



# BOLOGNA INSIDE

second edition

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO MAKE BOLOGNA HOME

by the international women's forum of bologna

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## **Bologna Inside, Second Edition (2006)**

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ISBN 88-87569-27-4

## **Bologna Inside, First Edition (2001)**

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ISBN 1-884540-58-9

*Sorprendente. E' questo l'aggettivo più diffuso tra gli stranieri che visitano per la prima volta Bologna. In base ai dati raccolti con la collaborazione delle principali strutture ricettive del territorio, nel 2005 hanno visitato Bologna quasi 1 milione e 400 mila turisti stranieri, il 35% di tutto il turismo registrato in città, mentre la provincia ne ha ospitati oltre 400 mila, con una prevalenza di presenze inglesi e statunitensi e un incremento negli arrivi da parte di turisti di nazionalità tedesca e spagnola. Bologna non è tra le mete più ambite dai visitatori stranieri che approdano nel Bel Paese alla ricerca di storia, di arte, di tradizioni. Eppure, quando per scelta o per pura casualità rientra tra le città da visitare o in cui vivere, gli stranieri non si stancano di apprezzarne vie e monumenti e di rendere omaggio alle sue bellezze, spesso nascoste. Bologna si gusta a poco a poco, sembra accecarti con il rosso deciso dei suoi palazzi storici che brilla al sole del tramonto, ma poi si svela nel tempo, nella sua capacità di accoglienza, nella tradizione libertaria, nel piacere di vivere e di aggregare. Questa guida, poi, ha una particolarità: è rivolta soprattutto alle donne. E' bene sapere che Bologna può vantare molti primati femminili. Qui più del 60% delle donne lavora fuori casa, raggiungendo una delle medie più alte d'Italia e d'Europa. Qui le donne sono state protagoniste attive nella costruzione del welfare locale e nella liberazione della città, come riconosciuto dal monumento al Partigiano e alla Partigiana, unico in Italia nel suo genere, sito a Porta Lame. E' nel solco di questa tradizione che auguriamo a tutte le donne straniere di considerarsi in questa città un po' a casa.*

Surprising. This is the adjective most used among foreigners when visiting Bologna for the first time. According to data compiled with the collaboration of the principal hospitality structures of the territory, more than 1,400,000 foreign tourists visited Bologna in 2005, 35% of all tourism recorded in the city. The Province of Bologna received an additional 400,000 foreign visitors, prevalently British and Americans, as well as an increase in tourists from Germany and Spain. Bologna is not among the most sought after destinations for foreign visitors who arrive in the Bel Paese in search of history, art and tradition. Nevertheless, when by choice or by pure accident foreigners land in Bologna, they never tire of appreciating her streets and monuments and paying homage to her often hidden beauty. Bologna is savored little by little, seeming to blind you at first with the decisive red of her historic buildings shimmering in the light of the sunset, but then reveals herself over time, in her ability to welcome, her libertarian tradition, her love of life and bringing people together. This guide, however, has a peculiarity: it is geared above all toward women. It merits knowing that Bologna leads in many feminine measures. Here more than 60% of women work outside the home, reaching one of the highest averages in Italy and in Europe. Here women were active protagonists in the creation of local welfare and in the liberation of the city, as recognized by the monument at Porta Lame to the Partigiano and Partigiana (male and female partisans), unique in Italy. It is in line with this tradition that we hope all foreign women will find a bit of home in this city.

Simona Lembi

*Assessora alla Cultura e Pari Opportunità della Provincia di Bologna*  
Councilwoman for Culture and Equal Opportunity of the Province of Bologna

The International Women's Forum of Bologna (IWF) was founded in 1998 as a social and professional network for English-speaking women. The defining characteristic of this non-profit association is the diversity of our membership, as we welcome women of all ages, from all nations and backgrounds. It is fundamentally an organization of women helping women, through friendship, support and the transfer of knowledge from the experiences matured while living in our shared, adopted city. It is from this ethos that *Bologna Inside* was first born in 2001, in collaboration with talkaBOut magazine and the city's Comitato per Bologna 2000. It is with gratitude to the creators of the first edition that, five years later, we present *Bologna Inside, Second Edition*.

*Bologna Inside, Second Edition* is in many ways a model for service projects, as it is the product of a cross-sector collaboration between non-profit, private and public entities in our community. Thanks to two years of fundraising activities, including two silent auctions with donations from members and local businesses, the International Women's Forum of Bologna raised the seed funding for the project. This funding is complimented by the generous contribution of the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio in Bologna, as always, a leader in support for cultural initiatives in our territory and by PromoBologna, a local development agency promoting the Bologna metropolitan area.

We are also grateful to sponsors from the private sector, notably a group of five, young Italian women, consultants for Banca Mediolanum, who understood from the early stages how a collaboration between Italian and foreign women could further enrich the project. We are especially appreciative of the patronage of both the Province and City of Bologna and give particular thanks to the Assessorato alla Cultura e Pari Opportunità della Provincia di Bologna, which specifically financed the internet realization of the guidebook, maximizing the number of people who will have access to its content, even before arriving in Bologna. It is a great honor to present the project in the Sala del Consiglio della Residenza Provinciale and we thank Assessora Simona Lembi for this opportunity. I extend personal thanks to colleagues at the European Ramazzini Foundation for their expertise and assistance.

*Bologna Inside, Second Edition* is, of course, the result of the creative contributions of its authors, artists and most of all, Editor Andrea Vogt. What began as an update to the first edition grew into an expanded guide with additional content covering life in the province, preparing for the long term in Italy and more. This edition is enriched by 90 personal vignettes and essays, written by 60 unique authors, a glimpse into the personal experiences of women, foreign and Italian, who have over the years mastered the resources of our city and province.

*Bologna Inside, Second Edition* is dedicated to all the women who came before us and to all the foreigners who will use this guidebook to call Bologna home.

Kathryn Knowles, Project Director  
IWF President 2004-2006

You've chosen a great place to live - a hidden gem in the heart of Italy, an ancient city rich with culture, color and cuisine. But no matter how enchanting your surroundings, moving to another country and adapting to a new culture is a momentous challenge, at times exhilarating and at other times downright difficult. In this second edition of *Bologna Inside*, our aim is to make the frustrating part of the process a little easier by offering practical tips and solid advice about everyday life in Bologna. The book's "inside" information was gleaned from dozens of foreign women who have made Bologna their home over the years and who have chosen to share their experiences in order to help improve yours.

If you are just starting to get to know this city, Bologna's three nicknames, "Bologna La Dotta, Bologna La Rossa and Bologna La Grassa" are a good starting point. Home to the oldest university in Europe, the University of Bologna's esteemed professors and 90,000 students energize an urban environment already steeped in arts and culture, hence the nickname Bologna La Dotta or Bologna the Learned.

The rosy Bolognese clay used for the city's characteristic roof tiles and colorful brick palaces is the obvious rational behind Bologna La Rossa or Bologna the Red, though in recent decades, the nickname's been attributed to the city's "red" political leanings: the election of numerous leftist city councils made it for years a near-impregnable capital of Italian communism (hence the streets honoring Lenin and Marx).

Beneath its bohemian veneer, however, is a pulsing industry of small and medium-sized businesses supporting an affluent way of life, second only to Milan in per capita income for Italian cities. It is however, Bologna's reputation for excellent food, not its material wealth, that earned its reputation as Bologna La Grassa or Bologna the Fat. Widely considered Italy's gastronomical capital, the city hosts numerous cooking schools and more than 500 pizzerie, osterie, trattorie and ristoranti.

Relatively untouched by the mass tourism experienced by her noted neighbors, Florence and Venice, Bologna is the perfect place to experience genuine, authentic Italian living - in an atmosphere open and welcoming to outsiders, but not yet overwhelmed by them. Bologna's central location makes it a convenient hub for visiting the seaside or the mountains, as well as many of Italy's most beautiful cities and towns.

Just as Bologna is an alternative city located off most of the main tourist routes, *Bologna Inside, Second Edition* is not your typical guidebook. It was written for people who come here to make Bologna home, not just for tourists passing through. There's no information about where to get a shower near the train station or how to buy a Eurorail pass. But we have done our best to pique your curiosity about your new home, while giving you the courage, practical know-how and references you need to begin the pleasure of discovering Bologna on your own.

Andrea Vogt, Editor

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*Harriet Walker, Marketing Manager  
Durban, South Africa*



# 1 > PLUGGING IN

## INTRODUCTION

Moving to another country is a delicious thrill, yet the very things that make a new place so exciting also make it daunting when you start to truly make a place your home. You come to Italy enthralled by how ancient everything is - until you bump up against one of the oldest bureaucracies in the world. There may be times when the sheer volume of documents, forms, stamped pieces of paper and special passes you'll need in order to live in Bologna will have you wondering what ever possessed you to come here in the first place. If it's any comfort, you're not alone. Everyone who comes to Italy feels this way at some point. Fortunately, the positive aspects of living here far outweigh the difficulties you may encounter in the beginning. With time, the frustrating and charming aspects of life in Bologna will start to melt together. Had you not been turned away at the immigration office because you lacked the right stamp, you may not have discovered that quaint coffee bar around the corner. Had the bus drivers not been on strike, you may not have stumbled upon that narrow alleyway with the mouthwatering *gelato*.

The bureaucracy's wheels do grind slowly here, but with a little *pazienza*, you will soon be approaching these challenges *con calma* and you'll find that waiting will seem less of an inconvenience and more of an opportunity - a chance to *prendere un caffè*, or *fare un giro*. In the meantime, this chapter will give you some of the specific information you need to begin taking care of paperwork and getting about the basic business of living and orienting yourself in Bologna. *In bocca al lupo!*

## GETTING YOUR BEARINGS

The city's central *Ufficio per le Relazioni con il Pubblico* (Office of Public Relations), commonly referred to as the URP, is located in Bologna's main piazza. Make this your first stop for answers to questions about bureaucratic procedures. If the helpful staff can't answer your questions, they will refer you to someone who can. Even after you've settled in, make it a habit to stop by the URP regularly to get information about what's happening around the city. Many concerts, lectures, guided tours, sports activities, theater, dance and literary events are publicized through the URP.

*pazienza = patience*

*con calma = calmly*

*prendere un caffè = have a coffee*

*fare un giro = take a spin around*

*in bocca al lupo = in the mouth of the wolf = good luck*

*crepi il lupo = may the wolf perish! (appropriate response to in bocca al lupo)*

### **URP Comune di Bologna**

Piazza Maggiore, 6

Tel. 051.2193040

[www.comune.bologna.it/cittadini/urp](http://www.comune.bologna.it/cittadini/urp)

Open Monday-Saturday 8:30-19; Sunday 8:30-14

The Province of Bologna and the Region of Emilia Romagna also have useful information offices and websites.

### **URP Provincia di Bologna**

Via Benedetto XIV, 3

Tel. 051.6598218

Numero verde 800.239754

[www.provincia.bologna.it](http://www.provincia.bologna.it)

Open Monday-Friday 9-13; Thursday 15-17

Note: *numeri verdi* (green numbers) are always toll free.

### **URP Regione Emilia Romagna**

Via Aldo Moro, 52

Numero verde 800.662200

[www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/urp](http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/urp)

Open weekdays 9-13

If you are first familiarizing yourself with the city online, you can find most information about city services, transportation, cultural highlights, etc., on the city's website, [www.comune.bologna.it](http://www.comune.bologna.it). This site is in Italian, but some of the same information is available in English on the Bologna tourist office site at [www.bolognaturismo.info](http://www.bolognaturismo.info) and on [www.hellobologna.bolognafiere.it](http://www.hellobologna.bolognafiere.it).

The Bologna tourist office is another helpful first stop upon arriving in the city. Branches are located in Piazza Maggiore (under the arcades across from San Petronio), at the train station and at the airport. Here you can find information on restaurants, hotels and other lodging, as well as information on current entertainment, museum listings and other local events of interest.

## **CITY NEIGHBORHOODS**

Bologna is divided into nine *quartieri* (neighborhoods or administrative districts). In some of the larger *quartieri*, the neighborhoods are subdivided into *zone* (zones). There are municipal offices in each, called *sede del quartiere* (neighborhood office), where you can take care of administrative issues such as becoming a resident, signing your child up for school, or arranging a parking space for your car. Most of these offices have their own URP where you can get answers to questions about bureaucratic procedures. If you aren't sure in which *quartiere* you live, go to the office nearest you.

## QUARTIERI

### QUARTIERE BORGO PANIGALE

Via M. Emilio Lepido, 25

Tel. 051.6418203 or 051.6418229 or 051.6418231

### QUARTIERE NAVILE

#### **Zona Lame**

Via Marco Polo, 53

Tel. 051.6353611

#### **Zona Bolognina**

Via Saliceto, 5

Tel. 051.4151311

#### **Zona Corticella**

Via M. Gorki, 10

Tel. 051.6329811

### QUARTIERE PORTO

Via dello Scalo, 21

Tel. 051.525811

### QUARTIERE RENO

Via Battindarno, 123

Tel. 051.6177811

### QUARTIERE SARAGOZZA

#### **Zona Malpighi**

Via Pietralata, 58/60

Tel. 051.526311

#### **Zona Costa Saragozza**

Via XXI Aprile, 3

Tel. 051.4390797

*I am a mother of three, homemaker and worker and I live Bologna with great enthusiasm. I marvel almost daily at the number and variety of opportunities available to us. "An embarrassment of riches" is an apt description of our good*

*fortune here. Furthermore, there seems to be an ethos which allows for innovation. This makes me think that there can be a place here for a transplant like me too, now and in the future.*

*Audrey Ellis Saracco*

## QUARTIERE SAN DONATO

Via San Donato, 68

Tel. 051.6337511

## QUARTIERE SANTO STEFANO

### Zona Centrale e Colli

Via Santo Stefano, 119

Tel. 051.301211

### Zona Murri

Via Lamponi, 62

Tel. 051.441311

## QUARTIERE SAN VITALE

### Zona Irnerio

Vicolo Bolognetti, 2

Tel. 051.276111

### Zona San Vitale

Via Rimesse, 1/13

Tel. 051.340868 or 051.302268

## QUARTIERE SAVENA

### Zona Mazzini

Via Faenza, 4

Tel. 051.6279335

### Zona San Ruffillo

Via Toscana, 19

Tel. 051.6235712

## SAFETY

Memorize the following emergency numbers: **112** *carabinieri* (local police); **113** *polizia* (state police); **115** *vigili del fuoco* (fire department); **116** *soccorso stradale* (highway emergency); **118** *ambulanza* (ambulance).

If you want to report a disturbance such as noise, illegal activity or loitering, call the *vigili urbani* (urban police) at 051.266626. If you call to report a loud party or other minor public disturbance, the police may also stop by your house to hear your version of events. The *polizia municipale* (city police) have an informative website in Italian with how-to information on most safety issues: [www.comune.bologna.it/pm](http://www.comune.bologna.it/pm).

## STREET AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

Pick-pocketing is probably the most prevalent street crime in Bologna. Keep in mind that when many people leave the city in August, the crime rate goes up. Be extra careful when closing up your house in this period whether you're going on an extended vacation or

just running down to the *latteria* (dairy). Watch your belongings and keep purses and bags zipped, especially while riding the bus.

Many people avoid walking alone at night in the area around the train station and in some parts of the university district, especially around Piazza Verdi and the end of Via San Vitale, near the gate. At night, the street that runs from Piazza Verdi to Via San Vitale (Via Giuseppe Petroni) is frequently the site of fights and other drug and alcohol-related crime.

Walkers should be aware that motorists rarely stop at pedestrian crosswalks. Always look both ways for traffic before crossing any street, no matter what the traffic signals say. Given the frenetic pace of traffic, you might be wondering how people manage to survive riding a bike around town. Riding with attitude will only get you in trouble. You can try to hog more space in the practically fictitious bike lanes and look menacingly over your left shoulder at the *motorini* (scooters) zipping between you and moving traffic, but by so doing, you risk slamming into something yourself. When motorists roar by, leaving little margin for error, stay calm and use prudence.

## HELP FOR NON-ITALIANS

Help centers for immigrants are listed on the province's website under *sportelli di prima accoglienza* (help desks for new arrivals):

[www.provincia.bologna.it/immigrazione/pop\\_up/sportelli.html](http://www.provincia.bologna.it/immigrazione/pop_up/sportelli.html)

### **Centro Ascolto Immigrati, Caritas Diocesana di Bologna**

Via Rialto, 7/2

Tel. 051.235358

Open Monday, Thursday and Friday 9-11; Tuesday 15-17

Run by the Catholic church.

Quartiere San Vitale has a multi-ethnic information point where foreigners can ask questions about their rights and services in Arabic, French or English.

### **Quartiere San Vitale Information Desk**

Via Rimesse, 1/13

Tel. 051.4296044

Open Tuesday 9-12 and 15-17:30; Thursday 9-12

*When I first arrived in Italy, Telecom Italia offered a voice directory service that one reached by dialing the number 12.*

*Unfortunately, the emergency number to reach the carabinieri is 112. Dialing 112 and asking for the number of a restaurant in broken Italian caused some major confusion as the operator believed I was requesting for*

*officers to rush to the scene of the restaurant! I quickly learned that emergency numbers in Italy have 5 digits, the first of which are 1-1. It is also helpful to know that the national cell phone network is programmed to allow calls to 118 for medical emergencies even if your SIM card is without credit.*

*Kathryn Knowles*

**Numero Verde Stranieri** (toll free number for foreigners): 800.663366

Multilingual healthcare hotline in five languages.

## CONSULATES

You can contact your country's consulate, listed in the yellow pages under *CONSOLATI*.

For addresses of Italian embassies abroad visit: [www.esteri.it](http://www.esteri.it).

Consulates in Bologna include: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Mexico, Morocco, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland and Venezuela.

The closest consulates for the United Kingdom and the United States of America are located in Florence and Milan. See [www.britain.it](http://www.britain.it) (UK) and [www.usembassy.it](http://www.usembassy.it) (USA).

## PLUGGING IN WITH PEOPLE

Newcomers to Bologna occasionally find it difficult to make friends in the beginning. The Bolognese can be reserved and they take some time to warm up to new faces. Many of them grew up here, so don't be surprised when you meet groups of friends who have been hanging out together since elementary school. Taking an Italian course is a great way to meet other newcomers. The International Women's Forum of Bologna welcomes English-speaking women of all nationalities to its meetings and events. Joining a sports club, an association or becoming involved with cultural events are also good ways to get to know people. See Chapter 8: *Tempo Libero*.

Bologna is home to a great many foreign cultural associations, some of which are listed below. Check the yellow pages under *ASSOCIAZIONI* or visit the city's website at [www.comune.bologna.it/cittadino/societacivile/ass\\_culturali](http://www.comune.bologna.it/cittadino/societacivile/ass_culturali).

### **International Women's Forum of Bologna**

[www.iwfbologna.com](http://www.iwfbologna.com)

### **Associazione Italo-Americana "Luciano Finelli"**

Via Belmeloro, 11

Tel. 051.2682825

[www.italo-american.org](http://www.italo-american.org)

### **Associazione Culturale Italia-Austria**

Via Ugo Bassi, 13

Tel. 051.268711

### **Associazione Italo-Britannica**

Via Farini, 35

Tel. 051.221249

[www.italobritannica.com](http://www.italobritannica.com)

### **Associazione Culturale Italo-Brasiliana**

Via Milazzo, 3

Tel. 051.320175

### **Associazione Caribe**

Via F.lli Rosselli, 15/a

Tel. 051.520506

### **Alliance Française**

Via de' Marchi, 4

Tel. 051.581161

### **Istituto di Cultura Germanica**

Via de' Marchi, 4

Tel. 051.225658

[www.istitutodiculturagermanica.com](http://www.istitutodiculturagermanica.com)

### **Associazione Culturale Italia-Israele**

Via de' Gombruti, 9

Tel. 051.232066

### **Centro di Cultura Islamica**

Via Massarenti, 221/7

Tel. 051.6011116

### **Associazione Italia-Olanda-Fiandre**

Via del Monte, 10

Tel. 333.4875099

<http://it.geocities.com/acitafia>

### **Associazione Culturale Italia-Ungheria**

Via Santa Caterina, 55

Tel. 051.331708

*Sure signs you're a straniera*

1) Asking for a cappuccino after 11

2) Drinking a cappuccino with your lunch or dinner

3) Ordering salad before your pasta

4) Putting grated parmesan cheese on your spaghetti alle vongole

5) Wearing shorts downtown

6) Thinking that a bimbo is a dumb blond

7) Cutting your spaghetti with a knife

8) Participating in the Sunday afternoon passeggiata looking like you just rolled out of bed (even if you did)

9) Not asking permesso before entering an apartment

10) Greeting everyone, regardless of their age, social position, or relationship to you, with a cheery "ciao!" instead of the more appropriate buongiorno, buonasera, or salve

*Julia Culver*

## RELIGION

### ROMAN CATHOLIC

The principal religion in Bologna, as in the rest of Italy, is Roman Catholicism. The city is divided into parishes by street address and you are automatically considered a member of a parish once you move into a neighborhood. You may even receive the church bulletin in your mailbox whether or not you attend church. You will find a complete listing of Roman Catholic churches in the yellow pages under *CHIESE CATTOLICHE*. For a list of non-Catholic churches and religious centers, see *CHIESE E CENTRI DI ALTRI CULTI*.

No Bolognese parish regularly offers Catholic mass in English. Don Francesco Pieri of the University Church San Sigismondo is willing to provide one if enough English-speakers are interested.

#### **San Sigismondo University Chapel**

Via San Sigismondo, 7

Tel. 051.226021

Contact: Don Francesco Pieri

E-mail: [lupus@iperbole.bologna.it](mailto:lupus@iperbole.bologna.it)

### PROTESTANT

Overshadowed by the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant churches in Italy have smoothed over their differences and often worship together. In particular, the Waldensian Church (Italian pre-Reformation church that adhered to the Reformation in the 1700's) and the Methodist Church have joined in a union that is also connected to the Baptist Church in a Federation of Protestant Churches (FCEI). Their agreement extends officially to Presbyterian and Free Churches and unofficially to any Protestants that are looking for a place to worship. As a result, these Protestant churches are often highly heterogeneous and multi-cultural.

In Italy, the word *evangelica* in a church's name indicates that it is Bible-based, not necessarily that it is part of the "evangelical movement" as it is known in Anglo-Saxon countries. In fact, the word *evangelico/a* in Italian is used generally to mean Protestant. The word *protestante* is also used, but not without some confusion: Italian-speaking Roman Catholics sometimes ask self-declared *Protestanti*, "*Ma, cosa protesti?*" (But, what are you protesting?). Although this makes for lively conversation, it does not always clear up the misunderstanding. Evangelical churches are experiencing exponential growth in Italy as in the rest of the world. They are very international and often host English-speaking missionaries even when worship is exclusively in Italian. Churches that can be classified as evangelical are marked with an \*.

New, culturally specific groups are forming spontaneously in churches all over Bologna. If you do not see a group from your denomination, nationality or language here, contact churches through the yellow pages and ask what groups they host. The following is a list of churches and congregations that provide worship services in languages other than Italian.



### **Anglican Church in Bologna**

Contact: Pru Crane

Tel. 051.582891

Alternate Contact: Stephen Williams

Tel. 051.332204

E-mail: [usamed@tin.it](mailto:usamed@tin.it)

Sunday worship services in English, call for details.

### **Bologna Bible Church International\***

Chiesa della Nuova Vita

Via Parisio, 54

[www.bolognabible.org](http://www.bolognabible.org)

Contact: Hertmut "Cas" Casablanca

Tel. 333.9980847

E-mail: [twocasablanca@yahoo.com](mailto:twocasablanca@yahoo.com)

A bible church for the international community sponsored by the Frisco Bible Church of Dallas, Texas. Worship in English held Saturdays at 19:30.

The same church, Chiesa della Nuova Vita, also hosts a Philippine group who worships in Tagalog and English Sundays at 17.

### **Chiesa Cristiana Evangelica La Parola della Grazia\***

Via dei Lapidari, 8

Contact: Mike d'Anna

Tel. 338.4105283

E-mail: [dannamike@tin.it](mailto:dannamike@tin.it)

Part of the International Evangelical Church, Washington DC. Lively evangelical worship services are translated into English. Worship in Italian is held Sunday at 10:30.

### **Chiesa Evangelica della Riconciliazione\***

Via Mascherino, 11/b

Contact: Giacomo Casolari

Tel. 328.2776205

Worship in Chinese and Romanian on Sunday afternoons, call for details.

*When I learned we were moving to Bologna for my husband's job, I naively thought I would be the only English-speaking wife there. But then I was told about the International Women's Forum of Bologna and given a copy of Bologna Inside before*

*moving here and it became my lifeline. What initially began with apprehension and uncertainty, relocating to Bologna then became an exciting opportunity to embrace a new culture with the support of a unique community of women.*

*Christine Ricci*

### **Chiesa Metodista Evangelica di Bologna**

Via Venezian, 1

[www.chiesavaldese.org](http://www.chiesavaldese.org)

Contact: Pastor Sergio Ribet

Tel. 051.239227

E-mail: [bolognametodista@chiesavaldese.org](mailto:bolognametodista@chiesavaldese.org)

Contact for English language worship services: Lisa Gelhaus

Tel. 347.0714343

E-mail: [lisamarie@tin.it](mailto:lisamarie@tin.it)

The Chiesa Metodista Evangelica is an international congregation with firm Italian Protestant roots and is part of the Methodist/Waldensian Union of churches. It hosts many international groups who worship in their own languages (Ukrainian, Korean, Philippino and Ghanaian). Sunday worship services in Italian are held at 11. Worship in English held the last Sunday of each month at 14:30.

### **JEWISH**

The *Comunità Ebraica di Bologna* (Jewish Community of Bologna) is one of 21 members of *L'Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane* (Union of Italian Jewish Communities), which coordinates and promotes the Jewish community nationally.

#### **Comunità Ebraica di Bologna**

Via de' Gombruti, 9

Tel. 051.232066

[www.comunitadibologna.it](http://www.comunitadibologna.it)

Orthodox synagogue. Shabbat services are held Friday at 19:30 and Saturday at 9. Does not offer English worship. Call for information about courses and activities for children.

### **Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane**

Lungotevere Sanzio, 9

Rome

Tel. 06.5803667

[www.ucei.it](http://www.ucei.it)

### **ISLAMIC**

Islam represents the second largest religious group in Italy.

#### **Centro di Cultura Islamica/Moschea An-Nur (La luce)**

Via Pallavicini, 13

Tel. 051.6011116

[www.corano.it](http://www.corano.it)

Open all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday until AISHA prayers. Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings for FAGR prayers and from 11:50 until AISHA.

## JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

### Testimoni di Geova

Via Papini, 7

Tel. 051.4187206

Contact: Peter Fray

Tel. 380.7930675

English services Wednesdays 19:30-21:30; Sundays 10-12:30. Services also held in five other languages.

## RESOURCES FOR GAYS & LESBIANS

The gay and lesbian associations, Circolo Arcigay and Arci Lesbica Il Cassero are good starting points for getting oriented with the city's gay and lesbian culture. As well as being an archive and center for political action, Il Cassero is also a lively night spot.

### Il Cassero/Arcigay/Arcilesbica

Via Don Minzoni, 18

Tel. 051.6494416

[www.cassero.it](http://www.cassero.it)

[www.women.it/arcilesbicabologna](http://www.women.it/arcilesbicabologna)

[www.arcigay.it](http://www.arcigay.it) (national site)

## HANDY REFERENCES

### THE PHONE BOOK

Information is not always where you might expect it to be in the Italian phone book. For example, Bologna's city offices are not listed under "B" for Bologna but under "C" for *COMUNE DI BOLOGNA*. Read the table of contents in the front of the yellow pages or try searching online at [www.paginegialle.it](http://www.paginegialle.it). You can also consult the English yellow pages [www.intoitaly.it](http://www.intoitaly.it), however Bologna listings are limited.

### TUTTO CITTÀ

Tutto Città, a booklet containing detailed maps of the city, is provided by the phone company. Tutto Città is also available online at [www.tuttocitta.it](http://www.tuttocitta.it). Here you can map driving and pedestrian routes in almost any Italian city.

*A few weeks before Easter, don't be surprised when the parish priest comes knocking to bless your house. A holiday tradition, he'll come in and chat for a moment, say a prayer*

*and sprinkle some holy water around before leaving. Some people give the priest a small donation for his trouble. It is acceptable to decline if you want. Simply say, "no grazie."*

*Elizabeth Garvey*

## CLASSIFIED NEWSPAPERS

Bologna's classified newspapers, including Bologna & Bologna and Secondamano, are published weekly and are available at *edicole* (newsstands) everywhere. They come in handy when you want to find an apartment, a job, a language teacher, a used bicycle and much more. If you want to place your own ad, call the number listed on the newspaper.

## PAPERWORK

Most Italians have only one given first name and one given last name that appear in passports and other documents. If you decide to also use your middle name, or a name in addition to your first and last name, be consistent because even the slightest variation on documents can cause snafus in the system.

When processing paperwork, you are usually required to pay a government tax by means of a *marca da bollo* (tax stamp). These stamps are available in *tabaccherie* (tobacco shops), where you may also buy postage stamps.

European Union (EU) citizens are entitled to live, work, go to school and get health coverage in all other EU countries. For EU citizens, many of the documents required of foreigners living in Italy are simple formalities and relatively easy to obtain.

If you are not from an EU country, things can be more difficult. You might find getting your papers in order quite a challenge if you didn't arrange for a work/study visa in your home country before arriving. Many people from non-EU countries must return home and legalize their status before being able to truly settle down. For information about the types of visas available, contact your country's embassy or consulate, one of the offices that offers assistance to foreigners, or the Italian consulate back home.

## PERMIT OF STAY

The *permesso* or *carta di soggiorno* is the first requirement for legalizing your status in Italy. The rules governing permits differ depending if you are a *cittadino/a extra-comunitario/a* (from outside the EU) or a *cittadino/a comunitario/a* (EU citizen). In either case, your first step should be an in-person visit to the URP of the *Questura* (Police Headquarters). Here you can ask for an updated list of the necessary documents required to process your specific type of permit.

### URP Questura di Bologna

Piazza Galilei, 3

Tel. 051.6401575

Tel. 051.6401111 switchboard

[www.poliziadistato.it](http://www.poliziadistato.it) (follow Questure Su Web>Emilia Romagna>Bologna>Stranieri)

## NON-EUROPEAN CITIZENS

After visiting the URP for your list of documents, you will need to telephone the Questura call center to make an appointment to deliver your completed application. The call center has specific hours and the number is often busy, but you must keep trying

until you get through. You will be given a date, time and protocol number for your appointment, potentially months away.

On the day of your appointment, go to the *Sportello Cittadini Extracomunitari* (Non-EU Citizen Office) and check-in with the officer at the front door. Unfortunately, the Questura is a very old-fashioned place and little is computerized. Even with a fixed appointment, you will have to wait outside with no restrooms, seating or other services. If all goes well, you will only repeat this experience once every two years. Once you have been a legal resident for six years, you will then be able to graduate to the *carta di soggiorno*, renewable in five-year intervals.

When you hand in your application you will be given a receipt, indicating a new protocol number. You will use this number to check the city's website at [www.comune.bologna.it](http://www.comune.bologna.it) to learn if your *permesso* is ready for pick up – at least a 60 day wait. If you are a resident of the city, you will then be able to retrieve your document in your local *quartiere* office. Residents of the province have to return to the Sportello Cittadini Extracomunitari during specific hours.

### **Sportello Cittadini Extracomunitari**

Via degli Agresti, 2

Tel. 051.6401780 (call center active Monday, Wednesday and Friday 13:30-18:30; Saturday 8:30-12:30)

Open Monday-Friday 8:30-13 for handing in documents (with appointment); Tuesday and Thursday 15-17 for picking up documents or inquiring about the status of your permit

### **EUROPEAN UNION CITIZENS**

EU citizens may apply directly for a *carta di soggiorno*, a permit renewable every five years. For EU citizens, this paperwork is handled at the *Sportello Cittadini dell'Unione Europea* (EU Citizen Office). Confirm the documents required for this application with the Questura's URP.

If work is your reason for coming to Italy, EU citizens may need to have their employer make a declaration to the CIP - *Centro per l'Impiego* (Center for Employment). For CIP contact information, see Chapter 5: Work.

### **Sportello Cittadini dell'Unione Europea**

Piazza Roosevelt, 22

Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9-13; numbers for turns distributed 8:30-12

*The secret to survival in another country is of course patience and a sense of humor but above all - chattiness! It's amazing how people enjoy talking and especially giving advice, so what you do is talk a lot to everyone about everything. That's how I got the 2-for-1 package deal at the post office. I told the clerk I was sending something to my*

*mom for her birthday and she said why not send something also to your sister? She had noticed the same last name for sender and receiver and thought I was sending the package to a sibling. No, I said I am sending it to my mom. That's how I got lucky and got to send 3 kilograms to my sister for Thanksgiving for free.*

*Peggy Kidney*

## INDIVIDUAL TAX CODE

Getting a *codice fiscale* (individual tax code) is just about the easiest thing you'll ever have to do here, which is good, as you need it for anything having to do with money, including getting paid legally and opening a bank account.

Go to the *Ufficio Entrate* (Income Office) nearest you with your passport and/or *permesso di soggiorno*. See *UFFICI FINANZARI* in the phone book for office addresses and phone numbers. In a matter of minutes you will be given a little card with your own personal tax code stamped on it. If you have any questions about the procedure, call the central information line. The only trick is to make sure that you give your names as written on your passport. There is a website that allows you to calculate your own tax code but you need the official card as well: [www.comuni.it/servizi/codfisc](http://www.comuni.it/servizi/codfisc).

### Ufficio Entrate

Via Marco Emilio Lepido, 178 (branch offices listed on website)

Tel. 051.4131711

Numero verde 848.800444 central information line

<http://emiliaromagna.agenziaentrate.it/site.php?page=home>

## RESIDENCY

You need to become a resident to sign up your child for school and get official working papers, among other things. You apply for *residenza* (residency) through an office in your *quartiere* called the *ufficio anagrafe* (vital statistics office).

Until your residence is official, you will be given a temporary document verifying that you've applied. You can use this document to do things requiring residency, such as applying for health coverage, see Chapter 4: Health.

One or two weeks after you have applied to become a resident, the police will stop by the address listed on your application to verify that you really do live where you said. Put your name by the doorbell, even with a temporary sticker, so they know where to ring. If you're not at home, they will leave a postcard to let you know that they will return. Once the police verify that your paperwork has been completed, notification that your application for residency has been approved will be mailed to you.

## IDENTIFICATION CARD

EU citizens use their *carta d'identità* (identification card) to travel from one EU country to another. Non-EU citizens who become official residents are not granted this privilege, but the identification card is still a very handy document to have. Anyone who asks you for identification will recognize it immediately. Get the identity card at your local *anagrafe*. In Italy, you are required to carry identification with you at all times, and if you don't want to carry your passport, you should at least have your *carta d'identità*. If you are stopped randomly by the authorities (which does happen on the Italian roadways) they immediately ask for this document. Foreigners must also carry a copy of their *permesso di soggiorno*.

## MARRIAGE AND CITIZENSHIP

For information about getting married in Italy, marriage to an Italian citizen and how to apply for citizenship, see Chapter 10: Long Term.

## LEARNING ITALIAN

There are numerous private language schools in Bologna. Ask the URP in Piazza Maggiore or consult the yellow pages under *SCUOLE DI LINGUA* for a complete list. For private lessons, check the bulletin boards in the university district. Below are a few well-established language schools offering Italian for foreigners.

### Centrodidattico Uno

Via Laura Bassi Veratti, 28 (additional location in San Lazzaro di Savena)  
Tel. 051.6236808  
[www.associazionecsa.it](http://www.associazionecsa.it)

### Cultura Italiana

Via Castiglione, 4  
Tel. 051.228003 or 051.228011  
[www.culturaitaliana.it](http://www.culturaitaliana.it)

### Inlingua

Via Milazzo, 5  
Tel. 051.6390330  
[www.inlinguabologna.it](http://www.inlinguabologna.it)

### Istituto Dante Alighieri

Via de' Pignattari, 1  
Tel. 051.226658  
[www.ladante.it](http://www.ladante.it)

For courses that offer home-stay at teachers' private residences, see:

[www.bolognalingua.com](http://www.bolognalingua.com)  
[www.italianoabologna.com](http://www.italianoabologna.com)

*I'd done all the paperwork to become a resident and I was told to expect a vigile urbano to come by my house sometime after 7. Each morning I would wake up at the crack of dawn, dress and lie on the living room couch, anxiously awaiting the vigile. God forbid I be in my pajamas when the inspector came! When the bell finally rang*

*early one morning, I raced to the door. Inspection time! The policewoman stood in the doorway and held out a card for me to sign. Without even looking at me, she waited as I signed it, then left. What an anticlimax! I'd been expecting something more official, a series of difficult questions or something. But that was it.*

*Julie Wade*

If you are studying on your own, the public library in Piazza Maggiore, Biblioteca Sala Borsa, has a huge collection of material on learning languages, see Chapter 2: Essential Services.

The city of Bologna offers free Italian classes to foreigners with a valid *permesso di soggiorno*. Participants are required to take a placement test and most courses meet twice a week. Depending on the teacher, you may be asked to purchase course materials. These courses are also available for intermediate and advanced speakers. Check with the URP in Piazza Maggiore for a list of current course offerings.



## *The Bologna Crane*

*Never let attention wane  
Lest you forget to do the crane.  
When sidewalk should abruptly end,  
Stiffen trunk and forward bend.  
The arcades arching overhead  
Shield sun and rain, it may be said,  
But line your toes and lock your knees  
And crane for passing danger, please.  
Oh, incidentally, might I add,  
Another misadventure to be had.  
The architecture's very fine,  
But you must mind the canine mines.  
Diligently eyes affix  
Uneven walks of stone and bricks,  
Not merely to avoid a stumbling;  
There lie unpleasantries much more humbling.  
Admire towers, columns, and frescos,  
But take care not to be maldestro.  
And here nobody makes a fuss  
Of umbrellas snagged by a passing bus,  
Or motor vehicles brushing your leg;  
It's useless to the authorities beg.  
Just dive for a niche when a car you spy,  
And ogle the architecture by the bye.  
(Indians contend with charging cows;  
in Italy to mechanized humans we bow.)*

*Angela Lorenz © 1998*



*Claudia Calzati, Administrative Assistant  
Bologna, Italy e³ San Juan, Argentina*

## 2 > ESSENTIAL SERVICES

### INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! The most pressing bureaucratic hurdles are behind you and now you are ready to go about the business of daily living. You are in luck – Bologna is known for its high quality of life and efficient city services.

Though the day-to-day routine ticks along fairly smoothly, expect to *fare la fila* regularly, prepare yourself for the occasional *sciopero* and don't be surprised if you blow a fuse by using more than one major appliance at a time. The number of stops you'll have to make to get your essential services up and running may seem daunting, but before you know it, you'll be calling home, paying bills and checking your e-mail.

Once you find your way around town, you'll soon be multi-tasking Italian style, talking on your *telefonino* as you wait in line at the *posta* and reading the paper at the bar with your morning *cappuccio*. Observe Italians closely to learn the tricks of the trade such as squeezing your car into a scooter-sized spot and saying *permesso* as you elbow your way on and off the bus. When in doubt, ask. Your Italian neighbors know the ropes when it comes to dealing with city services and are usually eager to share tips and shortcuts.

### GETTING AROUND (OR NOT)

Bologna is a medium-sized city, but getting around in the congested *centro storico* (historic city center) can be a challenge. Inside the old city walls, bus, bike or foot travel is highly recommended, not only because it is fast and convenient, but also to avoid contributing to Bologna's already troubling pollution problems. The worsening smog has prompted the city government to take various measures to reduce traffic in the city center. Programs have ranged from alternating the circulation of car traffic between odd and even numbered license plates to a total traffic block based on the previous week's air quality. The *centro storico* is considered a ZTL, or *zona a traffico limitato* (limited traffic zone). Entrance into the ZTL is regulated by a video surveillance system called Sirio.

Unless you have a resident pass, you may not drive a car in the ZTL from 7 to 20 any day, including Sundays. Even if you are a resident, there are certain streets in the city, notably the "T" formed by Via Rizzoli/Ugo Bassi and Via dell'Indipendenza, which are always off limits to all private traffic. Sirio's sister system, Rita, controls this access. If caught by Sirio or Rita, you will receive notification of your steep fine by mail. Once you receive the

*fare la fila* = to wait in line  
*lo sciopero* = strike  
*il telefonino* = cell phone  
*la posta* = post office  
*il cappuccio* = slang for cappuccino  
*permesso* = with permission, excuse me

number of your infraction, you can then verify your guilt or innocence by checking the photo on the city's website. A word of caution: it takes several weeks for your infraction notice to arrive by mail and you may find yourself with a heap of fines before you are able to modify your driving route. Sound confusing? It is. Consider taking the bus.

## **BUS**

Buses, while sometimes quite crowded, are a reliable, swift way to get across town, especially the small, red, cross-town *navette* (shuttles). If you're arriving from out of town, Bus #25 is a popular choice for getting into *centro* from the train station.

Bologna's bus service, organized by Azienda Trasporti Comunali or ATC, offers comprehensive coverage of the city and surrounding area. For information about bus routes and free maps, stop by one of the ATC information offices or visit their helpful website. ATC also provides personal assistance with bus routes via their call center.

### **ATC information offices**

Via IV Novembre, 16/a

The kiosk at the intersection of Via Lame and Via Marconi

Piazza Medaglie d'Oro (train station)

Piazza XX Settembre (bus station)

Tel. 051.290290 (active 7-20)

[www.atc.bo.it](http://www.atc.bo.it)

Bus tickets are available in most *tabaccherie* (tobacco shops), newsstands and from red parking machines on the street. Some buses have a ticket machine on board, indicated by a sign in the window. The basic ticket is good for a ride of up to an hour within city limits and you may change buses as many times as you wish during that period. The *extraurbana* (outside city limits) ticket costs slightly more. You may also purchase a City Pass, which is valid for eight rides for the price of six. Ask ATC for information about season passes.

Passengers must validate their tickets upon boarding using machines located in the front and back of the bus. If you ever feel tempted not to punch your ticket, remember that ATC's staff of *controllori* (inspectors) boards buses at random to make sure all passengers have a validated ticket. If you're caught without, you'll be presented with a stiff fine, not to mention feeling humiliated in front of your fellow passengers. If the machine is not working, ask the driver for assistance. Pickpockets sometimes work the buses, so be aware of who's around you and keep an eye on your belongings, especially while standing. Intracity and international bus trips leave from the *Autostazione* (bus station). The Autostazione has a helpful website with information available in English.

### **Autostazione di Bologna**

Piazza XX Settembre, 6

Tel. 051.245400

[www.autostazionebo.it](http://www.autostazionebo.it)

## BIKE

With a bicycle, nothing in Bologna is really more than 15 minutes away from the *Due Torri* (two towers). The classic, gearless, handbrake-style bike is best suited to Bologna's streets and alleys. Since you'll probably be leaving your bike on the street, you should buy something sturdy. Good brakes and working front and rear lights are essential. As bike theft is common in Bologna, it's not a good idea to spend too much or choose anything flashy. Don't be tempted to buy a used bicycle from someone in Piazza Verdi. Most of these bikes are stolen property. It will probably need repairs and you risk having it spotted by its original owner. Ask at bike shops to find used bikes for sale. See *BICICLETTE* in the yellow pages or consult the classified newspapers. You can also check the Piazza Grande association's warehouse of second-hand goods - sometimes it's possible to find reconditioned used bikes.

