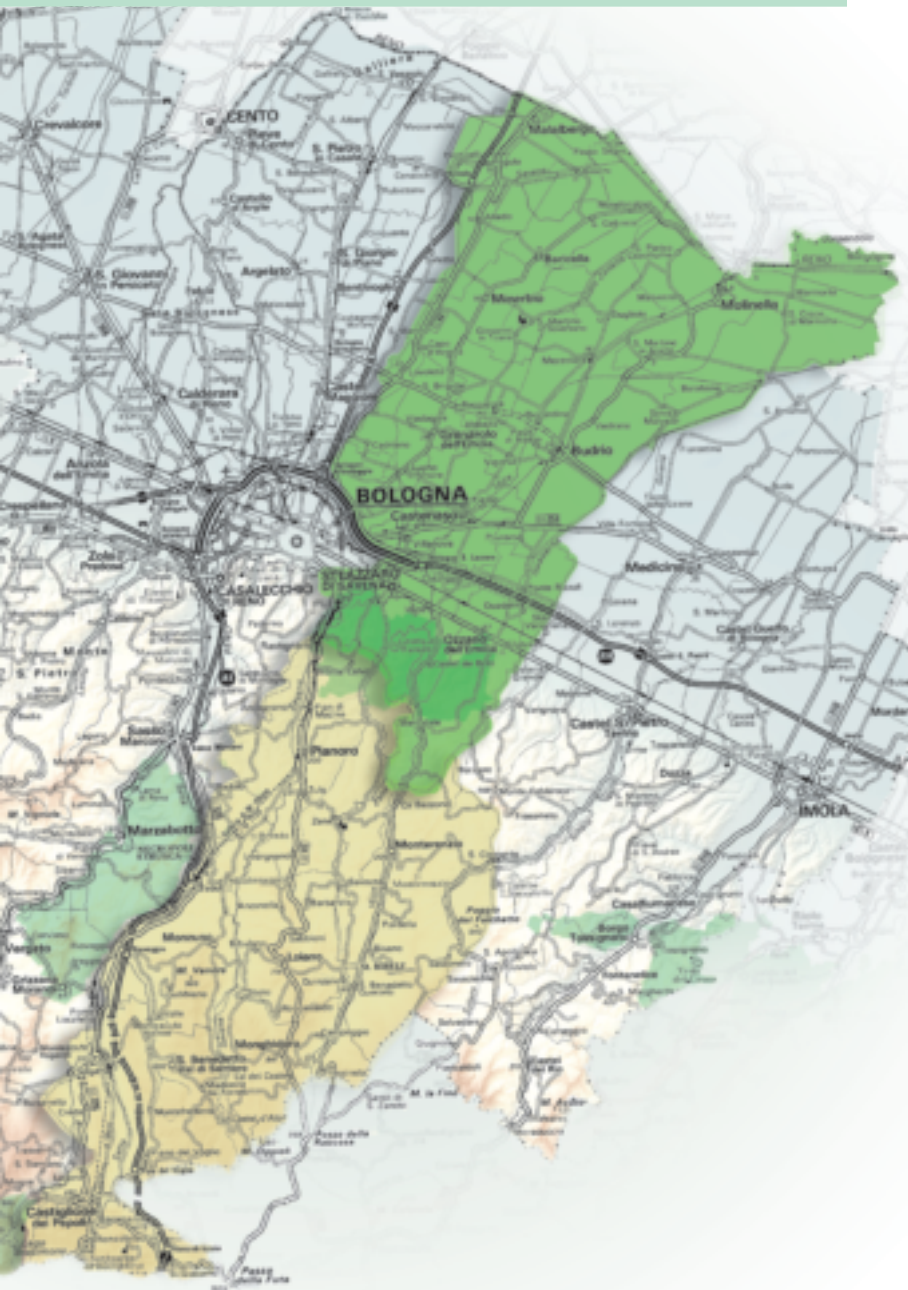


The Bolognese Valleys of the Idice, Savena and Setta



The Rivers

The valleys of the tributaries to the right of the Reno punctuate the central area of the Bolognese Apennines in a truly surprising variety of colours and landscapes. They are the Idice, Savena and Setta Rivers, of which only the Idice continues its course onto the plains, as far as the Park of the Po Delta.

The Idice

The Idice starts on Monte Oggioli, near the Raticosa Pass, and is the largest of the rivers in these valleys. Interesting from a geological and naturalistic point of view, its valley offers many reasons for a visit. Particularly beautiful is the stretch of river where it joins the Zena Valley: this is where the Canale dei Mulini (mills) branches off, continuing alongside it until it reaches the plains, in the territory of San Lazzaro di Savena. Flowing through the Valleys of Campotto, the Idice finally joins the Reno. Here an interesting system of manmade basins stop the Reno's water flowing into the Idice's bed in dry periods.

The Setta

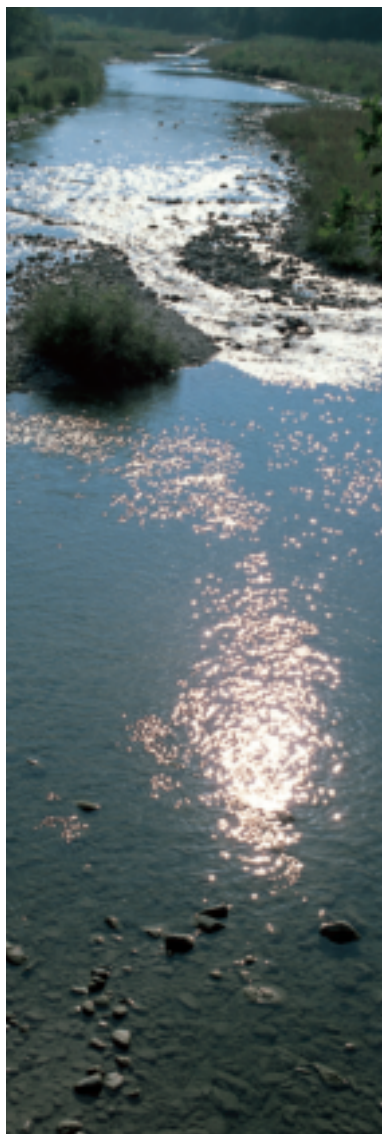
The Setta's journey begins in Tuscany, in the Province of Florence, but a few kilometres from its source, it already enters Bolognese territory. A typical Apennine river of a torrential nature, its valley has always been a crossroads for people and goods to and from Tuscany. Today this land of travellers offers tourists innumerable opportunities of discovery along ancient trails, on foot, horseback or by mountain bike. In the territory of Castiglione dei Pepoli, one of its tributaries, the River Brasimone, flows into the Lake of Santa Maria, which, together with the basins of Suviana and Brasimone, make up the Regional Park of the Lakes.

From the Setta, the Romans built an underground aqueduct (18 kilometres of tunnel, some of which can be visited) which still today carries water to Bologna. A little further on, about fifty kilometres from its source, the river ends its course, joining the Reno.

The Savena

First of all the pronunciation: we say Sávena and not Savéna, as would be natural according to Italian phonetics. An Etruscan term meaning "vein of water", the Savena and Reno are the territorial borders of the city of Bologna: Dante Alighieri in the Divine Comedy identifies the Bolognese as living "between the Savena and Reno" (Inferno, Canto 18th). The river's course is followed by

the Futa state highway SS 65 and the road along the valley-bottom, which continues as far as the Lake of Castel dell'Alpi, passing the majestic Gorges of Scascoli. Along the river, there are numerous mills, some of which can be visited, constructed over the centuries. Before entering the plains, the Savena crosses the Regional Park of Bolognese Gypsums and Abbadessa Gullies, which is also crossed by the River Idice.



River Setta

Photo by Provincia di Bologna

The Bolognese Valleys of the Idice, Savena and Setta

the Apennines

Tourist itinerary

The itinerary starts in the Apennines: our main road will be the historical Futa road, on the range between the Savena and Idice, from which there are infinite possible deviations to discover the treasures of the various valleys.

From the SS 65 "Futa" Highway to the Idice Valley

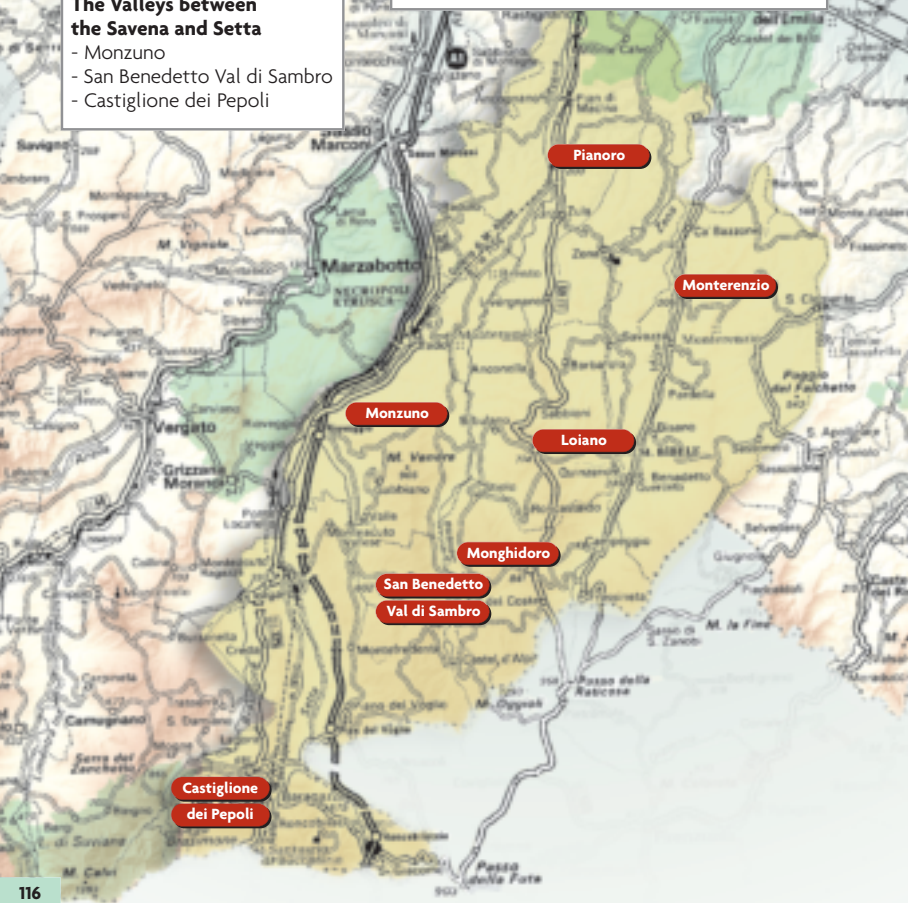
- Pianoro
- Loiano
- Monghidoro
- Monterenzio

The Valleys between the Savena and Setta

- Monzuno
- San Benedetto Val di Sambro
- Castiglione dei Pepoli

Not to be missed:

- The Bread Route and the ancient mills on the Idice and Savena
- The Route of the Gods and Bologna-Florence Trekking Trails
- The Natural Parks
- The Gardens of Casoncello
- The spa-village of Monterenzio
- The Monzuno Golf Club
- The Futa and the Raticosa Pass
- The Etruscan-Celtic village of Monte Bibele and the Monterenzio Archaeological Museum
- The Sanctuary of Boccadivino
- The chestnuts, mushrooms, truffles and their festivals
- The acrobatic park of Monghidoro
- The Loiano Observatory
- The Zena Valley



History and environment

Crossed by the ancient pilgrims' route from Tuscany, the territory of the Bolognese Valleys of the Idice, Savena and Setta has always been an obligatory passage for commercial and cultural exchanges between North and Central Italy. Human presence in these Valleys has been found dating back to the Palaeolithic Period and on Monte Bibebe, between Monterezenzio and Loiano, Etruscans and Celts left important traces of their civilisations. Created to house the numerous relics brought to light in the area, the "Luigi Fantini" Archaeological Museum in Monterezenzio today has one of the most important Celtic collections in Italy. According to legendary sources, the Etruscan King Ocno lived in this area, as also recalled by Virgilio, the legendary founder of Felsina (today's Bologna), as well as Parma and Mantua. Signs of the successive passage of the Romans can be recognised in the *Flaminia Minor*, a consular road used by the Roman legions on their way to conquer Gaul. Then the castles and towers in these valleys take us back to the troubled medieval affairs of the Apennines. The Lord of a large part of the territory in the 11th century was Marquis Bonifacio of Tuscany, the father of Matilde of Canossa, who chose to reside in the Castle of Pianoro, then destroyed by the Bolognese in 1377. The countryside of these valleys has remained wild and uncontaminated in many places. The landscape is typical of the mid-Apenine mountains, where the highest peaks are never more than 1,200 metres. Ideal for exploring slowly on foot, horseback or cycling, here you can experience the emotions of following in the centuries of footsteps of armies, pilgrims and writers.

Events

Favolando per le Valli (Fairy Tales in the Valleys)

Festival internazionale dedicato al teatro su misura per bambini e ragazzi ospitato dai comuni delle Valli Bolognesi tra Idice, Savena e Setta. www.vallibolognesi.it

History and Culture

The Bolognese art of Bell-ringing

Between Monzuno and Monghidoro, an ancient musical tradition still survives, linked to the sound of bells. The roots of the Bolognese art of Bell-ringing date back to the mid-16th century: it requires a particular "athletic-musical" technique, involving on average four or five ringers (one for each bell), still passed down from generation to generation.

Buon appetito

The Bolognese Apennines in these valleys has remained faithful to the simplicity and flavours of the traditional inn: mountain cooking which unites the specialities of Emilia and Tuscany. The "tortelli di patate" (filled pasta) and steaks "alla fiorentina" (T-bone) are a must, as well as unusual dishes such as the "agliata" (a garlic-based sauce). Every year in autumn there are festivals based around chestnuts, mushrooms and truffles, perfect occasions to taste the most classic Apennines products. The ancient presence in the area of water mills has led to the baking traditions of these valleys, celebrated by the "Bolognese Mountains Bread Route".

