pale.” The cost of this cross amounted to 2,000 lire. The parish priest of Pale at that time, with the assistance of the parish priest of Belfiore, generated tremendous enthusiasm among the population for the initiative. This led to the immediate formation of a committee and the collection of contributions for the swift execution of the cross, entrusting the work to the steelworks in Terni. The cross’s inauguration was solemnly celebrated, attended by thousands of people from both the plains and the mountains.



*Cross of Pale*

## **SPORT AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES IN PALE**

Pale is a perfect destination for outdoor sports enthusiasts, ideal for activities such as trekking, biking, climbing, and trail running.

### **The Trails**

Through appropriate signage, four tourist routes have been highlighted, suitable for walking without significant difficulties. However, it is always necessary to wear suitable clothing and shoes, especially for the Eremo trail, which involves a steep ascent and is quite exposed to the sun in summer.

#### **1. The Menotre Waterfalls (Red Trail)**

The red trail offers a unique naturalistic experience along the Menotre River, where the river cascades majestically in three large steps of limestone and travertine rocks, creating a 200-meter waterfall. Starting from the parking lot downstream, coinciding with the “Nature Le Cascate del Menotre” trail, it leads to the inhabited center of Pale.

#### **2. Via dell'Eremo (Orange Trail)**

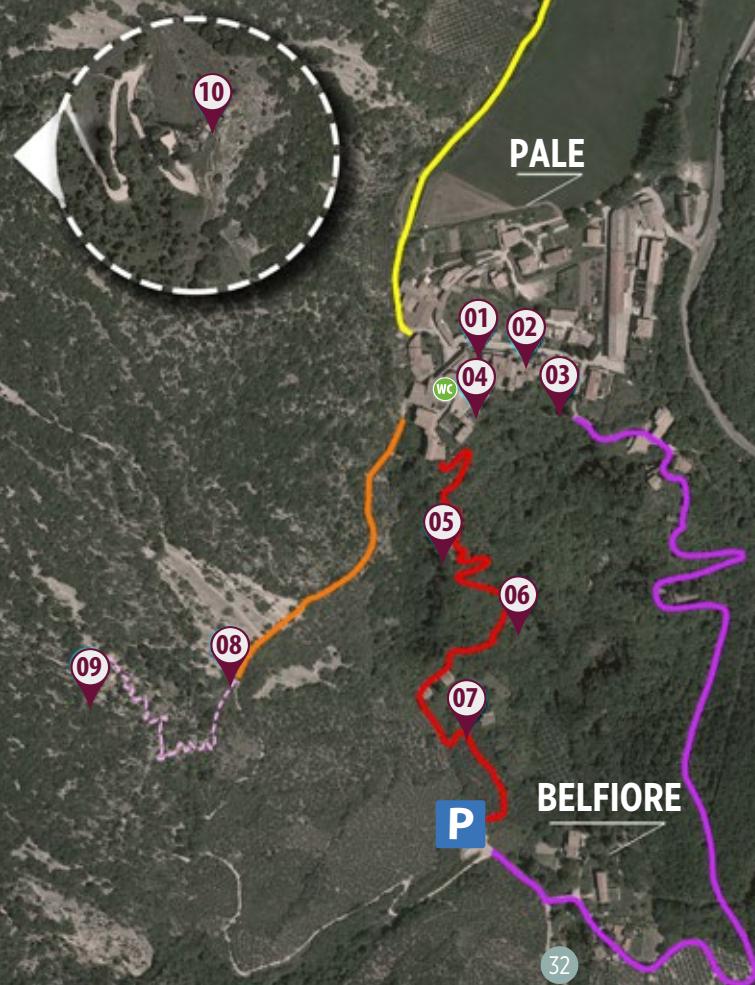
The orange trail starts from the center of Pale and ascends along the southwest slope of Mount Pale, known for its cliffs. It leads to the Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe.

