



Emilia-Romagna & San Marino

Emilia-Romagna has long been overlooked as little more than a stepping stone between the Veneto and Tuscany. But take time to explore this underrated region and you'll discover an area rich in art and culture, an area of mouthwatering food and robust wine, of cosmopolitan resorts and quiet backwaters.

Much of its medieval architecture dates to the Renaissance, when a handful of powerful families set up court here: the Farnese in Parma and Piacenza, the Este in Ferrara and Modena, and the Bentivoglio in Bologna.

The regional capital, Bologna, is one of Italy's unsung joys. A foodie city with a hedonistic approach to life, it's home to Europe's oldest university and a stunning medieval centre. A short hop to the northwest, Modena boasts a superb Romanesque cathedral and a hint of the gourmet delights that await in Parma, the city that gifted the world *prosciutto crudo* (cured ham, popularly known as Parma ham) and *parmigiano reggiano* (Parmesan). In the countryside to the south, castles pepper hilltops as flat plains give way to the Apennine peaks. Ferrara and Ravenna are the highlights of Romagna (the eastern half of Emilia-Romagna). Both are within easy distance of Bologna and both merit a visit – Ferrara for its beautiful Renaissance centre, Ravenna for its sensational Byzantine mosaics. If, after all that high culture, you need a break, head to Rimini where the crowded beaches and cutting-edge clubs promise more earthy pleasures, or San Marino where armies of day-trippers enjoy vast views. Alternatively, saddle up and take to the road – cycling is one of the region's most popular pursuits.

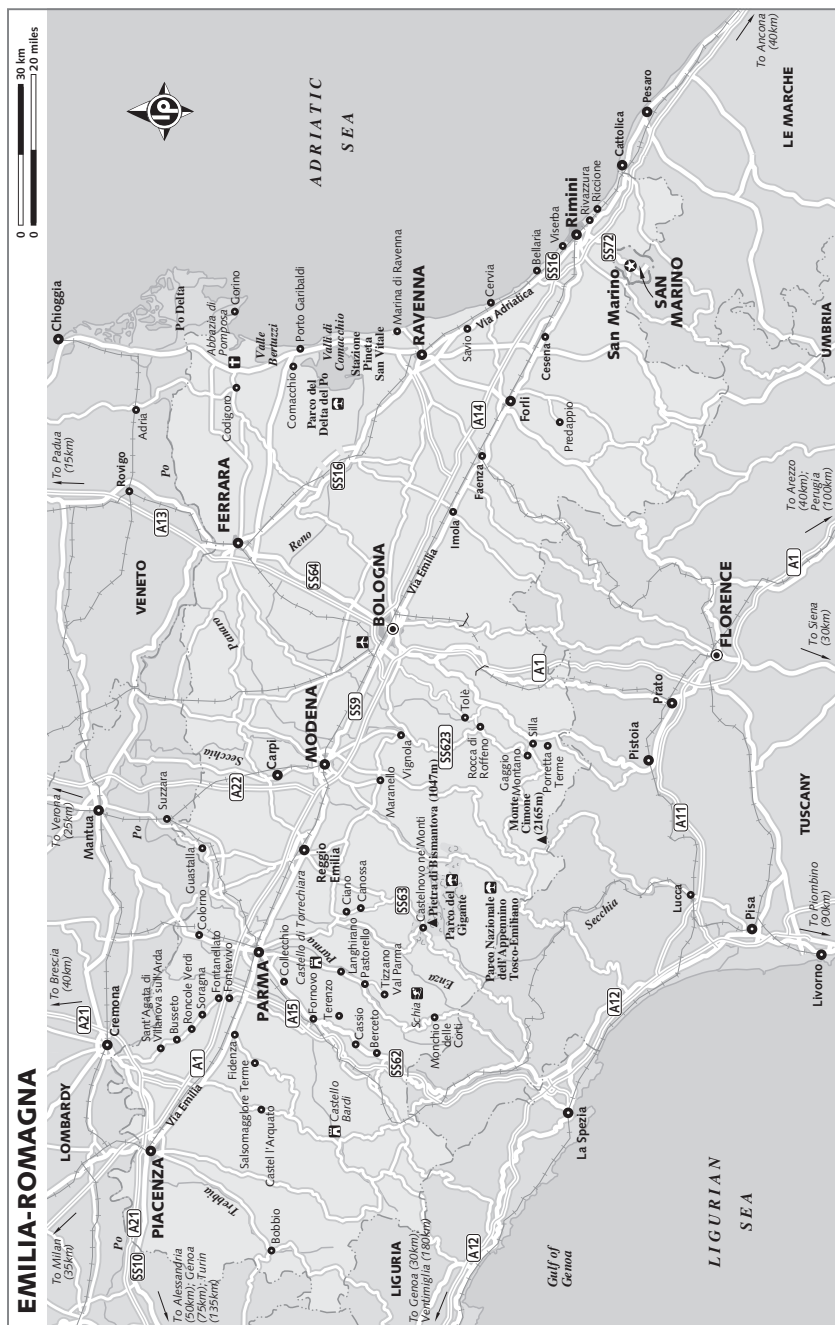
HIGHLIGHTS

- Lap up the animated atmosphere in **Bologna** (p413), the region's dynamic capital
- Marvel at the kaleidoscopic colours of shimmering mosaics in **Ravenna** (p449)
- Pay homage to the king of cars at Maranello's **Galleria Ferrari** (p426)
- Study the finer points of Romanesque architecture at Modena's inspiring **cathedral** (p423)
- Throw yourself into the medieval maelstrom at Ferrara's **Il Palio** (p446), the oldest horse race of its kind in Italy
- Add a drop of *aceto balsamico* (balsamic vinegar) to a hunk of *parmigiano reggiano* (Parmesan) and bite while in **Parma** (p434)



■ POPULATION: Emilia-Romagna 4.1 million; San Marino 29,600

■ AREA: Emilia-Romagna 22,121 sq km; San Marino 61 sq km



BOLOGNA

pop 374,000

Boasting one of the country's great medieval cityscapes – an eye-catching ensemble of red-brick *palazzi*, Renaissance towers and 40km of arched porticoes – Bologna is a wonderful alternative to the north's more famous cities. Italy's culinary capital, it's an attractive, animated place; a large student population and active gay scene ensure a vitality that's so often missing in many of Emilia's smaller towns.

Nicknamed *la rossa* ('the red' – as much a political moniker as reference to its colourful buildings), Bologna has long had a reputation for left-wing militancy. Passions have cooled since students faced down tanks in 1977, but the city remains highly political. Italian prime minister Romano Prodi is from Bologna and the university, Europe's oldest, is still a source of student agitation.

HISTORY

Bologna started life in the 6th century BC as Felsina. For two centuries it was the capital of the Etruscan Po valley territories until tribes from Gaul took over, renaming it Bononia. They lasted another couple of hundred years before surrendering to the Romans. As the Western Empire crumbled, Bologna was successively sacked and occupied by Visigoths, Huns, Goths and Lombards.

The city reached its pinnacle as an independent commune and leading European university around the 12th century. Wealth brought a building boom and every well-to-do family left its mark by erecting a tower – 180 of them in all, of which 15 still stand today. The endless tussle between the papacy and Holy Roman Empire for control of northern Italy inevitably involved Bologna. The city started by siding with the Guelphs (who backed the papacy), going against the Ghibellines, but adopted neutrality in the 14th century.

Following a popular rebellion against the ruling Bentivoglio family, during which the family's palace was razed, papal troops took Bologna in 1506 and the city remained under their control until the arrival of Napoleon at the end of the 18th century. In 1860 Bologna joined the newly formed Kingdom of Italy.

During heavy fighting in the last months of WWII, up to 40% of the city's industrial buildings were destroyed. However, the historic

town inside the walls survived and it has been lovingly and carefully preserved.

Today the city is a centre for Italy's hi-tech industries and is a popular trade-fair venue.

ORIENTATION

Bologna is best explored on foot. From the train and bus stations, Via dell'Indipendenza leads to Piazza del Nettuno and Piazza Maggiore, the heart of the city. Just to the east, Piazza di Porta Ravegnana marks the starting point of Via Zamboni and the university quarter. Via Ugo Bassi and its continuation, Via San Felice, are the main east-west arteries.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Feltrinelli International (☎ 051 26 80 70; Via Zamboni 7b; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Mon-Sat)

Internet Access

Liong@te (☎ 051 407 01 61; Via Rizzoli 9; per hr €2; ☎ 10am-midnight)

Net Arena (☎ 051 22 08 50; Via de'Giudei 3b; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-1pm & 3-7pm Mon-Fri)

Ufficio per le Relazioni con il Pubblico (☎ 051 23 23 81; Palazzo D'Accursio, Piazza Maggiore 6; free; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-1.30pm Sat)

Laundry

iWash (Via Giuseppe Petroni 38; 6kg wash €3.40; ☎ 9am-9pm)

Medical Services

Spedale Maggiore (☎ 051 647 81 11; Via Nigrisoli 2) West of the city centre; take bus 19 from Via Ugo Bassi.

Post

Post office (☎ 051 23 06 99; Piazza Minghetti 1)

Tourist Information

Centro Servizi per i Turisti (☎ 800 85 60 65; www.cst.bo.it; Piazza Maggiore 1e; ☎ 10am-2pm & 3-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) A free hotel booking service in the main tourist office.

Tourist office (www.bolognaturismo.info) Piazza Maggiore (☎ 051 23 96 60; Piazza Maggiore 1e; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm); airport (☎ 051 647 21 13; ☎ 8am-8pm); main train station (☎ 051 25 19 47; Viale Angelo Masini; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-3pm Sun)

SIGHTS

Piazza Maggiore & Piazza del Nettuno

Flanked by the world's fifth-largest basilica and a series of impressive Renaissance *palazzi*,

Piazza Maggiore is the city's principal focus and an obvious starting point for sightseeing. A lively pedestrian hub through which you'll find yourself passing several times, it was laid out in the 13th century.

Adjacent to Piazza Maggiore, **Piazza del Nettuno** owes its name to the **Fontana del Nettuno** (Neptune's Fountain), a stirring bronze statue sculpted by Giambologna in 1566. Beneath the muscled sea god, four cherubs represent the winds and four buxom sirens, water spouting from every nipple, symbolise the four known continents of the pre-Oceania world.

Forming the western flank of Piazza Maggiore, **Palazzo Comunale** (known also as Palazzo D'Accursio after its original resident, Francesco D'Accursio) has been home to Bologna city council since 1336. A salad of architectural styles, it owes much of its current look to makeovers in the 15th and 16th centuries. The statue of Pope Gregory XIII, the Bolognese prelate responsible for the Gregorian calendar, was placed above the main portal in 1580, while inside, Donato Bramante's 16th-century staircase was designed to allow horse-drawn carriages to ride directly up to the first floor.

On the 2nd floor you'll find the *palazzo's* two art galleries: the **Collezioni Comunali d'Arte** (☎ 051 20 36 29; admission free; 🕒 9am-3pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun) with its interesting collection of 13th- to 19th-century paintings, sculpture and furniture, and the captivating **Museo Morandi** (☎ 051 20 33 32; www.museomorandi.it; admission free; 🕒 9am-3pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun) dedicated to the Bolognese artist Giorgio Morandi. Among the 200 or so works on display are many of Morandi's trademark still lives.

Outside the *palazzo*, three large panels bear photos of hundreds of partisans killed in the resistance to German occupation, many on this very spot.

Over the square, the 13th-century **Palazzo del Re Enzo** is named after King Enzo, the illegitimate son of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, who was held here by papal forces between 1249 and 1272. Dating to the same period, the neighbouring **Palazzo del Podestà** was the original residence of Bologna's chief magistrate. Beneath the *palazzo*, there's a **whispering gallery** where two perpendicular passages intersect. Stand diagonally opposite someone and whisper: the acoustics are amazing. Both *palazzi* are off limits to the public unless there's a temporary exhibition on.

Dominating the piazza's southern flank, the Gothic **Basilica di San Petronio** (☎ 051 22 54 42; 🕒 7.30am-12.30pm & 3-6pm) is Bologna's greatest church. Dedicated to the city's patron saint and measuring 132m by 66m by 47m, it's the world's fifth-largest basilica. Surprisingly, though, it was never finished. Originally it was intended to be larger than St Peter's in Rome, but in 1561, some 169 years after building had started, Pope Pius IV blocked construction by commissioning a new university on the basilica's eastern flank. As a result the façade was never completed and if you walk along Via dell'Archiginnasio you can see semiconstructed apses poking out oddly.

The central doorway, carved in 1425 by Jacopo della Quercia, boasts a beautiful Madonna and Child and scenes from the Old and New Testaments; inside, chapels contain frescoes by Giovanni da Modena and Jacopo di Paolo. Note also the huge sundial that stretches 67.7m along the floor of the eastern aisle. Designed in 1656 by Gian Cassini and Domenico Guglielmi, it was instrumental in discovering the anomalies of the Julian calendar and led to the creation of the leap year.

The Quadrilatero

To the east of Piazza Maggiore, the grid of streets around Via Clavature (Street of Locksmiths) sits on what was once Roman Bologna. Known as the Quadrilatero, this bustling district is one of the centre's most enticing – colourful market stalls and delicious delis open onto cobbled medieval streets lined with trendy cafés, swish bars and neighbourhood eateries.

South & West of Piazza Maggiore

Running south off Piazza Maggiore, Via dell'Archiginnasio leads to the **Museo Civico Archeologico** (☎ 051 275 72 11; Via dell'Archiginnasio 2; admission free; 🕒 9am-3pm Tue-Sat, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun) with its well-documented Egyptian and Roman artefacts and one of Italy's best Etruscan collections.

A few doors down, **Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio** is the result of Pope Pius IV's project to curtail the Basilica di San Petronio. Seat of the city university from 1563 to 1805 (notice the professors' coats of arms on the walls), it today houses Bologna's 700,000-volume **Biblioteca Comunale** (Municipal Library) and the fascinating 17th-century **Teatro Anatomico** (☎ 051 27 68 11; Piazza Galvani 1; admission free; 🕒 9am-1pm

Mon-Sat), where public body dissections were held under the sinister gaze of an Inquisition priest, ready to intervene if proceedings became too spiritually compromising. Cedar-wood tiered seats surround a central marble-topped table while a sculptured Apollo looks down from the ceiling. The canopy above the lecturer's chair is supported by two skinless figures carved into the wood. The theatre, and many of the building's frescoes, was destroyed during WWII and subsequently rebuilt.

A short walk south brings you to the **Basilica di San Domenico** (☎ 051 640 04 11; Piazza San Domenico 13; ☎ 8am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm), built in 1238 to house the remains of San Domenico, founder of the Dominican order, who had died in 1221. His elaborate sarcophagus is in the **Cappella di San Domenico**, which was designed by Nicola Pisano and later added to by a host of artists. Michelangelo carved the angel on the right of the altar when he was only 19. Notice, too, the intricately executed wooden tableaux of the choir stalls. When Mozart spent a month at the city's music academy, he occasionally played the church's organ.

Some way to the west, the **Chiesa di San Francesco** (☎ 051 22 17 62; Piazza San Francesco; ☎ 6.30am-noon & 3-7pm) was one of the first churches in Italy to be built in the French Gothic style. Features include the tomb of Pope Alexander V and a remarkable 14th-century marble altarpiece depicting sundry saints and scenes from the life of St Francis.

About 3.5km southwest of the city centre, the hilltop **Basilica Santuario della Madonna di San Luca** (☎ 051 614 23 39; Via di San Luca 46; ☎ 7am-12.30pm & 2.30-7pm Apr-Sep, to 5pm Oct-Feb, to 6pm Mar) houses a representation of the Virgin Mary, supposedly painted by St Luke and transported from the Middle East to Bologna in the 12th century. The 18th-century sanctuary is connected to the city walls by the world's longest portico, held aloft by 666 arches, beginning at Piazza di Porta Saragozza. Take bus 20 from the city centre to Villa Spada, from where you can continue by minibus (buy the €2.60 return ticket on board) to the sanctuary. To stretch the legs, continue one more stop on bus 20 to the Meloncello arch and walk the remaining 2km under the arches.

University Quarter

Towering above Piazza di Porta Ravegnana, Bologna's two leaning towers, Le Due Torri, are unmistakable landmarks. The taller of the

two, the 97.6m-high **Torre degli Asinelli** (admission €3; ☎ 9am-6pm, to 5pm winter) is open to the public, although it's not advisable for the weak-kneed (there are 498 steps) or superstitious students (local lore says if you climb the tower you'll never graduate). Built by the Asinelli family between 1109 and 1119, today it leans 1.3m off vertical. The neighbouring 48m **Torre Garisenda** is sensibly out of bounds given its drunken 3.2m tilt.

From the two towers, head southeast along Via Santo Stefano for the **Basilica di Santo Stefano** (☎ 051 22 32 56; Via Santo Stefano 24; ☎ 9am-noon & 3.30-6.30pm), an atmospheric medieval religious complex. Originally there were seven churches – hence the basilica's nickname Sette Chiese – but only four remain. Entry is via the 11th-century **Chiesa del Crocefisso**, which houses the bones of San Petronio and leads through to the **Chiesa del Santo Sepolcro**. This austere octagonal structure probably started life as a baptistry. Next door, the **Cortile di Pilato** is named after the central basin in which Pontius Pilate is said to have washed his hands after condemning Christ to death. In fact, it's an 8th-century Lombard artefact. Beyond the courtyard, the **Chiesa della Trinità** connects to a modest cloister and a small museum. The fourth church, the **Santi Vitale e Agricola** is the city's oldest. Incorporating recycled Roman masonry and carvings, the bulk of the building dates from the 11th century. The considerably older tombs of two saints in the side aisles once served as altars.

To the north of the basilica complex, along Via Zamboni, the 13th-century **Chiesa di San Giacomo Maggiore** (☎ 051 22 59 70; Piazza Rossini; ☎ 7am-noon & 3.30-6.30pm) houses a noteworthy collection of paintings and artefacts. The highlight is the Bentivoglio chapel with frescoes by Lorenzo Costa and an altarpiece by Francesco Raibolini (known as Il Francia). The same pair were mainly responsible for the magnificent 16th-century frescoes in the adjacent **Oratorio di Santa Cecilia** (☎ 051 22 59 70; Via Zamboni 15; ☎ 10am-1pm & 3-7pm, to 6pm winter), one of Bologna's unsung gems. Depicting the life and technicolour death of St Cecilia and her husband Valeriano, they are in remarkably good nick, their colours vibrant and their imagery bold and unabashed. Note the blood-thirsty glee with which the artists portray the decapitation of Valeriano.

For a break from ecclesiastical art head down the road to the university museums at

Palazzo Poggi (☎ 051 209 93 98; Via Zambroni 33; admission free; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-1.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm Sat & Sun), where you can peruse waxwork uteri in the Obstetrics Museum and giant tortoise shells in the Museum of Natural Sciences. Further surprises are to be found in museums dedicated to ships and old maps, military architecture and physics.

Back on the art trail, the **Pinacoteca Nazionale** (☎ 051 420 94 11; Via delle Belle Arti 56; admission €4; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) has a strong collection of works by Bolognese artists from the 14th century onwards, including a number of important canvases by the late 16th-century Carracci cousins Ludovico, Agostino and Annibale. Among the founding fathers of Italian Baroque art, the Carraccis were deeply influenced by the Counter-Reformation sweeping through Italy in the latter half of the 16th century. Much of their work is religious and their imagery is often highly charged and emotional, designed to appeal to the piety of the viewing public. Works to look out for include Ludovico's *Madonna Bargellini*, the *Comunione di San Girolamo* (Communion of St Jerome) by Agostino and the *Madonna di San Ludovico* by Annibale. Elsewhere in the gallery you'll find several works by Giotto, as well as Raphael's *Estasi di Santa Cecilia* (Ecstasy of St Cecilia). El Greco and Titian are also represented, but by comparatively little-known works.

North & East of Piazza Maggiore

A short walk north of Piazza Maggiore, Bologna's cathedral, the **Metropolitana di San Pietro** (☎ 051 22 21 12; Via dell'Indipendenza 9-13; ☎ 8am-noon & 4-6.15pm) has suffered redevelopment many times over the centuries. More a landmark than somewhere to search out, it stands opposite the **Museo Civico Medioevale e del Rinascimento** (☎ 051 20 39 30; Via Manzoni 4; admission free; ☎ 9am-3pm Tue-Sat, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun), over the road in the 15th-century Palazzo Ghilisardi-Fava. Of interest in the museum are the fine frescoes by Jacopo della Quercia and the collection of battle armour, bronze statues and medieval coffin slabs.

ACTIVITIES

Take time out to rejuvenate with a sauna and scrub at **Hammam Bleu** (☎ 051 58 01 62; www.hammambleu.it; Vicolo Barbazzi 4), a Turkish bath in the historic centre. Prices start at €35 for a half-hour rubdown.

For information on cycling in Bologna and the region as a whole see the boxed text, below.