### Piazza Grande

Via Libia, 69

Tel. 051.342328

[www.piazzagrande.it](http://www.piazzagrande.it)

Spend as little as possible for your bike, but buy the best lock you can find. Bike thieves can break just about any chain around, so your best bet is a metal/titanium type. You can find locks at the *ferramenta* (hardware store).

To promote the use of bikes in the city, the Comune di Bologna provides bikes with baskets for free use from 7-23. Contact ATC for information.

## MOTORINI

One of the most popular forms of transportation in Bologna is the *motorino* (scooter). You don't need a license to drive one unless the horsepower is over 50ccs. To find dealerships selling new and used scooters, check the yellow pages under *MOTOCICLI E MOTOCARRI*. If you buy secondhand, make sure you obtain the *certificato per ciclomotore* (motorcycle permit), which contains technical information you will need to give the mechanic if the bike breaks down. In order to drive your scooter legally, you need to do four things: 1) get a *targa* (license plate); 2) buy insurance; 3) pay a government tax; and 4) wear a helmet. You get your license plate from the *Motorizzazione Civile* (Department of Motor Vehicles).

*Although the idea of a motorcycle or scooter can be scary if you haven't grown up with it, my life changed when I got a scooter - the city opened up and I was free to go anywhere, anytime, especially in the center without*

*worrying about the confusing rules for the car. Safety is important so make sure to wear the correct protective gear and know the rules of the road.*

*Susannab Tillson*

## CAR

Both new and used cars can be found at dealerships, through newspaper ads or sometimes at the car mechanic. For dealerships, see the yellow pages under *AUTOMOBILI*. Small cars are the best at handling the narrow streets and tight parking spaces of the city center.

If you are planning on making monthly payments rather than paying up front, dealers will ask to see a *busta paga* (pay slip) as proof of income. If you do not have a pay slip, you will need to find a co-signer or guarantor who does. Beware of unexpected costs when buying a used car. For example, you must change the name on the *libretto* (title). This title transfer is called *passaggio di proprietà* and it is wise to find out how much this will cost before purchasing the vehicle. One way to do it is through Automobile Club d'Italia, known as ACI, a public non-profit entity that can help you with just about all things car-related. You can also go directly to the Department of Motor Vehicles. You will need to bring proof of insurance, the *libretto* and your *permesso di soggiorno*. Finally, you will have to buy another *marca da bollo* (tax stamp), which you will keep with your *libretto* along with the insurance certificate. The staff at ACI or in your local *tabaccheria* can tell you the current cost (rates change from year to year) and print out a new *bollo* for you.

## INSURANCE

Insurance is obligatory for all types of vehicles in Italy and you must have your original registration papers and proof of insurance with you at all times while driving. There are two basic categories of insurance policies: *bonus-malus*, a premium based on your accident record, or *franchigia*, a policy with a deductible.

If you have a fender-bender, know that the police will only come to the scene if someone is hurt. Getting the details of the accident are up to you. Be sure to get the license plate, brand/model of car and the driver's license number, address and phone number of the other driver. If you and the other party agree on what happened, press to fill out a joint agreement called a *constatazione amichevole* (friendly report), which means the insurance companies will settle the case without any further testimony. Your insurance company will give you a couple of *constatazione amichevole* forms to keep with you in the car. If the two parties disagree, each must present a written summary of events to his or her own insurance company. Insurance companies are listed in the yellow pages under *ASSICURAZIONI*.

## PARKING

Parking in Bologna can be a nightmarish experience, fraught with expensive *multe* (fines) and towing costs for those who park in the wrong spot. If you are a resident in the *centro storico*, contact the *anagrafe* (vital statistics office) in your local *quartiere* for information about getting a parking permit for your neighborhood.

If you are not a resident of the city center, you're best bet is to park in one of Bologna's many official parking lots rather than trying to find a space on the street. There are 18

parking lots connected to public transportation, as well as a host of other smaller ones adjacent to the central pedestrian zones. These are indicated by a blue sign with a white P. The most centrally located large parking lot is under Piazza VIII Agosto. For a list of parking lots, see: [www.comune.bologna.it/bolognaturismo/trasporti](http://www.comune.bologna.it/bolognaturismo/trasporti).

## DRIVER'S LICENSE

Non-residents in Italy can drive legally with their foreign license or an international driver's license. However, within one year of becoming a resident you must acquire an Italian *patente* (driver's license). EU citizens can convert their valid national license to an Italian one without taking the exams. This can be accomplished through ACI but requires some paperwork and can take up to six months.

Italian driver's licenses, which you must have with you while driving, are available to all residents over 18 and are valid for 10 years. A point system regulates your driving status. Each driver starts with 20 points on his or her record. Points are knocked off, depending on the seriousness of the offense, when a driver receives a violation. If you lose all 20 points, your license is revoked and you are required to go back to driving school.

## OBTAINING A LICENSE

For those from non-EU countries, the process of getting a *patente* varies depending on whether there is a mutual recognition agreement in place between your country and the Italian Department of Motor Vehicles. Those from non-EU countries should confirm the details of this arrangement with their embassy, ACI or the Department of Motor Vehicles. Many non-EU licenses can be converted to Italian ones without taking the tests. Others, including those from the United States and Canada, must take a two-part exam to obtain a license. It should be noted that driving without an Italian license after one year of residency is illegal, because your Italian insurance policy will not cover you if you have an accident. The process of getting a license usually takes at least a few months.

There are several steps involved in obtaining the *patente*. First you must apply for the *foglio rosa* (learner's permit). If you do not have a valid license, this permit gives you the right to drive when accompanied by a licensed driver over 25 and is valid for six months. You must take a state-sanctioned eye exam before you can apply. After you have your *foglio rosa*, you must wait one month and a day before taking the thirty question true/false written exam, now available in multiple languages. Within three months of

*Oh my gosh, I tried to think of any possible way to avoid having to take my Italian driving exam. I dreaded this test so much, especially the idea of having to take it in Italian after only residing here for one year...but there was no way out of it. So, I finally signed up for the ACI classes which my husband recommended to me "to help*

*make the process much easier" (which it did, by the way). After a few months of blood (okay, there was no real bleeding involved), sweat and a few tears, I actually passed the exam and proudly held a brand new pink Italian patente in my hand. I tell you, I felt like I had earned a university degree.*

*Kristin Post*

passing the written exam, you must also pass a driving test.

Although it is expensive, most people decide to go to a driving school rather than attempt to prepare for the exams on their own. It is generally accepted that attending a driving school significantly improves one's chances of passing the exams. You can find driving schools in the yellow pages under *AUTOSCUOLE*. ACI can also provide this information. If you pay for the theory course and attend lessons, the instructors will do their best to help you pass by letting you know what kinds of questions to expect. During the driving test, your instructor will sit next to you in the front seat while the examiner sits in the back. He or she may even help you along by surreptitiously telling you to signal, speed up, slow down or change gears. While driving instructors can be very helpful, they also have been known to be critical of experienced drivers with bad habits. As a result, many foreigners find themselves paying for more driving lessons than they thought were necessary.

In addition to a high enrollment fee and road lessons, you will have to pay for your eye exam and *marca da bollo*. It is considered difficult, if not impossible, to prepare for the driving test on your own. If you want to give it a try, this option is referred to as *da privatista* (privately).

Whether you attend driving school or opt to study on your own, practice quizzes are an indispensable study aid. They help you get used to the obscure language and the types of questions you will be asked. The price of your *autoscuola* course usually includes a manual and a book of practice quizzes or you can buy them at Feltrinelli. See this chapter under 'Bookstores.' There is also a website for downloading a freeware program with quizzes: [www.webpatente.altervista.org](http://www.webpatente.altervista.org).

### **ACI – Automobile Club d'Italia**

Via Marzabotto, 2 (branch offices listed on website)  
Tel. 051.3145911  
[www.aci.it](http://www.aci.it)

### **Motorizzazione Civile**

Via dell'Industria, 17  
Tel. 051.6046111

### **CAR SHARING**

Bologna's car share program allows residents with an Italian driver's license to rent out vehicles from a pool of automobiles in all sizes. You must apply and pay a minimal annual fee. Car use is then charged by hour and distance. A satellite program makes cars available almost any time and you are allowed to park and drive in the ZTL. The maximum time allowed to rent a car is four days. Contact ATC for more information. See this chapter under 'Bus.'



## TRAIN

Trains are a reliable and convenient method of transportation in Italy, especially for day trips to nearby cities or if you are commuting from outlying areas. If you have decided to commute by train, consider a monthly pass or multiple-ride ticket. You can find schedules for the national rail system Trenitalia and the regional rail line, Ferrovie Emilia Romagna, in front of many travel agencies and city offices, at the station and on the internet. Ferrovie Emilia Romagna and ATC jointly manage a suburban metro line from Vignola to Bologna Centrale. ATC kilometer-based fares are applied to this service. From Bologna Centrale to Porto Maggiore, a similar service is run by Ferrovie Emilia Romagna. In the latter case, an urban ATC bus ticket will get you as far as Ca' dell'Orbo, then you'll need a kilometer-based train ticket.

### **Trenitalia**

Tel. 892021 (active 24 hours)  
[www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

### **Ferrovie Emilia Romagna**

Numero verde 800.915030  
[www.fer-online.it](http://www.fer-online.it)

### **Suburbana Bologna-Vignola**

Tel. 051.290290 (active 7-21)  
[www.suburbanafbv.it](http://www.suburbanafbv.it)

## AIR TRAVEL

The Aeroporto Guglielmo Marconi (airport code BLQ) is an international airport served by many European and charter airlines. During the summer, there are also direct, long-haul charter flights. Some discount airlines advertise flights to Bologna-Forlì. Note that this is not the BLQ airport, but rather the Forlì one, 45 minutes from Bologna by car or bus.

### **BLQ - Aeroporto Guglielmo Marconi**

Via Triumverato, 84  
Tel. 051.6479615 (active 6:30-21:30)  
[www.bologna-airport.it](http://www.bologna-airport.it)

*Since we live in centro, we decided to join the Bologna car share program rather than deal with parking and the other hassles of owning a car. Now we always have an auto on hand*

*whether we want to drive to the beach for the weekend or just take a spin around the hills. Overall, the costs are much lower than buying a car.*

*Kristi Bailey*

## GETTING TO THE AIRPORT

ATC runs a special service called Aerobus between the airport and the city center, making stops at the train station, Ospedale Maggiore, Via dell'Indipendenza and Via Ugo Bassi. See ATC information in this chapter under 'Bus.'

## TAXIS AND CAR SERVICES

Taxis, pronounced tassi, are not allowed to pick up passengers on the street but must instead line up at taxi stands or respond to radio dispatches. They usually respond quickly and get to their destination without much delay. Legal taxis must be equipped with a fee meter.

### CO.TA.BO – Cooperativa Taxisti Bolognesi (Bolognese Taxi Cooperative)

Tel. 051.372727

### CAT – Consorzio Autonomo Taxisti (Autonomous Taxi Consortium)

Tel. 051.534141

There are also a number of car and driver services. You may be surprised that a dark sedan and well-dressed driver do not necessarily cost more than a regular taxi.

### CoSePuRi

Tel. 051.519090 (active 24 hours)

[www.cosepuri.it](http://www.cosepuri.it)

### C.N.N.

Tel. 051.6646666 (active 24 hours)

[www.autocnn.it](http://www.autocnn.it)

### Saca

Tel. 051.6349444

[www.sacaonline.it](http://www.sacaonline.it)

A list of transportation-related services may be found on the city's website: [www.comune.bologna.it/servizi/trasporti/trasporti.php](http://www.comune.bologna.it/servizi/trasporti/trasporti.php).

## COMMUNICATION & MEDIA

### HOME TELEPHONE

Now that the state telephone company Telecom Italia no longer enjoys a monopoly, the choice of telephone, *telefonino* and internet services can be overwhelming. Although Telecom Italia still has a stronghold over the *telefono fisso* (landline), you now have an extensive choice of providers.

Since phone and internet are closely linked, you may want to investigate the package of overall services that best meets your needs. See this chapter under 'Internet'.

### **Telecom Italia**

Via Oberdan, 20

Tel. 187

[www.telecomitalia.it](http://www.telecomitalia.it)

### **CHEAP CALLS**

Pre-paid international calling cards are a good option for making cheap long-distance calls, especially to other continents. These cards include the Europa and EDICARD, available at the post office and at some *tabaccherie* and grocery stores. Instead of buying an actual card you purchase minutes and are given a receipt with an access number to dial and a PIN code. Calling costs depend if you connect via a local city access number or a toll-free number, both of which are provided to you on the receipt. Calling from a cell phone costs more. This service is offered by SISAL [www.sisal.it](http://www.sisal.it) and EUTELIA [www.edicard.eutelia.it](http://www.edicard.eutelia.it). Updated per-minute price lists are available online. There are also a number of international calling centers around town.

### **CELL PHONE**

Just about anyone over the age of 10 has a *telefonino* in Italy and cell coverage is reliable throughout most of the country. Check the yellow pages under *TELEFONI CELLULARI E RADIOTELEFONI* or *TELEFONIA E TELECOMUNICAZIONI* for cell phone resellers. Although you can sign up for a cellular service contract, most people use prepaid, rechargeable plans. You can recharge your credit at most *Bancomat* (automatic teller machines) or buy a *scheda* (telephone card) at any *tabaccheria*, phone store or bar where you see signs advertising *ricarica* (recharge).

### **INTERNET**

If you want ISDN, ADSL, fiber optic broadband or wireless service, you will need to sign up for a monthly plan with a telephone/internet provider and pay to have the connection installed. If a dial-up connection fits the bill, then you may instead dial into a public service provider such as Iperbole, through the city of Bologna.

*Commuting to Florence from Bologna is not as bad or expensive as it seems. There are at least two fast trains (Eurostar or Intercity) running every hour in either direction daily. And if you travel to Florence at least twice weekly, tickets are much cheaper if you buy a weekly or monthly personal pass. These*

*passes are valid on all Intercity and Eurostar trains without a reservation. However, before boarding a Eurostar train you must validate a separate upgrade ticket called a "Ticket di Ammissione ES per Abbonati IC." Buon viaggio!*

*Molly Bourne*

A selection of service providers is listed below:

[www.alice.it](http://www.alice.it) (service offered by Telecom Italia)

[www.infostrada.it](http://www.infostrada.it) (portal includes ADSL service called Libero and cellular service called Wind)

[www.fastweb.it](http://www.fastweb.it)

[www.tele2.it](http://www.tele2.it)

[www.tiscali.it](http://www.tiscali.it)

## **PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET POINTS**

There are numerous places where you can connect to the internet, either for free or in pay-by-the-hour internet points. Be sure to bring a valid photo ID with you. The URP in Piazza Maggiore offers its Iperbole internet service on a first-come, first-serve sign-up basis. Often you have to reserve a space in advance and your time on the net is limited to an hour. The URP internet point is open Monday-Friday 9-18:30 and Saturday 9-13:30. There is also an internet point and wireless service at the nearby city library, Biblioteca Sala Borsa. The internet point is open Monday 14:30-21:30, Tuesday-Friday 9-21:30 and Saturday 9-19. To use the computers, you must first possess a library card and sign up for a username and password. See this chapter under 'Libraries.'

If you are a member of the Sala Borsa, a university student or university personnel, you may also use the free internet point at the Palazzo Paleotti Sala Borsa extension on Via Zamboni, 25, Monday-Saturday 9-22.

The *Biblioteca Italiana delle Donne* (Italian Women's Library) also offers free internet access, computer training and e-mail accounts to women at its Internet Tea Room. The Internet Tea Room is open to the public Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:30-13:30 and Tuesday and Thursday 14-18. See this chapter under 'Libraries.'

If you need computer assistance in English, visit Net.Arena, a fee-for-service internet point where you can use your own laptop and also fax and copy. The Net.Arena owners will even make house calls for computer assistance.

### **Net.Arena**

Via dè Guidei, 3b

Open 10:30-21:30

## **TELEVISION**

There are three state-controlled television channels in Italy, run by the Rai Group (Rai 1, Rai 2, Rai 3). The Mediaset group, owned by business mogul/politician Silvio Berlusconi, controls most of the nation's private television channels. Theoretically, everyone who owns a television is supposed to pay an annual tax called the *canone RAI*. This goes towards supporting the state-run television system. You will get notice of how to pay the tax when you buy a new television; otherwise, wait for them to track you down.

If you decide you want to buy a satellite dish, look for dealers in the yellow pages under *ANTENNE RADIO-TELEVISIONE*. While satellite television will bring you programs in English, you will also receive 24-hour *calcio* (soccer) and commentary. Note: public, private or satellite, you can't escape the scantily-clad Italian *veline* (dancing girls).

## READING MATERIAL

Bologna has dozens of wonderful bookstores and libraries, with no shortage of reading material available in English. Newspapers are rarely delivered to your doorstep here. Rather, most people read the paper at the bar as they drink their morning coffee or pick up a copy of their preferred paper at a local newsstand. The International Herald Tribune, a subsidiary of The New York Times, is printed in English right here in Bologna. The IHT also has a website: [www.iht.com](http://www.iht.com).

## LIBRARIES

The Bologna city library, Biblioteca Sala Borsa, carries magazines, newspapers and books from all over the world. With its public spaces, unique architecture (underground Roman ruins are visible beneath the transparent floor), caf  s, book shop and a wonderful children's library, the Sala Borsa is a valuable resource and important must-see. The Biblioteca Italiana delle Donne has more than 30,000 volumes, including a large English-language section of books and periodicals related to women. The reading room of the Johns Hopkins University SAIS Bologna Center library has a good selection of foreign and Italian newspapers for browsing.

### **Biblioteca Sala Borsa**

Piazza Nettuno, 3/b

Tel. 051.2194400

[www.bibliotecasalaborsa.it](http://www.bibliotecasalaborsa.it)

### **Biblioteca Italiana delle Donne**

Sala da T   Internet

Ex-Convento di Santa Cristina

Via del Piombo, 5

Tel. 051.4299411

[www.women.it/bibliotecadelledonne](http://www.women.it/bibliotecadelledonne)

### **Johns Hopkins University**

Via Belmeloro, 11

[www.jhubc.it](http://www.jhubc.it)

*Most bookstores in Bologna have an original language section, the biggest is Feltrinelli International in Via Zamboni. Alternatively, there are plenty of UK-based websites delivering to Italy - [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) and [www.play.com](http://www.play.com) are two that I use. Comparison shop on the sites as prices can differ substantially and there is no difference*

*in service. Newspapers and magazines are widely available at the edicole and most are happy to order international magazines and newspapers, just ask! The Sala Borsa in Piazza Maggiore stocks plenty of international press, as well as a wide range of English and other foreign language books and media for all ages.*

*Emily Heurlin*

## BOOKSTORES

*Bologna La Dotta* (Bologna the Learned) is also home to countless bookstores, many of which are highly specialized.

### **Libreria Feltrinelli**

Via dei Mille, 12/a/b/c

Tel. 051.240302

[www.lafeltrinelli.it](http://www.lafeltrinelli.it)

Books are in Italian, but newsstand is international. Open past midnight.

### **Feltrinelli International**

Via Zamboni, 7/b

Tel. 051.268070

Well-stocked with foreign language books and magazines. You can also special order.

### **Modo Infoshop**

Via Mascarella, 24/a

Tel. 051.5871012

[www.modoinfoshop.com](http://www.modoinfoshop.com)

Easy in-store catalogue searching, books in English available on order.

### **Mondadori Multicenter**

Via D'Azeglio, 34/a

Tel. 051.275611

[www.negozimondadori.it](http://www.negozimondadori.it)

Books are mostly in Italian, with a small foreign language section. Contains a multi-media department and is also a licensed Apple reseller.

## MAIL & THE POSTAL SYSTEM

You can avoid going to the post office if all you have to do is send a letter because you can buy *francobolli* (stamps) at any *tabaccheria* and drop your letter in a red postal box. Don't hesitate to ask if you're not sure about postage, as most *tabaccherie* are equipped with a scale and postage charts. The website of the national postal service, Poste Italiane, has explanations of the different options for letters, packages, etc: [www.posteitaliane.it](http://www.posteitaliane.it). You have a range of options for sending letters and packages. *Posta celere* (express mail) is a sure way to send things anywhere in Italy in one day. *Posta Prioritaria* (first class mail) is the fastest way to send letters abroad and within Italy. If you need proof of your letter's arrival at its destination, send it *raccomandata* (registered mail). You can also send it *assicurata* (insured mail), although this significantly slows the arrival of the item. In Italy, you can do a lot more at the post office than mailing. Services such as bill pay are handled at the blue window, Bancaposta. Pensioners pick up their monthly check at the Bancaposta - you'll soon learn to avoid that day of the month.

## UTILITIES

### **WATER AND GAS**

Contact Hera, the city's water and gas authority, to set up new services or to ask questions about your existing contract.

#### **Hera Bologna**

Via C. Berti Pichat, 2/4

Tel. 051.287111

Numero verde 800.999500 for new contracts

Numero verde 800.250101 for existing service

[www.gruppohera.it](http://www.gruppohera.it)

You will get your gas bill every three months. You can pay it at the post office, through your bank's automatic bill pay, or directly at Hera. The authorities only come to read the meter once a year. Periodically, you may be requested by mail to read your meter and send back the reading on a special postcard. If you do not update the information, the authorities will charge you according to the previous year's usage. The difference between your actual usage and what you've paid is calculated at the next meter reading. If they have overcharged you, they give you a credit. If you use more than projected, you'll have to pay the difference, called a *conguaglio*.

### **ELECTRICITY**

The electric company is called ENEL. ENEL services, including initial set-up can be handled by phone, fax and mail.

A standard contract gives you a usage capacity of three kilowatt-hours. This may not be enough to run many electrical appliances at once. To avoid blowing a fuse, use only one major appliance at a time or ask for a higher base consumption level. Bills are sent out every other month. Here too, prepare yourself for the occasional *conguaglio*.

#### **ENEL**

Numero verde 800.900800

[www.enel.it](http://www.enel.it)

*At the little neighborhood post office where I pay all my bills, I have found I can avoid the long lines at the bill-paying sportelli by having something to send at the letter sportello where they will then happily*

*process my bill. I have been known to write a postcard to myself and mail it, just to get in and out quickly. I always marvel at the twenty-five people waiting in line for the other sportelli - don't they know this trick?*

*Stephanie Jurs*

## GARBAGE AND RECYCLING

Hera services all of Bologna with garbage/recycling services and street cleaning. Put regular household trash in the dumpsters located everywhere. Unlike in many other countries, there is no limit on the amount of trash you produce nor is there required sorting. Once you become a resident, go to the *Ufficio Tassa Rifiuti Urbani* (Urban Waste Tax Office) to put yourself on the garbage tax list. Know the exact size of your apartment in square meters as well as any other space such as garage or basement.

### Ufficio Tassa Rifiuti Urbani

Via Capramozza, 15

Tel. 051.203429

In most neighborhoods you can find colorful recycling receptacles known as *campane* (bells). There are also special smaller containers for used batteries. Used or expired pharmaceutical items can be disposed of in collection boxes in the pharmacy. When you need to dispose of furniture or other large items, call Hera and they will give you a specific time and date to leave the items by the dumpster. Nearby the *campane*, you will sometimes also find donation receptacles for used clothing.

## BANKING

*La banca* (bank) is actually an Italian invention - the world's first check was issued in Tuscany where the Medici family was already running an international banking operation in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, Italian banks have been charging customers for their services ever since. Forget about beating the system, you pay the bank to keep your money, sometimes more than they pay you in interest. There's a charge for almost everything, including the postage to send statements. Ask about the fees for online banking, automatic bill pay, checks, credit and debit cards. If someone you know is a customer in good standing at a particular bank (keep in mind it is the specific branch that counts), you might consider using the personal connection as leverage for negotiating. To open a bank account, you will first need a *codice fiscale*, see Chapter 1: Plugging In. Banks are open Monday-Friday 8:20-13:20 and 14:35-16:05; closed weekends and holidays.

There are also some branchless banks, such as Banca Mediolanum, which charge lower fees by offering services via internet, telephone, teletex and personal consultants. For more information see: [www.bancamediolanum.it](http://www.bancamediolanum.it).

## CHECKS AND WIRE TRANSFERS

If you are paid by *assegno* (check) and don't have a bank account, cash it at the bank of issue. Checks drawn on banks other than your own are called *fuori piazza*. Note that *fuori piazza* checks may take up to 12 business days to clear. Use blue or black ink and write *non trasferibile* (non-transferable) on the check.

While checks are mostly for consumer use, most other business is done using a *bonifico bancario* (wire transfer). Employers prefer this payment method, so you will probably be



asked for your account number, national routing number (ABI) and branch codes (CAB). Your bank will give you this information when you open an account. For EU wire transfers you need to know the IBAN number; US transfers use a SWIFT code.

## DEBIT CARDS

*Bancomat* (debit cards) are convenient and worth the fee. They can be used to withdraw money, recharge your cell phone and pay for goods and services. There is no charge to use your *bancomat* to buy goods in Italy, but ask your bank about fees for using it in other countries. You may be charged a fee if you withdraw cash from a machine that does not belong to your bank.

## CREDIT CARDS

Although Italy is largely a cash-based consumer economy, most shops and restaurants accept *carte di credito* (credit cards). It is still a good idea to ask before arriving at the register. Credit cards are arranged through the bank and there is usually an annual fee. Italian credit cards are tied to your bank account, meaning that at the end of the month, your card is paid in full. You can therefore think of your Italian credit card as a short-term loan that comes due in 30 days.

## LOANS

If you are employed, you can ask for a *prestito* (loan) of up to 25,000 euro, paid back in fixed monthly installments from 12 to 60 months. You may *canalizzare lo stipendio*, that is, have loan payments deducted from your bank account after payday. If you are self-employed, you can ask for a *fido* or a *facoltà di scoperto*, a fixed amount at a fixed rate decided by the bank. You will be asked for your income tax records and other proof of assets. As with getting a loan anywhere, having good personal connections can affect whether or not you get a loan and for how much. Ask to speak with the branch director about the interest rate offered. With some negotiation, you may be able to lower the rate a couple of points.

*It is easy to mix up commas and decimal points. Here 5,900 is written 5.900 and the percentage 5.9 % is written 5,9 %. You can change the international setting in your computer's office package to Italian and the comma-decimal function should adjust. Some*

*numbers are handwritten slightly differently as well. The number one is written like a droopy seven and the seven has its stem crossed. Don't write your two with a loop because it could be mistaken for the crossed seven.*

*Andrea Vogt*



*Ann Gagliardi, Teacher/Writer  
Athol, MA, USA*

## 3 > HOUSING

### INTRODUCTION

While many cultures have a national or regional identity, Italians usually define themselves by their native city. Bolognese are no different and tend to stick close to home, looking for *la casa* near parents or in-laws, sometimes even in the same *palazzo*. When young couples are getting started, it is not uncommon for parents to help purchase their first apartment, which helps explain how many Italians get by in this affluent city, where rent can exceed monthly wages.

Culturally, Italians are homeowners and tend to be wary of renting and accruing mortgage debt. However, the thousands of students attending the University of Bologna fuel a substantial rental market, pushing up demand for centrally-located apartments. If student life is not for you, avoid advertisements for a *posto letto*, or you will find yourself sharing a room with one or more young co-eds!

The historical center of Bologna is laid out like the spokes of a wheel from the two towers to the twelve city gates, once connected by a surrounding wall. To get your bearings, why not climb to the top of *Torre Asinelli* for a bird's eye view? Try not to get your hopes up when you see the marvelous rooftop *terrazzi* scattered across town – it is unlikely that these gems are for rent or will be within your budget. Instead, take note how the south and west sides of the city rise into the *colli* and the north and east sides stretch out into the plains. Try counting how many other towers were once a part of the Bologna skyline before being lopped off by a rival family. See if you can identify the Roman cross in the otherwise medieval architecture. Then spend some time walking the city to get a feel for the neighborhoods, keeping an eye out for the words *affittasi* or *vendesi* wherever you go.

### JUST LANDED

Rather than househunting from afar, it is undoubtedly easier to find a home once you have arrived in town. If, however, you would like to get started before you arrive, you'll need to contact a resettlement agency such as Re/Max or ask a local friend to do the legwork for you. If you are interested in buying or selling a house, see Chapter 10: Long Term.

*la casa* = home  
*il palazzo* = building  
*un posto letto* = bed in a shared room  
*i terrazzi* = terraces  
*i colli* = foothills  
*affittasi* = for rent  
*vendesi* = for sale

For temporary housing while you are looking, consider a room in a hotel, residence or *pensione* (no-frills hotel). A list of options in English is available on the Bologna Turismo website: [www.bolognaturismo.info](http://www.bolognaturismo.info). Residences, which have the advantage of a kitchen and living room, often have minimum and maximum periods of stay. Check the yellow pages under *RESIDENCES ED APPARTAMENTI AMMOBILIATI* or visit the site of the association Residence Da Ercole, which rents out a variety of apartments for short stays.

### **Re/Max Relocation**

Via Murri, 39

Tel. 051.6360766

[www.remax.it/about/english/relocation](http://www.remax.it/about/english/relocation)

### **Residence Da Ercole**

Via Vallescura, 23

Tel. 051.300116

[www.bolognaholiday.com](http://www.bolognaholiday.com) (English)

[www.residencedaercole.com](http://www.residencedaercole.com) (Italian)

Bologna also has two youth hostels:

### **L'Ostello Centro Europa Uno**

Via Emilia, 297

San Lazzaro di Savena

Tel. 051.6258352

Includes solarium, sauna, laundromat and handicap-accessible camping area.

### **L'Ostello Due Torri**

Via Viadagola, 5

Tel. 051.501810

Includes sports areas and is also handicap-accessible.

## **THE SEARCH**

The approach to looking for a rental in Bologna is not unlike anywhere else: networking and word-of-mouth often end up being the best ways to find a place. Approach your search from several different directions. Try browsing through the housing listings in the free magazines on stands around town or look for the *offresi* (offering) or *cercasi* (looking for) announcements posted all over the university quarter. You might even consider placing an ad of your own in the classifieds, see Chapter 1: Plugging In.

A word to the wise: if you don't feel confident speaking Italian, try to take someone with you who does. In any case, be sure to show any legal documents to an Italian speaker before signing.

## REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

One way to find an apartment is to browse the various free newspapers and magazines with listings by *agenzie immobiliari* (real estate agencies). These publications come out weekly or bi-monthly and are available throughout the city. Look for titles such as Casa Dove, Gazzetta Immobiliare, Attico and Telecasa. Each agency has a section with most of its available properties. At first, you may think you have to read the magazine ad by ad to see if a particular agency has something that meets your requirements. There is an easier way! Go straight to listings by area (usually in the back) rather than by agency. Everything already mentioned in an agency ad is repeated in this section. This method is especially time-saving if you already have an idea of the neighborhood where you would like to live.

Another method is to visit the agencies in your neighborhood of choice. Once an agency has found you a place, they may also assist you with some of the initial negotiations with your landlord. If you use a real estate agency, you will be expected to pay a finder's fee, usually equivalent to one month's rent. Always ask in advance.

## FLYERS AND NOTICES

As in other cities, students and young professionals share apartments in Bologna and it's not unusual to move in with people you've never met before. If you're not particularly picky about peace and quiet, the student connections can end up being a great way to meet others. If your roommates are from out of town, you may even find yourself alone on the weekends. Most of these arrangements are organized by way of *annunci* (announcements), which you can find tacked up on walls and bulletin boards all over the university district, especially around Piazza Verdi.

Competition for rooms can be fierce. There are people who trawl the university area and remove all the notices for rooms they are interested in, rather than copying the phone number and risk leaving the ad displayed for others. You can also place your own room-wanted notices around the city, but don't count on this method as a reliable option.

## STUDENT RESOURCES

Fortunately, there are several helpful resources for English-speaking foreign students. Your first stop should be the Student Accomodation and Information Service (SAIS) office and their free housing service called *Bussola* (compass). The English-speaking staff can

*It came as a great surprise to me just how expensive the whole process is, from the agency fees to the rent itself - comparable to*

*London or Milan. In true Italian style, anything found by word of mouth or through an introduction is by far the best.*

*Philippa Hoddell*

help with all your housing questions and even arrange for you to view potential apartments. If you want to search the Bussola housing database, you must have a user name and password from the SAIS office. The University of Bologna ARSTUD office manages 18 different university residences in Bologna.

### **SAIS – Student Accomodation and Information Service**

Via Zamboni, 62/b

Tel. 051.254423

[www.sais.ceur.it](http://www.sais.ceur.it)

Open 9-12:30

### **ARSTUD – Agenzia Regionale per il Diritto allo Studio Universitario (Regional Agency for the Right to University Education)**

Via Schiavonia, 3

Tel. 051.6436900

[www.arstud.unibo.it](http://www.arstud.unibo.it)

### **ONLINE LISTINGS**

While finding a place to live is mostly done by pounding the pavement, there are a few websites with databases of available housing in Bologna, most notably [www.2torri.it](http://www.2torri.it) and [www.easystanza.it](http://www.easystanza.it). Both are in Italian only.

### **AU PAIR/LIVE-IN ASSISTANCE**

Some Bolognese families seek an English-speaking *ragazza alle pari* (au pair) to help with children, or a *badante* (caregiver) for the elderly. You can advertise yourself independently, spread the word via contacts, place a classified ad or put up notices.

### **DECIPHERING THE ADS**

The following list will help you decipher the code used to describe apartments for rent.

*Arredato*: fully furnished

This could range from an apartment that is truly furnished with everything, including frying pans, crucifixes and pictures painted by the owner. It could also mean that the apartment is equipped with just the bare essentials: kitchen appliances, beds and tables.

*Semi arredato*: semi furnished

There is no norm as far as a semi furnished apartment is concerned. You could find everything you need and then some. You could find only a toilet and a sink. Call the landlord or agency and ask for specifics before you even bother going to see the place.

*Non arredato or vuoto*: not furnished or empty

Here again, the meaning can vary. Hopefully, you will find a finished bathroom but there is no guarantee. It's not uncommon for the landlord to tell you that the kitchen is without appliances, either because the previous tenants will be taking the appliances with them, or because the apartment has just been rennovated and there is literally nothing in the kitchen.

*Posto letto*: bed in a shared room

*Camera singola/doppia*: single/double room

Some flats are same-sex, so check the noun endings carefully:

*Ragazzo/a*: boy/girl

*Studente/studentessa*: male student/female student

Other qualifiers:

*Serio/a*: hard-working (as opposed to noisy party animal)

*Referenziato/a*: with references i.e., reliable

*Fumatore/non-fumatore*: smoker/non-smoker

*Settimana corta*: short week

With this type of arrangement, you are expected to disappear on the weekends. Yes, that means vacate the premises. This maneuver is more tricky for foreigners than for Italians, who often go home on Friday afternoon and return Monday, laden with delicacies prepared by *la mamma* (mother).

## NEIGHBORHOOD GUIDE

When in Bologna you are either *dentro* or *fuori porta* (inside or outside the city gates). The once intact ancient wall is now encircled by the *viale* (ring road). Life *dentro porta* means arcades, monuments and charming architecture. Just about everything is within walking or biking distance. It also means higher density living, steep rent and minimal green space. Depending on where you land, *fuori porta* can mean urban sprawl minus the charm, fancy suburbs with beautiful parks and everything in between. Keep in mind that Bologna has good bus service and nothing is ever too far away.

## CENTRO STORICO

*Centro* is divided into nine neighborhoods and real estate listings are organized in this format. For a list of *quartieri*, see Chapter 1: Plugging In. The center is characterized by a labyrinth of narrow streets and arcades. An exception is the area surrounding Via Marconi, heavily bombed during WWII and rebuilt in modest post-war fashion. The university district, with its heart in Via Zamboni, is packed with students day and night. This area is very lively, with lots of bars and eateries, but it also attracts a seedy element that may not be attractive to families. The area running from Piazza Maggiore towards Santo Stefano, Castiglione and San Mamolo is residential, quiet and beautiful.

*During my search, I found neither the internet nor the magazine ads helpful. Internet ads were never updated and in the magazines, by the time you find something you're interested in and call, they tell you it is gone. After trying several routes, I found the best way was to decide on the area you like and then literally walk from agency to*

*agency in that area. When you are standing in their office, they have to help you and are generally much more accommodating than over the phone. Also, if your Italian is not that good, things are easier face-to-face, as you can use hand gestures and draw little pictures to get your point across.*

*Harriet Walker*

## **BOLOGNINA/CORTICELLA**

These areas are located on the north side of the city. Bolognina, or "Little Bologna," is situated right behind the train station and runs eastward toward the *fiera* (convention center) district. The heart of the area is Piazza dell'Unità, well serviced by public transportation. A former working-class stronghold, this area is increasingly home to immigrants, young families, students, artists and older people, which makes for an eclectic mix. Bolognina borders Corticella, an area with a similar demographic, but characterized primarily by 1960/70s block architecture. Corticella is the first stop on the north-bound commuter train and also has a small park and lake.

## **BARCA/SAFFI/BORGO PANIGALE**

Via della Barca runs westward from the soccer stadium. The Barca neighborhood includes the area off Via della Barca and the Reno area, named for the Reno river which cuts through it from south to north. Bus service is good, but the walk to a bus stop may be a little long. This is primarily a residential area with tall apartment buildings and a nice greenbelt along the river. Older Bolognese remember Barca as a tough neighborhood, but today it is not unlike other peripheral areas of the city. Via Saffi is one of the main arteries leading out of the city and turns into Via Emilia Ponente, where one of the city's largest hospitals, Ospedale Maggiore, is located. Westward from Saffi is Borgo Panigale, home to Ducati and other industry. Recent construction has somewhat revitalized this traditional working-class neighborhood.

A word about the Via Emilia, the ancient east-west route that runs across Emilia Romagna. Locals often direct you to the Via Emilia, but this roadway actually has many names. In the city, you should know that *Emilia Levante* (rising) heads east and *Emilia Ponente* (setting) heads west.

## **MAZZINI/MURRI/SAN RUFFILLO**

Heading outward from Porta Mazzini and Porta Santo Stefano, this residential area extends into the hills and includes some high-end neighborhoods. Many of the homes along the area's tree-lined avenues are constructed in attractive *stile bolognese* (Bolognese style). One of the city's largest and nicest parks, Giardini Margherita, is at the entrance of Via Murri. The area has many shops and supermarkets, as well as cinemas and the Sterlino swimming pool. Murri is ideal for those who seek street parking or a garage.

## **SAN DONATO/MASSARENTI**

These areas extend outside Porta San Donato and Porta San Vitale. Heavily trafficked Via Massarenti is home to the university hospital, Policlinico S. Orsola-Malpighi. Excellent bus service makes it accessible to the city center, it is also serviced by the little-known *suburbana* train that runs from Crespellano to Budrio. Traditionally a working-class area, San Donato's more reasonable prices make it popular for students. The *fiera* district is located here.



## COLLI/COSTA/SARAGOZZA

When someone tells you they live "in the colli," it really means they live anywhere in the exclusive hilly areas on the south side of town. Some call this the Beverly Hills of Bologna. The air in the *colli* seems cleaner than in the rest of the city, the temperature is lower all year round and there are some amazing views. On the other hand, it is not always well served by public transportation and many of the narrow streets have limited parking. One of the highlights of the area is the Parco Villa Ghigi, which is accessible from Via San Mamolo by foot or bike, or from Via Gaibola.

Bologna's soccer stadium lies between Via Andrea Costa and Via Saragozza, both conveniently close to the center with plenty of shops, theaters and services. From Via Saragozza, one can make the historic pilgrimage up the 666 porticoed stairs to the Basilica di San Luca, a major Bologna landmark.

## JUST OUTSIDE

The following areas are not in the administrative jurisdiction of Bologna and have their own *comuni*. From the north moving clockwise, they are: Castel Maggiore, Granarolo dell'Emilia, Castenaso, San Lazzaro di Savena, Casalecchio di Reno, Zola Predosa and Calderara di Reno. Given their proximity and accessibility via public transport, many consider San Lazzaro di Savena and Casalecchio di Reno to be extensions of Bologna neighborhoods. For more information on outlying areas, see Chapter 9: Provincia.

## RENTAL & LIVING EXPENSES

In addition to your monthly rent, you will usually be asked to pay a *deposito* (security deposit) of one to four months of rent when you first move into an apartment. When you move out, the landlord will inspect the apartment for damages. If you have a legal contract, much of what could be considered damages is clearly stated. If you have a good relationship with your landlord, by the time you give notice to vacate you will have most likely already come to an agreement about the return of your security deposit. Rather than refund the deposit at the end of your stay, the landlord may simply refrain from collecting the last months of rent. Of course, in situations where the relationship with the landlord is tense, getting your deposit back is a challenge.

The other costs to budget are *spese condominiali* (condominium fees). As most apartments in Italy are individually owned, apartment buildings and finances are

*Beware of hidden fees - for example the spese condominiali - we were asked to pay a percentage towards the maintenance of the lift (the percentage depends on which floor you live). Most likely you will also be asked to pay a certain amount towards the portinaio's fees if there is one, and again this varies enormously. Ask if the heating is*

*included or if it is autonomous. If it is included you cannot control when it comes on and off. Our first flat had designated days of the year when the heating could be turned on and off regardless of the outside temperature. The temperature and hours varied enormously depending on the portinaio's moods and nocturnal habits.*

*Philippa Hoddell*

managed either by a chosen resident or an external *amministratore* (administrator). Regular meetings are held to discuss and vote on policies and expenses. In a rented apartment, the tenant is usually spared the onerous task of attending the meetings. However, he or she is usually responsible for paying the condominium fees. Make it a point to ask if the condominium fees are included in your rent and if not, clarify how much they will cost per month. Agencies frequently advertise the rent without mentioning the fees and in some cases, the condominium fees determine whether or not the apartment fits within your budget. Buildings with elevators, central heating, *portineria* (reception) and other amenities tend to have higher monthly fees. If you have decided to share an apartment with others, ask your potential housemates about their system for divvying up various expenses. Some houses organize a *cassa comune* (group fund) for buying staples and it's good to know the house rules before moving in.

## HEATING

Be sure to ask which kind of system is used to heat the apartment. *Riscaldamento autonomo* (individually controlled heating) means you decide when to turn the heat on and off. Therefore, you only pay for what you consume individually. With *riscaldamento centralizzato* (central heating), the cost of heating the building is divided among all the apartments and the condominium owners decide (also on the basis of local laws) the temperature settings and number of hours a day the heat is on.

## HOT WATER

The type of heating system installed in an apartment also can affect the supply of hot water. Most apartments are equipped with an individual *caldaia* (small gas boiler) and there is no limit to the amount of hot water consumption. In apartments with centralized heating, beware of the electric hot water heater. These hold a limited amount of water, so if two people in the building take consecutive showers, the second person risks a frosty rinse-off. In addition, this can send the electricity bill soaring.

The worst possible option is a seasonal setup in which your hot water availability is correlated to the heating system. You pay a premium for hot water during the summer months when the heating system is not running. Sometimes hot water is not part of the deal at all. When looking at prospective apartments, take into account which type of system is installed.

