

# Panoramic wheels

Provincia di Ferrara



Cycle routes  
with an Este flavour



Ferrara  
terra e acqua



## Panoramic wheels

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‘**Panoramic wheels**’ is a guide for cycle tourism enthusiasts. It features a number of routes (best undertaken between April and October) grouped into 3 sections.

### TOWARDS FERRARA

Our innovation here is information on **long-distance routes**, from elsewhere in Emilia Romagna or neighbouring regions, **that converge on Ferrara** along scenic cycle routes like the famous *Ciclopista del Sole* that comes down from the Brennero pass.

### AROUND FERRARA

Routes within the province itself: Ferrara Province is criss-crossed by an impressive **network of interconnected cycle tourism routes**, unwinding between town and countryside, nature reserves and castles, watercourses and lagoons, on safe roads or cycle-only paths. The most famous is the ‘Destro Po’, part of the Eurovelo project: it is the central part of Paneuropean route No.8 from Athens to Cadiz and runs along the right-hand bank of the River Po.

### IN FERRARA

The third section is given over to **trails around Ferrara’s history, art and architecture**, getting around in the “cycling city” without fuss, getting to know the beauties of the Este’s capital, like its green walls, Este castle, mediaeval city and cathedral, and the Renaissance city centred on the Palazzo dei Diamanti.





This guide is supported by documents and technical information downloadable from the official tourism portal of the province, [www.ferrara.info](http://www.ferrara.info), where you will find a whole section on cycle tourism. From there, for every route in this guide, you can download gratis the **GPS routing, road book, Google Earth coordinates**, and other necessary information to study the route beforehand, and to consult en route.

## How to use this guide

An information panel indicates the length of the route, important points to note, train+bike tickets available, and the rest of the essential information, as well as a plan of the route and a text describing it. If you need information on accommodation or bike hire, consult the tourist information office..

## Key

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| Arrival & departure points              | Railway stations           |
| Route                                   | Accommodation              |
| Diversions and variations               | Tourist Information Office |
| Direction of travel                     | Information                |
| Routes into the province of Ferrara     | Diversion                  |
| Routes within the province of Ferrara   | Rest area, refreshments    |
| Junctions of routes into the province   | Drinking fountain          |
| Junctions of routes within the province | Ferry                      |
|   | Note especially            |

**Published by:**  
Province of Ferrara

**Text, editorial coordination:**  
Tourist Information Office  
Castello Estense, Ferrara

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Antea s.r.l., Photo Archive of the Province of Ferrara

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**Graphics, maps, route surveys, technical information:**  
Noemastudio, Ferrara

**Printed by:**  
Italia Tipolitografia  
Printed on environment-friendly paper

**This guide went to press:**  
01.03.2010

Thanks to FIAB- Ferrara Friends of the Bicycle for their collaboration.



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# Towards Ferrara

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From Bolzano to Ferrara  
Length 314,690 km
- 2 Artistic journeys**  
From Padova to Ferrara  
Length 105,580 km
- 3 Biking in the great delta**  
From Venice to Ferrara  
Length 216,550 km
- 4 Suspended between land and water**  
From Ravenna to Ferrara  
Length 126,610 km
- 5 The heart of Emilia**  
From Bologna to Ferrara  
Length 73,570 km
- 6 The two capitals of the Dukedom**  
From Modena to Ferrara  
Length 84,520 km



# THE ALPS AND THE PLAIN

## From Bolzano to Ferrara



Bolzano, Piazza Walther

A voyage of discovery: natural and artistic panoramas of Italy in all their riches and variety. This route touches on four regions: Trentino Alto Adige, Veneto, Lombardia and Emilia Romagna; from Bolzano to Ferrara, along part of the Ciclopista del Sole long distance cycle route. The route descends from the enchanted basin in which **Bolzano** is immersed among vineyards and woodlands, at the heart of the Dolomite region of Alto Adige; it drops into **Trento** passing through mediaeval villages, skirts along Lake Garda, follows the river Mincio, then, after visiting **Mantova**, joins the Po to arrive in **Ferrara**, the city of the cycle.



### 1 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Bolzano, Piazza Walther

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 314,690 km

**Difficulty level:** the route is mainly cycle path, difficult only because of its length and for a little climb just before Affi.

#### Railways

**Brennero/Bologna - Suzzara/Ferrara**

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)

**NB.** We suggest splitting the route into 3 stages:

Bolzano - Rovereto, Rovereto - Mantova, Mantova - Ferrara.

#### i

**Bolzano-Bozen:**

Piazza Walther, 8  
tel. 0471 307000  
[www.bolzano-bozen.it](http://www.bolzano-bozen.it)

**Trento:** Via Mancini, 2

tel. 0461 216000 • [www.ap.trento.it](http://www.ap.trento.it)

**Rovereto:** Corso Rosmini, 6

tel. 0464 430363 • [www.visitrovereto.it](http://www.visitrovereto.it)

**Peschiera del Garda:** Piazzale Betteloni, 15

tel. 045 7551673 • [www.tourism.verona.it](http://www.tourism.verona.it)

**Mantova:** Piazza Mantegna, 6

tel. 0376 432432 • [www.turismo.mantova.it](http://www.turismo.mantova.it)

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense

tel. 0532 299303 • [www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)



## FURTHER INFORMATION

**Bolzano** is the finest route to the foot of the Dolomite peaks.

In art and architecture, as in language, the characteristics of German country coexist with the Italian; among its many major attractions is the archaeological museum which is home to Ötzi, the mummified body from 3500-3300 BC discovered in the Similaun glacier.

**Trento** is the capital of the Trentino and has a strong renaissance flavour in its art and architecture. Historically at the meeting point of Latin civilisation with the German language, it maintains a lively cultural tradition: it has notable museums for archaeology, mediaeval art, the natural sciences, and its own history of Irredentism.

**Mantova** is the city of the Gonzagas: they took over the governance of the city in 1328 and held it securely, ruling over a long period of economic, political and artistic splendour. Don't miss strolling among its squares, or visiting the cathedral and the splendid Palazzo Ducale and Palazzo Te complexes.

The 'Ciclopista del Sole' between Bolzano and Trento



## BOLZANO TO ROVERETO

km 90,180

This first part of the BOLZANO-FERRARA route follows the 'Ciclopista del Sole' which runs for the most part along gentle gradients down the valleys of the Isarco and the Adige.

Our point of departure in **Bolzano** is Piazza Walther, dominated by the memorial to Walther von der Vogelweide, one of the greatest poet-troubadours of the German middle ages. Out of the old centre, the cycle track follows an embankment between the two rivers, the Adige to the right and the Isarco to the left - these join later downstream.

The route passes through **Ora** and **Egna**, and then **Salorno**, before the border with the province of Trento. After a few kilometres the valley grows wider and opens out into the Rotaliana plain, with the towns of **San Michele all'Adige**, **Mezzocorona**, and **Mezzolombardo**, famous for their wine, including the outstanding Teroldego.

Arrival in **Trento**.

After Trento, sticking to the left of the Adige, we pass through Besenello, and then **Nomi** - where there is a specialist cycle travel resource called the 'Bicigrill' - arriving in the outskirts of **Rovereto**. A little town of the Vallagarina, this is known for its great Peace Bell and for the MART modern art museum, with its prestigious permanent collection of 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian art.

## ROVERETO TO MANTOVA

km 117,330

From **Rovereto** we stay on the cycle track alongside the Adige, eventually crossing it at the Diga di Mori dam. After Chizzola, the track is high up on the river bank crossing the vineyards of the lower Vallagarina, as far as Pilcante. Near **Borghetto all'Adige** the Valle dell'Adige cyclepath finishes, and the route runs between Monte Baldo and the river on the left; important landmarks are Belluno Veronese, then Rivalta and Peri. At Zuane is the start of a good climb, necessary to pass from the altitude of the Adige to Lago di Garda across the Caprino-Costermano-Affi plateau.

After Affi and Lazise, with its Gardaland amusement park, we get to the walled town of **Peschiera del Garda**.



### Lake Garda

The variety of countryside and historical stratification are truly breathtaking; olive trees, perhaps brought here by the Etruscans, cypresses from Venetian times, citrus trees for which the Franciscans built winter greenhouses, vines, stark fortresses overhanging its fjords, villages, ancient walls, churches, and houses on the banks to which the centuries have given the distinct flavours of their respective origins, Venetian on one bank, Lombard on the other.

From the fortress of Peschiera, we leave Lago di Garda, along the river Mincio. The Mantova-Peschiera cycle/pedestrian track, easy and well-known among cyclists, follows the river as far as **Valeggio sul Mincio** and its romantic **Borghetto**. We reach **Mantova** across the area around the lakes, the Periurban Park.

## MANTOVA TO FERRARA

km 107,180

It's impossible to list the thousand threads that link these two Renaissance courts, Mantova and Ferrara: historic links from alliances and marriages, but above all artistic links so close that you can easily claim that a visit to one complements a visit to the other. Both are listed as World Heritage Cities by UNESCO, and are both cities on the water, linked to a river, the Mincio for Mantova and the Po for Ferrara.

On leaving **Mantova** we aim for Bagnolo San Vito where we meet the river Po: we climb up onto its embankment, which here is the Sinistra Po cycle route, but then leave it again for a while to head towards **Governolo**. There we come again upon the river Mincio, which flows into the Po here, and continue on the left bank of the Po as far as **Ostiglia**.

At Ostiglia we cross the Po by the iron bridge and arrive at **Revere**, where we continue along the right-hand side of the Po on the Destra Po cycle track. The province of Mantova ends with Borgofranco sul Po, Carbonara di Po, Sermide and Felonica; we enter the province of Ferrara at **Stellata** di Bondeno. Here the cycle track on the riverbank officially becomes the "Destra Po" and passes the beautiful Rocca Possente castle; from Stellata, crossing over the river Panaro we arrive in **Bondeno** where we turn onto the Burana cycle/pedestrian route as far as Ferrara (see Routes around Ferrara n° 2, p.38).