COURSES

A good place to eat in, Bologna is also a good place in which to cook. **La Vecchia Scuola Bolognese** (☎ 051 649 15 76; www.lavecchiascuola.com; Via Malvasia 49) is one of several schools that offer courses for English speakers. Budget €70 for

PEDAL ROUND THE REGION

At the forefront of Italy's *cicloturismo* (bicycle tourism) trend, Emilia-Romagna offers excellent cycling. The region's geography is mixed, encompassing the flatlands of the Po Delta and the peaks of the Apennines, and facilities are excellent. There are hundreds of bike-hire points, repair shops are widespread and transporting your bike is easy on the rail network. Tourist offices can supply itineraries and basic maps, although you'd be advised to get hold of a decent regional map, one of the best is *Emilia-Romagna* (1:200,000; €7) published by the Touring Club of Italy.

Outlined below are a couple of routes, one flat, one downhill, which can be modified to make them less challenging.

- **Bologna-Ferrara** A 45km trip through the villages of the Po valley. From Bologna train station head north along Via Giacomo Matteotti and Via di Corticella, go under the A14 autostrada, to the left of the A13, and follow the signs for Castel Maggiore. Once there continue for 13km to San Pietro in Casale and then to Ferrara, a further 21km. If you don't want to head back to Bologna, you could go on to the Po Delta, about 50km away on the east coast.
- **Into the Apennines** A 75km descent from the Apennine spa town of Porretta Terme to Bologna. Take one of the regular trains from Bologna to Poretta, then hit the road for Gaggio Montano via Silla. At Gaggio turn right onto the SS623 and follow for about 20km before turning off right for Rocca di Roffeno and Tolè. From Tolè, the road continues for about 36km back to Bologna.

a one-day package and €180 for a three-day course.

TOURS

Various outfits offer guided walking tours in English. Tours last roughly two hours and cost €13 per person (no booking required). The meeting point for each tour is outside the main tourist office on Piazza Maggiore.

GAIA (☎ 051 296 00 05; www.guidebologna.com) Meets 10.15am Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday.

Le Guide d'Arte (☎ 051 275 02 54; www.guidearte.com) Meets 3pm Saturday and Sunday.

Prima Classe (☎ 347 894 40 94; sspadoni@inwind.it) Meets 11am Monday and Friday, and 3pm Tuesday and Thursday.

Prima Classe also organises two-hour cycle tours (tours including bike rental €18). Call to reserve your spot; there's a minimum of three participants for tours to begin.

Trambus Open (☎ 800 28 12 81; www.trambusopen.com) runs a hop-on-hop-off bus tour of the city departing from the train station at 10am, 11am, noon, 2.30pm and 3.30pm. Tickets (€10) can be bought on board.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Bologna has a lively and varied events calendar with gigs ranging from street raves to jazz concerts, ballet performances and religious processions. Summer is generally the best time to catch a party. Big events include: **Celebrazioni della Madonna di San Luca** (the Saturday before the fifth Sunday after Easter and the following Wednesday and Sunday) Solemn processions take to the city streets in Bologna's major religious festival.

Bologna Estate (June to September) A three-month programme of concerts, film projections, dance perform-

ances and much more. Held in open-air venues throughout the city, many events are free. Tourist offices carry details.

Street Rave Parade (early July) Techno, hip-hop, reggae and pop whip up a dance frenzy in the city centre.

Salotto del Jazz (July to September) A small-scale jazz fest organised by four venues in and around Via Mascarella in the university quarter northwest of Via Zamboni.

SLEEPING

Accommodation in Bologna is geared to the business market with a glut of midrange to top-end hotels and precious few budget options. The busy trade-fair calendar means that hotels are often heavily booked, especially during spring and autumn, so always reserve ahead. When there are no fairs on, some hotels offer discounts of up to 50% and attractive weekend rates.

Budget

Centro Turistico Città di Bologna (☎ 051 32 50 16; www.hotelcamping.com; Via Romita 124a; camp site per adult/child/tent €7.50/4.50/13, 2-person bungalows €50-78; ☎ ☎) This large, well-equipped camping ground is on the north side of town, 6km from the main train station. On-site facilities include a bar, minimarket and a newsagent for bus tickets.

Take bus 68 from the main bus station.

Ostello Due Torri-San Sisto (☎ 051 50 18 10; bologna@ostellionline.org; Via Viadogala 5 & 14; dm/d €15.50/36; ☎ ☎) Some 6km north of the city centre, Bologna's two HI hostels, barely 100m apart, are modern, functional and cheap. Take bus 93 (Monday to Saturday, until 8.20pm) from Via Marconi or Via Irnerio, bus 301 (Sunday) from the bus station or 21B (daily, after 8.30pm) from Via Marconi.

Albergo Panorama (☎ 051 22 18 02; www.hotelpanoramabologna.it; 4th fl, Via Livraghi 1; s/d/tr/q with

GAY BOLOGNA

'Bologna is the centre of Italy's social and political gay movement,' says 32-year-old Maurizio Ceconi, a gay activist who's been working with Arcigay (Italy's biggest gay-rights organisation) for the past six years. 'The city is home to numerous groups, including the national and Bologna branches of Arcigay and Arciesbica, which provide health services, counselling and HIV advice. Then there's the Movimento Identità Transessuale (MIT; Movement for Transsexual Identity) and various collectives such as Carniscelte, an *antagonismo* gay group.'

But, as Maurizio is quick to point out, there's more to gay life than politics. 'On the cultural level, Bologna has a vivacious gay scene. There are gay nights at many clubs and lots of cultural events. The Cassero (p421) is very popular – Wednesday is the big night but Thursday is lesbian night and on Fridays there are concerts by international gay and lesbian artists.'

For more information check out the Arcigay website at www.arcigay.it or log onto www.cassero.it.

bathroom €60/75/85/95) A cheerful old-school family *pensione* with fresh flowers in the halls and sunny, spacious rooms, some of which have distant views of Bologna's medieval towers.

Midrange

Albergo delle Drapperie (☎ 051 22 39 55; www.albergo drapperie.com; Via delle Drapperie 5; s €60-105, d €75-140; 🚽) Right in the heart of the atmospheric Quadrilatero district, this welcoming three-star establishment has 21 attractive rooms with wood-beamed ceilings, the occasional brick arch and colourful ceiling frescoes.

Albergo Centrale (☎ 051 22 51 14; www.albergocentralebologna.it; Via della Zecca 2; s €60-75, d €80-110; 🚽) Offering comfort for which you could easily pay a lot more, the large rooms at Albergo Centrale come with parquet floors, modern furniture and, in some cases, colourful paintings of fish.

Albergo Rossini (☎ 051 23 77 16; www.albergorossini.com; Via dei Bibiena 11; s/d €75/110, without bathroom €42/70; 🚽 closed mid-Jul–mid-Aug; 🚽) Off studenty Piazza Verdi, the modest and friendly Rossini is well placed for just about everything in the centre. Rooms are bare but they are bright, comfortably big, and some have air-con.

Albergo Garisenda (☎ 051 22 43 69; www.albergogarisenda.com; 3rd fl, Galleria del Leone 1, Via Rizzoli 9; d €110, s/d without bathroom €55/85) In the shadow of Bologna's leaning towers, the Garisenda has seven no-nonsense rooms with comfy beds and a smattering of modest furniture. The entrance is in a covered shopping gallery off Via Rizzoli.

Top End

Il Convento dei Fiori di Seta (☎ 051 27 20 39; www.silkflowersnunnery.com; Via Orfeo 32-34b; r €165-220; 🚽) A chic boutique hotel housed in a 14th-century convent, Il Convento is a model of sharp design. Religious-inspired frescoes sit alongside Mapplethorpe-style flower photos; beds come with earth-coloured linen sheets and bathrooms feature cool mosaic tiles.

Hotel Orologio (☎ 051 745 74 11; www.bolognarhotels.it; Via IV Novembre 10; s €125-310, d €180-340; 🚽 🚶 🚶) One of four upmarket hotels run by Bologna Arts Hotels, this refined pile just off Piazza Maggiore charms with its slick service, smart rooms and complimentary chocs.

Prendiparte B&B (☎ 051 58 90 23; www.prendiparte.it; Via Sant'Alò 7; r €300) You don't just get a room at this unique B&B, you get an entire 900-year-old tower. The living area (bedroom, kitchen

and lounge) is spread over three floors but there are nine more floors to explore, with a terrace on the top and a 17th-century prison halfway up.

Also recommended:

Hotel Comercianti (☎ 051 745 75 11; www.bolognarhotels.it; Via de' Pignattari 11; s €135-310, d €190-340; 🚽 🚶 🚶) Timeless elegance in a 12th-century palazzo overlooking the Basilica di San Petronio.

Hotel Novcento (☎ 051 745 73 11; www.bolognarhotels.it; Piazza Galileo 4/3; s €135-310, d €190-340; 🚽) A slick throwback to the 1930s, with cream walls and modish black furniture.

Hotel Corona d'Oro 1890 (☎ 051 745 76 11; www.bolognarhotels.it; Via Oberdan 12; s €145-310, d €200-340; 🚽) Sumptuous Art Nouveau décor combines with modern comforts and the odd 14th-century ceiling.

EATING

Known as *la grassa* (the fat one), Bologna is celebrated for its cuisine. Spaghetti bolognese was born here, even if locals call the meat sauce *ragù* and mix it with tagliatelle; *mortadella* (baloney or Bologna sausage) hails from the area and tortellini is a speciality. The hills nearby produce the light, fizzy Lambrusco red and a full, dry Sauvignon Blanc.

The university district northeast of Via Rizzoli harbours hundreds of restaurants, trattorias, takeaways and cafés catering to hard-up students and gourmet diners alike. For foodie gifts head to the sumptuous delis in the Quadrilatero.

Restaurants

BUDGET

Bar Trattoria Fantoni (☎ 051 23 63 58; Via del Prateello 11; meals €15; 🚽 closed dinner Sun & Mon) To the west of the centre, Via del Prateello is a long-standing bohemian hang-out packed with pubs, trattorias and bars. One of the best, Fantoni is a much-loved eatery dishing up classic Italian food at welcome prices. The atmosphere's jovial and the décor is an agreeable clash of clutter and modern art.

Trattoria Mariposa (☎ 051 22 56 56; Via Bertiera 12; meals €18; 🚽 closed Sun & Mon, dinner Thu) A genial, laid-back trattoria, the Mariposa serves simple, homemade food to a faithful crowd. The menu varies but you'll usually find tortellini, either with *burro e salvia* (butter and sage) or *ragù*, and *polpetti* (meatballs). Service is friendly and the prices are honest.

Trattoria del Rosso (☎ 051 23 67 30; Via Augusto Righi 30; meals €18) This perennially popular trattoria

is said to be the oldest in the city. A busy, bustling place, it's good for solid meats and filling pastas. The daily menus (€10) are exceptional value and the vegetarian options are a welcome sight in such a meat-obsessed city.

Tamburini (☎ 051 23 47 26; Via Caprarie 1; meals around €20; ☺ lunch Mon-Sat) Bologna's most-famous delicatessen also has a classy self-service lunch canteen. To grab a table get here early or be prepared to queue.

MIDRANGE

Pizzeria La Brace (☎ 051 23 56 56; Via San Vitale 15d; pizzas from €4.50, meals €25) Neither pizza nor fish are considered Bolognese specialities but that's what they do here, and what they do well. If a pizza doesn't appeal, the *carpaccio di pesce spada* (thin slices of raw swordfish) followed by a *fritto misto* (mixed fish fry) is a fine alternative. Hanging football shirts and portraits of Hollywood icons provide an unusual décor.

Trattoria Meloncello (☎ 051 614 39 47; Via Saragozza 240; meals €30; ☺ closed Tue & lunch Mon) Perfect for a pit stop on the way up to the Basilica Santuario della Madonna di San Luca, this unassuming trattoria is loved for its delicious Bolognese cooking. After a bowl of homemade pasta, try the stuffed rabbit, a house speciality, before rounding off with a homemade *semifreddo* (chilled dessert).

our pick Osteria de' Poeti (☎ 051 23 61 66; Via de' Poeti 1b; meals €30; ☺ closed Sun & lunch Sat) In the wine cellar of a 14th-century *palazzo*, this historic eatery is a great place for hearty local fare in atmospheric surroundings. Take a table by the impressive stone fireplace and order from a selection of staples such as *gnocchetti di zucca* (pasta stuffed with pumpkin) or *tagliatelle al ragù*. Prices at lunchtime are considerably cheaper.

Trattoria da Gianni (☎ 051 22 94 34; Via Clavature 18; meals €30; ☺ Tue-Sat & lunch Sun) Down a side alley in the Quadrilatero, Gianni's is well known and well loved. Italian speakers can read the testimonies and press-cuttings on the walls as they wait for such crowd-pleasers as *gnocchi di zucca*, *burro e menta* (pumpkin gnocchi with butter and mint) and *bollito misto* (mixed boiled meat).

Drogheria della Rosa (☎ 051 22 25 29; Via Cartoleria 10; meals €35; ☺ Mon-Sat) With its wooden shelves, apothecaries' jars and bottles, it's not difficult to picture this place as the pharmacy that it once was. Nowadays it's a charming trattoria

run by an affable English-speaking owner who will happily go through the day's choices with you (there's no printed menu). Expect the tried and tested such as steak with balsamic vinegar and tortellini.

Gelaterie

La Sorbetteria Castiglione (☎ 051 23 32 57; Via Castiglione 44; ☺ Tue-Sun) This gelateria achieved international recognition in 2003 when it was awarded a Premio Speciale at the Concorso Internazionale Gelatissimo. Judge for yourself if its homemade ice cream is up to the mark.

Gelateria delle Moline (Via delle Moline 13b; ☺ Wed-Mon) A student hang-out, this modest gelateria stands out for its unusual speciality – ice cream served with focaccia.

Self-Catering

Stock up on victuals at the **Mercato delle Erbe** (Via Ugo Bassi 27; ☺ 7am-1.15pm Mon-Sat & 4.30-7.30pm Mon-Wed & Fri), Bologna's main covered market. Alternatively, the Quadrilatero area east of Piazza Maggiore harbours a daily **produce market** (Via Clavature 12; ☺ 7am-1pm Mon-Sat & 4.30-7.15pm Mon-Wed & Fri & Sat) and some of the city's best-known delis (see p422).

DRINKING

There's no shortage of places to drink in Bologna. Whether you're after a raucous pub, a cosy wine bar or a swank café, you'll find something to suit your scene. Thirsty students congregate in and around Piazza Verdi and in the pubs on Via del Pratello. For a more upmarket, dressier scene head to the Quadrilatero.

Godot Wine Bar (☎ 051 22 63 15; Via Cartoleria 12; glass of wine from €4.50; ☺ 8am-1am Mon-Sat) Wine buffs will feel comfortable among the bottles at this down-to-earth wine bar. Tipples of the day are chalked up on a board, with the emphasis on Italian vintages.

Terzi (☎ 051 23 64 70; Via Oberdan 10; ☺ Mon-Sat) A refined café serving an unusual range of coffees, Terzi is a great spot to toy with a *caffè con prugna e cannella* (espresso with plum and cinnamon) or *cappuccino brulé alla cannella* (cappuccino with cinnamon).

La Scuderia (☎ 051 656 96 19; Piazza Verdi 2; ☺ 8am-2am Mon-Sat) On Piazza Verdi, this happening bar occupies the Bentivoglio family's former stables. All the rage with image-conscious students, it features towering columns, impressive vaults and large arty photos.

Osteria del Sole (Vicolo Ranocchi 1d; ☎ Mon-Sat) Oozing the sort of character that modern rivals strive for, this historic *osteria* (wine bar) has been serving booze, and only booze, since the 15th century. If you want to eat, bring a takeaway; if you want water, bring your own.

Osteria l'Infedele (☎ 393 052 21 51; Via Gerusalemme 5a; snacks €5, glass of wine from €2.50; ☎ Tue-Sun) Another very agreeable spot to while away a few hours with a glass or two of wine. Vintage adverts line the walls and the mellow jazz soundtrack hits all the right chords.

Café le Palais (☎ 051 648 69 63; Via de' Musei 40e) One of several swish cafés in the Quadrilatero, le Palais attracts smart shoppers and sharp dressers. Join the beautiful people in the plush, Art Nouveau mirrored interior or on the terrace beneath the broad colonnade.

Cantina Bentivoglio (☎ 051 26 54 16; www.cantina.bentivoglio.it; Via Mascarella 4b; ☎ 8pm-2am) Bologna's top jazz joint, the Bentivoglio is a jack of all trades. Part wine bar (choose from 500-plus labels), part restaurant (a meal costs about €25) and part jazz club (there's live music nightly), this much-loved institution makes for a great night out.

Bravo Caffè (☎ 051 26 61 12; Via Mascarella 1; ☎ 7pm-2am Mon-Sat) Over the road from Cantina Bentivoglio, Bravo Caffè is a sexy wine bar with red walls, black furniture and soft, subtle lighting. A favourite with the cool crowd, it too features regular live jazz and a full food menu.

Marsalino (☎ 051 23 86 75; Via Marsala 13d; ☎ Tue-Sun) The ideal place to sit and put the world to rights, Marsalino is a laid-back watering hole. Tiny, arty and chameleon-like, it opens as a tearoom at 4pm, morphs into a wine bar at 6pm, and becomes a modest restaurant at 8pm.

Le Stanze (☎ 051 22 87 67; Via Borgo San Pietro 1) With its chapel-chic décor, hip clientele and in tunes, Le Stanze is hot. As you drink, admire the original 17th-century frescoes, vestiges of the *palazzo's* past as the private chapel of the Bentivoglio family.

ENTERTAINMENT

Bologna is one of Italy's most culturally vibrant cities. The large student population ensures a cosmopolitan and energetic nightlife and a thriving theatre scene. A *Guest of Bologna*, available from tourist

offices and some hotels, is a useful bimonthly guide to what's on, as is the monthly *2night Magazine* (www.2night.it in Italian). The most comprehensive listings guide is *Bologna Spettacolo* (€1, in Italian), available at newsstands.

Nightclubs

Whatever your scene, you'll find somewhere to suit your style. The clubs listed here offer a range of tunes, from '70s pop to underground rock, house, funk and disco. Admission prices vary but are typically around €15 for a weekend night.

Corto Maltese (☎ 051 22 97 46; Via Borgo San Pietro 9/2a; ☎ 9pm-3am) A popular student joint with commercial sounds and nightly happy hour (9pm to 10.30pm).

Kinki (☎ 051 26 60 28; www.kinkidisco.com; Via Zamboni 1a; ☎ Thu-Sat) Art exhibitions, video projections, house music and the Sunday gay night keep Kinki at the forefront of the disco scene.

Cassero (☎ 051 649 44 16; www.cassero.it; Via Don Minzoni 18; ☎ 10pm-4am) Wednesday is the big night at this legendary gay and lesbian (but not exclusively) club, home of Italy's Arcigay organisation.

Link Associated (☎ 051 633 23 12; www.link.bo.it in Italian; Via Fantoni 21; ☎ from 9pm) Historic music club famous for its experimental art shows, video projections and multimedia events.

Estragon (☎ 051 32 34 90; www.estrason.it in Italian; Via Stalingrado 83; ☎ 10pm-late) This large, edge-of-town club (take bus 25 from the main train station) hosts regular concerts; tunes range from electro-pop to hard rock and ska.

Villa Serena (☎ 051 615 67 89; www.vserena.it in Italian; Via della Barca 1; ☎ 9pm-3am Thu-Sat) Three floors of film screenings and music, live and canned, plus a garden for outdoor chilling.

Jazz fiends should make for Cantina Bentivoglio (see left), one of the best jazz venues in town, or **Chet Baker Jazz Club** (☎ 051 22 37 95; www.chetbaker.it in Italian; Via Polese 7a; ☎ Mon-Sat), which has live music Tuesday to Saturday from 10pm.

Cinemas

Cinema Odeon (☎ 051 22 79 16; Via Mascarella 3; admission €7) and **Cinema Capitol** (☎ 051 24 10 02; Via Milazzo 1; admission €7.50) screen films in English on Thursday and Tuesday, respectively. The day may vary, so phone ahead to check.

Northwest of the city centre, **Cinema Lumière** (☎ 051 219 53 11; www.cinetecadibologna.it; Via Azzo Gardino 65; admission €6) shows art-house films in their original version.

Theatre & Opera

Bologna has a year-round cultural calendar. **Teatro Comunale** (☎ 051 52 99 99; Largo Respighi 1), where Wagner's works were heard for the first time in Italy, is Bologna's main opera and classical music venue.

SHOPPING

Bologna's main shopping streets are Via Ugo Bassi, Via Rizzoli, Via Marconi, Via dell'Indipendenza, Via Massimo d'Azeglio, Via Farini and Via San Felice. You can safely leave your wallet behind on Thursday afternoons, when all shops are shut.

For foodie buys head to the Quadrilatero, a haven of delis and speciality food shops, including **Tamburini** (☎ 051 23 47 26; Via Caprarie 1), **La Baita** (☎ 051 22 39 40; Via Pescheria Vecchie 3) and **Gilberto** (☎ 051 22 39 25; Via Drapperie 5).

