

a guide to exploring Mantua with children of all ages



WHAT IS MANTOVA PLAYGROUND?

Mantova Playground is a project promoted and supported by the Comune di Mantova and is born with the aim of transforming the city into a playground that children will use to approach the complexity of the world. Workshops, maps, events to help discover the city from unusual and unexpected viewpoints or to rediscover what you already know by suggesting a new perspective.

website mantovaplayground.it fb [mantovaplayground](https://www.facebook.com/mantovaplayground)

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Illustrations by Noemi Vola

The typeface of the texts is Biancoenero®, by biancoenero edizioni, high-readability font, designed by graphic designers Riccardo Lorusso and Umberto Mischi - biancoeneroedizioni.com

FILMS RECOMMENDED BY THE CINEMA DEL CARBONE

Boxtrolls by **Grahm Annable and Anthony Stacchi, Usa, 2014, '100'** A comic fable set in Cheesebridge, an elegant Victorian town under whose picturesque streets live the Boxtrolls, dirty monsters who creep up from the sewers to steal what the inhabitants hold dearest: their children and their cheese. Or, at least, that is how the legend goes. In actual fact, the Boxtrolls are an underground community of eccentric, quirky and adorable creatures who show ingenious talent in defending themselves against an evil pest controller...



Ernest & Celestine by **Sthéphane Aubier, Vincent Patar and Benjamin Renner, France, 2011, 80'**

Beneath the city of bears, there is a city of mice. The two groups, which are substantially similar to each other, one above one below, ignore and dislike each other. One day, the mouse Celestine meets the bear Ernest: the two soon become friends and convince the other mice and bears to be friendly to each other, showing that collaboration between the two worlds is a possibility.

BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY THE BIBLIOTECA MEDIATECA G. BARATTA

La rapina del secolo by **Davide Cali, Uovonero Edizioni, 2016** Luigino recalls the first-hand experience of his adventures with Il Furbo and Carlone. They were a band of thieves, but not just any band of thieves: they hid in drains, brought down walls, walked through sewers and gorged on cannoli. But, of course, you need to wait to the end of the book to discover what's inside that strange safe which opens in five minutes.



The Underground Garden by **Seonkyeong Jo, JacaBook, 2008**

Mr Moss sweeps the subway. He fights against the dirt and support which has accumulated in the once bright and shiny tunnels over the years. He decides to battle against all of that and one day discovers an air vent obstructed by rubbish, he cleans it and plants the small tree that. Days and months pass and at some point, some kind of magic emerges from the subway grate: what could it be?

MANHOLES & CO.

Manhole covers, with their iron veracity, are among the most mysterious creatures that make up the wildlife of our cities. This is why, perhaps because my father was a railway worker and my mother was an avid duck hunter, I have long studied their complex behaviour. There is no city in the world that does not have among its wildlife at least 10 different kinds of covers, but some, such as Mantua, offer a truly amazing selection. And therefore it is with pride and emotion that I'm going to put together this little map, so that all of you, the youngest of you most of all, can go on a journey and discover these enigmatic and wonderful creatures. Just one warning: take care where you put your feet, especially if you're wearing sandals.



Davide Longo is originally from Carmagnola, near Turin, where he was born in 1971. He is a writer, filmmaker and teacher at the Scuola Holden in Turin. He was awarded the Premio Grinzane Opera Prima 2001 and the Premio Via Po for his novel *Un mattino a Irgalem*. He writes for several Italian publications, such as "Repubblica", "Avvenire", "Slow Food", "Donna", "Lettere" and "Travel". He has also written a number of children's books, such as *Il Laboratorio di Pinot* and *Pirulin senza parole*, illustrated by Chiara Carrer. His latest book is *Il caso Bramard*, released by Feltrinelli.

GRATE OF SANT'ANDREA

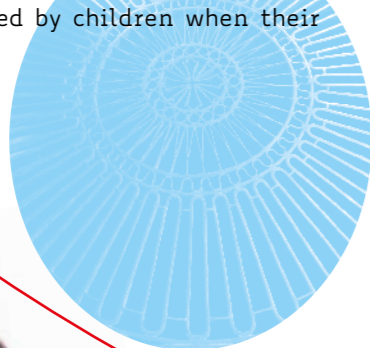
Basilica di Sant'Andrea, piazza Andrea Mantegna

www.santandreainmantova.it

Piazza Erbe

These are probably the snootiest of all manhole covers. Passionate about singing, you'll find them in places such as churches, concert squares and television studios (there is one really famous specimen which swallowed an X factor finalist), where it can unleash its deep timbre, blending with human voices. I'm almost certain that you will find a small example in your shower, proving that there is someone in your family who sings in the shower like a dog with its tail stuck in a door.