Stellata di Bondeno, the Rocca Possente

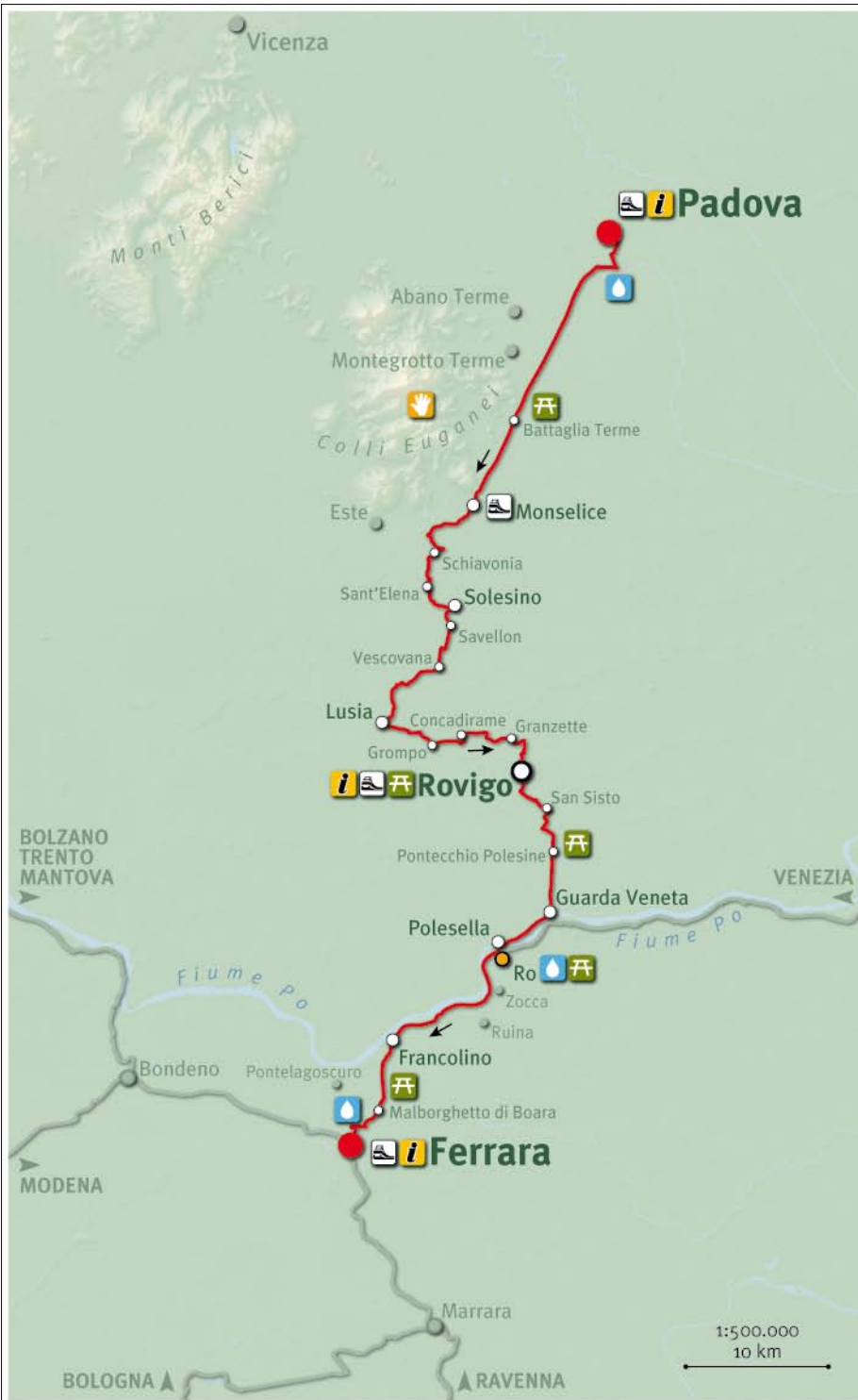


## ARTISTIC JOURNEYS From Padova to Ferrara



Padova, Piazza delle Erbe

A most agreeable and convenient journey from the Veneto to Emilia Romagna, joining two mediaeval centres of great importance: Ferrara's still splendidly intact and wedded to the Renaissance masterpiece of the Addizione Erculeae; Padova's right in the middle of the city: both of them notable artistic destinations. After admiring the beauties of the province of **Padova** at every turn of the pedals, it reaches **Rovigo**, once part of the Este's domain, which shares with **Ferrara** the natural boundary of the river Po.



### 2 GPS + ROAD BOOK **Technical notes**

**Depart:** Padova, Ufficio IAT - Via C. Pedrocchi

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 105,580 km

**Difficulty level:**

flat route along cycle paths and minor roads.

First section on gravel path.

 **Railways**

**Bologna/Venezia**

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

 **i**

**Padova:** Galleria Pedrocchi

tel. 049 8767927

[www.turismopadova.it](http://www.turismopadova.it)

**Rovigo:** Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, 20

tel. 0425 386290 • [www.provincia.rovigo.it/turismo](http://www.provincia.rovigo.it/turismo)

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense

tel. 0532 299303 • [www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**NB.**

A long cycle-pedestrian path runs along the canals in the Padova region as far as Monselice, far

from the traffic of the main road.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

**Padova** is one of the most lively and dynamic cities in the Veneto region, economically and culturally. Because of its position and its waterways it has been inhabited since antiquity, including the Roman period. Its elegant city centre is rich in splendid examples of mediaeval, renaissance and modern architecture. Among the symbols of the city are great open squares, the *piazze delle Erbe*, dei Frutti, dei Signori and the Prato della Valle; the Scrovegni chapel with its outstanding frescoes by Giotto; and the Basilica of St. Anthony, a jewel box of art and devotion.

**Rovigo** is the smallest province of the Veneto, in the heart of the Padana plain; it began life as an Episcopal fiefdom, its urban structure showing evidence of its high mediaeval history. The great civil and religious buildings of the city centre bear the impression of the Serene Republic, Venice, which was dominant here from the XV-XVIII centuries. Worth seeing are: Palazzo del Municipio, Palazzo dell'Accademia dei Concordi, the cathedral and the church of the Beata Vergine del Soccorso.



*Padova, cycle/pedestrian path on the Canale Scaricatore*

Our departure point in **Padova** is right in the centre, near the famous Caffè Pedrocchi. We pass through Piazza delle Erbe, and then in front of the Basilica of St. Anthony, on the urban cycle track. Out of the centre we hit the Canale Scaricatore. This canal, which heads west, was built by the Austrian governors in 1830 and takes most of the water of the River Bacchiglione out of the city. A cycle/pedestrian path runs long the right-hand bank, and crosses the canal on an iron bridge, carrying on to the right to the Canale della Battaglia, an old waterworks canal built 8 metres above the level of the plain. The path heads south, the residential areas of Padova quickly ceding to cultivated fields where old farms alternate with Venetian villas. These

*Battaglia Terme, Catajo Castle*



begin with Villa Molin, the masterpiece of Vincenzo Scamozzi. At **Battaglia Terme** you should stop and look at Catajo castle, an impressive residence which owes its fortifications to one of its owners, Pio Enea degli Obizzi, inventor of the siege cannons known as 'obice', otherwise 'howitzer'. Just outside the village of Battaglia Terme in an almost theatrical position is Villa Selvatico-Sartori, and shortly afterwards Villa Emo, with a typical Italian style garden. The cycle track ends at **Monselice**.



### The Euganean Hills

These gentle rolling hills constitute one of the principal natural jewels of the Padova area with their incomparable botanic riches and great heritage of historic monuments. The climate, particularly mild, encourages the cultivation of olives and vines, which leads to the production of 13 DOC wines.

Renowned throughout the world for its mud bath therapy, the Terme Euganee spa has its two main centres in Abano and Montegrotto, immersed amid the green hills.

Passing through Monselice on the road, and then on to Schiavonia, Sant'Elena, Granze, and Vescovana, we reach the river Adige, which we cross heading for **Lusia** and its tower. From Lusia we keep to minor roads, passing through Granzette and turning south.

### Arrival at Rovigo.

Rovigo was historically linked to the Este family, who presumably encouraged the development of its fortifications, the keep of the castle, nowadays known as Torre Donà, is one of the highest mediaeval towers in Italy.

In 1194 Azzo VI d'Este took possession of Rovigo with the title of Count, and from that point on, except for a period under Padova and another under Venice, the city was an Este possession until becoming part of the republic of Venice in 1482.

From Rovigo we head towards **Borsea** and, crossing the Canal Bianco, at **Pontecchio Polesine** we turn onto a cycle path that takes us to **Guarda Veneta**. The origin of this community, like that of Guarda Ferrarese facing it across the river, goes back to the period just after the flooding of the Po at Ficarolo in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when the work of constructing embankments brought many families of labourers here. The Po is now in front of us; we climb up onto its embankment, also called the Sinistra Po, as far as **Polesella**. This too is linked to the history of Ferrara, it was at the centre of an important battle between the Venetians and the Este dukes, who had built fortifications here at the river.

At Polesella, passing the elegant Villa Morosini, we cross the Po by the bridge (not for cycling) and arrive in Ferrarese territory at **Ro**. To get to Ferrara from here, take the Destra Po cycle-tourism route in the reverse direction via Francolino.

*Polesella, Villa Morosini*





## BIKING IN THE GREAT DELTA From Venice to Ferrara



Laguna di Venezia

**Venice**, one of the greatest masterpieces that humankind has ever produced, the floating city, mysterious, steeped in history, unforgettably fascinating - along with the Venice lagoon it is the tourist destination par excellence. This journey takes Venice's public transport network as far as **Chioggia**, crosses the rivers Brenta and Adige, and unwinds southwards through the landscape created by the River Po in its slow progress towards the Adriatic, which gave life to one of the broadest wetland zones of the European Mediterranean: The Po Delta, an ideal roaming ground for the naturalist, the environmentalist and the gourmet. It arrives in **Ferrara** along the 'Destra Po' route. Two cities, both friends and enemies, joined by culture and centuries of history in which wars alternated with periods of warm friendship when the dukes of Ferrara were welcomed in San Marco in honour and brotherhood.



### 3 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Venezia

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 216,550 km (from Chioggia 196,550 km)

**Difficulty level:**

suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along minor roads.

**Railways**

**Venezia/Adria • Adria/Chioggia**

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

**NB.** You can reach Chioggia from Venice either by direct ferry, or with the *vaporetti* via Lido di Venezia and Pellestrina.

**APT Venezia:**

Castello 5050

tel. 041 5298711

[www.turismovenezia.it](http://www.turismovenezia.it)

**APT Chioggia:** Lungomare Adriatico, 101

(Sottomarina) • tel. 041 401068

[www.chioggiatourism.it](http://www.chioggiatourism.it)

**Parco Regionale Veneto del Delta del Po:**

tel. 0426 372202 • [www.parcodeltapo.org](http://www.parcodeltapo.org)

**Parco Delta del Po Emilia-Romagna:**

tel. 0533 314003 • [www.parcodeltapo.it](http://www.parcodeltapo.it)

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense

tel. 0532 299303 • [www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)



## VENICE AND ITS LAGOON

Venice is an unending source of marvels and admiration just because of the way it is: the city is supported minimally on millions of wooden posts driven into the sand, crossed by dozens of canals thronged with boats and gondolas, woven together by narrow alleys, the *calli*, which are punctuated by opening into marvellous *piazze*, the *campi*, over whose paving stones moved grand personages and the most splendid treasures of history.

Venice's lagoon stands for the dogged defence of *La Serenissima* against the sea wearing away the shoreline, and against the rivers silting up the open water. The lagoon extends from north to south in the shape of a bow, from the mouth of the Sile to the mouth of the Brenta, shielded by the islands of the Lido and Pellestrina.

The route leaves from **Venice** itself, from where we head for **Chioggia**, either by the direct Venice-Chioggia boat or the *vaporetti* (boat buses) which would allow you to stop and cycle along the Lido and Pellestrina (bikes can be carried). Chioggia, separated from the sea by the island of Sottomarina, is certainly worth a visit for its urban fabric, the vertical lines of *piazze* and canals intersecting with the horizontal lines of the streets; their order and near perfect regularity making a classic fishbone shape.

Across the river Brenta by the bridge from Chioggia is **Ca' Lino**. To get to the Po Delta area we must first cross another important river, the Adige, whose Delta marks the end of the Venice lagoon. The Adige estuary is fairly wild still: on one side there is the beach resort of Rosolina Mare, a recently deposited sandy area including Porto Caleri and the island of Albarella (not on our itinerary). On the other side and inland is Rosolina itself, and near that **Porto Levante**. The Po di

Chioggia



Sacca degli Scardovari

Levante, at the extreme north of the Delta, is not an active branch of the river, but is kept alive by a canal.

**Marina di Porto Levante** is an ideal departure point from which to discover the splendid islands of the Venetian lagoon or as far as the Croatian coast; also a good place to try your hand at the absorbing sport of deep sea fishing.

From Porto Levante we head towards **Ca' Venier**: everywhere you look there are strong images, reflective or poetic, but always inspiring and of great evocative power; the bicycle is the best transport to appreciate these nuances of nature. Ca' Venier is an island enclosed by the Po di Venezia to the south, and by the Po di Maistra to the west and north; cross the river and head towards **Ca' Mello**, a reclaimed area of 40 hectares, and onto the **Sacca degli Scardovari** which we follow round as far as Santa Giulia.

 The landscape of the Sacca degli Scardovari changes colour by the seasons, through the various shades of grey and blue; on one side the sea water, on the other fresh water from canals, ponds and flooded fields. In amongst this are buildings used by fisher-folk, and beside them anchorages for the boats they call "vongolare" - the Sacca is today a centre for the cultivation of clams and mussels, and is one of the biggest European centres for the production of mussels.

At **Santa Giulia**, an important stop for anyone visiting the Po Delta, we cross the Po di Gnocca (otherwise known as Po della Donzella) by a pontoon bridge, and head for Gorino Veneto or Gorino Sullam, named after a Jewish family who used to farm there. At **Gorino Veneto** another pontoon bridge takes us across the Po di Goro and into Ferrara province at **Gorino Ferrarese**. At this point the route turns onto the Destra Po Cycle-tourism path, to be followed back to our final destination, **Ferrara**. (see Routes around Ferrara **No.1**, p.34).

