

## The Fortress

Lugo fortress (La Rocca di Lugo) is the most characteristic monument of the town and is an important example of the fortified architecture which was so important from the late Middle Ages onwards.



There is documentary evidence of a first structure, an enclosure probably created using barrier in earth and wood, as far back as the tenth century. The complex was then destroyed by the Faentines in 1218 and rebuilt in the XIII-XIV centuries. The most important period for the development of the fortification corresponds to that of the Estense domination, during which its features were modified at least twice. The fortress was extended following the transfer of Lugo to Church rule, with the addition of a building which became the offices of the papal governors. The building was partially destroyed in 1775, and the oldest part of the fortification made into dungeons in the same period, while the south-west ramparts were modified to create the hanging garden which we can still admire today. The moat around the fortress is still visible, although it has been partially filled in recent times. The main entrance was built using material from the old drawbridge. At the centre of the courtyard is a precious well head with the insignia of Borso d'Este.

### A curious fact

Numerous caper plants have been growing spontaneously in the cracks of the walls of the fortress for centuries. When the plant blossom at the end of May and for the whole summer, a brief period with a characteristically intense fragrance, the flower buds are picked and preserved in vinegar by expert hands, following the ancient recipe of Pellegrino Artusi.

Every year once the administration has finished picking the capers it needs, the people of the town have the “diritto the capperaggio”, allowing them to gather the capers up to head height. The Capers of Lugo are famous throughout the world, leading to the sale of many fakes: many years ago, the Harrods department store in London was selling little jars of Italian capers called “Capperi della Rocca di Lugo”, charming but most definitely fake.

### **The Hanging Garden**

The Hanging Garden at Lugo fortress is a highly original attraction, both in Lugo and in Romagna. Created between the end of eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, it is home to approximately fifteen arboreous species and around twenty species of shrubs with various examples of each species. There are also many species of birds, including blackbirds, robins, collared doves, chaffinches and common sparrows.