Along the arcades in Piazza Erbe you will find a bunch of grates attracted by the buzzers on the shop doors. Here, they mainly feed on crumbled receipts, cigarette butts and bits of snot dropped by children when their parents weren't watching.



TOMBINUS GASTIGATUS

Tempio di San Sebastiano,

largo XXIV Maggio

€ +39 0376 288208 · www.turismo.mantova.it

Chiesa di San Francesco, piazza San

Francesco d'Assisi 5

A moving example of a *Tombinus Gastigatus*, destiny which, like the *Ramingus*, can affect any manhole. Punished who knows when with its face turned to the wall, this example of *Gasticadus* carries out its punishment patiently: placing all the tiles in order. As you can see, he's going to be there for a while yet. It's not worth helping him.

In front of San Francesco, there is a magnificent example of a *Gastigatus* which, having completed its punishment, is running outdoors enjoying its new-found freedom. And how it laughs.

G.R.A.T.A. ACQUATICA

Piazza Canossa

Is a manhole that needs large amounts of so that it doesn't have to rely on rain, street cleaners or shopkeepers' buckets like other manholes. You will never quench your thirst when drinking from the G.R.A.T.A. Acquatica, it sucks the water back through the soles of your feet. Don't come close to it with soap bubbles, drink cans or goldfish in bags. If you do so, don't complain to me when you have to take your dried up goldfish home.

TOMBINUS STAGNUS

Piazza Leon Battista Alberti

Around here you can see some *Tombini Humili*, a *Tombimeticus*, a G.R.A.T.A. worn down to the bone and other specimens which run to the well. A nasty surprise awaits them. Look closer: a *Tombinus Stagnus* has completely sealed the well and is using up all of its water. The small holes are there for it to tell jokes, blow raspberries and giggle. If you have a glass of water, please give some to the other poor, thirsty manholes nearby.



HOW DO MANHOLES REPRODUCE?

Piazza Sordello

This exceptional event can be seen in Piazza Sordello went to manholes, who saw and liked each other 156 years ago, are finally about to finish their courtship and get the point. The choice of partner lasts a very long time for manholes. (Ah, we got so much to learn!) It is estimated that the act itself, which has never been seen by anyone, should be finished in this case by 2145 (don't miss it!). It's easy to recognise the male, larger and with bared biceps, from the female who is still wearing her dressing gown.



TOMBIMETICUS, OR CHAMELEON OF THE CAPPADOCIA

Piazza Broletto

Tends to take on the colour and shape the surface that surrounds it. Seemingly without a mouth, it feeds itself through suction. If you mistakenly stand over it for more than five minutes, you'll go home and find your big toe soft and wrinkled, as if someone had been sucking on it. They prefer churches and marketplaces.

TOMBINUS RAMINGUS E TOMBINUS JUNGHIANUS

Rotonda di San Lorenzo, piazza Erbe

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A *Tombinus Ramingus* can be seen outside of San Lorenzo. Almost always in front of the church entrance, sometimes in front of the town hall, the *Ramingus* spends years waiting for its loved one, alone and sad, eating rice and high heels in the meanwhile. The wait can last decades or even a lifetime but nothing annoys the *Ramingus* more than attempts at consolation. If you spot it, move straight on and don't stop. The *Ramingus* spits.

Inside you will find the *Tombinus Junghianus* deals with the mental health of its fellow manholes. It takes appointments on Mondays and Wednesdays after lunch. The reduced hours explain the long delays and the great number of benches that usually surround a *Junghianus*. I have to say however, that whenever I've spoken to it, I have always benefited greatly. You should try it too: sit down, talk and open your heart to it. If someone calls an ambulance, well, things will work themselves out somehow.

TOMBINUS HUMILIS

Via Orefici

Tombinus Humilis, originally from London, it owes its popularity to its adaptability. While it prefers corks, it will in fact devour anything in an instant. Its weakness is its bad breath, mainly due to its random diet. If you want to experience it for yourself with your nose closer to it, but be careful: it has been known for *Tombini Humilis* to mistake a nose for a cork.