## SUSPENDED BETWEEN LAND AND WATER From Ravenna to Ferrara



Ravenna, Mausoleo di Teodorico

**Ravenna** and **Ferrara** are brought together in one pleasing journey. These are two centres of art with UNESCO World Heritage recognition, rich in unmissable details: exhibitions, museums, monuments, churches; even those who prefer their views to be natural will find it fascinating to pedal through the pinewoods of Ravenna and the seaside, through the highlights of the Po Delta Park, along the embankments of the rivers Lamone and Reno, skirting alongside the watery zones like Pialassa della Baiona or the lagoons of Comacchio and Argenta. This is an invitation to a voyage through classic flavours like piadina romagnola, crescioni, passatelli in brodo, salama da sugo, and tastes from the waters - fish of the sea and eels of the lagoons - an invitation to discover a cuisine that is both healthy and tasty.



### 4 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Ravenna, Parco Logg. Lombardesca

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 126,610 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along minor roads with little traffic. Some long stretches on dirt track.

#### Railways Ravenna/Ferrara

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)



**Ravenna:** Via Salara, 8  
tel. 0544 35755  
[www.turismo.ravenna.it](http://www.turismo.ravenna.it)

**Parco Delta del Po Emilia Romagna:**  
tel. 0533 314003 • [www.parcodeltapo.it](http://www.parcodeltapo.it)

**Comacchio:** Via Mazzini, 4 • tel. 0533 314154

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303  
[www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**NB.** The Po Delta Park is situated between the provinces of Ravenna and Ferrara, and has many visitor trails.



Ravenna has Unesco World Heritage status for its Early Christian monuments

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**Ravenna** is a magical city of culture and of the sea, with monuments included on the UNESCO world heritage list. About 1500 years ago Ravenna was three times a capital city, richly adorned by Galla Placidia, Teodoric, Teodora and Justinian, with works of art and treasures that have withstood the millennia; the atmosphere of its historic buildings, the golden light in the basilicas and in the workshops of the mosaic artists, the reflection of its bell-towers along the waters of the canal port, all make Ravenna an unforgettable city in touch with all its souls: the Gothic, Byzantine, Mediaeval, Venetian, modern and contemporary.

**Must-sees:** Mausoleum of Teodoric, churches of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo and S. Vitale, Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Tomb of Dante.

## A STRONG LINK

Ravenna and Ferrara are linked by strong historic ties and common traits; but, divided by a struggle between two bishops, the cities had different destinies: Ferrara, capital of a feudal state, Ravenna, ancient imperial capital. But history finished up bringing them back together under the domination of Rome and both were enriched by innumerable churches and convents. Ravenna, like Ferrara, is also a city of the sea with well-equipped beaches, it also boasts a wide green area which matches with Ferrarese territory: the **Po Delta Park** is a joint project between the two provinces, and offers various excursions among protected wetlands, reserves, freshwater and sea-water lagoons, woodlands, and salt pans.



*The Ravenna - Punta Marina Terme cycle path*

After a visit to the centre of **Ravenna**, find yourself near the M.A.R. or the Loggetta Lombardesca (which houses temporary exhibitions), and leave the city to the east and towards the sea, over a good stretch of cycle path to **Punta Marina Terme**, a beach resort in among the pinewoods with a spa facility right on the beach. The route crosses the shady area of the pinewoods with a convenient track for cycles.

After Punta Marina Terme comes **Marina di Ravenna** with its little port to the south of the canal port, which we cross by the ferry boat at the Dalmatian Quay (Molo Dalmazia). The ferry reaches land in **Porto Corsini** on via Molo San Filippo. From there we proceed along the cycle track at the edge of the pine woods all the way to **Marina Romea**. Behind this beach resort, bordered by the San Vitale pinewoods to the west, is the Pialassa della Baiona, a extensive lagoon which gets fresh water from the canal and the river Lamone, and salt water from the sea.

We reach the mouth of the Lamone and cross it by the bridge, the cycle path goes on to the hamlet of **Casalborsetti**. Stay on the road as far as the embankment of the River Reno, crossed here on the SS 309 Romea main road (be careful on the bridge), and enter the province of Ferrara.

*Proceed with care.*

Over the Romea bridge we continue along the opposite embankment of the Reno.

The journey continues to offer lots of interest especially from nature: continue along Via Argine Sinistro Reno, between the river, to the left, and there is a splendid view over the lagoon to the right. Valle Furlana is the southernmost part of the famous Comacchio lagoons, between Sant'Alberto and the Romea man road, a sanctuary for birdwatching with numerous species. After the Stazi-one Oasi di Volta Scirocco there is the **Oasi di Boscoforte**, a splendid sand bar which reaches out into the waters of the famous Comacchio lagoons.

Stay on the embankment as far as Prato Pozzo, after which leave the Reno for a short while, then back onto it as far as Madonna del Bosco.

Here we turn right for Anita, then follow the panoramic Argine Agosta, along Via Valle Umana.

## Comacchio and its lagoons

Many-faceted Comacchio is known not only for its architectural centre but also for the extensive lagoon system that has become a historical and natural reserve that can be viewed from trails on embankments and canals, on foot, by bike or by motorboat. A paradise for birdwatchers, its fishermen's buildings have been conserved and can be visited, where once the locals fished for eels.

This route leads to **Argenta** across the lands of the Bonifica del Mantello land reclamation, and from there to **Ferrara**: at first we use the Argenta - Comacchio route (n° 9), then the one from Ferrara to Argenta (n° 4), both of which are to be taken in reverse order.

*The Comacchio Lagoons*





## THE HEART OF EMILIA From Bologna to Ferrara



Bologna, Fontana del Nettuno

**Bologna**, the city of a thousand porticos, ancient and modern. **Ferrara**, the Renaissance city, whose long broad streets run to meet the visitor arriving from the green enclosure of its walls. Although different, the two cities of the plains have been closely linked over the centuries by the university, their painting, their food and now also by a journey that links the capital of Emilia-Romagna to Ferrara. It runs from the riverside gardens of Lungo Navile dal Parco di Villa Angeletti all the way to the suspension bridge at Corticella, then across a classic agricultural landscape to Ferrara.

### 5 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Bologna, Piazza del Nettuno

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 73,570 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route with a long first stretch on dirt track along the Navile.

#### Railways

##### **Bologna/Venezia**

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

#### i

**Bologna:** Piazza Maggiore

tel. 051 239660/251947

[iat.comune.bologna.it](http://iat.comune.bologna.it)

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense

tel. 0532 299303 • [www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

#### **NB.**

**Bologna:** Basilica di San Petronio, Palazzo D'Accursio, Museo Morandi, Sala Borsa, Museo Civico Archeologico, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Due Torri.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

### BOLOGNA

Main town of Emilia-Romagna and geographically at the centre of the region, internationally recognised as a city of art and culture; a city of mediaeval buildings but with an atmosphere more of the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> century, with its red brick; it is the city of a thousand porticoes, old and new, sheltering both shops and the visitors who follow this network between the major monuments. Heart of the city is Piazza Maggiore, where on one side is the majestic Basilica of San Petronio with its stairway, while right in front of you the bar tables are inviting you to pause a moment.

**Bologna and Ferrara** are both home to ancient universities: Ferrara's was founded in 1391 with the same privileges as Bologna, which is the oldest university in the world. Bologna university is said to go back to 1088, according to a committee of historians chaired by Giosuè Carducci. Over the centuries the two universities have been beacons of culture drawing eager students from all over Europe. Both cities were also centres for great schools of painting and have exchanged artists and artworks over the centuries. Between the two cities runs a journey of many colours which will fascinate the cognoscenti and enthuse the general visitor.

From Piazza del Nettuno, cross Via Indipendenza (one of the city's main arteries) to exit from Porta Galliera with the railway station behind you. Here there is the beautiful

Villa Angeletti Park spreading along the right-hand bank of the **Navile** canal and notable for well-designed cycle paths, wide green spaces, wooded areas and children's play areas.

Bologna, Villa Angeletti Park



Bologna, Sostegno Battiferro lock

The Navile is evidence of a man-made water system that for centuries influenced the townscape and the economic development of Bologna. In the Mediaeval period it connected Bologna with the Po di Primaro and the sea. Today it is no longer navigable and is used for irrigation, but along its route there are the fascinating old locks that once regulated the flow of the waters.

Following the Navile we pass the Sostegno Battiferro and the Sostegno di Corticella before arriving in **Corticella**. Leaving the Navile we take the SP di Galliera main road, which is very busy but has an cycle lane. Through Castel Maggiore and Funo to **San Giorgio di Piano**; from here we take a cycle path to **Bentivoglio**, where you can see the 15<sup>th</sup> Century castle (restored around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) which under the ownership of one Bentivoglio welcomed - among other illustrious names - Dukes Ercole I & Alfonso of Ferrara and Lucrezia Borgia. From Fabbriera there is a diversion to San Marino with its countryside museum (Museo della Civiltà Contadina)

with thousands of exhibits showing work and life in the Bolognese countryside in the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

We pass through more villages of the Bologna countryside: **Saletto**, **Ponticelli**, **Pegola** and **Boschi**. After crossing the river Reno by a Bailey bridge we enter Ferrarese territory and continue along Via Imperiale for a little way, then through Spinazzino to **Marrara** on Via Cembalina. From here we follow route n° 4 (Ravenna to Ferrara, p.18) to **Ferrara** along the Po di Primaro.

The **Po di Primaro**, was at one time one of the two principal branches of the River Po, but today it is a modest watercourse that at Traghetto flows into the River Reno, which occupies the former bed of the Primaro until it flows into the Adriatic.



## THE TWO CAPITALS OF THE DUKEDOM

### From Modena to Ferrara



Modena, Cattedrale

The dukedoms of **Ferrara** and **Modena**, united under the rule of the Este family, have for centuries shared war, peace and splendour. This is a profound link that has never been broken, but retains a respect for their differences, and today allows the traveller to visit both along a thread that cannot be broken. From the historic centre of Modena, along stretches of cycle path recently reclaimed from disused railway tracks, it crosses the Modenese lands and Lambrusco country to enter Ferrarese territory at Finale Emilia, the border town, and then follows the course of the Panaro as far as Bondeno.

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### Technical notes

**Depart:** Modena, Piazza Grande

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 84,520 km

**Difficulty level:** Suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along minor roads with long stretches on cycle paths.

**Railways**

**Milano/Bologna • Bologna/Ferrara**

**Suzzara/Ferrara.** Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • www.trenitalia.com

**i**

**Modena:** Via Scudari, 8  
tel. 059 2032660  
turismo.comune.modena.it

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense  
tel. 0532 299303 • www.ferrarainfo.com

**NB.**

**Modena:**  
Biblioteca Estense, Galleria Estense, Palazzo Ducale, Museo Civico Archeologico.



**Modena has Unesco World Heritage status for its Cathedral, the Torre Civica Tower and Piazza Grande square**

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### MODENA

Modena was built upon Roman *Mutina* and has the Via Emilia itself crossing the centre and separating the mediaeval city from the Estense part, which is dominated by the bulk of the Palazzo Ducale. Its cathedral is one of the highest expressions of the Romanesque style: its facade recalls the cathedral in Ferrara, where we can read the influence of Nicholas, who may have been an apprentice of the Wiligelmo who designed Modena's cathedral.

For the Estes, Modena became the capital of their dukedom after they lost Ferrara in 1598.

Modena's fame is further increased by its renowned balsamic vinegar, lambrusco, tortellini, stuffed pig's trotters and a tradition of motor sport represented by Ferrari at Maranello.

The Modena - Mirandola railway cycle track



In **Modena** we leave bright Piazza Grande with its cathedral. We cross the city centre along roads and stretches of city cycle lanes, passing beside the Ducal Palace, now the Military Academy, and in the inner suburbs cannot avoid noticing the headquarters of Maserati by the railway overpass. Staying on the cycle lane we leave Modena to the north, along via Nonantolana following carefully the signs for the old railway path (*Pista ciclabile Ex Ferrovia Modena - Mirandola*). This reclaimed cycle track is called the Modena-Bastiglia route and occupies the track bed of an old railway, now completely asphalted over, for the most part deep in the green of the hedges of the old railway and the fields around.

Arriving in **Bastiglia**, which is the end of the cycle track.

