



COMUNE DI
CALLIANO MONFERRATO

CALLIANO
porta del Monferrato



History · Culture
Gastronomy · Sport

Foto di Beppe Cantarelli





Tipo e misure delle distanze de mulini che sono sopra la Versa. 1651.

Carte Boatteri - Sotteri, vol. 15 xv, Certosa.



OUR ORIGINS

Calliano belongs to the Province of Asti and is considered the southern door of the historical Monferrato region. It is located on a hilltop on the 45th parallel, halfway between the Equator and the North Pole. The ancient *Castrum Cadillianum*, founded as a Roman military outpost on the settlements of the ancient population of the Ligurians, was developed thanks to its commercially strategic position, being at the crossroads between the road from Hasta (Asti) towards the Vercelli area and the Via Marenca (which was the route that connected Piedmont, France, and the northern regions with the coast, allowing the movement of people and trade). This land is mentioned in an historic deed established in the year 996 AD, which was an agreement between Bishop Pietro of Asti and **Ermengarda**, the niece of Aleramo, who was the first Marquis of Monferrato and founder of the dynasty. A locus "Calliani" appears in some deeds related to a land exchange in the 9th century (by the notable Amandolone of Longobard origin). The importance of the village grew significantly with the expansion of the two neighboring states, destined to face each other between the 11th and 13th centuries. It was, therefore, a disputed village as well as the epicenter of some intriguing encounters between the **Marquisate of Monferrato** and the **Municipality of Asti**. Passed into the possessions of the Marquisate of Monferrato, between the 14th and 15th centuries, Calliano obtained feudal rights, later confirmed by all the sovereigns to various local noble families. From 1500, with the passage of Monferrato to the Gonzagas, the territory maintained a prominent role until it became a Marquisate entrusted to **Galeazzo di Canossa** in 1604. The Marquisate of **Calliano** then passed to the Scozia family, which maintained its rights even after its annexation to the Savoy state (1708).



Calliano Monferrato today, a door of Monferrato

OUR ART TREASURES

① The oldest church to be seen is the Romanesque Church of **Saints Peter and Paul**, mentioned in a document dated 866. It was the first parish church. The facade is constructed of square blocks of sandstone alternating with red bricks, as well as some friezes and reliefs, characteristic of that epoch, in the external side of the apse. Until a few decades ago, the church housed a magnificent fresco depicting an angel with bright colorful wings. This fresco, which has been recently restored, is now under the protection of the Superintendence of Fine Arts.

② The parish church dedicated to the **Most Holy Name of Mary**, in the upper part of Calliano, was built in the 16th century on the ruins of the castle chapel. The current building dates back to the 18th century. The brick facade, on which two construction phases are clearly evident due to the different color of the bricks, was designed by **Martino Donati** and completed in 1767, under the direction of **Francesco Ottavio Magnocavallo**. In the sanctuary there are an ancient wooden crucifix and the main altar, made out of polychrome marble, crafted by the artist **Giacomo Pelagatta**, from Lugano, in 1768, based on a project of the architect **Bernardo Antonio Vittone**.

Inside the church, two canvases painted by **Guglielmo Caccia**, known as "**The Moncalvo**", can be admired: the Crucifixion and Our Lady of the Rosary (Madonna del Rosario) adorned by fifteen small wooden panels representing the Mysteries of the Rosary. There is also a canvas painted by his daughter, **Orsola Caccia**, depicting St. Anthony of Padua with the Child Jesus. The organ was built by **Liborio Grisanti**, from Naples (1754), enriched by a marvelous encasement realized by the master carpenter **Giuseppe Maria Bonzanigo**, from Asti. After its enlargement and various restorations, the new organ, with 992 pipes, was inaugurated in 1913. From the forecourt of the parish church of **San Desiderio**, situated in the hamlet of the same name, which originally belonged to a Benedictine monastery known as "Monticello", it is possible to admire a beautiful panoramic view of the valley and the surrounding countryside.

The 1500's was a golden century for religious architecture in Calliano, in fact many churches were built, like: ④ the **Church of the Annunciation** (Annunziata), ③ the **Church of St. Michael the Archangel** (San Michele Arcangelo), the **Church of St. Roch** (San Rocco) and the **Church of St. Ann** (Sant'Anna) in the hamlet of Perrona.



