



# Emilia-Romagna & San Marino

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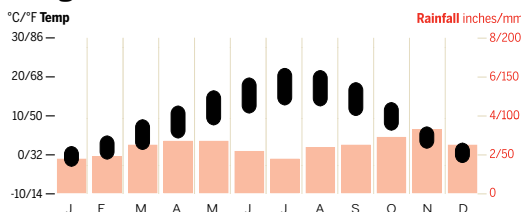
## Why Go?

Sweeping north from the Apennines to the fertile Po Valley, Emilia-Romagna boasts some of Italy's most hospitable people, some of its most productive land and some of its most soul-satisfying food. Since antiquity, the verdant Po lowlands have sown enough agricultural riches to feed a nation and finance an unending production line of luxury cars, regal *palazzi* (mansions), Romanesque churches, and a gigantic operatic legacy (Verdi and Pavarotti, no less).

You can eat like a Roman emperor here, in the birthplace of *tagliatelle al ragù*, pumpkin-filled *cappellacci* pasta, Parma prosciutto, balsamic vinegar and *parmigiano reggiano* (Parmesan). And then there's Emilia-Romagna's treasure trove of oft-neglected destinations: vibrant Bologna with its photogenic porticoes, Ravenna with its dazzling mosaics, posh Parma, Roman frontier-town-turned-beach-resort Rimini and the hilltop micro-nation of San Marino. Wherever you go, you'll be welcomed with the customary warmth of Emilia-Romagna's people.

## When to Go

### Bologna



**May** Enjoy pleasant weather on the Po plains and avoid summer crowds on Rimini's beaches.

**Jun–Aug** Summer music festivals fill the agenda from Bologna to Ravenna.

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

## EMILIA-ROMAGNA

## Bologna

POP 380,000

Fusing haughty elegance with down-to-earth grit in one beautifully colonnaded medieval grid, Bologna is a city of two intriguing halves. On one side is a hard-working, hi-tech city located in the super-rich Po valley where suave opera-goers waltz out of regal theatres and reconvene in some of the nation's finest restaurants and trattorias. On the other is a Bolshie, politically edgy city that hosts the world's oldest university and is famous for its graffiti-embellished piazzas filled with mildly inebriated students swapping Gothic fashion tips.

No small wonder Bologna has earned so many historical monikers. *La Grassa* (the fat one) celebrates a rich food legacy (*ragù* or bolognese sauce originated here). *La Dotta* (the learned one) doffs a cap to the city university founded in 1088. *La Rossa* (the red one) alludes to the ubiquity of the terracotta medieval buildings adorned with miles of porticoes, as well as the city's longstanding penchant for left-wing politics. All three names still ring true. Bologna is the kind of city where you can discuss Chomsky with a leftie newspaper-seller one minute, and eat like a king in a fine restaurant the next.

 Sights

 Piazza Maggiore & the Quadrilatero

All roads lead to pivotal Piazza Maggiore, flanked by the world's fifth-largest basilica and some impressive Renaissance *palazzi*.

 Basilica di San Petronio

CHURCH

(Piazza Maggiore; ☎ 7.45am-2pm & 3-6.30pm) Bologna's hulking Gothic basilica is the world's fifth-largest church, measuring 132m by 66m by 47m. Work began on it in 1390, but it was never finished and today its main facade still remains incomplete. Inside, look out for the huge sundial that stretches 67.7m down the eastern aisle. Designed in 1656 by Gian Cassini and Domenico Guglielmi, the sundial was instrumental in discovering the anomalies of the Julian calendar and led to the creation of the leap year. Original plans called for the basilica to be larger than Rome's St Peter's, but in 1561 Pope Pius

IV blocked construction by commissioning a new university on the basilica's eastern flank. If you walk along Via dell'Archiginnasio you can still see semi-constructed apses poking out oddly.

## Palazzo Comunale

GALLERY

(Piazza Maggiore) **FREE** The palace that forms the western flank of Piazza Maggiore has been home to the 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. On the 2nd floor you'll find the *palazzo's* **Collezioni Comunali d'Arte** (☎ 051 219 36 31; adult/reduced €5/3; ☀ 9am-6.30pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6.30pm Sat & Sun) with its interesting collection of 13th- to 19th-century paintings, sculpture and furniture. 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 1st floor. Outside the *palazzo* are photos of hundreds of partisans killed in the resistance to German occupation, many on this very spot.

## Fontana del Nettuno

FOUNTAIN

(Neptune's Fountain; Piazza del Nettuno) Adjacent to Piazza Maggiore, Piazza del Nettuno owes its name to this explicit 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.

## Palazzo del Re Enzo

PALACE

(Piazza del Nettuno) This 13th-century palace 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** (Piazza Maggiore 1) was the original residence of Bologna's chief magistrate. Beneath the

 **MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EURO**

If you're visiting multiple sights, a **Bologna Welcome Card** ([www.bologna.welcome.com/en/richiedicard](http://www.bologna.welcome.com/en/richiedicard); 48hr card €20) may save you money. It offers free museum admissions and public transport (including on the BLQ airport shuttle bus) for a 48-hour period.