How to get there

- A1 Motorway Bologna-Florence: exit Sasso Marconi, Rieveggio, Pian del Voglio and Roncobilaccio.
- Roads: State highway SS 64 Futa (Pianoro, Loiano, Monghidoro and Firenzuola in Tuscany). State highway SS 325 Val di Setta Val Bisenzio (Sasso Marconi, Vado, Rieveggio, Pian di Setta, Castiglione dei Pepoli and Montepiano in Tuscany). State highway SP 65 Savena Valley-bottom.
- Railway: the "Direttissima" Bologna-Florence, with the possibility of transporting bicycles; stations in Rastignano, Pianoro, Monzuno, Vado, San Benedetto Val di Sambro e Castiglione dei Pepoli.
- Buses ATC www.atc.bo.it. connect the towns to each other and Bologna

Tourist Information

Monghidoro - IAT Tourist Office

Via Matteotti, 1 - 40063 Monghidoro (BO)
Tel. 051.6555132 - turismo@tuttoservizispa.it
www.tuttoservizispa.it

Opening times:

From Monday to Saturday 9-12.30 am / 4-7 pm
Sunday (from June to September) 9-12.30 am



Sistema Turistico Valli Bolognesi

The **Bolognese Valleys Tourist System**, created by the "Five Bolognese Valleys Mountain Community" in conjunction with the "Idice, Savena and Setta Tourist Consortium", offers unique proposals to tourists, allowing them to immerse themselves fully in uncontaminated countryside, rich in history. Viale Risorgimento, 1 - 40065 Pianoro (BO)
Tel. **051.6527743** - Fax 051.774690
info@vallibolognesi.it
www.vallibolognesi.it

The Ancient Apennine Roads between history and legend

The Flaminia Minore and the Via degli Dei

Between the Futa Pass and the Via Emilia, the last section of the ancient military and pilgrims' road known as "Flaminia Minore" or "Flaminia Militare" winds. Built by Consul Flaminio in 187 BC, the road links Bologna and Arezzo and served to connect Rome as quickly as possible to the new colonies which were being created along the Via Emilia. Its route along the ridge between the Idice, Quaderna and upper-Sillaro valleys, as well as having splendid views of uncontaminated landscape, passes through places of great military, historical and cultural importance. The road took on greater relevance in the Middle Ages: from 1200 onwards, the most ancient stretch of the Via Francigena, the Cisa, became less important and pilgrims from Northern Europe, heading for Rome, preferred to travel along the Via Emilia to Bologna and then join the roads which followed the ancient Flaminia Minore. The most famous is the Via dello Stale or Via degli Dei (Route of the Gods), which still today links Bologna and Florence in a series of trails.

The Futa

The "Strada della Futa", known to the Bolognese as Via Toscana and to the Tuscans as Via Bolognese, follows the Savena Valley and then rises along the ridge between the Savena and Idice to the Raticosa Pass. From there it reaches the Futa Pass and then Florence. As far back as the 14th century, a similar trail was chosen by the Bologna City Council as the official road to Tuscany. This success was confirmed on the occasion of the 1300 Jubilee, when the Via Toscana was recommended to pilgrims journeying to Rome, since it was considered safer than the others and moreover, was equipped with inns, hospices, parish churches and monasteries, all fundamental for travellers. In 1759, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Francesco di Lorena, achieved his aim of improving the ancient road by building a more efficient means of communication between Florence and Bologna. The Grand Duke's project had to overcome the opposition of the Papacy, which would have preferred the main link between Rome and its northern possessions not to leave the pontifical territories, passing instead through the Marches.

With the rebuilding of the road in the 18th century, restoration work was also carried out on the Customs Houses of La Ca' in Bolognese territory, now demolished, and the Florentine one of Filigare, near Monghidoro. Built on the wishes of Grand Duke Leopoldo II, the ancient Customs House is still surprisingly magnificent. The Customs Houses survived until 1859, when, at Villa Loup near Loiano, it was decided to abolish all duty barriers in anticipation of the imminent Union of Italy (1861).

History and Culture

The Futa and the Grand Tour

Just as the pilgrimages of the various Jubilees marked the history of the Via Toscana in the Middle Ages, so the passage through the Apennines became fundamental to the Grand Tour which, from the 16th to 19th century, saw legions of young aristocrats and artists visit our nation. Culture, adventure and majestic landscapes were the attractions which led travellers to face the dangers involved. On their return to their various European countries, they recounted the fear and emotions of travelling along the Bologna-Florence stretch in either direction. Montaigne (1580), Goethe (1786), Casanova (1761), the Marquis de Sade (1776), Stendhal (1811 and 1817), Sir Walter Scott and Emperor Frederick of Russia are only a few of the illustrious travellers who wrote their impressions of the Futa Pass in their diaries. These writings are a rich testimony to episodes which also underline the personalities of the various characters. In 1811, Stendhal visited Pianoro, Loiano and Monghidoro and wrote: "Two Frenchmen travelling in a good coach with an intelligent servant can transport the pleasures of a drawing room into the Apennines, but they will not enjoy the Apennines as I do, travelling alone in an open carriage". Both De Montaigne and Goethe, almost two centuries apart, in their *Voyages in Italy* (1580 the former and 1786 the latter) passed through Loiano and Monghidoro. Many other more or less famous travellers followed them. Then progress and the inventions of steam, electric and internal combustion engines changed the world, the ways of travelling and so the most important roads changed.

Pianoro is the first town you reach travelling up the Futa highway. The centre was drastically damaged in the Second World War, so much so that Pietro Nenni described it as the “largest and saddest example of Nazi-fascist barbarity”. Following the devastation and the consequent post-war reconstruction, there are now two distinct parts - Pianoro Nuovo and Pianoro Vecchio. However, the territory still has numerous examples of the thousands of years of history here, in particular from the Middle Ages.

In Pianoro Vecchio, it is worth visiting the Church of **San Giacomo Maggiore**, restored in the 18th century, together with a hospice for pilgrims which can be traced back to the end of the 12th century. Inside there is a notable altar piece from the School of the Francia.

A kilometre before Pianoro Vecchio, there is a medieval tower, the **Torre Lùpari**, a precious example of the art of the “Maestri comacini” (an ancient Guild of Master-builders and Stonemasons - page 71), which was later enclosed in a 15th-century building with double-loggia.

The village of **Livergnano** has the peculiarity of a series of houses built deep into the rock, with only their façades external. A fundamental crossroads between the low and high Apennines, it was the site of violent clashes during the Second World War - this was one of the main areas of the Gothic Line (page 160).

Calanchi (gullies)

Photo by Provincia di Bologna



Events

The Bologna-Raticosa Time Trials

Motoring fans should not miss the historical “Bologna-Raticosa Time Trials”, 603 bends against the clock in a race for classic cars. Started in 1950, it was for years one of the most difficult time trials in Italy, for distance second only to the Parma-Berceto. Occasionally staged until 1969, the Bologna-Raticosa was reintroduced in 2001 on the road between Pianoro Vecchio and Livergnano. Since then, it has taken place every year.

Info: www.velocitaraticosa.it

Nature

The Paleotto Park

The Paleotto Park stretches along the banks of the Savena on gently sloping land in the territories of Rastignano (Pianoro), Sasso Marconi, San Lazzaro di Savena and Bologna. The name comes from an ancient noble Bolognese family and its history has been linked since the Middle Ages to an ancient mill which used to exist nearby, and which is still recalled today in the name of a local area, Molino del Paleotto. There is a notable ancient stone bridge providing a link to the old road for Sant'Andrea di Sesto.

Museums

“WINTER LINE” MUSEUM

via della Chiesa, 4 - Livergnano

40066 Pianoro (BO) - Tel. **380.5074820**

Dug at the base of the Pliocene Foothills above Livergnano, the museum lies in a cave where there was an air-raid shelter during the Second World War. It collects soldiers' objects of the 65th German Division and 91st Division of the 361st USA Infantry, found along trenches and shelters which still today can be seen in the countryside around Pianoro. Here, in the winter between 1944 and 1945, the two opposing armies blocked passage to each other.

Along the Zena Valley, inside the **Regional Park of Bolognese Gypsums and Abbadessa Gullies** (page 137), about 15 kilometres from Pianoro, there is Monte delle Formiche (Mount of the Ants), with its highly original Sanctuary.

History and Culture

Monte delle Formiche (Mount of the Ants) is a rocky crag dominating the Idice and Zena Valleys. From its summit, there is an incredible view which, on particularly clear mornings, goes from the Adriatic coast to the foothills of the Alps near Verona. The name of the mount comes from a very particular natural phenomenon: every year, in early September, swarms of flying ants reach the summit for their nuptial flight, then die around the Sanctuary of Santa Maria di Zena. Since 1400, the Sanctuary has been known as "Santa Maria Formicarum", proof that the phenomenon already occurred then. Even today, on occasion of the Festival of the Madonna, the ants are collected, blessed and given out to the faithful: according to popular belief, they have therapeutic properties.

In the direction of Monte delle Formiche, there is the **Castle of Zena**, which belonged to the Countess of Canossa. Of medieval origins, its architecture today shows elements from the 14th and 17th centuries. Another part of the castle is a nearby tower, the Torre dell'Erede (14th century), which being on higher ground, served as a lookout.

Towards the west, the stark, imposing peak of **Monte Adone**, dominating the ridge of the watershed between the Savena, Setta and Reno, is the highest point of the **Pliocene Foothills** (page 60).

In Pian di Macina, there is the Centro Anfibi (Amphibian Centre), where you can encounter rare species of amphibians from the Apennines.

Museums

THE "CIVILTÀ DEI MESTIERI" MUSEUM

Via del Gualando, 2 - 40066 Pianoro (BO)
Comune di Pianoro - Tel. **051.6529105**

Tuttoservizi s.p.a. - Tel. **051.655132**

The "Artisan Culture" Museum has collected numerous craftwork tools. Created as a genuine informative workshop, it is divided into different sections: rural house, cellar, stables, agricultural work, craftwork, weights and measures.

Events

Tartufesta (Truffle Festival): in October and in November

Festival of Santa Maria Assunta: 15th August

Nature

The **Pian di Macina Amphibian Centre** is a European conservation project for species of amphibians which are rare or in danger of extinction, promoted and financed by the Province of Bologna and the Pianoro Town Council. In the centre's tanks and humid zones, you can discover strange animals such as the Spectacled Salamander, the Alpine Newt and the Apennine Yellow-bellied Howler, whose name refers to the sounds made by the males in the mating season. Workshops and educational meetings are organized.

Info: Anfibi, Rettili e Territorio Onlus
Tel. **051.774253** www.centroanfibi.it

Nature

The Zena Valley

The Zena is a river which starts in the territory of Loiano and ends its tortuous journey in the River Idice, in San Lazzaro di Savena. Near Loiano, in Quinzano, it passes over a beautiful 30-metre-high waterfall, which precipitates into a woody gorge. The Zena valley has a road along the valley-bottom, the first few kilometres of which are the provincial road S.P.16 "Val di Zena", then becoming smaller roads for Pianoro and Monterenzio. With its bucolic appearance, the valley alternates between gentle meadow and wood-covered hills and the occasional gypsum, in a largely uncontaminated landscape of great naturalistic and historical interest. Apart from the Etruscan-Celtic remains found on Monte Bibebe, on the river banks there is the Castle of Zena. With the Pliocene Foothills running along one side, the valley contains the Regional Park of Bolognese Gypsums and Abbadessa Gullies. About 2 kilometres upstream from the confluence with the River Idice, just after entering the territory of San Lazzaro di Savena, near the left bank of the Zena, there is a famous cave, the Grotta del Farneto, in which important proof of human presence dating back to the Neolithic period was discovered.

Pianoro is a member of the "**National Association of Wine Cities**".

C'era una volta (Once upon a time): October

MARKET DAY: Wednesday



Astronomical Observatory

Photo by Provincia di Bologna

To justify a visit to Loiano, it would be enough to mention the astronomical observatory of the University of Bologna, along the Futa highway, 2 kms after Loiano towards Monghidoro.

Science and Technique: Park of the Stars

On Monte Orzale, there is the Loiano Station of the **Astronomical Observatory** of Bologna, in a structure belonging to the National Institute of Astrophysics. Inaugurated on the 15th November 1936, its biggest telescope is named after the astronomer Giovanni Domenico Cassini, designer of the great sundial of San Petronio in Bologna. The observatory of Loiano is the second biggest in Italy for the dimension of the telescope (152 cm in diameter). Thanks to a collaboration with the Loiano Town Council and the Province of Bologna, the observatory is open to the public for evening visits from April to September.

Info and bookings: Loiano Library on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-12am.

Tel. **051.6543617**

urp@comune.loiano.bologna.it

Loiano is situated on the spur separating the Idice and Savena Valleys and, apart from the observatory, there is no lack of historical and artistic points of interest. The first is the Church of **San Giacomo and Santa Margherita**, built by the Augustinians in the 14th century. Inside there is a painting by Calvaert and the Madonna del Carmine by Angelo Piò. In the town centre, there are still traces of the 15th-century porticos which were part of its original character.

The Corona inn is famous, being the place where, in the 16th century, the annexation of Cento to Ferrara was negotiated, and where on the 21st October 1786, Goethe stayed en route to Florence.

Among the most characteristic settlements in the territory is **Anconella**, an ancient 16th-century village. The village develops around a particular construction with porticos, a rare example in the Apennines, which was once a hospice for pilgrims. Inside you can admire a beautiful fireplace with the coat-of-arms of the noble Bentivoglio family. In the area it is also still possible to see the so-called “buse nelle lastre”, caves dug into the sandstone, once used as inhabitations and store rooms, and during wartime as shelters.

Along the provincial road from Loiano to Quinzano, on a high plain there is the **Parish Church of Scanello** dedicated to San Giovanni Battista, which conserves a painting attributed to **Passerotti** and two paintings from the School of Carracci. Nearby, in Cà di Priami, you can admire the main mountains of the Idice and Savena Valleys, with the upper-Apennines on one side, and the hills which frame Bologna on the other.



Hills around Loiano - Photo by Provincia di Bologna

Near Scanello, there is **Villa Loup**, which owes its name to the Swiss gentleman who, marrying a member of the Ghisilieri family, received the residence as part of the dowry. Pope Pious VII stayed here in 1805, after meeting Napoleon in Paris, but it became famous in the Risorgimento for the “Convegno di Scanello”. Here on the 28th September 1859, the representatives of Tuscany, Romagna, Modena and Parma negotiated the abolition of custom duties between their states and the adoption of a single currency, in anticipation of the Union of Italy.

From the centre of Quinzano, there is a road which, winding through the atmospheric ZenaValley, reaches the **archaeological site of Monte Bibele** (page 125).

The village of Scascoli is one of the most enchanting, due to its position. The Church of Saints Stefano and Martino was rebuilt after the Second World War: for the façade, the sandstone blocks from the destroyed Church of San Ansano di Brento were used, while the high altar was made by melting down the brass cartridge cases of the American artillery.

Near **Scascoli**, we find the interesting rural building called the Torre, a typical example of 15th-century building by the Maestri comacini (an ancient Guild of Master-builders and Stonemasons) (page 71).

Continuing along the road which descends towards the Savena, we reach the majestic **Gorges of Scascoli**, above the course of the river.



Gardens of Casoncello - Private archive

Nature

The Gardens of Casoncello

Via Scascoli, 75 - Loiano (BO)

Tel. **051.928100/928281**

Born from the restoration of an ancient farmhouse and open to the public since 1996, the Gardens of Casoncello are today considered an excellent example of a “natural garden” where the mark of nature and that of mankind exist in harmony and where the multiplicity of animal and vegetable life are respected and favoured. It has an unusual appearance, rich in ornamental plants and spontaneous flora: in the space of a single hectare there are more than a thousand species which, freely associated in “harmonious disorder”, create an enchanting atmosphere. The guided visits lead to the discovery of this enormous “green book” through various “vegetable situations”: mixed meadow, vegetable garden, rockery, wet zone, wood-garden, herb-garden, flowering borders, perennial grass borders, orchard, mixed hedges, with an approach that is not merely visual, but involves all the other senses. A particular element of the visit is in fact the olfactory one, in which different and unusual smells are offered from flowers, leaves, bark and even roots. The Gardens of Casoncello can only be visited by booking with guided visits.

