



# La Via Appia da Santa Maria delle Mole a Frattocchie

---

## Via Appia Antica



POI

**5**



Distance

**1.04 Km**



Scan the QrCode to  
access the navigable  
mobile version of the  
itinerary

### Poi

---

- 1 Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole
- 2 Tabernae
- 3 Excavation of the Appia substructure
- 4 Secchi's Tower
- 5 Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie

# Poi 1

## Via Appia Antica - Santa Maria delle Mole

---

### Marino / Place to visit - Ancient streets

Santa Maria delle Mole is a town in the commune of Marino, on the Via Appia Nuova and the Rome-Velletri railway. The landscape here is mostly flat except for some low hills, such as the Colle della Falcognana, and is crossed by several small streams, such as the Fosso di Fiorano. The origin of the name is traditionally associated with the discovery, in the area of a small statue of the Virgin Mary, who later became the patron saint of the town, and a pair of millstones, from one of the many flour mills ("mole" in Italian) that were built along the banks of the Fosso di Fiorano. In ancient times, not far from here, rose the Latin settlement of Mugilla, of which there are only a few remains on a hill near the Colle della Falcognana. Near Santa Maria delle Mole, at Frattocchie, are the ruins of Bovillae, the first town encountered by ancient travellers on the Via Appia after leaving Rome. Established as a colony of Alba Longa, Bovillae was a member of the Latin League and, after being defeated by Rome, became a Roman municipality. Its importance, in ancient times, was due to its location on one of the most important roads in the whole Empire.

After the Via Appia Antica fell into disrepair, Bovillae too inexorably declined, although it continued to be inhabited until the 9th century. However, it never recovered from the sacking and destruction perpetrated by the Saracens in AD 846, after which it disappeared from history. During the Middle Ages the area of the former Bovillae became the property of the Savelli family, and later of the Orsini and Colonna. The excavations carried out in the area of Bovillae during the 19th century have unearthed a circus, erected by Tiberius, in the 1st century AD, for the commemorative games in honour of his predecessor Augustus. Several arches of the starting gates, or carceres, remain. Until the mid-20th century, the area of Santa Maria delle Mole was mostly used as grazing land for sheep, and vineyards, but over the last decades it has rapidly expanded and has now become one of the most populated and lively towns in the commune of Marino.



#### **A** Address

Viale della Repubblica - Marino (RM)

# Poi 2

## Tabernae

---

### Marino / Place to visit - Archaeological areas

The stretch of the Via Appia Antica between the 10th and 11th milestones, between Rome and Bovillae, featured a large concentration of facilities serving the many travellers on the road. At the 10th mile, near the present-day railway station of Santa Maria delle Mole, are the remains of an ancient stage station, where horses could be replaced.

At a time when horses were widely used for travelling and transporting goods, it was necessary to be able to replace exhausted horses with fresh ones at these stage stations present on all major roads. In Roman times, every 10 miles there was a mutatio, for replacing horses, while every 20 miles there was a mansio, where could also find a bed and a meal.

At the stage station of the 10th mile there are remains of the tabernae, inn buildings discovered in 2000 and dated to the 2nd century AD, and probably abandoned in the middle of the 5th century.



#### **A** Address

Via Appia Antica - Marino (RM)

# Poi 3

## Excavation of the Appia substructure

---



#### **Address**

Via Appia Antica - Marino (RM)

### **Marino / Place to visit - Archaeological areas**

During the excavation campaigns conducted by the Gruppo Archeologico Romano at Santa Maria delle Mole, between 2008 and 2015, a 5 metre long masonry structure was unearthed, probably a substructure of the Via Appia Antica.

Over the centuries it had become buried beneath layers of both natural and man-made origin and features a complex stratigraphy. The discovery was made at the 9th mile of the road and is, in fact, a significant example of construction technique. The Via Appia was gradually paved from the 3rd century BC onwards, with basalt paving stones and using the same technique that was used to build all the major Roman roads, although the engineering precision and beauty of the Queen of All Roads was unrivalled.

The studies carried out on the construction technique of the Via Appia have revealed that the first step in the process was the excavation of a 1 metre deep trench filled with soil and gravel, which formed the roadbed, on top of which a thinner layer of gravel and crushed limestone was laid, finally topped by the basalt slabs, which formed the actual surface of the road and which were flat at the top, while underneath they were cut to a point, or edge, in order to grasp the underlying layer more firmly and ensure greater stability. The stones were arranged close to each other so as not to leave any holes and smoothed. The stone used to build the Via Appia is leucite, a very hard lava stone from quarries in the Alban Hills.

The road width is about 14 Roman feet, corresponding to between 4.10 and 4.20 metres. This was the standard width for all important Roman roads and was designed to allow two carts to pass at the same time without having to give way. On the sides were pavements for pedestrians, consisting of beaten earth or gravel, as a result of which the roads could measure up to 10 metres in width.

## Poi 4



#### **Address**

Via Appia Antica - Marino (RM)

### **Secchi's Tower**

#### **Marino / Place to visit - Towers**

This monument, situated near the 11th mile of the Via Appia Antica, is a Roman tomb surmounted by a modern tower. The tomb, dating back to the 1st century AD, consists of a rectangular podium, originally faced with blocks of marble, topped by a cylinder shaped structure made of concrete. Inside is the funeral chamber, with niches in the walls for the burial urns.

The tower was built in the 19th century as the final control point for geodetic levelling purposes by the astronomer Angelo Secchi along the Via Appia Antica. The initial control point was located 12 kilometres away, near the Tomb of Cecilia Metella.

A survey had already been carried out in the mid-18th century, but it was no longer possible to accurately identify the southern control point at Frattocchie.

## Poi 5



#### **Address**

Via Appia Antica - Marino (RM)

### **Via Appia Antica - Frattocchie**

#### **Marino / Place to visit - Ancient streets**