

FRANCAVILLA AL MARE

5) Ciarrapico Tower and San Francesco Via Civitella snc, 66023 Francavilla Al Mare (CH)

The area at the top of the old part of Francavilla is called “la Civitella”, a name given to the oldest part of a town. Here one can see the ruins of the very first church built in Francavilla. It was originally dedicated to San Giovanni Battista and later changed to San Francesco as a Franciscan convent was built next to it in the thirteenth century. Not much is left of the church, just the vestry behind the high altar and a small part of the transept. The two single lancet windows of the vestry in a calcareous frame and the capital of a corner column indicate that it was probably built around 1200 AD. The only remaining piece of the convent is a long brick and stone wall.

Next to San Franco there is Ciarrapico Tower. It is an incorrect definition as it isn't actually a tower but an elegant residence on four floors. It was built between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the family who then lived there and whom the tower is still named after. Untouched during the war it has been renovated and is now the headquarters of a local cultural association run by young people.

On the top floor it has an open gallery with a spectacular view both of the coast and the hillside. An even better view can be obtained by going up to the balcony on the roof.

Opposite Ciarrapico Tower it is possible to see an ancient tower of the wall that surrounded the old town. It is a semi cylindrical building in brickwork, built in the year 1200 to guard the entrance named Porta Ripa. It was part of a defensive wall with seven towers to protect the three entrances to the town. One towards the sea and the other two towards the countryside, almost as if they characterized the inhabitants of the primitive town of Francavilla which were fishermen and farmers.

Abruzzo Audioguide