We continue along minor roads between the villages of Sorbara and Bomperto, whose names recall the famous wine: DOC Lambrusco di Sorbara red is produced right here in this area and there are many cantine and agricultural businesses.



The River Panaro

We continue by way of San Pietro in Elda, Staggia and **Villafranca**. In the latter we leave the road and turn onto a cycle track made from the old railway from Modena to Mirandola and Finale Emilia (closed in 1964), as far as Medolla. Leaving the cycle track for a few kilometres we cross **San Felice sul Panaro**, which, despite the name, isn't actually on the river. After San Felice we go back onto the cycle track as far as **Finale Emilia**.

Finale Emilia, Estense Castle



A very ancient settlement, this was one of the principal outposts of the Este Dukedom, an obligatory staging post on the waterways between Modena, Ferrara and Venice. Don't miss its Estense Castle.

The **Sfogliata** or **Torta degli Ebrei** (Jew's Tart) is the local delicacy par excellence. It comes from the Jewish community in Finale, for whom it was a gastronomic glory, a savoury tart made of flour, butter and cheese. Traditionally it is eaten on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

After a visit to the little town, we climb up onto the embankment of the river Panaro which connects Finale Emilia and Bondeno: it's 11 km of lightly trafficked road (residents and farm vehicles) from which we can admire the natural scenery of the river with its vegetation and the rich fauna that lives there. The river has marked this area for good as well as ill and its waters have carried the vessels of dukes, merchants and travellers.

Arrival at **Bondeno**, where we turn on to the Burana cycle track for **Ferrara** (route n° 2, p.38).



# Around Ferrara





# Around Ferrara

**1 The Destra Po Route**  
From Ferrara to Gorino Ferrarese  
Length 93,220 km

**2 Burana's great loop of water**  
Circular route Ferrara - Bondeno - Destra Po  
Length 56,770 km

**3 The Lands of the Alto Ferrarese**  
Circular route Ferrara - Cento  
Length 93,390 km

**4 The Lands of the Primaro**  
From Ferrara to Argenta  
Length 41,660 km

**5 Along the Po di Volano (first stage)**  
From Ferrara to Ostellato  
Length 38,890 km

**6 Along the Po di Volano (second stage)**  
From Ostellato to Pomposa Abbey  
Length 29,910 km

**7 Landscape of the great land reclamation**  
Ro - Copparo - Ostellato  
Length 43,380 km

**8 Nature reserves on two wheels**  
From Ostellato to Argenta  
Length 30,220 km

**9 The Lagoons of the Po Delta Park**  
From Argenta to Comacchio  
Length 46,430 km

**10 The Park and the Sea**  
Mesola - Lidi di Comacchio - Comacchio  
Length 55,870 km

# THE DESTRA PO ROUTE

## From Ferrara to Gorino Ferrarese



Mesola, Castello della Mesola

Leaving from the historic centre of the bewitching city of **Ferrara**, this route runs as far as the sea at **Gorino**, a long and extraordinary journey along the right-hand embankment of the Po that follows that river through to its Delta. A journey that encourages the enjoyment of the plains countryside and leads us to discover flora,

### 1 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes


**Depart:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola  
**Arrive:** Goro, località Gorino Ferrarese

**Length:** 93,220 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along cycle paths, with short stretches on minor roads. The section at the end of the route is on dirt track.

 **Railways**  
**Bologna/Venezia • Ferrara/Codigoro**

Bicycle transport available.  
 Please check timetables and availability.  
 Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)  
 800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)

 [www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303  
**Mesola:** Ptta S. Spirito, 3 • tel. 0533 993358  
**Goro:** Via Cavicchini • tel. 0533 995030

#### Places of Interest

**Ro:** Mill on the Po • **Serravalle:** the Delta Gateway • **Mesola:** Estense Castle, Gran Bosco della Mesola Woods • **Gorino Ferrarese:** Old Lighthouse, Goro Lighthouse.

#### Connections with other routes

- 7** Ro - Copparo - Ostellato
- 10** Mesola - Lidi di Comacchio - Comacchio



fauna, traditions, history, food, all in their distinct contexts.

The Destra Po Route is part of the Eurovelo network, 12 cycle routes right across Europe, connecting all the countries of the continent; this is the central part of European Cycle Route no. 8, which runs from Athens to Cadiz.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

The **River Po**, once known as the Eridano, springs from the northern slopes of Monviso, and at 652 km is the longest river in Italy.

Along its course, which flows basically from west to east, it crosses the Padana Plain lengthways and flows into the Adriatic through a wide delta. The Po enters Ferrarese territory at Stellata di Bondeno, where it meets its last tributary, the Panaro; on its final stages the river dominates wide areas of intensively cultivated reclaimed land.

**Capacity:**  
on average between 1200 - 1300 m<sup>3</sup>/sec.

**Height:**  
the average height of the river bed in respect to the countryside is +1 metre in Bondeno and Ferrara, and +2.5 metres in the Basso Ferrarese. At its fullest in October 2000, the level of water at Pontelagoscuro rose to 11.8 metres above sea level.

**Embankments:**  
average height 10m at Bondeno, 6.5m at Goro.

This long route is divided into 4 stages.

### FROM THE CASTLE TO THE RIVER

Ferrara to Francolino • 10,190 km

In **Ferrara** the rhythm of everyday life seems dictated by the silent procession of hundreds of bicycles, the favourite transport of the inhabitants, which helps (as well as the many green areas, parks and historic gardens) to make Ferrara an ideal city for pleasant strolls and excursions.

From the Este castle, symbol of the city, take the roads to the north leading to the city walls, and on the other side of which the green expanse of the G. Bassani Urban Park. We cross the countryside on the cycle tracks numbered FE202 & FE203 as far as the Po at **Francolino**, where we meet the cycle tourism route FE20, the Destra Po.

### THE LANDSCAPE OF "IL MULINO DEL PO"

Francolino to Serravalle • 36,570 km

Out of **Francolino**, which was once an important commercial port, we shall be cycling along the embankment of the river. After Fossadalbero the river runs for some kilome-

tres directly between its embankments, with no waterside area: as it happens, the river is always rising in level because of the sedimentary material carried in it, and the embankments grow ever higher, so as to take on the appearance of a long green wall.

At **Ro** there is a bridge over to Polesella in the Veneto. On the right-hand side stretches the nature reserve named '**Mulino sul Po**' which includes the area immediately around the river which featured in the celebrated *chef d'oeuvre* of Riccardo Bacchelli, '*Il Mulino del Po*' in which he recounts the travails of generations of country people. You can visit a faithful reproduction of the mill, anchored in the tourist marina, evoking those that existed on the river over a hundred years ago, with their mill-wheels for grinding corn.



Rest area with refreshments, bike hire, tourism information point.

After Ro the river runs for a good stretch directly against the right-hand embankment; we head for Guarda, with the imposing bulk of its 18<sup>th</sup> century church that has its facade turned to the river. After a few riverside

houses we arrive at **Berra**.

After Berra comes **Serravalle**, an important point because here the Po forks for the first time, the beginning of its Delta; one branch heads north towards Venice, one runs south and is called the Po di Goro. In the riverside area is the '**Porta del Delta**' an area laid out especially for fishing, from which we can enjoy a wide view over the wedge of land within the fork, known as the *Island of Ariano*.

### AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE DELTA

Serravalle to Mesola • 20,930 km

After Serravalle is the village of **Ariano Ferrarese**, extending between the Canale Bianco and the right-hand embankment of the Po di Goro. It is joined to the village of Ariano Polesine over on the Venetian side by a modern bridge.

At Ariano Ferrarese we take the road that goes alongside the Po di Goro towards Mesola.

**Mesola** is recognisable from far away with its great **Estense castle** facing onto the river. The castle was constructed on the orders of Duke Alfonso II d'Este in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century as a country retreat, adjoining an immense hunting reserve. The entire property was surrounded by walls and towers, and it is assumed that the Duke wanted to build a town here, but never completed it because of the sudden end of Este power.

The castle is home to a **Centre for Environmental Education** and the **Deer Museum**.

### RIVER HEADING FOR THE SEA

Mesola to Gorino Ferrarese • 25,620 km

Leaving Mesola Castle behind, the route tackles the wide bend that the Po di Goro makes to the north, and then turns south again for around 10 km, marking the boundary of one of the most significant natural areas in the **Po Delta Park**, rich in lagoons of

both salt and fresh water, and woods of great importance. From the embankment we can see to the right the long and dense scrubland of the **Bosco di Santa Giustina**.



**Diversion:** to visit the Gran Bosco della Mesola, come down off the embankment and continue along **route N° 10**, p.70.

After only a few kilometres we arrive at **Goro**, a village that looks out onto the '**Sacca**' of the same name and is characterised even today by its busy fishing activity; then carry on towards **Gorino Ferrarese**, passing on the left the pontoon bridge that leads to Gorino Veneto.

**Gorino Ferrarese** is a village dedicated to fishing and to nature tourism, a landscape in transition between dry land, lagoon, river, and sea. From here you can take a boat out to discover the Delta environment at the point where the river finally joins the sea.

Carry on along the track to the old lighthouse (**Lanterna Vecchia**) which once guided shipping, although it is now 4 km from the open sea.

Gorino Ferrarese



# BURANA'S GREAT LOOP OF WATER

## Circular route Ferrara - Bondeno - Destra Po



Cycle track Burana

From the heart of the Estense city this circular route runs along important waterways into the countryside as far as **Bondeno**, on a safe cycleway throughout. At Bondeno the journey turns onto the cycle path along the River Po embankment

## 2 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes



**Depart:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 56,770 km

**Difficulty level:**

suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along cycle paths, with short stretches on minor roads, especially when crossing urban areas in Ferrara and Bondeno.

**Railways**

**Bologna/Venezia • Ferrara/Suzzara**

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)



**Ferrara:**

Castello Estense

tel. 0532 299303 • [www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**NB.** The route is particularly enjoyable on the Burana cycle-pedestrian-path (FE 101), as it is shady, well signposted, with red asphalt at the intersections and distance markers every kilometre.

**Connections with other routes**

**1** Ferrara - Gorino Ferrarese

**3** Percorso circolare Ferrara - Cento

to admire the riverside landscape along a stretch of the “**Destra Po**” cycle-tourism route to Francolino, from which it loops back to the **Castle at Ferrara**.



## THE WATERWAYS ALONG THE ROUTE

The **Burana** was dug in the early years of the 20th century after the decision to reclaim the land in the Low Lands.

The **Cavo Napoleonico** is an important canal, 18km long, which connects the Reno to the Po, and was begun in the Napoleonic era in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century as a drainage canal for the Reno. It is evidence of the deep connection that the Bondeno lands have with the water.

The **Panaro** draws its waters all the way from the Apennines near Modena and passes the villages of Vignola, Bomperto and Finale Emilia before entering Ferrarese territory at Bondeno, where it flows into the **Po**. Before Bondeno the course is narrow, but after the village it becomes wide and majestic, with broad curves and a wooded flood plain.

River Po, Bonello Pepoli island reserve



The first stretch of the journey is made by leaving the historic centre of **Ferrara** and its castle to the west and joining the **Burana cycle/pedestrian path** which runs alongside the canal of the same name.

The path, in long straight sections, runs along lines of poplars in pleasant countryside through which we can pedal with effortless ease. After the village of Vigarano Mainarda, where can be seen in the distance the estate of the *Diamantina*, one of the Este's country retreats, we arrive at **Bondeno**, crossing the Cavo Napoleonico by the old railway bridge.

At the end of the cycle track at Bondeno we carry on to the left, along the road, then turn right and head north on the embankment of the Panaro, the **FE 20 Destra Po** cycle route.

After **Ospitale**, the riverside area between the Panaro and the road gets narrower and finally disappears. The road heads away from the river, to join it again at the point where the Panaro joins the Po. We are again cycling along the river embankment, and after little more than a kilometre we cross the **Cavo**



The Diamantina, one of the Estes' country retreats

### Napoleonico.

This is the beginning of a long straight section, with the river in clear view. Soon the **Bosco di Porporana reserve** comes into view, the nearest thing that now survives to the riverside plains woodland that at one time used to be typical of the Po flood-plain.