Elsewhere, **Le Sfogline** (☎ 051 22 05 58; Via Belvedere 7b) sells the best handmade pasta in town, **I Campetti** (☎ 051 26 60 43; Via Belvedere 2) specialises in Tuscan wine and olive oil, and **Enoteca Italiana** (☎ 051 23 59 89; Via Marsala 2b) stocks a comprehensive selection of regional wine.

On Friday and Saturday there's a flea and antique market at the Parco della Montagnola that seeps into Piazza del Otto Agosto.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Bologna's **Guglielmo Marconi airport** (BLQ; ☎ 051 647 96 15; www.bologna-airport.it) is about 6km north-west of the city.

Ryanair flies twice daily between London Stansted and **Forlì airport** (☎ 054 347 49 21; www.forli-airport.it), 70km southeast of Bologna.

Bus

Buses for Ferrara (€3.30, one hour, hourly) leave from the **main bus station** (☎ 051 29 02 90) off Piazza XX Settembre, just southeast of the train station. For most other regional destinations, the train's a better option.

Car & Motorcycle

The city is linked to Milan, Florence and Rome by the A1 Autostrada del Sole. The A13 heads directly to Ferrara, Padua and Venice, and the A14 to Rimini and Ravenna. Bologna

is also on the SS9 (Via Emilia), which connects Milan to the Adriatic coast. The SS64 goes to Ferrara.

Major car-hire companies are represented both at Guglielmo Marconi airport and in town. City offices include **Europcar** (☎ 051 24 71 01; Via Giovanni Amendola 12f) and **Hertz** (☎ 051 25 48 30; Via Giovanni Amendola 16a).

Train

Bologna is a major transport junction for northern Italy and has frequent services to Florence (€11.50, one hour, half-hourly), Rome (€34, three hours, half-hourly) and Milan (€22, two hours, half-hourly).

There are also trains to Ravenna (€4.90, 1½ hours, hourly) and Ferrara (€3, 30 minutes, half-hourly).

GETTING AROUND

To/From the Airport

Aerobus shuttles (☎ 051 29 02 90; www.atc.bo.it) depart from the main train station for Guglielmo Marconi airport every 15 minutes from 5.30am to 11.10pm. The 20-minute journey costs €5 (tickets can be bought on board).

For Forlì airport, **buses** (www.e-bus.it) leave from the main bus station at 6.10am, 7.50am, 10.15am, 4.45pm and 7pm. Journey time is one hour and 25 minutes and tickets cost €10.

Car & Motorcycle

Much of the city centre is off limits to vehicles. If you're staying in the heart of town, your hotel can provide a ticket (per one/four days €5/12) that entitles you to enter the ZTL (Zona a Traffico Limitato).

Should you be footsore, you can hire a bike at **Autorimessa Pincio** (☎ 051 24 90 81; Via dell'Indipendenza 71z; 12/24hr €10/12; ☎ 7am-midnight Mon-Sat), near the bus station.

Public Transport

Bologna has an efficient bus system, run by **ATC** (☎ 051 29 02 90; www.atc.bo.it). It has information booths at the main train station and on Via Marconi. Buses 25, 30 and A are among several that connect the train station with the city centre.

Taxi

To book a taxi, phone ☎ 051 37 27 27 or 051 53 41 41.

WEST OF BOLOGNA

MODENA

pop 180,100

Get past the unsightly factories that ring this affluent city and you'll find a lively medieval centre, thick with market stalls, vibrant pizzas and impressive *palazzi*. The highlight, and reason enough for a visit, is the stunning Unesco World Heritage-listed cathedral.

Some 40km northwest of Bologna, Modena was one of a series of Roman garrison towns established along the Via Emilia in the 2nd century BC. It became a free city in the 12th century and then passed to the Este family late in the following century. Prosperity came when it was chosen to be the capital of a much-reduced Este duchy in 1598, after the family lost Ferrara to the Papal States. Apart from a brief Napoleonic interlude, the Este family ran the town until Italian unification in the 19th century.

Orientation

Via Emilia is Modena's main drag. The street slices through the historic town centre from west to east. Flanking it to the south and north are Piazza Grande and Piazza Mazzini, the town's principal squares.

Information

Euro Lavanderie (Via Piave 31; 7kg wash/dry €3.50/3; ☎ 8am-10pm)

Internet point (☎ 059 21 20 96; Piazza Grande 34; per hr €4; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat)

Post office (Via Emilia 86)

ModenaTur (☎ 059 22 00 22; www.modenatur.net; Via Scudari 10; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3-6.30pm) A private agency that organises tours to balsamic vinegar producers and *parmigiano reggiano* dairies, and also arranges accommodation.

Tourist office (☎ 059 203 26 60; turismo.comune.modena.it; Piazza Grande 14; ☎ 3-6pm Mon, 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sat, 9.30am-12.30pm Sun) Pick up the useful *Welcome to Modena* brochure; the office also offers 15 minutes' free internet use.

Sights

CATHEDRAL

One of the finest Romanesque churches in Italy, Modena's Unesco World Heritage-listed **cathedral** (☎ 059 21 60 78; Corso Duomo; ☎ 7am-12.30pm & 3.30-7pm) is a thrilling example of 12th-century architecture. Dedicated to the city's patron saint, St Geminianus, it was con-

secrated in 1184, 85 years after construction had begun. The façade is dominated by a huge Gothic rose window, actually a 13th-century addition, under which stands the main portal; to the sides, a series of vivid bas-reliefs depict scenes from Genesis. These are the work of the 12th-century sculptor Wiligelmo, who actually autographed his work (see the panel to the left of the main door), as did the building's architect, Lanfranco (signing off in the main apse). Among Wiligelmo's many vigorous carvings, both sacred and singular, are typical medieval themes depicting the months and agricultural scenes. Inside, highlights include an elaborate rood screen decorated by Anselmo da Campione and, in the crypt, Guido Mazzoni's *Madonna della pappa*, a group of five painted terracotta figures.

Opposite the entrance to the cathedral, the **Musei del Duomo** (☎ 059 439 69 69; Via Lanfranco 6; adult/child €3/2, audioguide €1; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Tue-Sun) holds yet more of Wiligelmo's captivating stonework.

Rising above the cathedral, the early-13th-century **Torre Ghirlandina** (admission €1; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-7pm Sun Apr-Jul & Sep-Oct) rises to 87m, culminating in a slender Gothic spire. Facing it is the elegant façade of the **Palazzo Comunale**.

PALAZZO DEI MUSEI

Modena's main museums and galleries are housed in the **Palazzo dei Musei** (Piazzale Sant'Agostino 337) on the western fringes of the historic centre.

The most interesting, the **Galleria Estense** (☎ 059 439 57 11; admission €4; ☎ 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun) features the Este family's collection of northern Italy paintings from late medieval times to the 18th century. There are also some fine Flemish works and a canvas or two by Velázquez, Correggio and El Greco. Downstairs, the Biblioteca Estense (☎ 059 22 22 48; admission €2.60; ☎ 9am-1pm Mon-Sat) holds one of Italy's most valuable collections of books, letters and manuscripts including the celebrated *Bibbia di Borso d'Este*, a masterpiece of medieval illustration.

A combined ticket (€4) gives entry to the **Museo Archeologico Etnologico** (☎ 059 203 31 00; ☎ 9am-noon Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm & 3-6pm Sat & Sun) and the **Museo Civico d'Arte** (☎ 059 203 31 00; ☎ 9am-noon Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm & 3-6pm Sat & Sun). The former has some well-displayed local finds from Palaeolithic to medieval eras, as well as exhibits from Africa, Asia, Peru and New Guinea.

Most interesting among the Museo Civico d'Arte's eclectic collection are the sections devoted to traditional paper making, textiles and musical instruments.

A *biglietto cumulativo* (combined ticket; €6) gives entry to all the Palazzo dei Musei museums and galleries except for the Biblioteca Estense, and to the Musei del Duomo.

PALAZZO DUCALE

Dominating Piazza Roma, this heavy baroque edifice is home to one of Italy's top military academies. It was started in 1634 and was the Este family residence for two centuries. Admission is only by **guided tour** (tour €6; ☺ Sun). Contact ModenaTur (p423) to reserve a place.

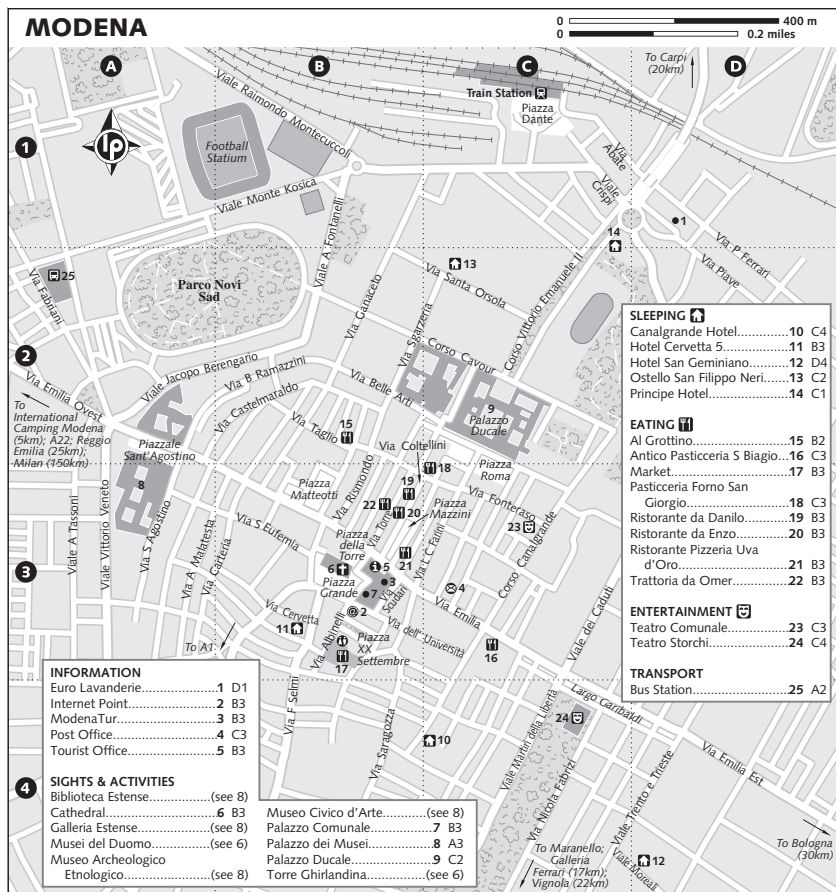
Festivals & Events

Vintage cars and snazzy Ferraris take to Modena's historic streets in the annual car fest, **Modena Terra di Motori**, in April and May. Later in the month, balsamic vinegar is celebrated in **Balsamico È**, a series of exhibitions, events and tastings from mid-May to early June.

The summer season features the **Serate Estensi** festival in late June and early July. A celebration of all things medieval, it involves banquets, jousts, and plenty of dressing up.

Sleeping

International Camping Modena (☎ 059 33 22 52; www.internationalcamping.org; Via Cave di Ramo 111, Bruciata; camp sites per adult/child/tent €7/5/11; ☺ year-round; 🚰)



A well-endowed camping ground, 5km west of the city in Bruciata. On-site facilities include a swimming pool, minimarket and four clay tennis courts. Take bus 9.

ostello San Filippo Neri (☎ 059 23 45 98; hostelmodena@hotmail.com; Via Santa Orsola 48-52; dm/d €15.50/34; 📍) Modena's businesslike HI hostel has 80 beds in single-sex dorms and family rooms for up to three people. There are no frills but guests are entitled to a discount at the Galleria Ferrari in nearby Maranello (p426).

Hotel San Geminiano (☎ 059 21 03 03; www.hotelsangeminiano.it; Viale Moreali 41; s/d €48/78, d without bathroom €58; 📍) A family-run hotel about one kilometre from the historic centre. Rooms are unspectacular but comfortable and quiet, and the free parking is much appreciated. Next door, the separately run restaurant of the same name is very popular and serves pizza from €4.50.

ourpick Hotel Cervetta 5 (☎ 059 23 84 47; www.hotelcervetta5.com; Via Cervetta 5; s/d/t €60/85/110; 📍) A budget boutique hotel that offers style at affordable prices. Within a stone's throw of Piazza Grande, it boasts a cool, contemporary look – white walls, white furniture and pearl-grey carpets – and modern amenities, including wi-fi. Note that air-con costs €6 per day.

Principe Hotel (☎ 059 21 86 70; www.hotelprincipe.mo.it in Italian; Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 94; s €50-80, d €80-110, tr €95-140; 📍) A short walk from the train station, this three-star hotel is comfortable and convenient. Room décor is fairly standard with blue carpets and smart wooden furniture, but wi-fi is available and low-season rates are a bargain.

Canalgrande Hotel (☎ 059 21 71 60; www.canalgrandehotel.it; Corso Canalgrande 6; s/d/tr €128/176/216; 📍) A venerable Modenese institution, the Canalgrande exudes old-school elegance with its acres of marble, gilt-framed paintings and chandeliers sparkling overhead. There's a leafy terrace leading into a garden at the rear. Parking costs €11 and there's wi-fi available.

Eating & Drinking

Like Bologna and Parma, Modena is an important gastronomic town. Its most famous product is *aceto balsamico*, considered the best in Italy by gourmets, but the centre also produces an excellent *prosciutto crudo* and *zampone* (stuffed pig's trotter). Tortellini is another speciality, as is Lambrusco, a lively, sparkling red, to be drunk chilled and with everything.

You'll find a selection of the city's better bars on and around Via Emilia, near the cathedral.

Ristorante Pizzeria Uva d'Oro (☎ 059 427 01 03; Piazza Mazzini 38; pizzas €6, meals €23; 📍 Wed-Mon) A bright, bustling restaurant-cum-pizzeria, this cheerful spot serves plate-sized pizzas and uncomplicated pasta dishes. The complimentary glass of *prosecco* ensures a good mood, as does the tempting antipasto buffet and kitsch fruit 'n' veg décor.

Al Grottino (☎ 059 22 39 85; Via Taglio 26; pizzas from €5.50, meals €25; 📍 Thu-Tue) Informal and popular, this is a good bet for a filling bowl of spaghetti or a delicious pizza. If undecided between pasta and pizza, go for the pizza – it'll be big, well cooked and full of bubbling, creamy cheese.

Trattoria da Omer (☎ 059 21 80 50; Via Torre 33; meals €25; 📍 Mon-Sat) The stereotypical family-run trattoria, Omer's sets a lovely atmosphere for a meal of classic Modenese and Ferrarese food. Try the *ossibuchi Estense*, a regional take on the more traditional osso bucco (a veal stew) served with veggies and chopped almonds.

Ristorante da Enzo (☎ 059 22 51 77; Via Coltellini 17; meals €30; 📍 Mon-Sat) Another local favourite, this highly regarded restaurant is known for its classic, regional cooking, which translates to dishes such as *scaloppina all'aceto balsamico* (cutlets in balsamic vinegar) and *co-tecchino al vapore con puré* (steamed sausage with mashed potato).

Ristorante da Danilo (☎ 059 22 54 98; Via Coltellini 31; meals €30; 📍 Mon-Sat) Traditional food served in a warm, old-fashioned dining room is what you pay for at Danilo's. Tuck into an antipasto of salami, cheese and fig marmalade before moving on to the house speciality – boiled meat. Vegetarians can opt for the *risotto all'radiccio trevigiano* (risotto with red chicory).

For the sweet of tooth, the **Pasticceria Forno San Giorgio** (☎ 059 22 35 14; Via Taglio 6; 📍 Tue-Sun) and **Antica Pasticceria S Biagio** (☎ 059 21 72 84; Via Emilia 77; 📍 closed Sun evening) produce enough creamy cakes to satisfy the child in anyone.

Modena's **fresh-produce market** (📍 6.30am-2pm Mon-Sat, 4.30-7pm Sat) has its main entrance on Via Albinelli.

Entertainment

During July and August, outdoor concerts and ballet are staged on Piazza Grande. Modena's main opera venue is **Teatro Comunale** (☎ 059 203 30 10; www.teatrocomunalemodena.it; Corso Canalgrande 85)

FERRARI MOTORS INTO HISTORY

Voted Europe's best workplace (2007) by the *Financial Times*, the near-mythical Maranello factory was established by Enzo Ferrari in 1943, 14 years after he had founded the company that bears his name. Four years later, in 1947, the 125S became the first Ferrari road car to roll off the production line.

More than 60 years on, Ferrari has become the world's ultimate status symbol, its prancing black horse logo (taken from an emblem used by Italian WWI ace Francesco Baracca) a modern motoring icon. Ferrari has also become the most successful racing team of all time – as of 2007 it had won 14 Formula One Constructors' Championships, 14 Drivers' Championships, nine 24-hour Le Mans races and eight Mille Miglia races.

On Sunday in April and May, you can catch the latest Ferrari models on Modena's Piazza Grande. More venerable versions get an extended outing during May's **Mille Miglia** (www.millemiglia.it), a vintage-car race that roars through the streets of Ferrara and Modena, then on to the chequered flag in Brescia. May also sees the **Modena Cento Ore**, a four-day event for historic cars that starts and finishes in Modena.

while **Teatro Storchi** (☎ 059 20 69 93; Largo Garibaldi 15) offers mainly drama.

Shopping

On the fourth Saturday and Sunday of every month, except for July and December, a giant antiques fair is held in Parco Novi Sad.

Getting There & Around

The **bus station** (☎ 059 22 22 20) is on Via Fabriani. **ATCM** (☎ 059 41 67 11; www.atcm.mo.it in Italian) and other companies connect Modena with most towns in the region. By car, take the A1 Autostrada del Sole if coming from Rome or Milan, or the A22 from Mantua and Verona.

The train station is north of the historic centre, fronting Piazza Dante. Destinations include Bologna (€2.60, 30 minutes, half-hourly), Parma (€3.35, 30 minutes, half-hourly) and Milan (€17.50, two hours, hourly).

ATCM's bus 7 links the train station with the bus station and city centre.

If you're after a taxi, call **Radio Taxi Modena** (☎ 059 37 42 42).

AROUND MODENA

Maranello

pop 16,400

Home to Ferrari, Maranello is a motoring mecca that attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims each year. Most head to the **Galleria Ferrari** (☎ 053 694 32 04; Via Dino Ferrari 43; adult/child €12/9; ☎ 9.30am-7pm May-Sep, 9.30am-6pm Oct-Apr) to obsess over the world's largest collection of Ferraris. Just down the road, the company factory is off limits to the 99.9% of the world's population that doesn't own a Ferrari.

Maranello is 17km south of Modena. From Modena bus station take bus 800.

Carpi

pop 63,800

Once the centre of the Pio family territories, the attractive town of Carpi makes an easy and worthwhile detour from Modena. Information is available from the **tourist office** (☎ 059 64 92 55; www.carpidiem.it/turismo; Via Berengario 2; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm daily & 3-6pm Mon-Sat) on the edge of the vast Piazza dei Martiri. Measuring 270m by 60m, the piazza is Italy's third largest after Piazza San Pietro in Rome and Venice's Piazza San Marco.

Running down the eastern flank of the square, **Palazzo Pio** houses a couple of museums including the **Museo Monumento al Deportato Politico e Razziale** (☎ 059 68 82 72; admission €3; ☎ 10am-1pm 3-7pm Fri-Sun), which documents the experience of prisoners in the nearby **Fossoli Concentration Camp** (☎ 059 68 82 72; admission free, ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 3-7pm Sun), itself open to visitors on Sunday.

Just behind and east of Palazzo Pio, a 50m-high brick tower stands over the remaining elements of the Romanesque **Chiesa di Santa Maria del Castello** (☎ 059 655 04 94; Piazzale Re Astolfo; ☎ 10.30am-12.30pm Thu-Sun & 4-6pm Sat & Sun), notable for its carved marble pulpit and 15th-century frescoes.

REGGIO EMILIA

pop 155,200

Smart and well-to-do, Reggio Emilia is a perfectly pleasant place – it's wealthy, and evidently so, it's got a handsome historic centre

and great restaurants – but there's not really a whole lot to do. Once you've explored the central piazzas and sniffed around the markets, you've pretty much covered the sights. It does, however, make a practical base for exploring the Apennines to the south.

Known also as Reggio nell'Emilia, the town started life in the 2nd century BC as a Roman colony along the Via Emilia. Much of Reggio was built by the Este family during the 400 years it controlled the town, beginning in 1406.

Information

Post office (Via Sessi 3)

URP Comune Informa (☎ 0522 45 66 60; Via Farini 2; ☎ 8.30am-1pm Mon & Tue, Thu-Sat & 3-6pm Tue, Thu & Fri, 9.30am-1pm Wed) Free internet.

Tourist office (☎ 0522 45 11 52; www.municipio.re.it/turismo; Via Farini 1a; ☎ 8.30am-1pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun)

Sights

Reggio's pedestrianised *centro storico* (historic city centre) is an attractive place to wander, with the main sights centred on Piazza Camillo Prampolini and adjacent Piazza San Prospero.