## GARBAGE

The city of Bologna requires that everyone pitch in to pay for the daily citywide garbage collection service. For more information, see Chapter 2: Essential Services.

## MOVING AND STORAGE

Movers, called *facchini*, are listed in the yellow pages under *TRASLOCHI*. Prices for moving vary according to quantity of items, location within a building, distance to be traveled

and if you require packing or storage. Have this information on hand when you call to request a *preventivo* (estimate). The moving company will then send someone out to survey the job. If you would like to pack your own belongings, ask the company if they will drop off boxes, packing tape and bubble wrap as part of the deal. If you live on a floor other than *piano terra* (ground floor) and have a balcony, your move may happen over the railing by use of a platform lift and a slide. Many moving companies also offer storage facilities, inquire about monthly rates.

## CONTRACTS (OR LACK THEREOF)

Technically speaking, all rental agreements must be formalized by a legal contract between owner and tenant. That said, some landlords are quite creative as far as bureaucracy is concerned and you may or may not be offered a rental contract. Usually the fee for officially registering the contract is divided between owner and tenant.

Your landlord may ask you if you object to registering a lower rental amount than what is actually being paid, in order to pay fewer taxes. This is not uncommon, as taxes are determined by the amount the landlord declares on the legal contract governing rental of the property. You will have no way of ever proving that you paid the higher amount should it become an issue, as all of your rent receipts will demonstrate a lesser amount. This system also poses some risk to the landlord, as there are people who decide to accept such terms and then begin paying the lesser official rate. When that happens, there isn't a lot the landlord can do.

Some landlords avoid paying taxes at all by renting out without a contract. This is called renting *in nero* (under the table). You might decide that this is fine with you, as you have more flexibility without the contract and the rent is undoubtedly lower than it would be otherwise. Nevertheless, remember that renting without a contract is illegal. It is legal, however, to lend an apartment to a friend, mistress or other acquaintance. In this case, a landlord might request that if anyone ask, you say you are a personal friend. Decide in advance what your comfort level is as far as these alternative arrangements are concerned.

## ITALIAN NEIGHBORS

You've found the place. You've paid the deposit and put your basil plant on the windowsill. You are about to enter into an established Italian tradition – condominium life. News travels fast in a Bolognese apartment building. More often than not, your new

*High-density living is the norm, most Italians live in flats instead of detached houses with gardens. That brings you into close contact with your neighbors. Curtains or shutters are therefore a must to avoid prying eyes! I have never had negative experiences with my neighbors. Having a*

*foreigner in the building has sometimes aroused suspicion, particularly amongst elderly neighbors, but more often than not, just friendly curiosity to find out who I am and where I am from. And of course, if I am available for English lessons!*

*Kate Porter*

neighbors will know your name, country of origin and how much rent you pay even before you arrive. They may be eager to know more. Then again, they may not, especially if it means speaking with you directly. The Bolognese tend to be reserved and many foreigners have remarked that their sense of neighborliness is understated compared to the Anglo-Saxon variety. Sometimes years can go by before your relationship develops into something deeper than a "hello." So don't expect your neighbors to pop by to welcome you to the building with a freshly baked cake. Following basic rules of etiquette will help ensure a smooth transition into your new community. A cheery "*buongiorno*" or "*buonasera*" every time you pass someone on the stairs is a good start. If you hear a loud knocking noise coming from your floor, it's probably your downstairs neighbors banging on their ceiling with a broom because of the noise coming from your apartment. Shhhh! Try not to slam doors or play music after 23 and remove shoes with heels in your apartment.

## HOME FURNISHINGS

Given the importance of *la casa* in Italian culture, there is no shortage of stores offering *arredamento* (furnishings) for your home. For a complete listing of shops, check the yellow pages under *ARREDAMENTI* and *MOBILI*.

There are several large warehouse chain stores that sell moderately priced new furniture, including Ikea, Krea, Mercatone Uno and Ricci Casa. Though based in Rome, Mondo Convenienza delivers in the Bologna area, with furniture assembled upon arrival. Comet, Marco Polo Expert and Media World have a good selection of electronics and appliances.

### **Comet**

Via Michelino, 105 (multiple locations)

Tel. 051.6079201

Open Monday 13-20; Tuesday-Saturday 9-20

[www.gruppocomet.it](http://www.gruppocomet.it)

### **IKEA**

Via John Lennon, 6

Casalecchio di Reno

Tel. 199.114646

[www.ikea.it/casalecchio](http://www.ikea.it/casalecchio)

Open Monday-Sunday 10-20

### **KREA Arredare Casa**

Via Paolo Fabbri, 2

Castel Maggiore

Tel. 051.700134

[www.kreacasa.it](http://www.kreacasa.it)

Open Monday-Saturday 9-12:30 and 15-19:30; Sunday 15-19:30

### **Marco Polo Expert**

Centro Borgo, Centro Commerciale Meridiana, Parco Commerciale Navile

See Chapter 7: Shopping

[www.talentosrl.com](http://www.talentosrl.com)

### **Media World**

Centro Commerciale Shopville GranReno, Parco Commerciale Meraville

See Chapter 7: Shopping

[www.mediaworld.it](http://www.mediaworld.it)

### **Mercatone Uno**

Via C. Gnudi, 2

Tel. 051.4164711

[www.mercatoneuno.com](http://www.mercatoneuno.com)

Open everyday 9:30-12:30 and 15-19:30

### **Mondo Convenienza**

Based in Rome, online ordering

Numero verde 800.015692

[www.mondoconv.it](http://www.mondoconv.it)

### **Ricci Casa**

Via Lunga, 5

Crespellano

Tel. 051.969188

[www.riccicasa.it](http://www.riccicasa.it)

Open Tuesday-Sunday 10-20

### **USED FURNITURE**

A number of stores in and around Bologna sell inexpensive used furniture. Be prepared to hunt as there is often a lot of junk to sift through. Turnover is high, so come back regularly to find new gems. Most stores close for lunch and at least one morning or afternoon a week, so call first to check on business hours.

*Living in the center is convenient. You can do your passeggiata on Saturday along with the rest of town, up and down Via dell'Indipendenza. But really, life in the center is chaotic because there are problems getting in and out with a car. There are all*

*these narrow, one way streets with trucks parked here and there so you can't get by. Nobody obeys the rules. You must have your own parking space. The pollution, the fumes... I always had a headache when I lived in the center.*

*Tracy Fairplay*

Il Mercatino is a franchise with three stores in the Bologna area. Although they appear related, the ownership is separate.

### **Il Mercatino**

#### **Zona Roveri**

Via E. Mattei, 50/d

Tel. 051.6014028

#### **Zona Ospedale Maggiore**

Via Monterumici, 36/3

Tel. 051.313529

#### **Zona Corticella**

Via dei Caligari, 6

Tel. 051.320119

[www.mercatinousato.com](http://www.mercatinousato.com)

Just off Via San Donato, Padre Marella - Fraternità Cristiana is one of the best bets for used furniture, but the rule of going back frequently definitely reigns. Owned and operated by a religious charitable organization, the store will upon request remove unwanted furniture from your house for free. If you look hard, there are some true beauties to be found at incredible prices, but be ready to use your best bargaining skills to get the real deals. There is also a well-stocked used clothing department. This store has irregular business hours and it's best to call ahead.

#### **Padre Marella - Fraternità Cristiana**

Via del Lavoro, 13

Tel. 051.244345

### **ANTIQUES**

Bologna's antique market is held every second Sunday of the month in Piazza Santo Stefano. In Piazza VIII Agosto, a collector's market called Celo' Celo' Mamanca is held every Thursday. Antique stores are listed in the yellow pages under *ANTIQUARIATO*. Two to keep in mind:

#### **Ornamenti d'Epoca di Angela Franchi**

Via dell' Luzzo, 6/a

In business for more than 30 years, Angela specializes in American, German and English silver, including Sheffield, Tiffany, Gorham, Wallace and Reddon Barton. She also takes special requests and has been known to fill the most obscure collector's wishes.

#### **Pami & Gallery**

Strada Maggiore, 7

Pamela specializes in antique furniture from England and France with an assortment of lamps, bookends, paintings and sculptures. Prices are often negotiable and there's something for almost every pocketbook, from 50 to 5,000 euro.

## DO-IT-YOURSELF

Once the exclusive domain of artisans, Italians are now engaging in their own home improvement projects. If you are the handy type, you can head to one of the mega *fai da te* (do-it-yourself) warehouses for construction materials, garden supplies and various hardware and fixtures. Of course, the teenage sales clerk at Castorama cannot be expected to impart the same kind of know-how you will find when speaking with the owner of your local *ferramenta* (hardware store).

Stores of this kind are listed in the yellow pages under *BRICOLAGE E FAI DAI TE* or *SUPERMERCATI, GRANDI MAGAZZINI E CENTRI COMMERCIALI*.

### Castorama

Parco Commerciale Navile

See Chapter 7: Shopping

Tel. 051.6351087

Via A. de Curtis, zona B (next to IKEA)

Casalecchio di Reno

Tel. 051.6113011

### Leroy-Merlin

Parco Commerciale Meraville

See Chapter 7: Shopping

Tel. 051.4202911

*The early bird definitely catches the worm. A few weeks into my search, I discovered that the real estate newspapers are often distributed late on the day before their publication date. I began gathering them in the afternoon instead of waiting until the next day, then making appointments immediately, beating out people who picked it up later. My husband and I got our*

*apartment because after realizing immediately that it was the one for us, we made a beeline to the agency on his scooter. We had gotten into the habit of bringing along all of our documents and had everything necessary to prove we were good people and, more importantly, solvent. Shortly thereafter it became our new home.*  
*Debra Christie*



*Edel Murphy, Entrepreneur  
Waterford, Ireland*



## 4 > HEALTH

### INTRODUCTION

The idea of going to a doctor in a foreign country – or even finding one – can be daunting. Don't let yourself be intimidated. Bologna is known for its sound health care, whether it is a simple *visita in ambulatorio* or a more serious trip to the *pronto soccorso*. However, attitudes towards health care and ideas about the origins of illness change from culture to culture, so don't be surprised if you hear the Bolognese attribute your ailment to the *cambio di stagione* or a *colpo d'aria*. What may seem like old wives' tales often coexist harmoniously with Italy's modern medical system. The question most people find themselves asking is whether they should use the *Servizio Sanitario Nazionale* (SSN) or choose to pay a private doctor outside of the system. This debate can be simplified to a question of time versus money. If you can take the time to stand in line at your assigned physician, the no-frills public system offers competent, very low cost care. Your *medico di base*, also known as *medico di famiglia*, will write prescriptions, order tests or refer you to specialists within the system. He or she will even make house calls when necessary. Private health care in Bologna is quick and reliable, but can be costly without a private health insurance policy. Many people elect a hybrid solution, that is, they enroll in the SSN, but choose private care for certain treatments. Keep in mind that if you require emergency care you will be treated immediately at no cost, regardless of your residency status or enrollment in the national system.

### IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

If you have a health-related emergency, call 118 for an ambulance or go directly to the emergency room nearest you. When you arrive you will be asked for identification and a description of the problem. As with emergency rooms anywhere, the wait depends on the gravity of your situation.

### GENERAL EMERGENCY

#### **Policlinico S. Orsola-Malpighi**

Via Massarenti, 9

Tel. 051.6363717

*una visita in ambulatorio = visit to the doctor's office*

*il pronto soccorso = emergency room*

*il cambio di stagione = change in the season*

*un colpo d'aria = a cold draft*

*il Servizio Sanitario Nazionale (SSN) = national health care system*

*il medico di base = il medico di famiglia = general practitioner/family doctor*

**Ospedale Maggiore**

Largo Nigrisoli, 2

Tel. 051.6478111

**Ospedale Bellaria**

Via Altura, 3

Tel. 051.6225111 switchboard

**PEDIATRIC EMERGENCY****Policlinico S. Orsola-Malpighi**

Via Massarenti, 11

Tel. 051.6363654

**ORTHOPEDIC****Istituti Ortopedici Rizzoli**

Via G.C. Pupilli, 1

Tel. 051.6366111

**OB/GYN****Ospedale Maternità/Ospedale Maggiore**

Via dell'Ospedale, 2

Tel. 051.6478111

**Policlinico S. Orsola-Malpighi**

Via Massarenti, 13

Tel. 051.6364429

**CENTRO ANTIVELENI (Poison control center)****Ospedale Maggiore**

Largo Nigrisoli, 2

Tel. 051.6478111

**PUBLIC MEDICAL CARE**

The agency that administers the SSN in Bologna is called the *ASL - Agenzia Sanitaria Locale* (local health agency), also known as Azienda USL. You can call the regional Azienda USL's free information numbers, one of which offers multilingual assistance. For an extensive list of useful telephone numbers, look in the phone book under *AZIENDA USL* or click on the *guida telefonica* (telephone guide) on the agency's website. For Italian speakers, the city of Bologna's health care services website is also informative: [www.comune.bologna.it/servizi/salute/salute.php](http://www.comune.bologna.it/servizi/salute/salute.php).

**Azienda USL**

Numero verde 800.033033

Numero verde multilingual 800.663366

[www.ausl.bologna.it](http://www.ausl.bologna.it)

## REGISTERING FOR THE SSN

The SSN is also known as the *mutua*. EU citizens have the right to coverage whether or not they have officially become residents in Italy. Non-resident EU citizens must obtain a clearance form, called E111, issued by the health authority in their home country. If you are not an EU citizen, you must be a resident in order to register for the system, see Chapter 1: Plugging In.

Registering for coverage is a simple procedure. The Azienda USL has divided the city into districts. Each district has an *anagrafe sanitaria*, an office that oversees administrative details. Call the general Azienda USL information hotline or ask at the URP in Piazza Maggiore if you are unsure about your district. The *anagrafe sanitaria* have a central URP office: 051.2869265.

## ANAGRAFE SANITARIA BY DISTRICT:

### Borgo/Reno

Via Colombi, 3  
Tel. 051.6173516

### Navile

Via Tiarini, 10/12  
Tel. 051.706205

### Porto/Saragozza

Via Montebello, 6  
Tel. 051.2869232

### San Donato/San Vitale

Via Mengoli, 32  
Tel. 051.396111

### Savena/Santo Stefano

Via Toscana, 17/19  
Tel. 051.6221587

*Years ago, I broke several bones, including two neck vertebrae, in a serious car accident that hospitalized me for months. After a month, I could wash my curly hair, which is impossible to control if left on its own to dry. When I can't blow it dry, I twist it into a bun or braid. I caused a scandal by returning to my hospital bed with wet hair. "Cervicale!"*

*they yelled. "If you don't dry your hair immediately, you'll get cervicale." Perplexed (I had done this for years with no ill effects), I asked my American friends what this was. Smiling, they said it was something like a neckache, caused by drafts and dampness. Something no one in the USA ever gets.*

*Maria Cromwell*

## HEALTH CARE CARD

When you register with the SSN you will be given a *tessera sanitaria* (health care card) with your registration number and *codice fiscale*. A plastic version that looks like a credit card will arrive later in the mail. Your doctor may ask to see your *tessera* when filling out a prescription and you will have to show it when you make an appointment to see a specialist or sign up for other services.

## CHOOSING A DOCTOR

When you sign up for the SSN, you will choose a *medico di base*. Ask friends or neighbors in your district for a recommendation. In the absence of advice, you can try choosing from the list by studying names and birthdates, to at least select a doctor on the basis of his or her age or gender. Once you have chosen a doctor, you will receive a slip of paper with regular office hours. If you move out of your district but still want to keep the same doctor, it is possible to do so upon request. Likewise, with a little extra paperwork, you may request a doctor in another district.

## OFFICE VISITS

Most general practitioners see patients on a first-come, first-serve basis during regular office hours. Although some doctors also schedule appointments, be prepared to spend some time in a waiting room. If you are used to having long conversations with your physician, you might be in for a surprise. General practitioners usually see many patients in a limited amount of time. They are adept at making quick diagnoses and tend to keep small talk to a minimum.

## AFTER HOURS CARE

For non-emergency medical care after hours, call the *guardia medica* (doctor on call) for your neighborhood. The *guardia medica* is available nights from 20-8, pre-holidays from 10-20 and holidays from 8-20.

**Quartieri Borgo Panigale, Reno, Saragozza, Porto, Navile**

Tel. 848.831831

**Quartieri San Donato, San Vitale, Savena, Santo Stefano**

Tel. 848.832832

For other areas of the city or province, see: [www.118er.it/sottosezione3\\_p.asp?id=4136](http://www.118er.it/sottosezione3_p.asp?id=4136)

## PRESCRIPTIONS AND TREATMENT

It's universal: prescriptions are written in hieroglyphics in Italy too. Don't hesitate to ask your doctor to clarify the name of the medication prescribed and the dosing regimen while in the office. Many doctors also schedule regular times when they accept telephone calls from patients with questions about medication or a health issue.

## SPECIALIST VISITS AND TESTS

Your *medico di base* might refer you to a specialist or order diagnostic tests. You will be

sent off with a formal request slip and it will be your responsibility to book your appointment through the CUP - *Centri Unificati di Prenotazione* (Unified Reservation Center). There are about 150 CUP reservation offices all over the city. It is also possible to book appointments in many pharmacies (look for the CUP sign) and online through eCup2000 at [www.cup2000.it](http://www.cup2000.it), or via phone by calling 848.884888. Note that phone bookings are not accepted for many services. A comprehensive list of CUP reservation desks is available on their website and at the URP in Piazza Maggiore.

You will be charged a fee for most specialist visits and tests. You can pay at the CUP office when you book the appointment or make a special trip back before your scheduled visit. Upon payment you will be given what is called a ticket, pronounced tee-ket, a piece of paper with a list of the things you need to have done. You must bring your ticket with you when you go for your tests. It will list the date and time of your appointment and may also include instructions for you to follow in advance of the test. You also have to bring your receipt to show that you have paid for the exam.

You may wait as long as a month to see a specialist or get a test done, even longer if you have requested a specific location or physician. If it really seems that too much time will elapse before you can be seen, book the appointment for the first available date without paying for it and call your doctor. He or she may say it's fine to wait. If not, they will probably be able to refer you to a private clinic or specialist *a pagamento* (fee for visit). Tip: it is easy to get specialist appointments in August during vacation time.

## NO COVERAGE OPTIONS

If you do not qualify for the SSN and do not have the resources to pay for private care, there are several clinics for immigrants without health care coverage.

### **Centro per la Salute delle Donne Straniere e dei loro Bambini (Health Center for Foreign Women and Children)**

Via Zanolini, 2

Tel. 051.4211511

### **Ambulatorio Biavati**

Vicolo Alemagna, 3

Tel. 051.226310

Free health care and gynecological exams.

*People here are really concerned about different health issues, like never being in a breeze. Kids are not supposed to sweat and when my son's friend comes over to play, he brings a second set of clothes in case he gets sweaty. Parents seem really concerned about fevers, so you're always taking your children's temperatures and you end up with*

*an almost daily record. And it seems like everything here gets chalked up to a liver problem. Someone's skin will break out and they'll say, "Oh my liver is acting up!" It's so different from the way we reason, it's become a family joke. If anything is wrong, we'll say, "Oh, it must be my liver."*

*Sally Hudson*

### **Ambulatorio Sokos**

Via de' Castagnoli, 10

Tel. 051.2750109

Free health care and help for non-residents in obtaining coverage under the SSN.

### **Ambulatorio Salute Senza Margini**

Via Cimarosa, 5/2

Casalecchio di Reno

Tel. 051.596795

The multilingual URP number, 800.663366, connects on Wednesday mornings to a clinic in Casalecchio di Reno, Thursday mornings to the hospital in Bentivoglio and Saturday morning, as well as all afternoons from 14:30-16:30, to Ospedale Maggiore. Trained social/health mediators are available to take calls.

## **WOMEN'S HEALTH**

A *consultorio familiare* is a special health care center for women staffed by gynecologists and specialized nurses. Some of the centers also offer services for children. If you are covered by the SSN, you can go here for gynecological exams, health care during pregnancy, counseling during menopause and birth control. It's not necessary to have a referral from your general practitioner. As a resident, you will receive a letter every three years from the state inviting you to make an appointment for a free pap test. More frequent pap tests are fee-based and you may have to insist to book the visit. Make an appointment for a pap test, breast or gynecological exam (all separate visits) at a *consultorio familiare* at any CUP window in the city. *Consultori* are listed in the yellow pages under *AZIENDA USL, SERVIZI PER LE DONNE E PER LA FAMIGLIA*.

Many women opt to see a gynecologist outside of the SSN to have the same physician throughout their pregnancies. This kind of continuity is not guaranteed if you use a *consultorio familiare*.

## **PRENATAL CARE**

Although you may not always see the same doctor, the *consultori familiari* are set up to follow a woman throughout her pregnancy and the doctors and obstetric nurses who work there are well-trained. Monthly check-ups are free. You will take precedence over others when reserving blood tests through the SSN and you will be able to have other tests at the *consultorio familiare* or else be given referrals for testing elsewhere. Some women find the public route quite convenient. It is definitely your least expensive option. You may feel more comfortable going the more costly private route, especially if you already have a good relationship with a gynecologist or if extras such as a private room or a video of your ultrasound are important to you.

Whether you choose private or public, you will give birth in one of the city's public hospitals. Your doctor may not actually be there when the big day arrives, as births are handled by the obstetrician on duty.

## **PRENATAL COURSES**

Both private organizations and public structures offer courses for expectant mothers and couples. Information about courses like Lamaze, water gymnastics and prenatal yoga is available at *consultori familiari*. Two organizations offering such courses are listed below.

### **Associazione Il Nido**

Via Zanardi, 56

Tel. 051.6350911

Il Nido was founded by obstetric nurses and provides prenatal courses and counseling with a special focus on natural childbirth. It can provide information for home births, the cost of which are 50% covered by the SSN. It also offers new mothers instruction on nursing, weaning and child-development.

### **ASIA**

Via Riva Reno, 124

Tel. 051.225588

In addition to yoga and Aikido classes, ASIA offers special yoga classes for pregnant women, baby massage classes and post-partum courses.

## **WATER BIRTH**

Water births are available in Lugo, a town in the province of Ravenna about 45 minutes from Bologna, as well as in Porretta Terme, also a 45-minute drive. At the hospital in Bentivoglio, expectant mothers may labor in water. For hospitals in Bentivoglio and Porretta Terme, see Chapter 9: Provincia.

## **TOURING THE HOSPITAL**

You can tour the birthing unit prior to your due date. During this visit, you will be given a list of things to bring with you for your stay. Remember that public hospitals do not provide towels, nightgowns, slippers, baby clothes, or cutlery. Patients often share rooms.

*I went to the foreign women's health clinic a couple of times before I got my papers in order. The staff was very helpful and*

*understanding and I was extremely satisfied with the medical care I received.*

*Ann Gagliardi*

## **PAIN MEDICATION DURING LABOR**

It is standard procedure to only administer epidurals by special advance request. The same holds true for other pain medications during labor. You must make preparations before you are admitted to the hospital.

## **BABY'S PAPERWORK**

The city has established special offices in the maternity wards where you can officially register your child's birth. Take advantage of this service, as it's a fast-track for entering the labyrinth of Italian paperwork. If you delay until after you come home from the hospital you may find that you face a long waiting period while papers are processed, during which time it will be difficult to do things like establish your baby's residency. As soon as possible after the birth and establishing residency, sign your infant up for the SSN at your district's *anagrafe sanitaria*.

If your baby was or will be born in your home country to an Italian parent and you plan to return to Italy to live, it is important that the Italian citizen notify the nearest Italian consulate in the country of the baby's birth. It is then the consulate's responsibility to notify the *anagrafe* in the city or town where the Italian parent is a resident, in order to process the child's Italian citizenship and other paperwork. If you have your baby outside of Italy, it is wise to request an apostille with the official birth certificate from the vital statistics department in your home country to bring back to Italy with you. For information on apostilles, see Chapter 10: Long Term.

## **DELICATE SUBJECTS**

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

#### **SOS Donna (SOS Women)**

Tel. 051.434345

The staff at this line will refer women with substance abuse problems to agencies for assistance. They also offer legal information.

### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

#### **Casa delle Donne per non subire violenze (Women's home for non-violence)**

Via dell'Oro, 3

Tel. 051.333173

[www.women.it/casadonne](http://www.women.it/casadonne)

All forms of support for women who are victims of violence, including a safe house.

### **CONTRACEPTION**

*Preservativi* (condoms) are available in all pharmacies, also in 24-hour dispensers outside. You need a prescription for oral contraceptives in Italy, some brands are covered by the SSN. To discuss other forms of contraception, see a gynecologist.



## PREGNANCY TESTS

Ask for *un test di gravidanza* (home pregnancy test) in any pharmacy. Otherwise, turn to your gynecologist, *consultorio familiare*, or one of the clinics open to foreigners without health care coverage.

## UNWANTED PREGNANCY

Drop by a *consultorio familiare* - appointment not necessary - to discuss options, including the possibility of taking the morning-after pill. IVG - *interruzione volontaria di gravidanza* (voluntary termination of a pregnancy) is legal and is the woman's choice through the first trimester. Once a positive pregnancy test has been confirmed, refer to a doctor or a *consultorio familiare* for counseling and information. The IVG procedure can only be performed in a public hospital, either at Policlinico S. Orsola-Malpighi or Ospedale Maggiore. There are no private options for this procedure.

If an unwanted pregnancy is carried to term, adoption services are available at the hospital post-birth.

## HIV and SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE TESTING

The Region of Emilia Romagna sponsors a toll free information number to reserve a free AIDS test in any hospital in the region. Your anonymity is protected at all times. Numero verde 800.856080 (active Monday-Friday 15-19)

## LILA - Lega Italiana per la Lotta Contro AIDS (Italian League for the Fight Against AIDS)

Via Agucchi, 290/a

Tel. 051.6347644 (active Monday, Wednesday and Friday 18:30-20)

[www.lilabologna.it](http://www.lilabologna.it)

Staff provide information about prevention, testing and treatment in the city.

## PRIVATE MEDICAL CARE

If you do not have access to the SSN you can always make an appointment with a *medico privato* (private physician) who operates outside of the system. Ask the doctor's rate in advance to avoid any surprises or embarrassing moments. You will be expected to pay the doctor at the time services are rendered.

*Giving birth naturally was the most unexpected and incredible experience of my life. Early labor pains cancelled out my scheduled caesarean and, unbeknownst to me until then, the option of an epidural. Even with the language barrier, the midwives were patient and supportive and having the*

*hospital room to myself in the following two days was a luxury. Though I was under the care of a private doctor throughout my pregnancy, the birth and follow-up at S. Orsola was adequate and completely satisfactory for both my baby and me.*

*Christine Ricci*

Even if you do have access to the SSN, there may still be times when you prefer to see a doctor outside of the system. Many Italians move back and forth between the national system and private care, depending on what health problems they need to address. For example, there are times when paying for health care outside of the system becomes an effective way of avoiding a long waiting period when the public structures are backed up. For foreigners who haven't yet mastered the language, paying to see medical professionals who speak English can also be a way of making sure you are able to communicate your health matters effectively. The following private, English-speaking medical professionals have been recommended by IWF members.

### **GENERAL PRACTITIONERS**

#### **Dr. Anthony Bruno Cilurso**

Via Morandi, 4

Tel. 051.582781

Cell. 347.1671183

#### **Dr. Stephen Williams**

Via Matteotti, 29

Tel. 051.332204

Cell. 347.8164535

### **GYNECOLOGISTS**

#### **Dr. George Blagogee**

Viale Oriani, 2

Tel. 051.300088 (call in the afternoon to make appointments)

#### **Dr. Raphael Leizer**

Piazza Roosevelt, 4

Tel. 051.265470

#### **Dr. Maria Cristina Meriggiola**

Via Massarenti, 162

Tel. 051.398404

#### **Dr. Stefania Tabanelli**

Via Libia, 20/6a

Tel. 051.392314

Cell. 335.309490

### **CHIROPRACTORS**

#### **Paul Caruso and Larry Kaye**

Via Cracovia, 5

Tel. 051.466994

#### **Jon Cory**

Piazza dei Martiri, 5/2

Tel. 051.223984

## PHYSICAL THERAPISTS/OSTEOPATHS

### Tracy Fairplay

Via Emilia Ponente, 34

Tel. 051.347474

Cell. 348.5906211

[www.studiofairplay.it](http://www.studiofairplay.it)

### Marco Orsi

Via Emilia Ponente, 34

Cell. 328.6355251

## ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

### ACUPUNCTURE

#### Tu Loss

Via Antonio di Vincenzo, 23a/b

Tel. 051.373668

### SHIATSU

#### Shiatsu Integrato

Paolo Casartelli

Piazza Roosevelt, 4

Tel. 051.220848

[www.istitutoshiatsuintegrato.it](http://www.istitutoshiatsuintegrato.it)

### COUNSELING

#### Neil Oblowitz

Tel. 335.6834372

British certified therapist based in Milan, also does children's assessments.

#### Dr. Valentina Gentili, Psychiatrist

Via San Vitale, 70

Tel. 328.9437648

*At the (private) Villa Regina, I was treated like a queen... elegant silverware, AC, choice of menu, private room with bathroom and even terry cloth slippers. My S. Orsola experience was quite different: my own room (because it was August) instead of the normal six beds in a room; a faucet that sprinkled out water; and a shared*

*bathroom with only three working toilets. I had to bring my own toilet paper and was given attitude when I asked why they hadn't refilled it. All that said, I do believe the health care was the same in both structures. The doctors were good in both places. It is just a matter of what you are accustomed to.*

*Nina Vellucci*

## DENTAL CARE

For dental appointments through the SSN, refer to any CUP. Waiting lists are long and most Italians see private dentists.

### **Dr. Carlo Cuzzani**

Studio Odontoiatrico Associato

Via S. Quasimodo, 44

Primo Maggio, Castel Maggiore

Tel. 051.700886

Dr. Cuzzani is an Italian oral surgeon who speaks excellent English.

### **Dr. Hae Kyung Kang**

### **Dr. Fabio Rossini**

Via Santo Stefano, 30

Cell. 333.7263444

Dr. Kang is American. Both she and her Italian husband, Dr. Rossini, were trained in the United States at the University of Pennsylvania. They also practice in Pesaro.

## WEEKEND DENTAL EMERGENCIES

In case of weekend dental emergencies, contact:

### **Istituto Beretta**

Via XXI Aprile, 15

Tel. 051.6162211

Open Monday-Friday 8:30-12:30 and 14:30-16:30; Saturday and Sunday 8-12 (emergency only). During the week, this USL clinic provides all types of dental care covered by the national health care system. On weekends, it serves as Bologna's emergency dental clinic.

## VETERINARY CARE

Veterinary care is not offered through USL, so you must find a private veterinarian for your pet. Ask a neighbor or check the yellow pages under *VETERINARIA - AMBULATORI E LABORATORI*. Most vets will give you a personal emergency contact number to call for after-hours care.

Pets (dogs, cats and ferrets) must be registered at the city's *Anagrafe Canina* (Pet Vital Statistics Office). At the time of registration, your pet will be given a microchip and inscription number.

If you wish to travel with your pet outside of Italy, you will need to visit the ASL's *Servizio Veterinario* (Veterinary Service) to get a pet passport. Make sure that you bring your pet's microchip number and that Fido or Fluffy has had a rabies shot.

When out with your dog, it must on a leash and you must pick up its feces. Although you will see Bolognese dogs wearing haute-couture, even these pooches are not officially allowed in places of work or where food is distributed.

## **Servizio Veterinario Azienda ASL**

Via Gramsci, 12

Tel. 051.6079889

Open Wednesday morning by appointment for pet passports.

If you find a lost or stray dog, contact the city's dog pound:

## **Canile Municipale**

Via Bacialli, 20

Trebbo di Reno

Tel. 051.6325537

An English speaking veterinarian recommended by IWF members is:

## **Dr. Danny Laino**

Ambulatori Veterinari Associati

Via Caselle, 11

San Lazzaro di Savena

Tel. 051.466503

## **PHARMACIES & MEDICINE**

You can have prescriptions filled at any pharmacy. Medicines deemed essential by the SSN are free, but you still have to have a prescription. Pharmacists in Italy often serve as informal medical advisors, so if you have a minor medical problem you can ask a pharmacist for an opinion.

The pharmacists who work in the main Farmacia Comunale in Piazza Maggiore are extremely helpful and some speak English. This pharmacy is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, although there is a surcharge added to medication purchased at certain hours of the night. Other pharmacies are open on nights and weekends on a rotating basis. Check local newspapers to see which pharmacies are *di turno* (on duty). You will also find this information posted outside your local pharmacy whenever it is closed.

## **HERBAL MEDICINE SHOPS**

Italy's ancient *erboristerie* (herbal medicine shops) are an excellent health resource for those interested in time-honored herbal and natural remedies. These stores carry most

*You are serious about being here when your gynecologist and dentist are no longer six time zones away.*

*Peggy Kidney*

herbs in bulk and the *erborista* (herbalist) is trained to combine different herbs for specific ailments. Here you can also find natural and specialty foods, gluten-free grocery items, herbal or plant-based tinctures, homeopathic medicines, natural beauty products, essential oils, dyes and bulk items.

## GIVING BLOOD

Blood donation is organized by AVIS - *Associazione Nazionale Volontari Sangue* (National Association of Blood Volunteers). Potential donors are given a medical exam and blood test before they are permitted to become regular donors.

### AVIS

Via Emilia Ponente, 56

Tel. 051.388688

[www.avisbologna.it](http://www.avisbologna.it)

## SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

All services and benefits for the disabled are available to foreigners registered in the SSN. The first step is to apply for the recognition of *l'invalidità* (civil disability) through Azienda USL. After a medical visit, a commission will evaluate the status and qualification of the disability. A disability of 33.33% is the minimum level to be considered invalid and guarantees prosthetic and orthopedic services. At 46%, one also acquires the right to be included in special employment lists. People with higher levels of disability (74%-100%) are entitled to various *prestazioni economiche* (benefits), depending on their level of autonomy. Detailed information about other financial assistance can be obtained from a booklet available at the site of the *Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze* (Ministry of the Economy and Finance) at [www.agenziaentrate.it](http://www.agenziaentrate.it).

It should be noted that there is a difference between "civil disability" and "handicap" and the two categories translate into different benefits. "Handicap" and "Severe Handicap" are defined by law and are based on the disadvantages a disabled person encounters from interaction with his or her environment. Detailed information can be obtained from the city's *Centro Risorse Handicap* (Handicap Resource Center): [www.handybo.it](http://www.handybo.it). The site, an excellent source for information and documentation on services and legislation regarding the handicapped, also offers the downloadable guidebook: "Bologna for the disabled, the disabled for Bologna." Other sites of interest include:

[www.saluter.it/wcm/saluter/dedicatoa/persone\\_disabili.htm](http://www.saluter.it/wcm/saluter/dedicatoa/persone_disabili.htm) (regional health site)

[www.accaparlante.it](http://www.accaparlante.it) (Center for Documentation on Handicap, also in English)

[www.inps.it](http://www.inps.it) (downloadable guidebook on civil disability)

[www.handylex.org](http://www.handylex.org) (information on legislation)

[www.asphi.it](http://www.asphi.it) (Association for Developing Projects to Reduce a Handicap by Means of Information Technology, also in English)

[www.ausilioteca.org](http://www.ausilioteca.org) (Center for Technical Aids, also in English)

[www.disabili.com](http://www.disabili.com) (general information)

## ELDERCARE & HOSPICE ASSISTANCE

The city and region's websites are good places to start for a preview of the resources available to senior citizens:

[www.comune.bologna.it/over60](http://www.comune.bologna.it/over60)

[www.saluter.it/wcm/saluter/dedicatoa/anziani.htm](http://www.saluter.it/wcm/saluter/dedicatoa/anziani.htm)

Culturally, Italians prefer to care for the elderly at home and it is very normal for grandparents and great-grandparents to live with their children. Most nursing homes in Bologna are private structures called *case di riposo* (rest homes). These facilities range from basic care to extremely elegant and costly. Check the yellow pages under *CASE DI RIPOSO*.

If you have a loved one who is ill with cancer, there are some important resources in Bologna that can help you. One is ANT - *Fondazione Associazione Nazionale Tumori* (National Tumor Association Foundation) which provides free at-home assistance and hospice care for oncological patients.

### **ANT - Associazione Nazionale Tumori**

Via Jacopo di Paolo, 36

Tel. 051.7190111

[www.antnet.it](http://www.antnet.it)

The following in-patient structures provide palliative care to terminal oncological patients as well as psychological support for their families.

### **Hospice Maria Teresa Chiantore Sergàoli**

Via Marconi, 43-45

Bentivoglio

Tel. 051.8909611

[www.hospiceserganoli.it](http://www.hospiceserganoli.it)

### **Hospice Ospedale Bellaria**

Padiglione Tinozzi

Via Altura, 3

Tel. 051.6225111

*I love Italy's ancient herbal medicine shops - they're like a step back in time. Most herbalists are very knowledgeable about the different effects of herbs, plants and their derivatives. One hot and muggy summer night, when no amount of chamomile tea could help me sleep, an erborista suggested*

*an all-natural herbal tincture called Erbe della Notte. It really worked. I also relied on the erboristeria for bulk almond oil during my two pregnancies (commonly used by Italian women to keep their skin beautiful) and even found non-toxic dye when I wanted to color Easter eggs.*

*Andrea Vogt*

## *Special Needs*

*“É qui l’America” is used when something in Italy works really well. In my experience, it definitely applies to handicap assistance in Emilia Romagna. Our son Guido was diagnosed with cerebral palsy through a routine post-birth head sonogram. He looked and behaved normally, but specialists said he would have motor and mental problems. When Guido was 6 months old we went to the US to finish my post-doc research and Guido was seen by a pediatric neurologist who recommended weekly therapy (a volunteer showing us exercises at home). It soon became clear that Guido’s motor development was falling behind his twin brother, Riccardo. When we returned to Italy, Guido was immediately inserted into intense therapy, three times a week by a physical therapist. He and his brother were given priority at public day care, its stimulating environment considered essential for development. The Comune provided transportation and a volunteer to assist the teachers.*

*With time, I discovered a vast network for both medical and financial assistance. A pediatric neuropsychiatrist follows Guido’s motor and cognitive development and*



*coordinates the institutions involved, aiming for maximum social integration and autonomy.*

*A commission of teachers, parents, socio-sanitary operators and local authority creates a personalized plan and meets biannually to discuss progress. Guido goes to a regular school as is the right of all disabled pupils in Italy. His class can have no more than 20 students (instead of 25) and has an extra didactic support teacher as well as an educatore. Many parents of “normal” kids hope their child will be placed with a “certified” one, as the entire class often benefits from the additional support.*

*In first grade, Guido struggled with writing between the lines. At the Regional Center for Linguistic and Cognitive Disability, his difficulties were attributed almost entirely to visual problems. Via help from the ASPHI (Association for Developing Projects to Reduce a Handicap by Means of Information Technology), Guido now studies autonomously using material prepared specifically for him. The school even acquired software for transforming graphic files into text, read to him by a synthetic voice. It has been a tremendous help.*

*Marianne van Buuren*



*Kathryn Knowles, Non-profit Fundraiser  
San Francisco, CA, USA*

## 5 > WORK

### INTRODUCTION

Job searching in any country is one of life's more humbling experiences. This is especially true in a new city where you are not yet familiar with the rules of the game. When beginning to look for work in Italy, it is best to set aside your expectations and start with a clean slate.

Bologna boasts one of the lowest unemployment rates among major Italian cities and is consistently ranked at the top of the charts in terms of quality of life, including business and employment. The Bologna area is home to 87,000 companies, including some of the world's leading niche manufacturing outlets and a highly developed service sector. Its economic landscape is characterized by small and medium *imprese*, often sole proprietorships or family-run enterprises. Although these statistics are overwhelmingly positive, anyone who has been through the job search process in Bologna will tell you that you need to be tenacious and patient to land your first *contratto*.

Know from the onset that high-paying jobs, both for Italians and foreigners, are scarce. *Laureati* often look for employment for many months and then work for little or no pay during their first years of training. This slow introduction into the world of economic self-sufficiency helps explain why many Italians live with their parents into their 30s. Try to resist the urge to ask new acquaintances "*che lavoro fai?*" Although asking about what one does for a living is certainly not offensive, it is not among the first pieces of information shared when making Italian friends.

The best source of information regarding work opportunities is by far your network of friends and acquaintances. Potential employers are more likely to consider you if you've been *raccomandato/a* by someone they know. The good news is that as a native English speaker, you will probably be able to find *lavoretti* to support yourself while you continue your search. Finding work that gives you both economic and professional satisfaction requires determination. *Coraggio!*

### GETTING STARTED

Learning Italian is an indispensable skill for entering the job market in Bologna. Although English may be considered an asset, business in Bologna is conducted in Italian. Dedicate yourself to learning the language while you are job searching and know that your spoken

*le imprese* = companies  
*un contratto* = contract  
*i laureati* = university graduates  
*che lavoro fai?* = what do you do for a living?  
*raccomandata* = recommended  
*i lavoretti* = odd jobs, literally "little work"  
*coraggio* = courage

and written Italian will improve drastically once you find yourself in the working world. For a list of selected language schools, see Chapter 1: Plugging In.

## PAPERWORK

Non-EU citizens are not able to work legally in Italy without a *permesso di soggiorno* that specifically permits work. A 90-day tourist *permesso* will permit you to stay in the country while you search for a job, but it cannot be converted into a work permit without first returning to your home country. Employers are generally reticent to consider candidates who require assistance obtaining work papers, so you are better off making your own arrangements rather than counting on a company to sponsor your stay. You will also need a *codice fiscale* in order to open a bank account and be legally paid. For more information regarding paperwork, see Chapter 1: Plugging In.

If you do not have means of obtaining work papers, your job possibilities in Bologna are limited. In this case, you will need to establish private agreements and be paid *in nero* (under the table). Working *in nero* amounts to tax evasion and is obviously illegal. That said, someone needs to buy the groceries.

## CURRICULUM VITAE AND EUROPASS

Before launching your job search, be sure to prepare your curriculum vitae (CV) in Italian. If you have doubts about what information to include, follow the Europass model, an initiative of the European Commission to help job seekers make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in the EU, EFTA/EEA and candidate countries. Visit <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu> to download examples and instructions.

You will note that the Europass format includes information that you may not be used to divulging, such as your nationality, birthday and driver's license. If you decide not to include this information on your CV, be ready for it to come up in an Italian interview, together with marital and family status.

The practice of targeting companies and then sending your CV and cover letter to the human resources department is not likely to yield results. Most employers will not even acknowledge receipt of your CV, let alone call you on their own accord for an informational interview. While this may seem discourteous, it is a fact of life in the Italian job market, so try not to feel discouraged if it seems you are sending your CV into a black hole.

## NETWORKING

Although you may tire of telling everyone you are job hunting, this is by far the best way to find work here. Don't limit your networking to people in your sector of interest. Think of how many potential contacts your butcher or hairdresser makes each day! Getting involved in associations (see Chapter 1: Plugging In) and leisure activities (see Chapter 8: Tempo Libero) are the best ways to make personal contacts that may help in your search. English-speaking women should consider joining the International Women's Forum of Bologna, which among other services, offers a job bank for members via its website

www.iwfbologna.com. On the European level, the European Professional Women's Network provides an online networking platform linking several thousand business women across Europe: [www.europeanpwn.net](http://www.europeanpwn.net)

## WHERE TO LOOK

### PUBLISHED JOB POSTINGS

Employment classifieds are published in *Il Sole 24 Ore* on Mondays, *La Repubblica* on Thursdays and *Il Corriere della Sera* and *Il Resto del Carlino* on Fridays. You can also check the weekly classified newspapers and specialized publications such as the *Bollettino del Lavoro*, also found online at [www.bollettinodellavoro.it](http://www.bollettinodellavoro.it).