In June these woods enjoy a really special experience: swarms of fireflies scatter lights across the night to make a real-life fairytale woodland.

After about 7 km, follow the diversion signs for Pontelagoscuro (we are getting near Ferrara now) and take the embankment road near the **Isola Bianca**, a LIPU reserve that can be visited with a guide.

At **Francolino** turn onto the **FE 203** cycleway and proceed the few kilometres to **Ferrara**. Just before the city is the G. Bassani Urban Park, a fine green area with lakes that extends around the northern walls. Cross Via Bacchelli at the traffic lights and from there under the walls to Corso Ercole I d'Este with its grand buildings. From here we can return to the Este Castle or climb up onto the earthworks of the city walls for a pleasant circuit of the city.

# THE LANDS OF THE ALTO FERRARESE

## Circular route Ferrara - Cento



Cento, Piazza del Guercino e Palazzo del Governatore

### 3 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes



**Depart:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 93,390 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route partly along cycle path (FE 101 Burana), partly along minor roads. Section on dirt track along the Cavo Napoleonico, on the return to Santa Bianca.



[www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303

**Cento:** Via Guercino, 41 • tel. 051 6843334

#### Connections with other routes

**2** Circular route Ferrara - Bondeno - Destra Po



#### Railways

**Bologna/Venezia**

Bicycle transport available. Please check timetables and availability. Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

This circular route unwinds to the west of **Ferrara**, the area known as the Alto Ferrarese, higher ground where the waters have been easier to control throughout history. The journey reaches into the province of Modena, crossing agricultural country dominated by fruit and grain production, between the Panaro to the north and the Reno to the south. Its artistic destination is the town of **Cento** with its own great houses, museums and castle.



The first part of this route is the same as that of the 'Great Loop of Water', Burana-Destra Po (see route n° 2, p.38). At **Bondeno** take the road that runs alongside the Panaro and head for **Finale Emilia**, leaving the province of Ferrara for a moment. From up on the embankment we can see the Santa Bianca sluice and the water works of the same name, part of the Burana land reclamation. Water is really the dominant element of this route, although the watercourses are contained behind high artificial embankments.

**Finale Emilia** is an old waterfront town, worth rediscovering. It is dominated by the bulk of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Castello delle Rocche, built by the same Bartolino da Novara to whom we owe the Este Castle in Ferrara; it is one of the best preserved in the region.

From Finale Emilia cross the Panaro back into Ferrarese territory, and after **Alberone**, **Dodici Morelli** and **Renazzo**, we get to **Cento**.

Guercino and his studio, *The Dinner at Emmaus*, Cento, Municipal Gallery



Cento - a little jewel of art, architecture, cuisine and commerce - has ancient roots but they are not well documented. It was owned by the Bishop of Bologna in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, then given to the Estensi by Pope Alessandro VI Borgia as part of his settlement for the marriage of his daughter Lucrezia to Alfonso d'Este. In the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries it saw years of great splendour thanks to the rebuilding of the town, as well as a flourishing artistic and cultural life, when the great painter Giovan Francesco Barbieri, known as 'il Guercino', was active.

An old Cento tradition is its Carnevale, today an internationally known event.

After visiting Cento, on the return leg we use the minor roads with little traffic through **Dosso** and then **Molino Albergati**.

Turn towards **Santa Bianca** along the track that runs alongside the Cavo Napoleonico and back to **Bondeno**, and then to **Ferrara** along the FE101 Burana cycle track.



Sant'Agostino, Bosco della Panfilia



### Diversion to the Bosco della Panfilia

These woods at Sant'Agostino can be visited at any time of the year, but preferably in autumn or spring. The entrance is beside the Cavo Napoleonico, and the wooded area extends along a riverside terrace of the Reno, which has determined the vegetation. The river takes a clear turn to the south-east here, and forms the southern border of the Province of Ferrara.

Santa Bianca, water works





# THE LANDS OF THE PRIMARO

## From Ferrara to Argenta



Po di Primaro

A long journey through the heart of the ancient delta of the Po river, that goes deep into the classic countryside to the south of **Ferrara**, along the course of the Po di Primaro as far as Traghetto, where the Primaro flows into the River Reno. The route goes as far as **Argenta**, the 6<sup>th</sup> 'station' of the Po Delta Park, with its nature reserves and Ecomuseo, its lagoons, and its museums dedicated to the relationship between the inhabitants and the waters that have for so long surrounded it.



### 4 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Arrive:** Argenta, Centro Culturale Mercato

**Length:** 41,660 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone.  
Level route mainly along minor roads.

#### Railways

**Ferrara/Ravenna**

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)



[www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**Ferrara:**

Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303

**Argenta:**

Piazza Marconi, 1 • tel. 0532 330276

#### Connections with other routes

**8** Ostellato - Argenta

**9** Argenta - Comacchio



## TRACES OF AN ANCIENT RIVER

At the time when Ferrara was founded, the **Po di Primaro** was one of the two principal branches of the Po along with the Po di Volano.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> Century a series of floods near Ficarolo sent the water north, and the Primaro began a slow decline followed by increased height of the river-bed. Today it is a relief canal for water from land reclamation, a modest watercourse that ends its course at Traghetto at a pumping station beneath the embankment of the river Reno, to which is has given over its own bed as far as the Adriatic.

The **River Reno** marks the southern boundary of the province of Ferrara. This watercourse, mostly active after storms, was for centuries the source of terrible floods due above all to it flowing into the plain without a way out to the sea, it now has a mouth in the Adriatic along the bed of the former Po di Primaro.

From the Este castle at **Ferrara** proceed via Via Bologna to the south of the city and turn onto the path beneath the walls; after the cycle/pedestrian bridge over the Po di Volano, turn left into Via Putinati towards Torre Fossa. The road winds tortuously along the former course of the Po di Primaro, through places whose names come from being on the river, eg. **Torre Fossa** and **Fossanova**. Near the village of Sant'Egidio there is the sanctuary of the *Beata Vergine del Poggetto*, a modest and graceful building that houses a venerated image of the Madonna. Numerous aristocratic homes of some architectural merit border the route as far as **Marrara**, then Bova. After the hamlet of Bova, we cross the river



Argenta, Pieve di San Giorgio

and proceed along the left-hand side of the Primaro as far as **Ospital Monacale**, where we turn onto a stretch of the main road as far as **Traghetto**, there to climb up onto the embankment of the Reno which we follow as far as the cycleable bridge over the river. At this point, we switch to the minor road at the base of the embankment, reaching Argenta along Via Cardinala.



Argenta, Sairino Water Works

Final destination of this route, **Argenta** is a town, probably Roman in origin, which in the middle ages passed from the Archbishop of Ravenna to the Este family. Today it is a modern thriving tourist centre. Towards Campotto you pass in front of the atmospheric *Pieve di San Giorgio*, the oldest church in the province (6<sup>th</sup> Century); in the immediate vicinity there is a museum of land reclamation (*Museo della*

*Bonifica*) inside the Sairino Water Works, which demonstrates, through the machines and descriptions of their use, the history of the works to drain the area of Argenta. About 4 km further on is the nature reserve *Oasi delle Valli di Argenta e Marmorta*, which extends over an area of 1600 hectares with grand lakes and the Traversante woodlands, typical of the hygrophilous woodlands of the region, and home to numerous species of animals and especially birds. The main part of the Ecomuseum is situated here in the Casino di Campotto at the entrance to the reserve, and it's an unmissable part of this voyage of discovery into the nature and countryside of Ferrara.



The Ecobus is a gas-powered shuttle bus which runs excursions into the Val Campotto reserves in full respect for the environment and sustainable ecology.



# ALONG THE PO DI VOLANO

## First stage - From Ferrara to Ostellato



Final di Rero, Via delle Siepi

### 5 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes



**Depart:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Arrive:** Ostellato, Piazza Repubblica

**Length:** 38,890 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along minor roads, some of which have traffic restrictions.

 **Railways. Ferrara/Codigoro**

Bicycle transport available. Please check timetables and availability. Info: 800 91 50 30 • www.fer.it



**Ferrara:**

Castello Estense

tel. 0532 299303 • www.ferrarainfo.com

**Connections with other routes**

- 6** Ostellato - Abbazia di Pomposa
- 7** Ro - Copparo - Ostellato
- 8** Ostellato - Argenta

Leaving historic **Ferrara** on long stretches of cycle path through various villages along the banks of what was once one of the main branches of the river Po, but which is nowadays much narrower. View countryside with an antique flavour, scattered with centres that in the past were moorings on the river, and which retain even now their little treasures of history. The journey follows the Volano and the Ferrara relief canal system as far as **Migliarino** and then skips over to **Ostellato**, where many and varied cycle journeys unwind and cross each other.



## ONCE UPON A TIME ON THE RIVER

This zone of countryside to the east of Ferrara was for centuries chosen by the nobles and rich families for their escape from the city. Unlike other parts of the province it was less subject to flooding, favouring settlement. Its trump card as regards transport connections between the city and the country was the course of the Po di Volano, along which grew up in different historical periods country retreats, hunting lodges, estate houses and holiday homes.

From the **Este Castle** in Ferrara we take Via Bologna towards the south of the city and turn onto the *sottomura* path in the shade of the walls and bastions that protect Ferrara. We leave the city to the east along the convenient cycle track beside the road as far as the hamlet of **Pontegradella**, then carry on along Via Pontegradella towards Baura, then, after the bridge over the Po di Volano, traverse tiny villages on the river. The embankment is low and the river visible from the road.

*The Anse Vallive di Ostellato nature reserve*



The first village is **Contrapo**, dominated by the elegant facade of its 17<sup>th</sup> century parish church, San Martino, where we find the Bishop's House 'Casa del Vescovo', later called 'Casa Mistri', which dates we think from the 16th century. At **Viconovo**, under the Volano embankment, is the villa once known as 'dei Costabili' that in 1845 was the property of William Mac Alister, a rich Scottish merchant who resided a long time in Ferrara and used his post of British Consul to defend the city from abuses of power under the Austrians. At **Albarea**, next to the church, was the great house belonging to Gian Battista Aleotti, known as 'l'Argenta', the Dukes' architect and engineer. Villa Gandini, later known as Colombari, with decorations in the Art Nouveau style, is in **Villanova di Denore**.

A little before **Denore**, where the Villa Naselli (now known as Villa Beltrame) stands beside the river, we cross the Po di Volano on the bridge towards **Sabbioncello San Vittore** and continue along the road to the left of the watercourse. At Sabbioncello there is mooring for boats.

Next to the embankment, on the left, stands the *Villa della Mensa*, built between 1474 and 1495 on the orders of Bartolomeo della Ro-



## Boating on the Volano

From spring to autumn there are guided river excursions on which you can also take your bike. The departure point is in the Darsena port at Ferrara, but other points of joining are possible, such as Sabbioncello S. Vittore, Final di Rero or Migliarino. Destinations are Baura, Fossalta, Ostellato and Comacchio.

Booking essential.  
Info tel. 0532 205681.

vere, as a summer residence for the Bishops of Ferrara. After Villa della Mensa the track becomes cycleway only and stays with the Volano as far as Final di Rero. Just before this, note the lock basin at Valpagliaro which works with wind powered doors and allows a drop of about 3 metres. After **Final di Rero**, this pleasant cycle track, here named Via delle Siepi, goes alongside an area of the Volano embankment that is being ecologically rebalanced with native vegetation, and is particularly pleasant in spring.



*The Po di Volano between Final di Rero and Migliarino*

Carry on along Via Argine Sinistro Volano as far as **Migliarino**. Here we turn right on the cycle/pedestrian bridge across the Volano, and enter the village on the road. We then stick to minor country roads, moving away from the watercourse which heads north to the sea; the branch that diverts towards Ostellato is the Ferrara Waterway.

The **Anse Vallive di Ostellato** are a unique freshwater wetland in this region, populated by 150 species of water birds including beautiful herons, and is characterised by vegetation like cane, water-lilies, flowering rushes. There are many activities possible: birdwatching, outings on foot, bicycle or horseback, canoeing.