#### **3. Old Road (Yellow Trail)**

The yellow trail follows the route of the Old Road, connecting the center of Pale to Ponte Santa Lucia, also following the Via Lauretana (Lauretana Road). During the itinerary, breathtaking views are offered, overlooking the spectacular Sasso di Pale and the plain along the Menotre River.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Pale Castle - Medieval walls
- 2 Parish Church of San Biagio
- 3 Equipped area
- 4 Grottoes of the Abbess
- 5 Villa Elisei
- 6 Menotre Waterfalls
- 7 House Lu Majo
- 8 Pale scarp
- 9 Hermitage of Santa Maria Giacobbe
- 10 Cross of Pale



## PONTE SANTA LUCIA

**YELLOW TRAIL**  
Old Road

**RED TRAIL**  
The Menotre Waterfalls

**ORANGE TRAIL**  
Via dell'Eremo

**PURPLE TRAIL**  
Chiovata Road

TOILET

PARKING AREA



#### 4. Chiovata Road (Purple Trail)

The purple trail starts from Pale and, passing under the arch of the ancient Carnali paper mill, overlooks the gorge below. It continues through a beautiful forest until reaching the Altolina hydroelectric plant.

#### Rock Climbing Routes in Pale

Pale is a gem for free climbing, attracting enthusiasts from outside the region. There are **220 routes**, some of which are unique. Sport climbing on the rocks of Mount Pale began to develop systematically in 1981. Thanks to the Alpine Speleological Group Folignate (G.A.S.F.), the first routes of the fourth and fifth grades were established: "Gasf," "il Masso," "la Volpe," and shortly after, the super classics: "Luce," "Canto Navajo," "l'Uccellessa," "il Vecchiazzo," and "Magico Picchio." Following these, and among the most beautiful and frequented, routes like "Danza Classica," "Nitroglicerina," "Orbita," "S.O.B," "Frullato," and "Mezza Palla" were established. In the first half of the 1980s, Pale saw the creation of the first real climbing gym in Umbria, attracting an increasingly growing number of climbers through word of mouth. Between 1984 and 1986, there was a gradual and rapid increase in difficulty, with new routes opened on slabs and overhangs: "Ibernazione," "Geometria verticale," "Pelle di Luna," and "Twist." In 2010, all the equipment on the wall was renewed.

Leaving the town of Pale means leaving the Altolina Park, but the journey continues, following the waters of the Menotre River to Rasiglia.



## PONTE SANTA LUCIA, SCOPOLI, LEGGIANA, CASENOVE, SERRONE



Continuing along the SS77, you pass through the locality of **Ponte Santa Lucia**, a place where a therapeutic sanctuary arose in the Middle Ages, eventually becoming specific for eye diseases. The current church, entirely rebuilt at the end of the nineteenth century, was established in a different location than the older one, which is unknown.

Continuing, you reach the village of **Scopoli** with its ancient medieval castle, the Church of S. Maria Assunta, the small palace of the Conti Rossi from 1679 with the oratory of S. Francesco, now Sant'Anna. Also noteworthy are some sacred shrines from the fifteenth century and the small Sanctuary of Madonna del Sasso.

In Scopoli, one of the Antennas of the **Ecomuseum of the Umbrian Apennine Dorsal** was established in 2015. This exhibition space, equipped with informative panels and multimedia devices, uses images and descriptions to narrate the history of Menotre and its

valley, a rich and strategic area along historical routes and ancient Tyrrhenian-Adriatic communication routes.

The journey continues towards **Leggiana**, which houses the *Palazzaccio* owned by the Trinci family. Then, it goes on to Casenove and Serrone.

The settlement of **Casenove** originated at the intersection of three valleys: Foligno, Sellano, and Colfiorito. The parish church of Sant'Ansovino is mentioned in documents from the Abbey of Sasso Vivo dating back to 1245. Due to its location, being a mandatory passage to the mountains and a central point along the Lauretana road, it was a renowned place, also hosting the large annual agricultural fair of Sant'Antonio. Practically a “capital” of the Menotre Valley, where there was a **barracks for the carabinieri, a general practitioner, a pharmacy, customs, post office, employment office, elementary and middle schools**.