Events

Festa della Batdura (Threshing Festival),

farming show, exhibition of machines and tools for threshing grain: July

Tartufesta (Truffle Festival): October and November

Market of Santa Lucia: December

Scascoli

Chestnuts Festival: October

MARKET DAY: Sunday



Monghidoro

An ancient pontifical Customs House on the border with Tuscany, Monghidoro also used to be called Scaricalasino ("Unload-the-mule"), since it was necessary to check the exhausted animals' loads after the climb from Roncastaldo.

In the town centre, the cloisters of **La Cisterna** are all that remain of the ancient Monastery of San Michele ad Alpes, built in 1528 by converting the Palazzo di Armaciotto dei Ramazzotti, donated to the Olivetani order, who ran it until 1797. Today the cloisters are the splendid setting for events which liven up the town in summer.

Culture and Famous Names

The Ramazzotto

Armeciotto dei Ramazzotti, called the Ramazzotto, is a typical figure of the Italian Renaissance. Born in Scaricalasino in 1444, the Ramazzotto took up arms and built his future battle by battle. Becoming a Captain, he first served Cesare Borgia, then various Popes among whom Clemente VII dei Medici, his great protector. As compensation, he received ever-larger feudal territories in the Apennines and the title of Count. Ramazzotto became lord of his own personal state, which included an impregnable fort, the Rocca di Tossignano, in the Santerno Valley, which he fortified even further. The reorganisation of the lands of Romagna by Paolo III Farnese threw the survival of his feud into crisis, and after various mishaps, he finally surrendered in 1537. He died in exile in Tuscany, but in the Church of San Michele in Bosco in Bologna, there is the splendid marble arch commissioned by him to the sculptor Alfonso Lombardi (1531-1533).

The **Sentiero dei Pilastrini** is a trail which starts from the county town and takes in some typical villages, following ten small stone pillars, some rebuilt, direct evidence of the sacred element so pervasive in the mountain peasant culture up to the 19th century.

Museums

MUSEUM OF APENNINE FARMING CULTURE

Via Provinciale, 13 - Piamaggio 40063 Monghidoro (BO) - Tel. **051.6555132** - Fax 051-6552268 - turismo@tuttoservizispa.it

The museum reconstructs the working and day-to-day aspects of past rural life of the Apennines. Alternated with spaces dedicated to ancient jobs (carpentry, the elaboration of wool and straw, wine production), there are some domestic spaces: the kitchen, the bedroom, a school room, stables, and finally, an aristocratic corner. There is also a unique 1:3-scale reconstruction of a perfectly-working water mill.

Opening times: in winter, Sunday 3-6pm; in summer, Saturday 4-7pm, Sunday 10-12am and 4-7pm.

Free entrance (donations welcome).

MONGHIDORO PARISH MUSEUM

Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta
Via Garibaldi, 37 - 40063 Monghidoro (BO)
Tel. **051.6555539**

This 19th-century parish church houses a small collection of sacred art: devotional and liturgical objects and vestments. There is also a notable painting by Burrini from 1685, showing Saints Petronio and Dionigi. Opening times: Sunday and public holidays; by request on weekdays. Free entrance.



La Cisterna

Photo by Comune di Monghidoro

The whole area is also of great natural worth, in particular the Park, “La Martina”, and the Alpe of Monghidoro.

Nature

“La Martina” Provincial Park

In the upper-Idice Valley, the Park offers the ideal environment for walks in the woods and open-air picnics. Created by the Province of Bologna in 1972, in an area of about 155 hectares, it belongs to the Monghidoro Town Council. This area was once covered with meadows and cultivated fields, with the occasional oak wood; then in the Twenties, it was reforested with conifers such as Black Pine, Woodland Pine, Silver Fir and Lawson's Cypress. An informative trail gives an insight into the natural aspects of the Apennines and the widespread network of well-signposted paths makes the park a useful base for longer excursions in the Apennines, in particular the connection between the Futa Pass and the Grande Escursione Apennine (G.E.A.). Within the Park, there is an equipped campsite, a bar and an educational hall.

The **Alpe of Monghidoro** is a very interesting natural area extending above the Futa state highway SS 65, just after the area of Ca' del Costa, about 2 kms from Monghidoro. Secondary roads and well-signposted trails make the Alpe easily accessible. At an altitude of 800-1200 metres, it is covered with oak and chestnut woods in the lower band, beech woods in the higher one, and is full of springs. Jays, buzzards, woodpeckers and owls can be seen, as well as squirrels, dormice and hares. Less easy to spot, but not impossible, particularly at dawn and dusk, there are fallow and roe deer, wild boar, and foxes. From the highest point of the Alpe, Monte Oggioli (1290 mts), on a clear day you can admire a view that stretches from the foothills of the Alps in Veneto to the Adriatic.

Info: Tuttoservizi s.p.a. - Tel **051.6555132**
turismo@tuttoservizispa.it

Like other places in the valley, Monghidoro has also been recalled in the travel diaries of more and less well-known characters who have passed through. There is the strange story of **Giacomo Casanova**, who, having left Florence at eight in the evening, arrived in Scaricalasino in the middle of the night and even though he made them prepare “a bed which astounded the host, since making it meant using four others”, maybe due to

the macaroni with ragù washed down with too much wine, the great seducer wrote that he was unable to “partake” of the young woman, a certain Corticelli, who was accompanying him.

The singer **Gianni Morandi** maintains very close links with his birthplace, Monghidoro.

Beyond Monghidoro, there is the **German Cemetery of the Futa**, in Tuscan territory, created by the architect Oesterlen and the landscape artists Rossow and Bournot. Built in sandstone, it has more than 30,000 graves of fallen soldiers from the Gothic Line (page 160) in the Second World War. In summer, it lends its highly evocative setting to the staging of classical Greek tragedies.



Triton's Park

Photo by Comune di Monghidoro

Sport and Active Tourism

Tarzaning - Adventure Park

In the heart of the Bolognese Apennines, Monghidoro is happy to host anyone wishing to emulate Tartan, thanks to Triton's Park (Newt Park), an acrobatic park in the greenery of Monte Oggioli. At an altitude of about 1,000 metres, the park has various structures such as ropes, trapezes, net tunnels, fixed and swinging walkways. There are six routes, three for adults and three for children, of varying levels of difficulty at a maximum height of 7 metres above the ground. Triton's Park also offers a picnic area equipped with barbecues and a spectacular little lake with various species of fish and some newts. Open all year.

Info: Tuttoservizi s.p.a. - Tel **051.6555132**
turismo@tuttoservizispa.it

Events

Festival of Saints Pietro e Paolo: June
Festival of San Michele: September
Tartufesta (Truffle Festival): tra October and November

MARKET DAY: Thursday



Monterenzio

The territory of Monterenzio stretches between the green valleys of the Idice and Sillaro, an area that has been inhabited since time immemorial: on the massif of **Monte Bibele** (towards Loiano), the remains of an Etruscan-Celtic village have been found, built in the 4th century BC. The copious evidence uncovered, which can be seen at the “Luigi Fantini” Archaeological Museum, indicates the contemporaneous presence of the two populations.

Museums

Named after the pioneer of Bolognese Prehistoric research, the museum was created after the discovery in 1978 of the Monte Bibele Etruscan-Celtic village. It offers visitors a clear picture of the ancient inhabitation and its complex of sepulchres, through numerous relics, with illustrative panels, photographs, drawings, maps, plans, reconstructions of the original appearance and how to use some of the tools: the vertical frame, hoes and sickles.

THE “LUIGI FANTINI” ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Via del Museo, 2 - 40050 Monterenzio (BO)
tel. **051.929766** - Fax 051.929766

museomonterenzio@yahoo.it

Opening times: in summer (April-September), Tuesday-Friday 9am-1pm; Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 9am-1pm and 3-6pm; in winter (October-March), Saturday, Sunday and public holidays 9am-1pm and 3-6pm, weekdays subject to prior booking. Tickets: € 3.00; free entrance on the first Sunday of the month.



Rebuilding of a Celtic hut with original objects

Photo by Provincia di Bologna - Vanes Cavazza

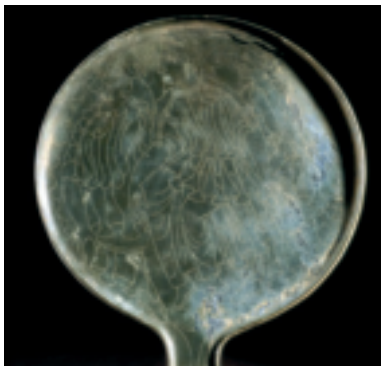
History and Culture

The Celts

Migrating from the north in the 4th century BC, the Celts settled in Gallia Cisalpina, a region between the Alps and Apennines. Among the numerous tribes to come down into Italy, the Gauls Boi settled in the Bolognese area, from which it is said the name Bologna derives. After more than 2000 years, traces of their presence can still be found, not only in museums and archaeological sites, but also in many aspects of the local culture, starting with the language. Contemporary Bolognese dialect, even though largely derived from Latin, still has a consistent Celtic element. Of similarly Celtic origins are practices such as pig-farming and the elaboration of pork, so important to the cooking of the territory. The peaceful co-existence and the ethnic and cultural mixing between Etruscans and Celts, confirmed by the finding of the village on Monte Bibele, created a new civilisation in the area, defined as “Etruscan-Celtic”.

Bronze mirror

Photo by Provincia di Bologna - Vanes Cavazza



Then it was the turn of the Romans, who created the copper mines of **Bisano**, active up to modern times. Bisano is today a typical village of medieval origins, near which there is Casa Cella, a noble house which in the 15th century belonged to Giacomo di Gottifredo, and which still conserves the original architectural characteristics.

The strategic importance of the situation, astride the two valleys, led it to be chosen for a castle in the Middle Ages, belonging to Queen Matilde di Canossa, later devastated by Barbarossa's troops. Even today there is still a lot of evidence of the period. The most notable can be found in the village of Scaruglio, between Monterenzio vecchia and Monterenzio nuova - an imposing 13th-century building called the "Torre": it is worth noting the original openings, a façade with three off-set portals, a slit and viewing-flap.

Heading down towards the Idice, we come to the village of **Villa di Cassano**, where there are two tower-houses connected by architraves and portals decorated with an eight-pointed star.

Sport and Active Tourism

The **Traversata delle Cinque Valli Bolognesi** (Crossing of the Five Bolognese Valleys) winds along the Pliocene Foothills (page 60) reaching the most interesting villages of the Bolognese mid-Apennines, from Rocca di Badolo with its climbing face, to Monte Adone with beautiful sandstone towers, from Livergnano with its War Museum, to Monte delle Formiche (page 120). We close the crossing in Monterenzio, Celt and Etruscan land. You can do this trekking on foot or cycling in two days.

Info: Sistema Turistico Valli Bolognesi
www.vallibolognesi.it

Crossing of the Five Bolognese Valleys - Monte Adone

Photo by Comunità Montana Cinque Valli Bolognesi

Still in the territory of Monterenzio, in the Sillaro Valley, 15 kms from the Via Emilia, there is an important spa-centre deep in the countryside.

Spas & wellness

Health Spa and Aqua Park

Immersed in the calm of a large natural amphitheatre, the "Villaggio della Salute più" is an oasis of relaxation, sport, culture and wellness. With its thermal systems and numerous services for treatment and physical therapy, the centre, denominated "Terme dell'Agriturismo", is open all year. It looks over the valley and has spa pools which can be both covered and open-air. The adjoining summer complex of the Aqua Park has 14 pools, each with different health and wellness properties. Enriching the offer is Bimbolandia, the first spa park created specifically for children, and the Oasis of Zello, where naturalists can find the ideal environment for complete heliotherapy.

Villaggio della Salute Più

Via Sillaro, 6 - 40050 Monterenzio (BO) - Tel. 051.929791 www.villagiodellasalutepiu.it



Aqua Park of the Villaggio della Salute Più

Private archive





Il Villaggio della Salute Più - Private archive

History and Culture

La Via dei Mulini (Water Mill Route)

In the Savena and Idice Valleys, water mills have for centuries been the reference point for the rural economy. Some mills are still working, others have been restored and turned into private homes, while of others there remains no more than place names. The river water drove the heavy millstones, grinding the grain, chestnuts and even walnuts, extracting an oil used both for food and lighting.

Between Monzuno and Monghidoro, in the Savena Valley, a spectacular path leads to the **Allocco Mill**, perhaps the best known and most representative of the whole area, built in the 19th century on a pre-existing 16th-century structure. Also interesting is the **Molino della Valle**, where Melchiade Benni alternated his work as a miller with the art of violi-



nist. In Monghidoro, in perfect working order and open to visits, there is the **Molino del Mazzone** from 1785, with its ample portico, and, on request, the **Molino di Ca' di Guglielmo** from 1776.

In the territory of San Benedetto Val di Sambro, there is the **Molino di Federico**, in perfect working order and open to visits, and two lovely mills near the Lake of Castel dell'Alpi.

These are only a few examples: many other

mills are dotted along the rivers which flow through these valleys. Various initiatives have grown up around them, including gastronomic ones, which lead visitors on a journey of rediscovery.

Info: Tuttoservizi s.p.a.

Via Matteotti, 1 - 40063 Monghidoro (BO)

Tel. **051.6555132** - Fax 051.6552268

turismo@tuttoservizispa.it

Events

Flower Fair, general market and sale of plants and flowers: April

Celtic Festival, Festival of Celtic culture and customs with dancing and food: September

Chestnut Fair, Sale of chestnuts and polenta: October

Bisano

Bisano Festival, market, gastronomic stalls, musical shows: end of July

MARKET DAY: Sunday

Monzuno

Monzuno is a small centre in the Apennines, whose name refers to Juno (Mons Junonis) and to the sacred aspect of the site since ancient times. At the end of the 15th century, the territory of Monzuno came into the possession of Giovanni II Bentivoglio, Lord of Bologna. The present inhabitation is modern, but the Church of **San Giovanni Evangelista**, restored in 1891, has a surprising Baroque interior.

The greatest value of Monzuno is that it overlooks a stunning valley, rich in natural and historical beauty, enhanced by **Trekking Bologna-Florence** and by the re-discovery of the **Via degli Dei (Route of the Gods)** (page 131), the medieval pilgrims' route, also called the "Via dello Stale" which linked Bologna to Florence.

History and Culture

The County of Bentivoglio

"100 bushels of wheat, 10 pairs of capons, 10 goats, 10 chickens and an ample collection of cheeses: this was the annual rent for the territory of Monzuno in 1471. At that time the village, together with Scascoli and Ripoli, sold or donated its farm produce to the Lord of Bologna, **Giovanni Bentivoglio**, in return for the right to permanent settlement on the land. This agreement exempted the villages from other taxes to the city of Bologna. Justice was administered by emissaries appointed by Bentivoglio."

Renzo Renzi



Giovanni II Bentivoglio

Photo by Provincia di Bologna

Along this trail, not far from Monzuno, there is Monte Venero, a 996-metre summit softened by woods and pastureland, on which it is said there used to be a temple dedicated to the Goddess of love. The Hospice, about a kilometre from Monzuno, however, was built around the year 1000 to offer hospitality to pilgrims bound for Rome. In the period around the Second World War, **Nino Bertocchi**, an important Bolognese painter and art critic, stayed here. Since then, Monzuno has become the destination of numerous other artists, such as Giacomelli and Manzù.

