

Padua is a city and comune in Veneto, northern Italy, and the capital of the eponymous province of Padua. The city lies on the banks of the river Bacchiglione, 40 kilometres (25 miles) west of Venice and 29 km (18 miles) southeast of Vicenza, and has a population of 214,000 (as of 2011).

Padua appears twice in the UNESCO World Heritage List: for its Botanical Garden, the most ancient of the world, and the 14th-century frescoes, situated in different buildings of the city centre. An example is the Scrovegni Chapel painted by Giotto at the beginning of 1300. The city is picturesque, with a dense network of arcaded streets opening into large communal piazze (squares), and many bridges crossing the various branches of the Bacchiglione, which once surrounded the ancient walls like a moat.

Padua is home to one of the oldest universities in the world, the University of Padua, founded in 1222 and where figures such as Galileo Galilei and Nicolaus Copernicus have taught or studied. In 1610, Galileo observed the moons of Jupiter through a homemade telescope in Padua, marking the second phase of the Copernican Revolution. Today, the university has around 72,000 students and has a profound impact on the city's recreational, artistic and economic activities.

The university also hosts the oldest botanical garden (1545) in the world. The botanical garden Orto Botanico di Padova was founded as the garden of curative herbs attached to the University's faculty of medicine. It still contains an important collection of rare plants.

Padua is also the setting for most of the action in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and the namesake of Oscar Wilde's *The Duchess of Padua*. Saint Anthony, the patron saint of the city, was a Portuguese Franciscan who spent part of his life in the city and died there in 1231.

Padua claims to be among the oldest cities in northern Italy. According to a tradition dated at least to the time of Virgil's *Aeneid* and to Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, Padua was founded around 1183 BC by the Trojan prince Antenor. Nevertheless, archeological remains confirm an early date for the foundation of the center of the town to between the 11th and 10th centuries B.C.

Since local government political reorganization in 1993, Padua has been governed by the City Council of Padua. Voters elect directly 33 councilors and the Mayor of Padua every five years. The current Mayor of Padua is Sergio Giordani (independent, supported by the PD), elected on 26 June 2017.