Since 1997, following the earthquake, the village has undergone significant depopulation, completely changing its identity.



Casenove

Shortly after the village of Casenove, along the road on the left, the sixteenth-century **Palazzo Bolognini** in the small hamlet of **Serrone** tells the story of Sister Maria Maddalena del Crocifisso, Ersilia Foschi in secular life. In 1712, she married the noble Giovanni Battista Bolognini, whose residence in the city was in the current Via Cesare Agostini in Foligno. After some sad family events, Ersilia withdrew to a hermit's life in a room at the back of the palace.

Looking up towards the mountain from the road, you can see the ruins of the triangular-shaped **Castle of Serrone**, which, despite being in a state of decay, is still very evocative. It seems that inside, it housed a healing spring (San Felice spring).

In the center of the village, the **Church of Madonna dell'Assunta** houses a precious crucifix, an altarpiece with the *Assumption of the Virgin*, and a copy of the famous painting preserved here for centuries, *La Bottega di San Giuseppe* (1617-1628), by the Flemish Caravaggioesque artist known as the Master of Serrone (the original is now preserved in the Diocesan Museum of Foligno).

At this point in the journey, it's worth taking some time to explore the scenic beauties of these places, perhaps by walking the "**La Passeggiata della Corte**," a beautiful circular path of about 2 km between the fractions of Casenove and Serrone, with an almost negligible elevation of less than 50 meters. The walk, named after an ancient toponym, passes through significant places where you can discover palaces, fountains, and monuments in a context noteworthy for history, art, and naturalistic beauty. 

To continue exploring the Menotre Valley until reaching the upper pass, from Casenove, take the SP459 south towards the village of **Rasiglia**.

## RASIGLIA



Rasiglia is situated at an altitude of 648 meters, approximately 18 km from Foligno. Its name means “**impetuous springs**,” and indeed, it is nicknamed “**The village of waters**” because it is crossed by spring water, visible and audible in every corner of the village.



### POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1 Former Monastery of St. Michael the Archangel or Church of the Saints
- 2 Former Toni Woolen Mill
- 3 Ancient Rest Stop (13th century)
- 4 Oratory of San Filippo (17th century)
- 5 Public Gardens
- 6 Former Ottaviani Mill
- 7 Peschiera
- 8 Former Accorimboni Woolen Mill
- 9 Former Silvestri Mill
- 10 Former Accorimboni Mill
- 11 Former Angeli Mill
- 12 Former Accorimboni Loom and Gaulchiera
- 13 Headquarters of “Rasiglia and its Springs” Association
- 14 Church of SS. Peter and Paul (18th century)
- 15 Canon’s House
- 16 Washhouse
- 17 “Lu Purgu”
- 18 Ancient Toni Woolen Mill
- 19 Former Accorimboni small hydroelectric power plant
- 20 Capovena Spring
- 21 Resurgence
- 22 Castellina dei Trinci
- 23 Trinci Castle
- 24 Sanctuary of Madonna delle Grazie
- 25 Youth House



It is a fascinating place, protected by a constraint of historical-monumental interest by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, attracting a considerable flow of tourists, significantly increased over the last few years.

Abundant water flows through the village, making it unique. The water comes from the **Capovena** spring, located at the top of the village. The village's foundations are based on travertine deposits formed by the chemical precipitation of calcium carbonate from the spring. The waters gather within the village in the large and suggestive basin called **La Peschiera**.

