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Guide to the province of Bologna

Valley Itineraries













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Valley Itineraries

edited by
Michelangelo Stanzani





Landscapes tell the stories of territories and people. The various landscapes in the territory around Bologna make up a living mosaic. They tell of the transformations brought about by man in order to make the land more fertile and productive, they display traces of the ages which have succeeded each other, they bear masterworks of art and of popular religious feeling, as well as hints of the original natural environment.

The territory around Bologna may be looked upon as a jewel-case of art, nature and culture: extraordinary monuments, artistic outpourings of singular beauty, together with important historical and cultural remains, are set among mountains, hills, plains, rivers and lakes, providing a rich continuity of harmonious, suggestive beauty. The true wealth of our territory lies in its alternation of differing, but equally spectacular, landscapes, in its richly complete cultural, environmental and tourist context.

"Valley Itineraries" serves as a showcase for this wealth: tiny cities of art, vestiges of ancient civilizations, churches and historical dwelling-places are to be found throughout our countryside.

The fascination of the territory around Bologna translates into long summer sunsets, into shimmering autumn sunlight, into virgin winter whiteness and the fresh, variegated colours of spring. In order to get the genuine feel of our peaceful valleys, we suggest that, whenever possible, you leave your car behind and continue on foot or by bicycle along the footpaths through the meadows and woods, or by ski in the winter, to enjoy and discover the infinite range of views. The valleys are green areas of the greatest landscape and environmental interest and can now be experienced more directly and at first hand, as a result of adequate services and equipment. The territory is now able to satisfy the requirements of tourists and visitors as well as those of the most demanding sportsmen. There is a kind of nature which is gentle, which captures the gaze from a distance and is pleasant to experience close up, which gives rise to harmonious sensations.

The traveller who loves mountains, snow and open-air sports will certainly feel the attraction of our valleys, where a simple sporting weekend may easily turn into an opportunity to broaden his knowledge and culture. We are addressing the alert and sensitive tourist: in our valleys, in the tiny towns of art and the surrounding hills, a fascinating atmosphere predominates. Everything moves in accordance with ancient rhythms inherited from the surrounding nature. Promoting tourism which is respectful of this atmosphere means investing in "gentle" tourism and discouraging the "hit and run" kind.





above **Beatrice Draghetti**below **Marco Strada**

Readers' Guide

The province of Bologna, set between Tuscany and the nearby cities of Modena, Ferrara and Ravenna, includes the last strip of Emilia and the seven municipalities, the territories of which are already part of the historical region of Romagna. It is a landscape that rises from the lowlands of the Po Plain and rises to the almost 2,000 mts of the Corno alle Scale, which concludes the Apennine side with its unmistakeable profile and its great skiing zone. The fulcrum of the cultural aspect is the museum system, a network of a hundred or more museums covering the city and the province. Important art collections thus sit side by side with exhibitions displaying the excellent products of this land, of which motors are perhaps the most significant feature. Also available to all is a natural heritage which is truly unique, not only for its environmental beauties but also for the innumerable opportunities it offers to lovers of sports and open-air activities in general. And then, Gastronomy and Wine. Bologna is the Italian Province with the highest number of products identified with European DPO and GPI (equivalent, in the guide, to the Italian acronyms DOP and IGP) labels and it has the largest surface in the Emilia-Romagna region dedicated to biological products. The territory of Bologna is also rich in thermal springs: each type of water - sulphurous, saline, ferruginous or bituminous - is the subject of special treatment which the new techniques and scientific knowledge of today render increasingly precise and satisfying. Lastly, events: treat these pages as a sort of "theatrical play-bill", to be consulted carefully in order not to miss anything interesting taking place on that great natural stage which is the territory of Bologna. A theatre which we might describe as atypical in the sense that the tourist is not just the spectator but also the leading actor in the various productions which unfold from the mountain to the plain, in municipalities as well as in smaller towns, parks and oases, in a miscellary where nature and the landscape form wonderful backdrops.

This guide has been created to help visitors find their way around this extraordinary historical, cultural and natural variety and to discover all that is to be found in these places.

"Discover the Valleys" discusses four areas to be visited, based on the four valleys of the province, each of which has a strong personality and identity of its own. Thus we start with the Samoggia Valley, the ancient borderland between "Longobardia" and "Romània". Next comes the **Reno Valley**, a river with a name echoing the distant Rhine - called the Reno in Italian - and which more than any other has left its traces on the territory of Bologna over the centuries. This is followed by the **Bolognese Valleys**, embracing the Idice, Savena and Setta, which have always been trod by travellers and pilgrims heading for Rome or Tuscany. Last are the Imolese Valleys, which are by now in the territory of Romagna. All these itineraries begin in the Apennines and continue in the plain, in order not to miss the opportunity to rediscover each time same mixture of atmospheres and suggestive values. For the territory of the province lies half in the plain and half in the hills and mountains. The two parts are separated by the Via Emilia, on which have been developed the largest inhabited centres. It's easy to keep a sense of direction - just remember that the mountains are to the south! Each section is divided into two parts, dedicated to the apennines and the plain, and presents their historical-environmental and logistic aspects, as well as their food and drink specialities, a detailed map of the territory and boxes giving details of information offices and events or initiatives of various kinds involving the municipalities in the valley.