On Piazza Camillo Prampolini, Reggio's 13th-century **Duomo** (☎ 0522 43 37 83; ☎ 7.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-7pm) was first built in the Romanesque style but was given a comprehensive makeover 300 years later. Nowadays, virtually all that remains of the original is the upper half of the façade and, inside, the crypt.

Marking the southern edge of the square, the 14th-century **Palazzo del Comune** is celebrated as the birthplace of the Italian flag. At a meeting in the **Sala del Tricolore** in 1797, Napoleon's short-lived Cispadane Republic was proclaimed and the tricolour flag was adopted for the first time.

Over on Piazza San Prospero, the 15th-century **Chiesa di San Prospero** (☎ 0522 43 46 67; ☎ 8.30-11.30am) is guarded by a royal pair of red marble lions and their four cubs. A later addition, the striking octagonal bell tower was built in 1537.

To the north, the **Musei Civici** (☎ 0522 45 64 77; Via Secchi 2; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm & 4-7pm Sat & Sun) houses an eclectic collection of mainly 18th-century art and archaeological discoveries. Nearby, the **Galleria Parmegiani** (☎ 052 245 10 54; Corso Cairoli 2; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon Tue-Fri, 10m-1pm & 4-7pm Sat & Sun) boasts some worthwhile Italian, Flemish and Spanish

paintings plus a heterogeneous collection of costumes, arms, jewellery and cutlery.

On the western side of the historic centre, the baroque **Basilica della Ghiara** (☎ 0522 43 97 07; Corso Garibaldi 44; ☎ 7.30am-noon & 3-7.30pm) is worth a look for its 17th-century ceiling frescoes. To really enjoy them, however, you'll need a pair of binoculars.

Sleeping

Ostello Basilica della Ghiara (☎ 0522 45 23 23; fax 0522 45 47 95; Via Guasco 6; dm/s/d €15/20/36) There's no shortage of space at Reggio's memorable HI hostel. The reception's at the top of a baronial staircase and the guest rooms line vast, echoing corridors. In summer breakfast is served under the porticoes in the internal garden.

Albergo Morandi (☎ 0522 45 43 97; www.albergo.morandi.com in Italian; Via Emilia San Pietro 64; s €67-85, d €95-120; ☎ ☎) It's not just the location – half-way between the train station and historic centre – that makes the Morandi such a good option. The spruce rooms all come with big beds, gleaming bathrooms and satellite TV, and the service is unfailingly courteous.

Albergo Reggio (☎ 0522 45 15 33; www.albergo.reggio.it; Via San Giuseppe 7; s/d €75/95) Hotel Posta has cheaper rooms at this 16-room annexe.

Hotel Posta (☎ 0522 43 29 44; www.hotelposta.re.it; Piazza del Monte 2; s/d €135/190; ☎ ☎ ☎) Elegant inside and out, this grand four-star is housed in the 13th-century Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo, one-time residence of Reggio's governor. Rooms are individually decorated but heavy floral fabrics, gilt-framed mirrors and antique furniture abound. Parking is €12.

Eating

There's a **produce market** each Tuesday and Friday on Reggio's central squares. Typical local snacks include *erbazzone* (herb pie with cheese or bacon) and *gnocco fritto* (fried salted dough). Parmesan is also produced locally.

La Taverna dell'Aquila (☎ 0522 45 29 56; Via dell'Aquila 6a; meals €20) With its colourful, funky décor, gentle jazz soundtrack and tasty, home-made food, this bright eatery is a bit different from your classic wood-and-wine-bottle trattoria. If you're on a budget, the €8.50 lunch menu is exceptionally good value.

Sotto Broletto (☎ 0522 45 22 76; Vicolo Broletto 1n; pizzas from €4.50, meals €20; ☎ Fri-Wed) Neapolitan (deep-pan) pizza is the speciality of the house here. On the tiny alleyway between Piazza Camillo Prampolini and Piazza San Prospero,

it's a boisterous place better suited to a cheerful fill-up than a romantic head to head.

La Bottega dei Briganti (☎ 0522 43 66 43; Via San Carlo 14b; meals €25; 🍷 Mon-Sat) Duck under the porticoes to this cosy *osteria* with its conspiratorial atmosphere and small leafy courtyard. The food is excellent, particularly the pasta and risottos, and the prices are honest.

Ristorante Canossa (☎ 0522 45 41 96; Via Roma 37; meals €30; 🍷 Thu-Tue Aug-Jun; ♿) A local favourite known for its Reggiano specialties including excellent boiled meat and homemade *tortelli d'erba alla reggiana* (tortelli with local herbs).

Entertainment

Reggio's imposing 19th-century **Teatro Municipale Valli** (☎ 0522 45 88 11; www.iteatri.re.it; Piazza Martiri

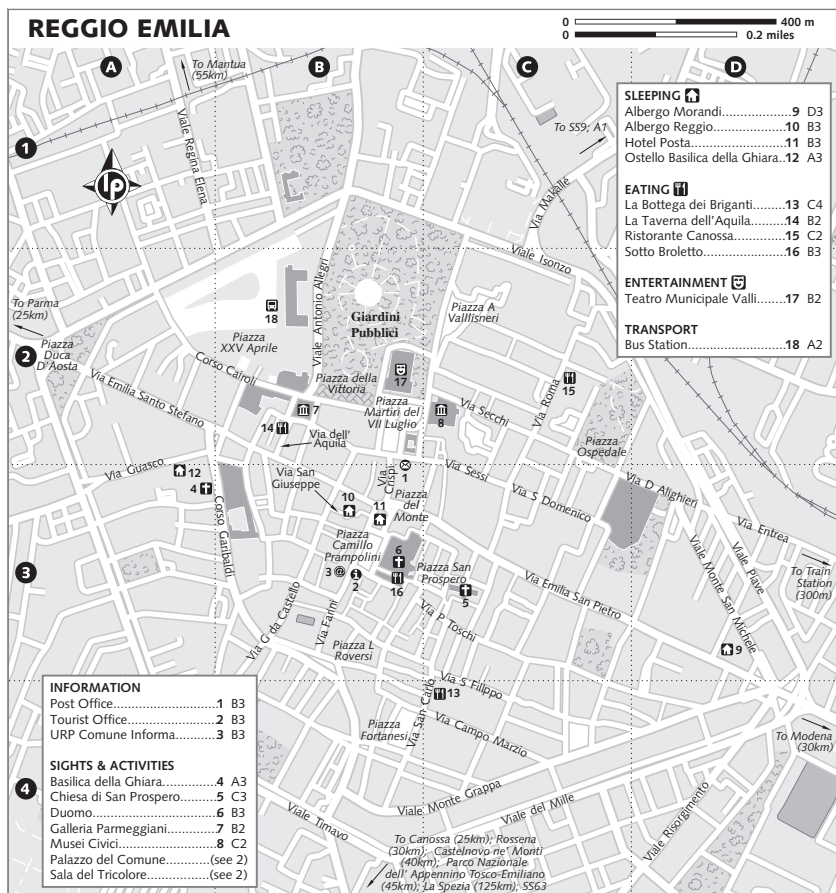
VII Luglio) stages a full season of dance, opera and theatre.

Getting There & Around

Bus operator **ACT** (☎ 0522 43 16 67; www.actre.it in Italian) serves the city and region from the bus station in Viale Antonio Allegri. Destinations include Carpi (€3.30, one hour, 10 daily) and Castelnovo ne' Monti (€4, 1¼ hours, at least 12 daily).

Reggio is on the Via Emilia (SS9) and A1 autostrada. The SS63 is a tortuous but scenic route that takes you southwest across the Parma Apennines to La Spezia on the Ligurian coast.

The train station is east of the town centre. Frequent trains serve all stops on the



Milan–Bologna line including Milan (€15.50, 1½ hours, hourly), Parma (€2.05, 15 minutes, half-hourly), Modena (€2.05, 15 minutes, half-hourly) and Bologna (€7, 45 minutes, half-hourly).

For a taxi, call **Radiotaxi** (☎ 0522 45 25 45).

AROUND REGGIO EMILIA

Southwest of the city, the flat Emilian landscape gives way to the green hills of the Apennines and the Parco del Gigante, part of the **Parco Nazionale dell'Appennino Tosco-Emiliano** (www.appenninoreggiano.it). Among several signed walking trails, well served by *rifugi* (mountain huts), the most extensive is the Matilda Way, a four- to seven-day trek from Ciano, in the Enza valley near Canossa, to San Pellegrino in Alpe, just over the border in Tuscany.

About 40km from Reggio, along the scenic SS63, twee **Castelnovo ne' Monti** makes a convenient base for exploring the area. The **tourist office** (☎ 0522 81 04 30; www.reappennino.it; Via Roma 15b; ☎ 9am–1pm Mon–Sat) has bags of information, including the handy *Parco del Gigante* hiking map, and *Ciclopista Ippovia del Gigante*, a good guide for cyclists. Nearby, and visible for miles around, the stark limestone outcrop known as the **Pietra di Bismantova** (1047m) is a popular venue for climbers and weekend walkers.

A good place to hole up for the night is **Albergo Bismontava** (☎ 0522 81 22 18; www.albergo bismontava.com; Via Roma 73; s/d €45/72) with its colourful rooms and superb restaurant, **Ristorante Le Mormordie** (meals around €25).

Four daily ACT buses link Castelnovo with Reggio (€4, two hours).

Back towards Reggio, there is a pair of medieval castles that merit a detour, as much for their views as for their architectural interest. The **castle of Canossa** (☎ 0522 87 71 04; Via del Castello; admission free; ☎ 9am–12.30pm & 3–7pm Tue–Sun Apr–Sep, 9am–4.30pm Tue–Sun Oct–Mar), built in 940 and then rebuilt in the 13th century, is where Matilda, countess of Canossa, reconciled the excommunicated Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV with Pope Gregory VII in 1077. Largely ruined, it has a small museum.

From Canossa you can see across to the **castle of Rossena** (☎ 0522 24 20 09; Via del Castello 11; admission by guided tour €4.50; ☎ 3–7pm Sat, 11am–7pm Sun Mar–Oct, 2.30–5.30pm Sun Nov–Feb), which is better preserved but less accessible. By road 4.5km away, it's much nearer as the crow flies.

PARMA

pop 174,500

Rich on the back of its food industry, Parma is the perfect picture of a well-off provincial city. Well-dressed locals cycle through pretty piazzas and drink in elegant cafés; beautifully preserved monuments adorn picturesque cobble lanes; and sumptuous displays tempt from delicious delis. It's not cheap, though, and you'll find it quite a challenge to keep costs down without skimping on the magnificent local food – something you really don't want to do.

History

Originally Etruscan, Parma achieved importance as a Roman colony astride what would become the Via Emilia. As Roman authority dwindled, the town passed onto the Goths, then the Lombards and then the Franks.

In the 11th century Parma threw in its lot with the Holy Roman Empire against the papacy. In the following centuries it fell successively to the Visconti family, the Sforzas, the French and finally – sweet revenge – the papacy.

The Farnese family ruled Parma in the pope's name from 1545 to 1731, when the Bourbons took control, ushering in a period of peace and frenetic cultural activity. Following Napoleon's incursions into northern Italy at the beginning of the 19th century, Parma entered a period of instability that ended only with Italian unification. Some 60 years later, the barricades went up as Parma became the only Emilian city to oppose the infamous 1922 march on Rome by Mussolini's Blackshirts.

Orientation

From the train station, Via Verdi leads south to the green turf of Piazza della Pace. Continue south along Via Garibaldi to connect with Via Mazzini and Piazza Garibaldi, Parma's main square. Most sights are within easy walking distance of here.

Information

Euro Lavanderia (Via Massimo d'Azeglio 108; 2kg wash & dry €4; ☎ 7.30am–10.30pm)

Post office (☎ 0521 22 24 12; Via Melloni)

Police station (☎ 0521 21 94; Borgo della Posta 14)

Polidoro Web (per hr €5); Galleria Polidoro (☎ 0521 20 64 78; Galleria Polidoro 6b, Via Mazzini; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat); Via Maestri (☎ 0521 39 14 83; Via Maestri 4b; ☎ 10am–10pm Mon–Fri, 10am–8pm Sat)

THE PARMALAT SCANDAL

In late 2003 the good citizens of Parma were horrified to read that their flagship food company was at the centre of one of the biggest financial scandals in corporate history.

Parmalat was founded by college dropout Calisto Tanzi in 1961 and grew to become Italy's eighth-largest firm – a multinational food and dairy conglomerate with 36,000 employees worldwide and sales in 31 countries. But in late 2003 it all went horribly wrong and the whole house of cards came crashing down. Accountants discovered a €10 billion hole (estimates as to its size range from €8 to €14 billion) in the company's accounts. And with Parmalat already facing debts of about €13 billion, disaster was assured. In December 2003 Tanzi resigned and within weeks he'd been arrested and the company had been declared bankrupt.

Details gradually began to emerge of fraud on an almost unprecedented scale. Throughout the 1990s, Tanzi had been using debt to finance his ambitious acquisitions programme. But when many of his purchases turned out to be lossmakers, he was forced into evermore elaborate scams to hide his losses. The crack eventually came when news emerged of the famous hidden hole.

There's a happy ending, though – at least for the company, if not for Tanzi and the thousands of investors who lost their savings. Under new CEO Enrico Bondi, Parmalat reported profits of €192.5 million in 2006 and forecast a €403 million profit for 2007.

Tourist office (☎ 0521 21 88 89; turismo.comune.parma.it/turismo; Via Melloni 1a; ☎ 9am-1pm & 3-7pm Mon, 9am-7pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun)
Web 'n' Wine (☎ 0521 03 08 93; Via Massimo d'Azeglio 72d; per hr €5; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-8pm Sat) Log on with a glass of fine wine at your elbow.

Sights

PIAZZA DEL DUOMO & AROUND

From the outside, Parma's **Duomo** (☎ 0521 23 58 86; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 3-7pm), consecrated in 1106, is classic Lombard-Romanesque. Inside, the gross gilded pulpit and ornate lamp-holders all scream baroque bombast. But there are some genuine treasures among the ecclesiastical bling: up in the dome, Antonio Correggio's *Assunzione della Vergine* (Assumption of the Virgin) is a kaleidoscopic swirl of cherubims and whirling angels, while down in the southern transept, Benedetto Antelami's *Deposizione* (Descent from the Cross; 1178) relief is considered a masterpiece of its type.

Antelami was also responsible for the octagonal pink-marble **battistero** (☎ 0521 23 58 86; admission €4; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 3-6.30pm) on the south side of the piazza. Combining Romanesque and Gothic styles, it features some of Antelami's best work, including a celebrated set of figures representing the months, seasons and signs of the zodiac. Work began on the baptistry in 1196 but wasn't completed until 1307 thanks to several interruptions, most notably when the supply of pink Verona marble ran out.

On the other side of the square, in the cellars of the former bishop's palace, the **Museo Diocesano** (☎ 0521 20 86 99; Vicolo del Vescovado 3a; admission €3; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 3-6.30pm) displays yet more statuary. Highlights include a finely sculpted Solomon and Sheba and a 5th-century early Christian mosaic, which was discovered under Piazza del Duomo.

A combined ticket (€5) allows entry into the baptistry and Museo Diocesano.

East of Piazza del Duomo, the 16th-century **Chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista** (☎ 0521 23 53 11; Piazzale San Giovanni; ☎ 8-11.45am & 3-7.45pm) is noted for its magnificent frescoed dome, the work of Coreggio, and a series of frescoes by Francesco Parmigianino. The adjoining **monastery** (☎ 8.30am-noon & 3-6pm), however, is known as much for the oils and unguents that its monks produce as for its Renaissance cloisters. Just around the corner, the **Spezieria di San Giovanni** (☎ 0521 50 85 32; Borgo Pipa 1; admission €2; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm Tue-Sun) is the monastery's ancient pharmacy, which still has its original interior.

PIAZZA DELLA PACE & AROUND

Looming over Piazza della Pace's manicured lawns and modern fountains, the monumental **Palazzo della Pilotta** is hard to miss. Supposedly named after the Spanish ball game of *pelota* that was once played within its walls, it was originally built for the Farnese family between 1583 and 1622. Heavily bombed in WWII, it has since been largely rebuilt and today houses several museums.

PARMA

0 400 m
0 0.2 miles

INFORMATION

Euro Lavanderia.....	1	A2
Police Station.....	2	C3
Polidoro Web.....	3	B2
Polidoro Web.....	4	C3
Post Office.....	5	D4
Tourist Office.....	6	D4
Web 'n' Wine.....	7	B2

To Rocca Sanvitale di Fontanelletto (19km); Soragna (28km); Roncole Verdi (33km); Busseto (44km); Piacenza (50km); Milan (110km)

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Battistero.....	8	D4
Camera di San Paolo.....(see 6)		
Casa Natale di Toscanini.....	9	B2
Chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista.....	10	D4
Chiesa di Santa Maria della Steccata.....	11	D3
Duomo.....	12	D4
Galleria Nazionale.....(see 16)		
Monastery.....(see 10)		
Museo Archeologico Nazionale.....(see 16)		
Museo di Glauco Lombardi.....	13	D3
Museo Diocesano.....	14	D4
Palazzo del Governatore.....	15	C4
Palazzo della Pilotta.....	16	C2
Palazzo Ducale.....	17	B1
Parco Ducale.....	18	B2
Spezieria di San Giovanni.....	19	D4
Teatro Farnese.....(see 16)		

To Cimitero della Villetta (1.4km); To Castello di Torrechiara (18km); Langhirano (23km); Tizzano Val Parma (39km); Schia (49km); Bardi (74km); La Spezia (100km); A15

EATING

Hotel Torino.....	22	D4
Hotel Verdi.....	23	A2
Trattoria Locanda Lazzaro.....	24	D4
Angiol d'Or.....	25	D4
Da Walter Clinica del Panino.....	26	C3
Gallo d'Or.....	27	C3
Hostaria da Beppe.....	28	B2
Trattoria Corrieri.....	29	B3
Trattoria Locanda Lazzaro.....(see 24)		

DRINKING

Cavour Gran Caffè.....	30	D4
Enoteca Fontana.....	31	C3
Tabarro.....	32	C3

ENTERTAINMENT

Teatro Due.....	33	B3
Teatro Regio.....	34	D3

SHOPPING

Salumeria Verdi.....	35	C2
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TRANSPORT

Bus Station.....	36	C1
City Bike.....	37	D3
Parma Punto Bici.....	38	B2

See Enlargement

Cittadella

0 200 m

EMILIA-ROMAGNA & SAN MARINO

The most important of these, the **Galleria Nazionale** (☎ 0521 23 33 09; admission incl Teatro Farnese €6; 🕒 8.30am-1.30pm Tue-Sun), displays Parma's main art collection. Alongside works by local artists Correggio and Parmigianino, you'll find paintings by Fra Angelico, Canaletto and El Greco. Before you get to the gallery, though, you'll pass through the **Teatro Farnese**, a copy of Andrea Palladio's Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza. Constructed entirely out of wood, it was almost completely rebuilt after being bombed in WWII.

For a change of period, the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (☎ 0521 23 37 18; admission €2; 🕒 9am-1pm Tue-Sat, 3-5pm Sun) exhibits Roman artefacts discovered around Parma and Etruscan finds from the Po valley.

Over the road from the piazza is the **Museo di Glauco Lombardi** (☎ 0521 23 37 27; Via Garibaldi 15; admission €4; 🕒 9.30am-3.30pm Tue-Sat, 9am-6.30pm Sun) and its miscellaneous collection of clothes, paintings, furniture and historical knick-knacks. Many of the exhibits once belonged to Marie-Louise of Austria, who ruled Parma following her husband Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.

Nearby, the **Camera di San Paolo** (☎ 0521 53 32 21; Via Melloni 3; adult/child €2/free; 🕒 8.30am-1.30pm Tue-Sun) in the convent of the same name, displays yet more frescoes by the prolific Correggio.

PIAZZA GARIBALDI

On the site of the ancient Roman forum, Piazza Garibaldi is a lively hub bisected by

Parma's main east-west artery, Via Mazzini, and its continuation, Strada della Repubblica. On the square's north side, the façade of the 17th-century **Palazzo del Governatore**, these days municipal offices, sports a giant sundial, added in 1829. Behind the palace in the **Chiesa di Santa Maria della Steccata** (☎ 0521 23 49 37; Piazza Steccata 9; ☎ 9am-noon & 3-6pm), you'll find some of Parmigianino's most extraordinary work, notably the stunning, if rather faded, frescoes on the arches above the altar. Many members of the ruling Farnese and Bourbon families lie buried in this church, which is known to locals as La Steccata.

WEST BANK

Stretching along the west bank of the Parma, the formal gardens of the **Parco Ducale** (☎ 6am-midnight Apr-Oct, 7am-8pm Nov-Mar) were laid out in 1560 around the Farnese family's **Palazzo Ducale**, which now serves as headquarters of the provincial *carabinieri*.