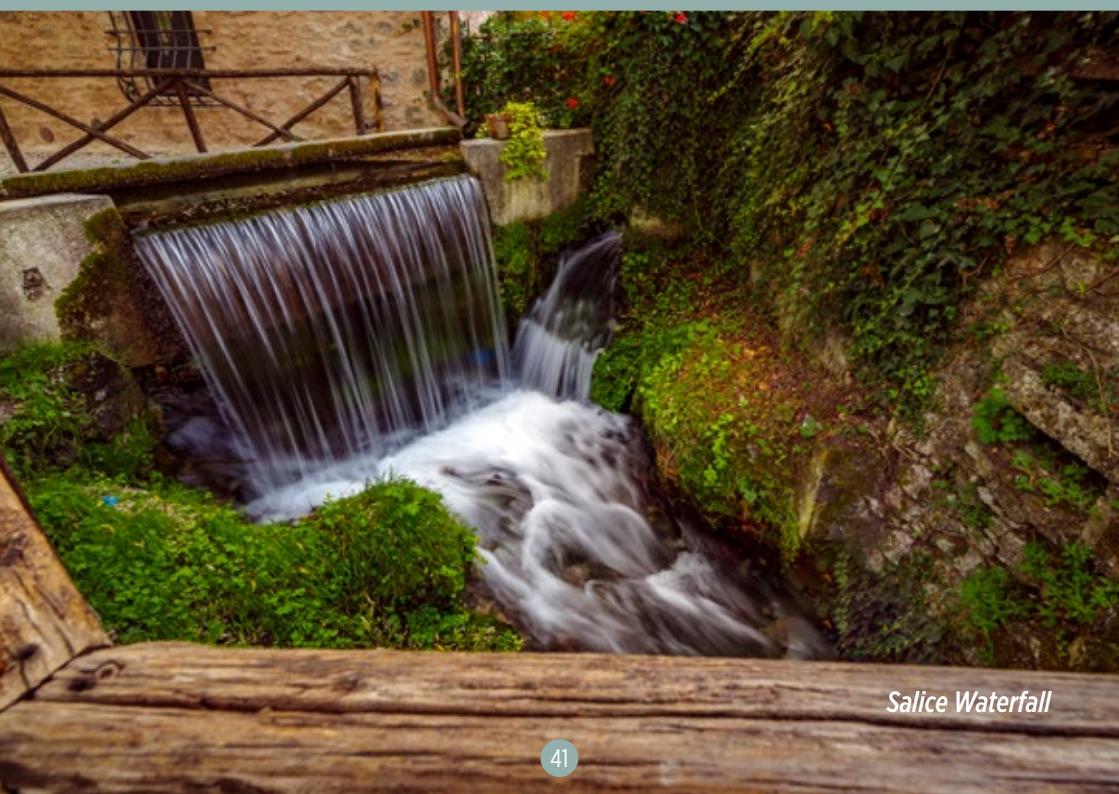
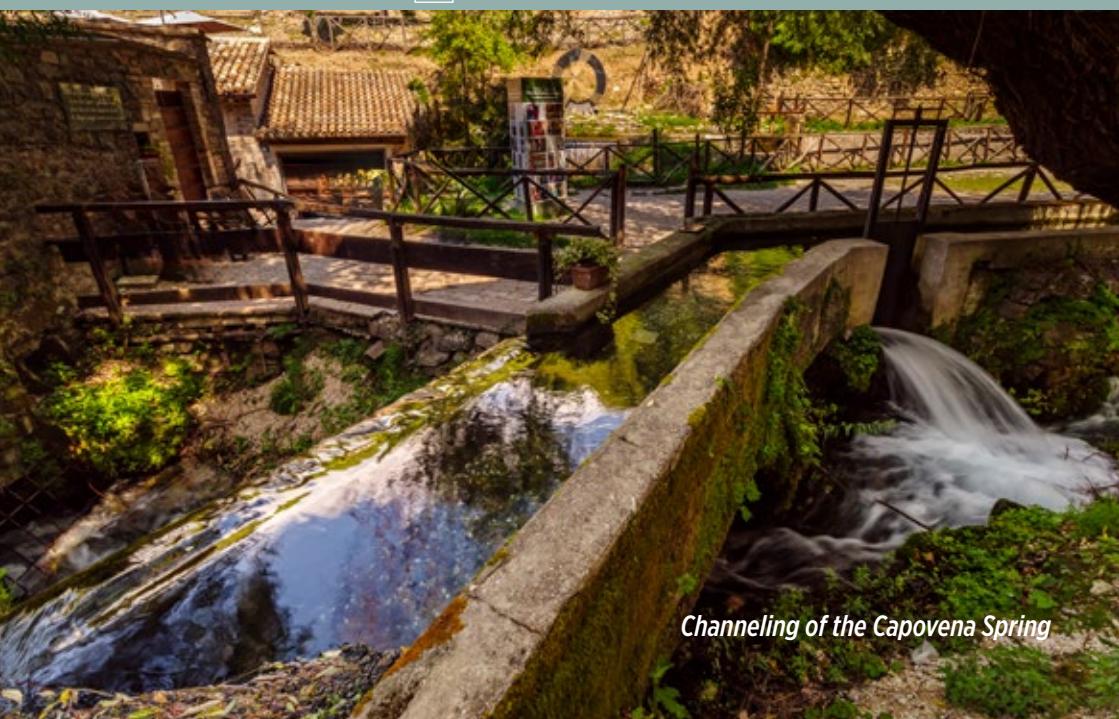
However, water is not lacking outside the village either. Other springs are found near Rasiglia, including **Alzabove**, at the foot of Mount Carosale, a kilometer from the village, the **Venarella** spring, located between Rasiglia and the Alzabove spring, whose water is believed to have beneficial properties, and the **Vena Pidocchiosa** near Le Ville or Pallaila, on the road coming from Foligno.