Newcomers are sometimes surprised and even offended to read specifics regarding age and sex in job announcements. While seemingly discriminatory, companies include this information in order to narrow their applicant pool. If you are interested in the job but fall outside of the age bracket, apply anyway. As a foreigner, your age and experience is likely to differ from the Italian average.

The internet is helpful in understanding the job market and current offerings. The websites listed below have information about openings all over Italy:

[www.monster.it](http://www.monster.it) (Italian version of the US-based job search portal)

[www.cambiolavoro.com](http://www.cambiolavoro.com) (service to forward your CV directly to HR directors)

[www.assioma.org](http://www.assioma.org) (interactive job bank)

[www.talentmanager.it](http://www.talentmanager.it) (online recruiting agency)

[www.talentfinder.it](http://www.talentfinder.it) (online recruiting agency)

Especially for recent graduates:

[www.almalaurea.it/eng](http://www.almalaurea.it/eng) (interuniversity consortium that works to facilitate young graduates' access to the Italian labor market)

[www.bancalavoro.it](http://www.bancalavoro.it) (self-described bridge between graduates, universities and companies)

A listing of the latest internet sites related to work can be found on the comprehensive site of the *Direzione Provinciale del Lavoro di Modena* (Provincial Direction of Work of Modena): [www.dplmodena.it](http://www.dplmodena.it).

*Work is extremely important for someone who moves here. It helps you adjust. I'd say the hardest thing is finding a job. Once you*

*do, it will really help you feel as if you are a part of things.*

*Peggy Kidney*

## TEMPORARY AGENCIES

Whether you are searching for part-time or full-time work, one option is to register with a temp agency. These agencies do not send out one-day replacements, but rather seek to place candidates in positions. Temp agencies mostly offer opportunities for *operai* (manual workers) and *impiegati* (office workers). Larger agencies may even have separate locations for the two categories.

In order to register with a temp agency, you need to bring your CV, *permesso di soggiorno* and valid ID. Once you have completed the agency specific *scheda* (form), your information will be inserted into their database at no cost to you. If and when the agency places you in a job, you will sign a work contract to become an employee of the temp agency, rather than of the company where you are placed.

Be sure that the agency you choose is registered in the guild authorized by the *Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali* (Ministry of Work and Social Politics). This information must be provided by the agency. National authorized temp agencies with multiple offices in the Bologna area include Adecco, Manpower and Obiettivo Lavoro. For a complete list of agencies, see the yellow pages under *LAVORO INTERINALE E TEMPORANEO*.

### Adecco

Via Irnerio, 18  
Tel. 051.241045  
[www.adecco.it](http://www.adecco.it)

### Manpower

Via Oberdan, 27  
Tel. 051.273207  
[www.manpower.it](http://www.manpower.it)

### Obiettivo Lavoro

Via della Grada, 4/b  
Tel. 051.6493421  
[www.obiettivolavoro.it](http://www.obiettivolavoro.it)

## SELECTION AGENCIES/HEADHUNTERS

The main difference between a selection agency/headhunter and a temp agency is that selection agencies are mediators between candidates and companies, not employers themselves. If you find a job through a selection agency, you will then sign a contract directly with the hiring company. Agency fees, usually equivalent to a month's salary, are paid by the hiring company, never the candidate. Job seekers looking for positions as *dirigenti* (managers) should turn toward selection rather than temp agencies.

Whereas you can walk in off the street at a temporary agency, meeting with a headhunter usually requires an appointment and sometimes even a recommendation.

That's right: a recommendation just to meet the person who could potentially give you a

recommendation! Selection agencies are listed in the yellow pages under *RICERCA E SELEZIONE DEL PERSONALE*. Below are a few recommended agencies:

### **Cubo Consulenza**

Via G. Mazzini, 51/3

Tel. 051.397380

[www.cuboconsulenza.com](http://www.cuboconsulenza.com)

### **Focus Head Hunting**

Via degli Orti, 44

Tel. 051.6238776

[www.focusheadhunting.it](http://www.focusheadhunting.it)

### **Manager Società Ricerche Direzionali**

Piazza Cavour, 2

Tel. 051.228787

[www.managersrd.com](http://www.managersrd.com)

### **Praxi**

Via Marconi, 71

Tel. 051.246130

[www.praxi.it](http://www.praxi.it)

### **JOB FAIRS**

Recent graduates can meet with representatives of large national and multinational companies at CESOP Communication's annual job fair. Dates of job fairs in various Italian cities may be found at: [www.jobmeeting.it](http://www.jobmeeting.it).

CESOP, a recruiting advertising company, also offers an online job bank, information about Masters programs and detailed profiles of some of the most important companies in Italy. Even if you are not a recent graduate, it is worth a visit to this website to get an overview of the market: [www.cesop.it](http://www.cesop.it).

*Interviewing in Italy is quite different compared with the UK. Everything takes time: a long while can pass between sending in your CV, being contacted, interviewing and receiving a reply. It is often necessary to contact the company yourself to discover the outcome as many companies only give spontaneous feedback to successful*

*candidates. And don't be surprised if you are asked personal questions which would be considered inappropriate elsewhere such as "do you have a serious boyfriend?" or "any plans for marriage or kids?" These are all acceptable and standard questions when interviewing women.*

*Kate Porter*

## **Employment Centers**

CIP - *Centri per l'Impiego* (Employment Centers) are government offices that provide work-related information on training courses, job opportunities, unemployment benefits and more. Most *comuni* in the province also have a CIP *sportello* (help desk). The central CIP in Bologna has a cultural mediator who offers assistance in English.

### **CIP Bologna**

Via Todaro, 8/a

Numero verde 800.286040 (active Monday-Friday 9-17)

[www.provincia.bologna.it/lavoro](http://www.provincia.bologna.it/lavoro)

Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9-13; Thursday 16:30-18

The University Career Service, an American-style career guidance center, is officially open to all students and graduates of the University of Bologna, however, it also provides assistance to graduates of foreign universities. The center offers help in Italian with job searching as well training seminars on successful interview techniques. They have an excellent library of company directories and information about continuing education that you can consult during office hours without an appointment.

### **University Career Service**

Via Zamboni, 7

Tel. 051.272618

[www.careers.ceur.it](http://www.careers.ceur.it) or [www.unibo.it/careers](http://www.unibo.it/careers)

Open Monday-Wednesday 9-13 and 14:30-18; Thursday and Friday by appointment only

## **MARKET RESEARCH**

PromoBologna, a local development agency for the promotion of the Bologna metropolitan area, has published an online brochure in English called "Discover Bologna." "Discover Bologna" gives an excellent introduction to the Bolognese economy and is required reading for understanding the major players in the city and province of Bologna. See website: [www.promobologna.it](http://www.promobologna.it).

Information about Italian companies nationwide may be found in the Seat or Kompas guides. If you don't find them at your local library, try the Bologna Chamber of Commerce library. You must first call for an appointment to consult the library's resources. Bring a notebook to write down information as the library does not have a photocopy machine.

### **CCIAA - Camera di Commercio Industria Artigianato e Agricoltura di Bologna (Chamber of Commerce)**

Palazzo della Mercanzia

Via Santo Stefano, 1/c

Tel. 051.6093435

[www.bo.camcom.it](http://www.bo.camcom.it)

Open by appointment only



## COOPERATIVES

You will undoubtedly notice the number of businesses with the letters "Coop" or "Co" in their names, for example, the supermarket Coop Adriatica, the construction company Coop Ansaloni, maintenance services ManutenCoop and so on. Others, without the Coop, like Granarolo and Unipol, represent some of the largest economic forces in Italy.

Cooperatives, a source of Emilian pride, are private companies with a unique organizational structure. Profits are not paid out in dividends but are instead re-invested in the cooperative. Employees have the opportunity to become shareholders, usually following a number of years of service and an inscription quota. Many cooperatives also publish a *bilancio sociale*, a statement of social responsibility. To learn more about cooperatives, visit the website of LegaCoop, one of the national umbrella organizations, located in Bologna: [www.legacoop.bologna.it](http://www.legacoop.bologna.it).

## PUBLIC SECTOR

Positions in the public sector at the local and national level are usually reserved for EU citizens. However, positions in select areas, such as education or medicine, are sometimes open to non-EU citizens. Most public positions are filled by *concorso* (public contest). News regarding *concorsi* for public sector positions are advertised in government journals that provide a description of each position and list job requirements and rules for each contest. Consult the *supplemento ordinario* (regular supplement) of the Gazzetta Ufficiale for information about openings at the national level and the Emilia-Romagna Region's Bollettino Ufficiale for information about local openings, both of which are available at newsstands and in the library. Be sure to note the published deadlines for submitting your candidacy. Sometimes a written and/or oral test is part of the application process. Positions are awarded according to a point system.

## NON-PROFIT AND THIRD SECTOR

The non-profit, or *terzo settore* (third sector), is an emerging area in Italy. Although Rome is the Italian base for most international non-governmental organizations, Bologna also has many opportunities for non-profit work. These organizations, known as *no-profit* or *senza scopo di lucro* (without goal of profit), are often structured as social cooperatives, meaning they are partially funded by fees collected from *soci* (members). Others are structured as *fondazioni* (foundations). The title ONLUS means that a non-profit has a

*Every once in a while, the fact that you're "different" and foreign can pay off. In academic settings, we are sometimes perceived as having an edge in research, writing, or editing skills (especially when an employer*

*has worked or studied abroad). So sometimes it's good to stress that you've had a different background, because this background has provided you with an expanded set of skills - skills which Italians may not have.*

*Liz Kaplan*

special fiscal status. Visit the following websites to learn about opportunities to work or volunteer in the *terzo settore*:

[www.terzosettore.it](http://www.terzosettore.it)

[www.noprofit.org](http://www.noprofit.org)

[www.vita.it](http://www.vita.it)

## SCIENCE AND THE ARTS

In addition to research conducted at the university level, Bologna is also home to one of Italy's CNR - *Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche* (National Research Council). CNR Bologna hosts eight research institutes and a library with over 6,000 scientific journals.

### **CNR - Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Area della Ricerca di Bologna**

Via Gobetti, 101

Tel. 051.639811

[www.bo.cnr.it](http://www.bo.cnr.it)

### **CNR Library**

Tel. 051.6398034

<http://biblio.bo.cnr.it>

For creative types interested in the arts, theater, web and multimedia, visit the self-described "help desk for the creative class" Poplab, or LADIS, which offers courses for multimedia production, web design and other cutting-edge professions.

Young artists should also visit [www.giovaniartisti.it](http://www.giovaniartisti.it), which includes information regarding funding, jobs and contests for artists in Italy.

### **Poplab**

Via delle Belle Arti, 19

Tel. 051.226232

[www.poplab.it](http://www.poplab.it)

### **LADIS - Laboratori Didattici Sperimentali (Experimental Didactic Laboratories)**

Via Giuseppe Petroni, 9

Tel. 051.271533

[www.ladis.it](http://www.ladis.it)

## JOB TRAINING

Many public and private centers offer free courses to young people and those seeking to make a career change. Funded by the EU, local or regional governments, these *corsi di formazione* (training courses) are designed to prepare you to attain your career goals. Contact the following organizations to find out about courses currently available.

## **OSSOF - L'Osservatorio sull'Offerta Formativa (Observatory on Job Training)**

[www.ossof.provincia.bologna.it](http://www.ossof.provincia.bologna.it)

Online guide to the training courses open for enrollment in the Province of Bologna.

## **CTC - Centro di Formazione Manageriale e Gestione d'impresa (Center for Managerial Training and Business Administration)**

Camera di Commercio di Bologna

Piazza Costituzione, 8/3

Tel. 051.6093200

[www.ctcformazione.it](http://www.ctcformazione.it)

CTC offers courses for individuals in 19 different areas of business administration, including computer training, language courses, accounting etc. CTC also manages a *Servizio di Orientamento alle Nuove Imprese* (New Business Orientation) offering assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs and a Linguistics Center offering training in English, French, German and Spanish.

## **Fondazione Aldini Valeriani per lo Sviluppo della Cultura Tecnica (Aldini Valeriani Foundation for the Development of Technical Culture)**

Via Bassanelli, 9/11

Tel. 051.4151911

[www.fav.it](http://www.fav.it)

Accredited by the Emilia Romagna Region as a center for technical job training, continuing education and reintroduction to the job market.

## WORKING ON YOUR OWN

### **FREELANCING**

If you're thinking about working as a *libero professionista* (freelancer or consultant), you will need professional assistance from a *commercialista* (accountant) both in terms of getting started and paying your taxes at the end of the year. In order to freelance legally, you must open a *partita IVA*, a tax identification code issued by the Ministry of Finance. Italian taxlaws don't favor freelancers, so make sure your that your activity will generate enough income and deductions to make opening a *partita IVA* worth your while.

*Working in the non-profit sector is challenging anywhere, even more so in Italy. Although the media gives the impression of relentless fundraising campaigns, the field is still relatively new and unexploited. Our society is getting more and more sensitive to the importance of donating and volunteering, largely because of the continuous cuts in*

*public spending on health, research and social services, the typical non-profit areas of interest. However, fiscal deductions on donations and the usual tangle of bureaucracy are still controversial topics for Italian policy makers and this is a significant obstacle to non-profit activity.*

*Silvia Arcangeli*

Ask friends to recommend a *commercialista*, look in the yellow pages under the listing *DOTTORI COMMERCIALISTI - STUDI*, or try getting in touch with one of the organizations listed below, as many provide advisory services both to freelancers and small business owners.

## STARTING A BUSINESS

Starting a business in Italy is challenging because access to start-up capital is limited. You can talk with your bank about taking out a start-up loan, greatly facilitated if you or a family member can demonstrate a steady source of income or other collateral. Standard interest rates on personal loans in Italy always significantly exceed the worldwide interest rate – be sure to negotiate with the bank director. While access to private capital is hard to come by, local and regional *agevolazioni fiscali* (financial assistance) for entrepreneurial activity is abundant. For example, a foreign woman under 40 falls into three categories for business assistance, *imprenditoria giovanile, femminile e immigrati* (young, female and immigrant entrepreneurs). You will need help from an Italian speaker to navigate the world of *agevolazioni fiscali*, which are made available via *bandi* (calls). For more information, check the website of the Chamber of Commerce at [www.bo.camcom.it](http://www.bo.camcom.it) and ERMES Imprese, a regional website dedicated to economic development at [www.ermesimprese.it](http://www.ermesimprese.it).

The following organizations provide courses and assistance for entrepreneurial activity:

### **CID - Comitato Impresa Donna (Committee for Women-owned Businesses)**

Viale Aldo Moro, 22

Tel. 051.6099473

[www.cid.er.cna.it](http://www.cid.er.cna.it)

Information, training, consulting and support for female entrepreneurs.

### **ISCOM Bologna**

Strada Maggiore, 23

Tel. 051.6487610

[www.ascom.bo.it](http://www.ascom.bo.it)

ISCOM is the training organ of ASCOM - *Associazione dei Commercianti, degli Operatori Turistici e dei Servizi della Provincia di Bologna* (Association of Store Owners, Tour Operators and Services of the Province of Bologna).

### **Progetti d'impresa (Company Projects)**

Provincia di Bologna

Via Benedetto XIV, 3

Tel. 051.6598505

[www.provincia.bologna.it/proimp](http://www.provincia.bologna.it/proimp)

A program of the Province of Bologna that offers start-up assistance including consulting, help with business plans, financing and microcredit.

## Servizio di Orientamento alle Nuove Imprese (New Business Orientation)

Camera di Commercio di Bologna

See this chapter under 'Job Training.'

## FOR ENGLISH SPEAKERS

In addition to teaching, native English speakers sometimes find immediate work at the *fiera* (convention center) as translators during large trade shows. For a calendar of tradeshow and information about the Bologna Fiere, visit [www.bolognafiere.it](http://www.bolognafiere.it).

## TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Many people find work teaching English when they first arrive. While some are dedicated career language teachers, for others teaching is a way to support yourself in the short term while you continue your job search.

Language schools usually require teachers to have a *permesso di soggiorno* and a *codice fiscale*. Some require a teaching certificate such as TOEFL, while others provide internal training. Schools do not often offer contracts, but instead offer work on a course-by-course basis. This means it is necessary to work for multiple schools or to supplement your income by offering private lessons.

Private language schools are found in the yellow pages under the listing *SCUOLE DI LINGUE* and a list is also available through the URP in Piazza Maggiore. Call the schools and ask if they are looking for teachers. Don't worry if your Italian is limited because in most cases the person who answers the phone will speak English. If you prefer, you may send your resume along with a traditional cover letter, but follow up with a phone call if you haven't heard anything after a few days. Although not appropriate in most other sectors, it is also acceptable to drop by language schools during business hours with your CV in hand.

Language courses typically start in October and run through the spring, but many schools also have new courses starting throughout the academic year. Most schools conduct courses on site, but some offer lessons in companies around the city. The latter often expect teachers to provide their own transportation with the understanding that travel expenses will be reimbursed. Be sure to ask about the *trasferta* (travel fee).

*Before opening a partita IVA, do the math with your commercialista and calculate your monthly minimum in order to survive. Lots of tax deadlines during the year somehow occur when you least expect them. You may want to set up a private pension fund and*

*polizza infortuni. It's important to have some coverage in case you get ill, or you need to take some time off for whatever reason. The key word is strategize, stay on top of the financial issues and love your commercialista.*

*Lisa Gelhaus*

## PRIVATE LESSONS

Many teachers make more money giving private lessons than they do by working for language schools. Private lessons are also the best option if you do not yet have your paperwork in order. Although teaching privately can be lucrative, students cancel lessons at any time, so your income may fluctuate. Ask around to find out about the going rate for private lessons. If you are willing to travel into the province, there is much less competition for private teachers and demand is high.

The bulletin board at Johns Hopkins University is a good place to advertise, see Chapter 2: Essential Services. People looking for a teacher also post there. You can also place an ad in the weekly classified newspapers or advertise on the bulletin boards at the University of Bologna's Department of Languages located in Via Cartoleria, 5. Be sure to ask at the front desk which bulletin boards are open to the public.

Once again, the better teaching jobs come via word of mouth. Once you're established as a teacher, you may be inundated with phone calls from student referrals or by other language teachers.

## TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

### CONTRACTS

Work contracts fall into two general categories, *strutturati* (structured) and *atipici* (atypical). Those with structured contracts are *dipendenti*, meaning that they are regular employees with a series of obligations and benefits. The three classes of *dipendenti* (*operai*, *impiegati*, *dirigenti*) have varying pay scales and one can generally expect a raise every two years. If your job falls into a category of organized labor, contracts are negotiated by the unions, a very powerful force in Italy.

Once you are hired as a *dipendente*, you can only be let go if your employer demonstrates just cause. Here this does not include poor job performance, but instead indicates a more serious offense like stealing or repeated absence. *Dipendenti* contracts represent job security and predictable income. They also offer paid vacation (from 4-6 weeks a year), maternity/paternity leave, and the real zinger: 13 months of paychecks rather than 12, called a *tredicesima* (thirteenth). In some sectors, like banking, *dipendenti* can sometimes even receive a 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> month of pay. Is there a downside?

These contracts are extremely rigid and usually have fixed work hours. Even professionals punch a time card. While vacation is ample, employers may require you to take time off at certain times, notably in August when some businesses literally close their doors for weeks. Some argue that the real downside to these contracts is for the employer, who pays elevated taxes, overtime, generous leave and may have to put up with mediocre job performance without the threat of firing. The downside for job seekers, foreigners and Italians alike, is that employers are extremely risk averse when it comes to hiring *dipendenti* and the lack of flexibility in the labor market means that openings for these positions are scarce.

*Atipici* contracts take multiple forms: fixed duration agreements, research grants, project contracts and apprentice contracts. In political lingo, these contracts are also called *precari* (precarious) because they do not offer any of the job security that comes with being a *dipendente*. The *contratto a progetto* (project contract) is the most common example, in fact, it is becoming more typical than atypical. Under this type of arrangement, you are hired for a fixed amount of time (anywhere from three months to several years) to work on a specific project.

A *contratto a progetto* gives total autonomy to the employee to decide how to best accomplish the assigned goals. In theory, this means no fixed working hours and no reporting structure. These contracts, however, do not offer any benefits such as sick days, vacation or parental leave. A *tredicesima* is out of the question. If at the end of the defined project your employer is not satisfied with your performance, he or she simply does not renew your contract. Unfortunately, employers do not always use these contracts in the way they were intended, but instead as a way to save in employee tax contributions. There is an upside to these contracts, especially for foreigners who are seeking their first job in Italy. They have created flexibility in the labor market, increasing job turnover and employers' willingness to take a chance on an unknown quantity. Many foreigners cite the *contratto a progetto* as their foray into the Italian job market and the start of their career. Visit [www.atipici.net](http://www.atipici.net), a site sponsored by the Region of Emilia Romagna, for detailed information about atypical contracts.

## HELP WITH CONTRACTS

Do not sign any contractual agreement that is not clear to you. Ask to take a copy of the contract home to review the details. You may also consult the *Centro Lavoratori Stranieri* (Center for Foreign Workers) organized by the CGIL trade union. This office is accustomed to helping foreigners decipher the labyrinth of laws governing work in Italy.

### Centro Lavoratori Stranieri

**CGIL – Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro**  
**(General Italian Work Confederation)**

Via Marconi, 69/d

Tel. 051.6087190

Open Monday-Friday 9-13 and 15-18; Saturday 9-13

*I have six years of international teaching experience. I chose to come to work in Italy not for the pay and conditions, as there are much better deals elsewhere, but for the experience of living here. As an EU citizen I have the advantage of working in Italy tax free for two years, that makes a big difference as teaching salaries are low.*

*The contract I have is a contratto a progetto, which does not include any type of medical insurance, etc. Although teaching is a profession, this type of contract feels like a student package and can be a little demoralizing. However, the environment I work in and the opportunities it provides make it worthwhile.*

*Rachel Burgess*

## GETTING PAID

Employers typically pay once a month and the date by which you will receive your *stipendio* (stipend) is indicated in your contract. The University of Bologna is known to pay its project employees up to 60 days after certified completion of the project. Overtime, paid only to structured employees, amounts to 115-130% of your basic pay and up to 175% for overtime performed at night or on holidays. Some employers limit the number of possible overtime hours in a year.

## PAYING TAXES

If your main home is Italy, or if you spend more than 183 days in any tax year in Italy, you are classified as a tax resident. Most legal residents are also tax residents. Under Italian law, it is your responsibility to file a *dichiarazione dei redditi* (declaration of income) each year when you have any taxable income. The Italian fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31. Taxes must be filed by June 30 for the period ending December 31 of the previous year.

Below is a partial list of taxes you will encounter as a tax resident in Italy:

*Imposta sul Valore Aggiunto (IVA)*: IVA is the Italian acronym for value added tax, or VAT. The rate of IVA varies, but the standard is 20%. Different than an across the board sales tax, you pay IVA on services, but not on consumer goods or food. IVA is paid at the time services are rendered.

*Imposta sul Reddito delle Persone Fisiche (IRPEF)*: personal income tax on your worldwide income from all sources, ranging from about 12-60% of your gross income. IRPEF is applied to income from business activities, income generated from land and buildings located in Italy, income from Italian securities, capital invested in Italy and earned income from self-employment. If you are working under any kind of contract, IRPEF will be automatically withheld from your paycheck.

*Imposta Comunale sugli Immobili (ICI)*: ICI is paid by owners of residential property. It is calculated based on the *valore catastale* (see Chapter 10: Long Term) and is paid annually in two installments, 90% by June 30 and the remaining 10% in the first 20 days of December. The notification to pay ICI arrives by mail to your residence.

*Tassa Rifiuti* (garbage tax): garbage tax is calculated based on the number of inhabitants in your home and is paid to your local *comune*. The notification to pay your garbage tax arrives by mail to your residence.

*Bolli, Imposte and Canoni*: various smaller taxes include a *bollo auto* (car tax), *bollo moto* (scooter tax), *imposta di registro* (registration tax), and *canone Rai* (tv tax), not to mention the ubiquitous *imposta/marca da bollo* (stamp tax). These various *bolli*, *imposte* and *canoni* can sometimes catch you by surprise. If you think you have completed a transaction without paying a tax on it, you probably just don't know about it yet.



Given the complexity of the Italian tax system, most people get help from a professional accountant when filing. See this chapter under 'Working on your own.' If you don't have an accountant, you can go to one of the many agencies around the city specializing in tax assistance, called *Centri Autorizzati Assistenza Fiscale* or CAAF. Some CAAF are organized by trade unions and only charge a percentage fee for the service. Check with the URP for a list of approved agencies. One of the most popular is Teorema, organized by the CGIL trade union.

### **Teorema Bologna**

72 locations in the city and province

Tel. 051.4199333

[www.teorema.bo.it](http://www.teorema.bo.it)

## **PERSONAL INCOME DEDUCTIONS**

Various personal tax deductions are available, but the rules are complex. Deductions include certain medical and funeral expenses, certain mortgage allowances in your primary residence and some university tuition fees. During the tax year, save your receipts from the pharmacy, physician and veterinarian as well as any charitable donations. Consult with your accountant to see which of these expenses may then be deducted.

## **TAX OBLIGATIONS IN MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY**

Just because you are now an Italian taxpayer, doesn't mean that you no longer have tax obligations in your home country. Since you may be a tax resident in more than one country, many nations have signed reciprocal double taxation treaties in order to limit the possibility of being required to pay the same tax twice. Details regarding double taxation treaties depend on your country of origin. For example, Italy has a double taxation treaty with both the UK and the US. Consult with your embassy and your accountant.

## **INFORMATION FOR US CITIZENS**

US citizens must file a US tax return every year reporting gross income in US dollars regardless of where they live. If you earn less than \$80,000 US dollars and pay Italian taxes on these earnings, you do not also have to pay US taxes on this foreign income, but

*From my experience, the dipendente alternative usually has a lower take home pay but more benefits, such as job security*

*and pregnancy leave. In the end, it seems to be a lifestyle decision: appetite for risk and more money vs security.*

*Sheila Donohue*

you still must declare it. This is known as the 80K exemption. Tax returns are due on April 15 but an automatic extension is granted until June 15 to those filing from abroad. A "failure to notify" penalty can be applied to foreign residents who fail to report foreign tax status to the IRS. Publications that explain the guidelines for US citizens living abroad may be found at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## BENEFITS

### RETIREMENT

The Italian pension system, INPS - Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale, is one of the most generous in Europe, but like many countries is unsustainable under the weight of an aging population. For this reason, some young people in Italy, especially foreigners, are considering the options for private pension policies available through most insurance companies. See *ASSICURAZIONI* in the yellow pages.

Your claim to INPS benefits is determined by your payments into the system. You are eligible for partial payment after 15 years of contributions and full pension after 35 years of contributions and meeting the minimum age requirement.

If you are working, your contribution as an employee amounts to 10% and is deducted directly from your paycheck. Your employer then pays an additional 35%. If you are self-employed, you must register with INPS and make your own contributions.

With certain types of contracts, notably *atipici* ones, your employer will ask you to open up your own INPS position. This is a very simple procedure that involves going to your local INPS office with your original signed contract, *permesso di soggiorno*, passport and photocopies of each.

#### **INPS - Istituto Nazionale di Previdenza Sociale**

Provincial Headquarters

Via Gramsci, 6

Tel. 051.216111

[www.inps.it](http://www.inps.it)

### PENSION BENEFITS IN MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY

Pensions in EU countries are based on a cumulative system and your accrued pension earned in any EU country will be calculated together to determine your benefits. Italy and the US have an agreement covering items such as social security taxes, retirement, disability and survivor's insurance benefits. Italians and US citizens who acquire pension credits in either country can later decide to use them where they want. You acquire credits based on the residency status of your employer. Details vary depending on individual situations, see the website of the Social Security Administration: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

### SICK LEAVE/DISABILITY

Structured employees who cannot work due to illness or injury are eligible to receive 75%-100% of their pay for up to 180 days. If you are absent more than 180 days you are

considered disabled. If your injury occurs in the workplace, you receive full pay during your absence. Permanent injury means that you will qualify for pension benefits.

## MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE

The emphasis on family in Italy means that there are generous maternity and paternity benefits, but only if you have a structured employment contract. This is a subject of great concern among women in Italy who work under *atipici* contracts. *Maternità* (maternity leave) is five months at 80% pay with the option to extend the leave for an additional six months at reduced pay. Women (and men) may also take advantage of two hours a day for nursing leave. While maternity laws were created to support women and families, their practical application sometimes results in hiring discrimination, especially at higher levels.

## TERMINATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Although notoriously difficult to be fired if you are a *dipendente*, if you are fired with just cause, you are entitled to state unemployment benefits. Whether you are fired or resign from a structured contract, you receive a TFR - *trattamento di fine rapporto* (severance pay). Your TFR is usually one month of pay for every year worked with the same employer. You may leave your job under any type of contract as long as you notify your employer in writing according to the terms outlined in your contract.

## BUSINESS ETIQUETTE & WORK CULTURE

### FORMALITY AND TITLES

The first rule in the Italian work environment is to be as formal as possible, until directed otherwise. Use the third person *Lei* when speaking with superiors and colleagues and most importantly, use proper titles. Italians often refer to their boss simply as *Direttore* (Director) or *Presidente* (President). The title *Dottore/Dottoressa* is used when addressing anyone with an undergraduate university degree. It does not imply that the person is a medical doctor or holds a Ph.D. in any discipline. When in doubt about someone's academic credentials, aim high with *Dottore* or *Dottoressa* and wait to be corrected. Both school teachers and university professors use the same title of *Professore/Professoressa*, but only the later get *Chiarissimo/Chiarissima* placed in front.

*Juggling two toddlers and holding a full time job without any relatives to help was quite a task back in the '80s and still is now. Just getting the kids accepted to the asilo nido was a challenge as our dual income put us at the bottom of the list. I pointed out that I would lose my job if they didn't take my kids! Planning holidays with my husband was*

*hard - everything had to coincide with our two companies and the availability and high cost of summer camp (which only take children over age 5). Some weeks were covered by an understanding mother-in-law, others with teenage babysitters. Now my boys are in high school and on their own... bigger kids, bigger problems!*

*Marybeth Pounders*

Other titles to learn include:

*Avvocato*: lawyer, university degree

*Ingegnere*: engineer, university degree

*Geometra*: surveyor, professional school degree

*Ragioniere*: bookkeeper, professional school degree (not to be confused with *commercialisti*, who are instead addressed as *Dottore/Dottoressa*)

*Cavaliere del lavoro*: knight of the working order, special awarded title, does not require a degree of any kind

## **MAKING AN IMPRESSION**

Forget about casual Friday – Italians are elegant seven days a week. Appearances matter in any culture, but people really take note here. You may be surprised that professional women dress more revealingly in Italy as exemplified by the décolletage sported by tv journalists. Femininity is celebrated and it is acceptable for women to shed nylons in the summer.

*Biglietti da visita* (business cards) are also key to making an impression. Consider having personal cards printed with your title, name, phone number and e-mail while you are looking for a job. You will then have something to slide across the table during the requisite exchange at the start of an interview.

## **MEETINGS AND WORKING LUNCHES**

Face-to-face meetings are a very important element of Italian work culture, preferred to telephone calls and e-mail. A “get down to business” attitude can be considered abrupt, so take the lead from colleagues or your interlocutor about how much small talk should proceed the meeting agenda. Meetings can drag on for hours without seeming to accomplish much. That’s because the real decisions are made in side meetings or over a meal. Here however, there is a careful balance to be maintained – Italians don’t like to mix business with pleasure and you should never whip out a notebook at the table. It does seem acceptable to place your cell phone next to your plate – it shows that you may be expecting a very important call. Wine may be ordered, but these are not martini lunches and sipping on one glass is plenty. If it is not clear who is paying for a business meal, insist, but just enough. Rather than spitting the bill *alla Romana* (Roman style), it is more appropriate to say that you will offer next time.

## **POLITICS IN THE WORKPLACE**

The adage about not discussing religion or politics also applies in the Italian workplace. If you make the mistake of letting anyone know your political viewpoint, make sure it is the right viewpoint (or as usually the case in Bologna, the left viewpoint). Do your best to at least glance at the morning headlines so you can follow the day’s exchanges at the *espresso* machine.

## STEREOTYPES

While it is true that Italians love their *ferie* (vacation), the stereotype of Italians being lazy is definitely not true in Bologna. Bolognese are incredibly enterprising and the work day usually wraps up closer to 19 than to 17. In addition to stores, many companies are also open on Saturday mornings.

Italians will joke about the *quarto d'ora accademico* (being 15 minutes late), but business meetings usually start on time and it is *brutta figura* (poor form) to show up with an excuse about the heavy traffic.

One stereotype that is unfortunately true is that males dominate the boardroom and women are still fighting against the glass ceiling in terms of hiring, pay and promotion.

*Italians take their professional titles very seriously. I'll never forget that when working with a medical doctor, I used "Dottore," thinking surely I couldn't be wrong. Yet since this doctor also taught at the medical school, I was embarrassingly corrected that he should be referred to as "Professore." It seems that when someone teaches their*

*profession at the university level, "Professore" trumps any other title. Just when you think you know all the titles and rules, someone throws something new out at you. Fortunately, as a foreigner, you are more likely to be forgiven, but you will definitely score points if you pay close attention to these titles.*

*Allison Hoeltzel*

## *Working Parents*

*While Italy's maternity leave is not as generous as other European countries like Germany or Sweden, it does have some interesting options for dipendenti that not everyone knows about. Normal maternity leave is five months - two before the birth and three after.*

*However, if your job is judged to be low-risk you can stay at work until the last month of pregnancy and get an extra month at home with your baby. After the obligatory leave, there are an additional eleven months (six for the mother and five for the father) at reduced pay. When our daughter was born, we faced the same dilemma as all working parents without nonni - what to do once I'd finished my obligatory leave. I didn't want to use up my entire leave allowance but I also didn't want Eleonora to start day care too young.*

*Luckily, that year the Italian government had decided that fathers as well as mothers were entitled to have the two hours per day of paid leave for the child's first year - the allattamento or nursing entitlement. Amazingly enough, the bureaucracy was simple - a one-page form that my husband handed in to his office and INPS. He did have to put up with some teasing, however; he was*

*the first man to “nurse” in his workplace. Since I am fortunate enough to have a flexible job and an understanding boss, we decided that I would work part time in the afternoon and that my husband Andrea would take the two hours so he could be home by 14. By working in shifts, we were able to take care of our baby until she entered day care at fourteen months. For us, it was the perfect solution and it enabled Andrea to be a more involved father than many of his friends and coworkers. I was happy that my shorter work day meant that I was able to continue to breastfeed without ever having to pump. This system also enabled us to set aside paid maternity leave to use during the never-ending Italian summer with no child care. You can take paid maternity leave until your child’s third birthday; unpaid maternity leave, however, may be taken until your child turns eight. An unanticipated bonus of having dad stay at home with the kids is that he NEVER complains that the house is a mess, or dinner isn’t ready or about the laundry overflowing the hamper - he knows firsthand the reason why!*

*Alexa Sinel*



*Philippa Hoddell, Lawyer  
London, England*



## 6 > FAMILY

### INTRODUCTION

Italy is a very family friendly country, perhaps a reflection of how strong the concept of *la famiglia* is felt here. Babies are adored, mothers revered. Families often maintain close ties. It is not uncommon for grown children to visit their parents for lunch or dinner during the week, or make daily telephone calls. Family in Italy often includes not only the traditional nuclear family of *genitori e figli*, but also a vast network of extended family members, especially in the south, where larger families are more common. Sometimes even childhood friends can gain a quasi family status when they play important roles in weddings, funerals or are invited to become *il padrino* or *la madrina* for children at baptism or confirmation.

Historically, the support of the extended family also translated into child care and eldercare, though this is gradually changing. Nonetheless, grandparents, and especially *la nonna*, still play a central role in childrearing, so don't be surprised if she suggests how you should make your baby's *pappa*, remarks that your child is dressed too warmly or too lightly, or offers other parenting advice. Many new moms are pleasantly surprised at just how eager their Italian *nonna* is to help out with babysitting and they come to appreciate, even depend on this extra familial help. The role of grandparents is a deeply ingrained cultural expectation - so much so that even your local *asilo nido* is likely to consider their proximity as one of the factors determining your child's eligibility.

### INFANCY

Italians love babies. At first you may be surprised at how complete strangers, even men, may openly admire and coo over your tiny bundle. Infants are showered with positive attention here.

In general, Italians are non-judgmental about bottle feeding versus nursing. Don't be surprised if you're told certain foods will cause a nursing strike (*tartufo* or truffle is a classic), or hear various opinions about what causes colic, gas, or other maladies. Like in any culture, it can be hard to separate fact from folklore when it comes to baby advice, so just see what works best for you.

*Allattamento al seno* (breastfeeding) is openly accepted as a natural, positive maternal responsibility and it is rare that one would be asked to cover up or not nurse in public,

*la famiglia* = family  
*i genitori* = parents  
*i figli* = children  
*il padrino/la madrina* = godfather/godmother  
*la nonna* = grandmother  
*la pappa* = baby's meal  
*l'asilo nido* = day care

though discretion is appreciated. In most baby stores and some pharmacies you can find breast pumps, called *tiralatte*. The breastfeeding support group La Leche League has materials in English and Italian at [www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org). Many Italians don't nurse their babies much past a year (when maternity leave is up) and nursing after that age is viewed as out of the ordinary.

When babies start on solid food, Italian women rely on an age-old recipe that is even given out by pediatricians. While there may be small variances, it usually consists of a little rice or grain cereal, mixed with the broth of one or more basic vegetables like carrots, zucchini and potatoes, mashed along with a teaspoon or two of grated parmesan cheese and a splash of extra virgin olive oil. Later, meat, fowl, lamb and fish are introduced, often first in a powdered, freeze-dried form called *liofilizzato* and later by cooking a small amount of veal, chicken or fish *a vapore* (steamed) and then grinding or mincing it into the *pappa*. While pre-made baby food in jars is available in supermarkets and pharmacies, making the fresh *pappa* by hand is still common.

## BABY SUPPLIES

Check the yellow pages under *ABBIGLIAMENTO BAMBINI E RAGAZZI* for a complete list of stores selling baby clothes, furniture and accessories. Games and toys are listed under *GIOCATTOLE E GIOCHI*.

Prenatal has two stores in the center which carry maternity and baby clothes along with everything else you'd need for a newborn. Prices are medium to high, but the quality is excellent. Chicco is another chain for clothing and accessorizing your baby. Most pharmacies stock basic baby foods, creams, bottles, pacifiers, diapers and even a few toys. For baby furniture, the Bolognese household name is Orsini, located in Via Aldo Moro, 10 in San Lazzaro di Savena. Here you can special order your *passettino* (stroller) of choice, but be sure to do so months before giving birth. For cloth diapers and other hard-to-find items, see [www.ipiccolissimi.it](http://www.ipiccolissimi.it).

## EDUCATION

Sending your child to school in a foreign country constitutes a major step toward integration for the entire family. Schools are used to having pupils from other countries and it is unlikely that your child will be the only foreigner in his or her class. Many schools with a high number of foreign pupils organize special language lessons to help those students who don't speak Italian.

A multicultural class, however, does not necessarily translate into a multicultural curriculum. It is up to the individual teachers to decide how and if they want to incorporate lessons about different cultures or religions into their curriculum. Attitudes about your child's bilingual skills and the parents' choice to speak a different language at home are also likely to differ depending on the individual teacher. When considering what school your child will attend, try to meet the teachers and if possible, bring your child with you. Once your child is enrolled in school, getting involved is the best way for you and your child to adapt to the new environment.

## THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Italy has some of the oldest educational institutions in Europe. Here, education is state-controlled and all schools, both public and private, must comply with the curricula and teaching methods set by the *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione* (Ministry of Public Education). Schools are administered locally by the *Provveditorato agli Studi*. School is mandatory and free of charge for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 and is segmented into *scuola elementare* (elementary school) from ages 6 to 11 and *scuola media* (middle school) from ages 11 to 14. Many students choose to continue their education by completing a five-year *scuola superiore* (secondary school).

Bologna's preschools have an outstanding reputation. Day care accept children from 3 months to 3 years of age. Children 3 to 6 years of age may attend *scuola materna* (preschool). Bologna is relatively unique in that the city itself governs many of the public day care and preschools, attesting to the city's longstanding tradition of providing services for working people and their families. The cost of day care depends primarily on income; public preschools are free except for a monthly fee for the food service. Most *quartieri* have a special *ufficio scuola* (school office) that is responsible for sending out information about day care and preschools, receiving school applications and sending out admission letters and packets. The staff is usually knowledgeable and is a good place to start if you have questions about your neighborhood's schools. If your *quartiere* does not have a school office, the URP will be able to give you the information you need.

### Provveditorato agli Studi

Via de' Castagnoli, 1

Tel. 051.6437711

<http://provvbbo.scuole.bo.it>

Visit the following websites for information on the Italian school system:

[www.istruzione.it](http://www.istruzione.it) (Ministry of Public Education)

[www.scuolaer.it](http://www.scuolaer.it) (schools of the Emilia Romagna Region)

[www.edubo.it](http://www.edubo.it) (education portal for the Province of Bologna)

[www.comune.bologna.it/servizi/scuola/scuola.php](http://www.comune.bologna.it/servizi/scuola/scuola.php) (list of school-related sites)

[www.comune.bologna.it/istruzione](http://www.comune.bologna.it/istruzione) (types of schools and programs in Bologna)

*Do not judge a school from the outside. This is something I discovered while living in Bologna. You can walk by something a hundred times and have no idea of what is behind the portone. Signage outside the school may be minimal and perhaps they*

*only have one line in the yellow pages but this does not necessarily indicate an inferior school. At least in their marketing, private schools here seem less competitive with each other compared to other places I have lived.*

*Kim Brown*

Although primarily directed toward teachers, Bologna's center for intercultural education, CD/Lei, offers assistance to foreign families with school-age children.

**CD/Lei – Centro Documentazione/Laboratorio per un'Educazione Interculturale  
(Documentation Center/Laboratory for Intercultural Education)**

Via Ca' Selvatica, 7

Tel. 051.6443345

[www.iperbole.bologna.it/istruzione/cd-lei/index.php](http://www.iperbole.bologna.it/istruzione/cd-lei/index.php)

## DAY CARE

Bologna's day care centers are what the name *asilo nido* implies: a safe nest in which babies and small children thrive, in an atmosphere that favors well-balanced physical and emotional development. All the city's public day care share the same division by age group: *piccoli* or *lattanti* (little or nursing) for ages 3 to 12 months, *medi* (medium) for ages 13 to 21 months and *grandi* (big) for 22 months to 3 years. Some day care offer all three sections, while others only host *medi* and *grandi*.

Parents who want to send their children to public day care must be residents or have applied for residency at the time of school registration. Registration for day care takes place in April or May. If your child was born in Italy and registered at the *anagrafe* you will receive information automatically in the mail. If you recently moved to Bologna or did not receive notification, go to your local *ufficio scuola*. Many *quartieri* web sites list this information.