At the southeastern corner of the park is the **Casa Natale di Toscanini** (☎ 0521 031 11 70; Via Rodolfo Tanzi 13; admission €2; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun), birthplace of Italy's greatest modern conductor, Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957). If in a musical frame of mind, you could also visit the tomb of Niccolò Paganini, just over a kilometre to the south in the Cimitero della Villetta.

Sleeping

Trattoria Locanda Lazzaro (☎ 0521 20 89 44; Via XX Marzo 14; s/d from €45/65, s without bathroom €35) If you're looking for a basic bolthole in the heart of the action, this cheerful, no-frills *pensione* will do fine. In a building a few doors down from the trattoria, the rooms are Spartan but the ethnic rugs add a bolt of colour and the bathrooms are clean. Note that you might not find anyone around outside of restaurant hours.

Albergo Ristorante Leon d'Oro (☎ 0521 77 31 82; fax 0521 70 78 78; Viale Antonio Fratti 4A; s/d €50/70, without bathroom €37/60) Flying the flag for budget accommodation in this otherwise pricey city, the Leon d'Oro offers large, no-nonsense rooms with colourful floor tiles and old-fashioned furniture. Downstairs, the family restaurant is a further plus (meals cost around €28), as is the location near the train station.

Albergo Moderno (☎ 0521 77 26 47; info@centuryhotel.it; Via Antonio Cecchi 4; s/d €65/80; P) What was once one of Parma's rare budget hotels is now half-way to becoming a slick four-star. At the time of research, some rooms had been given a

sharp, pearl-grey look and slick bathroom, others hadn't. Whatever you get, the convenient station location is still the same. Parking costs €6.

Hotel Torino (☎ 0521 28 10 46; www.hotel-torino.it; Via Mazza 7; s/d €88/130; P ☎ ☎ ☎) Just off Piazza della Pace, Torino is a reliable midrange choice, popular with performers from the nearby Teatro Regio. But there's little that's theatrical about the rooms which, although bright and reasonably sized, are fairly bland. Parking costs €12.

Hotel Verdi (☎ 0521 29 35 39; www.hotelverdi.it; Viale Alberto Pasini 18; s/d €150/220; P ☎ ☎ ☎) Across the river from the *centro storico*, this refined four-star overlooks the leafy Parco Ducale (and, unfortunately, a busy road). The 20 guest rooms are tastefully furnished with plenty of polished wood and gleaming marble.

Eating

Parma specialities, which you'll find served just about everywhere, include the homonymous ham and *parmigiano reggiano*.

Da Walter Clinica del Panino (☎ 0521 20 63 09; Borgo Palma 2; panini from €3; ☎ Mon-Sat) Fast food, Parma style – neon lights, deft-handed cooks and more than 100 varieties of snacks and sandwiches. The burgers are better than average and the service is supersonic – even in the busy lunch rush you won't have to wait for more than a few minutes for your order.

Trattoria Locanda Lazzaro (☎ 0521 20 89 44; Via XX Marzo 14; meals €25; ☎ daily Easter-Nov, closed Thu & dinner Sun Nov-Easter) Like the hotel of the same name, this trattoria is down to earth and unpretentious, its décor decidedly DIY – the walls are covered with place mats doodled on by previous diners. The food is homely and hearty with menu staples including *brasato di Barolo* (meat stewed in Barolo wine) and *parmigiana di melanzane* (layers of aubergines baked with a tomato sauce).

our pick Gallo d'Oro (☎ 0521 20 88 46; Borgo Salina 3; meals €25; ☎ closed dinner Sun) Vintage magazine covers and artfully placed wine bottles lend the Gallo d'Oro a very agreeable bistro feel. But it's not all image: this is one of Parma's best trattorias serving consistently good Emilian cuisine. For proof, dig into a bowl of delicious *tortelli di erbetta* (pasta stuffed with ricotta and herbs). Booking is essential.

Trattoria Corrieri (☎ 0521 23 44 26; Via Conservatorio 1-3; meals €25; ☎ closed dinner Sun; ☎) Under the same ownership as the Gallo d'Oro, this offers

more of the same – namely great food and a convivial atmosphere. Try the *gnocchi con gorgonzola e noci* (gnocchi with blue cheese and walnuts) and you'll get the idea.

Hostaria da Beppe (☎ 0521 20 65 08; Via Imbriani 51b; meals €25; 🕒 Tue-Sun; 🍷) People drive from far and wide to taste Beppe's house speciality – risotto with osso bucco. For a fruity variation on the theme, you can tuck into risotto with lemon or strawberry. The *osteria* is over the river from the historic centre.

Angiol d'Or (☎ 0521 28 26 32; Vicolo Scutellari 1; meals €40; 🕒 closed Tue & dinner Sun) Book a table among the pot plants at this refined restaurant and you get the best of all worlds – fine, regional cooking, an impressive wine list and a great view of Parma's pink baptistry.

Drinking

The city's subdued drinking scene is centred on Strada Farini, where you'll find numerous wine bars, including **Tabarro** (☎ 0521 20 02 23; Strada Farini 5b), a quiet retreat for aficionados, and **Enoteca Fontana** (☎ 0521 28 60 37; Strada Farini 24), popular with a younger, trendier crowd.

On the other side of Piazza Garibaldi, the **Cavour Gran Caffè** (☎ 0521 20 62 23; Strada Cavour 30b; 🕒 Mon-Sat), makes a pleasant drinks stop, whether on the terrace or inside beneath the colourful frescoes.

Entertainment

Parma's opera, concert and theatre season runs from about October through to April. **Teatro Regio** (☎ 0521 03 93 93; www.teatroregioparma.org; Via Garibaldi 16a) offers a particularly rich programme of music and opera, even by exacting Italian standards, while the **Teatro Due** (☎ 0521 23 02 42; www.teatrodue.org in Italian; Via Salnittrara 10) presents the city's top drama.

In summer, the city sponsors several outdoor music programmes.

Shopping

Stock up on edible goodies at **Salumeria Verdi** (☎ 0521 120 81 00; Via Verdi 6c; 🕒 Tue-Sat), a bountiful delicatessen with dangling sausages, shelves of Lambrusco wines, slabs of Parma ham and wheel upon wheel of *parmigiano reggiano*.

Getting There & Away

TEP (☎ 800 977 966; www.tep.pr.it in Italian) operates buses throughout the region. There are up to six buses daily to/from Busseto (€3.40, 1½ hours), via Soragna (€2.85, one hour), leav-

ing from Piazzale dalla Chiesa in front of the train station.

If you're driving, Parma is on the A1 connecting Bologna and Milan and just east of the A15, which runs to La Spezia. Via Emilia (SS9) passes right through town.

The city is also well connected by train, with direct services to Milan (€15.50, 1¼ hours, hourly), Bologna (€4.90, one hour, every 20 minutes), Modena (€3.35, 30 minutes, half-hourly) and Piacenza (€3.35, 30 minutes, every 20 minutes).

Getting Around

Traffic is banned from the historic centre, so leave your car at the underground car park on Viale Toschi or park it in one of the pay-and-display spaces near the train station.

Bikes are available for hire at **Parma Punto Bici** (☎ 0521 28 19 79; www.parmapuntobici.it; Viale Toschi 2a; per hr bicycles/electric bikes €0.70/0.90; 🕒 9.30am-1pm & 3-6.30pm), and **City Bike** (☎ 0521 23 56 39; Viale Mentana 8a; per hr €1; 🕒 9.30am-1.30pm & 3.30-8pm Mon-Sat).

For a taxi, call ☎ 0521 25 25 62.

AROUND PARMA Verdi Country

A pleasant day tour northwest of Parma takes in a couple of the province's more than 20 castles, plus four buildings closely associated with Verdi, Parma's most famous son.

Sitting in a stagnant moat, 19km northwest of Parma, the formidable **Rocca Sanvitale di Fontanellato** (☎ 0521 82 90 55; Fontanellato; adult/child €7/2.50; 🕒 9.30-11.30am & 3-6pm Tue-Sat, 9.30am-noon & 2.30-6pm Sun Apr-Oct, 9.30-11.30am & 3-5pm Tue-Sat, 9.30am-noon & 2.30-5pm Sun Nov-Mar) is one of the region's best-preserved castles. Built over an older fort by the Sanvitale family in the 16th century, it contains some superb frescoes by Parmigianino, the best of which adorn the Sala di Diana e Atteone.

Nine kilometres further northwest is Soragna, site of the 14th-century **Rocca Meli Lupi** (☎ 0524 59 79 64; adult/child €7/3.50; 🕒 9-11am & 3-6pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 9-11am & 2.30-5.30pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb). A fine example of early baroque, it retains much of the furniture that the Meli Lupi family added in the 16th century.

Admission to both castles is by guided tour only (in Italian).

Continuing towards **Busseto**, it would be easy to miss the humble cottage where Giuseppe Verdi was born in 1813. Now a small museum, the **Casa Natale di Giuseppe Verdi**

(☎ 0524 9 74 50; adult/child €4/3; 🕒 9.30-12.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-4.30pm Sat & Sun Nov-Feb) is in the hamlet of Roncole Verdi, 5km beyond Soragna.

In Busseto, there are a couple of sights dedicated to the great composer. The most famous is the stately **Teatro Verdi** (☎ 0524 9 24 87; adult/child €4/3 by guided tour only; 🕒 9.30am-1pm & 3-6.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 9.30am-1pm & 2.30-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb) on the aptly named Piazza Verdi. Also facing the square is **Casa Barezzi** (☎ 0524 93 11 17; Via Roma 119; admission €3; 🕒 10am-12.30pm & 3-6.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-12.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb), home of the composer's patron and father-in-law and site of Verdi's first concert.

Verdi's villa, **Sant'Agata** (☎ 0523 83 00 00; Via Verdi 22; admission €6; 🕒 9-11.30am & 3-6.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Sep, 9.30-11.30am & 2.30-4.30pm Tue-Sun Oct & Nov, 9.30-11.30am & 2.30-4.30pm Sat & Sun Jan), where he composed many of his major works, is in Sant'Agata di Villanova sull'Arda, 5km northwest of Busseto.

A combined ticket for the first three Verdi venues costs €8. An alternative ticket priced at €13 allows entry to all four. For more information on the Verdi sights, contact Busseto's **tourist office** (☎ 0524 9 24 87; www.bussetolive.com in Italian; Piazza Verdi 10; 🕒 9.30-12.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-4.30pm Sat & Sun Nov-Feb).

TEP buses from Parma run along this route up to six times a day from Monday to Saturday; tickets cost €2.85.

South into the Apennines

A relatively unexplored area, the mountainous countryside to the south of Parma is peppered with medieval castles, ancient churches and remote villages. It's ideal for unhurried exploring, although to get the best out of it you'll need a car, especially if you want to continue over into northwest Tuscany.

The first port of call is the majestic **Castello di Torrechiara** (☎ 0521 35 52 55; adult/child €3/free; 🕒 9am-

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

Forget any ideas of fussy fusion cuisine or low-cal Mediterranean diets. Food in Emilia-Romagna is all about ham, cheese, red meat and robust wine. And lots of it. Regional specialties abound – tortelloni, tagliatelle, *mortadella* (baloney or Bologna sausage) and *zampone* (stuffed pig's trotter), to name a few – but three stand out: prosciutto (ham) and *parmigiano reggiano* (Parmesan) from Parma, and Modena's *aceto balsamico* (balsamic vinegar). All are produced using traditional techniques and rigorously checked by local consortia.

The king of Italian cheeses, *parmigiano reggiano* has been produced in the area around Parma for more than 700 years. It is made from skimmed evening milk and full cream morning milk, which is poured into copper vats, cultured, heated and then stirred with a giant paddle. When the curd is ready, it is heaved out into cheesecloth. Each lump is shaped into a wheel form and left in brine for more than a month before being aged for at least one, and often two or more, years.

Parma's prosciutto undergoes a similarly meticulous process. Meat is taken from pigs born and raised in one of 11 regions in northern and central Italy and aged in an area south of Parma where the climatic conditions are held to be ideal. After a 10- or 12-month process of drying, cutting and salting, the ham is judged ready if it passes a final test: it is pierced with a needle made from horse bone and sniffed by an expert – if the whiff is right, the ham is ready.

If you want to know more, check out the **Museo del Parmigiano Reggiano** (☎ 0524 59 61 29; Via Volta 5; admission & tasting €5; 🕒 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Sat & Sun Mar-Oct) in Soragna, and the **Museo del Prosciutto di Parma** (☎ 0521 35 50 09; Via Bocchialini 7; admission €3; 🕒 10am-6pm Sat & Sun Mar-Dec) in Langhirano.

Commercial balsamic vinegar, as sold around the world, bears little relation to its upmarket cousin from Modena. According to the original recipe, it is made by boiling must (unfermented grape juice) from Trebbiano (white) and Lambrusco (red) vines grown in a closely defined area around Modena. The must is filtered, placed in a large oak barrel, then over many years decanted and transferred into smaller barrels made of different woods that are stored in farmhouse lofts. The summer temperature in these lofts can reach 50°C, so much of the must evaporates and the remainder becomes ever darker and stickier. *Aceto balsamico tradizionale di Modena* is then aged for at least 12 years, and *aceto balsamico tradizionale di Modena extravecchio* for at least 25.

ModenaTur (see p423) can arrange visits to local producers.

7pm Tue-Fri, from 10pm Sat & Sun Mar-Oct, 9am-5pm Tue-Fri, from 10pm Sat & Sun Nov-Feb), 18km from Parma along the SS665. One of many castles built or rebuilt by Pier Maria Rossi in the 15th century, it commands great views of the Apennines and has some exquisite frescoes in the Camera d'Oro (Golden Room). There's also a smart restaurant-cum-B&B here, the **Taverna del Castello** (☎ 052 135 50 15; www.tavernadelcastello.it; Via del Castello 5; s/d €65/100), which has meals for €30.

Five kilometres beyond the castle, the unexceptional town of **Langhirano** is famed for its high-quality hams. From Langhirano, follow the road down the west bank of the Parma, crossing the river at Pastorello and continuing to **Tizzano Val Parma**, a charming Apennine village that offers pleasant walking in summer and reasonable winter skiing at **Schia**, 10km further on.

Further south still, the heights around **Monchio delle Corti** offer views as far as La Spezia, in good weather. It's a possible base for exploring some of the 20 glacial lakes that dot the southern corner of the province.

The mountains here are crisscrossed with **walking** and **cycling** tracks and dotted with *rifugi*. An interesting trek is to follow a section of the signed Romea, or the Via Francigena, an ancient pilgrim route heading south to Rome via the villages of Collecchio, Fornovo, Bardone, Terenzo, Cassio and Berteco, each with a small Romanesque church. The tourist office in Parma (p429) can advise on maps and accommodation.

Castello Bardi (☎ 0525 7 13 68; ☞ 10am-7pm Jul-Aug, 2-7pm Mon-Fri & 10am-7pm Sat & Sun May & Jun, 2-6pm Mon-Fri & 10am-6pm Sat & Sun Sep & Apr, 2-6pm Sat & 10am-6pm Sun Mar & Oct, 2-5pm Sat Nov), about 65km southwest of Parma, also merits a mention. Soaring above the surrounding town, it dates from 898, although most of the present structure was built in the 15th century.

PIACENZA

pop 99,200

Just short of the regional border with Lombardy, Piacenza is worth a quick stopover if you're in the area. Its picturesque centre boasts a beautiful Gothic town hall and a couple of august churches.

The train station is on the eastern edge of the old town, an easy 20-minute walk from the central square, **Piazza dei Cavalli**, where you'll find the **tourist office** (☎ 0523 32 93 24; www.comune.piacenza.it; Piazza dei Cavalli 7; ☞ 9am-noon Mon &

Sun, 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sat Apr-Sep, 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sat Oct-Mar).

Sights

Dominated by **Palazzo Gotico**, the impressive 13th-century town hall, **Piazza dei Cavalli** is named after its two martial bronze horses. The two baroque statues, cast by the Tuscan sculptor Francesco Mochi between 1612 and 1625, depict the Farnese dukes Alessandro and Ranuccio.

To the southeast of the piazza, the 12th-century Lombard-Romanesque **cathedral** (☎ 0523 33 51 54; Piazza del Duomo 33; ☞ 7.30am-12.30pm & 4-7.30pm) harmoniously blends white and pink marble, mellow sandstone and red brick. Inside, there are some magnificent 17th-century dome frescoes by Morazzone and Guercino.

The nearby **Basilica di Sant'Antonino** (☎ 0523 32 06 53; Piazza Sant'Antonino 5; ☞ 8am-noon & 4-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-12.30pm & 8-9.30pm Sun) was built in the 11th century on the site of an earlier church. Its peculiar octagonal tower is claimed to be the oldest of its type in Italy.

A short walk away, the **Galleria Ricci Oddi** (☎ 0523 32 07 42; Via San Siro 13; admission €4; ☞ 10am-noon & 3-6pm Tue-Sun) contains a respectable collection of Italian art and sculpture from the 18th century onwards.

On the northern edge of the *centro storico*, the vast **Palazzo Farnese** (☎ 0523 49 26 62; www.musei.piacenza.it; Piazza Cittadella; ☞ 8.45am-1pm Tue-Thu, 8.45am-1pm & 3-6pm Fri-Sun) was started in 1558 but never fully completed. It now houses the Pinacoteca, an art gallery, and four minor museums of archaeology, carriages, Italian unification and, in the main one, the **Museo Civico**, bizarre Etruscan Fegato di Piacenza, a sheep's liver in bronze that was used for divining the future. Admission to all the museums costs €6; single entry to the archaeology museum costs €3, to the carriages and unification museums €2.50, and to the Pinacoteca and Museo Civico €4.80.

Sleeping & Eating

Ostello Don Zermani (☎ 0523 71 23 19; www.ostellodi.piacenza.it; Via Zoni 38-40; s/d/tr €21/40/48; P) In a quiet residential area about 20 minutes' walk from the city centre, this well-run private hostel offers a cheerful welcome and bright, spotless rooms. Laundry facilities are available, as is bike hire (per day €3), and the building has disabled access. Take bus 1, 3, 7 or 16 from the train station.

Hotel Astor (☎ 0523 32 92 96; fax 052 331 35 84; Via Tibini 29-31; s/d/tr €52/68/78; 🏠) A relaxed three-star hotel near the train station, the Astor offers modest accommodation at reasonable rates. The rooms make no great impression, but they are clean and comfortable.

Antica Trattoria Dell'Angelo (☎ 0523 32 67 39; Via Tibini 14; meals €18; 🍷 Thu-Tue) With its beamed ceiling, wood-fire heater and red-check tablecloths, this laid-back trattoria is as traditional as they come. The food is hearty, homemade fare – think cannelloni followed by roast meat – and the wine local and red.

Antica Osteria del Teatro (☎ 0523 32 37 77; Via Verdi 16; meals €70; 🍷 Tue-Sat) High-class cuisine in a restored 15th-century *palazzo* is what you get here, at one of Emilia's top restaurants. The menu is seasonal, ensuring that dishes are prepared with fresh, locally sourced ingredients, and the wine list is abundant.

Getting There & Around

Piacenza's bus station is located on Piazza Citadella; however, the train is a more convenient way to travel to most destinations. There are direct trains to/from Milan (€8, one hour, hourly), Parma (€3.35, 30 minutes, half-hourly) and Bologna (€12.50, 1½ hours, hourly).

Piacenza is just off the A1 linking Milan and Bologna and the A21 joining Brescia and Turin. Via Emilia (SS9) also runs past on its way to Rimini and the Adriatic Sea.

Buses 1, 2 and 6 run between the train station and Piazza dei Cavalli.

AROUND PIACENZA

The hill-top *borgo* (village) of **Castell'Arquato** rises above the green countryside of the Arda Valley, 33km southeast of Piacenza. Dominating its beautifully preserved medieval centre is the crenellated **Rocca Viscontea** (☎ 0523 80 30 91; admission €3.50; 🍷 10am-7pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-1pm & 3-7pm Sat & Sun Nov-Feb), a 14th-century castle built by Luchino Visconti.

Castle apart, Castell'Arquato is an atmospheric place for a stopover. You can try local wine at the **Enoteca Comunale** (☎ 0523 80 61 57; Piazza del Municipio; 🍷 11am-3pm Tue-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun) and bunk up at **Ca' di Cima** (☎ 0523 80 52 86; cadicama@libero.it; Vicolo degli Spalti 4b; s/d €30/65), a rustic B&B at the top of a cobbled lane.

Local information is available at the **tourist office** (☎ 0523 80 30 91; www.castellarquato.net; Via Dante 27; 🍷 10am-1pm & 3-7pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct; 10am-1pm

Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm & 3-5pm Sat & Sun Nov-Feb) at the bottom of the village.

Tempi (☎ 800 211 173; www.tempi.piacenza.it) bus 41 links Castell'Arquata with Piacenza (€3.10).

EAST OF BOLOGNA

FERRARA

pop 131,900

Less smug than some of Emilia-Romagna's provincial cities, Ferrara retains much of the austere splendour of its Renaissance heyday when, as seat of the Este family, it was a force to be reckoned with.