Sport and Active Tourism



Trekking from Bologna to Florence

Over the centuries, various roads have passed over the mountain range, among which the Flaminia Minore, the Via Cassiola, the Via Francesca della Sambuca, the Via dello Stale or Via degli Dei and the Via Montanara. In any case, at the centre of these routes were the two great world-famous cities of Bologna and Florence. Based on historic routes, there is the trekking itinerary from Bologna to Florence, well sign-posted and divided into 7 sections which can be followed by bicycle, on foot or on horseback. From the ancient roads to new trails between the two ancient cities on opposite sides of the Apennines, this is a new proposal for tourism which respects the environment, allowing genuine contact with nature and an understanding of the cultural and gastronomic aspects of Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany. The "Bologna-Florence" trail is illustrated by the guide "Voyage in Italy - Trekking in the footsteps of De Montaigne and Goethe across the Alps (via Spluga) and Apennines (Bologna-Florence)" and is accompanied by tourist packages.

Info and bookings: Tuttoservizi s.p.a.

Via Matteotti, 1 - 40063 Monghidoro (BO)

Tel. **051.6555132** - Fax 051.6552268

turismo@tuttoservizispa.it

www.vallibolognesi.it

The most interesting site in the area is undoubtedly **Montorio**, the seat of an ancient, vast ecclesiastical district. The Pieve (parish) of Montorio, dedicated to San Pietro and containing notable sacred ornaments, had a good 42 parish churches and was second only to that of Monteveglio. A short distance from the town, there is an imposing tower, the Torre di Montorio, dominating the Setta and Sambro Valleys from the peak of a rocky crag. The original building, altered several times, dates back to the 12th century and is next to a second building from the 16th century. The tower still has traces of the original Guelph battlements with the addition of Ghibelline battlements from the 19th century. In the Tower, in the early of the 14th century, the Count Mostarda da Panico lived (page 63). Also near Montorio, there is the **Castello d'Elle**, dating back to the 14th century, and the 18th-century Oratory of San Mamolo.



Gastronomy and Wine

MONTAGNAMICA

and THE ROUTE OF THE BREAD

Via Casaglia, 4 - 40036 Monzuno (BO)

Tel. 051.6773328 - Fax 051.6770144

info@montagnamica.it

www.montagnamica.it

info@laviadelpane.it

In the Bolognese Apennines, you can find the products of the "MontagnAmica breadbasket": meat, salami, cheese, forest fruit, honey, wine and baking produce. Fragrant from the oven and smelling of wood smoke, the tasty local mountain bread, with its high quality and its traditional and cultural value, has become symbolic of the typical flavours of these mountain lands. This bread is the protagonist of a tourist-cultural-gastronomical itinerary - The Bread Route of the Bolognese Mountains - covering the territory of the Bolognese Valleys of the Idice, Savena and Setta.

The basic idea is to recover and valorise biological cereal-farming, so common in the Bolognese Apennine area, through the qualification of the entire process, from the field to the table.

In Brento, there is the **Grotta delle Fate** (Cave of the Fairies), a tectonic cave which owes its name to legends which tell of treasures and mysterious apparitions of ethereal feminine figures suspended in the void over the Savena valley-bottom below the mountain summit. An explanation may lie in the strong currents of air inside the cave, which in certain atmospheric conditions led to the expulsion of clouds of vapour.

Sport and Active Tourism

The "Molino del Pero" Golf Club

Via Molino del Pero, 323 - 40036 Monzuno (BO)

Tel. 051.770506 - molino.golf@tin.it

www.molinodelpero.it

Created in 1991, it proposes a highly technical course, extremely enjoyable even for the most expert. The ascent to the first holes, rising steeply from the Savena Valley, has often been mentioned in international magazines as "The stairway to heaven".

Technical Data: 18 holes, 300 mts a.s.l.



Mountain Bread - Photo by Dioteca Agricoltura della Regione Emilia-Romagna - Fabrizio Dell'Aquila

Remarkable is also **borgo Polverara**, that shows two 16th century fortified buildings. Part of the Monzuno territory, it is included in the **Regional Historical Park of Monte Sole** (page 64).

Events

Village Festival: April

MontagnaAperta (Open Mountains): country festival based on bread and typical products from the Bolognese Apennines. Various events and entertainment, open-air sport, folk music and traditional dancing, June

Festival of San Luigi: August

Festival of Monte Venere: August

Chestnut Festival: October

Tartufesta (Truffle Festival): October and November

MARKET DAY: Wednesday in Vado

San Benedetto Val di Sambro

Taking its name from an ancient Benedictine abbey, San Benedetto Val di Sambro comes from the fusion of two important communities held by the noble families of the de' Bianchi, the Counts of Piano, and Rossi di San Secondo, feudal lords of Poggio.

Nature is the main attraction of the area, from the woods of Val Serena and Pian di Balestra to the notable **Lake of Castel dell'Alpi**, 7 kms from the town. The lake is an ideal spot for a trip: originating in 1951 from a landslide which blocked the course of the Savena, its banks are today used for fishing, sunbathing and having picnics. It is also possible to visit two ancient mills, each with a grindstone and large barrels to collect the river water coming down from Monte Oggioli.

Science and Technique

The Monte Galletto Wind-Power Park

In 1998, in the territory of San Benedetto Val di Sambro, the first wind-power park in Northern Italy was set up. The turbines of the **Monte Galletto Wind-Power Park** produce clean energy and contribute significantly to the regional energy requirements. To discover the secrets of this new clean energy production system and for guided visits to the Park, contact the IAT (Tourist Office) of Monghidoro.

But the territory's history is also of great artistic value.

We can start in the centre of **Pian del Voglio**, with its pretty, ancient village centre and Palazzo Comitale with a 15th-century tower, which belonged to the Counts of de' Bianchi, and where there are still beautiful panelled ceilings and a late-16th-century fireplace. In the chapel adjoining the tower, it is worth noting the tombstone of the de' Bianchi, dated 1526. The building hosted the Medici during their exile from Florence and was the residence of Cardinal Lambertini, later to become Pope Benedict XIV. In **Monteacuto Vallesse**, the Palazzo di Poggio Suvizzano is a majestic 16th-century building with the coat-of-arms of the Counts of de' Bianchi on an architrave, dated 1525.

In **Ripoli**, it is worth having a look at the Sanctuary of the Beata Vergine di Serra (1616), in a panoramic position at the confluence of the Brasimone and Setta Valleys.

Not far from there is the railway station of San Benedetto Val di Sambro, whose name is impressed in the Italian memory for the two tragic terrorist attacks which took place there in 1974 on the Italicus train and ten years later on the Rapido 904 train: in total 27 dead and about 150 wounded. In the station, there is the monument to the Italicus by the sculptor Walter Veronesi, and a commemorative plaque in memory of the victims.

History and Culture

The "Direttissima" and the "Great Tunnel of the Apennines"

The "Direttissima" can be defined as the first high-speed rail link between Bologna and Florence. Planned at the turn of the 20th century, it was at the time a highly advanced piece of engineering work. In fact, creating the new line meant excavating the longest tunnel in Italy, the "Great Tunnel of the Apennines": 18.5 kilometres in a straight line. Work started in 1920 and on the 22nd April 1934, the first trains ran along the stretch. Bologna and Florence had never been so close. The cost in human lives for the construction of the "Direttissima" was heavy: 97 workers, of which 65 just for the creation of the Great Tunnel.



Monte Galletto wind-power Park

Photo by Comune di San Benedetto Val di Sambro

Halfway down the left-hand side of the Sambro Valley, S. Andrea stands directly opposite San Benedetto, which can also be reached on foot along a steep path. In the church, there is a painting, the Visitazione, attributed to Guido Reni. The climb to the peak of **Monte Armato** is worth the effort, since there is a wide view over the surrounding valleys.

A crossroads for naturalistic outings and access to the Bologna-Florence trans-Apennine passes, the area of **Madonna dei Fornelli** owes its name to the “fornelli” (stoves) of the charcoal-burners and to the Sanctuary dedicated to the Madonna della Neve. Built in 1638 as an *ex voto* for the end of the Plague, also described by Alessandro Manzoni in *Promessi Sposi*, the apse and façade of the Sanctuary were restored between the 19th and 20th centuries. Inside there is a notable portrait of the Madonna in oil on copper. Every year, the icon is carried in a procession to Castel dell’Alpi, where it remains for eight days before returning to the Sanctuary on the day of the Ascension.

From Madonna dei Fornelli, we reach the 16th-century **village of Qualto**, near which slabs of local sandstone, the remains of an ancient road on Monte Bastione between Bologna and Fiesole came to light.



Qualto

Photo by Comune di San Benedetto Val di Sambro

Sport and Active Tourism

The **Via degli Dei**, (Route of the Gods), a trail which goes from Bádolo and Bologna to Fiesole and Florence in four sections, crosses the central valleys of the Bolognese Apennines as far as the Futa Pass. The route passes Monte Adone, Monzuno, Monte Veneri and Madonna dei Fornelli (San Benedetto Val di Sambro). From the names of these mounts, the origins of the name of the route becomes clear, evoking sacred sites dating back to time immemorial. Evidence of this is an earthenware fragment found in the Setta Valley with an inscription dedicated to “Iuppiter Appenninus”, the Apennine Jupiter of the Celts of Liguria. The Via degli Dei partially follows the ancient Via dello Stale, in use since the Middle ages, whose name comes from a linguistic transformation of “Ospedale”, referring to the Benedictine Hospice of San Salvatore which was built here to offer shelter to travellers. Along the path it is possible to tread the ancient street remains of the *Flaminia militare*, built by Romans in the 2nd century BC. The best conserved ones are near the summit of Monte Bastione (1190 mts a.s.l.), adjoining the quarry where the stone was won to pave this arduous piece of route, unpaved in the remaining part. The trekking is marked out by the VD trail sign and also by the famous “*dau bal zali*” (two yellow balls), which represent the first trail marker of this exciting crossing.

Remarkable is also the village named Cà Musolesi, where there are 15th- and 16th-century architectonic elements and a building, in the past tower-house.

Events

Tartufesta (Truffle Festival): October and November

San Benedetto VS. Fair: end of August

MARKET DAY: Saturday

Castiglione dei Pepoli

We are now in the territory of Castiglione dei Pepoli, rich in chestnut and fir tree woods. The area, on the limits of the Regional Park of the Lakes, has the typical mountain beauty, situated among different summits, all slightly over 1,000 metres above sea level.

The ancient name being “Castiglione dei Gatti”, from the Lombard “gaita” meaning mount, the town was part of the vast possessions of Queen Matilde of Canossa. It was the dominion of the Counts of the Alberti family and then the feud of the **Pepoli family**, who held it for over four centuries. In the 18th century, it even had the right to make coins.

Particularly fascinating, and in some ways unique in the Apennines, is the architectural complex of the main square, in particular the imposing form of the 15th-century **Palazzo Comunale** (Town Hall). Designed by the architect Marchesino di Cento, a guest in 1473 of the Pepoli family, the building was the seat of the local government and so included a jail, commissioner's residence and the Pepoli family quarters. Enlarged in the 17th century with the building of the so-called “Palazzina”, it still today has the frescoes which have embellished the interiors over the centuries.

Art-lovers should not miss the 17th-century Church of the **Madonna della Consolazione**, with important works by the Bolognese School, and the Church of San Lorenzo, built in about 1576 as the Oratory of the Compagnia della Misericordia.



Chestnut wood

Photo by Comune di Castiglione dei Pepoli

Culture and Famous Names

Leo Nucci

A world-famous baritone, Leo Nucci was born in Castiglione dei Pepoli in 1942 into a typical Emilian family of the time, in which everyone sang a little. His father in particular sang in a choir and played in the town band, which Leo joined at nine years of age. Also typical of Emilia is the technique he jokingly said had created and maintained his extraordinary breathing: his passion for cycling! In 1977, he made his debut at the Scala in Milan as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, which together with *Rigoletto*, a role he interpreted about 400 times, became his tour-de-force. Since then he has performed regularly in the most important theatres around the world and has recorded over thirty complete operas with conductors such as Herbert von Karajan, Riccardo Muti and Claudio Abbado. He has also made two films of opera, including a Macbeth presented at the Cannes Festival in 1987. Nominated a UNICEF “Goodwill Ambassador” for Italy in July 2000 and an international opera star, Leo Nucci has maintained strong links with his birthplace, sometimes performing in the events which enliven this tourist location.

Near Castiglione dei Pepoli, it is worth visiting the ancient 17th-century villages of Canova with its Oratory dedicated to San Giusto, Linari with its Oratory built in 1641, and Rasora with its Oratory of 18th-century origins, enlarged in the 19th century with the construction of a bell tower and a small sacristy.

In Monte Baducco, a small village on the peak of a mount overlooking Castiglione dei Pepoli, there are splendid views of the valleys below.

A few kilometres from Baragazza, there is one of the most beautiful places of worship in the Bolognese Apennines: the **Sanctuary of Boccadirio**, the destination of incessant pilgrimages from all over Italy. This 16th-century building is in an enchanting position amidst green forests, at the confluence of two rivers at the foot of Mount Tavianella.

History and Culture

Sanctuary of the Madonna of Boccadurio

The Sanctuary of the Madonna of Boccadurio is on the site where the Madonna appeared to two young shepherds from Baragazza on the 16th July 1480. The original small temple, later enlarged at the end of the 16th century, was substituted in the 18th century by the present building, the work of the famous Bolognese architect Angelo Venturoli. The Sanctuary does not have a bell tower, as tradition recounts that it has never been possible to make the bells since, every time they have been cast, they have immediately disappeared. Legend apart, the façade is by Puccetti, while the portico of the sacristy has been attributed to Dotti, creator of the portico of San Luca in Bologna. The interior, with three naves and three altars at their ends, has paintings and bas-reliefs. An object of particular worship is the Madonna delle Grazie, in fine glazed terracotta by Andrea Della Robbia.

Castiglione is also a land of water: the Setta, Brasimone and Gabellato Rivers run through its territory, while the Lake of Santa Maria, in the **Regional Park of the Lakes** (page 73), is definitely worth an excursion.



Old Church

Photo by Comune di Castiglione dei Pepoli

Sport and Active Tourism

The **Via dei Santuari (Route of the Sanctuaries)** is an excursion journey which leads from Bologna to Prato in 4/7 legs through the Tuscan-Emilian Apennine woods. Its name comes from the 4 sanctuaries we meet along the way: from the Sanctuary of the Madonna of San Luca, on the Guardia hill in Bologna, to the Abbey of Montepiano in the Tuscan territory, passing through the Sanctuary of Montovolo, in the homonymous Provincial Park (page 69), and the Sanctuary of Boccadurio. The full trekking follows about 150 kms of CAI paths and it is distinguished by the VS trail marker.

