



Posta: A Pearl in the Velino Valley

The ancient village of Posta was founded on the ruins of the Machilone Castle. Sources citing the original location date as far back as 1150. The Castle fell under the rule of Rieti in 1286 and the people of Posta obtained permission to found a new city far from the stronghold of Machilone. And so Posta came to being.

The **Machilone Castle** was sacked and razed to the ground by the forces from Aquila. In 1301 the Aquilans and the barons of Machilone underwrote an agreement that forbade the construction of new structures on the hill where the castle stood. The quadrangular towers among the ruins of the imposing fortress can still be seen.

The first settlement in Posta rose around the **Franciscan convent** on a hill in front of the Machilone Castle. It grew and expanded into the piedmont area on the borders of the Via Salaria. In the 14th century, battles between the Guelph and the Ghibellines included Posta in their bloody slaughter. During those years the Guelph family of the Camponeschi rose to power and ruled the village for many years.

The area became a feudal state under the reign of **Margaret of Austria**, daughter of Charles V, in 1572. In 1703 a violent earthquake destroyed the town that was rebuilt within Napoleon Bonaparte's empire. In 1798 Posta rebelled against the Napoleonic troops forcing them out of the area. In 1806 Posta became a free municipality.

Posta preserves important traces of the **ancient Via Salaria** that joined Rome to the Adriatic Sea. Arriving from Rieti, the ruins of a large **bridge** that is over 5 metres in height can be seen right before arriving at the village. The **Romualdo Grottos** (km 117 on the Via Salaria) are also spectacular, a rock standing 30 metres high and 20 metres long that was cut to open a stretch of the Via Salaria. The **69th milestone** was transported from the ancient Salaria to Masso dell'Orso, located on the new Via Salaria. The remarkable size of the milestone reminds us of its function: to mark the mid-point between Rome and the Adriatic Sea.

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