The Este dynasty ruled Ferrara from 1260 to 1598, its political and military prowess matched by intense cultural activity. Petrarch, Titian, Antonio Pisanello and poets Torquato Tasso and Ludovico Ariosto all spent time here under the patronage of the Este dukes.

When the Este fell in 1598, Pope Clement VIII claimed the city, only to preside over its decline. Ferrara recovered importance during and after the Napoleonic period, when it was made chief city of the lower Po. Today's local government has carefully restored much of the centre, which was battered during WWII.

Orientation

From Porta Po near the train station, Viale Cavour runs southeast to Ferrara's landmark castle. To the castle's immediate east, Corso Martiri della Libertà leads down to the cathedral and adjoining Piazza Trento Trieste, from where the *centro storico* is a brief hop to the south.

Information

Ferrara Internet Point (☎ 0532 191 08 76; Via Ad-elardi 17; per hr €4; 🍷 9am-1pm & 3.30-5pm Mon-Sat)

Post office (☎ 0532 29 73 36; Viale Cavour 27)

Police station (☎ 0532 29 43 11; Corso Ercole I d'Este 26)

Tourist office (☎ 0532 20 93 70; www.ferrara.info.com; Viale Cavour; 🍷 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1pm & 2-5.30pm Sun) In Castello Estense.

Sights

CASTELLO ESTENSE

Complete with moat and drawbridge, Ferrara's towering **castle** (☎ 0532 29 92 33; Viale Cavour; adult/child €6/free, €1 extra for tower; 🍷 9.30am-5.30pm

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(Continued from page 436)

Tue-Sun) was commissioned by Nicolò II d'Este in 1385. Initially it was intended to protect him and his family from the town's irate citizenry, who were up in arms over tax increases, but in the late 15th century it became the family's permanent residence.

Although sections are now used as government offices, a few rooms, including the royal suites, are open for viewing. Highlights are the Sala dei Giganti (Giants' Room) and Salone dei Giochi (Games Salon), the Cappella di Renée de France and the claustrophobic dungeon. It was here in 1425 that Duke Nicolò III d'Este had his young second wife, Parisina Malatesta, and his son, Ugo, beheaded after discovering they were lovers, providing the inspiration for Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess*.

PALAZZO MUNICIPALE

Linked to the castle by an elevated passageway, the 13th-century crenellated **Palazzo Municipale** (🕒 9am-2pm Mon-Fri; admission free) was the Este family home until they moved next door to the castle in the late 15th century. Nowadays, it's largely occupied by administrative offices but you can wander around its twin courtyards. The entrance is watched over by copper statues of Nicolò III and his less-wayward son Borso – they're 20th-century copies but none-the-less imposing.

CATHEDRAL

The outstanding feature of the pink-and-white 12th-century **Duomo** (📞 0532 20 74 49; Piazza Cattedrale; 🕒 7.30am-noon & 3-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 7.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-7.30pm Sun) is its three-tiered marble façade, combining Romanesque and Gothic styles on the lower and upper tiers respectively. Much of the upper level is a graphic representation of the Final Judgment and heaven and hell (notice the four figures clambering out of their coffins). Astride a pair of handsome lions at the base squat an oddly secular duo, mouths agape at the effort of holding it all up.

Along the south side of the cathedral is an attractive colonnaded merchants' gallery.

On the other side of Piazza Trento Trieste, the **Museo della Cattedrale** (📞 0532 24 49 49; Via San Romano 9; adult/child €5/free; 🕒 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sun) houses various artefacts from the cathedral, including a serene *Madonna* by Jacopo della Quercia, a couple of vigorous Cosimo

Tura canvases, and some witty bas-reliefs illustrating the months of the year.

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

If you're planning on visiting most of the museums, buy a combined ticket (€8) that gives entry to the Museo della Cattedrale, Palazzina di Marfisa d'Este, Palazzo Schifanoia and Museo Lapidario.

Named after the diamond-shaped ashlar stones on its façade, the **Palazzo dei Diamanti** was built for Sigismondo d'Este late in the 15th century. Regarded as the family's grandest *palazzo*, it is now home to the **Pinacoteca Nazionale** (📞 0532 20 58 44; Corso Ercole I d'Este 21; adult/child €4/free; 🕒 9am-2pm Tue-Wed, Fri & Sat, 9am-7pm Thu, 9am-1pm Sun) and its interesting collection of paintings from the Ferrarese and Bolognese schools.

Next door, the small **Museo del Risorgimento e della Resistenza** (📞 0532 24 49 49; Corso Ercole I d'Este 19; adult/child €3/free; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) exhibits documents, proclamations and posters from the Italian unification movement and WWII, as well as numerous uniforms, guns and hand grenades.

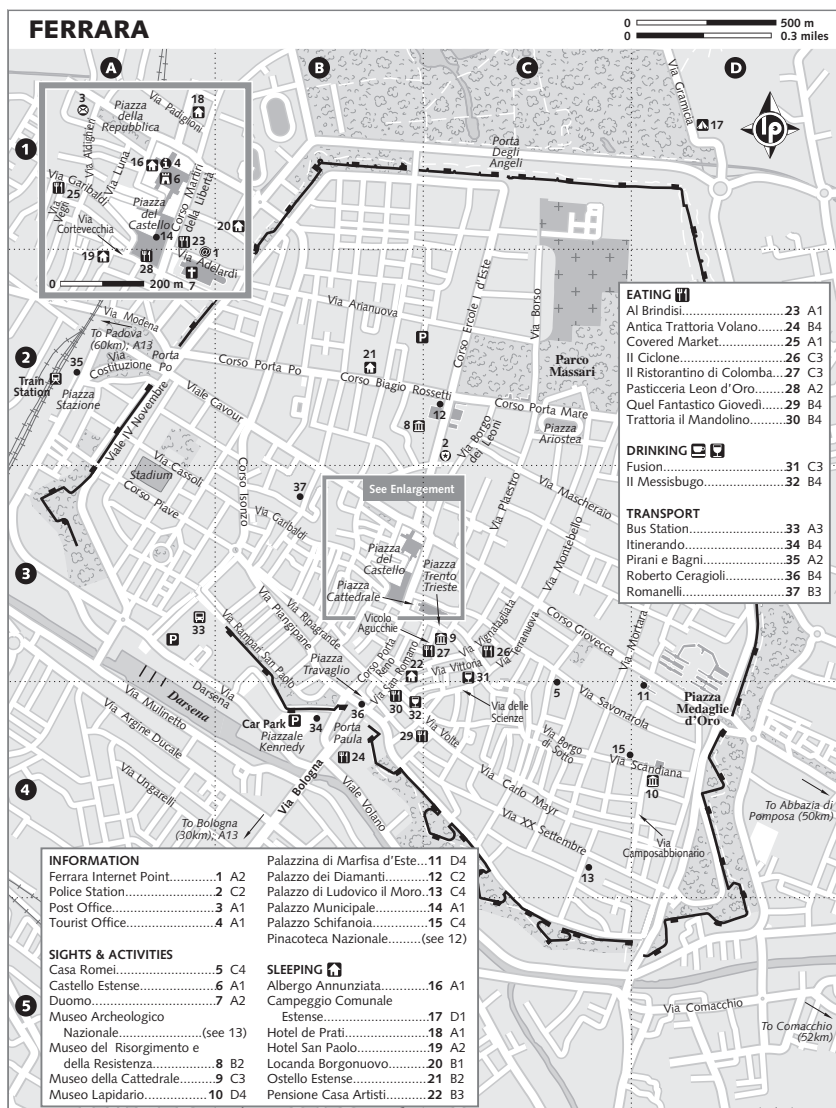
East of Piazza Trento Trieste, the Renaissance **Casa Romei** (📞 0532 24 03 41; Via Savonarola 30; adult/child €3/free; 🕒 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun) is where Lucrezia Borgia spent much of her time in Ferrara. The austere brick exterior hides a peaceful inner patio and, on the 1st floor, a 16th-century apartment preserved in its original state.

In similar style, the **Palazzina di Marfisa d'Este** (📞 0532 24 49 49; Corso Giovecca 170; adult/child €3/free; 🕒 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sun) reveals ornate 16th-century decorations and a shady garden.

Ferrara's most-famous frescoes are in the Este's 14th-century pleasure palace, **Palazzo Schifanoia** (📞 0532 24 49 49; Via Scandiana 23; adult/child €5/free; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun). In the Salone dei Mesi, Francesco del Cossa's 15th-century frescoes depicting the months and seasons are considered among the best examples of their type in Italy. Sadly, however, they're not in great nick.

Your ticket also gives entry to the nearby **Museo Lapidario** (📞 0532 24 49 49; Via Camposabionario 23; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun), which has a small, undocumented collection of Roman and Etruscan stele, tombs and inscriptions.

You'll find yet more Etruscan artefacts, along with an impressive selection of Attic vases, in **Palazzo di Ludovico il Moro** at the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (📞 0532 6 62 99; Via XX



Settembre 124; adult/child €4/free; ☎ 9am-2pm Tue-Sun). Many finds came from the Etruscan town of Spina, near modern-day Comacchio.

CITY WALLS

Although not terribly impressive, most of the 9km of ancient city walls are more or less intact and some parts are walkable. Alterna-

tively, hire a bike and cycle the perimeter (ask at the tourist office for the free leaflet titled *Seven Itineraries Cycling Tourism Routes*).

Festivals & Events

On the last Sunday of May each year, the eight *contrade* (districts) of Ferrara compete in **Il Palio**, a horse race that momentarily turns

Piazza Ariostea into medieval bedlam. Claimed to be the oldest race of its kind in Italy, the first official competition was held in 1279. For more background, log onto www.paliodiferrara.it.

For something completely different, Ferrara hosts an annual **Buskers' Festival** (☎ 0532 24 93 37; www.ferrarabuskers.com) in late August and Europe's largest hot-air balloon gathering, the **Ferrara Balloon Festival** (☎ 0532 29 93 03; www.ferrarafestival.it), in late September.

Sleeping

Campeggio Comunale Estense (☎ 0532 75 23 96; campeggio.estense@freeminternet.it; Via Gramicia 76; camp sites per person/tent €5/7; ☹ year-round) The only camp site in Ferrara is just outside the city walls. Catch bus 1 or 5 from the train station to Piazzale San Giovanni and follow the signs. Don't forget your insect repellent.

Ostello Estense (☎ 0532 20 11 58; ostelloestense@comcamelot; Corso Biagio Rossetti 24; dm €18; ☹ year-round) For the cheapest beds in town, head to Ferrara's functional youth hostel. Don't expect frills or breakfast, just a bed in a scrubbed five-person dorm. Curfew is 11.30pm in winter, later in summer.

Pensione Casa Artisti (☎ 0532 76 10 38; Via Vittoria 66; d €60, s/d without bathroom €28/48) The best budget option in town. Its old-fashioned rooms are spotless, the location is convenient for everything and the owners are ultrahospitable. If you want one of the three rooms with a private bathroom, book ahead.

Hotel San Paolo (☎ 0532 76 83 33; www.hotelsanpaolo.it; Via Baluardi 9; s/d/t €50/80/90; ☎ ☹ ☹) On the edge of the *centro storico*, just inside the city walls, this welcoming hotel offers great value for money. The modern rooms are comfortable, if unspectacular, and there's a long list of extras: free bicycle hire, free parking, wi-fi and foreign newspapers. Some rooms are set up for travellers with disabilities.

ourpick Hotel de Prati (☎ 0532 24 19 05; www.hoteldeprati.com; Via Padiglioni 5; s €49-75, d €75-110; ☹ ☹) A step up from your average three-star, de Prati has got the lot – a central location near the castle, beautiful décor and a friendly owner. The upstairs guest rooms sport wrought-iron bedsteads, antique furniture and prints of Renaissance paintings, while downstairs the bright public rooms are enlivened by contemporary art exhibitions.

Locanda Borgonuovo (☎ 0532 21 11 00; www.borgonuovo.com; Via Cairoli 29; s/d €55/95; ☎ ☹ ☹)

Within an arrow shot of the castle, this charming B&B is a real gem. There are four refined rooms, each decorated with antiques and swathes of polished wood. Breakfast is delicious, and there's a delightfully frondy patio for a quiet breather. Parking costs €5 and bikes are free for guests. Reservations are essential.

Albergo Annunziata (☎ 0532 20 11 11; www.annunziata.it; Piazza della Repubblica 5; s/d €120/200; ☎ ☹ ☹) When Casanova spent the night here, the Annunziata was little more than a simple *locanda* (inn or small hotel). Today it's a refined top-end hotel with all the creature comforts (including wi-fi) and elegant, tasteful rooms. There are also six modern apartments (€130 to €240) 150m from the main hotel. Parking costs €7; bike hire is free.

Eating & Drinking

Local specialities to look out for include *caprellacci di zucca*, a pasta pouch filled with pumpkin, and *salama da sugo* (stewed pork sausage). Ferrarese bread is well known for its distinctive twisted shape and crunchy consistency.

Pasticceria Leon d'Oro (☎ 0532 20 93 18; Piazza Cattedrale 2-10; panini €3; ☹ Thu-Tue) Opposite the cathedral, Leon d'Oro has a tempting array of sweet and savoury snacks and outdoor seating on Palazzo Municipale's internal courtyard.

Il Ciclone (☎ 0532 21 02 62; 1st fl, Via Vignatagliata 11; pizzas from €4, meals €25; ☹ Tue-Sun) A laid-back restaurant-cum-pizzeria that plays Verve on the stereo and serves a tempting selection of pastas, pizzas, meats and fish. If you're not going to have pizza – and the pizzas here are excellent – the *spaghetti allo scoglio* (spaghetti with seafood) makes for a tasty meal.

Il Ristorantino di Colomba (☎ 0532 76 15 17; Vicolo Agucchie 15; meals €25; ☹ Wed-Mon) For healthy helpings of simple, no-nonsense food, this modest *centro storico* trattoria is a reliable choice. You won't find any great novelties but the food is tasty and the Sangiovese house red a fine tippie. Soft lighting and muted jazz lend a relaxed low-key feel.

Trattoria il Mandolino (☎ 0532 76 00 80; Via Carlo Mayr 83; meals €27; ☹ Wed-Sun, lunch Mon) The mandolin after which this charming trattoria is named is just one of the musical instruments adorning the cluttered walls. In tune with the old-fashioned feel, the food is traditional Ferrarese, so expect plenty of meat, cheese and salami. Signature dishes include *formaggio*

con *marmellata di cipolla* (cheese with onion marmalade) and the classic *salama da sugo*.

Antica Trattoria Volano (☎ 0532 76 14 21; Viale Volano 20; meals €28; 🗓 Sat-Thu) A local favourite, this historic trattoria has been serving traditional Ferrarese food for more than 30 years. Menu stalwarts include the traditional *cappellacci di zucca con ragù* and *salama da sugo* served with mashed potato. For fish lovers, *anguilla* (eel) is an adventurous choice. In summer, relax in the attractive rear garden.

Al Brindisi (☎ 0532 20 91 42; Via Adelardi 11; meals €30; 🗓 Tue-Sun) The oldest *osteria* in the world, this atmospheric wine bar was already an established drinking den in 1435 – Titian drank here and Benvenuto Cellini dropped in on occasion. Alongside the substantial wine list there's also a strong selection of grappas and whiskies, as well as a full menu of pastas, mains and snacks. The lunch menu costs €10.30.

Quel Fantastico Giovedì (☎ 0532 76 05 70; Via Castelnuovo 9; meals €35; 🗓 Thu-Tue) For fashionable food in a cool, bistro-chic setting, book here. Seafood features strongly on the menu with dishes such as *riso al curry con code di gamberi, vongole e spinacini* (rice curry with prawns, clams and spinach) and *calamari e gamberi fritte* (fried squid and prawns) typical offerings.

Fusion (☎ 0532 20 14 73; Via delle Scienze 8a; 🗓 closed lunch Sun & Mon evening) You'll need to dress up unless you want to be outsmarted by the slick designer furniture and sexy, self-conscious drinkers at this chic wine bar.

Il Messisbugo (☎ 0532 76 40 60; Via Carlo Mayr 79; 🗓 7pm-2am Tue-Sun) Despite a name that suggests Tex-Mex tack, this is actually a cool brick-vaulted bar, popular with students and bohemians.

Self-caterers can fill up at the **covered market** (Via Vegri; 🗓 7am-1.30pm Mon-Sat).

Getting There & Around

The bus station is on Via Rampari San Paolo. **ACFT** (☎ 0532 59 94 11; www.acft.it in Italian) buses operate within the city and to surrounding towns such as Comacchio (€4.10, 1¼ hours, eight daily), as well as to the Adriatic beaches (note that some of these leave from the train station). The train is the better option for Bologna (€3, 30 minute, half-hourly) and Ravenna (€4.40, 1¼ hours, 17 daily).

Most traffic is banned from the city centre. If you need to leave your car overnight there's a car park on Via Darsena (just outside the

centro storico), which costs €3 for 24 hours. ACFT buses 1, 2 and 9 run from the train station to the city centre.

For a taxi, call **Radiotaxi** (☎ 0532 90 09 00).

Even better, get in the saddle and join the hundreds of other wheelers in Italy's most cycle-friendly city. Among the places where you can rent bikes (per hour/day around €2.50/10):

Itinerando (☎ 0532 20 20 03; Piazzale Kennedy 6-8)

Pirani e Bagni (☎ 0532 77 21 90; Piazza Stazione 2)

Roberto Ceragioli (☎ 339 405 68 53; Piazza Travaglio 4)

Romanelli (☎ 0532 20 60 17; Via Aldighieri)

PO DELTA

Straddling Emilia-Romagna and the Veneto, the Po Delta (Foci del Po) is where the Po spills into the Adriatic Sea. An easy day trip from either Ferrara or Ravenna, it has an atmosphere all of its own, particularly in winter when fog shrouds the extensive pine woods and wetlands in eerie silence.

The area's main attraction is the **Parco del Delta del Po** (www.parcodeltapo.it), a regional park encompassing one of Europe's largest wetlands and a pair of alluring lagoons, the Valli di Comacchio and Valle Bertuzzi. With more than 300 bird species nesting or passing through the area, it's a paradise for ornithologists. In late April, Comacchio hosts the **International Po Delta Birdwatching Fair** (☎ 0533 5 76 93; www.podeltabirdfair.it), the largest event of its kind in Europe.

For fauna of a different kind, a battery of *lidi* (small beach resorts) offer coastal fun.

In summertime, the mosquitoes are man-eaters; slap on the insect repellent and consider mosquito nets if you're camping.

Abbazia di Pomposa

About 50km east of Ferrara, the **Abbazia di Pomposa** (☎ 0533 71 91 10; Codigoro; admission €5 Mon-Sat, monastery/church €3/free Sun; 🗓 8.30am-7pm) is one of Italy's oldest Benedictine endowments. The monk Guido d'Arezzo reputedly invented the musical scale here, and in the 11th century it was one of Italy's foremost cultural centres. Its decline began in the 14th century, and in 1652 vespers were sung here for the last time. The nave of its church has elaborate mosaic paving and is adorned with frescoes from the 14th-century Bologna school and artworks by Vitale di Bologna. There's also a small museum.

The abbey stages a classical music festival, **Rassegna di Musica Classica**, each July.

Comacchio

The delta's main centre, Comacchio, is a picturesque fishing village of canals and brick bridges. The most famous bridge, the 1635 Trepponti, is an eye-catching construction traversing a trio of canals.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 0533 31 41 54; www.comune.comacchio.fe.it; Corso Mazzini 4; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Apr-Oct, 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Fri-Sun Nov-Mar) has loads of information about hiking and cycling in the area, bird-watching, horse riding and boat excursions. Useful publications include the *Destra Po* leaflet, which details the 132km *Destra Po* cycle route from west of Ferrara to the sea, and the pamphlet *Birdwatching in the Po Delta Park: Map & Itineraries*.

In the village, the **Manifattura dei Marinati** (☎ 0533 8 17 42; Corso G Mazzini 200; admission free; ☎ 10am-1pm & 3-6.30pm) is a musty-smelling museum chronicling the town's traditional eel-fishing industry.

There is no shortage of restaurants along the canals, most offering fish-based menus and eel specialities. One of the best is **Trattoria della Pescheria** (☎ 0533 8 15 97; Via E Fogli 93; meals €28, tourist menu €16; ☎ Wed-Mon), where the helpings are huge, the fish is fresh and the chips are a delight.

From Ferrara, buses run eight times daily to Comacchio (€4.10, 1¼ hours).

RAVENNA

pop 147,000

Of the region's artistic jewels none shines brighter than Ravenna's early Christian and Byzantine mosaics. Described as a symphony of colour by Dante in his *Divine Comedy*, they date to Ravenna's golden age as an early Christian centre.

Ravenna was an unimportant provincial city until 402, when Emperor Honorius moved his court here from Milan and made it capital of the Western Roman Empire. He chose Ravenna on the basis that the malarial swamps around the town would provide protection from barbarian invaders – and in fact, they did until 476 when the city fell to the Goths. The change in regime, however, did little to hinder Ravenna's development and under Theodoric the Great it became one of the Mediterranean's most glamorous cities.