The information packet will include an application, descriptive booklets and a list of the day care along with the dates and times of their open houses. It is possible to send your child to day care in a different neighborhood; the application, however, must be received by your own *quartiere*.

As may be expected, attendance at *asilo nido* is coveted and space is limited, especially for older babies. It is a good idea to apply to as many facilities as you can. The monthly cost of day care is determined by your yearly income, which is declared on a financial statement called an Attestazione ISEE. This document is prepared at a Centro Autorizzato di Assistenza Fiscale (CAAF); a list of centers is usually provided upon registration. For more information on CAAF offices, see Chapter 5: Work.

To get the Attestazione ISEE, you need last year's tax declarations and ending bank balances plus any liabilities such as a mortgage remaining on a home. Other than the tax forms, you can usually have the other figures written down by hand on a piece of paper – they'll take your word for it. Your income is then divided by the number of people in your family and you are given an official estimate of your ability to pay.

It is a good idea to get your ISEE statement as soon as possible since many CAAF have heavy workloads and long waiting lists. Once you receive your statement, it is valid for one year. If your child attends day care for more than one year, you do not need to get a new statement unless your financial situation changes, for example, you move from full-time to part-time work. In this case, it is worthwhile to update your paperwork for a lower monthly fee. Your financial position also helps determine your place on the

*graduatoria* (ranking), a list prioritizing entrance according to need. Low income, single-parent households, children with disabilities, working parents without other relatives, and siblings, all contribute to a preferential spot on the list.

## PRIVATE DAY CARE OPTIONS

There are many private day care centers in Bologna for those who do not get a place at a public *asilo nido*. A list of approved centers that have a number of places at public prices is included with the registration packet. For older children, there are a few preschools that have a day care section – they are called *sezioni primavera* (spring section) and information is obtained by contacting the participating school directly. For those who do not require full-time day care, there are also a few centers that offer morning care two or three days a week. Bologna also offers two types of mini day care, small groups of two to five children that meet either at a private home or in an authorized center. For more information about these additional services consult the city's website.

## DAY CARE: WHAT TO EXPECT

Most children are dropped off between 8 and 9 in the morning and picked up by 17 in the afternoon. For children older than 1 year, it is possible to extend these hours either in the morning (from 7:30) and/or in the evening (until 18). Some day care offer a part-time service with pick-up midday.

Much of the day is spent playing under the supervision of well-trained staff. In the Italian school system there is no teaching in the traditional sense until elementary school. Children in the *medi* and *grandi* sections, however, often have access to children's theater, libraries and numerous arts and crafts. Children who stay the whole day are put down for a nap; the babies have cribs while older children use low cots. Staff regularly change diapers and help with toilet training. Activities (mostly bowel movements and eating) are recorded and can be reviewed each day when you pick up your child.

Most day care have their own kitchens and prepare fresh food daily. Children eat a snack of fresh fruit mid-morning, a hot lunch, and for those who stay all day, a mid-afternoon snack. The menu is posted each calendar month along with any variations. Even picky Italian parents agree that day care centers provide a healthy and varied menu.

Expect your child to get sick once he or she starts day care. While a simple cold, runny nose or cough poses no problem, your child will be sent home if he or she has any of the

*Take heart: I'm a foreigner, I have two kids, and I have never failed to get my kids in the nido, materna or elementary school that I wanted. I myself have been attending the*

*Accademia di Belle Arti - Scuola di Nudo (as an auditor) for several years now, taking advantage of what higher education offers here too.*

*Elizabeth Garvey*

following: fever, more than two bouts of diarrhea, conjunctivitis or any other contagious disease. Once your child has been sent home, he or she will need a doctor's note to be readmitted. A doctor's permission is also necessary for absences due to sickness that last more than five working days.

## THE INTEGRATION PROCESS AT DAY CARE

The gradual *inserimento* (integration) of children at day care can be challenging for the working parent. Although each day care has its own process, they all generally follow the same guidelines. During the first few days, parents spend a few hours at school with their child. As the days (and weeks) go by, parents are permitted to leave the child for increasingly longer periods of time. The idea is to make the transition from home to day care as painless as possible since this is the first time many children will be spending a substantial amount of time away from their families. If you plan on leaving your child all day, the *inserimento* process will take at least three weeks.

## PRESCHOOL

Most children in Bologna attend a *scuola materna* for at least a year before starting elementary school. In Bologna, preschools are either *statali* (state-run) or *comunali* (city-run). City-run schools have a better reputation, a longer school calendar and generally more funds for projects, outings and activities. There are a few preschools that follow the Montessori approach, including Gabelli, Carducci and Marighetto. For more information, see [www.montessori.it](http://www.montessori.it).

As with all public day care, parents who want to send their children to preschool must be residents or have applied for residency at the time of school registration. If your child is registered at the *anagrafe*, information will be mailed to you automatically. If you do not receive notification, go to your local *ufficio scuola*. Registration takes place in January and is handled by the *ufficio scuola* in each *quartiere* that sends out the registration form and information packet in late fall. If you are interested in schools in different *quartieri* you must contact their school offices for information. However, the registration form must be delivered to the office in your own *quartiere*. Unlike day care, admission to the *scuola materna* is based on where you live and it is often very difficult to send your child to a school outside your *quartiere*. When the number of applicants exceeds available spaces, admission is awarded according to need. As with day care, there is a *graduatoria* and children with disabilities, children from single parent households and children with siblings in the same school complex are placed on top of the list. You can request early enrollment for your child for *scuola materna* if he or she turns 3 in January or February of the following school year, but be warned that he or she will automatically go to the bottom of the *graduatoria*.

## PRESCHOOL: WHAT TO EXPECT

There is no formal *inserimento* process at preschool although parents who want to send their children full-time might have to wait a few weeks before their child is allowed to

spend the entire day at school. Some schools have three sections divided by age while other schools have mixed classes, an important consideration when choosing a school. Children must arrive at school before 9; pick-up times may vary from school to school but generally you may retrieve your child from 11:45-12, from 13-14, or from 16:30-17:30. Children get a morning snack of cookies and milk, lunch, and for those who stay all day, an afternoon snack. Children are expected to be toilet trained prior to enrollment. Activities and teaching styles vary from school to school and even from class to class, so it is a good idea to visit as many schools as you can and talk to parents of children already attending a preschool. Common activities include music and movement classes, outings to the children's theater, libraries, museums and language workshops. Children in their final year of preschool often have English and/or computer classes and get the skills they need for a successful transition to elementary school. In general, playtime outside is dependent on good weather. Playgrounds and equipment can vary considerably from school to school.

Italian preschool also entails a weekly Catholic religion component. It is not obligatory; you can choose that your child not participate when you register for preschool and can also opt out (or in) at any point during the school year. Children who do not participate generally do some other activity with their regular teacher.

## ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

Foreign students may attend public schools as long as their parents have a valid *permesso di soggiorno*. The registration process is greatly facilitated if you bring documentation of your child's prior education, preferably translated into Italian and authorized by the Italian consulate in your home country. Once your child is in the system, you will receive regular notification when the time comes to move from one school to the next.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Registration for elementary school takes place in January; children who will be 6 years old by December 31 are obligated to enter first grade. Children who will be 6 years old by the following April 30 are eligible for first grade, but are considered for placement after the older children. Most teachers do not recommend such an early entrance to elementary school.

*Our first son, Mattia, started the Italian asilo nido when he was 10 months. He was in a group with nine other babies all within a few months of his age. We had regularly scheduled bi-monthly meetings with his assigned educator who carefully discussed with us his personality traits, his development, character, interaction with other*

*babies, food habits, etc. The downside to the first year of asilo nido is that small babies are often sick, and in turn, at home more often than they are at day care. But, while he was there, we trusted the educators and felt he was in a warm, affectionate and healthy environment.*

*Carol Sicbaldi*

Bologna is divided into school districts, each with a *direzione didattica* or *istituto comprensivo* (superintendency) that oversees the public education within its jurisdiction. These offices are listed in the yellow pages under *SCUOLE PUBBLICHE*; a useful list organized by *quartiere* can be found at:

[www.comune.bologna.it/istruzione/scuoleprimarie/index.php](http://www.comune.bologna.it/istruzione/scuoleprimarie/index.php). Naturally, each district has its own registration process. You will belong to a district by virtue of location and will receive notice of its schools by mail or through the *scuola materna*. If you are interested in schools outside your *comprensivo* and/or *quartiere*, you must contact their *direzione didattica* for information. As with preschool, admission is based on location; applications to schools outside one's *quartiere* are considered last.

Elementary school registration usually takes place directly at the *direzione didattica*. Registration for before and after-school activities and the lunch service, however, takes place at your local *ufficio scuola* from the end of June through the first two weeks of July.

In the not so distant past, most schools were *tempo pieno* (full-time); these schools are now few and far between. Full-time means the school day starts at 8:30 and ends at 16:30, Monday-Friday, 40 hours/week. Children eat at school and you pay a small fee for this service. Schools that can no longer afford the classic full-time may offer what is called *tempo lungo* (extended time) that offers the same hours as full-time but with fewer teachers.

The other option is a *scuola modulare* (modular school) and depending on the module, the time spent at school varies from 30 to 36 hours per week. Generally, children at a *scuola modulare* go to school from 8:30 to 12:30, Monday-Friday, with afternoon classes two to three times a week. Some modular schools also meet on Saturday mornings.

Many schools offer extended hours for working parents; children may be dropped off at 7:30 and picked up no later than 18:30. This service is offered for a fee by an external cooperative.

Depending on whether the school is *tempo pieno* or *modulare*, Italian elementary schools have two to four teachers assigned to each class. In theory, children have the same teachers and classmates throughout their primary education, but an increasing number of teachers without a fixed school assignment makes change inevitable. Class size is supposed to be limited to 25 (20 if a class contains a child with disabilities) but cuts have resulted in increasingly larger classes.

Extra-curricular programs differ greatly from one school to the next. All elementary schools must have three hours of creative workshops per week, but their content is up to individual schools and teachers. English is now a fixed part of the curriculum from the first year of elementary school. The weekly Catholic religion option continues in elementary school.

Children from elementary school through middle school are expected to bring a *diario* (diary) to school as a means of communication between parents and teachers. Children copy their homework assignments into these notebooks and teachers will write notes to parents regarding behavior, school trips and other information.



## MIDDLE SCHOOL

The exact date of registration for middle school is communicated via your child's elementary school, usually during the last two weeks of January. Since this is when school gets serious, you should begin collecting information about various schools early in order to be able to make an informed decision. Each of the city's middle schools issues a document called a *piano dell'offerta formativa* (plan of educational offering) which includes all the information related to the school and lists different activities and special projects open to students.

If you've just moved to Bologna, go to your local *ufficio scuola* or contact directly the office of the schools in which you are interested. If there are spaces available, it is possible to enroll your child in middle school after the deadline. If your child attended elementary school outside your local district and you now want to register your child in one of the middle schools within your *quartiere*, you will need a *nulla osta* (no obstacle), a document attesting to special clearance for your child. Your local *ufficio scuola* should be able to inform you as to how to obtain this document.

There are two timetable options for middle school: *tempo normale* (regular time) in which 30 hours of lessons per week are divided over five or six days, or *tempo prolungato* (extended time) which consists of 36 hours of class time per week.

At middle school, students will have the same classmates for all three years, but the teachers change from subject to subject and from year to year.

## SECONDARY SCHOOL

In Italy, choosing a secondary school means deciding early the educational path your child will follow. Learning programs vary greatly depending on whether your child selects a *liceo* (high school), an *istituto tecnico* (technical school), *istituto artistico* (artistic school) or an *istituto professionale* (professional school).

There are eight different types of *licei*, each with its own particular focus. The curriculum for all types, however, is designed to prepare students for university. Although the diploma students receive when they finish a *liceo* is valid in competitions for public jobs, the assumption is that the student will attend university rather than enter the workforce immediately.

Students who go to *istituti tecnici* graduate with certification for work as technicians, such as plumbers, draftsmen, electricians, etc. Students who graduate from *istituti*

*Elementary school is a radical departure from the previous three years of scuola materna. One day you're riding your tricycle and playing dress-up. The next you're sitting at a desk with a notebook for hours on end. First graders are expected to read, write and do simple math equations. The faster kids wait for and help the slower ones. The teacher*

*lets the slowest student set the pace, but if she's good, she makes a massive effort to help that student and "no child left behind" is a reality. On the flip side, if a child has a special talent for a subject, it's unlikely to be stimulated by additional assignments. Everyone keeps the same pace.*

*Liz Kaplan*

*professionali* also have professional qualifications, such as accounting skills, which make it possible for them to begin work immediately. There are many different types of technical and professional schools, some with very demanding curricula. To obtain a complete list of secondary schools, go to your local *direzione didattica*. An exhaustive guide can also be found at: [www.guidascuolesuperiori.provincia.bologna.it](http://www.guidascuolesuperiori.provincia.bologna.it). The search for the right secondary school begins in the fall of the last year of middle school. Many secondary schools organize after-school activities such as theater groups, clubs, sports teams and student government. Some schools do not offer any extra-curricular activities and you must instead enroll your child in one of the numerous private sports or arts programs in your area.

## ORAL EXPRESSION

Italian schools place great emphasis on oral expression. From elementary school on, the dreaded *interrogazione* (oral exam) is one of the principal means of evaluating students' progress and final grades. Pop *interrogazioni* are also quite popular. This is good preparation for the university system, where much examination is done orally, but to parents unaccustomed to such an oral emphasis, this method might seem like a special form of torture. To help children prepare, have them read assigned material and take notes about important facts. These should then be memorized and expounded upon out loud.

## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Official parental participation in Italian schools is accomplished through the election of one or more class representatives who attend periodic meetings with teachers. Don't expect too much from your class representative; the onus is on you to find out what is going on at school. Don't be afraid to ask the teachers and the parent representatives for information as the three to four annual parent-teacher meetings aren't always sufficient. Most teachers are also amenable to setting up additional meetings. Getting to know the other parents is also a good way to keep abreast of things in and outside school. When your children are young, you are expected to personally pick them up at school, rather than have the child rely on public transportation. Some schools encourage this practice until the child is 14 years old. You will fill out a form noting who, other than a parent, is allowed to pick up your child. If you send somebody else, make sure you notify the school.

## SCHOOL DOCTOR

There is a doctor who oversees health issues for each school. Children who have been absent due to a lengthy illness must have medical clearance in order to return to the classroom. The school doctor can provide this authorization if you're unable to have your child seen by your family doctor. School doctors don't work in the school. Get the address of the physician assigned to your school from your *ufficio scuola* or *quartiere* information office.

## PRIVATE SCHOOLS

A list of private schools can be picked up at your local *quartiere* school office. Private schools can also be found in the yellow pages under *SCUOLE PRIVATE*. Below are selected private schools recommended by IWF members.

### **International School of Bologna**

Via D'Azeglio, 55

Tel. 051.6449954

[www.isbologna.com](http://www.isbologna.com)

For children age 3 to 11 years.

### **Kinder Haus/Kinder College**

Via Cino da Pistoia, 7; Via dell'Osservanza, 88

Tel. 051.581344

[www.kinderhaus.it](http://www.kinderhaus.it)

English and bilingual programs from preschool through middle school.

There is also a Steiner School in nearby Casteldebole offering preschool through middle school and an additional preschool class in the Bolognina area.

### **Giardino d'infanzia**

Via di Vincenzo, 37

Tel. 051.359453

### **Scuola Steineriana "Maria Garagnani"**

Via Morazzo, 4/4

Tel. 051.6415398

[www.scuolasteineriana.org](http://www.scuolasteineriana.org)

## RAISING BILINGUAL CHILDREN

Living in a foreign country is an excellent opportunity to raise your kids bilingually as it will greatly ease their transition into Italian culture and enrich their time here. The choices you make will largely depend on the ages of your children and your home situation. There are many pedagogical approaches to raising children bilingually. One of the most common methods is for each parent to speak his or her mother tongue when

*My Italian husband and I both speak English in the home to our three young children and so far it is going well. If you speak to our oldest son in one language, he will respond in that language, though the siblings seem to speak more Italian between them, especially now that our oldest is in school and we travel back to the US less*

*frequently. We know other families who mix it up, but it seems the kids mix it up too, speaking a little English, a little Italian. Everyone has their own way that is best for them. We have made a conscious effort to speak English in the home and that has worked for us.*

*Hae Kyung Kang*

addressing the child directly one-on-one. Generally speaking, the younger the child, the easier it is to pick up a new language. If you move to Bologna as an English-speaking family and wish for your children to attend Italian schools, then speak to the staff at the school to find out if there are any specific language programs to assist non-Italian speakers. If you feel your child will need extra tutoring in Italian, contact an Italian language school; see Chapter 1: Plugging In. An online resource for parents raising bilingual children is: [www.bilingualbabies.org](http://www.bilingualbabies.org).

## **ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES**

Bologna doesn't offer a huge selection of activities for children in English, but there are a few out there. A good starting place is the IWF website, [www.iwfbologna.com](http://www.iwfbologna.com), where you can find more information about playgroups organized by English-speaking moms. The Madrelingua/English Baby Club is a language school offering English and Italian courses for bilingual children.

### **Madrelingua/English Baby Club**

Via San Giorgio, 6

Tel. 051.267822

[www.madrelinguabologna.com](http://www.madrelinguabologna.com) or [www.madrelinguaitaliano.com](http://www.madrelinguaitaliano.com)

## **ART**

### **Studio Maria Moscato**

Via dell'Angelo Custode, 61

Tel. 349.3595405

[www.mariamoscato.com](http://www.mariamoscato.com)

Art courses in English for children age 6 and up.

## **MUSIC**

### **Music Together**

Various class locations in Bologna, San Lazzaro di Savena and Castelmaggiore

Tel. 051.6347029

[www.musictogether.it](http://www.musictogether.it)

Music Together is a wonderful program for parents and children that combines song, movement, rhythm and percussion in a fun package in both English and Italian.

Some schools and nurseries, such as Green Corner, also offer activities in English. Scuola Media Malpighi, for example, organizes basketball and theater classes in English. Most of the city libraries, particularly the Sala Borsa, have a selection of children's books and videos in English.

### **Green Corner**

Via L. Busi, 19

Tel. 051.432092

## Scuola Media Malpighi

Via Audinot, 43

Tel. 051.585616

## ENTERTAINING KIDS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Finding fun activities for children outside of school in Bologna is no problem, the challenge is finding time to experience them all. School bulletin boards and your local or central URP are good sources for information. Most swimming pools, sports clubs and many gyms offer special classes for kids. The BimbiBo site has a calendar that lists many kid-related activities, including special museum openings, library readings, puppet shows and more: [www.bimbibo.it/eventcal.php](http://www.bimbibo.it/eventcal.php).

## PLAY CENTERS

Bologna's *centri giochi* or *ludoteche* (play centers) are a great way to meet other parents while your children ages 0-6 play with their peers in a controlled environment. There are many such centers throughout Bologna, most are open a few mornings or afternoons a week and the first visit is usually free. Subsequent visits are paid with a ticket, purchased in packets of ten. These tickets can be used at any participating center in the city. The nominal entry fee often includes snacks for the kids and coffee and tea for the adults. Many play centers also offer additional courses such as baby massage and arts and crafts. Your local *quartiere* or URP office can provide you with a list of these centers.

## CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES

Bologna's principal children's library is located in the Sala Borsa in Piazza Maggiore. It boasts a large collection of books in many languages including English, German, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian as well as videos, DVDs, an internet point and a pleasant reading and play area for small children. It's the perfect place to take a quiet break from the city when out with children. It's also a convenient and relatively private space for nursing a baby or otherwise tending to a child's needs. There are also numerous *spazi lettura* (reading rooms) throughout the city. In addition to children's books and videos they often offer readings and creative workshops. See the Sala Borsa website at [www.bibliotecasalaborsa.it/ragazzi](http://www.bibliotecasalaborsa.it/ragazzi).

*I'm not sure how I would have survived the first few months of motherhood without my local ludoteca. When my daughter was born, I felt very isolated so I signed up for a baby massage class. There, I discovered ten other women all experiencing the same mixed emotions I was. After the massage lessons, we passed on to conversations in which we*

*talked about birth, death, our husbands, and everything in between. These conversations were a revelation to me and helped me feel more confident as a mother and less foreign as a woman. As my children grow we continue to use the center, but it is the friendships I made with the other women that I cherish the most.*

*Alexa Sinel*

## CHILDREN'S THEATER

The children's theater Testoni Ragazzi puts on plays for children ages 1 and up from November to April and organizes workshops and summer activities for older children.

### **Testoni Ragazzi**

Via Matteotti, 16

Tel. 051.4153800 tickets

Tel. 051.4153700 office

[www.testoniragazzi.it](http://www.testoniragazzi.it)

The Montagnola park also offers a theater series for children ages 4 and up.

### **Isola Montagnola – A Teatro nel Parco (Theater in the Park)**

Via Irnerio, 2/3

Tel. 051.4228708

[www.isolamontagnola.it](http://www.isolamontagnola.it)

## MUSEUMS

From January to May, many of Bologna's museums participate in a special calendar of children's events called Il Museo Si Diverte. The URP offices and websites usually carry each year's program. Museums of particular interest to children include: Museo Civico Archeologico, Museo del Patrimonio Industriale, Museo di Zoologia, Museo Geologico Capallini, Museo della Preistoria Luigi Donini. For details about these museums and others, see Chapter 8: Tempo Libero.

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Bologna has a number of parks with playgrounds, an excellent way to meet your neighbors and their children. For more information about green space, see Chapter 8: Tempo Libero and Chapter 9: Provincia.

## SCOUTING

There are two main boy and girl scout organizations in Bologna. AGESCI is organized by the Catholic church. CNGEI has an inter-denominational approach.

### **AGESCI – Associazione Guide e Scouts Cattolici Italiani (Association of Italian Catholic Guides and Scouts)**

Via Rainaldi, 2

Tel. 051.490065 or 051.540104

[www.agesci.org](http://www.agesci.org)

### **CNGEI - Corpo Nazionale Giovani Esploratori Esploratrici Italiani (National Corps of Young Italian Explorers)**

Via Mirasole, 31

Tel. 051.331555

[www.cngei.it](http://www.cngei.it)

## BABYSITTERS

While word-of-mouth is the best way to find a babysitter, notice boards at schools, supermarkets and shops are usually full of announcements. There is also a list of English-speaking babysitters posted at the Universities of California and Indiana offices on Via Val d'Aposa, 7.

## SUMMERTIME

Summer can be difficult for working parents as the summer vacation lasts well over two months. Most public day care and schools finish up at the end of June and reopen in mid-September. Some offer a pay-by-the-week program in July. Otherwise there are a number of *campi estivi* (summer camps) for children preschool age and older available on a full-day or half-day basis. There are also sleep-away camps for older children. Programs are available at your local school office and at the city's *Ufficio Settore Sport e Giovani* (Office of Youth and Sports).

### **Ufficio Settore Sport e Giovani**

Via Oberdan, 24

Tel. 051.2194704

[www.comune.bologna.it/sportgiovani](http://www.comune.bologna.it/sportgiovani)

*I feel that Bologna and the surrounding area have a lot to offer a family. I love that we can step outside our door and go on a picturesque hike, eat homemade pasta at a wonderful osteria, or take a short drive and find ourselves in centro. I especially like how the agricultural seasons are deeply rooted in the culture. I think this gives our children a*

*deep connection to the generous nature that surrounds them. There are a lot of seasonal festivals celebrating this (The Chestnut Festival, The Mushroom Festival, The Blueberry Festival, etc.). It's fun for us as a family to go and eat the local products, listen to the music, dance and be a part of everything.*

*Kristin Post*



*Christine Ricci, University Administrator  
Princeton, NJ, USA & Tokyo, Japan*



## 7 > SHOPPING

### INTRODUCTION

Think of your first few shopping expeditions in Bologna as adventures. Shopping is a great way to practice your Italian, get to know Bologna and learn more about the cuisine and culture. Whether you're looking to *fare la spesa* or *fare shopping*, you'll need to follow some shopping etiquette. There is not much "self-service" in Bologna and in clothing stores you should let the *titolare* or *commessa* help you. Unless you are in the *piazzola*, it is best not touch any merchandise on your own. If you haven't decided and simply wish to browse, you can always say "*dò solo un'occhiata, grazie.*"

Although there are numerous large supermarkets in the city, food shopping at small grocers or in the open-air market is still part of the daily ritual for many Italians. For the newcomer, figuring out when shops are open can be confusing. While some shops in the historical center of the city still close for a long lunch and don't reopen on Thursday afternoons, many others maintain *orario continuato*. Open for business or not, the pride Bologna shopkeepers take in their enticing *vetrine* makes window shopping under the city's characteristic arcades a delightful experience, no matter what the weather!

### FOOD SHOPPING

#### SMALL SHOPS AND MARKETS

Many people in Bologna do their shopping at *negozi di alimentari* (small grocers), outdoor markets and specialty shops. While it can be overwhelming at first, shopping Italian style and liberating oneself from the one-stop superstore becomes a real pleasure. Don't be discouraged if shop personnel seem a little reserved at first. The key to shopping in Bologna is to find stores or stands that you like and return again and again. After two or three visits back to the same place you'll be accepted as a regular customer. The tradeoff is you may not find everything you want in one stop. Your butcher may not carry eggs. Your favorite greengrocer may not carry radishes, you'll find them down the street. Establishing and maintaining a good relationship with local vendors should be a part of your game plan. Don't hesitate to ask questions about food preparation. Many vendors are pleased to tell you how to cook a vegetable you've never tried before or offer suggestions for marinating the lamb chops you're buying for dinner.

*fare la spesa* = go grocery shopping  
*fare shopping* = go shopping for clothes, gifts etc.  
*il titolare/la commessa* = owner or salesperson  
*la piazzola* = weekly bazaar in Piazza VIII Agosto  
*dò solo un'occhiata, grazie* = I'm just looking, thanks  
*orario continuato* = continuous opening without a midday closure  
*le vetrine* = window displays

Try your neighborhood shops or head to one of the market areas in the heart of the city. The biggest is the covered *Mercato delle Erbe* (Herb Market), a warehouse with fruit and vegetable stands as well as butcher shops, dairies, bakeries and beauty supplies. Fresh catch of the day is located in a special section in the back.

### **Mercato delle Erbe**

Via Ugo Bassi, 2

Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 8-12:30 and 16:30-19:30; Thursday and Saturday 8-12:30

The outdoor market area nestled into the side streets off Piazza Maggiore showcases beautiful displays of produce, but prices are somewhat higher. If you're willing to stand in line, there are two very good fishmongers and produce stands on Via Pescherie and Via Drapperie. The market is also a great place to shop by bicycle - you don't even have to get off your *bici* (bike) to make your purchase! There is another large, centrally-located market in Piazza Aldrovandi specializing in fresh produce and some of the more exotic fruits and vegetables.

The price of an item is usually clearly displayed on individual placards and is calculated either in kilograms or *etti*. One *etto* equals 100 grams or a tenth of a kilo. If you're not familiar with the metric system, ordering may be intimidating, but it won't be long before you're able to correctly gauge just how many apples in a kilo, or *prosciutto* in one *etto*. Of course you can also order fruit by number, as in *cinque mele* (five apples).

### **QUICK GUIDE TO ITALIAN SPECIALTY SHOPS**

*Drogheria*: candies, spices, wines, spirits, some baking supplies, tea, coffee, cocoa

*Edicola*: newspapers and magazines, maps, bus tickets

*Enoteca*: wine, liqueurs, snacks, cookies, chocolate

*Erboristeria*: bulk herbs, natural foods (including gluten-free), homeopathic medicines

*Farmacia*: prescriptions, baby food, diapers, feminine hygiene products, hair care items

*Ferramenta*: hardware, bike locks, light bulbs, locksmithing

*Fruttivendolo*: fresh fruit and vegetables, sometimes a few canned goods

*Forno*: bread, cookies, pastries, pasta, crackers

*Latteria*: fresh milk, cheese, yogurt

*Merceria*: buttons, children's pajamas, sewing materials, linens

*Profumeria*: beauty products, perfume for men and women, bedroom slippers

*Macelleria*: meat, sometimes poultry, sometimes eggs

*Mesticcheria*: paint, brushes, do-it-yourself craft and hobby items

*Pescheria*: seafood

*Polleria*: poultry, fowl. Note: it's uncommon to cook a whole *tacchino* (turkey) in Italy, so you should special order your bird in advance. You will undoubtedly end up having a conversation about whether or not you prefer the larger, male *tacchino* or the more delicate *tacchinella*. You may find that your bird is too large for your Italian oven. Bring your measurements when purchasing or request it to be deboned.

*Rosticceria*: take-out such as roasted chicken, *lasagne*, grilled vegetables

*Salumeria*: cold-cuts, cheeses, *tortellini*, long-life milk, a limited selection of wine

*Tabaccheria*: cigarettes, stamps, greeting cards, film, bus tickets, phone cards, matches

## SUPERMARKETS AND SUPERSTORES

Maybe you just want to buy your groceries and be done with it. There are many supermarket chain stores in and around Bologna, including Carrefour, Conad, COOP and its larger cousin IperCOOP, Esselunga, Supermercati Emiliani and Pam. You might pay more for vegetables and meat and in exchange, considerably less for pasta and baked goods. On the other hand, you can pick the produce yourself (wearing a plastic glove) rather than having to order from the *fruttivendolo*. You will save time, as you will find everything you need under one roof. When you arrive at the check-out, remember there is a small charge for grocery bags and you will be expected to pack them yourself at warp speed.

Most supermarket chains also offer memberships. You can get discounts on specially-marked items and will receive points for every euro spent, which you can then redeem for a gift. At the COOP supermarket chain, a member cooperative, you can also open a savings account.

You have to travel outside of the center to find the superstores and mega-supermarkets. These stores carry a vast number of products beyond food, including furniture and stereo equipment and have later hours.

## ONLINE SHOPPING AND HOME DELIVERY

If you live in *centro*, especially in a building without an elevator, you might consider online shopping and home delivery. Esselunga has an excellent and easy-to-navigate web site: [www.esselunga.it](http://www.esselunga.it). There is no minimum purchase, they accept all forms of payment and there is a small fee for the convenience of home delivery. Tipping the delivery man is not necessary nor expected.

## DISCOUNT SUPERMARKET CHAINS

A number of discount *alimentari* have outlets in Bologna. Although the ambiance is usually less appetizing, with cartons in the aisles and general disorder, it is possible to find great bargains and the occasional surprise, especially when it comes to cheeses,

*In the produce section, consider one hand “clean” (gloved) and the other one “dirty” (ungloved). The “clean” hand is usually your dominant one, for selecting produce. Your “dirty” hand must remain far from the food until it’s time to weigh your selection. Once you have matched your item with its gaily painted counterpart on the bacteria-*

*laden touch-pad above, the machine ejects a gummed label. By this time, other shoppers are waiting and the pressure is on. You must then extract the sticky label from the dispenser and affix it to the bag. If you use the wrong hand, the label adheres to anything but the bag. Sometimes frozen vegetables are the better choice.*

*Lisa Strickland*

cookies and candies from all over Europe. Lower prices don't always translate into inferior quality. There are often products you might never think of looking for in a discount and they are a good place to stock up on household goods and cleaning products. Look for stores such as In's, Ecu, D più, Eurodiscount, Lidl and Penny Market.

## NATURAL AND ORGANIC FOODS

Many supermarket chains carry organic foods. Look for food marked *biologico*. For a full selection of organic goods, try one of the city's sometimes pricey natural food supermarkets, listed in the yellow pages under *ALIMENTI DI PRODUZIONE BIOLOGICA* or *ALIMENTI DIETETICI O MACROBIOTICI*. In addition to three markets, Natura Sì also has an organic restaurant at its Via Po location.

### Natura Sì

Via Montefiorino, 2/d and 4

Tel. 051.6144011

Viale della Repubblica, 23

Tel. 051.503902

Via Po, 3

Tel. 051.6241205

## WINE AND WATER

Wine can be found in the *enoteca*, at your local *alimentari* and the supermarket. Consider buying directly from a wine producer. It's not unusual to buy wine by the *damigiana* (demijohn) and bottle it yourself. Ask around to find a good wine producer who sells to the public.

Though tested safe for drinking, the water in Bologna and the province is very hard, leading to problems of *calcare* (calcium deposits). This white film can be hard on appliances, laundry and fixtures. Tip: use wine vinegar to remove *calcare* from fixtures and dishes.

Many families rely on bottled water and choosing a brand of mineral water is something many Italians take surprisingly seriously. You will always be asked if you prefer *acqua naturale* (still water) or *frizzante* (carbonated). If you don't feel like toting all those bottles around, look in the yellow pages under *ACQUE MINERALI E BEVANDE* for companies who offer *servizio a domicilio* (home delivery). Another option is to get a water filter, available in a *ferramenta*.

## BOLOGNA SPECIALTIES

If you love rich, full-flavored dishes, then you've come to the right place. Many dishes here are laden with butter and cream, although it is possible to eat light or vegetarian. But never let it be said that the Bolognese don't like pork, as its appearance in virtually everything puts a different spin on the term "pig out." Before you run off to your local *mercato* or *ristorante*, take a look at the following mini-food glossary.

## PASTA

*Tagliatelle*: long, thin, flat egg noodles best served with *ragù*. The tourist version of this dish is “*spaghetti alla Bolognese*.”

*Ragù*: a good *ragù* must cling to the pasta. It must have the right mix of meats (veal, pork and sausage) and spices and simmer for hours. Just a touch of tomato is added as the authentic version is not a tomato sauce. To finish, add a drop of heavy cream and a dollop of fresh butter. Some recipes also call for red wine.

*Tortellini*: little pouches of egg pasta filled with pork, *prosciutto*, *mortadella*, parmesan cheese and various spices. The traditional Bolognese recipe is to serve them cooked in a meat broth with lots of parmesan cheese on top.

*Tortelloni*: shaped like *tortellini* only bigger and filled with *ricotta* and spinach or other greens. Served with *ragù*, a plain tomato sauce, or *burro e salvia* (butter and sage).

*Lasagne*: don't expect to find *ricotta*, *mozzarella* or zucchini layered between these egg pasta sheets. Authentic Bolognese *lasagna* is made with *ragù*, white béchamel sauce and parmesan cheese.

## BREAD

*Crescente*: square bread usually made with lard, to which *prosciutto*, *pancetta* or *ciccioli* has been added. You can also find meatless versions topped with rosemary or onion. Often served in a basket in *osterie*.

*Crescentine*: puffy, fried bread dough, usually served hot with a selection of cold cuts and cheeses.

*Piadina*: a famous favorite from Romagna, this Italian tortilla is a thin, flat, round bread cooked on a flat iron. They are eaten folded in half and filled with *prosciutto*, *rucola* (arugula), *stracchino*, or *squacquerone* (two varieties of soft, fresh cheese).

*Tigelle*: made of the same dough as *crescentine* but cooked between two stone or metal discs and usually sliced in half and filled with *prosciutto*, other cold cuts, or cheese. If you dare, try them as they were meant to be eaten, filled with *pesto modenese*, which is made of lard, garlic, rosemary and parmesan cheese.

## MEAT

*Cotechino*: a large pork sausage seasoned with cloves, nutmeg, salt and pepper. This heavy dish is usually reserved for the winter months. A classic at Christmas or New Year's.

*One of the secrets to cooking meat, poultry and fish in Emilia Romagna is salamoia Bolognese, a regional seasoning salt found in most Bolognese kitchens that you can buy at the store (stocked with the herbs and spices). My mother-in-law, Angela, makes her own by finely chopping fresh rosemary, garlic and a little pepper into a pesto, then mixing it*

*with sale grosso, or rock salt, which she has crushed slightly using a glass bottle. She is careful to explain that sale grosso is too big, but sale fino is too small. Every few weeks she sends me a fresh jar of these sale odori, which I sprinkle on just about anything before cooking or barbecuing.*

*Kathryn Knowles*

*Mortadella*: this is Bologna's most famous cold cut, known outside of Italy as bologna! You'll find it at every *salumeria*.

*Prosciutto*: the stars of the *prosciutto* world are San Daniele di Friuli and Prosciutto di Parma. *Prosciutto cotto* is cooked ham and *prosciutto crudo* is cured, salted raw ham.

*Zampone*: here the sausage meat has been stuffed back inside the pig's *zampa* (foot) making for quite a display.

*Bollito misto*: this traditional dish consists of boiled meats and vegetables.

## SWEETS

*Castagnole*: a traditional carnival sweet, these soft, doughy balls made of chestnut flour are deep fried and then rolled in sugar.

*Certosino and Panettone*: these rich Christmas fruitcakes are chock-full of candied fruit, nuts and chocolate. *Panettone* is a simpler and softer version of *certosino*. Around Easter, the *panettone* reappears with a slightly altered recipe, this time in the shape of a dove, *la colomba*.

*Fave dei morti*: these delicious, multi-colored chewy cookies made of almond paste appear in bakeries during the last two weeks of October. They are made for the November 1 and 2 holidays, when Italians remember their deceased loved ones.

*Raviole*: made of cookie dough filled with prune or apricot jam and folded into a half moon. The Bolognese make them especially for March 19, the saint day of San Giuseppe, which is also celebrated as Father's Day.

*Torta di riso*: the Bolognese are very proud of this solid confection, half cake, half custard. It's made with rice, almonds and *amaretto*.

*Sfrappole*: another traditional carnival sweet made of strips of sweet dough fried and then sprinkled with powdered sugar. *Sfrappole* change name region to region and are also known as *chiacchiere*.

## THINGS FROM HOME

After the first few months of delicious *tortellini*, you may be longing for comfort foods from home. Does the mere mention of peanut butter or marmite make you swoon? Chances are you will be able to find these items here. Major supermarket chains are increasingly carrying specialty items such as Mexican taco kits and Asian sauces and noodles.

Asia Mach carries just about everything Asian, including seven different varieties of soy sauce, coconut milk and spices galore. You can also find fresh cilantro, Indian, Latin American and American specialties.

Be sure to also check out Scaramagli, an upscale wine and candy shop where you can also find a selection of prepared foreign foods, dark grain breads, teas, jams and spices. For Russian specialties and pickled foods, try Kalinka. If you still have energy after furniture shopping at IKEA, the food section at the exit has Scandinavian goodies, see listing in Chapter 3: Housing.

### Asia Mach

Via Mascarella, 81/a/b/c

Tel. 051.253288

Via Livraghi, 5/6

Tel. 051.262213

[www.asiamach.com](http://www.asiamach.com)

### Scaramagli

Strada Maggiore, 31

Tel. 051.227132

### Kalinka

Via Galliera, 63/a

Tel. 051.240173

## FROM SCRATCH

For the ingredients you just can't find - like baking powder or real vanilla extract - try making your own. For baking powder, use 1/4 tsp *bicarbonato* (baking soda) and 1/2 tsp *crema tartara* (cream of tartar), found in the pharmacy. For real vanilla extract, as opposed to the Italian imitation flavoring, soak 2-4 vanilla beans in pure alcohol for 2-3 weeks. You can get the alcohol, called *spirito*, at the *drogheria*. A helpful website for ingredient substitution is [www.kraftfoods.com/kf/CookingSchool/SubstitutionGuide.htm](http://www.kraftfoods.com/kf/CookingSchool/SubstitutionGuide.htm).

## STORE HOURS

Sundays and Thursday afternoon are Bologna's official periods of *riposo* (rest). Just a few years ago it was practically impossible to buy anything on a Thursday afternoon, but this is changing. Store closing is not mandatory and some clothing shops, large shopping centers and department stores remain open. But most of the smaller shops, including those that offer services such as dry cleaning, bike repair and copying will close at lunchtime on Thursday and won't open again until Friday morning. Hairdressers and barbershops on the other hand take their *riposo* on Monday, as do many family-run restaurants. COOP grocery stores stay open Thursday afternoons and close Monday mornings instead. There are also a handful of stands in the market area behind Piazza

*If you are unfamiliar with metric weight measurements, it's very easy to end up with the wrong amount. Have you ever bought crusca? That's bran. I went into a granaglie store and announced that I wanted half a kilo of the stuff! The clerk just stared and stared. I guess he thought I was really*

*having some problems. Because bran is so light, half a kilo of bran is a lot of bran - a whole lot. I was too embarrassed to say anything once I'd realized my mistake and so off I went all "grazie, grazie" with what was clearly a five-year supply!*

*Peggy Kidney*

Maggiore and in Piazza Aldrovandi that maintain *orario continuato*.

On Sundays, you'll have to use the self-service machines for gas. If you need fresh milk, you can try to cajole some barman at a local caffè into selling you some. There is almost always one large supermarket outside the city center open on Sunday - the trick is finding out which one. The best source of information is *Il Resto del Carlino*. Most shops will hang up a banner the week before announcing a special Sunday opening. Almost all shops are open on the Sundays leading up to Christmas and Easter, the biggest Italian food fests. During these holiday periods, shops will also extend their opening hours.

## SHOPPING ETIQUETTE

### DON'T TOUCH THE PRODUCE

The rule, whether in your local market or a superstore, is that fruit and vegetables must not come into direct contact with your hands until after purchase. When in smaller shops, you often end up having to point to the object you desire. The supermarket will provide you with oversized plastic gloves to wear while handling produce.

### "ALTRO"

When a shopkeeper says, "*altro?*" in an inquisitive tone, what they're really asking is, "Do you want anything else?" If you don't want anything else from that particular shopkeeper, an affirmative "*altro*" is the only proper response. This is a Bolognese-ism that baffles people from other parts of Italy.

### RECEIPTS AND RETURNS

It is actually illegal to leave a shop without a receipt and both you and the shopkeeper can be fined by the *Guardia di Finanza* (Finance Police) if caught within five meters of the scene of a transaction without one. With a receipt, some stores accept returns within 15 days, usually for store credit. Otherwise, there is no cure for buyer's remorse.

## CLOTHES & SHOES

Browsing is not always part of the equation in small shops and boutiques when shopping for *abbigliamento e calzature* (clothes and shoes). You are expected to tell the salesperson what you want as soon as you step over the threshold. If you're not up for hovering salesclerks, head for a department store, such as COIN on Via Rizzoli, 7.

Sometimes bad clothes happen to good people, but in Bologna the real style mavens wouldn't be caught dead in last year's fashions. Via D'Azeglio has many shops carrying elegant fashion items and children's clothes. Via Farini's exclusive boutiques cater to fashion slaves on a quest for top-notch items. And if anything other than Gucci, Fendi, La Perla and Bruno Magli simply won't do, then go to Galleria Cavour, located off Via Farini. Under the *portici* of Via dell'Archiginnasio, you will find smaller shops with swimwear, lingerie, shoes and accessories. More moderately priced clothing shops can be found on Via San Felice, Via Rizzoli and Via dell'Indipendenza.



## ALTERATIONS

If you find a garment that fits well but needs minor alterations, the shop where you buy it will usually offer to do the work for a fee. Many family-run dry cleaners have someone on the premises who can do alterations for less than you'd pay elsewhere.

*Sarte* (seamstresses) are still in demand here, especially for weddings and special occasions. Many women can refer you to someone they know and trust. Bring a photo of your dream dress - an experienced *sarta* will be able to copy the design.