PLACES WORTH A VISIT



7 The Castle - The village is nestled upon a tufa hill on the top of which the castle once stood. Built in the 10th century, had several different owners along the centuries. In 1468, Marquis **Guglielmo VIII** Paleologo stipulated an agreement with the residents of Calliano, exempting them from all taxes, under the condition of their commitment to build the surrounding walls at their own expense, for which purpose at least 400,000 bricks had to be made per year.

Given the importance of the town in Monferrato's defensive strategies against the untamed Asti, Calliano, surrounded by high walls and a large moat filled with water, was a real fortress, impenetrable by those who attempted to gain access to it. The town passed on to the Gonzaga family, the Lords of Mantua, in 1536, after an arbitration solved by Emperor **Charles V**, and, as a consequence, the members of this family became Lords of Monferrato, until the Marquisate itself disappeared. In 1708 (developing into the Duchy of **Charles Ferdinand**) it was incorporated into the Savoy State and a deed of that time mentions already "a ruined castle with a land toward the square".



8 The ancient gate - In the Middle Age, the access to the fortified camp of Calliano was secured by seven gates, one of which was on the Via Marenca. This gateway can still be identified with a large archway in the wall where, until the last century, there was "il fosso", a remnant of the ancient moat that surrounded the village.

9 The ice-house - On one side of the "game square", now renamed Piazza Marconi, there is an ancient domed ice-house that in the past was used to store snow and ice to be used during the summer. Walking along the so-called "Via dell'Entrata", it is possible to move upward, along the edge of the castle walls, until reaching the church square.



10 The footbridge - Set above the brick arch of the former "Masseria Parrocchiale", there is a cantilevered footbridge from which it is possible to admire, on clear days, a magnificent view of the hills of the "Low Monferrato" (Basso Monferrato), having the Alps in the background.

11 The Oven - Dating back to the 16th century and used until 60 years ago, the public oven, in which

everyone could bake their own bread, has been restored to serve as a reminder of one of the most significant collective moments for the community life. It is located on the upper right corner of Vittorio Emanuele II Square.

12 Sferisterio and belvedere - Calliano has one of the best playing courts for the "tamburello a muro" (wall tambourine), a very popular local sport in the Monferrato region. It is sided by an 8 m high wall, which, aside from being essential for the game itself, acts as a strong support for the historic center and the so-called "belvedere", which allows a view of the scenic valley and a place for a nice walk.

13 The Pirenta Spring - Located in the lower region called Pietra, along the main road that, coming from Asti, goes up to the town center, there is a natural water spring, mentioned in a 13th century document under the name of "fon de Punlenta". The name comes from the strong and putrid exhalation of the sulfur dissolved in the water (purulent can be interpreted as rotten, unpleasant to smell). The sulfurous water, used in ancient times to treat liver and skin diseases, is today appreciated for its therapeutic properties. In the 1920's, equipped with suitable facilities, the Pirenta Spring was used as a "hydro-heliotherapy colony". Recently cleaned and refurbished, it is now a cool resting place and a source of beneficial water.

14 Bifarola - Piazza del Vento - Halfway along the Galliano road, on the way up to the parochial church of the Most Holy Name of Mary, is situated the newly revamped "Bifarola" square, or, in correct Italian language "Piazza del Vento" (Wind Square), since a strong wind is usually blowing there, coming from the valley. On the area, at the foot of the wall supporting the street in that point, the poultry market was once held, hence the name "Piazza della penna" (the feather square).

GASTRONOMIC EXCELLENCES

Toward the end of the 19th century, Mr. Cesare De Maria from Calliano (known as "I Cegi d Marulin"), during a trip to Tuscany, where he had gone to buy donkeys for some breeders located in St. Jean de Maurienne (Savoy), tasted the meat of this animal and was impressed by its good flavor. Upon his return to Calliano, he convinced his fellow villagers to consume this meat, which was encouraged by the fact that donkey meat, also known as "zòca", was at that time one of the least expensive meats available. At the beginning of the 20th century, Mrs. Carolina Coggiola opened the "Leon d'Oro" restaurant in



the village, called by everyone "l'Ubergi d'la Carolina". One of her daughters, "la Durina", kept the restaurant going by calling it "Ciuchet", which became renowned for "la lasagna", or "agnolotto" (small and irregular squared meat-filled pasta), accompanied by a roasted-meat sauce. This is how "agnolotti" became the gastronomic specialty of Calliano, along with other donkey meat dishes such as "salamini" and stew, served with polenta. Of course, as it is easily understandable, the importance of the donkey is not linked only to gastronomy but also to the "**PaGlio Ragliante**" race, held on the third Sunday in October, as previously explained.