Ravenna's Byzantine heyday was still to come, however. In little more than 200 years, between the Byzantine arrival in 540 and the

Lombard capture of the city in 752, the city grew into a glittering showcase for Byzantine art and culture.

More down-to-earth nowadays, it is still a refined and polished place. Less sophisticated are the seaside resorts that crowd the nearby Adriatic beaches.

Orientation

From Piazza Farini, in front of the train station, it's a 600m walk along Viale Farini and its continuation, Via Diaz, into central Piazza del Popolo. From here, nearly everything of interest is within easy walking distance.

Information

Multimedia tea (☎ 0544 48 20 56; Via Guido da Polenta 4; per hr €2.07; ☎ 2.30-7pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat) Internet access on the 1st floor of Palazzo Farini.

Post office (☎ 0544 24 33 11; Piazza Garibaldi 1)

Police station (☎ 0544 48 29 99; Piazza Mameli)

Splash (Via Candiano 16; 6kg wash €3.50; ☎ 7am-10pm)

Tourist office Via Salara (☎ 0544 3 54 04; www.turismo.ravenna.it in Italian; Via Salara 8; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun); Via delle Industrie (☎ 0544 45 15 39; Via dell'Industria 14; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 2-5pm) The main office at the Mausoleo di Teodorico.

Sights

The website www.ravennamosaici.it gives information, both historical and practical, about Ravenna's main UNESCO-listed sights.

BASILICA DI SAN VITALE, MAUSOLEO DI GALLA PLACIDA & MUSEO NAZIONALE

The **basilica** (☎ 0544 21 51 93; Via Fiandrini, entrance on Via San Vitale; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Sep, to 5.30pm Mar & Oct, 9.30am-5pm Nov-Feb) was consecrated in 547 by Archbishop Massimiano. In contrast to the sombre exterior, its interior is awash with colour as the rich greens, golds and blues of the mosaics are bathed in soft yellow sunlight. The mosaics on the side and end walls represent scenes from the Old Testament: to the left, Abraham prepares to sacrifice Isaac in the presence of three angels, while the one on the right portrays the death of Abel and the offering of Melchizedek. Inside the chancel, two magnificent mosaics depict the Byzantine emperor Justinian with San Massimiano and a particularly solemn and expressive Empress Theodora, who was his consort.

In the same complex, the small **Mausoleo di Galla Placida** (☎ 0544 21 51 93; Via Fiandrini; ☎ 9am-7pm Apr-Sep, to 5.30pm Mar & Oct, 9.30am-5pm Nov-Feb) was

constructed for Galla Placidia, the half-sister of Emperor Honorius, who initiated construction of many of Ravenna's grandest buildings. The mosaics here, more muted than those in the basilica, are the oldest in Ravenna.

Next door to the basilica, the **Museo Nazionale** (☎ 0544 3 44 24; Via Fiandrini; admission €4; 🕒 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun) is housed in the cloisters of a former Benedictine monastery. There's a wealth of pottery, bronzes, icons and vestments, plus more Madonna and Child portraits than you can shake a halo at.

MUSEO ARCIVESCOVILE & BATTISTERO NEONIANO

Next to the unremarkable 18th-century **cathedral** (Via Gioacchino Rasponi; 🕒 7am-noon & 2.30-5pm), the

tiny **Museo Arcivescovile** (Episcopal Museum; ☎ 0544 21 52 01; Piazza Arcivescovado; 🕒 9am-7pm Apr-Sep, 9.30am-5.30pm Mar & Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Feb) merits a quick look. Pride of place goes to an exquisite 6th-century ivory throne and interesting mosaics.

Even more impressive, and still *in situ*, are the mosaics of the baptism of Christ and the apostles on the domed roof of the neighbouring **Battistero Neoniano** (☎ 0544 21 52 01; Piazza del Duomo; 🕒 9am-7pm Apr-Sep, to 5.30pm Mar & Oct, 9.30am-5pm Nov-Feb). Thought to have started life as a Roman bathhouse, it was converted into a baptistry in the 5th century.

BASILICA DI SANT'APOLLINARE NUOVO

Originally built by the Goths in the 6th century, the **basilica** (☎ 0544 21 95 18; Via di Roma;

RAVENNA

0 300 m
0 0.2 miles

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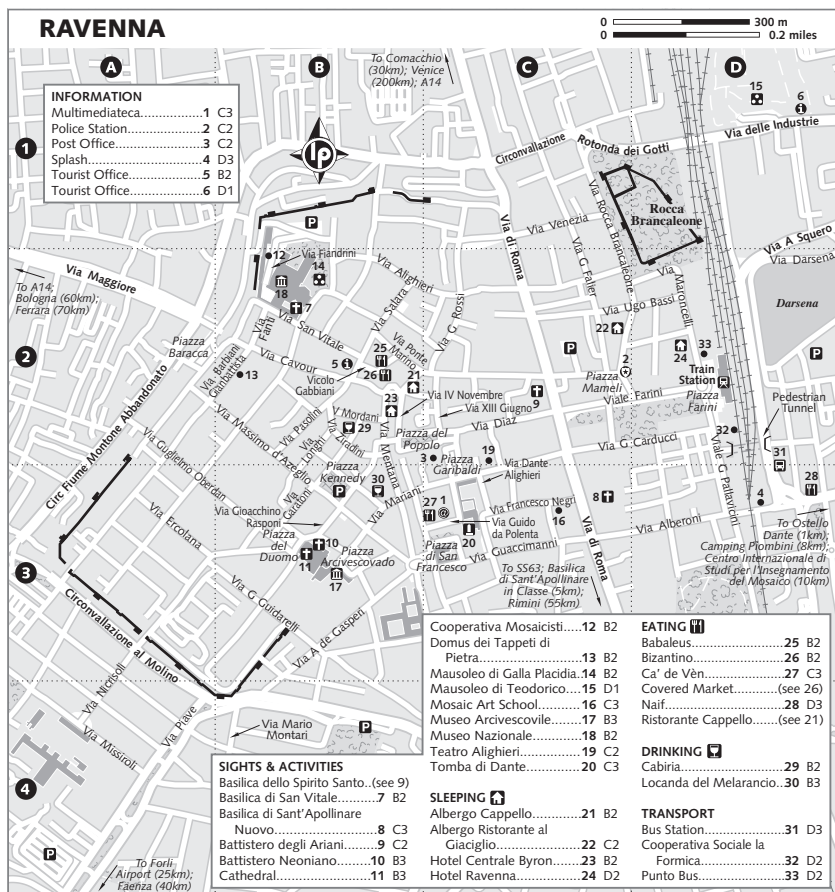
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TICKETS & TIMES

There are three combined tickets on offer in Ravenna. The first (€7.50), valid for seven days, gives entry to the five main monuments: Basilica di San Vitale, Mausoleo di Galla Placidia, Basilica di Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Museo Arcivescovile and Battistero Neoniano. There's no individual admission price for these monuments.

A different ticket (€6) lets you into Mausoleo di Teodorico and the Museo Nazionale. Pay an extra €2 and this also includes the Basilica di Sant'Apollinare in Classe, about 5km southeast of town. Each of these sites has its own admission price.

The Basilica di San Vitale, Mausoleo di Galla Placidia and Museo Nazionale are all in the same complex, which has its main entrance on Via San Vitale.

To see the mosaics in a different light, do the rounds at night. They're open and illuminated from 9pm to 11.30pm Monday to Friday from late June to early September.

🕒 9am-7pm Apr-Sep, to 5.30pm Mar & Oct, 9.30am-5pm Nov-Feb) claims some of Ravenna's most impressive, and certainly largest, mosaics. On the right (south) wall, 26 white-robed martyrs are depicted heading towards Christ with his apostles, while on the left, there's an equally expressive procession of virgins, bearing offerings to the Madonna.

TOMBA DI DANTE

Dante spent the last 19 years of his life in Ravenna, writing much of the *Divine Comedy* here, after Florence expelled him in 1302. As a perpetual act of penance, Florence still supplies the oil for the lamp that burns continually in his **tomb** (☎ 0544 3 02 52; Via Dante Alighieri 9; admission free; 🕒 9am-7pm).

Another literary great, Lord Byron, briefly lived in a house on nearby Piazza di San Francesco.

MAUSOLEO DI TEODORICO

This two-storey **mausoleo** (☎ 0544 68 40 20; Via delle Industrie 14; admission €3; 🕒 8.30am-7pm), built in 520, is a considerable feat of construction with its huge blocks of stone uncemented by any mortar, and 300-tonne dome. At the heart of the mausoleum is a Roman basin of porphyry that was recycled as a sarcophagus. Take bus 2 from the city centre.

BASILICA DI SANT'APOLLINARE IN CLASSE

The brilliant star-spangled apse mosaic of the **Basilica di Sant'Apollinare in Classe** (☎ 0544 47 35 69; Via Romea Sud, Classe; admission €3; 🕒 8.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 1-7.30pm Sun) is a must-see. The basilica, 5km southeast of the city centre, was built in the 6th century on the burial site of Ravenna's patron saint, who converted the city to

Christianity in the 2nd century. To get there take bus 4 or 44 to Classe.

OTHER MONUMENTS

Behind the **Basilica dello Spirito Santo**, just off Via Diaz, is the **Battistero degli Ariani** (Via degli Ariani; admission free; 🕒 8.30am-4.30pm), whose breathtaking dome mosaic depicts the baptism of Christ.

To the west, not far from the Basilica di San Vitale, the 6th-century floor mosaics discovered at the **Domus dei Tappeti di Pietra** (☎ 0544 3 25 12; Via Barbiana Gianbattista; admission €3.50; 🕒 10am-6.30pm Sun-Fri, to 4.30pm Sat) were unearthed in the early 1990s. Of considerable artistic merit, they are decorated with geometric and floral designs.

Courses

Various outfits run mosaic courses catering to everyone from beginners to artists. Typically, a 40-hour week-long course will cost between €450 and €620.

Recommended:

Mosaic Art School (☎ 349 601 45 66; www.mosaic-tiles.com; Via Francesco Negri 14)

Centro Internazionale di Studi per l'Insegnamento del Mosaico (☎ 0544 45 03 44; www.mosaico.ravenna.it; Via Manlio Monti 32, Bassette)

Cooperativa Mosaicisti (☎ 054 43 47 99; www.coopmosaico.it; Via Fiandrini 1)

Festivals & Events

Riccardo Muti, Italy's top conductor, has close ties with Ravenna and is intimately involved each year with the **Ravenna Festival** (☎ 0544 24 92 44; www.ravennafestival.org), one of Italy's top classical music events. Concerts are staged at the **Teatro Alighieri** (☎ 0544 24 92 44; www.teatroalighieri.org; Via Mariani 2) from June to late July. Ticket prices start at around €15.

Jazz fans are well served in Ravenna. Concerts are held in town between late February and the end of May as part of the region-wide **Crossroads** (☎ 0544 40 56 56; www.crossroads-it.com in Italian) festival. Then, in the second half of July, stars of the jazz firmament descend on town for **Ravenna Jazz** (☎ 0544 40 56 66).

Sleeping

Camping Piomboni (☎ 0544 53 02 30; www.campingpiomboni.it; Viale della Pace 421, Marina di Ravenna; camp sites per person/tent €7.40/11.50; ☽ Easter–mid-Sep) In a pine wood 8km from town, this large self-contained camping ground is near the beach at Lido di Ravenna. Take bus 70 from Ravenna.

Ostello Dante (☎ 0544 42 11 64; www.hostelravenna.com; Via Nicolodi 12; dm/s/d €14/20/36; ☑) Ravenna's vibrant HI youth hostel is in a modern building 1km east of the train station. There's an 11.30pm lock-up but for €1 you can hire your own key, allowing you to come and go as you like. Take bus 1 from the train station.

Albergo Ristorante al Giaciglio (☎ 0544 3 94 03; www.albergoalgiaciglio.com in Italian; Via Rocca Brancaleone 42; s/d €45/75, without bathroom €40/60) This modest budget hotel has changed hands but remains what it has long been – a welcoming, family-run place with simple, clean rooms and a decent downstairs restaurant (set menus cost €6, €7 and €13).

Hotel Centrale Byron (☎ 0544 21 22 25; www.hotelbyron.com; Via IV Novembre 14; s €50-65, d €80-110; ☞ ☑) The prime location is what you pay for here – a mere 20 paces from central Piazza del Popolo. That said, rooms offer all the regular three-star comforts, including satellite TV and, in summer, air-con, and the rates are reasonable.

Hotel Ravenna (☎ 0544 21 22 04; hotelravenna.ra.it; Via Maroncelli 12; s/d €55/90, without bathroom €45/65; ☐) A stone's throw from the train station, Hotel Ravenna is a safe bet. The guest rooms are fairly bland with fading brown décor and unexceptional furniture, but they are large, quiet and the beds are comfortable.

Albergo Cappello (☎ 0544 21 98 13; www.albergoappello.it; Via IV Novembre 41; s/d €120/150; ☐ ☞ ☑) The old and the new combine to great effect at this eye-catching three-star hotel. Traces of original 15th-century frescoes and coffered ceilings are set against modern lamps, flatscreen TVs and sexy metallic walls. Parking costs €13.

Eating

Bizantino (Piazza Andrea Costa; set menus €6.70 & €7.50, meals €10; ☽ lunch Mon-Fri) A busy self-service

restaurant inside the main entrance of the covered market, this is the place for a quick, economical lunchtime bite.

Naif (☎ 0544 42 23 15; Via Candiano 34; pizzas from €3.80, meals €22) Any pizzeria that locals go to for their takeaway is good news. And locals go to Naif, a bright, brash place on the eastern side of the rail tracks. As well as pizza, there's plenty more to choose from on what must be Ravenna's longest menu.

Babaleus (☎ 0544 21 64 64; Vicolo Gabbiani 7; pizzas from €4, meals €23; ☽ closed Wed & lunch Sat) A popular place in the historic centre that's good for both pizza and pastas. There's a relaxed, informal atmosphere and a surprisingly imaginative menu with creative concoctions such as *filetino di suino allo zafferano e porro fritto* (pork fillet with saffron and fried leeks).

Ca' de Ven (☎ 0544 3 01 63; Via Corrado Ricci 24; meals €30; ☽ Tue-Sun) This cavernous *enoteca*-cum-restaurant attracts tourists by the coach load. But that shouldn't distract from the fine, if expensive, regional food and encyclopedic wine list.

Ristorante Cappello (☎ 0544 21 98 76; Via IV Novembre 41; tasting menu €30, meals €40; ☽ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat & lunch Sun) Under the hotel of the same name, but under separate management, this refined restaurant takes its food very seriously. The menu changes weekly, although the emphasis is always on fish. Typical dishes include *tagliata di tonno su foglie di sedano rape e broccoli* (tuna fillet on a bed of celeriac and broccoli) or *zite con scampi e zucca* (long pasta with scampi and courgettes).

Self-caterers and sandwich-fillers should load up at the city's **covered market** (Piazza Andrea Costa).

Drinking

Cabiria (☎ 0544 3 50 60; Via Mordani 8; ☽ 6pm-3am) A wine bar that hums like a Friday-night pub, Cabiria is a local favourite, popular with the 30-something crowd.

Locanda del Melarancio (☎ 0544 21 52 58; Via Mentana 33) Sharp threads are not obligatory but you might feel out of place without them at this smooth, looks-conscious bar.

Getting There & Around

ATM (www.atm.ra.it in Italian) buses depart from Piazza Farini for towns along the coast. **Punto Bus** (☎ 0544 68 99 00; ☽ 6.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, from 7.30am Sun), on the piazza, is ATM's information and ticketing office.

Ravenna is on a branch (A14 dir) of the main east coast A14 autostrada. The SS16 (Via Adriatica) heads south to Rimini and on down the coast. The main car parks are east of the train station and north of the Basilica di San Vitale.

Trains connect with Bologna (€4.90, 1½ hours, hourly), Ferrara (€4.40, 1¼ hours, 17 daily), Faenza (€2.60, 40 minutes, hourly), Rimini (€3, one hour, hourly) and the south coast.

In town, cycling is popular. In spring and summer, there's a free bike-hire service for visitors. Simply pick up a key from the main branch of the tourist office, borrow a bike from one of the cycle stalls around town and return it to the same rack. Red bikes are for residents, yellow for visitors.

Cooperativa Sociale la Formica (☎ 0544 3 70 31; Piazza Farini; per hr/day €1.10/8.50; ☎ 7am-8pm Mon-Sat) rents out bikes from outside the train station and acts as a left-luggage office.

FAENZA

pop 55,200

An easy train ride from Ravenna, Faenza is best known for its high-grade ceramics. Production of this faïence (tin-glazed earthenware) dates back to the Renaissance and is still a money-spinner for the town. Check out local styles at the vast **Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche** (☎ 0546 69 73 11; www.micfaenza.org; Viale Baccarini 19; adult/child €6/3; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 9.30am-1.30pm Tue-Thu & 9.30am-5.30pm Fri-Sun Nov-Mar).

Get details of Faenza's charming medieval centre from the **tourist office** (☎ 0546 2 52 31; Piazza del Popolo 1; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Mon-Sat & 9.30am-12.30pm Sun May-Sep, 9am-12.30pm & 3.30-5.30pm Tue-Wed, 9am-12.30pm Thu & Fri Oct-Apr) in the town centre.

Just outside of town, **Agriturismo La Curbastra** (☎ 0546 3 20 89; www.agriturismolacurbastra.it; Via Cesarlo 157; s/d/tr/q €40/55/70/85; ☎) has rustic rooms in the midst of a sea of vines, and a very welcoming swimming pool.

IMOLA

pop 66,400

Fans of Formula One will know Imola as home to the San Marino Grand Prix. Until the F1 authorities pulled the plug in 2007, the race was held at the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari circuit, the track on which Ayrton Senna crashed and died in 1994.

Imola itself is a pleasant-enough town with a handsome medieval core and a robust red-brick castle – the 13th-century **Rocca Sforzesca** (☎ 0542 60 26 09; Piazza G dalle Bande Nere; admission €3; ☎ 9am-noon & 3-7pm Sat, 3-7pm Sun).

The **tourist office** (☎ 0542 60 22 07; www.comune.imola.bo.it; Via Mazzini 14; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm Mon-Fri, 3-6.15pm Tue & Thu, 8.30am-1pm Sat) can help with accommodation lists and details of events at the racetrack.

Imola is on the Via Emilia (SS9) and regular trains connect with Bologna (€2.60, 25 minutes).

RIMINI

pop 135,700

One of Italy's most famous seaside resorts, Rimini is not to everyone's taste. Unless you're happy to share an overdeveloped strip of sand with tens of thousands of like-minded holiday-makers, you might want to think twice about visiting in August. If, however, the thought of days on flesh-packed beaches followed by nights in some of Italy's finest clubs turns you on – welcome to Rimini.

Birthplace of director Federico Fellini, the city does have another, more recognisably Italian, face. Its small *centro storico* was battered by 400 Allied bombing raids in WWII but has since been largely restored. It won't keep you for long but it's good for a quick wander and is loaded with cool bars and eateries.

History

Originally Umbrian, then Etruscan, and then the important Roman colony of Ariminum, Rimini sits at the centre of the Riviera del Sole. The city continued to change hands throughout the Middle Ages, knowing Byzantine, Lombard and papal rule before ending up in the hands of the Malatesta family in the 13th century. At the beginning of the 16th century, Cesare Borgia added the city to his list of short-lived conquests but Rimini soon succumbed to Venice, then to the Papal States. Rimini, finally its own master, joined the Kingdom of Italy in 1860.

Orientation

Halfway between the sea and the historic centre, the train station is a useful landmark. To get from the train station to the centre, take Corso Giovanni XXIII down to Corso d'Augusto, hang a left and continue to Piazza Cavour and Piazza Tre Martiri, old Rimini's

two main squares. For the seafront, duck under the underpass on the right of Piazzale Cesare Battisti, the square in front of the station, and head straight down Viale Principe Amedeo.

Information

Bar Posto Pubblico (☎ 0541 2 98 28; Corso Giovanni XXIII 20a; per hr €3; ☎ 7.30am-midnight Mon-Sat Jun-Sep, 2-10pm Sun Oct-May) Bar with internet access.

Hospital (☎ 0541 70 51 11; Viale Luigi Settembrini 2) Located 1.2km southeast of the centre.

Police station (☎ 0541 35 31 11; Corso d'Augusto 192)

Post office (☎ 0541 43 83 11; Via Gambalunga 40)

Tourist office Parco Federico Fellini (☎ 0541 5 69 02; www.riminiturismo.it; Parco Federico Fellini 3;

☎ 8.30am-7pm May-Sep, 9.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Mon-Sat Oct-Apr); train station (☎ 0541 5 13 31; Piazzale Cesare Battisti; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun May-Sep, 8.30am-6pm Mon-Sat Oct-Apr) There are also three beachfront kiosks, open in summer only.