Six themes entitled "Enjoy the Valleys" appear within the pages dedicated to the presentation of the Provincial territory. Different coloured boxes offer practical information or curiosities which the visitor will find along his chosen itinerary, an itinerary which he may even have worked out for himself, taking his inspiration from the themes offered: **Nature**, **Sport and Active Tourism**, **Culture** (Museums, Famous Names, Historical Theatres, Science and Technique, History and Culture), **Gastronomy and Wine**, **Spas & Wellness**, **Events**.

The present publishing project will reserve a separate publication for Bologna, a unique city with a character all its own.

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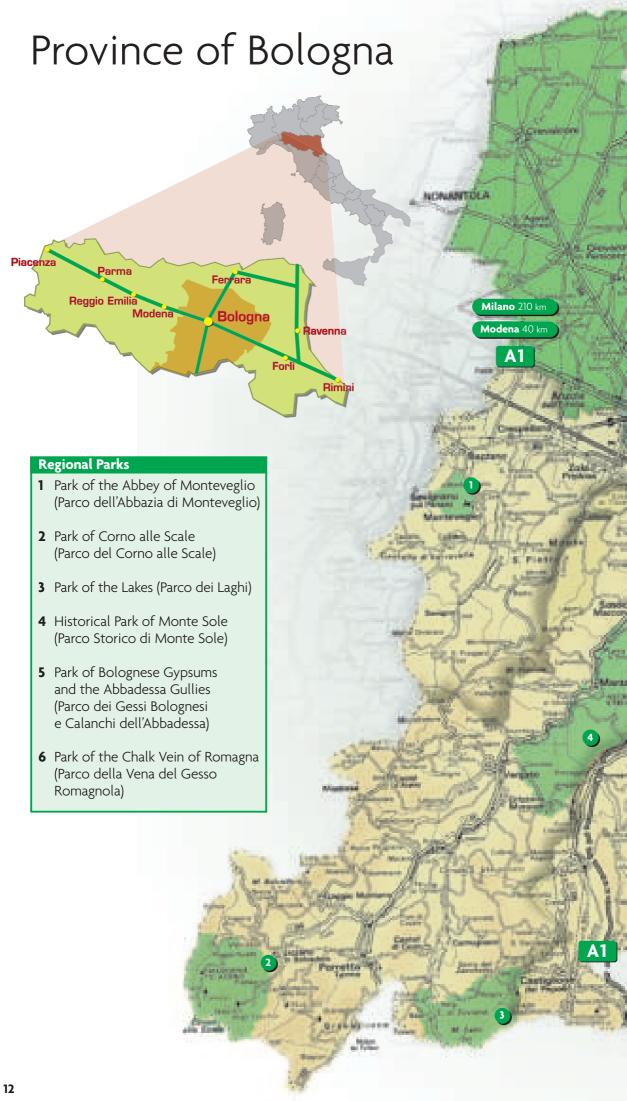
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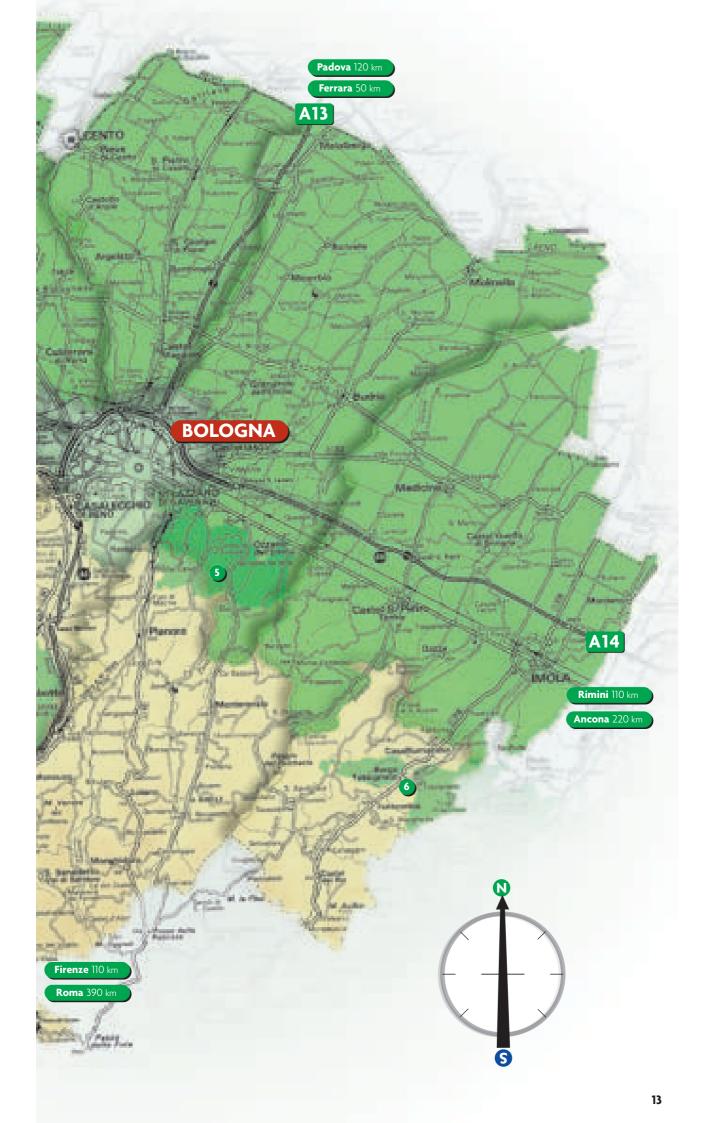
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