*Peschiera - Ancient reservoir of water*

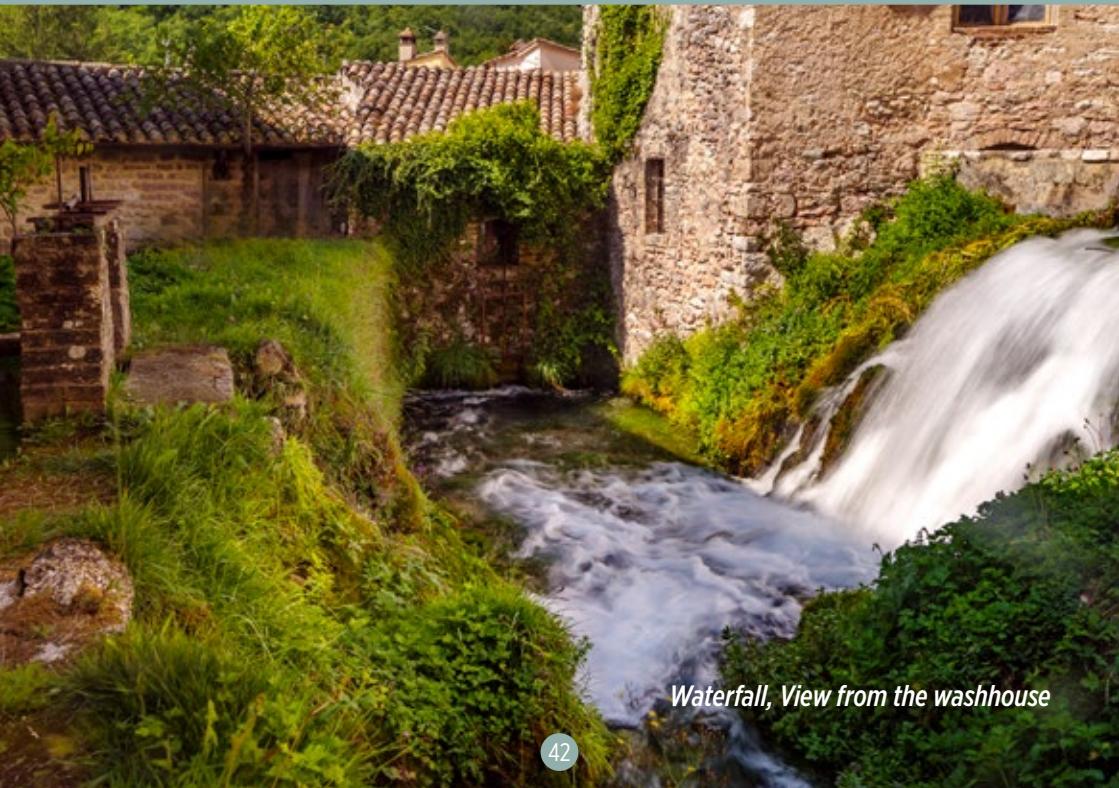


*Capovena Spring*





*The Ponticello*



*Waterfall, View from the washhouse*

## ! FUN FACT

Along the river's course, traditions and legends have flourished, such as that of the "pagan waters," which were considered cursed. Under the castle of Rasiglia, there is a spring that collects water from the Verchiano plateau in the upper Chienti Valley.

It is said that **the people of that area considered these waters a curse** because, when they emerged, they flooded the fields, preventing any cultivation. So, they decided to block the spring with sacks filled with wool, stopping its flow. **The waters then began to flow towards Rasiglia.**

Rasiglia was a crucial stop for trade between the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic and a place of important activities related to water use, such as processing grains and wool in all its phases (shearing, spinning, dyeing, and weaving).

Until the post-World War I era, the Rasiglia factories produced textiles, not only with wool but also with hemp grown locally, reaching high-quality levels through two main production centers: the **Tonti woolen mill** and the **Accorimboni woolen mill**.

The importance of textile processing for this small center is evidenced by the presence of an **archaeological-industrial Textile Park**, a place for preserving textile processing and all its phases, as well as the evolutionary processes that led from the use of the hand loom to the hydraulic loom and the true revolution given by the Jacquard mechanical loom, of which an example is still visible to visitors.

Rasiglia, from 1258, is documented as a *castrum* of the Municipality of Foligno. The Trinci family, lords of the city, have governed it since the late 14th century, subjecting its manufacturing activities. Traces of their rule remain in the ruins of the **ancient castle**, of which sections of the enclosing walls and the remains of a tower are still visible.



*Ancient Tonti Woolen Mill*



*Ancient lock control station Accorimboni*



*Remains of the Trinci Fortress 14th century*



*Remains of the Trinci Fortress 14th century*