Sights & Activities

TEMPIO MALATESTIANO & CASTEL SISMONDO

Rimini's grandest monument, the **Tempio Malatestiano** (☎ 051 5 11 30; Via IV Novembre 35; ☎ 8.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm & 3.30-7pm Sun) is, in fact, the city's cathedral. Dedicated to St Francis, it was transformed in the 15th century to house the tomb of Isotta degli Atti, the beloved mistress of Sigismondo Malatesta. Sigismondo, a member of the ruling Malatesta clan, was something of a rogue: Pope Pius II, himself no angel, burned Sigismondo's effigy in Rome and condemned him to hell for an impressive litany of sins that included rape, murder, incest, adultery and severe oppression of the people.

Most of the church's unfinished façade is by the Florentine Leon Battista Alberti, one of the period's great architects. The side chapels are separated from the single wide nave by marble balustrades topped by tubby cherubs. The chapel nearest the altar on the south side has a fine fresco by Piero della Francesca.

A short walk to the west from the cathedral, the 15th-century **Castel Sismondo** (☎ 0541 2 91 92; Piazza Malatesta; ☎ exhibitions only), also known as the Rocca Malatestiana, is named after the notorious Sigismondo.

PIAZZA CAVOUR

The city's finest *palazzi* hug this attractive piazza. On its northern flank, **Palazzo del Municipio**, built in 1562 and reconstructed after

being razed during WWII, abuts the imposing 14th-century Gothic **Palazzo del Podestà**; neither are open to the public. On the other side of the square, Via Pescheria is the town's old fish market. The **Teatro Amintore Galli** was a 19th-century addition, appearing in 1857 in the feverish years leading to unification.

MUSEUMS

The main museum, the **Museo della Città** (☎ 0541 2 14 82; Via Tonini 1; adult/child €4/2.50; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 4.30-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 4.30-7.30pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Sep; 8.30am-12.30pm & 5-7pm Mon-Sat, 4-7pm Sun mid-Sep-mid-Jun) is worth a visit for the archaeological section on the ground floor, where finds from a nearby Roman villa are displayed alongside splendid mosaics. Upstairs is a haunting *Pietà* by Giovanni Bellini and Domenico Ghirlandai's painting of San Vincenzo Ferreri and supplicant members of the Malatesta family.

Film buffs will enjoy the Fellini memorabilia at the small **Museo Fellini** (☎ 0541 5 00 85; Via Clementini 2; admission free; ☎ 4.30-7.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-noon & 4.30-7.30pm Sat & Sun).

ROMAN REMAINS

At the southeastern end of Corso d'Augusto, the **Arco di Augusto** (Arch of Augustus) was erected in 27 BC, while at the Corso's other end, the **Ponte di Tiberio** (Tiberius' Bridge) dates to the 1st century AD. To visit the insubstantial remains of Rimini's **Roman amphitheatre** (Via Vezia 2), once one of the largest in the region, contact the **Musei Comunali** (☎ 0541 70 44 22).

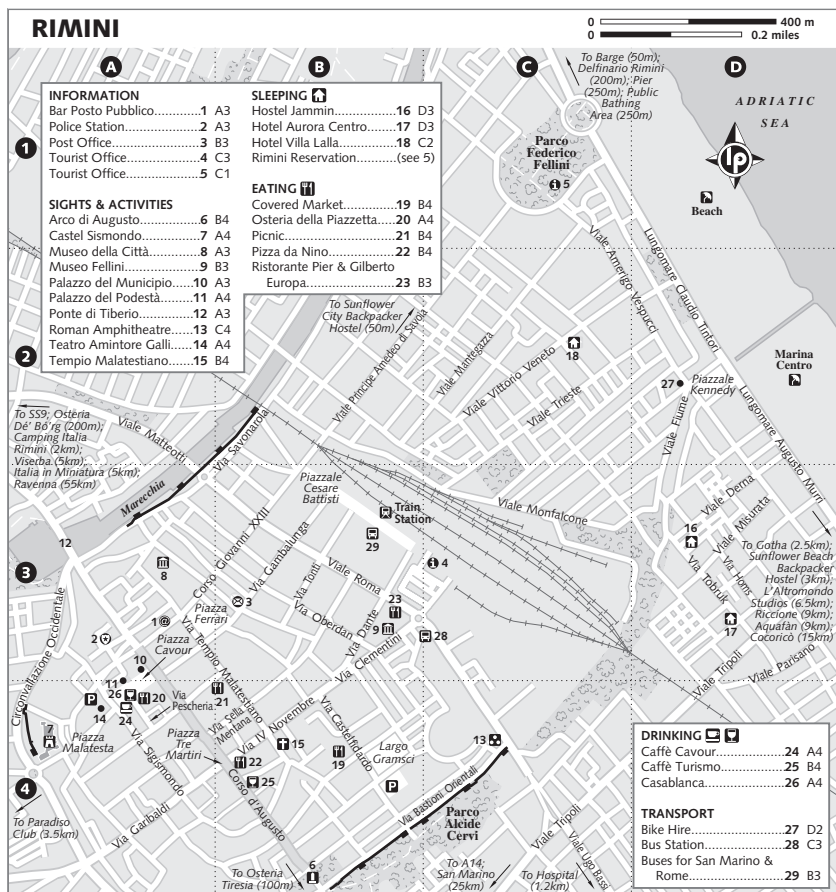
BORGO SAN GIULIANO

Just over the Ponte di Tiberio, Rimini's old fisherfolk's quarter has been freshened up and is now a colourful patchwork of cobbled lanes, trendy trattorias, wine bars and trim terraced houses.

BEACHES

Rimini's beaches heave in summer. The Rimini riviera boasts 40km of mostly sandy beaches, in some places 200m wide, yet come August you'll be pushed to find a spare millimetre.

Most beaches are connected to hotels or run by private clubs, which typically charge about €15 per day for an umbrella and two loungers. The only free sand you'll find is a tiny patch north of the city centre near the pier. Private beaches have bars and most organise activities (aerobics, beach games etc); several also offer windsurfing courses and board hire.



All of Rimini's beaches bear the coveted EU blue flag as an indication of their cleanliness, and pollution levels are monitored daily.

THEME PARKS

Love 'em or loathe 'em, Rimini's theme parks are hugely popular. The tourist office can provide a full list. Major ones are:

Italia in Miniatura (☎ 0541 73 20 04; www.italiani.miniatura.com; Via Popilia 239, Viserba 5516 km 197; adult/child €17/12; 🕒 10am-midnight Jul & Aug, 10am-6.30pm Sep-Jun) Scale models of Italy's major sights. Bus 8 from Rimini train station.

Delfinario Rimini (☎ 0541 5 02 98; Lungomare Tintori 2; adult/child €10/7; 🕒 Easter-Sep) Dolphinarium beside Rimini's public beach.

Aquafan (☎ 0541 60 30 50; Via Pistoia, Riccione;

adult/child €22/13.50; 🕒 10am-6.30pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep) At Riccione, the area's biggest water park. Bus 42, 45 or 51 from Riccione station.

Festivals & Events

In early April Rimini hosts **Paganello** (☎ 0541 74 31 87; www.paganello.com), the annual Frisbee World Cup. Once that's done, the marble-slingers move in at the end of the month for the annual **Cheecoting championship** (☎ 0541 68 00 41). Cheecoting involves highly trained athletes flicking marbles around circuits built on the beach.

On 21 June Rimini celebrates **Gradisca** with dancing, fireworks and eating – it's estimated that revellers consume some two tonnes of grilled sardines and 12,000L of Sangiovese wine in that one night.

In summer the **Rimini Jazz Festival** (☎ 0541 5 22 06; www.jazzswingrimini.com) is held beside the main Marina Centro beach area, while September's **Sagra Musicale Malatestiana** (☎ 0541 70 42 92) brings in top classical conductors and performers.

Sleeping

Ironically for a city with more than 1200 hotels, accommodation can be tricky. In July and August many places are booked out and prices are sky-high, especially as many proprietors insist on full board; in winter a lot of places simply shut up shop. If you do arrive without anywhere lined up, **Rimini Reservation** (☎ 0541 5 69 02; Parco Federico Fellini 3) will be able to help.

Camping Italia Rimini (☎ 0541 73 28 82; www.camp.ingitaliarimini.it; Via Toscanelli 112, Viserba; camp sites per adult/child/tent €10/5.50/11; ☎ mid-May–Sep) One of numerous camping grounds along the coast, this wooded place is about 2km northwest of the city centre. It has all requisite facilities and is easily reachable by bus 4 from the train station.

Sunflower City Backpacker Hostel (☎ 0541 2 51 80; Via Dardanelli 102; www.sunflowerhostel.com; dm €14–23, s €21–38, d €38–62; ☑) Run by three ex-backpackers, the Sunflower is chilled out with retro wallpaper, pool table and beds in dorms, singles and doubles. Useful details include lockers big enough for rucksacks, laundry and cooking facilities and free bike hire. The same gang runs the Sunflower Beach Backpacker Hostel at Viale Siracusa 25 (☎ 0541 37 34 32), which is open from the end of March to the end of October and has the same prices and facilities. Take bus 11 from the train station to stop 24.

Hostel Jammin (☎ 0541 39 08 00; www.hosteljammin.com; Viale Derna 22; dm €16–19, d/q €50/84; ☎ Mar–Oct; ☑) Just what a hostel should be: cheap, friendly and full of energetic travellers. The crew who run the place are a laugh and the facilities are spot on with clean, spacious rooms, a rooftop terrace, free bike hire and wi-fi. To cap it all, the beach is only a short stroll away.

Hotel Villa Lalla (☎ 0541 5 51 55; www.villalalla.com; Viale Vittorio Veneto 22; s €34–73, d €52–130; ☎ year-round; ☑) One of the best of the hotels in the leafy residential district between the beach and the train station. Its smart white rooms are fresh and cool and, in winter, its rates are a snip. From mid-June to mid-September when the restaurant's open, it's a good idea to invest in half board or full board (a mere €4 and €8, respectively). Bikes are free for guests.

Hotel Aurora Centro (☎ 0541 39 10 02; fax 0541 39 18 82; Via Tobruk 6; s/d €35/60; ☑) A homely *pensione*

with threadbare carpets and children's toys cheerfully littered around the breakfast room. You get no airs and graces here, just clean, simple rooms and a gruff but kindly welcome. The beach is a quick hop away.

Eating

For fast food, nothing beats a *piadina*, a toasted half-moon of unleavened bread with a savoury filling – Romagna's retort to the wrap.

Osteria Tiresia (☎ 0541 78 18 96; Via XX Settembre 41; meals €25; ☎ dinner Tue–Sun) It's not hard to work out why the Tiresia is often full – excellent food, fair prices and a convivial faux-rustic setting. The emphasis is on meat here, with steak featuring in dishes such as the wonderful-sounding *filetto ubriaco di sangiovese* (fillet drunk on sangiovese red wine).

Picnic (☎ 0541 2 19 16; Via Tempio Malatestiano 3; meals €26; ☎ Tue–Sun) Don't let the indifferent service put you off, because once the food's on your table you'll enjoy it. Sit out back and select from the sumptuous salad and vegetable buffet or go for one of the many seafood dishes. If you're fed up with fish, the goulash is a good winter alternative.

Osteria della Piazzetta (☎ 0541 78 39 86; Vicolo Pescheria 5; meals €30; ☎ Mon–Sat) One of several eateries in a trendy pocket just off Piazza Cavour. An informal, wood-lined place whose food is more upmarket pub grub than haute cuisine, it's good for everything from simple *piadine* to grilled sausages, fried fish and hearty pasta.

Osteria Dé'Bó'rg (☎ 0541 5 60 71; Via dei Forzieri 12; meals €35; dinner Tue–Sun) A homely *osteria* in the old fishing quarter, this place is what eating in Italy is all about. Simple, honest food made with local ingredients and served in unpretentious surroundings. Particularly good is the meat, grilled on an open fire and, on Fridays, the fish, bought at the local market.

Ristorante Pier & Gilberto Europe (☎ 0541 2 87 61; Viale Roma 51; tasting menus €35/40; ☎ Mon–Sat) Whatever you're paying here, rest assured that it's going on the food not the location. Once you've come in off the noisy road, you're in a world of silver candlesticks, cascading bouquets and seriously good food. Seafood is a speciality so play safe with *spaghetti ai frusta di mare* (spaghetti with seafood) followed by a fish grill.

There are plenty of pizza takeaways, such as **Pizza da Nino** (Via IV Novembre 9) in the town centre. For self-catering or picnic provender, load up at Rimini's **covered market** (Via Castelfiardo; ☎ 7am–7.30pm).

Drinking

Rimini is well set up with bars and cafés. There are plenty of places on the seafront and near Piazza Cavour in the centre.

Barge (☎ 0541 2 26 85; Longmire Tincture 13; ☎ Wed-Sun) A magnet for modish 20-somethings, Barge is a big nautical-theme pub on the seafront. Draft Guinness and regular DJs ensure a good crowd.

Caffè Cavour (☎ 0541 78 51 23; Piazza Cavour 13) This swish café on Rimini's main square attracts a well-to-do aperitif set on winter evenings. The coffee's good and there are lunchtime *panini*.

Caffè Turismo (☎ 0541 2 27 15; Piazza Tre Martiri 3) Not the tourist trap its name might imply but a cool bar with video projections on the mellow green walls and a young, good-looking staff.

Casablanca (☎ 0541 79 06 71; Via Pescheria 25) All chandeliers, velvet and dark corners, this decadent bar in the fashionable former fish market draws a glamorous crowd.

Entertainment

Rimini and nearby Riccione are Italy's top clubbing venues, attracting thousands of clubbers each weekend and many more in the frenetic summer months. The tourist office can advise on the 'in' venues and the clubbing bus services (see right). Admission varies but reckon on anything from €15 to €30 for a top gig at a big club.

Cocoricò (☎ 0541 60 51 83; Via Chieti 44, Riccione; ☎ 11pm-5.30am) Dance under a glass pyramid at one of Italy's most famous clubs, 15km south of town in Riccione. Underground, techno and house rule.

Gotha (☎ 0541 47 87 39; Viale Regina Margherita; ☎ 9pm-5am) An intimate lounge bar for 1000, Gotha swings to a Latin beat in winter and a commercial soundtrack in summer.

L'Altromondo Studios (☎ 0541 37 31 51; Via Flaminia 358; ☎ 11pm-5am Sat) The futuristic décor gives no hint of Altromondo's heritage – Ray Charles and James Brown have both partied here. Nowadays, the sounds are commercial and the crowd's young.

Paradiso Club (☎ 0541 75 11 32; Via Covignano 260; ☎ 11.30pm-5am) Disco never dies in paradise. One of Rimini's mega-clubs, the Paradiso is heaven for up to 2500 dolled-up, anything-goes dancers.

Getting There & Away

Ryanair flies twice daily between London Stansted and Forlì airport, 50km northwest

of Rimini. Between June and August **buses** (☎ 0541 64 69 00; www.easyromagna.com) run to the airport from the train station to coincide with flights. The 90-minute journey costs €13.

There are regular buses down the coast to Riccione (bus 11) from the *lungomare* (seafront), and from the train station to San Marino (return €6.80, 45 minutes, six to eight daily). There's a direct bus to Rome (€25, 5¼ hours) that runs daily from June to September, and on Monday and Friday from October to May.

By car, you have a choice of the A14 (south into Le Marche or northwest towards Bologna and Milan) or the toll-free but very busy SS16.

Hourly trains run down the coast to the ferry ports of Ancona (€11.50, 1¼ hours) and Bari (€39.50, six hours). Up the line, they serve Ravenna (€3, one hour, hourly) and Bologna (€11.50, 1½ hours, half-hourly).

Getting Around

AM (☎ 0541 30 05 11; www.amrimini.it in Italian) buses operate throughout the city. In summer, the Blue Line are special late-night buses with on-board music connecting the out-of-town clubs with the city centre, train station and camping grounds. They run from 2am until 6am and for €3.50 you can hop on and off at will. A seven-night pass costs €14.

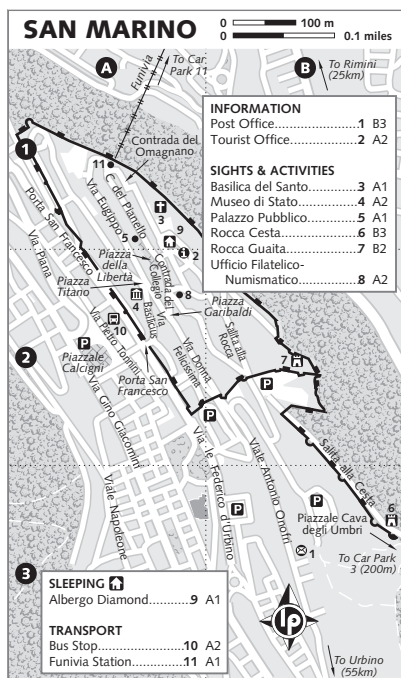
For a taxi, call ☎ 0541 5 00 20.

You can hire bikes (per hour €3) and scooters (per hour €13) from a kiosk on Piazzale Kennedy.

SAN MARINO

Perched on the top of a 657m lump of rock, the 61-sq-km Repubblica di San Marino is Europe's third-smallest state after the Vatican and Monaco. A favourite day-trip destination – in 2006, about 2.1 million visitors made the very steep climb to the historic centre – it's largely given over to tourism. Hundreds of souvenir stalls line the not-unattractive streets selling everything from samurai swords to San Marino stamps and locally minted coins, and restaurants do a brisk trade feeding the visiting hordes. However, if you catch it at a quiet time (ie during the week, preferably in winter) the old town is pleasant enough and the views are spectacular.

Several legends describe the founding of San Marino, including one about a stonemason who was given the land on top of Monte Titano by a rich Roman woman whose son he had cured.



Throughout history, it's pretty much been left to its own devices. Cesare Borgia took possession early in the 16th century, but his rule was short-lived as he died soon after. Then in 1739 one Cardinal Giulio Alberoni took over the republic, but the pope backed San Marino's independence and the cardinal was sent packing. During WWII it remained neutral and played host to 100,000 refugees until 1944, when the Allies marched into town.

ORIENTATION

The old part of San Marino, the only element of any interest, is essentially one main street. Enter via Porta San Francesco, ascend via Basilicius to Piazza Titano, climb another 50m to Piazza Garibaldi, turn left up Contrada del Collegio, go to the end of Contrada del Omagnano or parallel Contrada del Pianello – then stop short or you'll fall off the cliff. That's it. You've done the capital of this city state.

INFORMATION

Post office (☎ 0549 88 29 06; Viale Antonio Onofri 87; ☎ 8.15am–4.30pm Mon–Fri)

Tourist office (☎ 0549 88 29 14; www.visitsanmarino

.com; Contrada del Collegio; ☎ 8.30am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1.30pm & 2–6.30pm Sat & Sun)

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

There's not much to do in San Marino other than stroll the historic centre, admire the views and perhaps take in a bizarre museum or two, of which there's an ample selection. You'll find museums dedicated to weapons, torture, wax dummies and, best of all, to strange facts (the Museo della Curiosità). The archaeological artefacts and paintings at the small **Museo di Stato** (☎ 0549 88 38 35; Piazza Titano 1; admission €4.50 incl Palazzo Pubblico; ☎ 8am–8pm mid-Jun–mid-Sep, 9am–5pm mid-Sep–mid-Jun) are more mainstream, including several canvases by Guercino. The neo-Gothic **Palazzo Pubblico** (admission €4.50 incl Museo di Stato) overlooks Piazza della Libertà.

At the top of town the two fortresses, the 11th-century **Rocca Guaita** and 13th-century **Rocca Cesta** (admission to each €4.50; ☎ 8am–8pm mid-Jun–mid-Sep, 9am–5pm mid-Sep–mid-Jun) dominate the skyline, offering some superb views towards Rimini and the coast. The latter houses a small museum of old weapons.

Collectors can pick up San Marino stamps and coins at the **Ufficio Filatelico-Numismatico** (☎ 0549 88 23 70; Piazza Garibaldi 5; ☎ 8.15am–1pm Mon–Fri & 3–5pm Tue & Thu). To get your passport stamped with a San Marino visa, you'll need to fork out €2.50 at the tourist office.

SLEEPING & EATING

You don't need to overnight in San Marino to do it justice, but if you're determined to do so there are several camping grounds signposted off the main Rimini–San Marino road (SS72). In the historic centre, **Albergo Diamond** (☎/fax 0549 99 10 03; Contrada del Collegio 50; s/d €43/60) has six modest rooms above a large, busy restaurant.

Food is not one of San Marino's strong points and the best thing about some of the cafés is the views. The centre is well endowed with places offering set meals starting at around €15.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Buses run to/from Rimini (return €6.80, 45 minutes, six to eight daily), arriving at the parking station in Piazzale Calcigni, also known as the Piazzale delle Autocorriere. The SS72 leads up from Rimini.

Leave your car at one of the numerous car parks and walk up to the *centro storico*. If necessary, park at car park 11 and take the **funivia** (cable car; return €4.50; ☎ 7.50am–6.30pm) up.

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