# ALONG THE PO DI VOLANO

## Second stage - From Ostellato to Pomposa Abbey



Codigoro

From **Ostellato**, the meeting place of many journeys and an agreeable centre for a visit to nature reserves, the route follows the Po di Volano, identified in the Etruscan period with the mythical Eridano. It visits **Codigoro**, whose name derives from *Caput Gauri* and indicates the point where the branch of the Po di Goro was

### 6 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes



**Depart:** Ostellato, Piazza Repubblica  
**Arrive:** Codigoro, *Abbazia di Pomposa*

**Length:** 29,910 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along cycle paths (partly on dirt track). Some stretches along minor roads with little traffic.



#### Railways

**Ferrara/Codigoro**  
 Bicycle transport available.  
 Please check timetables and availability.  
 Info: 800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)



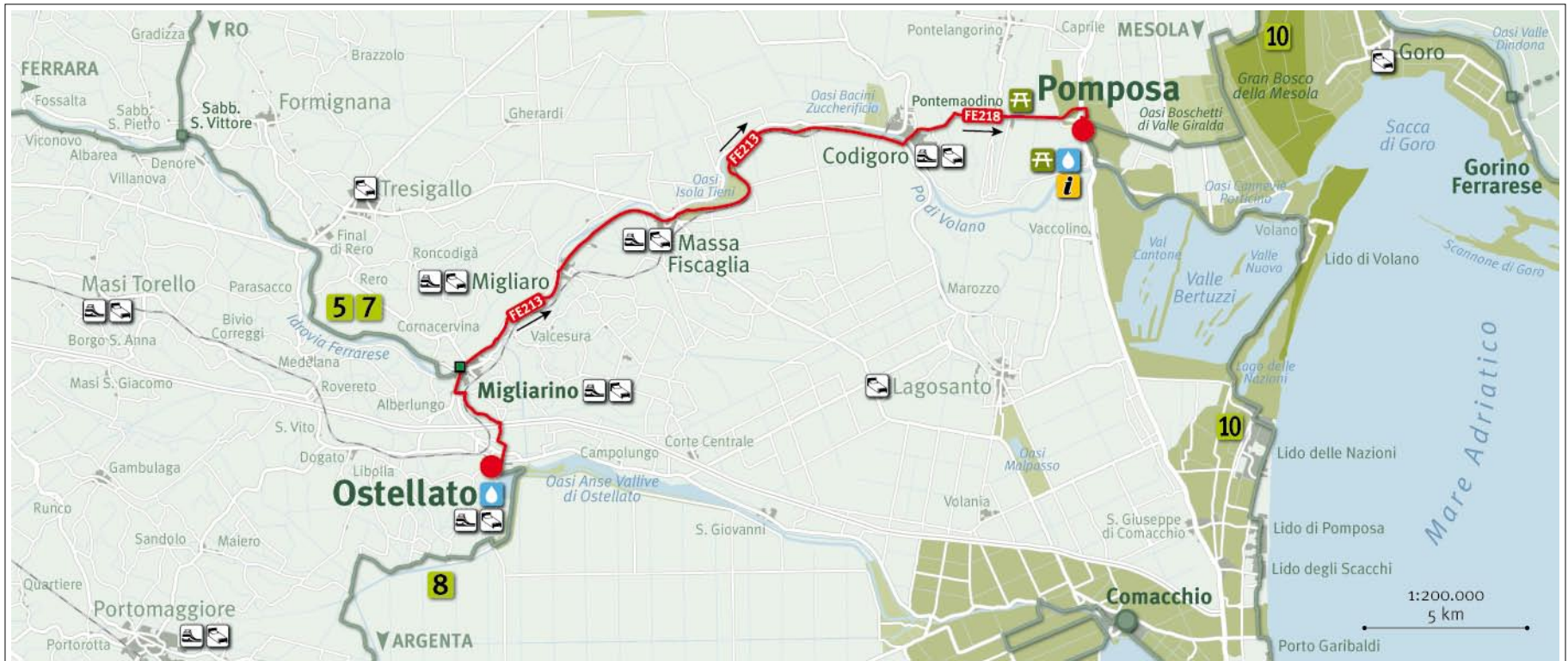
[www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**Ferrara:**  
 Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303  
**Codigoro:**  
 Abbazia di Pomposa • tel. 0533 719110

#### Connections with other routes

- 5** Ferrara - Ostellato
- 7** Ro - Ostellato
- 8** Ostellato - Argenta
- 10** Mesola - Lidi di Comacchio - Comacchio

born out of the left flank of the Po di Volano, more evidence of how everything in the Ferrarese lands is determined by the presence of water. The journey arrives finally at the splendid **Pomposa Abbey**, one of the most important examples of Romanesque architecture in north Italy.



## THE PO DI VOLANO

An old waterway, this was the northern branch of the Po in the mediaeval period, and it has always been a natural way from Ferrara to the Adriatic. Today it is a drainage canal characterised by cane and willow, bejewelled by a series of noble houses which as well as being residences for recreation and rest were also places to keep an eye on agricultural activities. The story of these lands is linked to the land reclamation undertaken in the first place by the monks, continued by the Este family and finally concluded this century by the Drainage Board (ConSORZI di Bonifica).

From **Ostellato**, after a visit to the Anse Valive, we head for **Migliarino** on minor roads and return to the Po di Volano. Rural buildings, drying houses and barns for grain are important characteristics of this route. The river passes not far from the square and towers of Migliarino, cross it and continue along the left

*The Tieni tower. Following page: Pomposa Abbey*



of the Volano as far as **Migliaro**, using the Po di Volano cycleway.

At Migliaro we cross the Volano again and carry on along the right-hand bank as far as Codigoro. The river widens and at the lagoon at **Massa Fiscaglia** runs in open countryside. From the path we can see the Tieni Island reserve, an island formed by the Volano, on which stands Tieni Tower, a historic building from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century which once served as a lighthouse and as an excise point for shipping tolls.

We head for **Codigoro** which stands out from a distance by the buildings of the old sugar factory - nowadays a heronry, a veritable *city of herons and egrets* - and the chimney of the pumping station. Codigoro was initially a settlement of fisher-folk and hunters that grew up due to the waterways that crossed the area, and then with the reclamation of the surrounding lagoons, beginning in the mid nineteenth century and completed with the construction of the waterworks, it took a great leap forward in agriculture as well as industry.

From Codigoro the cycle path arrives at **Pomposa Abbey**, one of the most fascinating places in the whole province. Composed of church, bell tower, chapter house and the Palazzo della Ragione, it represents only a part, albeit an important one, of the a monastery which goes back to the 6<sup>th</sup> Century and was great and powerful in Mediaeval times, a landmark in history and culture and one of the most important religious centres. The monastery, elegant and well preserved on the exterior, has inside a treasure-house of excellent 14<sup>th</sup> century frescoes and a pavement in mosaic and marquetry.

In the refectory there is, miraculously preserved, a fresco that shows the *miraculous dinner of Abbot Guido* and the Bavarian Gebeardo di Eichstätt, archbishop of Ravenna, the latter being surprised by the miraculous transformation of water into wine.



## LANDSCAPE OF THE GREAT LAND RECLAMATION Ro - Copparo - Ostellato



Ro, Mulino sul Po

From **Ro** this route unfolds across little hamlets with churches, minor roads and watercourses marking out irregular portions of countryside; all a prelude to the landscape of the great Ferrara land reclamation. The route then leaves the Destra Po cycleway on the river embankment to run as far as **Copparo** and the banks of the Po di Volano, through to the nature reserves of the Anse Vallive di **Ostellato**.

### 7 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Ro, percorso cicloturistico Destra Po

**Arrive:** Ostellato, Piazza Repubblica

**Length:** 43,380 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along cycle path. Some stretches along minor roads with little traffic.

#### Railways

**Bologna/Venezia • Ferrara/Codigoro**

Bicycle transport available. Please check timetables and availability. Info: 892021

[www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com); 800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)



[www.ferrairainfo.com](http://www.ferrairainfo.com)

#### **Ferrara:**

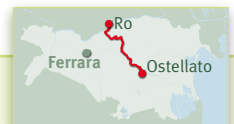
Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303

**Ro:** Punto informativo presso l'area golenale  
tel. 0532 868444

#### **Connections with other routes**

**1** Ferrara - Gorino Ferrarese

**5** Ferrara - Ostellato



## IN THE CENTRE OF THE PROVINCE

This route follows a circuit of the geographical centre of the Province of Ferrara, connecting the great river Po, the northern limit of the province, and the Po di Volano, which was active from the 6<sup>th</sup> century and was one of the main two branches of the river along with the Po di Primaro, but was slowly supplanted by what is now the main stream. After the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries the Po di Volano had really become little more than a canal.

The discriminating cycle-tourist who is interested in a more-than-superficial understanding of the region will cross these middle lands with interest: though there are no particularly precious buildings but there are rural workplaces, little old churches, and urban areas which recount the era of land reclamation with its waterworks and countryside taken from lagoons.

The point of departure here is the areas beside the river where the **'Mulino sul Po'** is anchored. This is a faithful reconstruction of the mill boats which were on the river hereabouts over a century ago, and has been placed in a very attractive natural surroundings: the Mill isn't just an open-air museum, but a living and productive reality where you can watch the milling and the preparation of bread in a tourist centre with moorings and a landscaped area by the river. We proceed on minor roads towards **Ro**, through **Zocca** where we turn onto the main part of the limited traffic path (the FE206) that leads to **Copparo**. Before the centre, the enchanting Romanesque Church of San Venanzio welcomes the visitor; it is one of the oldest buildings in the province and has frescoes of the Bolognese school from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> Century. The town of Copparo, founded in the mediaeval era, grew up on Este hunting grounds which we can see by the building of the Town Hall (Palazzo Comunale) on the ruins of an Este country house.

*Romanesque Church of San Venanzio*



*Sabbioncello San Vittore, Villa della Mensa*

From Copparo we reach **Sabbioncello San Vittore** almost entirely on a restricted traffic route (the FE211), and there we start alongside the Po di Volano which at this point is part of the Ferrara waterway, passing by the *Villa della Mensa*.

After **Migliarino**, along minor roads and a little unmetalled track, we get to **Ostellato**.

to the Este family. At one point it was surrounded by lagoons and then involved with the land reclamation which dried out the Valle del Mezzano. Today from that area all that remains are the **Anse Vallive**, our destination, which constitute a biotype freshwater wetland area unique in the region, especially for the quantity and variety of its animal life.

## The Ferrara waterway

The Ferrara waterway (Idrovia Ferrarese) links the Po with the Adriatic Sea, it actually leaves from Pontelagoscuro and ends at Porto Garibaldi; it is 70 km long and is made up of the Canale Boicelli (Pontelagoscuro - Ferrara), then a stretch of the natural course of the Po di Volano (Ferrara - Fiscaglia di Migliarino) and lastly the navigable canal from Migliarino to Porto Garibaldi that finishes in the Adriatic.

Ostellato has very ancient origins, as evidenced by numerous archaeological finds, the first documentation goes back to 997. Ostellato belonged first to Comacchio, then to Pomposa Abbey, from which it was ceded

*The River Po*



For more about the Anse Vallive see **route no. 8**, From Ostellato to Argenta, p. 62.



# NATURE RESERVES ON TWO WHEELS

## From Ostellato to Argenta



Oasi Trava

Much-prized nature reserves, the Anse Vallive di **Ostellato** wetlands are the departure point for this journey which runs mostly along the FE414 cycleway, which was named after the Ferrarese writer & journalist Bruno Traversari. The route visits the Anse Vallive di Porto and the Bacini di Bando before reaching **Argenta**.



### 8 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Ostellato, Piazza Repubblica

**Arrive:** Argenta, Centro Culturale Mercato

**Length:** 30,220 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along cycle path, partly on dirt track. Some stretches along minor roads with little traffic.

#### Railways

**Ferrara/Codigoro • Ferrara/Ravenna**

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)



[www.ferrara.info.com](http://www.ferrara.info.com)

**Ferrara:**

Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303

**Argenta:**

Piazza Marconi, 1 • tel. 0532 330276

#### Connections with other routes

**4** Ferrara - Argenta

**5** Ferrara - Ostellato

**6** Ostellato - Pomposa

**7** Ro - Copparo - Ostellato

**9** Argenta - Comacchio





## THE VANISHED LAGOON

The reclamation of the **Valle del Mezzano**, begun in 1957, was finished less than 10 years later: the Valle was a large inland saltwater lagoon, that had formed after subsidence in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when river and sea water flooded an oak forest.