## OUTLET STORES

If money were no object, it would not be hard to be chic and avant garde in Bologna - inspiration is everywhere. But doing so on a budget takes talent, or perhaps just knowing where to go to find the best fashion deals. Outlets, known as *spacci*, are shops that sell merchandise from past seasons or items that haven't sold well in regular stores.

### Castel Guelfo Outlets

Via del Commercio, 20/d

Castel Guelfo di Bologna

A large outlet mall with many stores carrying clothing, housewares and furniture.

### Fashion Outlet

Via Emilia Ponente, 73

Anzola dell'Emilia

Single warehouse with fashions divided by brands, avoid Sundays.

### Gianfranco Pini Le Occasioni Outlet

Via Clavature, 17

Reduced prices on women's and men's shoes. Lots of size 37 and up.

### Pancaldi

Via Circonvallazione Sud, 14/20

Molinella

Pancaldi shoes, sold at half price by the manufacturer.

*When I first arrived in Bologna I was terrified of Italian commesse. I would only shop where all the merchandise was in sight, and even there I was afraid of getting dirty looks for unfolding the t-shirts. After six years, I got engaged and had to find a wedding dress. Realizing I was not going to find one at Oviessè, I held my head up high*

*and entered "grown-up" stores like Luisa Spagnoli. There no-one got offended when I didn't actually buy anything. Now I have no qualms about making the girls pull down 10 different pairs of pajamas and still walking out empty-handed. I finally feel I belong, I just wish I'd faced up to my fears earlier.*

*Alexa Sinel*

### **Postacchini Surplus**

Via Carbonesi, 6

Items leftover from the regular Postacchini shop. Finding the right size can be a challenge.

### **Sotto Sotto**

Via Reno, 7/2

Casalecchio di Reno

A large outlet store carrying a good selection of brand name designer clothing.

## **SHOPPING MALLS**

In recent years, shopping malls have sprung up like mushrooms in the outskirts of Bologna. If it weren't for the authentic *espresso* at the food court, you could be in a strip mall in any anonymous city. On the upside, the malls offer parking, air conditioning and diaper-changing facilities. They are usually open Monday 12-21:30; Tuesday-Friday 8:30-21:30; Saturday 8:30-21.

### **Centro Borgo**

Via Marco Emilio Lepido, 186

[www.centroborgo.com](http://www.centroborgo.com)

Bus 87, 13

### **Centro Lame**

Via Beverara, 50

On Via Lame heading out of the city; Bus 17

### **Centro Commerciale Via Larga - Pianeta Conad**

Via Larga, 10

*Tangenziale* exit 11bis or 12; Bus 14B, 14C

### **Centro Commerciale Minganti**

Via della Liberazione, 15

Off of Via Stalingrado; Bus 25, 10, 11

### **Centro Commerciale Navile**

Via Cristoforo Colombo, 7/25

*Tangenziale* exit 5, Via Lame; Bus 17

### **Centro Nova**

Via Villanova, 29

Villanova di Castenaso

Follow San Vitale ss 253, direction Budrio; Bus 89

## **Centro Commerciale Shopville Gran Reno (IKEA)**

Via Marilyn Monroe, 2/9

Casalecchio di Reno

Tangenziale exit 1; Bus 90, 94

## **Parco Commerciale Meraville**

Viale Tito Carnacini, 25

Tangenziale exit 9, direction Granarolo; Bus 20

## **SECOND-HAND SHOPPING**

The Bolognese seem reluctant to buy second-hand. When and if they do decide to sell a used item, they only knock 10-20% off the original price. For adults, you can find both vintage and contemporary used clothing at Manuela Spiga, at the corner of Via Fondazza and Strada Maggiore. The second-hand stores Mercatopoli on Via Pasubio, 39 and Il Capovolto on Via Donato Creti, 51 have second-hand clothing and accessories for babies and small children. Mercatopoli buys used items and Il Capovolto allows you to consign clothing that your children have outgrown.

## **PIAZZOLA/MONTAGNOLA**

Piazzola, the largest open-air market in Bologna, does business all day Friday and Saturday. Located in Piazza VIII Agosto and across the street in Montagnola Park, this market features hundreds of vendors selling just about everything - shoes, handbags, clothes, household items, toys and plants. In the park, a number of stands sell vintage clothing, old coats, used jeans and cashmere, ethnic clothes and sundry paraphernalia. Don't be afraid to barter, especially if you are buying several items. Keep an eye on your purse while browsing for deals.

*One way of saving is to negotiate on the price of almost everything you buy. Try to haggle, even on the smaller items. It is accepted by most shop owners and part of the culture. Some shopkeepers are happy to receive cash instead of checks or credit cards and are willing to take a few euro off the price. If for*

*example, you buy two pairs of kids shoes at the same time, you might receive a discount. Just try to make it a habit to ask - you may be surprised how much you can save with a smile and the question "mi fa uno sconto, per favore?"*

*Pauline Mollema*



*Pauline Mollema, Hydrologist  
The Hague, The Netherlands*

## 8 > TEMPO LIBERO

### INTRODUCTION

Author Henry James once remarked that the Italian diet appeared to include a healthy dose of "sunshine and leisure and conversation." In fact, *tempo libero* and socializing are important elements of the culture here, evident not just in Italians' outgoing character but also in the community-centered architecture, their leisure activities and even their eating habits. Like all Italian cities, Bologna life centers around its public spaces and in the afternoons and evenings, residents head out into the city to *fare una passeggiata*. Epic, multi-course meals are eaten *in compagnia* and can last for hours. Hobbies and sports, even solitary ones like running, are organized into clubs.

Whatever your idea of fun – culture, cuisine, science, art, sports, the outdoors – Bologna's diverse array of leisure activities offers something for everyone. On the other hand, if it is more relaxing for you to "not do" rather than do something, you won't be admonished for being lazy, as time for *riposo* is also valued. Meeting up at a bar for an *aperitivo* or just hanging out with friends to exchange *due chiacchiere* is all part of the art of relaxing *alla Bolognese*.

### HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

From passing the morning in a museum to staying out late on the town, this chapter gives a general overview of what Bologna has to offer. Discovering your own favorite spots is half the fun, so don't limit yourself to what's here.

As always, start with the URP in Piazza Maggiore, which has extensive listings of concerts, plays, cultural events, museum exhibits, tours of the city and more. The city's website, [www.comune.bologna.it](http://www.comune.bologna.it), has listings in Italian and English, as does the University of Bologna's website, [www.unibo.it](http://www.unibo.it). For information about nightspots, cinema and leisure, try the websites [www.bongoclub.it](http://www.bongoclub.it), [www.2torri.it](http://www.2torri.it) (an e-magazine for Bologna) and [www.anidride.com](http://www.anidride.com). La Repubblica and Il Resto del Carlino also list local arts and entertainment events every day. Dove magazine, found in most bars and pubs, also has entertainment listings. Additional information about *tempo libero* in the greater area may be found in Chapter 9: Provincia.

*tempo libero* = free time  
*fare una passeggiata* = take a stroll  
*in compagnia* = with company  
*riposo* = rest  
*un aperitivo* = an aperitif/happy hour cocktail  
*due chiacchiere* = a chat, literally two chats

## PUBLIC ART & ARCHITECTURE

Roaming the streets to visit Bologna's public art and architecture is a great way to get to know the city. It is also good preparation for those out-of-town visitors who inevitably show up wanting to see a Michelangelo. You'll find the expected chapels and cloisters, but also a number of alternative itineraries, such as "Bologna of Museums," "Bologna of Poets," and "Bologna, City of Music," not to mention guided tours of the subterranean city, with its Roman ruins and little-known covered canals. The canals are visible from the street in only a few places, most notably in Via Piella, from a little window in the wall. There are also tours of the private courtyards, gardens and villas, again invisible from the street. Below are a few city highlights not to be missed.

### **Basilica di San Domenico**

Piazza San Domenico, 13

L'arca di San Domenico is adorned with statues by Nicola Pisano, Nicolò dell'Arca and Michelangelo. You may recognize Michelangelo's hand in the angel on the right, the one with the short Roman hair and powerful physique. There are also frescoes by Guido Reni, Filippino Lippi, Ludovico Carracci and other noted painters.

### **Basilica San Martino Maggiore**

Via Oberdan, 25

The first chapel on the left contains a recently discovered fresco, Adorazione del Bambino, attributed to Paolo Uccello, created during a stop in Bologna on his way to Venice. There is no written record of the work and it was likely covered immediately after its creation.

### **Chiesa Santa Maria della Vita**

Via Clavature, 10

Here you will find Nicolò dell'Arca's breathtaking terracotta sculpture *Il Compianto sul Cristo* (1463). Be sure to bring several coins with you as the piece is even more powerful when lit.

### **Collegio di Spagna**

Via Collegio di Spagna, 4

Tel. 051.330408

Founded in 1365, this is one of Bologna's most beautiful buildings. Open January-June for public visits by appointment. Call or send a fax to 051.5840508 to request a visit.

### **Complesso di Santo Stefano**

Via Santo Stefano, 24

This Benedictine foundation is also called *Le Sette Chiese* (The Seven Churches). Dating from the IV century, the complex includes four Romanesque churches of the original seven and a beautiful cloister.

## Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio

Piazza Galvani, 1

Built in 1563 and used by the university until 1803, this building contains the anatomical theater once used in Bologna's School of Medicine. Take note of the coats of arms that surround the courtyard and hallways, which describe the origin of the pupils who once studied here.

## Santuario della Madonna di San Luca

From Porta Saragozza, 666 arches form the elegant arcade of San Luca, which snakes up the hillside to the sanctuary overlooking Bologna.

## LIBRARIES & LEARNING

*Bologna La Dotta* (Bologna the Learned) is one of the most academic cities in Italy. If you want to spend your free time learning about a particular topic, you can turn to the city's dozens of libraries, research institutes and museums. For an overview of libraries, see Chapter 2: Essential Services. A complete list of university libraries may also be found on the website [www.unibo.it](http://www.unibo.it). The digital library system, which lists the exact location of all the system's books, is available through the interdepartmental library center at [www.cib.unibo.it](http://www.cib.unibo.it).

## MUSEUMS

Bologna is home to scores of museums, many of which host interesting temporary exhibitions in addition to their impressive permanent collections. Most museums are closed Mondays. Below are a selection of city museums, see additional references in Chapter 9: Provincia.

### MAMbo Museo Arte Moderna Bologna (Museum of Modern Art)

Via Don Minzoni, 14

Tel. 051.502859

[www.galleriadartemoderna.bo.it](http://www.galleriadartemoderna.bo.it)

Open Tuesday-Sunday 10-18

Reopens in late 2007 with more than 11,000 square meters of space. The museum complex is located inside the *distretto delle arti* (art district), also home to Cineteca and the DAMS music laboratory, not far from Via Azzo Gardino.

*To me, the fountain of Neptune, not the two leaning towers or spacious Piazza Maggiore, is Bologna's real heart. I have many personal associations with Neptune, the*

*fountain was a mandatory daily stop for me and my two-year-old son during my first, somewhat lonely year in Bologna. It never failed to lift our spirits.*

*Liz Kaplan*

### **Museo Ebraico di Bologna (Jewish Museum of Bologna)**

Via Valdonica, 1/5

Tel. 051.2911280

[www.museoebraicobo.it](http://www.museoebraicobo.it)

Open Sunday–Thursday 10–18; Friday 10–16

Contains displays and historical narratives of the region's Jewish population.

### **Museo Comunale (Municipal Art Collection)**

Piazza Maggiore, 6

Tel. 051.203526

[www.comune.bologna.it/Cultura/MuseiCivici](http://www.comune.bologna.it/Cultura/MuseiCivici)

Open weekdays 9–18:30

Works by Carracci, Creti, Palagi, Aspertini, Crespi, Gandolfi and Hayez.

There are a number of other noteworthy civic museums. Not to miss are: *Museo Civico Archeologico* (Civic Archaeology Museum); *Museo Civico d'Arte Industriale e Quadreria "Davida Bargellini"* (Civic Museum of Industrial Art and Davida Bargellini Picture Gallery); and *Museo Civico Medievale* (Civic Medieval Museum)

For more detailed information on these civic museums and others, check the city's listings at [www.comune.bologna.it/Musei](http://www.comune.bologna.it/Musei).

### **Museo della Comunicazione "Mille voci...mille suoni"**

**(Museum of Communication "A Thousand Voices...A Thousand Sounds")**

Via Col di Lana, 7/n

Tel. 051.6491008

[www.museomillevocimillesuoni.com](http://www.museomillevocimillesuoni.com)

Open by appointment

800 pieces related to the history of media, interesting recordings from the fascist era.

### **Museo Morandi (Morandi Museum)**

Piazza Maggiore, 6

Tel. 051.20332

[www.museomorandi.it](http://www.museomorandi.it)

Open Tuesday–Sunday 10–18

A collection of more than 250 works by Bolognese painter Giorgio Morandi.

### **Museo della Musica (Music Museum)**

Palazzo Sanguinetti, 34

Tel. 051.2757711

[www.museomusicabologna.it](http://www.museomusicabologna.it)

Open Tuesday–Sunday 10–18

Paintings of illustrious musicians, antique musical instruments, valuable documents.



## **Museo del Patrimonio Industriale (Museum of Industrial Heritage)**

Via della Beverara, 123

Tel. 051.6356611

[www.comune.bologna.it/patrimonioindustriale](http://www.comune.bologna.it/patrimonioindustriale)

Open Monday-Friday 9-13; Saturday and Sunday 15-18

Five centuries of Bologna history are reconstructed in this interactive exposition.

Machines and scientific instruments from the 1700s on, as well as photography and historical archives.

## **Pinacoteca Nazionale (National Picture Gallery)**

Via delle Belle Arti, 56

Tel. 051.243222

[www.pinacotecabologna.it](http://www.pinacotecabologna.it)

Open Tuesday-Sunday 9-19

A collection of the most noted Emilian painters including works by Giotto, Raffaello, Tiziano, Tintoretto, Carracci and Reni.

## **University Museums**

The University of Bologna has a number of interesting scientific museums from paleontology and zoology to wax anatomy and astronomy. For a complete list contact the SMA - *Sistema Museale d'Ateneo* (University Museum System).

### **SMA - Sistema Museale d'Ateneo**

Via Zamboni, 33

Tel. 051.2099602

[www.sma.unibo.it](http://www.sma.unibo.it)

## **THEATER**

Live theater in Bologna includes everything from dance to opera to traditional drama, with experimental theater and plays performed in Bolognese dialect thrown in for good measure. Programs are available at the URP in Piazza Maggiore. Otherwise, contact the theaters directly for programs and ticket information. A few of the larger theaters are mentioned below. For a complete list, see *TEATRI* in the yellow pages.

*I love the friendliness of Bologna, the emphasis on good food, the young university population and the scale and texture of the city, which is big enough to offer a variety of cultural activities and initiatives without feeling anonymous. But mostly what I love*

*is, after a day of work in Florence spent battling the long lines, tourists and metal detectors to take my students to see the artistic monuments, coming home to Bologna, where the only big crowds are all conveniently contained at the Fiera.*

*Molly Bourne*

**Teatro Comunale**

Largo Respighi, 1

Tel. 051.529999 or 199.107070 for recorded information

[www.tcbo.it](http://www.tcbo.it)

**L'Arena del Sole**

Via dell'Indipendenza, 44

Tel. 051.2910910

[www.arenadelsole.it](http://www.arenadelsole.it)

**Il Teatro delle Celebrazioni**

Via Saragozza, 234

Tel. 051.6153370 or 051.6153374

[www.teatrocelebrazioni.it](http://www.teatrocelebrazioni.it)

**EuropAuditorium**

Piazza Costituzione, 4

Tel. 051.372540

[www.teatroeuropa.it](http://www.teatroeuropa.it)

**Teatro Dehon**

Via Libia, 59

Tel. 051.342934 or 051.344772

[www.teatrodehon.it](http://www.teatrodehon.it)

**Teatro Duse**

Via Cartoleria, 42

Tel. 051.231836

[www.teatroduse.it](http://www.teatroduse.it)

**Teatro delle Moline**

Via delle Moline, 1

Tel. 051.235288

[www.teatrodellemoline.it](http://www.teatrodellemoline.it)

**CINEMA**

Ranked first in the nation for number of movie tickets sold per capita, Bologna is passionate about cinema. Most foreign films are dubbed into Italian and Italians pride themselves on having the best dubbers in the world. Indeed, the Italian Woody Allen is one of the more famous personalities in Italy. Daily movie listings are found in the local pages of La Repubblica and Il Resto del Carlino. You will also see large posters in many bars and restaurants listing theaters and current show times.

Shows listed as *prima visione* are new arrivals, those as *seconda visione* are on their second run. At the city's various *cinema parrocchiale* (parish cinemas) you can see selected films at discounted rates. For a complete online list, check out [www.cineweb-er.com/spettacoli.htm](http://www.cineweb-er.com/spettacoli.htm).

## FILMS IN ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

Currently, there are two movie theaters that show films in original language on various days of the week.

### Capitol

Via Milazzo, 1

Tel. 051.241002

### Nosadella

Via Nosadella, 21

Tel. 051.331506

[www.nosadella.it](http://www.nosadella.it)

Special discount to IWF members.

For a spicy night out with your partner, there is an adult theater in *centro*:

### All'Italico

Vicolo Quartirolo, 7

Tel. 051.220967

## FILM BUFF SPECIAL

Cineteca, Bologna's internationally respected film archive, home to more than 18,000 films, operates the city's art house cinema, Cinema Lumière. Here you can see a vast selection of films and retrospectives dedicated to specific directors and genres from the world over. The inexpensive membership card, necessary for viewing certain films, grants you discounted admission. Anyone can subscribe to their mailing list.

### Cineteca

Cinema Lumière

Via Azzo Gardino, 65

Tel. 051.2195311

[www.cinetecadibologna.it](http://www.cinetecadibologna.it)

*More so than in other Italian cities where I have lived, Bologna's main piazza is a stage. Its open space provides a point of exchange for a rendezvous; a history lesson; access to information on cultural activities for every taste and budget; a starting point for sampling the array of bookshops the city has to offer; and sometimes yes, it literally*

*becomes a stage. A tantalizing fountain accents the piazza, a place where citizens, residents and tourists alike are engaged in one place, something that few cities seem to accomplish with such ease. Above all it is a place to be, to watch, to be watched and to take in the city we call home.*

*Odette Boya Resta*

## FILM FESTIVALS

Bologna hosts several film festivals a year. The most popular is the Sotto le Stelle del Cinema, an open-air film festival held in Piazza Maggiore during the month of July. International films in original language are featured; the schedule is posted around town, in most of the local newspapers and on the Cineteca website. An enormous screen with surround sound is erected in the *piazza*, making for a unique, unforgettable summer experience. Shows generally begin at 22, but arrive beforehand to claim a seat. From June to September, Cineteca also organizes an open-air cinema in the Arena Puccini of the DLF - Associazione Dopolavoro Ferroviario, an association founded to provide after-work activities to railroad workers, now open to everyone. For more information, see the Cineteca or DLF website: [www.dlfbo.it](http://www.dlfbo.it).

Other Cineteca festivals include Officinema, specializing in the future of cinema and new technologies and a Human Rights Nights Festival held in the spring. The annual Cinema Ritrovato in July is one of Europe's most important festivals featuring rare and restored films, attracting cinema scholars and researchers from around the world. For more information, see the Cineteca website.

## EATING OUT

*Bologna La Grassa's* (Bologna the Fat) reputation as Italy's gastronomic capital is well deserved. Most Bolognese start off their day with a visit to the bar for a *caffè*, a pastry and some chit-chat with the *barista* (bartender). The local bar is a social center and most Italians have their favorite, which can say a lot about them. There are posh ones with marble counters and goldplated sugar bowls or ones with blaring soccer matches. There are bars where elderly men play cards, bars with internet and bars where the *barista* will draw a heart into the foam of your *cappuccino*. In the evenings, the bar becomes the place where friends meet for an *aperitivo* to map out plans and debate about where to eat. One of the first decisions is what type of establishment to frequent: *osteria*, *trattoria*, *pizzeria* or *ristorante*. Price and quality are not necessarily linked. One can eat poorly at an expensive restaurant and very well at a simple *trattoria*. Fun historical fact: Bologna's *osterie* multiplied in the late 1200s when the university experienced a major influx of students. Copious amounts of wine accompanied by sausage, *mortadella* and lively conversation were consumed in these establishments. One of them, Osteria della Scimmia, was frequented by students looking for lessons in love, but in 1490 it was closed down due to its nefarious reputation.

*Pizzerie*, which usually serve other dishes alongside the famous pie, are often the other most economic choice. *Trattorie*, small, frequently family-run restaurants, feature a wide selection of typical dishes. Then there's Bologna's elegant and renowned *ristoranti*. You'll pay more, but aren't you worth it?

Gambero Rosso, the equivalent of the French Guide Michelin, publishes a restaurant guide for Bologna, available at major bookstores or online at [www.gamberorosso.it](http://www.gamberorosso.it).

If you are in the mood for so-called ethnic food, you'll be pleasantly surprised at how immigration has diversified the choices of cuisine available in Bologna. In addition to

Indian restaurants, there are many bars, self-service and take-away places from the Middle East and Asia at affordable prices, especially in the university quarter. Even sushi is catching on. A hearty breakfast and an authentic burrito remain illusive.

## TIPPING

Tipping is not customary in Italy and it is not expected in bars and cafès. In *trattorie*, you might leave a few euro in spare change. In the better restaurants, consider rounding up. Leaving a *mancia* (tip) is really reserved for excellent service.

## ON THE TOWN

### THE ART OF THE APERITIVO

*Aperitivi* are a great way to meet friends after work and grab a bite to eat at the same time. The bars will lay out a spread of various snacks, anything from *pizzette* (mini pizzas) to plates of pasta from 17-21:30. Once you have ordered a drink or an *analcolica* (non-alcoholic) fruit cocktail you are allowed to help yourself to the buffet, but don't overdo it or you might be scowled at by the staff. Drinks usually cost a few euro more during this time, as the buffet is included. For *aperitivi*, students tend to congregate in the university quarter and in Via del Pratello while professionals head for the pedestrian area around Piazza Maggiore. Choices are endless, see selection below:

#### Aldrovandi Cafè

Via San Vitale, 33/c

Outdoor seating on Piazza Aldrovandi, great for cocktails.

#### Boavista

Via Cesare Battisti, 9/b

Trendy, funky decor.

#### Godot Wine Bar

Via Cartoleria, 12

Good selection of wines, intimate atmosphere.

*As an Italian IWF member, I try to attend all the movies offered in English throughout the city. The Monday night movie showing at Cinema Nosadella has become a regular get-together for several members and I really enjoy practicing my English in the*

*discussions afterward. Once the movie houses close down for the summer, the cinema festival in the piazza is a wonderful place to spend the July evenings and see movies in English, as well as other foreign languages.*

*Carla Ceserani*

### **The Irish Times Pub**

Via Paradiso, 1/d

Established traditional Irish pub.

### **Nu Lounge Bar**

Via dei Musei, 6

Great location to be seen and be seen.

### **Le Stanza del Tenente**

Via del Borgo di San Pietro, 1/a

Student locale in a restored chapel, sure to impress visitors.

### **Swine Bar**

Via Augusto Righi, 24/a

Relaxed atmosphere, good wine selection.

### **Zanarini**

Piazza Galvani, 1

A Bolognese institution, a place to bring Mom when she visits.

## **DISCOS/CLUBS**

Attention! In Italy, the word nightclub, often shortened to night, is synonymous with strip club. Disco is the word used for a place where you dance. Going dancing in Bologna means you are in for a late night (or an early morning). Bologna's discos are seasonal, with indoor locations open from October to late April and outdoor ones beginning in June. The happening summer dancing however takes place out on the Riviera Romagnola where some *bagni* (beach facilities) set up dancefloors right on the sand.

As a rule, plan to arrive no earlier than 23 unless you are dining at the club. If you are not a dinner guest and are not on the coveted VIP *lista* (guest list) you will have to wait in line outside. Ladies are usually permitted to enter first. Most discos charge an entry fee that includes one beverage and operate using drink cards, meaning that you pay for your consumption at the end of the night. Hold on to that drink card or pay the loser's fee, which assumes maximum consumption. Don't leave any valuables in the *guardaroba* (coat room), even if it is guarded. Discos sometimes reopen the following season under new management and a new name, but the location generally remains the same. The following winter locales have been around (under various names) for years:

### **Chalet delle Rose**

Via Porrettana, 114-116

Pontecchio di Sasso Marconi

Tel. 051.846024

[www.chaletdellerose.it](http://www.chaletdellerose.it)

### **La Capannina**

Via San Vittore, 29/2 (corner of Via di Barbiano)

Tel. 051.581115

[www.capannina.info](http://www.capannina.info)

### **Kasamatta**

Via Sanpieri, 3

Tel. 051.224256

[www.kasamatta.it](http://www.kasamatta.it)

### **Matis Dinner Club**

Via Rotta, 10

Tel. 051.6199418

[www.matisclub.it](http://www.matisclub.it)

### **Ruvido Disco Dinner Club**

Via Maserati, 9

Tel. 051.6311892

[www.ruvido.it](http://www.ruvido.it)

## **CIRCOLI AND CENTRI SOCIALI**

*Circoli* (circles) are small clubs organized by associations. You pay to become a member the first time you go and receive a *tessera* (card) for future entry. They organize concerts, lectures and other cultural events. *Centri sociali* (social centers) range from gathering places for the elderly to alternative clubs in empty buildings that young people have occupied and put to use. Often centers of political and social activism, there is a long history of *centri sociali* in Bologna and other large Italian cities.

### **Link Associated**

Via Fantoni, 21

Tel. 051.6332312 or 051.6344815

[www.link.bo.it](http://www.link.bo.it)

One of the city's longest standing *centri sociali*.

*Not quite as impressive as the Milanese version, Bologna manages to hold its own when it comes to early evening drinking. In recent years the aperitivo has become an important feature of Bolognese life generally and of my free time in particular. Most bars in the town center offer a wide selection of pre-dinner canapés that you can enjoy while*

*sipping on your cocktail. Beware, check the banco before you sit down, some bars seem to think potato chips and peanuts are enough! For the best all round drinking, snacking and people-watching, head for Zanarini in Piazza Galvani or Nu Lounge Bar in Via dei Musei. Mine's a Vodka and Tonic, cin cin.*

*Emily Heurlin*

## LIVE MUSIC

### OPERA AND CLASSICAL

You'll find wonderful opera and classical music concerts at the Teatro Comunale. You can get a copy of the program at the theater or at the URP in early fall. Seats sell out quickly and tickets can be quite expensive. Season tickets are available as well as steep discounts for under 30s and seniors.

Regular concerts are also organized by the Accademia Filarmonica, Associazione Bologna Festival and by Bologna's music conservatory, Conservatorio di Musica "G. B. Martini."

#### **Accademia Filarmonica**

Via Guerrazzi, 13

Tel. 051.222997

#### **Associazione Bologna Festival**

Tel. 051.6493397 or 051.6493245

[www.bolognafestival.it](http://www.bolognafestival.it)

Fall and spring concert series in various venues, season tickets available.

#### **Conservatorio di Musica "G.B. Martini"**

[www.conservatorio-bologna.com](http://www.conservatorio-bologna.com)

### JAZZ

#### **Cantina Bentivoglio**

Via Mascarella, 4

Tel. 051.265416

[www.cantinabentivoglio.it](http://www.cantinabentivoglio.it)

#### **Chet Baker Jazz Club**

Via Polese, 7/a

Tel. 051.223795

[www.chetbaker.it](http://www.chetbaker.it)

#### **Blue Inn Café**

Via dei Fornaciai, 9/3

Tel. 051.4180424

[www.blueinncafe.it](http://www.blueinncafe.it)

#### **Bar Wolf**

Via Massarenti, 118

Tel. 051.342944

[www.bar-wolf.it](http://www.bar-wolf.it)



## OPEN AIR EVENTS

### SPRING-SUMMER-FALL

In May each year, the Catholic month of the *Madonna* (Virgin Mary), a painting of a black *Madonna* is brought down from the Basilica di San Luca to the cathedral of San Pietro on Via dell'Indipendenza. After a week of visits from the faithful, the *Madonna* is carried back up to her home. This tradition traces back several centuries when the *Madonna* was brought down in an attempt to end the plague. Although no miracles occurred during her initial three-day sojourn in the city, it started to pour rain during her return and the plague disappeared. Nowadays, it almost always rains during the return procession. In the summer, nightlife moves *all'aperto* (in the open). Since 2005, the city, together with the university, has sponsored *Bè - Bologna Estate* (Bologna Summer) a vast program of arts and entertainment events that runs June-September. Open-air film festivals (see this chapter under 'Cinema') are held in the city's *piazze* and courtyards. For more information visit the city's website: [www.comune.bologna.it/cultura](http://www.comune.bologna.it/cultura). If you are up for a short drive into the country, you'll find good, inexpensive food and local entertainment at the *Feste dell'Unità* and *sagre* (food festivals) organized throughout the province from spring through fall. See Chapter 9: Provincia for more information.

### WINTER

While the largest Christmas markets are in Trentino, Bologna has its very own along Strada Maggiore under Santa Maria dei Servi and on Via Altabella. Items for sale include *presepi* (nativity scenes) and traditional holiday sweets such as *torrone*. The season is characterized by the smell of roasted *castagne* (chestnuts), in Bologna also known by a less delicate term, *i marroni*.

On *Capodanno* (New Year's Eve), Bologna casts off the passing year by burning in effigy a large wooden man known as *il vecchione* (old man). This huge bonfire lights up Piazza Maggiore and is quite a spectacle. Better to leave kids home as the party can get rowdy. In February, *Carnevale* (Carnival) is celebrated in the city and throughout the province. The most spectacular costumes are to be seen in Venice, but closer to home, you can go to Cento, just over the border of the Province of Ferrara. For more information see: [www.carnivalecento.com](http://www.carnivalecento.com).

*As they say, the grass is always greener... I'm a New Yorker and when I'm in Bologna, I always seem to have the itch to be in NYC. Call it that "New York state of mind." It's funny, though, I'm starting to realize that Bologna has its own state of mind. About two weeks into my stay in New York I have a sudden craving to return to BO for a stroll*

*through the piazzola. I want to have coffee with friends at Sala Borsa and I wonder if the trees and flowers are in bloom in Giardini Margherita. I miss Friday night aperitivo, tagliatelle al ragù, ice-cold prosecco and riding my bike through the piazza.*

*Nina Vellucci*

## SPORTS CLUBS & ASSOCIATIONS

Bologna offers a club for every sport and hobby. Here is a sampling of activities, how to get started and where to find more information. Make sure that you inquire about what kind of medical note you will need from your doctor if you are planning to join a gym, participate in a team sport of any sort or join a running or cycling club.

Sport associations and federations are listed in the yellow pages under *SPORT*, while courts, fields and courses are listed under *SPORT IMPIANTI E CORSI*.

The city, province and region have teamed up to form a consortium called the Bologniadi. Their site has useful information in Italian about sports events and clubs in Bologna: [www.bologniadi.it](http://www.bologniadi.it). For more information, contact the CONI office.

### **CONI - Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano (Italian National Olympic Committee)**

Via Barberia, 24  
Tel. 051.580542

UISP - *Unione Italiana Sportiva* (Italian Sporting Union) organizes teams and classes for just about every kind of water or land sport. UISP does not require you to visit a specialist sports doctor before joining the association, but instead requests a signed note from your physician attesting that you are in good condition to participate in the sport.

### **UISP - Unione Italiana Sportiva**

Via dell'Industria, 20  
Tel. 051.6013511  
[www.uisp.it/bologna](http://www.uisp.it/bologna)

If you're a university student, consider enrolling in the CUSB - *Centro Universitario Sportivo Bolognese* (Bologna University Sports Center), the university's sport organization. You will receive substantial discounts at gyms and sports centers in addition to becoming eligible to sign up for the CUSB's gym, classes and teams. They have a very informative website.

### **CUSB - Centro Universitario Sportivo Bolognese**

Via San Giacomo, 9/2  
Tel. 051.4217311  
[www.cusb.unibo.it](http://www.cusb.unibo.it)

The Dopolavoro Ferroviario organizes many sports clubs, from soccer to archery to waterpolo. They also offer a variety of courses including foreign languages, photography and Bonzai.

### **DLF - Associazione Dopolavoro Ferroviario**

Via S. Serlio, 25/2  
Tel. 051.4193256  
[www.dlfbo.it](http://www.dlfbo.it)

## INDOOR SPORTS

The website of the *Federazione Italiana Fitness* (Italian Fitness Federation) lists special fitness trade shows, courses and events. This is also the point of reference if you would like to be certified as a fitness or sports instructor: [www.fif.it](http://www.fif.it).

### GYMS/HEALTH CLUBS

In addition to regular membership fees, most gyms require an additional annual registration quota. A medical certificate is obligatory and some larger facilities provide an onsite doctor's visit. Most gyms offer a weight room and aerobics classes as a part of the base membership. Special courses like spinning, yoga and pilates usually cost extra. Do not expect amenities like towels and shampoo in the locker room. Bring your own *accappatoio* (bathrobe) rather than a towel if you want to fit in and your own lock for your belongings.

For a complete listing of gyms, see the yellow pages under *PALESTRE*. Below are a few of the gyms recommended by IWF members.

#### **Atlas Club**

Via Vezza, 22

Tel. 051.251122

A variety of courses and equipment, sauna, steam room and bar, student discounts.

#### **Body Planet**

Via delle Armi, 12

Tel. 051.494154

[www.palestrabodyplanet.it](http://www.palestrabodyplanet.it)

Large gym for all types of fitness programs, outdoor basketball and volleyball courts.

#### **Club President Silhouette**

Via Albiroli, 3b

Tel. 051.237842

One of the few clubs in the city center with an indoor lap pool.

*Bologna is not horrid in the summer. It's hot and muggy, but the city and the hills come alive at night with lots of outdoor music and dancing and cultural activities like film festivals, poetry readings, live concerts, sports events and parties. Many are free or*

*modestly priced and often organized by the city government in conjunction with restaurants, pubs and associations. It's really nice to be in Bologna without all the traffic and bustle and bustle.*

*Joanne Maloney*

**Fitness First**

Via San Felice, 99

Tel. 051.6494926

[www.fitnessfirst.it](http://www.fitnessfirst.it)

Modern multinational club with wide selection of courses and all the amenities.

**Palestra dè Poeti**

Via dè Poeti, 3

Tel. 051.237919

[www.palestradeipoeti.com](http://www.palestradeipoeti.com) (site also in English)

Smaller facility in *centro*, student discounts.

**Virgin Active**

Centro Commerciale Minganti, Centro Commerciale Meridiana

See Chapter 7: Shopping

Numero verde 800.914555

[www.virginactive.it/bologna/index.asp](http://www.virginactive.it/bologna/index.asp)

Top-of-the-line big city fitness centers with the latest equipment, swimming pool, day care and spa.

**YOGA****ASIA**

Via Riva Reno, 124

Tel. 051.225588

Zen meditation, Tai Chi, Yoga and Aikido, discounts are offered to CUSB pass holders.

**Centro Natura**

Via degli Albari, 6

Tel. 051.235643

[www.centronatura.it](http://www.centronatura.it)

Yoga and other courses, massage, natural foods restaurant.

**Centro Yoga Le Vie**

Via D'Azeglio, 35

Tel. 051.19982056

[www.yogalevie.it](http://www.yogalevie.it)

**Il Melograno**

Via Lombardia, 36

Tel. 051.6241125

[www.centromelograno.it](http://www.centromelograno.it)

## DANCE

For a complete listing, see yellow pages under *SCUOLE DI BALLO*.

### Centro Studio Danza Gymmoving

Via Azzo Gardino, 50

Tel. 051.6490476

[www.gymmoving.it](http://www.gymmoving.it)

Offers dance of all types: modern, classical, flamenco, hip hop, salsa and more.

### Isadora

Via San Vitale, 40/10

Tel. 051.235540

Modern and classical dance for adults and children.

## SWIMMING

Swimming is a popular means of staying fit in Bologna. Bathing caps and flip-flops in the pool area are mandatory. Like the gym, bring a bathrobe for drying off instead of a towel. You can pay by the visit or buy a slightly discounted ten-visit pass. For a complete listing of pools and hours, check with the URP in Piazza Maggiore. Community pools are listed online at [www.cusb.unibo.it](http://www.cusb.unibo.it). You can also check the website of SOGESE, the organization that runs most of the city's pools. For a list of greater area outdoor pools and water parks for summer outings, see Chapter 9: Provincia.

### SOGESE

Tel. 051.519109

[www.sogese.com](http://www.sogese.com)

## OUTDOOR SPORTS & LEISURE

### GREEN SPACE

Below are a number of parks and green spaces in the city. For recreational areas in the greater area see Chapter 9: Provincia or consult the region's website at [www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/parchi](http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/parchi).

*A few years ago, I was looking back while reversing my car and I felt a terrible pain in my neck. No way, Paola, I said to myself, you're too young to feel like an anziana. So, being a little lazy and hating to sweat, I decided to take a yoga course, thinking it would be easy. Luckily I was wrong. I asked where they do the best yoga and everybody*

*said the Centro Natura. Yoga became my passion - hard work but also a way of feeling good with my body and mind. Last year I joined another yoga lab, Yoga Le Vie. The people I met during class became close friends, who share my enthusiasm for the practice and the meaning, which goes far beyond the physical work.*

*Paola Fasano*

**Giardini Margherita:** between Via Murri and Via Castiglione, this centrally located park provides city-dwellers with a bit of fresh air. There is a small lake, lots of grass to laze around on, a bar and an open-air disco on summer evenings. For the kids, there is play equipment, trampolines, a carousel and lots of space to play soccer or frisbee.

**Parco Montagnola:** just off Piazza VIII Agosto, this park hosts the large *piazzola* open-air market every Friday and Saturday, but is otherwise open to the public. There are fountains, a play area for children and a bar. Entrances are located at Via Irnerio, Via Del Pallone and Via dell'Indipendenza.

**Villa Ghigi:** once the property of a wealthy Bolognese family, this large park outside Porta San Mamolo has very pretty views of the surrounding countryside. Enter from Via Martucci, Via San Mamolo and Via Gaibola. Parking, running trails and picnic tables.

**Parco Talon:** located on the Porrettana as you enter Casalecchio, this immense park is a great place for long runs, walks and barbecues, too. Nearby is the Lido, a "beach" with sand and umbrellas, but you can't (and probably won't want to) swim in the river.

**Villa Spada:** beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> century estate, turned into a park. Also hosts the *Museo della Tappezeria* (Museum of Tapestry). Enter at the corner of Via Casaglia and Via Saragozza.

**Parco del Pellegrino:** great views of the city from this park on Via Casaglia. It's full of cherry trees and you can pick to your heart's content in the spring.

**Parco dei Cedri:** you'll find this great park within easy reach of the city center, just across city limits in San Lazzaro di Savena.

**Parco Cavaioni:** take Via San Mamolo, then Via dei Colli to reach this park high above the city.

**Parco dei Giardini:** this park has a small lake with surrounding jogging path and a *gelateria*. Enter from Via di Corticella, Via dell'Arcoveggio or Via dei Giardini.

A different kind of park is the university's botanical gardens – a jewel in the center of Bologna that not even many native Bolognese know about. This park's huge ancient trees keep it cool even during Bologna's sweltering summer.

#### **Orto Botanico**

Via Irnerio, 42

Tel. 051.2091325

[www.unibo.it/musei-universitari/OrtoBotanico/OrtoBotanico.htm](http://www.unibo.it/musei-universitari/OrtoBotanico/OrtoBotanico.htm)

## CYCLING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING

Italians are passionate cyclists and there are a number of clubs for every age and fitness level. For road cycling or racing, consider joining a cycling team. Teams are usually sponsored by local bike shops, which is the best place to inquire. There are weekly races from the beginning of February through the end of October. Bittone, Leopardi and DLF are a few cycling clubs that ride a bit less competitively and keep a leisurely pace. For racing schedules and events, check the UISP site [www.uisp.it/bologna](http://www.uisp.it/bologna), under 'cicloamatori.' UISP also organizes a series of group bike rides called *cicloraduni* with a pre-planned route and food stops along the way each week from early March to the end of October. Another cycling association is UDACE - *Unione degli Amatori Ciclismo Europeo* (European Cycling Lovers Union). Their website, [www.udace.it](http://www.udace.it), provides detailed information on racing and cycling on the regional, national and international levels. One of the biggest annual races is the rigorous *Diecicolli* (ten hills), held the first weekend in May: [www.diecicolli.it](http://www.diecicolli.it). If you are looking to build a serious road or mountain bike, some bike shop recommendations include:

### CicliSalieri

Via Reggio Emilia, 6  
Tel. 051.453964

### Due Ruote

Piazza Allende, 8  
Ozzano dell'Emilia  
Tel. 051.797103  
Via Emilia, 292  
San Lazzaro di Savena  
Tel. 051.6255924

### Patelli Bike

Via Matteotti, 1  
Tel. 051.254218

*I live in Bologna's historical city center with my husband and three children - Sara, 2, Sofia, 4, and Marco, 6. We have always tried to involve our kids in children's activities. Marco signed up for basketball through a program called Sport Insieme and it was a very positive experience. You could tell the instructors were passionate about it, that it*

*wasn't just another job. Our kids also enjoyed swimming at the Tanari pool. There are lots of things to do with children, it just takes a lot of time to get to and from activities in the city - we always take the bus. One thing that is lacking, though, is green space and playgrounds - that's one luxury you don't have in the city center.*

*Hae Kyung Kang*

### **Tecnobike**

Viale Lenin, 4/a

Tel. 051.541464

For information on mountain biking in the Apennines, check out [www.mtbappennino.it](http://www.mtbappennino.it).

Below is a selection of Bologna's mountain biking clubs:

#### **Monte Sole Bike Group**

[www.montesolebikegroup.it](http://www.montesolebikegroup.it)

This non-competitive cycling club offers weekly group rides (mostly off-road/mtb) as well as weekend and week-long excursions.

#### **MTB Bambana Bike**

c/o Bar Monari

Via S. Cristoforo, 18

Ozzano dell'Emilia

[www.bambanabike.net/Bambana.htm](http://www.bambanabike.net/Bambana.htm)

This group meets every Saturday at 13 (14 in the winter) for group rides in the area. Their website also has a *mercato* (market) if you are looking for a used bike.

### **SOCCER AND CALCETTO**

The Italian zeal for cycling is matched only by their mania for *calcio* (soccer). Pick-up games are always going on in Giardini Margherita. Another popular year-round sport is *calcetto*, played outdoors or indoors with five players on a smaller field about the size of a basketball court. UISP organizes amateur leagues for both *calcio* and *calcetto*. Some teams are pretty serious, with sponsors, annual championships and attendance requirements. Others are more low-key. See '*calcio*' on the UISP website for information: [www.uisp.it/bologna](http://www.uisp.it/bologna).

### **RUGBY**

#### **Bologna Rugby 1928**

Via Benedetto Marcello, 1

Tel. 051.4830084

[www.rugbybologna1928.it](http://www.rugbybologna1928.it)

### **TENNIS**

Bologna has a number of tennis clubs, most of which are open to the public with a court fee that is higher in the winter for covered, heated or lit courts. Some clubs offer summer activities and programs for children. Tennis enthusiasts looking for ranking tournaments should check out the regional committee of FIT - *Federazione Italiana Tennis* (Italian Tennis Federation) at [www.fiter.it](http://www.fiter.it). The FIT site also lists all the tennis clubs and schools and in the city and province. This information may also be found through Bologniadi at [www.bologniadi.it/200/fit/fit.htm](http://www.bologniadi.it/200/fit/fit.htm).