Nature

The Lake of Santa Maria

From the centre of Castiglione, turning towards the cemetery (where the Old Church is worth a visit), the road descends to the valley-bottom and reaches the electrical power station of Santa Maria. Built in 1911 and destroyed in the Second World War, the station was then rebuilt using local stone, giving it a certain environmental value. The nearby Lake of Santa Maria is very interesting, created by the construction of a dam in 1917. The basin feeds the power station of Le Piane, near Lagora, and takes its name from the ancient Church of Santa Maria di Spinacacqua, no longer existent.



Lake of Santa Maria

Photo by Comune di Castiglione dei Pepoli

Near Castiglione is the **South African Cemetery**, which contains 502 tombs of Commonwealth soldiers, for the most part South Africans: the 6th South African Armoured Division entered Castiglione at the end of September 1944 and it remained on the outskirts until the next April and final breakthrough of the Gothic Line (page 160). The cemetery is always open and has an access for disabled persons by a side entrance.

Events

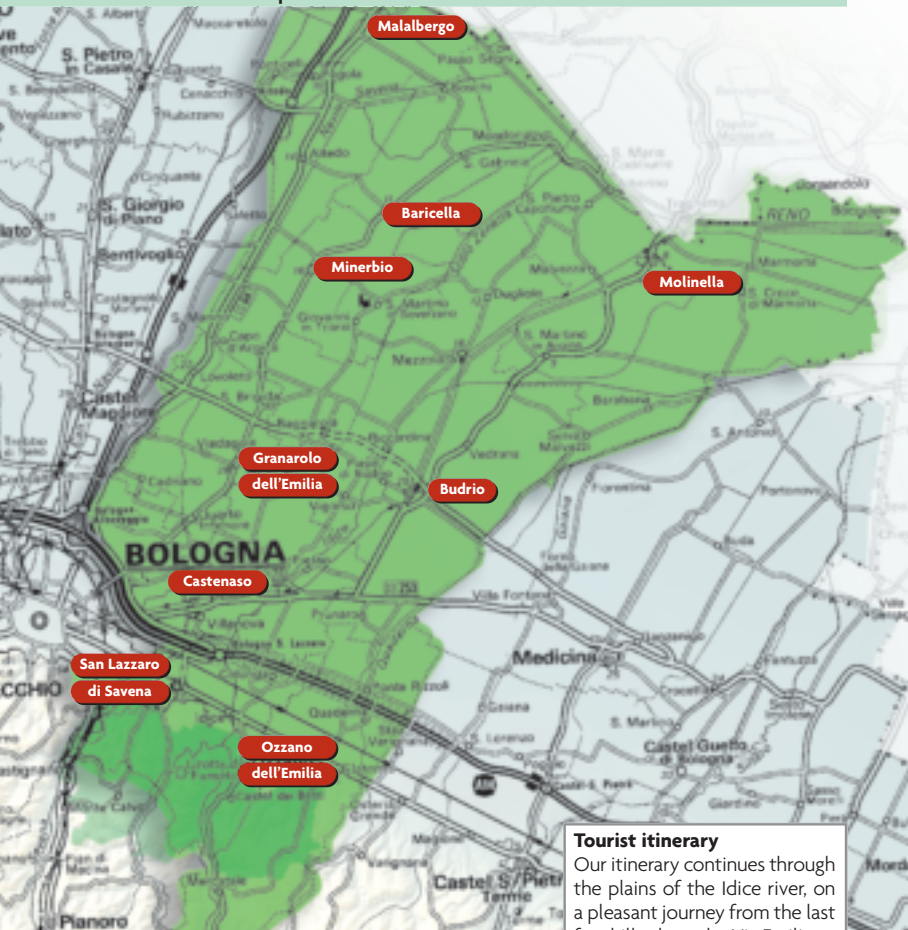
The Portaccia Market : July
Mountain Festival: August
Baragazza Fair: August
Tartufesta (Truffle Festival): October and November

Creda
Farmers' Fair: May
Fair of San Giacomo: July

MARKET DAY: Wednesday

The Bolognese Valleys of the Idice, Savena and Setta

the hills and plains



Not to be missed:

- The Regional Park of Bolognese Gypsums and the Abbadessa Gullies
- The Prehistoric Museum of San Lazzaro di Savena
- The Ocarinas of Budrio
- The museums and historical centre of Budrio
- Bagnarola: the Bolognese Versailles
- The ancient borough of Minerbio and the Rocca Isolani complex
- The cycling route along the San Lazzaro di Savena chalk veins
- The cycle-path alongside the Navile Canal at Malalbergo
- The Castenaso Golf Club
- The valleys and nature reserves of Baricella, Malalbergo and Molinella
- The Green Asparagus IGP of Altedo
- The "Fuori Porta" Market

Tourist itinerary

Our itinerary continues through the plains of the Idice river, on a pleasant journey from the last foothills along the Via Emilia to the Regional Park of the Po Delta.

The Lands of the Idice

- San Lazzaro di Savena
- Ozzano dell'Emilia
- Castenaso

The Plainlands

- Budrio
- Molinella
- Malalbergo
- Baricella
- Minerbio
- Granarolo dell'Emilia

History and Environment

Our journey to discover the plains of the Idice crosses a highly varied landscape: starting in the hills to the south of the Via Emilia, dominated by gullies in the protection of the Regional Park of Bolognese Gypsums and the Abbadesse Gullies, then moving on as far as the valleys of the lower plains. On the northern plains, the term "valley" is used to indicate what is left of the large wooded swampland which used to cover large areas of the western Bolognese plains. Today these have become environmentally-important nature reserves: the most important are the "Val-lazza" in Molinella, "La Comune" in Malalbergo and the "Cassa del Quadrone" in Buda di Medicina, in the territory of Imola. The waters, which we have followed from their springs in the greenery of the Apennines, seem to get lost in these so-called "valleys", despite Man's attempts to control them.

The charm of these lands lies in this mellow atmosphere, which often surrounds genuine artistic jewels, such as the historical centre of Budrio. However, the whole territory holds surprises, thanks to its ancient history: we just have to think that one of its towns takes its name from one of first civilisations on the Italian mainland - the Villanovian culture. In more recent times, these plains have witnessed the extraordinary spread of country residences for the Bolognese nobility, superb examples of which can be found in Minerbio and in the complex of Bagnarola di Budrio, known as the "Bolognese Versailles". And finally in the 20th century, the important battles for workers' rights found expression in the case of Molinella's agricultural workers.

Buon appetito

This area's cuisine is similar to classic Bolognese cooking, making use of some excellent local produce, first among which is the Green Asparagus of Altedo (IGP - a protected species specific to the zone), central to a festival and to the constant search for new dishes combining innovation and tradition. Then there are the DOP Potatoes of Bologna, whose special qualities come from the rich soil of the reclaimed lands of the Idice plains. Budrio is the local capital and as far back as the 18th century, a gastronomic tract illustrated the unusual use of potatoes in Bolognese cooking of the time: in bread, fritters, and even in cream-puffs and tagliatelle. Other typical elements of the territory are the rice of Molinella and, in common with all the northern lowlands, a passion for frogs, fried or stewed, and dishes based on local fish such as pike, catfish and sturgeon.



A product of the area's ample blossom is the Medical Herb Honey, which preserves the typical perfume of aromatic herbs.

How to get here

- The A14 Motorway: exit San Lazzaro di Savena.
The A13 Motorway: exit Bologna-Interporto and Altedo.
- By road:
SS 9 "Via Emilia" in the direction of Imola,
SS 253 "San Vitale" in the direction of Ravenna,
SP 6 "Zenzalino", SP 5 "San Donato".
- By rail: Rimini-Ancona-Bologna-Portomaggiore: stations in Ozzano dell'Emilia, Castenaso, Budrio, Mezzolara, Guarda, Molinella.
- By bus ATC www.atc.bo.it.

Events

Organi antichi offers a not-to-be-missed chance to hear a heritage which is unique in the world: 330 antique organs preserved in churches throughout the Province of Bologna. 110 of these original instruments are kept in the territory of the plains. Important international artists have "touched" these precious instruments, placing the events among the most appreciated in Italy. www.organiantichi.org

Orizzonti di Pianura (Plain Horizons)

Orizzonti di Pianura was set up in 2006 by the Province of Bologna to promote tourism in the Bolognese plains. The Local Councils of Baricella, Budrio, Bentivoglio, Minerbio, Malalbergo, San Giorgio di Piano, San Pietro in Casale and Molinella are involved in a project to promote the plains' particular artistic, historical and natural values through itineraries which can be followed either individually or in guided tours. www.orizzontidipianura.it.

Gastronomy and Wine

The "Fuori Porta" Market

This market was set up to give just value to the agro-alimentary production of the "Plain Lands": a journey which unites the Local Councils of the Association, opening up farms and offering their produce through direct sale to the public, and the chance to stay and even study on farms, as well as presenting historical, cultural and natural elements of the territory. The circuit can be easily recognised by its rainbow logo. Information can be obtained from the local Tourist Offices.

Tourist Information

Baricella - URP

Via Roma, 76 - 40052 Baricella (BO)

Tel. **051.6622423/4** - urp@comune.baricella.bo.it

Opening times:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8am-1pm

Tuesday and Thursday 8am-1pm/3-6pm

Saturday 8-12.30am

Budrio - URP

Pizza Filopanti, 11 - 40054 Budrio (BO)

Tel. **051.6928210** - urp@comune.budrio.bo.it

Opening times:

Monday and Wednesday 8am-6.30pm

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8am-1pm

Saturday 8-12am

Castenaso - URP

Pizza Bassi, 1 - 40055 Castenaso (BO)

Tel. **051.6059239** - urp@comune.castenaso.bo.it

Opening times:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 8am-1pm

Tuesday and Thursday 8am-1pm/2-6pm

Saturday 8-12am

Granarolo dell'Emilia - URP

Via San Donato, 199

40057 Granarolo dell'Emilia (BO)

Tel. **051.6004200/6004111**

urp@comune.granarolo-dellemilie.bo.it

Opening times:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 8am-1.30pm

Thursday 8am-1pm/3-6pm

Saturday 8.30-12am

Malalbergo - URP

Pizza dell'Unità d'Italia, 2 - 40051 Malalbergo (BO)

Tel. **051.6620210** - urp@comune.malalbergo.bo.it

Opening times:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,

Friday and Saturday

8.30-12.30am

Thursday

8.30am-5.45pm

Minerbio - URP

Via Garibaldi, 44 - 40061 Minerbio (BO)

Tel. **051.6611780** - urp@comune.minerbio.bo.it

Opening times:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

and Friday 8.30am-1pm

Thursday 8am-1pm / 2-6pm

Saturday 8.30-12am

Molinella - URP

Pizza A. Martoni, 1 - 40062 Molinella (BO)

Tel. **051.69068333/8002157**

urp@comune.molinella.bo.it

Opening times:

Monday and Thursday 8am-1pm / 3-6pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

and Saturday 8am-1pm

Ozzano dell'Emilia - URP

Via della Repubblica, 10

40064 Ozzano dell'Emilia (BO)

Tel. **051.791376/051.791377**

urp@ozzano.provincia.bologna.it

Opening times:

Monday (in winter) 8am-6.30pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 8am-1pm

Saturday 8-12am

Monday (in summer and at christmas) 8am-1pm

San Lazzaro di Savena - URP

Pizza Bracci, 1 - 40068 San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)

Tel. **051.6228174** - urp@comune.sanlazzaro.bo.it

Opening times:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,

Friday and Saturday 8am-1pm

Thursday 8am-6pm



Prehistoric Museum of San Lazzaro di Savena: Villanovian tomb - Photo by Provincia di Bologna - Vanes Cavazza

San Lazzaro di Savena

San Lazzaro di Savena first developed in the 12th and 13th centuries around a leper hospital founded by the Order of the Knights of San Lazzaro, along the Via Emilia to the east of Bologna. It was actually believed that the wind, blowing in that direction, would also carry diseases away.

In the hills to the south of the county town, it is worth visiting the **Abbey of Santa Cecilia della Croara**. Of medieval origins, its present structure dates back to the 19th century, while the frescoed cloisters still have the 16th-century structure intact. It also houses some very interesting painting, in particular a beautiful altar piece with the infant Jesus attributed to **Annibale Carracci**.

It was here, in the summer of 1915, that the 19-year-old **Filippo De Pisis** stayed, destined to become one of the major 20th-century European painters, as well as being a poet and writer. During his short stay, De Pisis wrote most of the prose-poems later published under the title *Canti de la Croara*.

The hills between San Lazzaro, Ozzano and Pianoro are of karst formation and of exceptional environmental value, so much so that in the heart of these hills, there is the **Regional Park of Bolognese Gypsums and the Abbadessa Gullies**. The Park is full of caves, the most famous of which are the "Farneto" and "Spipola". The "Grotta della Spipola", discovered by the great Bolognese speleologist Luigi Fantini, is the largest European cave to have been dug in chalk, while the "Grotta del Farneto" is famous for the discovery of relics from six thousand years ago, today preserved in the Archaeological Museums of San Lazzaro, Bologna and Budrio. For information about visiting the caves, contact the Park.

Nature

The **Regional Park of Bolognese Gypsums and the Abbadessa Gullies** is a spectacular karst complex: visiting it is like walking on the moon. Even today, in fact, the gypsums create a unique countryside, full of dolinas, closed valleys, vertical caves, and candle-erosion. A real labyrinth, considering that this hilly area is thought to hide entrances to over a hundred caves, including the famous caves of the "Farneto" and "Spipola". A mysterious place, redolent of adventure and mystery, in which the fauna has also evolved to adapt to life in the darkness. Even the water has adapted to life with the gypsums, carving complex underground water-complexes. The most significant example is near the Croara: the Acquafredda river disappears into an abyss and comes back to light nearly three kilometres further on, in a sort of second spring along the River Savena. However, this is also a park of great contrasts. Gentle, cultivated slopes frame more rugged landscape, where nature is wild. Such a case can be seen at the chalk outcrops between Zena and Idice, with the enormous dolines called "dell'Inferno" and "della Goibola", and the closed Ronzano Valley with its selenitic cliffs. The Park also preserves a zone of spectacular, wild gullies known as the "Calanchi dell'Abbadessa", formed of stratified clay, the oldest rocks in the Bolognese Apennines. Here you can also find notable historical evidence, linked in particular to the medieval period and the 16th and 17th centuries.

Park Headquarters, Via Jussi n. 171
40068 S. Lazzaro di Savena (BO)
Tel. **051.6254811**

The Villa Torre Visitors' Centre

Via Tolara di Sopra, 99 - Settefonti
Ozzano dell'Emilia (BO)
Tel. **051.6254821**
info@parcogessibolognesi.it
www.parcogessibolognesi.it



In the territory of San Lazzaro, there are some beautiful Renaissance country villas, in particular, on the Via Emilia, **Villa Cicogna**. Built to a project by the Vignola in the second half of the 16th century by the Boncompagni family, it today hosts meetings and cultural events. **Villa Bellaria** is also 16th-century, situated on the road of the same name, property of the Furla society.

