

## ATESSA

### 4) The Town Hall and theatre.

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The Town Hall and the adjacent theatre, which has recently been named after the local musician Antonio Di Iorio, are evidence of the ancient convent that according to historians dates back to 1275 and shows us how ancient buildings can be used for modern purposes. The only surviving part of the original structure is the church, now called Saint Dominic. It has been restructured many times and inside there is a triumph of paintings, and decorations where the warm golden colour intertwines with green and blue.

The convent was designed with large communal spaces and study areas, surrounded by wine cellars, stables and storage spaces. It underwent radical changes to be transformed into the Town Hall during the nineteenth century. The most recent work done at the end of the nineteenth century has greatly improved the building and has enabled ancient areas such as the courtyard to be transformed into the council meeting hall which is overlooked by council offices and the theatre, full of historic prominence.

By the first half of the nineteenth century, amateur actors used the dining hall to put on shows and plays. This area was widened several years later to meet the actors' needs and it became a real theatre. Thanks to money donated by local citizens and public funds, work was completed in 1911.

Damaged by the bombing raids during the second world war and used as a cinema, the theatre sustained a progressive downward spiral of decay and it was saved thanks to urgent work done in the 1980s. As it is now, the theatre is the cultural nerve centre of the town and is an excellent advertisement for Atessa with its refined decor but welcoming appeal.

# Abruzzo Audioguide