Today the Mezzano is an area completely adapted to intensive agriculture with almost no houses, where first corn and then the cultivation of asparagus, tomatoes, squash, melon and fruit trees was introduced.

Narrow strips of the lagoon were not touched by the reclamation: these are the Anse Vallive di Ostellato, Oasi di Bando, and di Porto, though these are all now fresh rather than salt water.

The **Anse Vallive di Ostellato**, an area of 200 hectares, include a series of lagoon basins with wetland vegetation and hydrophilous woodlands, stretching between the Canale Circondariale and the Canale Navigabile.

The trail inside the reserve begins in the visitor centre (Centro Visita) and goes as far as Valle San Zagno, the most protected of the lagoons. the trail is about 4.5 km long and can be done in circle on foot or by bike: in the first part is the aviary with white storks; in the basins that follow can be seen anatids (ducks, swans, etc.), white egrets, grebes, and the Black-winged Stilt.



The area is well provided with visitor viewpoints with places to stop, refreshment, excursions, sporting activities, horse-riding trips and an astronomical observatory.

After visiting the lagoons, the route goes onto the FE414 cycleway alongside the reclaimed land of the Mezzano, passing pumping stations, and reaches another point of great natural interest.

The **Bando reserve** and the **Anse Vallive di Porto**, extending for 50 hectares, are formed by a basin of fresh water and cane brakes and are a place of fundamental importance for the conservation of water birds. The vegetation on the banks is dominated by tamarisk and cane. The area is laid out with paths that circle the basins, part of which are accessible to disabled persons with assistance, and with hides for birdwatching and nature photography.

After the Oasi Trava go towards Argenta, pass through the hamlet of La Fiorana heading for the centre of the town.

In **Argenta** you can follow an artistic/historic trail which visits the Oratorio of Santa Croce,

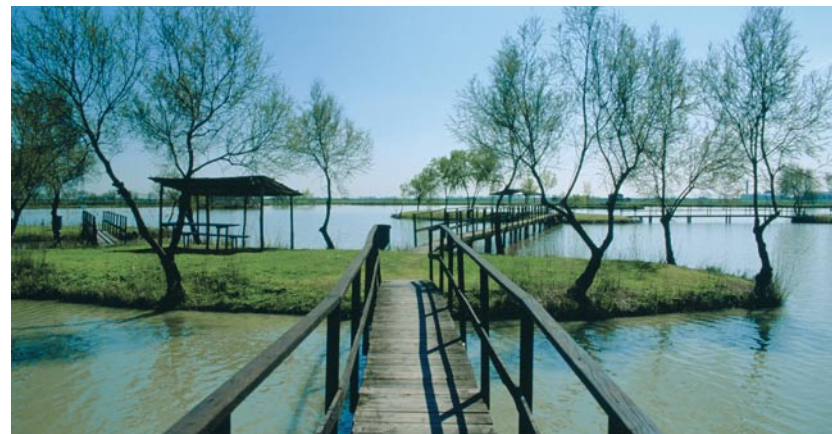


*The Anse Vallive di Ostellato reserve*

The Town Museum (Museo Civico), housed in the former church of San Domenico and including a picture gallery and an archaeological section, the former Capuchin Monastery, and the the Santuario della Celletta just outside the centre.

For information on the Lagoon Museum and on the nature reserves, see **route n° 4**, p. 46.

*Anse Vallive di Porto*



# THE LAGOONS OF THE PO DELTA PARK

## From Argenta to Comacchio



Argine Agosta

This journey links two of the most important natural zones in the whole province of Ferrara, the freshwater lagoons of **Argenta** and the saltwater ones of **Comacchio**. Both are 'stations' of the Po Delta Park and important tourist centres from which to explore the area in diverse and atmospheric trips on foot, by bike or by

### 9 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Argenta, *Centro Culturale Mercato*

**Arrive:** Comacchio, *Duomo di San Cassiano*

**Length:** 46,430 km

**Difficulty level:**

suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along minor roads with little traffic.

#### Railways

**Ferrara/Ravenna - Ferrara/Codigoro**

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)



[www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**Argenta:** Piazza Marconi, 1 • tel. 0532 330276

**Comacchio:** Via Mazzini, 4 • tel. 0533 314154

#### Connections with other routes

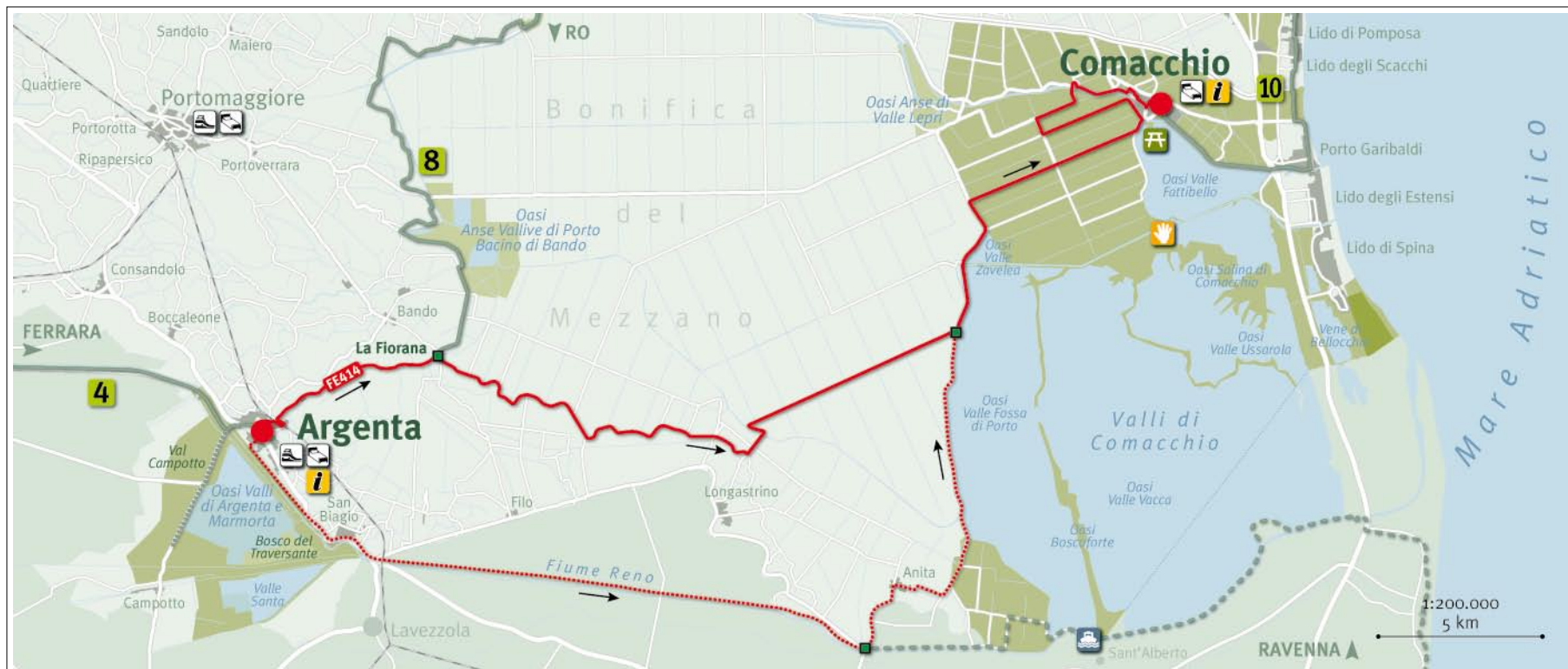
**8** Ostellato - Argenta

**10** Mesola - Lidi di Comacchio - Comacchio

**NB. Alternative route:** from Argenta take the path along the river Reno as far as Madonna del Bosco, then continue on the main road to Anita and up onto the Argine Agosta embankment to rejoin the original route.



motorboat. Spring and Autumn are also ideal seasons to watch birds here - both because of the number of species visible and for the colours and shapes of the landscape.



The freshwater **lagoons of Argenta and Marmorta**, formed by the Reno and familiarly known as the Oasi di Campotto, started to form in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century when the Po di Primaro, by then already above the level of the plain and full of sediment, was no longer able to deal with the waters of the various Apennine mountain streams that flowed into it. Nowadays they function as an overflow and they are used in periods of high water to take water from the lower Bolognese Plain, which then is drained away in the river Reno.

The **Comacchio Lagoons** are a vast depression between Comacchio and Ostellato to the north, Portomaggiore and Argenta to the west, and the course of the river Reno to the south. The lagoons are a relic of the ancient Padana delta between the Primaro branch (today the Reno) and the Volano. It is a saltwater zone, in which the salinity increases in the summer, characterised by ancient dunes, natural sandbars and it is of notable interest above all for the quantity and variety of its bird life, for which the habitat exerts a great attraction.

Valli di Comacchio



From **Argenta**, a little town renowned for its environmental riches and its museums of land reclamation, proceed north-west towards the hamlet of La Fiorana (the junction with route n° 8 from Ostellato to Argenta) from which we go on to **Longastrino**. Leaving the Argenta Lagoons behind us and heading towards the Comacchio Lagoons and the sea along the banks of the Reno, we cross sparsely inhabited agricultural land and the great plan of the Mantello and Gramigna land reclamation, among lands 1 or 2 metres below sea level used mostly for growing grain.

After the lands of the Mezzano reclamation we enter the Comacchio Lagoons which extend eastwards with such a great surface area you would think they were the sea. Continue in the direction of Comacchio along the Argine Agosta embankment, a long road for mixed traffic with no tree cover, which forms the western edge of the lagoons, and probably follows the line of the Roman road that connected Ravenna and Adria. The Argine Agosta finishes in the thinning cane brakes of Valle Zavelea, a wetland zone, nowadays fresh water, although it is the remaining part of a much larger area of brackish salty water, and today a Nature reserve. The long straight roads cross recently



Comacchio, Ponte Tre Ponti

reclaimed land, the site of the ancient Etruscan city of Spina, though you wouldn't be able to tell this from looking at the surface.

Turning right from the embankment of the Valle Fattibello you get to Stazione Foce, which is Visitor Centre for the Comacchio Lagoons and their historic and nature trails; turning left we continue to the historic centre of **Comacchio**. The town is an island with canals, narrow alleys, bridges, porticoes; mysterious and a romantic atmosphere, the artistic destination of this itinerary.

### An unforgettable trip

From Stazione Foce there are excursions every day to visit the old casoni, the fisherman's buildings in the lagoon area, which have been transformed into living museums.

Booking essential.