Inside the village is the **Church of Saints Peter and Paul**, built in 1743, with a simple yet elegant facade that preserves paintings from the same period.

Not far away is the **Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie**, dating back to 1450, surrounded by the quiet and silence of the woods. The church has a square plan with a single nave and a bell gable. The external portico features a colonnade of lions and serpents, and nearby, an ancient oak tree watches over a small spring in the rock. Inside, colorful frescoes decorate the walls. There are about forty sacred compositions, almost all dedicated to the Madonna, votive frescoes of considerable value, belonging to Foligno masters from the second half of the 15th century, including the so-called **Master of Rasiglia**. Beyond the altar, going down a staircase, you access the small lower crypt, where the fifteenth-century statue of the Madonna and angels adoring the Baby Jesus is still preserved today.

Since ancient times, the sacred statue was carried in procession from the Sanctuary to the parish church of Rasiglia, where it was displayed



*Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie*

for worship for eight days, then brought back the following Sunday to the Sanctuary. This ritual, which still takes place every three years, is part of the Triennial Feast, also known as the Grand Feast.

### ! FUN FACT

The origin and history of the **Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie** coincide, according to popular tradition, with the legend and miracle. In 1450, a simple fisherman discovered something unusual while walking along the river along a ditch called Terminara. The fisherman saw something unusual, resembling carved stone, painted in pastel colors; he saw the blue wings of angels, the naked child, the Madonna in prayer.

It was a terracotta sculptural group, abandoned in the brambles, appearing as if out of nowhere. Following this discovery, the inhabitants of Rasiglia decided to build a church dedicated to Santa Maria, near the place called Maragone, just above that ditch that still runs through the bowels of the sanctuary.

The church has become a place of devotion so important for the locals that numerous pilgrimages are still made every year by residents of neighboring villages.

