



PARCHI  
ARCHEOLOGICI  
DELLA  
MAREMMA

COSA

## Area archeologica e Museo nazionale di Cosa

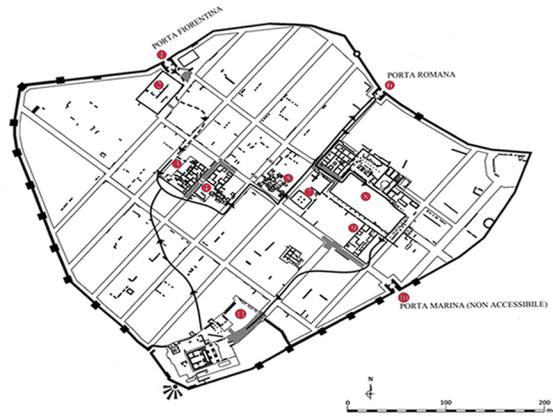
### ✓ MURA 1 - 6 - 10

The mighty city wall that encloses the ancient colony of Cosa was built in the 3rd century BC to protect it from attacks by land and sea. About a mile long, it represents one of the best examples of a great fortification. Its exceptional solidity is due to the use of polygonal masonry: enormous, irregular blocks were cut with extreme precision and interlocked without mortar, forming a monolithic and surprisingly resilient structure. The defensive circuit was reinforced by eighteen towers, which served as strategic points for sighting and defense. The city wall also included three main gates: Porta Romana, the monumental access facing the territories controlled by Rome; Porta Fiorentina, connected to the hinterland; and Porta Marina, essential for reaching the port below, the heart of maritime trade. Walls, towers, and gates not only guaranteed the colony's security but also shaped its urban development and economic relations.

### ✓ FORO 8

The Forum of Cosa is one of the rare intact examples of a Republican forum. Located in the saddle between the high grounds, it was the political, religious, and commercial center of the colony since its foundation in 273 BC. The first monumental building was the Comitium/Curia complex, intended for assemblies and the activities of the magistrates. In the 2nd century BC, the Forum was renovated with porticoes, shops, and a triple monumental arch, and the fish market area was expanded.

On the northeast side is the Basilica, built around 140 BC: it is the oldest known basilica in a colony founded by the Romans and the last one erected in the full Republican age. In the mid-1st century AD, after an earthquake, it was transformed into an Odeon by the will of Nerone. Nearby stand the Comitium, with its circular steps, the Curia with its offices, and a Mithraeum carved out in the Imperial age. Close to the Temple of Concordia, a two-level structure, interpreted as the Carcer, the colony's public prison, is recognizable.



### ✓ ARCE 11

The Arx (Arce) of Cosa dominates the summit of the Ansedonia promontory and represented the colony's acropolis, serving as both a religious center and a defensive citadel. Enclosed by the robust polygonal walls, it hosted the main sacred buildings, including the Capitulum, dedicated to the Capitoline Triad. Of the temple, the podium and part of the original floor plan remain. Nearby stood other places of worship, such as the Temple of Mater Matuta, a deity associated with birth and the light of dawn, and the small Temple dedicated to Jupiter. A large cistern, essential for rituals and daily life, completed the area.

From the Arx, a spectacular panorama can be enjoyed: to the west, the blue of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the profile of the Argentario peninsula; to the east, the Maremma with its hills. The natural landscape and the Roman vestiges converse in a unique whole, offering the visitor the same feeling of dominion and protection that the ancient garrison must have felt.

### ✓ TERME 5 - 7

The bath complex (thermae) of Cosa, located northwest of the Forum, is one of the most important buildings for understanding the colony's daily life. Modern investigations have confirmed the use of the baths as early as the late Republican period and their maximum splendor in the Imperial age. The facility exploited the natural slope of the terrain and an efficient water system connected directly to the Great Public Cistern of the Forum. The structure included the typical rooms: the frigidarium (cold room), tepidarium (warm room), and calidarium (hot room), in addition to changing rooms, latrines, and spaces for physical activity. A large wall made of opus incertum supported a raised rectangular basin, waterproofed with cocciopesto (opus signinum). Heating was ensured by a praefurnium (furnace), hypocaust (underfloor heating system), and terracotta tubuli (flue pipes). A circular room made of opus latericium, identified as the laconicum (dry sweating room), preserves remains of the mosaic floor that attest to the care and comfort of Cosa's public structures.

### GENERAL NORMS

You are in an archeological area protected by Italian legislation, D.Lgs 42/2004 (Code of cultural heritage). Visitors are kindly requested to observe and comply with the following rules:

Please respect the designated routes and signage

Please do not go beyond the marked boundaries

Please wear footwear suitable for uneven ground

It is forbidden to remove any materials

It is forbidden to sit, climb and/or walk on archeological structures

It is not permitted to light fires

Please dispose of waste material responsibly and do not leave litter

Please do not damage the plants

### ✓ DOMUS 4 - 9

The domus (houses) of Cosa, although less famous than those of Pompeii, offer valuable evidence regarding the life of the colony. The House of the Skeleton (Casa dello Scheletro), so named for the discovery of human remains, was an aristocratic residence with a vast double-peristyle layout, indicating notable wealth. The House of Diana (Casa di Diana), decorated with an ornamental small temple and a statue of the goddess of the hunt, featured an atrium and an internal garden with mosaic floors.

Of great importance is the House of Fulvius Quintus (Casa di Fulvius Quinto), where a treasure of silver coins, jewels, and valuable objects was found, likely hidden during a time of crisis. This discovery offers a vivid glimpse into the prosperity and fears of its inhabitants. Finally, the House of Romeo (Casa Romeo), with its taberna (shop/inn) that sold cooked mollusks and wine, testifies to the economic and social vitality of the Cosan elite.

### ✓ RETE VIARIA E CENTURIAZIONE

The colony of Cosa was designed according to the rigorous system of centuriation, which divided the agricultural territory into regular plots and also determined the urban grid. The main axes were the Decumanus Maximus (east-west) and the Cardo Maximus (north-south). Minor roads branched off from these, defining the insulae—the building blocks of the city—often standardized to dimensions of around 35 × 70 meters.

Among the streets of particular importance was the Via Sacra (Sacred Way), the processional route that connected the Forum to the Arx and its temples. The main roads were sometimes made of packed earth, but in more heavily trafficked areas, they featured the typical Roman paving (basolato) made of large stone slabs. The road network of Cosa reflects precise planning and notable attention to the functionality of urban spaces.