## RUNNING AND WALKING

Since the early '70s, runners and walkers in the province of Bologna have been organizing *camminate*, community events that attract *podisti* (runners/walkers) of all ages and abilities. On a typical Sunday morning you will find hundreds and sometimes thousands of these enthusiasts along the week's delineated routes – usually 3, 6, 12 or 15 km with a number of half-marathons each year.

In addition to individuals, local running clubs, known as *club podistici* or *polisportive*, are also present at the events, some with close to 200 members. Benefits of joining a club include meeting Italians who share your interest as well as a guarded team tent where you can keep your personal belongings during the event.

In order to participate in a *camminata*, you should have a medical certificate or an athletic *tessera* obtained through UISP. A minimal participation fee includes a *ristoro* (rest stop) along the route and at the finish line. Participants also go home with a prize each week such as a bag of pasta or coffee, even a turkey leg!

In the fall and winter these events are held in the *pianura* (plains) and begin at 9. When the weather heats up, the events move to the hills and start at 8:30. Allow yourself plenty of travel and parking time. A schedule may be found on the website of the Polisportiva San Rafèl, the first club founded in Bologna in 1975: [www.sanrafel.com](http://www.sanrafel.com).

For running or walking on your own in the city, see this chapter under 'Green Space.' The bicycle path that runs from the Certosa cemetery out to Parco Talon is a nice flat run, while the walkway up to San Luca makes for a steep climb. For a more gradual descent, take Via Casaglia down. Serious runners who like the challenge of a long hilly run should try the roads that lead upward on the southwestern side of town.

## SPORTSWEAR

Even if you plan on working up a sweat, fashion never takes a back seat to function in Italy. The meticulously color-coordinated cyclists that zoom by on a Sunday illustrate this point. Sportswear and gear stores include: Giacomelli Sport, Decathlon, Fini Sport, Longoni, Protec and Villa Alpine Shop. See *SPORT ARTICOLI* in the yellow pages for listings.

## OUTDOORS IN THE PROVINCE

For information on hiking, climbing, spelunking, skiing, outdoor swimming, the beach and thermal baths, see Chapter 9: Provincia.

*I like to grow plants on my balcony, walk the hills of Bologna and cook with local ingredients. I love that at Baita the woman behind the counter advises me about the best kind of ricotta and taleggio to serve with*

*pears. Not only can I choose from five different kinds of appropriate ricotta, I can also get her counsel that the capra would go better with pears than the mucca.*

*Karen Riedel*

## SPECTATOR SPORTS

### SOCCER

Bologna's home team, FC Bologna, was founded in 1909. Games are played in the center of the city at Stadio Renato Dallara (formerly Stadio Comunale), a stadium that seats nearly 40,000 spectators. You can buy tickets to matches directly at the *biglietteria* (ticket office) in Piazza della Pace in front of the stadium, through the offices of the *Centro Coordinamento Bologna Clubs* (Bologna Clubs Coordination Center), or at any Carisbo San Paolo branch during banking hours.

#### **Centro Coordinamento Bologna Clubs**

Stadio Renato Dallara  
Via Andrea Costa, 71  
Tel. 051.6152899  
[www.bolognafc.it](http://www.bolognafc.it)

### BASKETBALL

Basketball is popular in Bologna, where the city's two professional teams, Virtus and Fortitudo, provoke strong loyalties among their fans. Although the Italian word for the sport is actually *pallacanestro*, just about everyone refers to it as "basket." Regular season hoops run from October to May.

#### **Fortitudo Pallacanestro**

Paladozza Land Rover Arena  
Piazza Azzarita  
Tel. 051.6430411  
[www.fortitudo.it](http://www.fortitudo.it)

Fortitudo plays at Paladozza Land Rover Arena, an intimate stadium that seats 5,700 spectators. Here you will also find the Fortitudo Point, the team's merchandising shop. Fortitudo tickets may be purchased from the ticket office behind the arena on Via Graziano.

#### **Virtus**

Via dell'Arcoveggio, 49/2  
Tel. 051.4155911  
[www.virtus.it](http://www.virtus.it)

Virtus games are played at Palamalaguti in Casalecchio di Reno. Tickets for games may be purchased directly from the Virtus office or at the arena.

### BASEBALL

Bologna's most important baseball team is Fortitudo BC, on the scene since 1953. Baseball is played from April to September and Fortitudo's home field is Stadio Gianni Falchi. Tickets may be purchased directly at the *botteghino* (box office) of the stadium.

**Fortitudo BC 1953**

Piazzale Atleti Azzurri d'Italia

Tel. 051.479618

[www.fortitudobaseball.com](http://www.fortitudobaseball.com)

**TICKET AGENCIES****Bambulè Shop**

Via Tiarini, 1/a

Tel. 051.372494

**Botteghino Live Show**

Via Andrea Costa, 224/a

Tel. 051.6140998

**Estrogen Shop**

Via Zamboni, 53

Tel. 051.241554

**Tabaccheria AB**

Galleria 2 Agosto, 1/c

Tel. 051.249409

*For a really incredible experience you can watch Bologna's baseball team for the blind, the White Sox, one of six Italian teams supported by AIBXC - Associazione Italiana Baseball per Ciechi. The game is played like regular baseball, but with a special ball that*

*makes different noises based on how it moves through the air. Two seeing players help give directions behind second and third base. You can watch games at the Stadio Lioni in Casteldebole from June to October.*

*Elisa Pampaloni*

## *Last Minute Opera*

*The best way to see an opera on a budget is by getting into the dress rehearsal with a complimentary ticket from someone who works at the theater. But if your circle of pals doesn't include a diva or a cellist, you've got a couple of other options. The Teatro Comunale di Bologna offers a last minute deal, selling leftover tickets at great discounts 1.5 hours before curtain. This last minute special is only for tickets otherwise unsold for the day's performance, so forget about it if a production is popular. In addition to the last minute tix, the age-old tradition of selling the balconata tickets to starving artists is still in full swing. Though the bird's eye view leaves something to be desired, many say these seats are acoustically the best in the house. Be ready to hear the harshest criticisms, the most sincere bravi, hoots, whistles and comments from the balconata - those who end up there are known to be the greatest enthusiasts! The box office starts to sell balcony tickets, max two per person, two hours before curtain (1.5 hours before matinees). However, arrival at*

*the moment of truth is a day-long process using a system as old as the theater itself. It works as follows: the game begins at 6 with the first person to arrive tacking up a sheet with their name on a board outside the box office. Others add their names to the list as the day progresses. Every three hours (at 9, 12, 15 and 18) there is a call, and if you or a representative fail to respond to your name, you are slashed off the list and lose your place. The last call is made just before the box office opens and tickets are then sold until they run out. The number of balcony seats available varies according to the show. A similar system exists in some form at each Italian opera house. Balcony veterans are as serious about this tradition and its rules as they are about their expectations of the leading tenor. Take it from those of us who have tried: you risk your life trying to swoop up on your bike three minutes late and convince the crowd to put your name back where it was on the list before you got cut!*

*Jill Janzen*



*Carol Sicbaldi, Cycling and Walking Tour Manager  
Boston, MA, USA*

## 9 > PROVINCIA

### INTRODUCTION

They say Bologna is a two-faced city, with one half looking up at the foothills of the Apennines and the other out toward the plains of the Po Valley. In fact, her *provincia* extends from the industrial outskirts of the city across a vast and diverse network of outlying towns and hamlets in the *montagna*, *colline* and *pianura*, each with its own regional distinctions, culinary flavor and traditions. Outside city limits, most administrative affairs are handled by each local *comune*, many of which also have smaller *frazioni* under their jurisdiction.

Don't assume *provincia* means provincial. In fact, the boundary between the city and what used to be separate distinct towns is increasingly blurred, just ask anyone who lives in Casalecchio di Reno or San Lazzaro di Savena, with their efficient public transportation and modern shopping centers.

On the other hand, in the more distant and rural *campagna*, you might experience a more earthy Emilia Romagna, with its time-honored ways. In this *Bulagna*, elderly men play cards and talk politics in the bar and shopping at the weekly open-air market is a ritual. If you speak with Italians over the age of 70 in the province, you'll find that memories of war are still vivid.

A few things hold true no matter where you go outside the city: the lines at public offices are shorter, the air is cleaner and it's easier to find cuisine *fatta in casa*. On the flip side, you may have to commute to work, nightlife is dull and foreign language newspapers are hard to come by. If you hunger for tradition and full immersion, try spending some time in the province - your Italian is bound to improve and you may even pick up some *dialetto Bolognese*.

### PLUGGING IN (See also Chapter 1)

#### GETTING YOUR BEARINGS

If you are a city dweller, this chapter will give you some ideas about spending your free time in the greater Bologna area. If you live *in provincia*, or are thinking about moving there, you'll find important supplementary information specific to living outside city limits.

*la montagna, le colline, la pianura* = mountains, hills, plains  
*una frazione* = smaller town under the municipality's jurisdiction  
*la campagna* = countryside  
*Bulagna* = Bolognese dialect for Bologna  
*fatta in casa* = homemade  
*il dialetto Bolognese* = Bolognese dialect

It is helpful to think of the city and its outskirts as a series of concentric circles with the *centro storico* in the middle. The next circle, known as *fuori porta* (outside the gates), falls between the *viale* (ring road) and the *tangenziale* (beltway). From the *tangenziale* you'll see exits for various city *quartieri*, the airport, the *fiere*, the A1, A13 and A14 *autostrade* (highways), as well as for the closest outlying towns.

In total, the province is comprised of 60 *comuni*. After Bologna, the next largest city is Imola, with 65,000 inhabitants. Casalecchio di Reno, San Lazzaro di Savena, San Giovanni in Persiceto and Castel San Pietro Terme are next in terms of population, each with between 20,000-30,000 inhabitants. The *comune* with the fewest inhabitants is Castel del Rio with 1,256 residents, where processing your paperwork is sure to be a cinch.

The borders delineating *comuni* are often natural landmarks such as rivers, valleys or mountain ranges and residents feel a sense of belonging to their geographic area as delineated by these landmarks. It is not uncommon to hear an Italian refer to his or her geographic area, such as "the valley of the Reno," rather than citing a particular town. Generally speaking, the province is divided into three geographic areas: *l'Appennino*, the mountainous area south and east of Bologna to the Tuscan border, *la Pianura*, the expansive plain north and west of Bologna and *l'Imolese*, the area surrounding Imola to the east of Bologna.

## L'APPENNINO

*L'Appennino Bolognese* is comprised of five valleys formed by the region's biggest rivers, most of which eventually flow into the Reno. Each valley has distinct characteristics – for example, the Samoggia valley is known as the route of cities, castles and cherries while the upper reaches of the Reno valley are the gateway to high Apennine excursions. The north end has farmland and foothills, but the area is mostly mountainous woodland and riverside terrain covered by deciduous forests where a variety of flora and fauna thrive. The cuisine reflects this mountain heritage, with unique dishes such as *ragù* made with *cinghiale* (wild boar) and fried *crescentine*, *tigelle* and *borlenghi*, once considered mountain region breads.

The summers are cooler and the winters often bring significant snowfall, requiring residents to have front or four-wheel drive and sometimes chains. The main highway routes run along the river valleys (such as La Porrettana) as well as the ridge tops (for example, La Futa). Environmental tourism is increasingly important as the number of *agriturismi* (guest farmhouses) multiplies each year. The mountains are traversed by a web of well-maintained and marked trails, some of which are the same mule trails and footpaths used by residents for centuries. For more information on the *Appennino*, see the following websites:

[www.appenninobolognese.net](http://www.appenninobolognese.net)

[www.bolognaappennino.com](http://www.bolognaappennino.com)

[www.cinquevallibolognesi.bo.it](http://www.cinquevallibolognesi.bo.it)



## COMUNI OF THE APPENNINO

Reno Valley: Camugnano, Casalecchio di Reno, Castel d'Aiano, Castel di Casio, Castiglione dei Pepoli, Gaggio Montano, Granaglione, Grizzana Morandi, Lizzano in Belvedere, Marzabotto, Porretta Terme, San Benedetto Val di Sambro, Sasso Marconi, Vergato.

See area website: [www.valledelreno.provincia.bo.it](http://www.valledelreno.provincia.bo.it).

Samoggia Valley: Bazzano, Castello di Serravalle, Crespellano, Monte San Pietro, Monteveglio, Savigno, Zola Predosa.

See [www.cmsamoggia.provincia.bologna.it](http://www.cmsamoggia.provincia.bologna.it) or [www.mercatocosebuone.it](http://www.mercatocosebuone.it) (also in English).

Savena and Idice Valleys: Loiano, Monghidoro, Monterenzio, Monzuno, Ozzano dell'Emilia, Pianoro, San Lazzaro di Savena.

## LA PIANURA

*La Pianura*, sometimes referred to as *la bassa* (lowlands), is characterized by wide open spaces dotted with large farmhouses and stables. The Pianura's agricultural lands were once owned and managed by noble families, who employed *contadini* (farmers) to live on and work the land, under contracts called *mezzadria*. The rich farmlands are divided by an intricate system of canals and irrigation waterways, once the commerce routes of the region. This abundance of water creates more humidity in the summer and in the winter months, *la nebbia*, a pea soup-thick fog resembling the moor in a Thomas Hardy novel. The area is noted for its excellent fresh pasta and high quality pork production.

Alongside the agricultural tradition is a thriving industrial sector. Many of its *comuni* have well-defined *zone industriali* (industrial zones) where much of the province's manufacturing activity takes place. Among these areas is the Centergross fashion trading center with 650 companies and the immense Interporto customs weighing station.

Some of the *comuni*, notably Budrio, Minerbio, Pieve di Cento and San Giorgio di Piano, recall Bologna with their arcades and cobblestone streets. Residents of the *Pianura* often travel by bicycle, ideal in town as well as along the bucolic, flat routes.

For more information on the area, see the following sites:

[www.appenninobolognese.net/ar79](http://www.appenninobolognese.net/ar79) (*Pianura Bolognese* tourism site)

[www.terredipianura.it](http://www.terredipianura.it)

*I really love the area where we live, in the hills south of Bologna. Every morning when I open my shutters, regardless of what season it is, I'm still astounded as to how beautiful it is. We have the most magnificent views and walking trails right outside our front door... and without any tourists! This*

*means we may need to drive a bit to find a good Indian or Japanese restaurant, or even to have contact with other expatriates for that matter, but for me, living outside of Bologna has really helped me to integrate easily into Italian culture, with the help of my husband and in-laws, of course!*

*Kristin Post*

## COMUNI OF THE PIANURA

Anzola dell'Emilia, Argelato, Baricella, Bentivoglio, Budrio, Calderara di Reno, Castello d'Argile, Castel Maggiore, Castenaso, Crevalcore, Galliera, Granarolo dell'Emilia, Malalbergo, Minerbio, Molinella, Pieve di Cento, Sala Bolognese, San Giorgio di Piano, San Giovanni in Persiceto, San Pietro in Casale, Sant'Agata Bolognese.

## L'IMOLESE

This area of the province includes a corner of western Romagna (according to locals, everything east of the Santerno River) and also borders on the municipal district of Ravenna. In fact, several small cities have been under both provinces at one time or another. *L'Imolese* is home to some high quality vineyards, known especially for whites. The Enoteca Regionale Emilia Romagna, in Dozza, is a must stop for wine buffs visiting Bologna. For more information, see this chapter under 'Tempo Libero'.

Imola itself is perhaps most well known for the Formula 1 Gran Prix and other important international races held at the *autodromo* (race track). The tradition of racing in Imola dates back to the ancient Romans who raced their two-wheeled chariots there. Imola is proud of its excellent gastronomic heritage and there is no better food and wine festival to celebrate it than the longstanding Baccanale held every November. For more information, see [www.baccanaleimola.it](http://www.baccanaleimola.it).

Imola also has many fine art museums and archives. For more information see the Imola Tourist Information System, accessible through the site of the Comune di Imola.

### **Tourist Information Office Imola**

Via Mazzini, 14

Tel. 0542.602207

[www.comune.imola.bo.it](http://www.comune.imola.bo.it) (also in English)

## COMUNI OF THE IMOLESE

Castel Guelfo di Bologna, Medicina

Santerno Valley: Borgo Tossignano, Casalfiumanese, Castel del Rio, Fontanelice, Imola, Mordano.

See area website: [www.valledelsanterno.it](http://www.valledelsanterno.it).

Sillaro Valley: Castel San Pietro Terme, Dozza.

## HANDY REFERENCES

The Province has a helpful URP and website, with handy portals for accessing various services and interesting statistics about local demographics, environmental factors and political trends.

### **URP Provincia di Bologna**

Via Benedetto XIV, 3

Tel. 051.6598218

Numero verde 800.239754

[www.provincia.bologna.it](http://www.provincia.bologna.it)

Each individual *comune* also has its own website, easily located by following the model [www.comune.\[insert name here\].bo.it](http://www.comune.[insert name here].bo.it). For example, the website of the Comune di Budrio can be found at [www.comune.budrio.bo.it](http://www.comune.budrio.bo.it), the website of Zola Predosa at [www.comune.zolapredosa.bo.it](http://www.comune.zolapredosa.bo.it), etc.

If you are not fluent in Italian, you may find the Emilia Romagna regional tourism site helpful, also available in English: [www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it](http://www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it).

## THE PHONE BOOK

If you live outside Bologna city limits, Telecom Italia will provide you with the yellow and white pages for your geographical area only, for example *Provincia Nord* (North Province). If you would also like to have the phone books for the city of Bologna, you must contact SEAT Pagine Gialle directly. The volumes requested will be sent to you via *corriere* (delivery service) who will accept payment for both the volumes and delivery.

### SEAT Pagine Gialle

Numero verde 800.011411

[www.seatconvoi.it](http://www.seatconvoi.it)

## PAPERWORK

Most paperwork, with the exception of immigration documents, can be handled in the *comune* offices where you live. These offices are usually all located in the same building and due to a lower volume of business, are known to be more efficient than their counterparts in Bologna. Check area yellow pages under *COMUNI E SERVIZI COMUNALI*.

## ESSENTIAL SERVICES (See also Chapter 2)

## GETTING AROUND

While many areas of the province have excellent public transportation links, driving is almost imperative. If you live in the Apennines, you should also learn the basics about driving in snow. In this area, it is common to honk when entering a blind corner.

## TANGENZIALE

The *tangenziale* encircles two-thirds of the city, beginning in Casalecchio di Reno (exit 1) and ending beyond San Lazzaro di Savena (exit 12), in the Idice extension.

*I have always loved the historical center of Bologna, but living just outside of Sasso Marconi for almost 15 years has made me appreciate it even more. It is actually quite easy to get back and forth by train, bus, car and combinations of the above. Going with the family is a special trip. We plan the day, decide where to park, buy enough bus tickets*

*for everyone, pick the restaurant (usually McDonald's to appease my 13-year-old daughter), map out the itinerary; a major production for the 22 km trek. The only challenge is getting everyone past their provincial comfort zone to make the epochal jump.*

*Lisa Gelhaus*

The *tangenziale* is useful for entering and exiting the *autostrada*, but during rush hour can be a nightmare. If you need to commute on the *tangenziale*, it is worth your while to study the calendar of the *fiere* and plan an alternate route during large trade shows: [www.bolognafiere.it](http://www.bolognafiere.it). By law, you must always turn on your headlights while driving on the *tangenziale*.

## AUTOSTRADA

If you aren't terrified by high speeds, truck convoys and dense traffic, the *autostrada* can be a quick alternative to the *tangenziale* for getting from one end of the province to another. Italian *autostrade*, indicated by green signs, are privately owned and you must pay a *pedaggio* (toll). If you commute on the *autostrada*, you will want to consider a Telepass, which will allow you to pass in a special lane, automatically debiting the toll. For more information, see [www.autostrade.it](http://www.autostrade.it).

Be aware of some behaviors that are not listed in your driver's manual. For example, when you see a car flashing its lights behind you, it means another driver is coming up on you fast and wants you to get over in the other lane. In other words: get out of the way! Although you will see others passing in the emergency lane, this can result in automatic suspension of your license.

Traffic and road condition information is broadcast on Isoradio at the frequency 103.3. You can also check conditions on the Isoradio website at [www.radio.rai.it/isoradio](http://www.radio.rai.it/isoradio).

The following is a list of *autostrade* passing through Bologna:

A1- Autostrada del Sole: connects Milano and Napoli passing through Bologna, Firenze and Roma. It is the longest freeway in terms of distance and is also the first freeway built in Italy, hence number A1.

A14 - Autostrada Adriatica: connects Bologna and Taranto passing through the Riviera Romagnola. Beach traffic can clog this freeway from Bologna to Cesena.

A13 - Bologna/Padova: connects Bologna and Padova passing through Ferrara and Rovigo. On the Bologna end it connects to the A1 and A14. On the Padova end you can pick up the A4 for Torino-Trieste.

A22 - Autostrada del Brennero: connects the *Pianura Padana* beginning in Modena with Brennero and on to Austria and Germany.

## TRAIN AND BUS

There is generally good public transportation service between the towns in the province and the city of Bologna, making it possible to commute by train or bus. See [www.atc.bo.it](http://www.atc.bo.it) for information on the *extra-urbane* (beyond city limits) bus lines. A map of provincial rail lines is available at [www.ferroviae.it/cartina.php](http://www.ferroviae.it/cartina.php).

If you are commuting by train, consider an *abbonamento* (membership). Some passes combine train and bus transport. There is a special *sportello* (ticket window) in the Bologna train station that sells tickets by *fascia* (segment). You can buy them in bulk (such as 20 segments, each good for 10 km) and then use them as needed.

Tip: the 8-ride City Pass you bought in Bologna is also valid in Imola, Castel San Pietro Terme, Porretta Terme and vice-versa.

In the *Pianura*, areas that are not serviced by regular bus lines are instead connected to the principal routes via the Prontobus, a shuttle service that only makes its routes if you have called to reserve it. If you need to reach the Bentivoglio hospital using public transportation, for example, you will need to call the Prontobus at least 35 minutes prior to your departure. The Prontobus is very reliable and easy to use.

### **Prontobus Call Center**

Tel. 051.290299 (active Monday-Saturday 6-20; holidays 7-20)

## **COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA**

### **READING MATERIAL**

Just because you don't see Der Spiegel or the New York Times in your local *edicola* (newsstand), doesn't mean you need to make a trip to the city. Try asking your newsstand to special order foreign periodicals for you. If you special order, you will be expected to pick up your paper.

### **LIBRARIES**

Some local libraries have foreign language materials, but for a larger selection, try using the inter-library loan system. You can request books from the Sala Borsa and university libraries and your library card will work at any branch included in the system. Search online at: <http://sol.cib.unibo.it:8080/SebinaOpac/Opac>.

### **UTILITIES**

For gas, electricity, water and other services, you will set up contracts with Hera and Enel as described in Chapter 2: Essential Services. Depending on where you live, your gas may not be connected to the city main, but instead draw on a GPL *bombola* (tank). GPL stands for *gas di petrolio liquefatti* (liquified petroleum gas). In this case, your service will probably be privately furnished.

*I love the Bus 90 ride from the suburbs into town. I used to live at the very last stop. People getting on there wore slippers and casual clothing to go to the supermarket at the next stop. Those coming in at the supermarket to go to San Lazzaro's center were slightly more elegant. At the Bellaria hospital, people got on wearing bathrobes and*

*sometimes horrible eye patches or other bandages. Then as the bus approached Bologna, the passengers became very elegant, with bags matching their shoes, and socks matching their scarves. I always dress up as best as I can, but by the time I get to the final stop on Piazza Cavour, I feel I must look like a country cousin.*

*Pauline Mollema*

## HOUSING (See also Chapter 3)

Finding housing in the *provincia* is increasingly difficult due to its rapid growth and the influx of city slickers. It is generally true that the farther out you go, the lower the rents and real estate prices. If you are hoping to find a cheap, fixer-upper *rustico* (rustic farmhouse) you may be surprised how far from Bologna you will have to look. For more information on buying a house, see Chapter 10: Long Term.

### THE SEARCH

Contact a local real estate agency in the area where you would like to live. Real estate agents in the province know their turf and have their local reputation to uphold. For this reason, they are often friendlier and more accommodating than their colleagues in the big city.

### DECHIPHERING THE ADS

While in Bologna you are most likely to live in an *appartamento* (apartment), in the province your options are more varied. Below is a brief list of some of the descriptions you may encounter:

*Attico*: attic apartment, top floor

*Casa colonica*: colonial farmhouse, sometimes within a *corte colonica*, or farm complex with a *casella* and *fienile*

*Casa indipendente*: one-family house

*Casella/Fienile*: stables/hayloft

*Con giardino*: with outdoor space

*Cortile*: courtyard

*Mansarda*: loft space

*Palazzina*: small apartment building

*Porzione di*: a portion of

*Villetta a schiera*: townhouse, houses that share a wall

Depending on your location, check to see if the home is equipped with *zanzariera* (screens), which will keep out mosquitos and other vermin. This is especially important near rivers, lakes and canals where *zanzare* (mosquitos) are more common. If you are in a rural area, know that there will likely be seasonal use of herbicides and pesticides. Residents are sometimes notified of spraying, but often they are not. It's best to close your windows if you see spraying nearby.

### PRECAUTIONS

Like the city, areas in the province are not immune to visits from *ladri* (thieves), particularly in isolated areas. Many Italian homes are equipped with *inferriate di sicurezza* (security bars) on the windows, especially on the ground floor, to keep thieves at bay. It is wise to lock all your doors in August when most of Italy is on vacation, even while you are home.

## RELICS OF MAN

Be aware of old wells, especially around decrepit farmhouses or other rural outbuildings where they might be covered by vegetation. In the woods, unexploded World War II ordinances are still occasionally found. Do not allow your children to play in old bunkers or other former military entrenchments. The same goes for canals and waterways in the *Pianura* where the water is not safe for bathing or drinking.

## POISONOUS INSECTS, SNAKES AND MUSHROOMS

While the girth and length (up to two meters) can make quite an impression, most of the gray or black snakes you see in the Bolognese countryside are harmless *biscia*. However, poisonous vipers also live here, particularly in dry, sandy or rocky areas. Like most snakes, they are only dangerous when stepped on or otherwise scared or disturbed. While viper bites are a rare occurrence, the venom is poisonous and requires transport to a medical facility immediately.

You may come across a scorpion or *scorpioncino*, as small, black scorpions are called by locals. Most Bolognese will tell you they are practically harmless, with a bite no worse than a bee sting. There are also several varieties of yellowjackets, hornets and bees, including the large *calabrone*, known to cause severe reactions.

Mushrooms hunting is popular (especially when the famed *porcini* are in season), but you must know what you are doing, as there are many extremely poisonous varieties. For the poison control center, see Chapter 4: Health.

## HEALTH (See also Chapter 4)

### IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

In the case of emergency, dial 118 or go to the hospital nearest you. In addition to the city hospitals listed in Chapter 4: Health, there are numerous provincial hospitals. Know which is closest to you.

#### Bazzano – Ospedale Dossetti

Viale dei Martiri, 10/b

Tel. 051.838811

*The train from Marzabotto could be comfortable, when it wasn't five minutes (or an hour) late, or when it wasn't deragliato. You could read on the train, unless some anziano with a loud voice sitting ten seats away was holding court about his favorite cold cuts. This happened to me regularly,*

*so now, even though I am a vegetarian, I can say that prosciutto is the best, the little mortadella that you get from the COOP is OK but not as good as the stuff sliced off the big ones at the salumeria, and bresaola is just too lean to be really tasty!*

*Ann Gagliardi*

**Bentivoglio – Ospedale di Bentivoglio**

Via Marconi, 35

Tel. 051.6644111

**Budrio – Ospedale di Budrio**

Via Benni, 44

Tel. 051.809111

**Loiano – Ospedale Simiani**

Via Roma, 8

Tel. 051.6543711

**Porretta Terme – Ospedale Costa**

Via Roma, 16

Tel. 0534.20711

**San Giovanni in Persiceto – Ospedale di San Giovanni in Persiceto**

Via E. Palma, 1

Tel. 051.6813111

**Vergato – Ospedale Civile**

Via Repubblica, 120

Tel. 051.6749111

**PUBLIC MEDICAL CARE**

If you are enrolled in the national health care system all of your health care needs will revolve around your local ASL - Azienda Sanitaria Locale, also known as Azienda USL. To register with the ASL office in your *comune*, look in the local yellow pages under *SERVIZI DI PUBBLICA UTILITA'* or search online at [www.ausl.bologna.it](http://www.ausl.bologna.it).

**ANAGRAFE SANITARIA BY DISTRICT**

Your local ASL belongs to one of six larger districts in the province and your *medico di base* (general practitioner or family doctor) will be assigned within your district. If you have changed districts, you may request to keep your previous physician. This is a simple procedure that is done in your local ASL office during registration. It is important to know your district when calling the *guardia medica* (doctor on call) for after-hours care. They operate locally and will only make house calls within the assigned district. To find the number of the *guardia medica* for your *comune*, see: [www.118er.it/sottosezione3\\_p.asp?id=4136](http://www.118er.it/sottosezione3_p.asp?id=4136).

The six ASL districts are: Distretto Bologna, Distretto Casalecchio di Reno, Distretto Pianura Est (San Pietro in Casale), Distretto Pianura Ovest (San Giovanni in Persiceto), Distretto Porretta Terme, Distretto San Lazzaro di Savena.



## WORK (See also Chapter 5)

### THE SEARCH

Some job search resources are also available in the province. For example, the temporary agencies listed in Chapter 5: Work have local offices. The geographic scope of your search is not affected by the location of the agency with which you registered.

The province's CIP - *Centro per l'Impiego* (Employment Center) also runs *sportelli* (help desks) through local *comuni*. These help desks provide work-related information on training courses, job opportunities, unemployment benefits and more. The *sportelli* in the province, however, usually only offer assistance in Italian. For help in English, visit the central CIP in Bologna that has a cultural mediator. See Chapter 5: Work for contact information.

### TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

If you are looking for work teaching English, you might discover there is less competition in the province. In fact, many English speakers receive inquiries about lessons as soon as they open their mouths and reveal their foreign accents. Try placing an add for lessons on the bulletin board outside your local COOP supermarket, at your child's school or at the gym.

### TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

You will handle all of your work-related documents at the INPS office nearest you. Other than the Bologna headquarters, INPS offices are also located in Budrio, Casalecchio di Reno, Imola, San Giorgio di Piano, San Giovanni in Persiceto, San Lazzaro di Savena and Vergato. Click on '*le sedi INPS*' at [www.inps.it](http://www.inps.it) for addresses, telephone numbers and opening hours.

## FAMILY (See also Chapter 6)

### THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Children are usually placed in day care, preschool and elementary school within their *comune* of residence. If you live in a town without a middle or high school, your children will automatically be sent to the nearest neighboring facilities. Priority placement is always given to resident children. In cases of overflow, even younger children may be

*I lived in the historical city center for a year before moving out to the hills of the Appennino. Although I sometimes miss the social life of centro, I have to say I now prefer the quiet charm of the provincia. People are generally friendlier and I can get a lot more done in less time. One morning*

*I had my carta d'identità reissued, signed up my infant daughter up for the health system, picked up a day care application and had my son's lost library card replaced - all in less than an hour, something I could have never pulled off when we lived in Bologna.*

*Andrea Vogt*

assigned to schools in another comune. Factor in schools when choosing a place to live as it is difficult to change school districts.

Your first stop should be the local *ufficio scuola* (school office) usually housed among the other *comune* offices. Each *comune* will have different offerings, waiting lists and procedures. Be polite at the *ufficio scuola*, as it is this official who will make most of the decisions about your child's placement.

## SHOPPING (See also Chapter 7)

### FOOD SHOPPING

Food shopping in the *provincia* can be both a great delight and frustration. The upside is the abundance of fresh, locally grown food. Local crops include cereals (oats, wheat, corn and barley), industrial crops (sugar beets, hemp, sunflower and soy) and a variety of fruits and vegetables. The meat at your local butcher is likely just that - local. The province also has a host of farm-based fruit and vegetable vendors that have permanent stands and sell their own produce, marked with the word *nostrano* (ours). If you feel comfortable going from shop to shop you can get almost all fresh, local foods. If you really want to fit in, find out which day of the week the local market takes place and do your shopping there.

### JUST ASK

If you prefer one-stop shopping, there is likely to be a COOP supermarket where you can now find taco shells, soy sauce and other so-called ethnic foods. Each COOP has a buying manager, so you can make special requests about items you'd like to see on the shelves. You may have to promise to then purchase the four packs of tofu a month, but it saves you a trip into the city. Similarly, ask your local *fruttivendolo* (produce vendor) if he or she will provide special items, such as avocados or cilantro, you do not see displayed. Most are willing to pick up your request for you the next morning.

### CREDIT

Once they know you, province shopkeepers will often wave you off with a polite "*la prossima volta*" if you are a few cents short. Keep this charming tradition alive by actually paying the shopkeeper back on your next visit. Note: some small establishments in the province may not accept credit or *bancomat* (debit) cards.

## TEMPO LIBERO (See also Chapter 8)

### ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The province of Bologna organizes the Invito in Provincia program, bringing more than 500 different arts and entertainment events to charming venues from the *Pianura* to the upper *Appennino*. Searchable by *comune* or type of event, the province's website for culture is your best starting point for information: [www.invito.provincia.bologna.it](http://www.invito.provincia.bologna.it).

Together with local comuni, the province also sponsors a number of music festivals, including Corti, Chiese e Cortili, dedicated to classical, sacred and popular music; blues festivals in Porretta Terme and Castel San Pietro Terme; Angelica, a festival of contemporary music; and Suoni dell'Appennino featuring music in ancient hamlets and churches. Reading Retreats in Rural Italy, an American-run non-profit association, organizes year-round cultural events in Castello Galeazza, located in Crevalcore. The castle also has reading rooms and a small bed and breakfast: [www.galeazza.com](http://www.galeazza.com).

Many *comuni* have local theaters. One that merits special mention is the ITC.

### **ITC Teatro**

Via Rimembranze, 26  
San Lazzaro di Savena  
Tel. 051.6270150  
[www.itcteatro.it](http://www.itcteatro.it)

## **GASTRONOMY AND ENOGASTRONOMY**

Bolognese take the art of eating and drinking seriously and there are countless year-round events celebrating the area's gastronomic heritage. Timed to the harvest of the particular item being celebrated, dozens of *sagre* (food festivals) fill the province's *piazze* with tasty wines and *prodotti tipici* (typical, local products). In the spring, these may include cherries or asparagus; in the fall, *castagne* (chestnuts) and *tartufo* (truffles). For more information, see the sites [www.terredibologna.it](http://www.terredibologna.it) or [www.prodottitipici.com](http://www.prodottitipici.com).

The province of Bologna also boasts several noteworthy Food and Wine Routes, tourist itineraries related to the region's specialties.

### **Strade dei Vini e Sapori dei Colli d'Imola (Wine/Flavor Route of Imola's Hills)**

[www.stradaviniesapori.it](http://www.stradaviniesapori.it)

### **Città, Castelli e Ciliegi (Cities, Castles and Cherries)**

[www.cittacastelliliciliegi.it](http://www.cittacastelliliciliegi.it)

### **Via del Pane (Route of Bread)**

[www.montagnamica.it](http://www.montagnamica.it)

### **Colli Bolognesi (Wine Route of the Bolognese Hills)**

[www.collibolognesi.it](http://www.collibolognesi.it)

*I am on a continual search to find cultural things to do outside of the city. I recently discovered a little treasure just 10 kilometers outside Bologna called the Cà Ghironda Modern Art Museum ([www.ghironda.it](http://www.ghironda.it)). There are over 200 sculptures set along stepping stone paths on 10 hectares of hillside in Ponte Rocca, Zola Predosa. It was*

*originally a private collection and includes the works of masters Manzu, Zorio, Messina and Minguzzi. There are 150 different species of trees and plants on the property and the backdrop is an alternating rolling green and forested landscape, one that I never tire of in Italy.*

*Kim Brown*

## WINE

The wines of Bologna are still a relatively well-kept secret. Wines of controlled origin are certified with the letters DOC - *Denominazione di Origine Controllata*. Eight territories in the province have DOC certification: Albana di Romagna, Colli Bolognesi, Colli Bolognesi Classico Pignoletto, Colli d'Imola, Reno, Romagna Albana Spumante, Sangiovese di Romagna, Trebbiano di Romagna. Each of these areas produces numerous grape varieties. The provincial agriculture department maintains a searchable database of all DOC vineyards. It is accessible at [www.provincia.bologna.it/agricoltura/albi-vigneto.html](http://www.provincia.bologna.it/agricoltura/albi-vigneto.html).

You can taste every wine produced in the region in the wine cellar of Emilia Romagna, located in the fortress of Dozza. The Enoteca Regionale Emilia Romagna houses a permanent wine exhibition, tasting room and shop, with more than 800 different wines produced by 200 wineries and cooperatives. Situated about 25 kilometers southeast of Bologna, Dozza is also internationally known for its biennial festival of contemporary art, Il Muro Dipinto. Since 1960, artists have been invited to paint murals in this small medieval hamlet, which now has more than 90 frescoes. See [www.murodipinto.it](http://www.murodipinto.it).

### Enoteca Regionale Emilia Romagna

Rocca Sforzesca

Dozza

Tel. 0542.678089

[www.enotecaemiliaromagna.it](http://www.enotecaemiliaromagna.it)

Open Tuesday-Friday 9:30-13 and 14:30-18; Sunday 10-13 and 15-18:45

Wine bar open Sunday 15-18:30, see seasonal calendar for additional openings

## FESTIVALS

The annual *Feste dell'Unità* (Festivals of Unity) offer a glimpse into *Bologna La Rossa* (Bologna the Red). Beginning in May, these fundraisers organized by the *Democratici di Sinistra* (Democrats of the Left) take place throughout the province. Open to all political persuasions, the smaller *feste* culminate in September in Parco Nord with a month-long *mega-festa*. You'll find good, inexpensive food and local entertainment, with the requisite polka and line dancing. Larger *feste* may also offer bookstands, concerts and lectures. Entrance is free with an option to donate at the door. These events are Emilian phenomena and a characteristic element of Bolognese life.

There are a number of other kinds of festivals underway all year long as well, such as Casalecchio di Reno's *Festa degli Aquiloni* (kite festival) in May and Ozzano dell'Emilia's *Agosto con Noi* (August with us) to raise funds for the National Ramazzini Institute. Many rural towns also host *fiere agricole* (agricultural fairs) showcasing the latest farm equipment and prize-winning rabbits. For more information on local festivals see the following sites:

[www.2torri.it](http://www.2torri.it)

[www.provincia.bologna.it/sagreemercati/index.html](http://www.provincia.bologna.it/sagreemercati/index.html) (here you can search by *comune*)

[www.itineraribologna.it/enogastronomia.htm](http://www.itineraribologna.it/enogastronomia.htm)

## MUSEUMS AND MONUMENTS

Bologna witnessed fierce fighting during the last year of World War II. Allied forces, in concert with local partisan resistance groups, fought battles throughout the Apennines along the German Gothic Line until April 1945, when the allies reached Bologna. April 25<sup>th</sup> is a national holiday, celebrating Italy's liberation and the end of the war. There are many interesting war and antifascist resistance-related museums and monuments. One of the best is the *Museo Mostra della Resistenza e del Novecento* (Museum and Exhibit of the Resistance and the 1900s), part of the CIDRA - *Centro Imolese Documentazione Resistenza Antifascista e Storia Contemporanea* (Imolese Center of Anti-fascist Resistance Documentation and Contemporary History), a large archive and research center.

### **Museo Mostra della Resistenza e del Novecento**

Via dei Mille, 26

Imola

Tel. 0542.24422

[www.cidra.it](http://www.cidra.it)

Open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 9:30-12:30

For a comprehensive overview of the province's 100 museums, see "Bologna, Una Provincia, Cento Musei," available at Feltrinelli International. The province's website also has a searchable index of museums at [www.provincia.bologna.it/cultura](http://www.provincia.bologna.it/cultura). Below are a select few.

### **Museo della Civiltà Contadina**

Via San Marina, 35

Località San Marino, Bentivoglio

Tel. 051.891050

[www.provincia.bologna.it/cultura/vsmeraldi](http://www.provincia.bologna.it/cultura/vsmeraldi)

Open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 9:30-12:30 and 14:30-18; Wednesday and Friday 9:30-12:30; Sundays and holidays 14:30-18

An impressive collection of everyday objects that describe the history of work, agricultural and artisan life of the *Pianura*, displayed in a well-preserved villa.

*A perfect day outing is walking in the hills just south of Bologna near Castel San Pietro Terme near the tiny village of Liano. You can start the walk from località Campetto in the Valle Sillaro; from there you can walk to Liano and the Umberto Cesare winery for tasting. The walk is about 10 km round trip.*

*A detailed description of this walk can be found in one of my favorite guidebooks on biking and nature in the area, "Natura Insieme: guida per passeggiate sulle colline Bolognese" by Claudio Lenzi. Combining the walk with wine tasting is not in the book - that was my idea!*

*Carol Sicbaldi*

### **Museo d'Arte Sacra**

Piazza del Popolo, 22  
San Giovanni in Persiceto  
Tel. 051.821254

Open Saturday and Sunday 9-12 by appointment

A collection of 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century Bolognese paintings and other 14<sup>th</sup> century liturgical objects. Note the Parmigiano Reggiano on the table in the anonymous rendition of The Last Supper.

### **Museo Nazionale Etrusco Pompeo Aria**

Via Porrettana Sud, 13  
Marzabotto  
Tel. 051.932353

[www.archeobo.arti.beniculturali.it/Marzabotto](http://www.archeobo.arti.beniculturali.it/Marzabotto)

A national museum of Etruscan artifacts, including the remains of an ancient Etruscan city from the sixth and seventh century.

### **Pinacoteca Comunale**

Ex-Convento di San Domenico  
Via Sacchi, 4  
Imola  
Tel. 0542.602609

[www.comune.imola.bo.it/museicomunali](http://www.comune.imola.bo.it/museicomunali)

Open Saturday and Sunday 9-12 or by appointment during the week

### **MACHINES AND MOTORS**

Some of the fastest machines in the world are produced in Bologna, home to Lamborghini, Ducati, Malaguti and several top engine manufacturers. Ferrari and Maserati are in nearby Modena. Moto-tourism is on the rise, especially in the narrow, winding roads of the Apennines. In addition, thousands of motorheads flock to the popular Motor Show convention held in Bologna in December.

The Emilia Romagna tourism website has dedicated an area to the Land of Motors: [www.emiliaromagnatourismo.it](http://www.emiliaromagnatourismo.it).

### **Ducati Factory and Museum**

Via Cavalieri Ducati, 3  
Tel. 051.6413343 (active 10-12 and 14-16)  
[www.ducati.com](http://www.ducati.com)

Museum visits are coupled with a tour of the factory and must be booked ahead. Guided tours are available Monday-Friday at 11 and 16; continuously Saturday from 9:30 to 13.