On a chalk outcrop, on the right of the River Idice, there is the ancient village of **Castel de' Britti**: of the original castle belonging to Matilde of Canossa, there remains only the entrance arch in the square in front of the church, while nearby you cannot fail to notice the neo-medieval form of Villa Malvezzi. In the same area, at No. 30 Via Idice, Villa L'Abbadia, previously the Abbey of San Michele, is a centuries-old construction which belonged to the Camaldolesi monks until 1090 and then to the Gaudenti friars in the period of Dante, 1262-1586. Today it is a private residence.



Villa Cicogna

Photo by Bologna Turismo

Sport and Active Tourism

The Cycling Route on the Chalk Veins of San Lazzaro di Savena

Carefully planned routes allow cycling tourists to discover the heart of this extraordinary "green way" which comes down from the source of the Idice and continues to the Po Delta. They are sinuous paths which snake through the river zones and hills, passing through highly varied landscapes which the more you know of them, the more you want to find out about their history and nature, and taste the cuisine. The guide to the Cycling Route is on sale in the Tourist Offices of the territory, where you can also find out about bicycle hire.

www.montesolebikegroup.it



The Park of Bolognese Gypsums and the Abbadessa Gullies

Photo by Comune di Ozzano dell'Emilia



Prehistoric Museum
above, **scene of hunting**
right, **hominid**

Photo by Provincia di Bologna - Vanes Cavazza

Museums

Using innovative exhibition methods, the **Prehistoric Museum** illustrates the most ancient history of the eastern Bolognese territory. The reconstruction of Homo Erectus in the Ancestors' Room and of the great animals of the last Ice Age (the Bison of the Steppes, the Megacero and the Cave-Hyena) present an extraordinary portrait of the life and environment of prehistoric times. This highly original journey into the past is completed with relics from the Iron Age, in memory of Giovanni Gozzadini and the discovery of the Villanovian culture.

THE "LUIGI DONINI" PREHISTORIC MUSEUM

Via Fratelli Canova, 49
40068 San Lazzaro di Savena (BO)
tel. **051.465132** - Fax 051.465132
museodonini@libero.it

Opening Times: in winter (1/10 to 31/5), Monday, Tuesday, Friday 9am-1pm; Wednesday, Thursday 9am-5pm; Saturday and public holidays 9am-1pm and 3-6pm; in summer (1/6 to 30/9), Tuesday-Friday 5-7pm; Saturday and public holidays 9am-1pm.
Tickets: full price € 4, reductions € 2, free to under-14-year-olds.



Events

Verde San Lazzaro, a fair of nature and biological agriculture: 1st Sunday of April
Festival of San Lazzaro: August
Festival of the Madonna della Cintura, at the Farneto Parish Church: early September
Flavours of the Apennines: 1st Sunday of November

MARKET DAY: Saturday

In San Lazzaro in early August, there is the famous festival, the **Fiera di San Lazzaro**, mentioned in a traditional Bolognese song, made famous in a version by Francesco Guccini.

Ozzano dell'Emilia

Continuing along the Via Emilia, we come to Ozzano: in ancient times this was the site of the Roman town of Claterna, whose name is still recalled by the nearby River Quaderna.

Museums

Claterna, the lost city

The territory of Ozzano hides some of the region's most interesting archaeological sites. Around the Via Emilia, halfway between the two great centres of Bononia and Forum Cornelii (Imola), in the Republican and Imperial periods, the Roman city of Claterna flourished. We are now in the area between the modern village of Maggio and the River Quaderna. Nothing of the Roman settlement is left on the surface, but many relics of notable interest have been found here, such as the beautiful pavement mosaics. It is possible to visit the Roman Town Museum of Claterna on request. Same opening times of the public library. Free entrance. Tel: **051.790130**
biblioteca@comune.ozzano.bo.it

Fountain of San Pietro

Photo by Comune di Ozzano dell'Emilia

In the foothills above the area of Maggio, in the **borough of San Pietro**, there is the lovely Torre (tower) which was once part of the walls of a castle built in medieval times to defend the Via Emilia. 200 metres from the nearby Church of San Pietro, it is worth noting the two 15th-century fountains, called "Delle Armi" from the name of the Bolognese family who once had a palace here.

In the area of San Cristoforo stands Palazzo Galvani, the site of numerous electrical experiments in the 18th century by the Bolognese scientist **Luigi Galvani**, carried out on the frogs he bred here.

Also of great interest is the small local church dedicated to Sant'Andrea, containing the remains of the Blessed Lucia of Settefonti. This is the name of the historical character, Badessa (Mother Superior) Lucia, venerated by the Order of the Camaldolesi as the founder of the Order's female branch, and also recalled in the name of the **Park of Bolognese Gypsums and the Abbadessa Gullies**.



History and Culture

The legend of the love between the Knight Rolando and the Abbadessa Lucia

Around 1100, with Bologna involved in the fierce struggle between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, stories about the beauty of Lucia, Mother Superior of the Camaldolese monastery of Stifonti (Settefonti), soon reached the garrisons stationed in the territory. In particular, a soldier of fortune, the Bolognese Count Diatagora Fava, known as Rolando, had himself transferred to San Pietro di Ozzano just to know her. According to the legend, every morning Rolando rode along the path through the gullies leading to the convent of his beloved. The church stood on the ridge not far from the Parish Church of Pastino (built around 1000 on the ruins of a temple dedicated to the God Pan). Lucia soon found herself battling the turmoil his visits provoked. Prayers, vigils and penitence only served to endanger her health. When finally Lucia decided to meet Rolando, they confessed their mutual love for each other, but she did not want to betray her vows and pleaded with

him never to come back. Rolando left on a crusade to the Holy Lands, while Lucia, by now extremely ill, died. In Palestine, the knight was taken prisoner and locked up in a cell. One night, Lucia appeared to him in a dream and told him of her death. When he woke up, Rolando found himself magically free at his beloved's tomb and so copious were his tears that the seven fountains, dry since Lucia's death, began gushing once more. At once, Lucia was venerated as a saint, although the Church only officially recognised the miracle in 1508. After Lucia's death, the convent was moved first to S. Andrea di Ozzano, then in the mid-13th century, into S. Cristina della Fondazza in Bologna. Today the fountains are dry and the original site of the Monastery of Stifonti is indicated by a small pillaster. Since 1573, Lucia's body has been kept in the Church of S. Andrea, where there are also the shackles from Rolando's imprisonment. Since the Middle Ages, the narrow gully which the young knight followed every day to see his beloved has been known as the Passo della Badessa.

In Ciagnano, there is a truly spectacular view of the "calanchi" (gullies) of the **Passo della Badessa**.

Along the "**Stradelli Guelphi**", quiet roads running parallel to the Via Emilia which used to connect castles, churches and noble residences from Bologna all the way to Romagna, stands the neo-classical **Villa Angelica**, today the seat of the homonymous herbal produce Institute.

Not far away, there is the airstrip of the Aerdelta society, which explains the occasional circling over the plains of gliders and small planes. In this area, there is also the National Institute of Wild Fauna.

It is also worth noting the Church of **Santa Maria della Quaderna**, a 16th-century building, containing a valuable nativity scene, the Natività del Somacchini.



Tower of San Pietro

Photo by Comune di Ozzano dell'Emilia

Sant'Andrea

Photo by Provincia di Bologna



In Ozzano, there is the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Bologna.

Museums

The National Institute of Wild Fauna

The Institute holds a collection of about 10,000 samples of birds and mammals: in particular, series of birds of prey, aquatic birds and the Apennine Wolf, remains of birds now extinct in Italy and some particularly rare species. Under construction, there is an informative section which reconstructs some of the natural habitats of these plains.

THE MUSEUM OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF WILD FAUNA

Via Ca' Fornacetta, 9
40064 Ozzano dell'Emilia (BO)
Tel. **051.6512219** - Fax 051.796628
infoszumi@iperbole.bologna.it

Opening Times: by appointment from Monday to Friday. Free entrance.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Created in 1882, an important collection of anatomical samples holds over 2,000 examples of domestic species, conserved using a "dry method". There are particularly interesting skeletons of horses posed in different gaits, myological and vascular specimens, numerous preparations of the nervous system, together with plaster and papier-mâché anatomical models.

THE MUSEUM OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL ANATOMY

Via Tolara di Sopra, 50
40064 Ozzano dell'Emilia (BO)
Tel. **051.2097996** - Fax 051.792956
anatomia@vet.unibo.it

Opening Times: by appointment.
Free entrance.



The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

A collection of veterinary surgical instruments from prior to the 19th century, of notable historical interest, particularly fascinating for the care and precision with which they were created. There is also an interesting collection of horseshoes, evidence of the extraordinary ability of the local blacksmiths.

COLLECTION OF ANTIQUE SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS

Via Tolara di Sopra, 50
40064 Ozzano dell'Emilia (BO)
Tel. **051.2097988** - Fax 051.796892
fedrigo@vet.unibo.it

Opening Times: by appointment. Free entrance.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

The Museum displays over 3,000 specimens of animal pathology. Founded by Giovan Battista Ercolani in 1863 with veterinary specimens from the Chamber of Comparative Anatomy. Genuine works of art are the models in wax, clay and plaster, full-scale reproductions of the damaged interior organs of domestic animals and of animal monstrosities.

THE ERCOLANI MUSEUM OF PATHOLOGICAL ANATOMY AND VETERINARY TERA-TOLOGY

Via Tolara di Sopra, 50
40067 Ozzano dell'Emilia (BO)
Tel. **051.2097000-2097966** - Fax 051.2097967
marcato@vet.unibo.it

Opening Times: guided visits with prior telephone booking. Free entrance.

Events

Festival of the Badessa, street market with music and various shows: May

Festival of the Centonara, antique fair with evening shows, a hobby market and a demonstration of Parmesan-making: July

San Giovanni - Festival of the Patron Saint: 25th June

Agriozzano: itinerant agricultural-based events: every Friday in June
Tortellone Festival: July

Mercatale

Schioppi (rifles) Festival: September

MARKET DAY: Tuesday



Church of Pilar

Photo by Comune
di Castenaso

Castenaso

An important centre on the Bolognese plains, Castenaso stands on the banks of the Idice, along the ancient Via Salaria (today Via San Vitale), connecting Bologna to the salt flats of Cervia.

Here in the 2nd century BC, the Idice divided the encampments of the two opposing armies of the Gauls and the Romans. In command of the latter was Consul Publio Scipione, called Nasica, from whom Castenaso takes its name: originally it was called *Castrum Nasicae*, the encampment of Nasica, which then became Castelnaso and finally Castenaso.

Even more remote are the origins of the town of Villanova, famous for its Iron Age necropolis, the first discovery of the civilization which would consequently be named Villanovan. The promoter of the first archaeological excavations was Count Giovanni Gozzadini, to whom we owe the discovery of a good 179 tombs, rich in objects now conserved in the territory's archaeological museums. The centre of the digs was in **Villa Gozzadini**, dating back to the 16th century. Villanova is today an important commercial centre where the Adriatica Cooperative also has its legal headquarters.

In Marano di Castenaso, there is the **Parish Church of San Geminiano**, whose origins date back to the 12th century. Completely destroyed in the 16th century by the troops of Cesare Borgia, called the Valentino, it was finally rebuilt in neo-Romanesque style in 1929, preserving the 16th-century bell-tower.

Sport and Active Tourism

The Casalunga Golf Club

Via Cà Belfiore, 8 - 40055 Castenaso (BO)
Tel. **051.6050164** - Fax 051.6052186
golfclub@libero.it

The Casalunga Golf Club is a simple, 9-hole plainland course, surrounded by lovely countryside: the course winds around a lake, a paradise for numerous species of migratory birds. Inaugurated in 1993, it requires precise, prudent technique.

Technical data: 9 holes, 3010 m, par 36 + 3 executive holes - par 3., 30 mts a.s.l.

Among the villas of the territory, it is worth mentioning **Villa Marana**, once the property of Maestro Francesco Molinari-Pradelli. The villa has a 17th-century façade and houses the precious Molinari-Pradelli private art collection.

Culture and Famous Names

Francesco Molinari-Pradelli

Born in Bologna in 1911, where he studied piano and composition, Molinari-Pradelli completed his studies in conducting in Rome in 1938. The following year, he made his debut in Bologna with "Elisir d'amore," to great success, beginning an international career which led to performances in all the most important theatres in the world and recordings of various works, mostly from the repertoires of Verdi and Puccini, always with exceptional musicians. A member of the Academy of Santa Cecilia, the Maestro was also well-known as a keen art-collector. He died in Bologna in 1996.

Near the town stands the Church of the **Madonna del Pilar**, built on grounds belonging to the Collegio di Spagna. In the sanctuary's magnificent baroque interior, there is the miraculous image of the Virgin by G. B. Rossignini (1699). In this church, **Gioacchino Rossini** celebrated his second marriage to the soprano Isabella Colbran in 1822. The couple lived for about ten years in a villa next to the church, and it was here that the Maestro composed works such as "Semiramide" and "William Tell". Of Villa Rossignini today there remains only a particular well. Colbran is buried in the monumental cemetery of the Certosa in Bologna, in the company of other great musicians, from Farinelli to Ottorino Respighi.

Events

Grape Festival, antique market and sale of wine-making products: September
Maranofest, beer festival: September

MARKET DAY: Wednesday

Budrio

Our itinerary continues through the “Plainlands” and starts in Budrio, home of the ocarina and rich in monuments bearing witness to its ancient splendour.

While there is still visible evidence of the original Roman and Medieval plans, the historical centre has a lovely 16-18th-century appearance with its traditional porticoes. In fact, it was in the years between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment that Budrio attained its greatest splendour, also economically, thanks to a new technique in hemp production (page 101), which became exclusive exportation in many European countries.

It was in these years of prosperity that many of the most important buildings of the city were built, starting with **Palazzo Boriani Dalla Noce**, now the site of the Public Library, which, together with the Theatre, the Archaeological Museum and the “D. Inzaghi” Art Gallery, is part of a unique cultural heritage.



The “Consorziale” Theatre

The property since 1802 of the “Consorzio dei Partecipanti” (a form of labourers’ cooperative) of Budrio, from which its current name derives, the “Consorziale” was founded in the 17th century as a private theatre in a bourgeois house, Casa Sgargi. Throughout the 19th century, it quite regularly presented shows, particularly in the periods of carnival and the festival of San Lorenzo. During the First World War, it was used as a military barracks and deposit for lime-flowers. From 1920 onwards, it was also used as a cinema and hosted rallies and assemblies: regular speakers here included Quirico Filopanti, Andrea Costa and Aurelio Saffi. Built between 1924 and 1928, the new theatre is bell-shaped, with two galleries supported by slender cast-iron pillars, and a third central terrace. The sober polychromatic and golden decorations, in neo-Classical style, are the work of the painter Armando Aldrovandi. It was inaugurated on the 6th October 1928 with a performance of “La Gioconda” by Ponchielli. With the dissolution of the “Partecipanza” in 1932, the theatre passed into the hands of the local council. Still today it offers rich seasons of prose works, ballets, opera and concerts; in 2005, it hosted the Mozart Orchestra conducted by Claudio Abbado.



