



FROM FAR LEFT : Take a masterclass in gelato; the rooftops of Bologna; learn to make pasta



# A taste of Italy

Dramatic scenery, bustling medieval towns and fabulous food – indulge your senses in Emilia Romagna

**J**ust over the hills from Tuscany hides one of Italy's best kept secrets. Still untouched by mass tourism but popular with Italian holidaymakers, it's the perfect place to find a slice of *la dolce vita*. Bologna is at the heart of Emilia Romagna, and just a two-hour flight from UK airports. A beautiful city of porticoed streets, Romanesque cathedrals and medieval towers, you'll find just wandering around and stumbling upon its busy piazzas makes for a wonderful break. If you're looking to get away from it all, you'll love the city's relaxed atmosphere but it also has lots to offer if you want to do more than enjoy lazy lunches and long siestas.

Even if you are staying just for a few days, make the half-hour trip to Modena, famous for its bustling food markets, pretty piazzas and beautiful architecture, and you can combine cooking and culture in one leisurely trip.

### BOOK IT

A double room with breakfast at the Art Hotel Novecento, Bologna, starts from €120 per night ([bolognarhotels.it](http://bolognarhotels.it)). For more information on Emilia Romagna, visit [emiliaromagnaturismo.it/en](http://emiliaromagnaturismo.it/en). British Airways and easyJet fly to Bologna from Gatwick; Ryanair flies from Stansted, Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh and Dublin.

### COOK AND EAT

#### ★ Cookery classes

Arguably the gastronomic capital of Italy, Bologna is home to Parmigiano Reggiano, balsamic vinegar, tortellini, prosciutto di Parma and much more. It stands to reason that it's a great place to brush up on your cookery skills. Try your hand at rolling fresh pasta or cooking up a traditional ragu sauce at cookery school Il Salotto di Penelope. English-speaking chefs will teach you new techniques and authentic Italian dishes, on either a half- or full-day course. From €80 per person for a half day, includes lunch or dinner ([ilsalottodipenelope.it](http://ilsalottodipenelope.it))

#### ★ Balsamic vinegar tasting

Enjoy a day in the historic balsamic centre of Modena. Foodies will love a tour and a tasting at a traditional balsamic vinegar house, such as the Leonardi farmhouse ([acetaialeonardi.it](http://acetaialeonardi.it)). With an English-speaking guide see first-hand how the delicious condiment is made and aged, then sample it straight from the barrels. Afterwards, don't miss a wander in Modena's winding cobbled streets and

lively piazzas. The spectacular Pavarotti theatre, a 19th-century opera house, is also a highlight.

#### ★ Fabulous food markets

Soak up the atmosphere and try regional specialities at one of the many bustling food markets. The daily Mercato Albinelli in Modena is the perfect setting to take in Italian culture and taste the best local produce, Parmigiano-Reggiano, prosciutto di Parma and balsamic vinegar ([mercatoalbinelli.it](http://mercatoalbinelli.it)). On Saturdays, the vibrant farmers' market in Bologna, Mercato della Terra, is well worth a stroll. Fresh fruit and vegetables, piles of cheese and fresh fish will be sure to whet your appetite ([mercatoadellaterra.it](http://mercatoadellaterra.it)).

#### ★ The best gelato

A scoop of gelato is a must on any trip to Italy. For lovers of ice cream a trip to the Gelato Museum in Bologna should be top of your itinerary. Discover the roots and history of gelato, taste an assortment of tantalising flavours and even learn how to make your own at The Gelato Masterclass. Costing €45 for 3hr 30min, it must be booked in advance ([gelatomuseum.com](http://gelatomuseum.com)).