## Enzo e Dino Ferrari Race Track

Via Fratelli Rosselli, 2

Imola

Tel. 0542.634511

Tel. 0542.34116 ticket office

[www.imolacircuit.it](http://www.imolacircuit.it)

## Museo Lamborghini

Via Modena, 12

Sant'Agata Bolognese

Tel. 051.6817654

[www.lamborghini.com](http://www.lamborghini.com)

Open Monday-Friday 9-12:30 and 14:30-17

A collection of antique cars (mostly from the '60s) engines and other instruments from the Lamborghini factory.

## OUTDOOR SPORTS AND LEISURE

The province offers numerous hiking and biking routes, but also windsurfing, horseback riding, rock climbing and skiing. For an overview, see [www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it](http://www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it) or [www.appenninobolognese.net](http://www.appenninobolognese.net).

## GREEN SPACE

Additional information on the parks listed below and others is available in English at [www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/parchi](http://www.regione.emilia-romagna.it/parchi) and [www.parks.it](http://www.parks.it).

**Parco Gessi e Calanchi:** accessible from Pontecella, Pizzocalvo, Ozzano dell'Emilia or Castel dei Britti, includes guided spelunking visits of the Grotta di Spipola. Visitors' center Casa Luigi Fantini, named for the first explorer who discovered the cave, is located in San Lazzaro di Savena.

**Parco del Corno alle Scale:** accessibile from Lizzano in Belvedere, this park is home to the highest altitude peaks in the province as well as a ski area.

*I spent my first year in Italy as a graduate student in Bologna's city center. When I returned for love, I landed near my husband's hometown in the Pianura. Although neighbors inevitably try to compare the nebbia of the area to the coastal fog of San Francisco, I have grown to appreciate the*

*long horizon and now live and work even further away from the city. In the winter, I spend Sunday mornings running in camminate in different towns of the Pianura and in the summer, dine at as many Feste delle Unità as possible.*

*Kathryn Knowles*

**Parco dell'Abbazia di Monteveglio:** this intriguing little park lies on the hill above the medieval village of Monteveglio with a picturesque abbey.

**Parco Storico di Monte Sole:** located in Marzabotto, this large regional park has a *scuola di pace* (school for peace) and a monument to the WWII massacre of 1,800 Marzabotto area civilians.

**Riserva Naturale del Bosco della Frattona:** in the foothills between Dozza and Imola, this almost secret reserve is covered with oak, poplar and ancient chestnut trees. You will also find *sabbia di Imola*, a unique yellow sand, and a nice walking loop.

**Prati di Mugnano:** near Sasso Marconi, this hilly 110 hectares is a popular picnic destination, with fountains, tables and bbq pits. Offers a variety of hikes and views of rock tumbling down into the Val di Setta. The restaurant Mugnano di Sopra makes homemade *crescentine*.

**Parco dei Laghi di Suviana e Brasimone:** this park includes the manmade hydroelectric reservoirs Suviana and Brasimone, which supply most of Bologna's drinking water. Lakefront area includes *lettini* (beach chairs), bar and picnic areas. Water levels fluctuate – swim with caution.

**Parco Delta del Po:** while actually in the Provinces of Ferrara and Ravenna, this is the largest of all the regional parks, comprising a territory of 60,000 hectares. Great canoeing and bird watching.

## HIKING AND TREKKING

If you like to hike, invest in the classic book "A Piedi in Emilia Romagna" by Sandro Bassi and Mario Vinelli. One of the most popular hikes is the *Via degli Dei* (Road of the Gods), from Bologna to Florence on ancient footpaths. Most trails are marked and maintained by CAI – *Club Alpino Italiano* (Italian Alpine Club), which in addition to maintaining trails and *rifugi* (refuges), also publishes maps and offers outdoor courses.

In collaboration with Trenitalia, CAI runs a program called Trekking col Treno, a series of excursions in the Bolognese Apennines using public transportation and the assistance of CAI guides. See the national CAI site for details.

### CAI – Club Alpino Italiano

Sezione Mario Fantin Bologna

Via Cesare Battisti, 11a

Tel. 051.234856

[www.cai.it](http://www.cai.it) (national site)

[www.caibo.it](http://www.caibo.it) (local information)



Together with CAI, the Emilia Romagna region has published a series of color trail maps of popular hikes in the region's parks. Topographic maps are available at:

**Archivio Cartografico della Regione Emilia Romagna (Regional Map Archive)**

Via dello Scalo, 3/2

Tel. 051.6493230

<http://archiviocartografico.regione.emilia-romagna.it>

Open Monday-Friday 9:30-14

If you prefer to go with a group, consider an outing with Trekking Italia, La Boscaglia or Natura W. There is typically an annual membership and then a minimal fee for the various hikes. There are also several commercial outdoor travel organizations, such as the Canadian company Custom Walks that books custom walking and biking trips and will even transport your pack: [www.customwalks.com](http://www.customwalks.com).

**Trekking Italia**

Via Roncati, 17

Tel. 051.6153795

[www.trekkingitalia.com](http://www.trekkingitalia.com) (national site)

[www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/trekking](http://www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/trekking) (local information)

**La Boscaglia**

Tel. 051.6264169

[www.boscaglia.it](http://www.boscaglia.it)

**Natura W**

Tel. 0536.325586

[www.vallidelcimone.it/naturaviva](http://www.vallidelcimone.it/naturaviva)

Offers summer camps for kids and special outdoor skills courses such as orienteering.

**CLIMBING**

Climbers should contact FASI - *Federazione Arrampicata Sportiva Italiana* (Italian Sport Climbing Federation). You'll find information on their site about classes for children and adults, periodicals, rock gyms, etc. CAI also offers an annual course in free-climbing.

*One of the benefits of the provincia is having close contact with nature. When my parents came to visit me this spring, we were able to bike a trail not far from my house in Ozzano up through the calanchi to the Dulcamara, a local agriturismo, picking wild asparagus along the way. We found hoof*

*prints of wild boar near the trail, were surprised by pheasants hidden in the tall grasses as they took flight, and returned home in the evening to prepare a dinner of spaghetti flavored with the asparagus we had found.*

*Jennifer White*

If you are a university student you can also get involved in climbing through the CUSB. For CUSB contact information, see Chapter 8: Tempo Libero.

### **FASI – Federazione Arrampicata Sportiva Italiana**

Via del Terrapieno, 27

Tel. 051.6014890

[www.federclimb.it](http://www.federclimb.it)

Badolo, a village located just 5 km from Sasso Marconi has more than 150 climbing routes. Fosso Raibano, just 2 km from Badolo, is another year-round climbing spot for locals. Another popular climbing area is La Pietra di Bismantova, located northwest of Modena. See website: [www.sincretech.it/Bismantova](http://www.sincretech.it/Bismantova) (in English and Italian).

### **SPELUNKING**

Contact Bologna's spelunker group for information about courses for beginners and trips for seasoned explorers.

#### **Gruppo Speleologico Bolognese**

Cassero di Porta Lama

Piazza VII Novembre 1944, 7

Tel. 051.521133 (active Monday and Thursday 21-23)

[www.gsb-usb.it](http://www.gsb-usb.it)

### **SKIING**

You can arrive at two ski areas in the Apennines east of Bologna in less than two hours. While the snowfall is somewhat unpredictable, these small ski areas offer varied terrain and are great for a day or weekend of skiing. They are also accessible by train.

#### **Monte Cimone**

Tel. 053.662350

[www.cimonesci.it](http://www.cimonesci.it)

Located 80 km from Bologna in the *Appennino Modenese*

Lifts can be accessed in Fanano, Sestola, Montecreto and Riolutato

31 *piste* (runs), 22 lifts, 50 km of skiing

#### **Corno alle Scale**

Tel. 053.453398

[www.cornoallescale.it](http://www.cornoallescale.it)

Located 68 km from Bologna in the *Appennino Bolognese*

Lifts are accessed about 10 km from Lizzano in Belvedere

22 runs, 6 lifts, 36 km of skiing

## SWIMMING

*Comuni* in the province with community swimming pools include: Castel San Pietro Terme, Ozzano dell'Emilia, Pianoro, San Lazzaro di Savena, Sasso Marconi and Zola Predosa.

Summer-only outdoor pools are located in Budrio, Granarolo dell'Emilia, Monterenzio, Rastignano and Zola Predosa. For pictures and directions, see [www.sogese.com](http://www.sogese.com). Additional swim and recreation centers not managed by SOGESE include:

### Acqua Joss Parco Acquatico (Acquatic Park)

Via Nuova Selice

Conselice (Ravenna)

Tel. 0545.85320

[www.acquajoss.com](http://www.acquajoss.com)

### Castel Maggiore Tennis Club

Via Vancini, 5

Castel Maggiore

Tel. 051.711776

[www.tenniscastelmaggiore.com](http://www.tenniscastelmaggiore.com)

Outdoor pool, bar, lighted clay and hard surface tennis courts, calcetto and gym.

### Piccolo Paradiso

Via Sirano, 7

Sasso Marconi

Tel. 051.842680

[www.camping.piccoloparadiso.eu](http://www.camping.piccoloparadiso.eu)

Adult and children's pools, roller skating, fishing, play area, bar, adjacent tennis.

### Piscina di Monteombraro

Via Piscina, 109

Zocca (Modena)

Tel. 059.989561

[www.piscinadimonteombraro.it](http://www.piscinadimonteombraro.it)

Two large pools, waterslides, bar, picnic areas.

*Some of the best skiing in the world is not far from Bologna. Hop in the car and in 3-4 hours you can get to any great town in the Dolomites or the Alps. There is nothing like a day on the slopes with a blue sky and great*

*snow - and a break at the baita for a beer, grappa, or strudel at the end of the day. Be sure to try a bombardino - a tasty hot drink with egg and whipped cream, kind of like a warm and very alcoholic egg nog.*

*Susannah Tillson*

## FAMILY OUTINGS

A wonderful place for a picnic with the kids is the Cooperativa Dulcamara in nearby Ozzano dell'Emilia (località Settefonti). There are all kinds of farm animals and a beautiful grassy area for running around. The organic vegetarian restaurant is excellent and so are the products sold in their store. Located in the striking Parco Gessi, they also organize hikes, geological tours and other outdoor activities, including summer camps for children.

### **Cooperativa Dulcamara**

Via Tolara di Sopra, 78

Ozzano dell'Emilia

Tel. 051.796643

[www.coopdulcamara.it](http://www.coopdulcamara.it)

An excellent *gelateria* that also makes *piadine* is the Fior Fiore in Granarolo dell'Emilia. It is worth a mention for its playground and because it stays open until the end of October.

### **Fior Fiore Gelateria**

Via Passerotta, 2/a

Granarolo dell'Emilia

Tel. 051.760522

## THE BEACH

It's just a 1.5 hour drive or train ride to the beaches of the Adriatic, including the Lidi Ferraresi, the Lidi di Ravenna and the Riviera Romagnola, from Cervia to Riccione. No matter where you go, you'll find the beach more or less organized in the same way: *bagni* (beach facilities) with chairs and umbrellas for rent, changing rooms and showers and bars where you can have lunch. Family-oriented *bagni* offer children's play areas; those catering to the single crowd host happy hour at dusk. While there are a few public beaches where you can plant your own umbrella and cooler, the Italian beach experience is all about *servizi* (services).

How to arrive:

Lidi Ferraresi: A13 toward Padova, exit Ferrara Sud. Follow signs east toward Comacchio and the Lidi.

Lidi di Ravenna: A14 toward Ancona, exit Raccordo Ravenna. Follow signs to Lidi Ravennati. Or take the backroads through the Imolese by following Via San Vitale out of the city, due east for 1.5 hours.

Riviera Romagnola: A14 toward Ancona, exit Rimini or Riccione. Local train from Bologna Centrale to Rimini takes just over an hour. *Navette* (shuttles) in front of the Rimini train station will take you down to the *lungomare* (waterfront).

## THERMAL BATHS

Italians swear by the curative properties of their *terme* (thermal baths), so much so that when prescribed by a doctor, a visit to the *terme* is covered by the national health care system. *Terme* may be visited year-round and some have recreational offerings in addition to their natural springs. You may be asked to complete a release form before entering any *terme*. Don't forget your *cuffia* (bathing cap)!

### Terme di Castel San Pietro

Viale Terme, 1113

Castel San Pietro Terme

Tel. 051.941247

Numero verde 800.213540

[www.termedicastelsanpietro.it](http://www.termedicastelsanpietro.it)

### Terme di Porretta

Via Roma, 5

Porretta Terme

Tel. 0534.24055

[www.termediporretta.it](http://www.termediporretta.it)

### Villaggio della Salute Più

Via Sillaro, 6

Castel San Pietro Terme

Tel. 051.929791 or 051.929972

[www.villaggiodellasalute.it](http://www.villaggiodellasalute.it)

*Agriturismo*, thermal baths, an Acqua Park and Bimbolandia.

*Let's say that it is a beautiful Sunday and just the thought of getting stuck on the highway for hours, direction beach, is enough to keep you in bed. Consider the pleasant alternative of Lake Suviana, the dammed, man-made lake that supplies Bologna with drinking water. It is located in the hills after Porretta Terme, a 40-minute drive. There is*

*picnicking, camping and various bar/trattorie. Follow the lake around to the area called "the beach." There you can barbecue on the grills provided, rent a beach chair or canoe, take sun or shade and best of all, swim in the ice cold, clean water (water shoes recommended).*

*Janie Birchman*

## *Country Living*

*After years of living in 40 square meters, my husband and I started househunting after deciding to start a family. Hoping for a little green space, we began looking in Bologna's immediate outskirts, but prices pushed us farther and farther afield. Two years later, when my baby was 10 months old, we moved to Loiano, a small town in the Apennines. While driving there for the first time, I thought, "it's too far. You're never going to want to drive this far every day." But here we are, in this little borghetto, all stairways and nooks and crannies, nestled into the hilly countryside. It was ideal for raising young children. You send them out to play and watch from the window while accomplishing other things, rather than having to go to a park. They are free to explore, get dirty, learn about nature. The town, 5 km away, is safe. I could drop my kids off for a movie or pizza with friends. If I forget my wallet, everybody from the baker to the doctor tells me, "just pay me next time." True, everybody knows everybody else's business, but this is not always negative: we help each other out,*

*with child minding, transportation, information, whatever. And with limited cultural resources, one tends to actually participate in events. Bologna is only 30-75 minutes away (depending on traffic). On the other hand, the cool summers and the soft, autumn colors give way to long, miserable winters with lots of snow. Those with 4-wheel drives and no fear are OK. The rest of us are stranded - sometimes in our cars, in snowbanks. And so far from society, childhood friendships and visits took extra encouragement and planning. Now that my first baby is in high school and I am working again, we drive the windy road to Bologna almost daily. Moving back to the city is becoming imperative, for convenience and cultural stimulation. But I will miss short, friendly lines at the post office, the bank, the shops; the easy parking; the real, person-to-person relationships; the folklore festivals; the long walks without traffic; and sunbathing, dining and stargazing out my front door.*

*Shoshanna Zuckerman*



*Julia Hill, English Teacher  
Taunton, Somerset, England*



## 10 > LONG TERM

### INTRODUCTION

Perhaps you met *la tua metà*. Or found a great job. Or maybe Bologna has simply sunk her hooks into you so deep you just can't seem to pull away. In any case, at some point, you've started to think of Bologna as your home. You don't relate to life in your country the same way you once did, but you'll never be entirely Italian either. Some days, you could fit in everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

Many foreigners living abroad put off some of the topics in this chapter because it is psychologically challenging to accept the decision to truly *stabilirsi* in a foreign country. Like most expatriates, you feel nostalgia for your family, friends and aspects of your own culture that you have grown to appreciate even more while living in Italy. It's normal. Everybody feels it. But don't let those feelings get in the way of taking important steps toward getting yourself *in regola*. The more time you pass here, the more likely it is that you will experience life's milestones, such as buying a home, Italian style. Unfortunately, you may also experience some of life's darker moments, such as divorce or death. In these cases, foreigners sometimes find themselves in extremely difficult circumstances during what are already trying times because they have not obtained Italian *cittadinanza* or otherwise formalized their status here.

Even if you are one of those migratory types who goes back and forth between Bologna and your country frequently, make it a point to familiarize yourself with the issues you may face if you are planning to be here *a lungo termine*.

### PAPERWORK

By this point, you've discovered that Italy's ancient bureaucracy craves official letterhead and multiple authorizations. Italians sometimes explain this with the Latin phrase "*verba volant, scripta manent*," which means "spoken words fly away, written ones remain." For all the paperwork you'll have to do, it's a good idea to make personal contact with your nearest embassy or consulate. They will be your point of reference for many bureaucratic procedures, including registering a marriage, the birth of a child or renewing a passport. Whenever you require documents from your home country, you must request an apostille, the legalization of a document for international use under the terms of the 1961 Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalization for Foreign Public Documents.

*la tua metà* = your other half  
*stabilirsi* = settle down  
*in regola* = regularized  
*la cittadinanza* = citizenship  
*a lungo termine* = for the long term

Documents which have been notarized by a notary public and then certified with a conformant apostille are then accepted for legal use in all the nations that have signed the Hague Convention.

Any documents and apostilles written in a foreign language will have to be translated into Italian by an authorized translator, registered in the *albo* (guild). A list of authorized translators is available at the front desk of the *Tribunale* (City Courthouse) on Via Giuseppe Garibaldi, 6. IWF members have recommended the following translator:

**Lucia Gaudenzi**

Tel. 051.6153453

Cell. 347.3221840

E-mail: lu\_gaude@hotmail.com

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

For help with long-term paperwork, visit the city's URP in Piazza Maggiore, see Chapter 1: Plugging In. The URP website contains useful information in Italian on citizenship, marriage and other long-term issues.

The City of Turin has an excellent English-language version of its site. While some of the information is city specific, many of the procedures for preparing for the long term are similar to Bologna: [www.comune.torino.it/en](http://www.comune.torino.it/en).

## CITIZENSHIP

If you qualify, there are numerous benefits to acquiring Italian citizenship. For non-EU citizens, Italian citizenship will allow you to travel freely within the EU and to work in any of the member states. While EU citizens already enjoy the above privileges, becoming an Italian citizen will enable you to vote in the democracy in which you live and most importantly, make you an equal under Italian law.

There are four ways of automatically receiving Italian citizenship: birth to an Italian parent; being born in Italian territory; being adopted as a minor by an Italian citizen; or judicial recognition of paternity or maternity of an Italian citizen. There are also ways of requesting Italian citizenship. These include demonstration of bloodline or descent (if certain conditions are met), marriage to an Italian citizen and naturalization. Note that in the cases of marriage and naturalization, the decision to award citizenship is at the total discretion of the authorities.

## CITIZENSHIP BY MARRIAGE

You can apply for citizenship by marriage after having resided legally in Italy for six months after the date of the official Italian registration of your marriage. You will have to demonstrate that you have never been convicted of certain crimes. If you marry an Italian citizen but do not establish residency in Italy, you must instead wait three years from the date of your marriage to qualify. When you apply, you will complete a *modulo* (form), downloadable online from the *Prefettura* (Prefect). You will also need to submit the following documents:

*Atto di nascita*: the long form of your birth certificate, with apostille.

*Certificato penale*: a good conduct certificate or police record from your home country, with apostille.

*Certificato di matrimonio*: Italian marriage certificate, or in the case of a marriage performed abroad, the accompanying *atto di matrimonio* (marriage act), demonstrating that the foreign marriage has been registered in Italy.

## CITIZENSHIP BY NATURALIZATION

The government decides whether or not to accept a foreign citizen based on his or her involvement in Italian society, the applicant's legal record and financial self-sufficiency. A general requisite is 10 years of legal residence in Italy, five for those who have refugee status or were adopted over the age of 18 by an Italian citizen, four for EU citizens and three for foreigners born on Italian soil. When you apply for naturalization, you will need your *atto di nascita*, *certificato penale* and a personal declaration renouncing protection of diplomatic authority.

## NEXT STEPS

Once you have obtained your apostilled documents, had them translated into Italian by an authorized translator and made copies in triplicate, you will present your application to the *Ufficio Cittadinanza* (Citizenship Office) of the city's Prefect. Ask the person in the Citizenship Office to kindly review your documents to make sure that you have completed the paperwork correctly.

Your application will be assigned a protocol number and you will receive notification by mail that your request is being considered. The wait for citizenship takes approximately two years, depending on the caseload. If during the waiting period your *permesso di soggiorno* expires or you change residency, you must present your updated information to the Prefettura in writing. Be sure to include your protocol number.

### **Prefettura di Bologna – Ufficio Cittadinanza**

Via IV Novembre, 24

Tel. 051.6401111 switchboard

Tel. 051.6401364 (active Tuesday and Thursday 12-13)

[www2.comune.bologna.it/bologna/prefurp/html/index2.php](http://www2.comune.bologna.it/bologna/prefurp/html/index2.php)

Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9-11:30

*When I received a letter saying I had been granted Italian citizenship, my city hall authorities in Budrio arranged a small ceremony to make it more than just a passing of documents. My husband, two-year-old son and in-laws came, flowers, gifts and cameras in hand. The ceremony was short and sweet and the municipal staff had*

*prepared a floral bouquet, a packet of historical information and a copy of the Italian Constitution, all wrapped in the Italian flag motif. After my oath and lots of auguroni, we went to our village house for cake and spumante. It ended up being a special day that will remain etched in my memory as the day I became Italian.*

*Carol Sicbaldi*

*Il Ministero dell'Interno* (Ministry of the Interior) operates a telephone hotline for information regarding citizenship: 06.48042101 (or endings 02/03/04). The hotline is active Monday-Friday 9-14; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 14:30-18:30.

## VOTING & CIVIC DUTIES

If you would like to vote in your home elections while abroad, consult with your embassy. US citizens may receive voter registration assistance from the Overseas Vote Foundation, a non-profit, non-partisan organization that provides a suite of internet-based voter services for US federal elections: [www.overseasvotefoundation.org](http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org). Democrats Abroad, with a local chapter in Bologna, also provides voter registration assistance in both English and Spanish: [www.votefromabroad.org](http://www.votefromabroad.org).

Once you become an Italian citizen, you need to contact the *Ufficio Elettorale* (Electoral Office) of your *comune* of residence to register to vote. The voter registries are updated in January and July of each year, so it is not guaranteed that you will be able to vote in the first election following the acquisition of citizenship.

Once you are registered, you will receive a *tessera elettorale* (voting card) with instructions about the *seggio* (polling station) closest to your home, usually a school building. Local, provincial, regional and EU elections occur every five years, but not necessarily at the same time. The timing of national elections depends on the duration of the coalition in power. Italy also uses the instrument of the national referendum to vote on issues of a constitutional nature or others that the politicians prefer to defer to voters.

### **Ufficio Elettorale Comune di Bologna**

Via Don Minzoni, 10/2

Tel. 051.2194222 switchboard

Tel. 051.2194233 registration

## MARRIAGE & WEDDINGS

### **MARRIAGE TO AN ITALIAN CITIZEN**

If you decide to marry in Italy, you must choose between a religious or civil ceremony. It is unlikely that you will find an officiant who will marry you outdoors or in a location other than a place of worship or city hall. Prepare to start collecting documents, especially if you plan to marry in the Catholic church. For information on marrying in Bologna, your first stop should be the *Ufficio di Stato Civile* (Civil Status Office).

### **Ufficio di Stato Civile Comune di Bologna**

Via Santa Maria Maggiore, 1

Tel. 051.203960 marriage services

Tel. 051.203278/79 birth and citizenship services

Open Monday-Friday 8:30-13; Tuesday and Thursday 15-16:30

Religious ceremonies performed by a Roman Catholic priest or minister of a church recognized by the Italian government have civil validity and are automatically registered

with the Civil Status Office. Some non-Catholic officiants may insist on first doing a civil ceremony before performing a religious one so as to ensure that the marriage is legally valid. A notice publicly stating the couple's intention to marry must be posted for at least eight consecutive days in the city/cities where the bride and groom reside. You will need the following documents:

*Nulla osta*: this document, which literally means "no obstacle," is an affidavit of eligibility to marry. Put simply, it is an oath notarized by the consul of your home country in Italy stating that there are no obstacles to you getting married. It is one of the trickier documents to procure because it does not exist in many places outside of Italy, hence the necessity to visit a consulate. Once the signature of the consul has been affixed to the document, you then need to have it authenticated by another office, the *Ufficio Legalizzazione* (Legalization Office) which is usually located in the Prefettura. If your home country's consulate is in Florence for example, you may take care of this step at the Florence Prefect. Don't forget to inquire about the *marca da bollo* (tax stamp) which you will need to pick up before visiting the Ufficio Legalizzazione.

#### **Prefettura di Bologna - Ufficio Legalizzazioni**

Via IV Novembre, 24

Tel. 051.6401362

[www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/prefurp/html/legaliz.php](http://www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/prefurp/html/legaliz.php)

Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9-11:30

#### **Prefettura di Firenze - Ufficio Legalizzazioni**

Via A. Giacomini, 8

Tel. 055.2783562

Open Monday-Saturday 9-11

*Atto notorio*: this is an oath sworn before two witnesses and then notarized by the Italian consul of your home country, stating that there are no legal impediments to the marriage. Often, it is most convenient to do this at the nearest Italian consulate in your home country before coming to Italy or while on a trip home.

*Atto di nascita*: birth certificate showing the names of both parents. If issued outside of Italy, this document must be translated into Italian and authenticated by the nearest Italian consulate with jurisdiction over the state or place it was issued.

*We officially got married in Bologna, but we had a second, symbolic ceremony in my hometown, Washington DC, so that our friends and family on the other side of the world could also take part in our celebration.*

*If you are planning on having a civil wedding in Bologna, the Sala Rossa of the Comune is a beautiful red room overlooking Piazza Maggiore.*

*Susannah Tillson*

*Evidence of termination of any previous marriage:* such as final divorce or annulment decrees or certificate of death. Note that any previous marriage must have been dissolved at least 300 days before the date of the proposed marriage.

If you decide to marry in the Catholic church, you must also prepare a set of *documenti ecclesiastici* (ecclesiastical documents). You will need certificates of Catholic baptism and confirmation, a form signed by two witnesses who have known you since childhood attesting to your *stato libero ecclesiastico* (free ecclesiastic status) and proof of participation in pre-marital counseling. For more information on getting married in Bologna see [www.bolognanozze.it](http://www.bolognanozze.it).

## REGISTERING YOUR MARRIAGE

If you would like to have your Italian marriage recognized in your home country, the certificate of marriage can be taken to the *Procura della Repubblica* (District Attorney) in Bologna for an apostille. Once you have an apostille, your marriage certificate is valid outside of Italy and may be presented to the appropriate office in your home country.

### **Procura della Repubblica – Ufficio Apostille**

Piazza Trento e Trieste, 2

Tel. 051.201111 or 051.219111

If you were married to an Italian outside of Italy, you must request that your local embassy send your marriage certificate with apostille through diplomatic courier. Once your marriage has been registered, the *anagrafe* of your local *comune* will be notified and you can then request a copy of your *atto di matrimonio*. Note that it is this document, not a foreign marriage certificate, that you will use to apply for citizenship by marriage.

## ITALIAN WEDDINGS: WHAT TO EXPECT

In the Italian tradition, the groom and guests wait for the bride outside the church or city hall. Guests will kiss and hug the *sposi* (bride and bridegroom) offering congratulations, even prior to the main event. Following the ceremony, guests wait outside with rice or flower petals in hand.

Civil ceremonies are a short but sweet affair before the mayor or an officer of the registrar in the *comune* of residence of the bride or groom. After reading aloud the laws governing civil marriage, vows are exchanged and the act of marriage is signed by the couple and two witnesses. Depending on the space available, friends usually let family enter first, waiting outside the room if necessary.

Catholic weddings fall into two categories: a wedding incorporated into a full hour-long mass, or a shorter 20-minute ceremony with communion. Following the religious rite, there is a lengthy signing ceremony for the couple and witnesses, while the guests wait outside for the grand exit.

Italian receptions can range from a light *rinfrasco* (standing cocktail) to a seated six-course meal. The focus is on food and there may or may not be music and dancing. At the

end of the reception, the bride and groom usually distribute *bomboniere*, a party favor containing Jordan almonds, the names of the couple and the date of the event. Some couples decide to direct the funds that would have gone toward elaborate favors (for which there is a *bomboniere*-industrial complex), to a charity of choice. In this case, guests usually receive a card indicating where the funds have been donated. Bolognese couples may also distribute small ring-shaped sugar cookies, a local specialty called *zuccherini*, usually made by a mother or aunt.

## FAMILY CRISES

If you are experiencing a family crisis, you may contact one of the centers below or look in the yellow pages under *PROFESSIONISTI – MEDIAZIONE FAMILIARE*.

### **Centro per le Famiglie (Center for Families)**

Via Orfeo, 40/2

Tel. 051.6563311

[www.informafamiglie.it](http://www.informafamiglie.it)

Open Monday and Friday 8-15; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 8-18

Crisis center operated jointly by the city and region. Their informative website also includes a section for *famiglie straniere* (foreign families) with information about health, paperwork, driver's licenses, legal problems and other bureaucratic affairs.

### **Servizio di Consulenza per la Vita Familiare (Counseling Service for Family Life)**

Via Tacconi, 65

Tel. 051.450585

Open Tuesday and Thursday 9-12:30 and 16-19:30; Friday 16-19:30; Saturday 9-12:30

Offers consulting and psychological support for persons struggling with interpersonal family relations. Offers sex education courses for young people and premarital counseling for couples.

## LEGAL SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

There are two types of legal separation in Italy. The first is consensual separation, a mutual agreement between husband and wife that is then approved by the court. The second is judicial separation, in which a judge determines by way of court hearings

*In college I decided to work and live on my own. You may think this is normal but it wasn't for an Italian girl 40 years ago. I was hired by an airline, visited many countries and ended up marrying a Lebanese. I lived in Lebanon and the USA, two very different countries that taught me respect for other people and civilizations. I came back to Italy*

*because I missed the warmth of family and friends and the fun I had at work. Living abroad changed my personality; I am more determined to stand up for my rights, more understanding of Middle East turmoil and very critical of shallow Italian politicians. To live in other countries takes desire to learn and respect.*

*Paola Fasano*

which spouse is responsible for the failure of the marriage.

Divorce in Italy is granted on the following grounds: after a court-approved consensual separation; after judicial separation; when one spouse has been sentenced for certain criminal offenses; when one spouse is a foreign citizen and has obtained a divorce or has married again abroad; or when the marriage has not been consummated.

Note that if divorce is requested following separation, there is a mandatory waiting period of three years before the act is finalized. The waiting period begins from the date the couple appeared in court for legal separation. After three years, the judge is obligated by law to ask the couple if they wish to reconcile.

## **CUSTODY**

Under Italian law, each parent has the same rights and duties for the children. The two parties have to agree on which parent will have custody and how the other's visitation rights will be structured. If there's no agreement, a judge will decide on custody and child support. This system sometimes is disadvantageous for non-citizens, especially those with a language barrier. If the family and children are living in Italy at the time of the separation, foreigners might be required to have written approval of the Italian spouse to take children out of the country. At any time after the separation, the spouses may request a review of the conditions on which the separation was granted, especially related to the exercise of parental authority and amount and type of child support.

## **JURISDICTION**

In the case of separation, divorce and custody issues, Italian law is as follows: if husband and wife are not the same nationality, the law of the state in which their marriage life is prevalently located applies. In other words, if you have lived predominantly in Italy since marrying and then decide to separate in Italy, Italian laws regarding divorce, custody, etc., will apply, not those of your home country, even if you were married abroad and you and your children have retained your original citizenship. If you divorce but you still reside in Italy, your residency status will not be modified. Once your divorce is finalized, you should obtain a certified copy of the decree and then have the document authenticated and officially translated for registration in your home country.

Other resources regarding foreign divorces or custody disputes:

[www.iaml-usa.com](http://www.iaml-usa.com) (International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers)

[www.abanet.org/child](http://www.abanet.org/child) (ABA Center on Children and the Law)

[www.aaml.org](http://www.aaml.org) (American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers)

## **LEGAL MATTERS**

### **WHEN STOPPED BY POLICE**

If you are stopped by the police for any reason, you will be asked for your identification. If you are not an Italian citizen, you may also be fingerprinted. Do your best to be



cooperative with the officers as they do have the right to send you to jail for up to 48 hours while awaiting due process if you committed a flagrant offense. You have the right to an attorney and at the end of the identification process, you will be asked to name your *avvocato di fiducia* (trusted lawyer). If you do not have legal counsel, a public defender will be assigned to you by the court and you will be responsible for the associated legal fees. If your income is determined to be insufficient to pay for legal defense, fees are paid by the court.

## RETAINING A CIVIL ATTORNEY

If you run into legal trouble, remember that the regulations of the Italian Bar Association do not permit lawyers to accept cases on a contingency or percentage basis. Therefore, you should agree on fees in advance before retaining an attorney. Many of the functions handled by lawyers elsewhere can be handled by an Italian *notaio* (notary), who is a public official. Notaries are required to have a law degree and usually handle matters such as estates and property transactions.

The following English-speaking civil law firm has been recommended by members of the IWF:

### **Pezzi, Lugaresi & Associati**

Via Rubbiani, 2

Tel. 051.580382 or 051.581338

[www.pezzilugaresi.it](http://www.pezzilugaresi.it)

Corporate and insurance law, family, public health and environmental law, internet, privacy, data protection and contracts. The firm specializes in legal aid for Italians operating in the US and Americans with business interests in Italy.

Below is a list of English-speaking lawyers in Bologna compiled in alphabetical order by the US Consulate General in Florence:

### **Alessandro Albicini**

Via Marconi, 3

Tel. 051.228222

Commercial law, mergers and acquisitions.

*Once we determined what type of house we wanted, it was a matter of seeing as many as possible. A house in San Lazzaro had no windows. One on Via Mazzini had scooters leaned against the windows. One was underground and another in an industrial zone. A lot needed gutting out and refurbishing. Through the Tribunale, I even bid on a foreclosed house in Budrio just like*

*an auction at Christie's, but ended up the second-highest bidder. When we finally found our current house, I called the realtor immediately. The seller was unsure and I was told they wouldn't show the house for at least a month. I kept calling. Eventually, we bought it. I never shook so much in my life as the day I signed the contract.*

*Julie Angelos*

**Belvederi Attorneys at Law**

Via degli Agresti, 2

Tel. 051.272600

[www.belvederi.com](http://www.belvederi.com)

International commercial trade, agreements and litigation, trademark, fraud and anti-counterfeiting, asset recovery, bankruptcy, mergers and acquisitions, property and taxation.

**Antonio Cappuccio**

Piazza Tribunali, 6

Tel. 051.584309

Criminal and family law.

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**WILLS AND INHERITANCE**

If a foreign citizen dies in Italy, the national law of the individual is applied, according to the Italian Private International Law (Article 46 of Law n. 218/95). However, a foreigner in Italy may indicate, by means of a legal will, if he or she would rather apply Italian law to hereditary succession. If residency is subsequently changed to any country outside of Italy, the Italian will is no longer valid. In order to create a will, you must go to a public notary. Otherwise you can write it down in Italian by hand observing a few basic formalities, called a holographic will.

In the absence of a specific will, Italian inheritance law provides that assets be passed to immediate family members. This is sometimes referred to as forced inheritance, since relatives are entitled to a fixed proportion of the estate. For a very clear flow chart describing Italian inheritance law, see: [www.italianlaw.net](http://www.italianlaw.net).

Note that a written will in Italy that names only one family member as heir will likely be contested because it is expected that all biological and legally adopted children be mentioned in the estate. Immediate family members are rarely left out. A declaration of succession must be filed within one year of the date of death in order for the assets to transfer to the heirs. Italy has witnessed periods of heavy inheritance taxing, known as *tasse di successione*, depending on the government in power.

It should be noted that there is no such thing as a common-law partnership in Italy, meaning that couples who are not legally married are not entitled to any inheritance benefits in the event of a partner's death.

## DEATH IN ITALIAN CULTURE

Confronting death in a foreign culture can be very difficult, particularly if one is far from friends and family. Foreigners in Italy should know that many of the rites associated with the process of dying, from the hospital bed to funeral services, are inextricably linked to Catholic tradition. In the hospital for example, medical personnel may make references that one may expect to come from a religious officiant in other cultures. When there is a death in a Catholic family, a mass or benediction is usually organized within three days. This is due to the Catholic tradition of embalming and viewing of the deceased prior to the funeral. Following the wake, usually held in the *camera mortuaria* (mortuary chamber) of the hospital or funeral home, guests then follow the family in a slow caravan to the church and/or cemetery. It is very usual for Italians to make the sign of the cross whenever they see a funeral procession.

Funerals and associated rituals differ greatly depending on the region. In Bologna, families may hold a mass or place an announcement in the local newspaper to remember their loved one on the anniversary of his or her death. Many Italians take great care to visit the cemetery regularly and keep the family gravesite in good condition. November 2 is the *Giorno dei Morti* (Day of the Dead) when Italians remember their loved ones and ancestors.

## BUYING A HOME

The search for purchasing a home starts out not unlike the search for renting a place described in Chapter 3: Housing. There is no such thing as a buyer's market in Bologna. The so-called housing bubble has been on the rise for 20 years, so there is no time like the present to settle down.

## REAL ESTATE AGENCIES

Most agencies list properties in their area of town, however they may also have listings from other neighborhoods, often because the agent knows the seller personally. When you call real estate agencies, don't be surprised if the agent is reluctant to tell you exactly where the property is located until you come to the office in person and make an appointment.

Try to convince the agent to show more than one property at a time. Some realtors do nothing more than open the door to the property, whereas others will help you calculate

*Never ever think that once you make a deal, things will move quickly and smoothly. We bought our house in September 2002. We didn't actually move in until June 2003. We went back and forth with the owner that the*

*move-in date would be December 2002, then it was promised for February 2003, then no later than Easter 2003. Nothing appears as it seems.*

*Nina Vellucci*

your mortgage payment and even recommend a particular bank with good rates. Note that if the same property is listed by more than one realtor, it might be more difficult to get a good price. Real estate agents can take a commission anywhere from 2.5-4% on the sale or purchase of a property, but this may be negotiable, especially if you sell and buy with the same agency. Keep in mind that if you do not use an agency, you will incur costs that would otherwise be covered in agency fees, such as drawing up a preliminary agreement with a notary.

## MORTGAGE LENDING

The market for mortgage lending is in rapid expansion and you can request a loan for up to 100% of the price of your home. Fixed rate or variable, the maximum duration for a mortgage is 30 years. The bank or lending agency will evaluate your candidacy based on your income, job stability, other liabilities, etc. In some mortgage structures you are penalized for early pay-off, in others you may start with a fixed rate and move to a variable. It is worth your while to comparison shop.

Be sure to budget for the expenses associated with opening a mortgage including the *spese di istruttoria* (paperwork expenses) and the obligatory *perizia* (inspection/appraisal). Lending banks will also require you to take out a fire insurance policy before issuing a mortgage. You may use the service offered by your bank or refer to any insurance company, see Chapter 2: Essential Services.

## COSTS AND PROPERTY APPRAISAL

Compare prices of homes in terms of euro per square meter. The cost of living space, garage, *cantina* (storage space) and garden are all calculated separately. Homes are usually advertised in terms of *metri commerciali* (commercial meters), which includes the walls. *Metri calpestabili* (usable meters), are the actual space available for living. You should also clarify the difference between the *valore commerciale* (commercial value) and the *valore catastale*, a number based on a complex calculation of square meters, location and other factors. The *valore catastale* is almost always inferior to the commercial value, good news since it is on this figure that you will pay property taxes.

If you are building a new home, there are additional expenses to add to your budget, notably *accatastamenti*, the costs of registering the property and *allacciamenti*, the costs of hooking up your initial utilities. Together, these fees can total several thousand euro.

## RISKS AND PRECAUTIONS

Make sure the property you are considering does not have any open *ipoteche* (claims) from creditors. The notary presiding over the purchase of your home will handle this investigation, which will involve checking with the *catasto*, the office where the property is registered. This office provides historical records of all ownership transfers. If for example the property was ever bequeathed to heirs, then you will want to make sure that there are no long-lost relatives who could potentially have a claim on your future home.

## MAKING AN OFFER

If you use a real estate agency, your agent will help you make a formal offer on a property, called a *proposta d'acquisto*. You usually leave a check with the real estate agent at this time, to be returned to you in the event that your offer is not accepted. You may be able to beat out other buyers by offering a more substantial down payment, so strategize with your realtor before making the offer.

Once the offer has been accepted, you will sign a preliminary agreement called a *promessa di vendita* or *compromesso*, usually accompanied by a substantial down payment. The *compromesso* will indicate the parties, the price of the property and the timeframe within which the final deal must be stipulated. This document may be signed in front of a notary, but it may also be written as a *scrittura privata* (private agreement) between the buyer and seller, usually prepared by your real estate agent.

## FIRST HOME

Italian legislation provides a tax break for the purchase of your primary residence, or *prima casa* (first home). To be eligible, you must be buying a non-luxury house or apartment in the same municipality where you plan to reside within 18 months after purchase. There are penalties if you sell a *prima casa* within five years as this is considered property speculation. If you sell your *prima casa* after the five-year window, you can benefit again from the tax break by buying a new primary residence within a year. For more information, speak with your real estate agent or banker.

## CLOSING

When it comes time for *rogito* (closing), you will need to make an appointment with a *notaio*. Depending on the terms of payment, you may handle your closing in the notary's office, at the realtor's, or in the bank issuing your mortgage. The notary will read aloud the document in front of all parties, stopping to answer questions if necessary. In addition to the stipulated price, be sure to calculate the other costs associated with closing, including IVA and the notary fees. IVA is calculated as a percent of the *valore catastale*, however the applicable rate depends on use, such as first home, vacation home etc. Notary fees vary depending on the *notaio*, but you should expect to spend several thousand euro for this obligatory legal service.

*In the beginning, despite making great strides learning the language and subtleties of Italian culture, I still felt I was missing something. I sensed a need to bridge the past and present, to blend my Italian-speaking self with my English-speaking self. I had come across listings of ex-patriate groups in Milan, Florence and Rome, but there was*

*no such group in Bologna. I began to think maybe I could start one. Back then it was hard to imagine the future of the IWF. Associations take time to coalesce, discover their identity and to mature. And while I occasionally wondered whether the group would survive, today I can't imagine life without it.*

*Julie Wade, IWF founder*

## POST PURCHASE

Bologna and province have very strict urban planning laws governing remodelling of historic buildings. Do not assume that a proposed project will be approved by the local *Ufficio Programmi Urbanistici* (Urban Planning Office), especially if there are any exterior changes to the property. Every few years the government announces a *condono edilizio* (building pardon) when you have the opportunity to confess that you have undertaken projects without a permit. For questions about remodelling, building permits etc., contact the *sportello edilizia* (construction helpdesk) in your *comune*.

### **Sportello Edilizia Comune di Bologna**

Via San Felice, 25

Tel. 051.2193270

[www.comune.bologna.it/urbanisticaedilizia](http://www.comune.bologna.it/urbanisticaedilizia)

Open Monday-Friday 8:30-12:30; Thursday 16-17:30

## PASS IT ON

If you've navigated the Italian bureaucracy this far, *complimenti*. You now have everything you need to know to make Bologna home – pass this guide along to help others do the same. "Bologna Inside, Second Edition" is also available online at [www.iwfbologna.com](http://www.iwfbologna.com).

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