Consorziale Theatre - Photo by Provincia di Bologna

Gate and Avenue of a country villa

Photo by Provincia di Bologna

Museums

Palazzo della Partecipanza

Via Mentana, 32 40054 Budrio (BO)

Tel. **051.801220** (Biblioteca)

Tel. **051.6928263** (Ufficio Cultura)

Fax 051.6928289

musei@comune.budrio.bo.it

THE “DOMENICO INZAGHI” ART GALLERY

The Pinacoteca (Art Gallery) contains paintings mostly from Emilia from 1300 to 1700 (Vitale da Bologna, Dossi, Lavinia Fontana, Passerotti, Calvaert and others), a notable collection of prints (etchings by Dürer and Carracci) and drawings by important artists (Guercino, Bigari and Creti).

THE MUNICIPAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL MUSEUM

The Museum contains the archaeological objects discovered within the network of the Roman “centuriation” (land-division system), dating back to the Palaeolithic period (from three villages with a prevalently agricultural-pastoral economy from the 13th century BC), the Iron Age (from the Villanovian necropolis and settlement of Castenaso), and finally, the Roman period: fragments of tableware and kitchen pottery, and large containers for cereal, oil and wine. Opening Times: Sunday 3.30-6.30 pm and by appointment; the first Sunday of each month 10-12.30am.

Tickets: full price € 3, combined ticket for the Archaeological and Palaeo-environmental Museum and the Inzaghi Art Gallery, reductions € 1.50 for 14-18-year-olds and university students with student card, free for under-14s and over-60s, combined ticket for the Museums of Budrio € 5.50.

Museums

MUSEUM OF THE IDICE VALLEY

Tel. **051.692 8306/8322** - fax 051.6928289

musei@comune.budrio.bo.it

Housed in an ex-school built in Neo-Renaissance style in 1922, the Museum focuses on the places and protagonists (both individually and collectively) of the epochal transformations in the territory of the Idice Valley. The Museum also holds temporary exhibitions dedicated to the main innovations of the 20th Century and to the relevant social and economic dynamics in the territory: from mass-communication, in particular the radio, to transport, from the moped to the scooter.

There are many other sights to see, starting with the Church of **San Lorenzo**, restored in the 18th century, with a 15th-century fresco and a 16-17th-century altar-piece. Opposite the church stands the 15th-century **Torre dell'Orologio (Clock Tower)**.

Precious paintings can also be found in the Church of **San Domenico**, founded in 1605 by the Brotherhood of SS. Rosario.

The statue in the middle of the town square shows Budrio's most famous son, Quirico Filopanti: patriot, politician, university lecturer, inventor and astronomer.

Culture and Famous Names

Quirico Filopanti

Giuseppe Barilli was born in Budrio in 1812. His love of the Classics led him to change his name in 1837 to Quirico Filopanti. A multifaceted character, often a genius, Filopanti is remembered for inventing time zones, which he called “longitudinal days”, first presented in 1858 in London, where he was living in exile because of his support for the Roman Republic of 1849. A lecturer of Applied Mechanics at the University of Bologna, he was never appointed Professor due to his refusal to swear allegiance to the crown. A Parliamentary Deputy for the Republican Party until 1892, Filopanti is also recalled for his inspired, visionary genius, which led him to invent instruments to relieve the load of workers (a steam-plough, aqueducts for land reclamation on the plains, etc.), none of which were ever built, however. He died in poverty in Bologna in 1894.



Pinacoteca entrance

Photo by Provincia di Bologna - Vanes Cavazza

A visit to Budrio would not be complete without buying an example of the musical instrument invented right here: **the ocarina**.

Museums

The **ocarina** is a popular musical wind-instrument in terracotta, made in various dimensions, capable of playing concertos in various tonalities. It was invented by a native of Budrio, Giuseppe Donati, in 1853 and was very successful throughout the 19th century, also internationally, so much so that it was even produced in Paris and London. Concerts by early groups of ocarina-players from Budrio were performed for the Tsar and at the Moulin Rouge. Today the ocarina is celebrated in a biennial festival which brings together artists and fans from all over the world.

The Ocarina Museum, the only one in the world, illustrates the evolution of this particular musical instrument, the construction techniques and the traditional musical repertoires, through numerous examples and a rich documentary, bibliographical and audio collection.

THE MUSEUM OF THE OCARINA AND TERRACOTTA MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Via Garibaldi, 35 - 40054 Budrio (BO)

Tel. **051.801220** (Biblioteca)

Tel. **051.6928263** (Ufficio Cultura)

Fax 051.6928289

musei@comune.budrio.bo.it

Opening Times: Sunday 3.30-6.30pm; the first Sunday of each month 10-12.30am.

Tickets: full price € 3, reductions € 1.50 for 14-18-year-olds and university students with student card, free for under-14s and over-60s, combined ticket for the Museums of Budrio € 5,50.



Ocarina

Photo by Provincia di Bologna - Vanes Cavazza

Museums

The **Zanella-Pasqualini, Liliana Perani** and **Cervellati-Menarini** collections bring together over 1,200 objects collected in over twenty years of passionate research into Italian and Asiatic animated theatre: proof of the important regional tradition, a rich collection of marionettes, some of which are genuine works of art, Sicilian puppets from the early 20th Century and an antique, highly rare Neapolitan puppet.

PUPPET MUSEUM

Via Garibaldi, 29 - 40054 Budrio (BO)

Tel. **051.8028263** (Biblioteca)

Tel. **051.6928263** (Ufficio Cultura)

Fax 051-6928289

musei@comune.budrio.bo.it

Opening Times: Sunday 3.30-6.30pm; the first Sunday of each month also 10-12.30am. From October to June, it can also be visited by appointment.

Tickets: full price € 2, reductions € 1.50 for 14-18-year-olds and university students with student card, free for under-14s and over-60s, combined ticket for the Museums of Budrio € 5,50.

Puppet Museum

Photo by Provincia di Bologna



Moving out of the town, 1 km from the centre, we find the Church of **SS. Gervasio and Protasio**, one of the most ancient parish churches in the Bolognese area. The current architectural style of the exterior is the result of 18th-century rebuilding, while evidence of its high-medieval origins can be seen in the Roman and Lombard epigraphs (5th-8th centuries) and above all in the “sunken church”, of which only the apse is now accessible.

There is also a notable Carolingian cross and a baptism font carved from a late-Roman capital, as well as works by the Gandolfi and the School of Guido Reni.

Also worth seeing are the frescoes by the Guardassoni in the church in Vedrana, 5 kms north-east of the county town.

In the village of **Mezzolara**, the 18th-century **Villa Rusconi** stands isolated in an ancient, luxurious park, rich in rare botanical species. Interesting from a naturalistic point of view is also **Valle Benni**, once a reservoir for the rice paddies, today a protected wetland for flora and for the repopulation of migrant birds.

Finally, a gem which alone is worth a visit. “A delightful place, more charming than any other”, the small area of **Bagnarola** was chosen by some of the most prestigious Bolo-

gnese aristocratic families between the 16th and 18th centuries as the site to build their superb country residences. “The true highlight of all the society of the Bolognese villas”, Bagnarola’s most sensational feature is the Malvezzi-Campeggi complex, called the “**Bolognese Versailles**”. Composed of the Aurelio and Floriano villas, it is in the form of a horse-shoe with long, wide porticoes where a great fair was held. Next to this, there is Palazzo Odorici, called Palazzo di Sopra (Upper Palace), with a corresponding villa to the north, the Palazzo di Sotto (Lower Palace), a 16th-century villa which Count Ferdinando Ranuzzi-Cospi rebuilt in the 18th century, giving it its present appearance, with a splendid three-arched loggia. Aligned along its sides, there are two porticoed farm buildings. Two elegant, identical church façades complete the scene: the first is a real chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption, while the second hides a large underground larder. Villa Ranuzzi-Cospi is today the seat of the re-born “Notturmi” Literary Academy. The Bagnarola villas can only be visited when there are special events.



Bagnarola Villa - Photo by Regione Emilia-Romagna

Events

Carnival, in Budrio, Vedrana and Mezzolara.
Primaveranda, exhibitions, shows, markets and sports games: April and May
AGRIBU, agricultural and food fair with a health Market of natural and biological produce: September and October
Sport Festival: October
International Ocarina Festival: biennial event (in the spring of odd-numbered years)

Mezzolara

Onion Festival: end of September

MARKET DAY: Tuesday

Molinella



Tower of Santo Stefano

Photo by Provincia di Bologna

Molinella is a town that has always been contested by the land and water. Water here has not only conditioned the geography, but also the economy and culture. In fact, its name comes from the many water-mills which sprung up along the ancient River Idice, which it seems were able to function both when the water flowed down towards the Po at Primaro and when it flowed upstream due to flooding.

The agriculture of these lands is also based around a cereal linked to water: **rice**. Considered too stimulating and a carrier of malaria, it was banned for centuries by the State of the Church and intensive cultivation only began after the introduction of hydraulic systems in the 18-19th centuries.

These changes took on great importance in Molinella with the arrival of the workers' and socialist movements. It is the birthplace of **Giuseppe Massarenti**, who passed from the struggle for the trade unions to the creation of the first prime consumer, production and workers' cooperatives in the region.



Cartography of the Renana reclamation

Photo by Provincia di Bologna

From a historical point of view, Molinella still has some interesting traces of the warlike past of the plains. In the centre of the town, the lovely Tower, the **Torre di S. Stefano** is all that remains of the ancient castle built by the Bolognese to defend the border with Ferrara. Its present appearance is the result of rebuilding in 1404, after Alberto V d'Este, an ally of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, had destroyed it,

Culture and Famous Names

Giuseppe Massarenti

Sent to study at university in Bologna by his chemist uncle, Giuseppe Massarenti came into contact with some of the leading exponents of the radical socialist movement of Emilia and Romagna, in particular Andrea Costa. Defending the rights of the weakest rural classes hit by the agricultural crisis and the capitalist change in the social relationships in the countryside led him, in 1892, to form the Molinella section of the newly-created Italian Workers' Party. In the same year, he founded the League of Resistance in the struggle of farm-labourers in these plains. Elected to the town council in 1895, he later became a provincial deputy and the Mayor of Molinella, and contributed to the election in Parliament of Bissolati, Podrecca and Modigliani, all from the constituency of Budrio-Molinella. Rather than national poli-



tics, Massarenti always preferred local action in favour of the farm labourers and rice-workers of Molinella. In 1896, he created the consumer cooperative of Molinella, one of the

first in Emilia Romagna, which in the following years, provided fundamental economic support for the striking agricultural workers. Discharged as Mayor and forced into exile in Switzerland and San Marino, he never gave up the workers' struggle, for which he became known as the "apostle of cooperation". After the First World War, once more elected Mayor of Molinella, he became the subject of attacks by the Fascists, forcing him to leave

his hometown again and move to Rome. There, he was arrested in 1926 and banished for over seven years. In 1937, he was arrested once more and shut in a Roman psychiatric asylum. At the end of the Second World War, he was finally able to return to Molinella, where he died in May 1950.

History and Culture

The "Mondine"

The word "mondina" (rice-worker) brings to mind a world full of work, passion and songs,

immortalized by the film by Giuseppe De Santis *Riso Amaro*, with Silvana Mangano and Vittorio Gassman. The famous songs of the mondine, called "cantoni", were not only cheerful songs, but also a form of vocal protest. In Molinella in 1883, the first strike of rice-workers in Italy was organized. From then on, this area was the epicentre of large-scale, repeated industrial action, which involved up to a thousand rice-workers. These bitter, long-term strikes to reduce working hours ended in 1912 with the introduction of an eight-hour working day. Another significant event in the struggle happened during the period of Fascism: from the 12th to the 20th June 1944 the rice-workers of Molinella, Medicina, Galliera, Bentivoglio, S. Pietro in Casale, Malabergo, Baricella, Minerbio and San Giovanni in Persiceto joined in the strike called by the clandestine unions. Sixty years after the first strike, their demands were still a kilo of rice, a hot meal at midday and a new bicycle tyre...

along with the rest of the castle, in 1390. Changed into a bell-tower in the mid-16th century, its original merlons have been replaced by a bizarre crowning surmounted by a small four-arched tower which acted as the belfry. A date to be remembered is that of the Battle of the Riccardina - the 25th July 1467, the first occasion of a massive employment of fire-arms.

Leaving the town, there are several areas worth visiting, such as **Selva Malvezzi**, a genuine 14th-century feudal complex belonging to the powerful noble Malvezzi family. Although it was restructured in the 17th century, the complex still has its original appearance. The central 17th-century country house is particularly notable, with its large double-flighted staircase to allow separate access for people and animals, and the Governor's building with its splendid façade enriched by a clock and bell.

San Martino in Argine, mentioned in documents about river traffic dating back to before 1000, was sacked in 1390 by the troops of Gian Galeazzo Visconti. Villa Ghisleri is worth noting, a 15th-century villa whose present appearance came from restructuring by Giuseppe Grabinski, an officer of Napoleon.

In San Pietro Capofiume, there is one of the most important Centres of Meteorological Studies in North Italy. It was here that the record temperature of 1985, the lowest ever in these plains, was recorded: -29°C. Not far away, in Alberino, in 1865 Severino Ferrari was born. A refined poet and literary academic, he was a close friend of Pascoli and the favourite student of Carducci, who also wrote about him in his poetry.

The wet zones, which still survive today as a memory of the once-great “Padusa” (the wild lands of the Po Valley), offer animal-lovers and birdwatchers a genuine paradise, populated by thousands of aquatic birds.

Nature

The **Vallazza** is an 85-hectare area belonging to the “G. Massarenti” Cooperative, on the road from Molinella to Selva Malvezzi. Inside a perimeter of poplars, a thick tangle of marsh reeds surround a vast body of water, full of floating water lilies. It is an ideal habitat for frogs, turtles, grass snakes and other reptiles. Coots, grebes and various species of ducks often nest here and it is not rare to come across majestic herons. The old “maceri” (retting-pits) for hemp are also a biological system of surprising richness, characterized by oaks, willows, reed-thickets and wild flowers.

The **Valle di Marmorta** leads us into the Regional Park of the Po Delta. Following indications for Argenta, we reach the natural reserve of the Argenta vallis, in the territory of Ferrara. These wet zones stretch over 1,600 hectares and include the flood-plains of Bassarone, Campotto and Valle Santa, the remains of the enormous areas created for the flooding of the Idice, Quaderna, Sillaro and Reno rivers.



Rare example of “vite maritata”

Photo by Comune di Minerbo - Elisa Busato

Now, some gastronomic curiosities. Here, in the 18th century, the delicious cake “torta di tagliatelle” was created, while the local rice is the main ingredient of the most classic Bolognese sweet: rice cake. Another typical product of the zone is **White Balsamico Vinegar**, a variant of the more famous Balsamic Vinegar of Modena, obtained by combining wine vinegar and must from white Trebbiano grapes.

