



## THE DAY OF THE PALIO *Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024*

**10:00 am**

In each of the Parishes of the city: ceremony for the benediction of the horse and rider

**11:00 am**

Piazza San Secondo: exhibition of the A.S.T.A. flag-wavers

**2:00 pm**

Piazza Cattedrale: Start of historical procession with 1200 participants dressed in medieval costume representing 21 Quarters of Asti and some Province's towns taking part in the Palio.

The procession opens with the Team of the Captain of the Palio and the

Flag-wavers of A.S.T.A., and closes with the Carroccio escorted by Warriors.

*Route of the Historical Procession:*

*Piazza Cattedrale, Via Caracciolo, Piazza Cairoli, Corso Alfieri, Via Gobetti, Piazza San Secondo, Via Garibaldi, Via Gardini, Piazza Alfieri*

**4:00 pm**

Palio race with horses ridden bareback; three heats each with seven horses, final with nine contestants

**5:00 pm**

Exhibition by the flag-wavers

**6:00 pm**

Final and award of the Palio



Città di Asti

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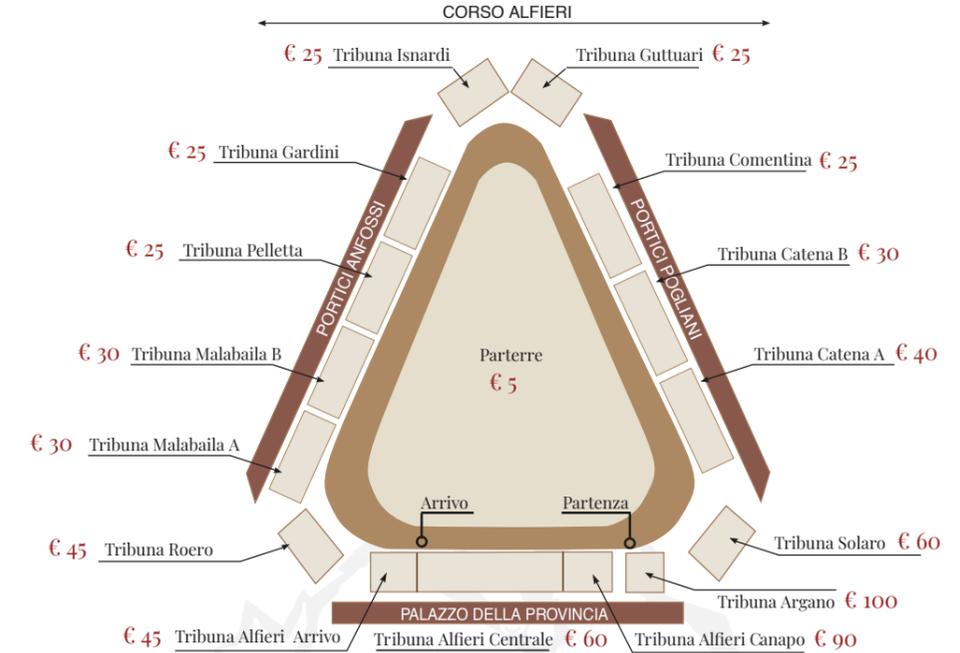
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**Sunday**  
**1<sup>st</sup> September 2024**



Free entry for children aged up to 6 years

**TICKET OFFICE**

Teatro Alfieri – Via Grandi angolo Piazzetta Italia  
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## ASTI AND ITS HISTORY

The founding of the Roman settlement of Hasta, mentioned by Pliny as one of the most important Roman towns in the ancient Liguria region, dates from 125 and 123 BC. After the period of the Roman Empire, it became the residence of the bishop and is mentioned as an important Longobard Duchy and the town where a major Court of Justice was held. Made into a County under the Franks and later governed by the bishops, the town flourished towards the end of the 11th century, becoming for a brief period, the most important free city of Piedmont.

In the 12th century it became one of the richest and most powerful cities in Italy, it was granted the right to mint coins and it engaged in busy trade with France, Flanders, Germany, England and others countries.



Giovanni Antonio Lavaglia, *La corsa del Palio, ex voto, 1677, Asti, Confraternita della Santissima Trinità.*

In 1387, the city was handed to the Visconti, then to the Orleans, and finally to the Savoy (1531).

Following the Unification of Italy, the fortunes of the city mirrored those of the newly-formed nation, and events there followed those of Italy. Characterised since the 12th century by a lively economy with profitable trade and dealings with other cities even if often divided by the feuds between opposing noble families. Asti has retained a pleasant medieval atmosphere, with towers, noble residences and fortified houses.

The population of Asti is now 73.683. Its patron saint is St. Secundus, whose celebration day is the first Tuesday in May.

## THE PALIO

The first written record of the race dates from 1275. That was the year in which, according to the Asti chronicler Guglielmo Ventura, the people of Asti held the Palio beneath the walls of the enemy city of Alba out of spite, causing damage and destruction to the vineyards.

The race now involves twentyone competitors who in the preceding days strenuously seek to propitiate victory with gargantuan dinners, rituals to ward off ill-luck and salacious practical jokes against the rivals up to the last exciting encounter on the race course. Preceding the race magnificent procession, featuring over one thousand two hundred people in medieval costume.



The track, specially prepared in the very central Piazza Alfieri, is 450 metres long. The race, on horses ridden bareback, takes place in three heats featuring seven horses each, while the final is between nine horses. In both the heats and the final the horses run around the track three times.

The start is given by the “mossiere” who unhooks the “canapo”: a thick rope stretching from one side of the track to the other.

From 2018 the Palio of Asti has taken place the first Sunday of September.

## THE DRAPE

The Palio, the large crimson velvet drape with the coats of arms of Asti, is the “dream” for which the twentyone rivals compete. But “Palio” is also the name of the fiery and exciting race that inflames the passions of the Asti region each September.

The Palio is run in the name of the Patron Saint of Asti, St. Secundus. There are two Palio drapes: one offered by the City Council to the Church of St. Secundus in May, the other offered as the prize for the race in September. These two Palio drapes are made up of two essential elements: the painted “labarum”, with the coats of arms of the City of Asti and the actual “Palio”, which is a long length of crimson velvet joined to the “labarum”.

The Palio is measured in “rasi”: a Palio of sixteen “rasi” won in the race, a Palio of ten “rasi” offered to the Collegiate Church. A raso is an ancient Piedmontese unit of measurement, corresponding to sixty centimetres.



## THE PROCESSION

The solemn procession preceding the race is a magnificent sight commemorating the medieval history of the City. Each group is led by the standard-bearer carrying the colours of the village, district or town, followed by the pageanters dressed in historical costumes who reenact a different historical theme each year.

## THE PRIZES

For 1st place: *the Palio drape*  
For 2nd place: *a bag of silver coins*  
For 3rd place: *silver spurs*  
For 4th place: *a live rooster*  
For 5th place: *the cockade*  
Last place: *the inchioda (anchovy) with salad*



The Palio drape for 2024 it has been painted by Stefano Bressani