FESTIVALS

The "**Sagra dell'Agnolotto d'Asino**" takes place on the last weekend of every June, while the "**Sagra dello Stufato d'Asino**", takes place on the last weekend of August. Both festivals attract thousands of visitors who, besides enjoying moments of relaxation and being entertained by festive music, have the opportunity to appreciate the two iconic dishes of local cuisine.

The event called "**Tra Piazze e Cortili**" (strolling through Squares and Courtyards), organized every year on the first weekend of June, allows visitors to discover the most characteristic corners of the historic Centre and to taste the typical dishes presented by tourist institutions and local associations of Calliano or of other surrounding towns participating in the event.

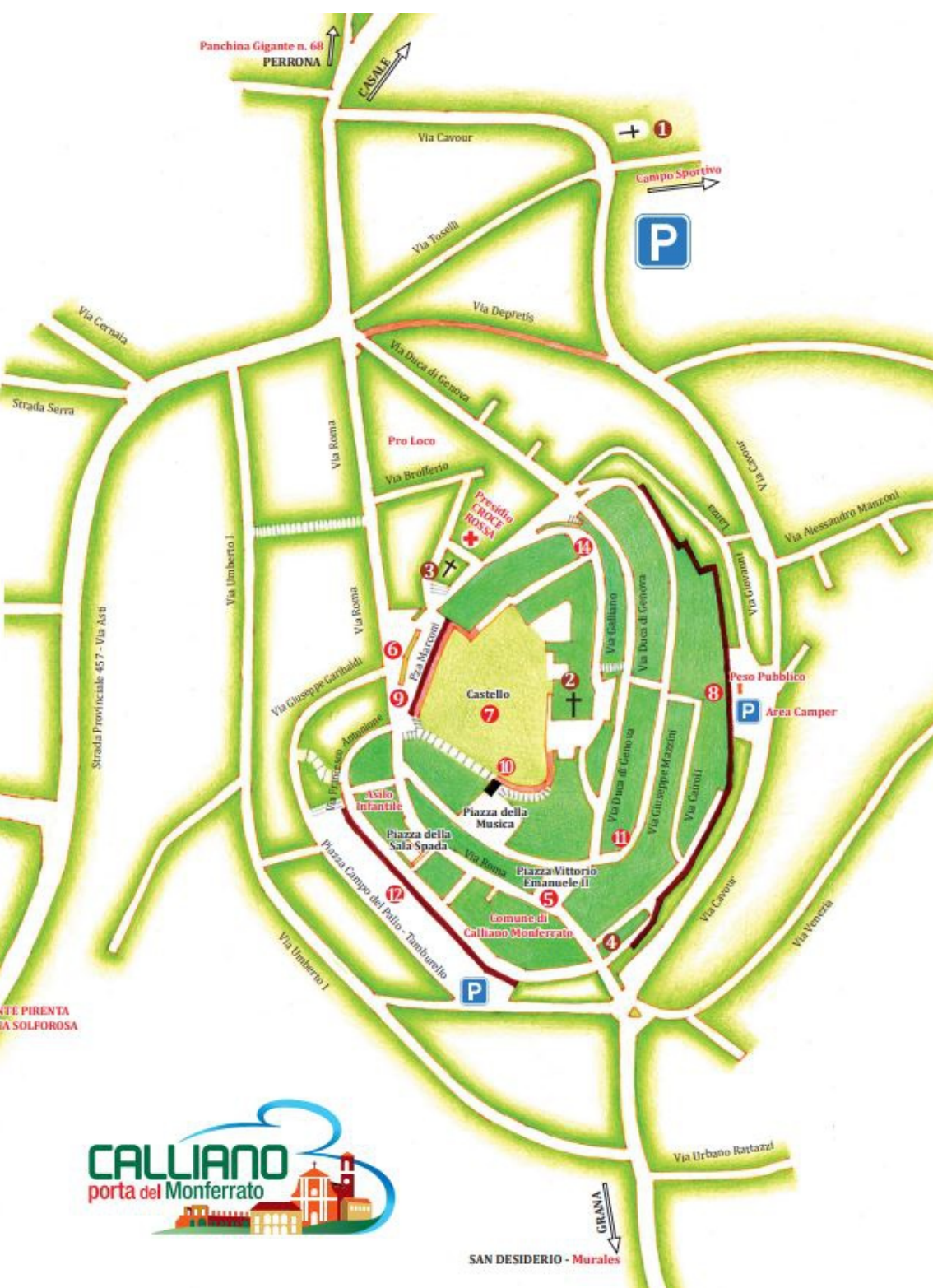
In September, Calliano participates, thanks to the commitment of its well-organized Committee for the Promotion of the Territory (Pro Loco), in the "**Festival delle Sagre**" in Asti. On that occasion, Calliano again has the opportunity to make known the most significant moments of its cultural roots and its gastronomic delicacies.