Events

Children's Carnival: February and March

Molinella Festival: June and July

Colli and Valli, cycling rally organised by the Molinella Mountain Bike Club: October

San Pietro Capodifiume

Festival of San Pietro: June

San Martino in Argine

Festival of San Luigi: July

Marmorta

Festival of San Vittore: early August

MARKET DAY: Thursday

History and Culture

The Plantations of the Po Valley

Still visible in aerial photographs taken by the Royal Air Force in 1944, the plantations of the Po Valley were a significant feature of the Bolognese countryside for centuries. Using a system of mixed cultivation, long narrow camps of crops alternated with rows of vines supported by trees used as stakes. In ancient times, the stakes were arbustum gallicum, spread throughout the plains by the Romans, who had learnt this plantation method from the Gauls, although it was already practiced by the Etruscans. In modern times, this system proved particularly adaptable to the requirements of sharecropping agriculture, since apart from the specialized industrial cultivation, (hemp and silk), the land had to supply each farm with enough produce to sustain the large families farming there. The stakes at the time were elms and maples, as well as willows and mulberries - the typical trees of the plains.

For lovers of skydiving, Molinella has the largest parachuting centre in Italy, which also has courses and a hire-service of ultralight planes and gliders.

Malalbergo

An ancient river port on the **Navile Canal**, Malalbergo no longer has many of the ancient buildings, most of them having been destroyed during the last world war. Among the exceptions are Palazzo Marescalchi, now the Public Library, and the Casermone, once the seat of the customs house and then of the Gendarmerie, now substantially restructured.

A 14-kilometre cycle-track links Malalbergo with **Altedo**, the world capital of the Green Asparagus. In May, this area becomes the haunt of cuisine-artists and a workshop for taste engineers, the stars of the festival dedicated to the asparagus.

Gastronomy and Wine

The **Green Asparagus of Altedo** has a long, consolidated tradition dating back to the 1920s. After the Second World War, the cultivation of asparagus began to spread and important cooperatives in the territory were created to concentrate on production and commercialization of this particular product, leading to the award in 2003 of the IGP (Protected Geographical Indication) trademark. The Green Asparagus of Altedo is grown in the areas of Anzola dell'Emilia, Argelato, Bologna, Budrio, Baricella, Bentivoglio, Calderara di Reno, Crevalcore, Castello d'Argile, Castenaso, Castel Maggiore, Castel San Pietro, Castel Guelfo, Dozza, Galliera, Granarolo dell'Emilia, Imola, Malalbergo, Medicina, Minerbio, Molinella, Mordano, Ozzano dell'Emilia, Pieve di Cento, Sala Bolognese, San Giovanni in Persiceto, San Giorgio di Piano, San Pietro in Casale, Sant'Agata Bolognese, San Lazzaro di Savena and in parts of the Province of Ferrara.



The Green Asparagus of Altedo is protected by a European trademark, but the tortellino is the venerated lord of Bolognese cooking and Malalbergo becomes its ambassador on occasion of the Tortellino Festival in June.

Gastronomy and Wine

The Tortellino of Bologna

The most classic and imitated of the pasta dishes in the Bolognese gastronomical tradition is without doubt the tortellino. Invented by the chef of Antipope Alessandro V, the "navel of Venus" is made with delicate sheets of egg pasta rolled out by hand, then closed around a filling of pork loin, ham, genuine mortadella of Bologna, egg and nutmeg, according to the recipe registered at the Chamber of Commerce on the 7th December 1974 by the Bolognese delegation of the Italian Academy of Cooking, together with the Export Brotherhood of the Tortellino. Another sign of how seriously eating is taken in these parts. Tradition then dictates that the tortellini are rigorously cooked and served in meat stock. Should one wish to contravene this tradition, one should at least respect it for the cooking in stock. However, this is not a risk when eating in the "trattorie" (traditional restaurants) of the province.



Tortellini of Bologna

Photo by Diateca Agricoltura della Regione Emilia-Romagna
- Fabrizio Dell'Aquila

IGP Green Asparagus of Altedo

Photo by Diateca Agricoltura della Regione Emilia-Romagna
- Luigi Riccioni



Riolo Canal

Photo by Comune di Malalbergo - Tiziana Bertacci

Nature-lovers should take note of the wet zones of two estates, **La Comune** and **La Valle**, nesting grounds for various species of aquatic birds such as herons, stilt-plovers and black storks. Here, in a profusion of hydrophilous woods, you can once more admire plants and animals whose disappearance coincided with that of the old valleys, linked to the cultivation of rice and a marsh herb locally called "erba sala", from which a material is obtained, commonly used in local craftwork to bottom chairs or cover flasks.



Via Tombe

Photo by Comune di Malalbergo - Tiziana Bertacci



La Valle

Photo by Comune di Malalbergo - Tiziana Bertacci

Nature

La Comune and La Valle Nature Reserves

The countryside here is very similar to that of the woods of the ancient plains of the Po Valley. Small swamps, of various depths, full of reed-beds, alternate with strips of dry land with poplars, willows, elms and English oaks. Moreover, in the pond behind the guard's house on the estate of La Comune, there are lotus flowers, a rare example in the Bolognese territory. Herons nest among these reeds and trees. There are numerous "inhabitants" in these lands: among the many species of birds, you can find wild ducks, garganeys, kingfishers, egrets, stilt-plovers, storks, owls and marsh harriers. In recent years there has also been a very welcome return: spoonbills, similar to storks but with particular bills, which had been missing for over thirty years. For several days a year, La Comune also hosts a black stork which stops here to rest and feed during its migration. The Malalbergo Town Council organizes a series of guided visits, allowing nature-lovers to observe, understand and appreciate these wet zones.

Events

Tortellino Festival: first two weekends of June

Birra sotto le stelle (Beer Festival): late June - early July

Evenings on the Navile Canal: first two weekends of September

Altado

Festival of the green Asparagus of Altado: May (3rd and 4th weeks)

MARKET DAY: Saturday in Malalbergo and Altado

Baricella



Gandazzolo Sluice

Photo by Comune di Baricella - Mario Fizzoni

The earliest documents referring to Baricella date back to the first half of the 15th century. Its name comes from the “bargelli”, officials in charge of policing and fiscal controls on the ancient course of the River Savena, once a crossroads for trade with the neighbouring territory of Ferrara.

It is worth visiting the 18th-century Church of **S. Maria di Baricella**, whose origins date back to the 16th century. Inside there is a valuable early 17th-century wooden crucifix, believed by the faithful to be miraculous - in cases of calamity, it used to be exhibited or carried in procession.

At the eastern limit of the town, the **Oratory of San Marco** is a beautiful brick building with neo-medieval terracotta decorations and the interior completely painted with frescoes celebrating Cavaliere Zucchini (whose ashes have been kept here since 1905), an important figure in the modernization of agriculture in these lands.

In the area of Boschi, there is the Church of **S. Maria Laurentana**, containing a beautiful wooden Madonna clothed in fabrics from the time of the original construction, the 17th century, substituted in the 19th century by the present building.

Near the village of San Gabriele, it is also worth noting the Church of **S. Maria del Corniolo**, consecrated in 1530, as can be seen on the plaque in the apse. The altar piece representing the Assumption, remodelled several times, dates back to the early 16th century. Of the decorations from then, there survive two frescoes on the counter-façade, as well as a highly interesting fragment with a floral and anthropomorphic motif, believed to be the work of Amico Aspertini (page 155), who was working in the same period on the decoration of the Rocca Isolani in Minerbio.

It is also worth visiting the **Ecological Readjustment Area of Baricella**, created by the Town Council in the grounds of the Reale Collegio di Spagna, where environmental education activities are organised. As well as numerous species of birds, there is also the chance to see the rare marsh tortoise.



Baricella Oasis

Photo by Comune di Baricella - Mario Fizzoni

Nature

The Baricella Oasis

Walking through the countryside of Baricella, you will notice a sudden change in Via Bocche, interrupting the flat monotony of the plains. This is the Ecological Readjustment Area of Baricella: large meadows interspersed with clumps of trees, rows of saplings, and hedges. On the board at the entrance, there is useful information for visitors and a description of the origins of the area.

Once inside, following the trails indicated, visitors can appreciate the two bodies of water, wet zones created from a flooded meadow and a deeper pond. From within the two observation towers, you can watch the arrival of aquatic birds, the acrobatic flight of dragonflies, or the courting of emerald toads. Occasionally, there are guided visits.

Info and booking: Baricella Town Council.



Oratory of San Marco

Photo by Comune di Baricella - Mario Fizzoni

Events

Fire di Sdazz: 3rd Sunday and Monday of October

MARKET DAY: Friday in Baricella and Monday in San Gabriele

Minerbio



Referred to in antique documents as “Selva Minervese”, it is assumed that the name Minerbio dates back to the Roman period and in particular to the religious cult dedicated to the god Minerva. The Roman presence in the area is confirmed by numerous traces of the “centuriazione” (land-division system) (page 104), still visible today. The official foundation took place in 1231, when the Podestà of Bologna gave Minerbio to a hundred and fifty families from Mantua, with the obligation of residing there and reclaiming the land from the abundant swamps.

Still today the town winds around the old medieval borough and the complex of **Rocca Isolani**, a masterpiece of 16th-century Bolognese architecture, which can only be visited on occasions of special events.



Portico of the historical centre

Photo by Comune di Minerbio - Elisa Busato

The building of the Rocca began in 1403 when the Isolani, given the feud of Minerbio by the Visconti for their help in conquering

Bologna, decided to build a dwelling with an essentially defensive design. Destroyed in 1527 by the Lanzichenecchi as they were marching towards Rome, the Rocca was rebuilt in the mid-16th century as a noble residence, abandoning all the military characteristics of the original construction. An example of the greatest decorative art of the 16th century, the Rocca boasts an interior with an extraordinary cycle of frescoes, the work of the most original painter of his time: **Amico Aspertini**.

Culture and Famous Names

Amico Aspertini was born in Bologna between 1474 and 1475. An original and highly-cultured painter, in a period for Bologna of particularly flat aesthetics along the lines of Perugino and Raffaello, Aspertini maintained an autonomous artistic personality, “in the manner of one who would never be subjected”. Having worked in Rome for Pope Alexander VI, in 1506, with the Francia and the Costa, he created the frescoes of Santa Cecilia in Bologna, followed by those of San Frediano in Lucca. The masterpiece of his mature years was the decoration of three rooms in the Rocca Isolani in Minerbio. His preparatory cartoons for the work are today kept in the British Museum in London. The frescoes in the Astronomy Room in particular, with their illusionistic vision, represent the most significant organic introduction of a taste for painted architecture which would prove so successful in Bologna from the second half of the 16th century onwards. Important works by Amico Aspertini are also kept in the Pinacoteca (Art Gallery) Nazionale in Bologna and in the Churches of San Petronio and San Martino, where he was buried on the 19th November 1552.



Palazzo Nuovo

Photo by Comune di Minerbio - Elisa Busato

Next to the Rocca stands “**Palazzo Nuovo**”, a mid-16th-century work by the architect Bartolomeo Triachini, with a façade featuring the motif of a loggia, which would become a recurrent feature in the Bolognese villas of the time. The large courtyard framing the complex has a very elegant dove-cote, the tower **Colombaia**, attributed to Jacopo Barozzi, called the Vignola. Dating back to 1536, with an octagonal interior plan, it has a helicoidal wooden staircase and a complicated system of small cells created to host over 3,000 nests.

It is also worth visiting the Church of **San Giovanni Battista**, in the town's main street. One of the most beautiful in the county, it was built in the 18th century on a project by the architect Carlo Francesco Dotti. Inside there are some important works, including an *Our Lady of the Sorrows* from the School of Guido Reni, the object of particular popular devotion, tradition wanting that she has on various occasions turned her gaze onto the faithful. There is a noteworthy group of sculptures of the Glory by Giuseppe Mazza, a typical example of high Bolognese Baroque style.

On the road to Budrio, there is a particularly interesting parish church, the **Pieve di San Giovanni in Triario**, probably from the 11th century, still containing an ancient baptismal font, as well as paintings attributed to Daniele da Volterra. It houses the **Museum of Popular Religion**. The parish church is also the setting for a novel by the Bolognese thriller-writer Danila Comastri Montanari, *La Campana dell'Arciprete* (The Archbishop's Bell), a country saga with a murder, set in 1824 at the time of the Pontifical Restoration after the defeat of the Napoleonic dream. In **San Martino in Soverzano** stands the Castle, built in 1411 by the Bolognese Knight Bartolomeo Manzoli. The original building was highly restructured in the 19th century.

However, its rectangular plan, spacious internal courtyard, four defensive towers at the corners and moat underline its twin functions of defence and abode. Now private property, it has a long porticoed walkway leading from the castle into the park, built in 1684 to host an important annual fair, which still today attracts visitors over the first weekend of October.



Castle and Portico of San Martino in Soverzano

Photo by Comune di Minerbio - Elisa Busato

Events

Nocturnal Carnival: 3rd Saturday of June

Sweet Fair: 3rd Sunday of June

Tagliatella and Musical Band Festival: 1st weekend of July

September Festival: 3rd weekend of September

Thanksgiving Festival: 2nd Sunday of November

San Giovanni in Triario

Country Fair: Easter Monday

San Martino in Soverzano

Festival of San Martino: 1st weekend of October

MARKET DAY: Wednesday

Granarolo dell'Emilia

Granarolo dell'Emilia started out as an agricultural borough at the gates of Bologna and was for centuries the real granary of the city. The long-lasting traces of the Roman "centuriazione" (land-division system) (page 104) are still today the most evident proof of the agricultural vocation of the territory, inhabited since time immemorial due to its position between the territory of Ferrara and the port of Spina.

Tradition recounts that one of the area's most important historical families had its origins here: the **Bentivoglio** family, Lords of Bologna in the 15th and 16th centuries. The founder of the noble family is said to have been born in Viadagola on the 4th May 1252, to a beautiful local peasant-girl and King Enzo of Svevia, a prisoner of the Bolognese.

In Granarolo, it is worth visiting the Church of **San Vitale**, rebuilt in 1682, containing a portrait of San Girolamo attributed to the **Guercino**. Near the church, there is the countryside residence (recently rebuild) of the explorer from Ravenna Pellegrino Matteucci, the first man to cross the African continent from the Red Sea to the Gulf of Guinea. Also in Granarolo, there is **Villa Bassi**, also called Villa del Marchesino, which now hosts events.

In the surrounding countryside, over the 18th century numerous villas sprung up, some of notable architectural interest. Particular examples are **Villa Amelia** in Fibbia, with



Sunset on Granarolo country

Photo by Comune di Granarolo dell'Emilia

rooms decorated in tempera from the 17th century and noted for its "conserva" (pantry), and **Villa Mareschi**, in Lovoletto, with its highly particular double row of centuries-old oaks, about 1 kilometre long, lining the main avenue to the villa.

The present buildings of the five parish churches, one for each of the Town Council's hamlets, date back to the 18th-19th centuries. Perhaps the most notable for its style and frescoes is the Church of San Mamante in Lovoletto. Quite apart from the churches, this territory is characterized by its traditional country oratories. The most important are in Granarolo, Lovoletto and Cadriano.



Oratory of Santa Croce

Photo by Comune di Granarolo dell'Emilia

Events

Verdevolo, market with biological produce and agricultural stalls: end of May
Quarto di Luna, procession of floats and fair: 1st weekend of June
Granarolo Festival: 2nd Sunday of October

Viadagola
Viadagola Festival: 2nd week of June

Lovoletto
Lovoletto Festival: in August and in September

Cadriano
Cadriano Festival: 3rd Sunday of September.

MARKET DAY: Saturday