Between the 19th and 20th centuries, Rasiglia underwent an extraordinary modernization, leaping from pre-industrial techniques and technologies to energy sources and industrial machinery.

The first **hydroelectric turbine was installed**, exploiting the water jump from the Capovena spring, producing energy to power a Jacquard loom and an entire textile chain. At that time, the village had three wool mills with attached dye works, three mills, a post office, a branch of the Savings Bank of Foligno, a school, various inns, and lodges, demonstrating the significant transit of people and goods in the area.

Following the earthquake of 1997, Rasiglia experienced a sudden depopulation. The village remained almost completely abandoned for

ten years until 2007 when “**Rasiglia e le sue sorgenti**” (Rasiglia and its Springs), a social promotion association aimed at recovering and enhancing the landscape and historical-anthropological assets of the village, was established.

The knowledge preserved and transmitted by the volunteers of the Association, combining historical information from archival documents with anecdotes of life, voices, and testimonies collected in over three hundred interviews with the elderly, allows visitors direct interaction with the tools, processing steps, natural and anthropized spaces that characterize Rasiglia’s identity.

Today, the village is a unique example in the world of a landscape created by the skillful combination of water and human engineering.



*Rasiglia*

## 🔍 FOCUS



Thanks to the work and passion of the “**Rasiglia e le sue sorgenti**” association, events such as “Penelope a Rasiglia” and “Natale a Rasiglia: paese presepe” were created, the proceeds of which are used for small and large conservation and redevelopment interventions in the village.

**Penelope a Rasiglia** - This event takes place in June during the Culture Week and revolves around the themes of thread, warp, and weft, recovering the tradition of the village's textile industry. Ancient hand looms and one of the first well-preserved mechanical looms are put back into action, setting the rhythm for cultural activities during the festival: stories, poems, music, theater, and workshops create a fabric of great historical-artistic value appreciated by the public.

**Christmas in Rasiglia: Nativity village** - This event is born from the desire of the villagers to enhance the ancient activities of the village in a perspective of study and recovery of traditions and roots: weavers, washerwomen, dyers, carpenters, blacksmiths, and cobblers all really at work, waiting for the birth of Jesus.

From the Sanctuary of Madonna delle Grazie in Rasiglia, continuing along the SS Sellanese, you enter the area of the many small springs that form the Menotre River and reach **Ponte San Lazzaro**, where the ruins of the ancient Lazaretto are located.

This is the intersection with the historic **Spina Road**, which has allowed the passage of flocks from the plain to the mountains and pilgrims heading to Loreto since ancient times.

## Free shuttle service

During summer weekends and peak tourist periods (such as spring and Christmas holidays), you can explore villages of Menotre Valley and Colfiorito Park with the **free shuttle service** provided by the Municipality of Foligno: visitors can leave their cars in designated parking areas in Foligno, Colfiorito, Ponte Santa Lucia, or Casenove.

The shuttle circuits connecting Foligno with Belfiore, Pale, Ponte Santa Lucia, Scopoli, Casenove, Rasiglia, and Colfiorito with Rasiglia are organized into **three main routes**:

### **Foligno, Railway Station – Rasiglia**

The circuit, that stops at Foligno's railway station, lasts approximately 35 minutes and stops at the villages of Vescia, Belfiore, Pale, Ponte Santa Lucia, Scopoli, Casenove, and Rasiglia.

### **Colfiorito – Rasiglia**

The circuit, starting from the square in front of the Colfiorito Park's Info Point, lasts about 30 minutes and stops in the hamlets of Casette Cupigliolo and Collelungo.

### **Casenove – Rasiglia**

This short circuit, lasting about 15 minutes, begins at the "Villaggio Europa" area just outside Casenove and directly connects to the village of Rasiglia.

For the most up-to-date information on the activation and schedules of the free transportation service, we recommend checking the Municipality of Foligno's website or contacting the tourist information office.



COMUNE DI FOLIGNO



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