Two more recent cultural and social events, of no less importance, are the **Carnival Fair** and the **Christmas Artesanal Market**.

MAP KEY

- HISTORIC VILLAGE
- ANCIENT MEDIEVAL WALLS
- STREETS
- ||||| STAIRS
- PEDESTRIAN STREETS





Panchina Gigante n. 68
PERRONA

CASALE

1

Campo Sportivo

P

Via Cavour

Via Toselli

Via Depretis

Via Duca di Genova

Pro Loco

Via Brofferio

Presidio
CIVILE
ROSSA

3

14

Via Alessandro Manzoni

Via Cavour

Via Garibaldi

Peso Pubblico

P

Area Camper

Castello

2

Via Galliano

Via Duca di Genova

Via Duca di Savoia

Via Giuseppe Mazzini

Via Garibaldi

Via Cavour

Via Venezia

Piazza della
Musica

10

Piazza della
Sala Spada

Via Roma

Piazza Vittorio
Emanuele II

5

Comune di
Calliano Monferrato

P

4

Via Roma

Via Giuseppe Garibaldi

Via Francesco
Antoniolo

Piazza Campo del Palo - Tamburello

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Via Umberto I

Strada Provinciale 457 - Via Asti

Via Cervata

Strada Serra

MONTE PIRENTA
VALLE SOLFOROSA

Via Urbano Rattazzi

GRANA

SAN DESIDERIO - Murales



OUR PASSIONS

"Tambass" - As a sport derived from an ancient game already practiced by the Romans, the tambourine game, in Italian "tamburello", or even better, "tambass", as it is popularly called by the locals, has found a fitting environment in the Monferrato region. The peculiarity of this game, played on the so-called "sferisterios", big open squares flanked by high ancient walls, which were usually part of the ramparts of the historical city centers, is exactly the fundamental role of such side wall, which the players, five in each of the two teams, learn to use for their advantage during the match. Energy, unpredictability and strategy make "tamburello" an exciting sport, either to play or to watch. The "Calliano Tamburellistica Society" has been an active member of the "Monferrato Wall Tamburello tournament" since its foundation.

The PaGlio Ragliante - Every year, on the third Sunday of the month of October, takes place, on the municipal "sferisterio", the so-called "PaGlio Ragliante". The capital G in the middle of the word "Palio" (as it should correctly be spelled, to indicate the medieval horse race that up to now is performed in Asti) is a joking way to underline the "less noble" type of the race which is run in Calliano, that involves donkeys instead of horses (ragliante = brying). The ten neighborhoods and helmets, out of which the municipality is composed, are represented by a donkey pushed and pulled by two running guides. The winners of the two preliminary rounds compete in the final race in an enthusiastic and participatory atmosphere. To make the event even more evocative, the donkey race is preceded by an elaborate historical costume parade, accompanied by musical bands and some flag-wavers belonging to the "nobler" Palio of Asti.

OUR CALENDAR

FEBRUARY/MARCH

Carnival fair

FIRST WEEKEND OF JUNE

Tra piazze e cortili

LAST WEEKEND OF JUNE

Sagra dell'agnolotto d'asino

FIRST WEEKEND OF AUGUST

Sagra dello stufato d'asino

THIRD SUNDAY OF OCTOBER

PaGlio Ragliante

DECEMBER

Christmas artisanal market



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