



# Emilia-Romagna & San Marino

POP 4.43 MILLION

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## Best Places to Eat

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## Best Places to Stay

- » Prendiparte B&B (p419)
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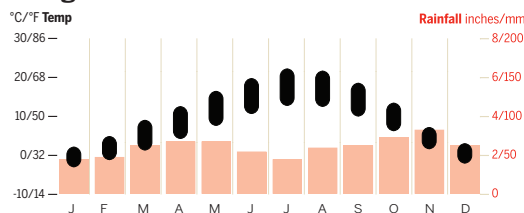
## Why Go?

The secret's in the mud. The roots of Emilia-Romagna's super-sonic economy lie not in the mechanics of its famous Ferraris, but in its exceptionally fertile soil. Since antiquity, the verdant plains of the region's Po river valley have sown enough agricultural riches to feed a nation and finance an unending production line of lavish products: luxury cars, regal *palazzi* (mansions), fine Romanesque churches, prosperous towns, a sturdy industrial infrastructure, a gigantic operatic legacy (Verdi and Pavarotti, no less), and food. Ah yes, did anyone mention the food?

You can eat like a Roman emperor here, and, if you have any appetite left, dip your toe tentatively into the places that time-poor Rome-o-philes serially miss. There's Bolshie Bologna with its *ragù* (meat and tomato sauce) and porticoes, posh Parma with its opera and cheese, Modena and its balsamic vinegar, the wealthy micro-nation of San Marino, and Ravenna with its mosaics. Come to Emilia-Romagna *ragazzi* (guys). Just don't forget the mud that made it.

## When to Go

### Bologna



**Mar-Apr** Avoid the heat on the Po plains and the crowds on Rimini's beaches.

**Jun-Aug** Summer festivals galore in Bologna, Modena, Ravenna and Rimini.

**Sep** Ideal hiking conditions in Parco Nazionale dell'Appennino Tosco-Emiliano.

## Don't Leave Without Trying

- » **Ferrara** *Cappellacci di zucca* (hat-shaped pasta stuffed with squash, herbs and nutmeg, sautéed with butter and sage)
- » **Bologna** *Tagliatelle al ragù* (pasta served with a dry meat-based sauce)
- » **Parma** *Pesto di cavallo* (raw minced horsemeat seasoned with herbs, olive oil and Parmesan)
- » **Modena** *Cotechino Modena* (fresh stuffed pork sausage served with lentils)
- » **Rimini** *Piadina* (flat bread wrap with various fillings)

### VIA EMILIA

Built by the Romans between their axis cities of Placentia (Piacenza) and Ariminum (Rimini), the ruler-straight Via Emilia quickly came to define the character of the Emilia-Romagna region, and led to the birth of its four most significant towns: Bononia (Bologna), Regium (Reggio Emilia), Mutina (Modena) and Parma. The road was completed in 187 BC following the subjugation of hostile Celtic tribes by the Romans, and ran for 260km through the Po river valley. Within decades it had opened up Italy's fertile northern hinterland to colonisation and economic expansion, and had converted the rich river plain into the empire's proverbial breadbasket – a position it still enjoys today.

The remarkable Ponte Tiberio on the Marecchia river in Rimini is one of the few original features of the Via Emilia still intact.

### EMILIA-ROMAGNA EXPANDS

In August 2009 Emilia-Romagna was officially expanded when, following a popular referendum, seven communes formerly part of Le Marche region were transferred across and merged with the province of Rimini.

## Internationally Acclaimed Natives

- » Giuseppe Verdi (composer) – born Le Roncole 1813
- » Arturo Toscanini (conductor) – born Parma 1867
- » Enzo Ferrari (car manufacturer) – born Modena 1898
- » Federico Fellini (film director) – born Rimini 1920
- » Luciano Pavarotti (opera singer) – born Modena 1935

## Know Your Romanesque

Like all Italian regions, Emilia-Romagna exhibits a wide range of architectural genres; yet it is the early-medieval style of Romanesque that defines it the best. Romanesque emerged in the late 10th century and was in vogue for about 200 years until usurped by the appearance of 'Gothic' in the early 1200s. Its defining feature was the rounded 'Roman' arch (as opposed to the pointed Gothic arch that followed), but it had a number of other recognisable trademarks, including thick walls, dramatic scale, decorative 'blind' arcades, and simple, yet symmetrical sculpture and ornamentation. Another adaptation in Italy was a free-standing ecclesial bell tower that stood apart from the main body of the church.

Pure Romanesque isn't always visible today in its original incarnation due to later additions by overzealous Gothic and Renaissance architects, but it can be thrillingly glimpsed in a trio of magnificent Emilia-Romagna cathedrals: Parma, Piacenza and Unesco-listed Modena.

## Resources

- » Official tourist site ([www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it](http://www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it))
- » Visit Emilia-Romagna ([www.visitemiliaromagna.com](http://www.visitemiliaromagna.com))
- » San Marino tourist site ([www.visitsanmarino.com](http://www.visitsanmarino.com))