Info tel. 340 2534267

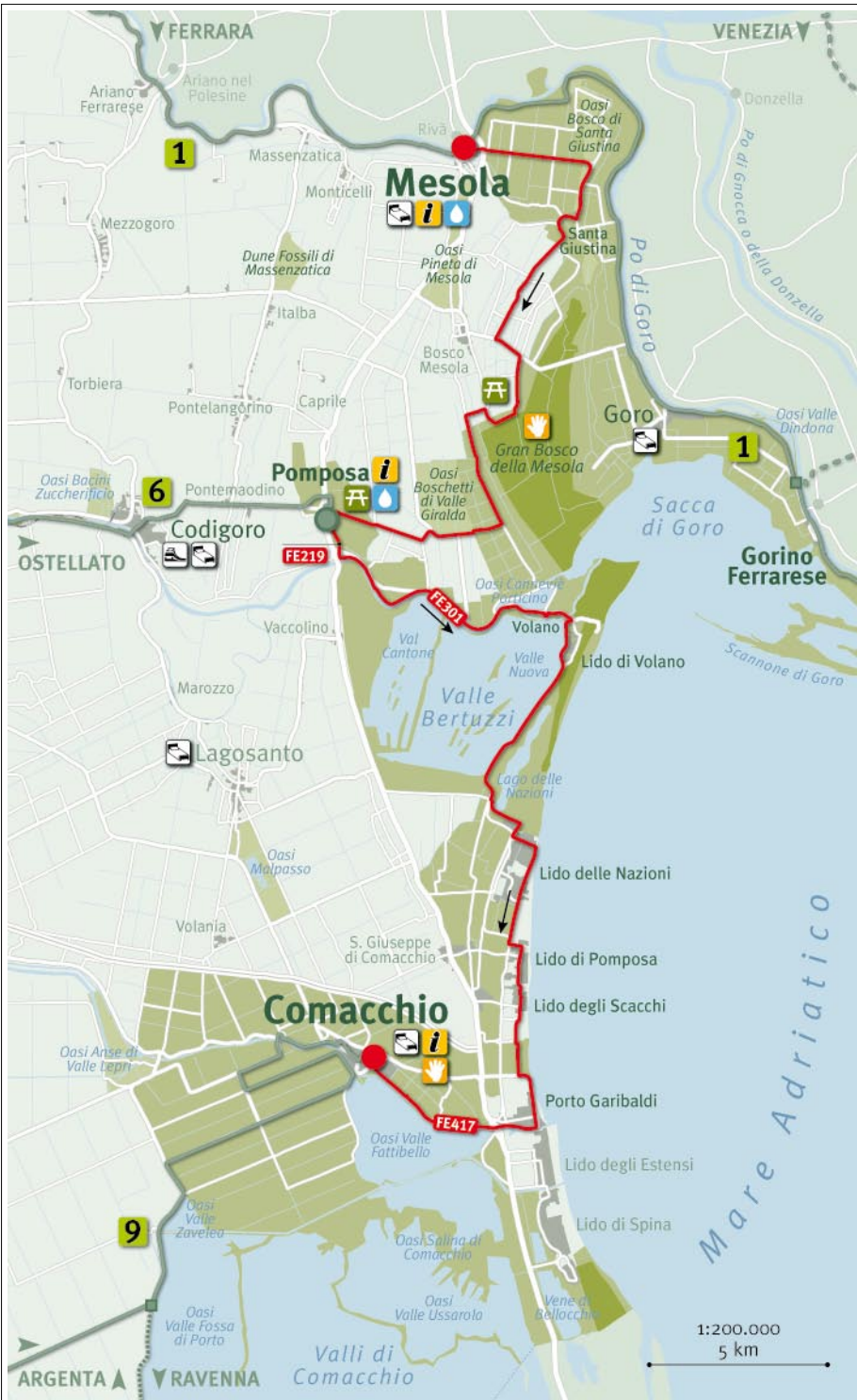
# THE PARK AND THE SEA

## Mesola - Lidi di Comacchio - Comacchio



Lidi di Comacchio

A journey of many destinations: art, woodlands, nature, seaside, which visits the most significant places in the Ferrarese part of the Po Delta Park. It leaves from Mesola Castle, the Este country retreat, visiting the woodlands of the Gran Bosco della Mesola, then Pomposa Abbey, and going all the way to the coast with its seven seaside towns. From the canal port in **Porto Garibaldi** there is a cycle path to the lagoon town of **Comacchio**, with its bridges and canals, the true capital of the Po Delta Park.



### 10 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes

**Depart:** Mesola, Castello della Mesola

**Arrive:** Comacchio, Duomo di San Cassiano

**Length:** 55,870 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along minor roads. Some stretches along cycle paths on asphalt and some on dirt track (FE219 and FE301).

#### Railways

**Ferrara/Codigoro**

Bicycle transport available. Please check timetables and availability. Info: 800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)

#### Places of Interest

Mesola Castle, Pomposa Abbey. **Comacchio:** the Trepponti Bridge, the Roman Ship Museum, the Old Hospital, the Cathedral of San Cassiano, the Eel-Works, the Loggiato dei Cappuccini, the Church of Santa Maria in Aula Regia, the trails in the Comacchio lagoons.



[www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

**Mesola:** Castello Estense • tel. 0533 993358

**Codigoro:** Abbazia di Pomposa • tel. 0533 719119

**Comacchio:** Via Mazzini, 4 • tel. 0533 314154

**Parco Delta del Po Emilia Romagna:**  
tel. 0533 314003 • [www.parcodeltapo.it](http://www.parcodeltapo.it)

#### Connections with other routes

**1** Ferrara - Gorino Ferrarese

**8** Ostellato - Pomposa

**9** Argenta - Comacchio





Gran Bosco della Mesola woodlands

This route starts from the *Destra Po* cycle tourism route at **Mesola** Castle, an Este country house built for Duke Alfonso II d'Este at the end of the 1500s on the edge of a large game reserve. At the castle visit the *Environmental Education Centre* and the *Deer Museum*. After passing Bosco di Santa Giustina and the interesting Torre Abate tower, we reach the Gran Bosco della Mesola woodlands, the last remaining example of the ancient forests that were found until a few centuries ago all along the Adriatic Coast.



For a pleasant excursion to the interior, the **Gran Bosco** has been equipped with a large area at the entrance laid out for cars and camper vans (with services), a green field to picnic in, and cycle hire. Time to walk though: at least one hour.



Peddalling along through agricultural land reclaimed from the sea with inter-linked drainage canals, pumping stations, and tree-lined roads with typical vegetation, we arrive at the magnificent **Pomposa Abbey**, a



The Canneviè-Porticino-Foce Volano Nature Reserve

magical place loaded with atmosphere from its religious role (but also economic and social) from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. Visit the church, the *Chapter House*, the *Refectory* and the *Museum*.

On the FE301 cycle track alongside the Po di Volano, we pass by the Canneviè-Porticino-Foce Volano nature reserves and the Torre della Finanza tower, to arrive at last at **Lido di Volano**; from here we take the Acciaioi panoramic road which gives a view over the beautiful Valle Bertuzzi and then Lago delle Nazioni. Here we get close to the sea, visiting in order the beach resorts of **Lido delle Nazioni**, **Lido di Pomposa**, **Lido degli Scacchi**, and **Porto Garibaldi**. On the other side

of the canal we finish the list of the coastal resorts with **Lido degli Estensi** and **Lido di Spina**, reached by a cycle/pedestrian ferry.

Follow the cycle track from the fishing centre of Porto Garibaldi and in time you arrive at the beautiful lagoon city of Comacchio, a precious jewel softly set among the warm red of its bricks and the and the sparkling green of its canals. Of ancient origin, it was a 'floating town' (unconnected by road) until 1821. Even today it seems designed by the water, with a network of canals instead of streets, bridges linking up quarters of terraced houses with their hidden androni passages leading to interior courtyards.



### Discover the flavours

Comacchio gastronomy achieves its fullest expression in fish dishes from both salt and fresh water. The eel is king of the table, cooked in a thousand ways: grilled, in *brodetto* soup, with Savoy cabbage, or marinated. The *antipasti* of mussels, scallops or clams, lobsters, *canocchie* (the mantis shrimp), small mixed seafood, or prawns are all delicious; among first courses the same goes for risottos like the *di mare* or *alla pescatora*, spaghetti with clams, fish soup, everything washed down with DOC wines from the Bosco Eliceo.




# In Ferrara

- 1** Ferrara's City Walls 30,950 km
- 2** Where the river used to run 9,010 km
- 3** The historic centre and the ghetto 4,260 km
- 4** The Renaissance City 4,720 km

 **GPS + ROAD BOOK**  
[www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com)

 **Tourist Information Office**

Castello Estense  
 tel. 0532 299303 • [www.ferrarainfo.com](http://www.ferrarainfo.com)

 **Railway Bologna/Venezia • Suzzara/Codigoro**  
 Bicycle transport available. Please check timetables and availability.  
 Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com); 800 91 50 30 • [www.fer.it](http://www.fer.it)



## 1 FERRARA'S CITY WALLS

**Depart/arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 30,950 km

**Difficulty:** suitable for everyone, level, mostly on cycle paths

**Recommended periods:** spring and autumn

**Don't miss:** the monumental beauty of the circuit of walls, mostly in the shade.

The Via delle Erbe cycle path.

From the **Estense Castle** and along **Corso Ercole I d'Este**, the route attains the northern walls of the city and climbs onto the tree-lined earthwork covering the curtain walls, 9km of which embrace the historic centre of Ferrara and can only be followed by bicycle or on foot, either on the embankment or below in the moat. Bastions, towers, battlements, gates and passages unfold one after another, evidence of the diverse defensive techniques elaborated over the course of centuries. As well as this, immersed as they

are in the green of trees and fields, the walls are today an enormous garden for the city, a place for rest and meetings.

After making the circuit of the walls, the route leaves from near the Porta degli Angeli to cross the **Parco Urbano G. Bassani** (park and playing fields) and goes as far as **Francolino** along the convenient cycle track (FE202-FE203), one of the greenways that lead from the city to explore its surroundings. Here it climbs onto the embankment of the Po. The river, yoked to the history of Fer-

rara and its development in the mediaeval era, is majestic: its embankment forms the 'Destra Po' cycle-tourism route. On the way back our route turns left along the embankment towards Pontelagoscuro to admire the nature reserves on the Isola Bianca, one of the oldest islands in the river.

At this point, to make the return to the castle, the journey descends the embankment to follow gravel tracks and other unmade roads back to the Parco Urbano in the shade of the walls.

Le Mura



Corso Ercole I d'Este







Castello Estense

## 2 WHERE THE RIVER USED TO RUN

**Depart/arrive:** Ferrara, Railway Station

**Length:** 9,010 km

**Difficulty:** level route along city streets, cycle paths and restricted traffic zones

**Recommended period:** all year

Once upon a time the Po ran to the south of Ferrara and lapped against a busy river port, a source of riches for the mediaeval city. A series of floods in the 12<sup>th</sup> century moved the main stream of the river further north, and the Ferrara Po began to lose body, finally disappearing almost completely. In time a new quarter of the city grew up in this area.

The route unfolds through the south of Ferrara and crosses the centre of the mediaeval city with its famous monuments: the imposing **Estense Castle**, seat of the Este court until 1598, surrounded by a moat; the cathedral; Casa Rome; the refined Palazzo Schifanoia with its 15<sup>th</sup> century murals; the monastery of Sant'Antonio in Polesine; the Archaeological Museum and its Greco-Etruscan finds from Spina. After visiting the Church of San Giorgio, first cathedral of Ferrara, the route

runs into the green zone at the foot of the wall. This antique stretch of curtain wall was radically changed in the latter part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century on the orders of Duke Alfonso II with the addition of three imposing bastions shaped like the Ace of Spades.



Palazzo Schifanoia



Cattedrale

## 3 THE HISTORIC CENTRE AND THE GHETTO

**Depart/arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 4,260 km

**Difficulty:** level route along city streets, cycle paths and restricted traffic zones

**Recommended period:** all year

**Don't miss:** the Via delle Erbe cycle path.

former Ghetto, made up of what is now Via Mazzini, Via Vignatagliata and Via Vittoria. The building with the three **synagogues** still stands as a museum dedicated to the history of the Jewish community and the most important aspects of their daily life. The journey then shifts to the renaissance part of the city to visit the **Jewish Cemetery**, which extends across a green area beside the walls.

The **Estense Castle** is the symbol of Ferrara, a fortress of 1385 built as a fortified palace to protect the Este family after a revolt in the city, but quickly transformed into a residence and embellished with richly decorated state rooms. To the south of the castle is the oldest part of the city, including the area around the **Palazzo Municipale** (town hall) and the **Cathedral**, about which the life of the city revolves, and which includes the townscape between the cathedral and the old river port.

Here the urban fabric, to a large extent still intact, is easy to read through the streets around the famous Via delle Volte, with its most atmospheric corners.

Also in the mediaeval city is the zone of the



Via Vignatagliata



Palazzo dei Diamanti

#### 4 THE RENAISSANCE CITY

**Depart/arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 4,720 km

**Difficulty:** level route along city streets, cycle paths and restricted traffic zones

**Recommended period:** all year

In 1492 Duke Ercole I, driven by considerations of economics, politics, defence and prestige, decided to expand the capital of his realm, taking within the walls the vast zone north of the **castle**. The project, to be realised with a surprising modernity, was entrusted to Biagio Rossetti, one of the most original architects and planners of the Italian Renaissance, and it became known as the **"Addizione Erculeale"**.

From the castle there is the view down the grandiose Corso Ercole I d'Este, main axis of the Addizione; half-way along it stands the **Palazzo dei Diamanti**, so called

because of the over 8000 stones shaped like pyramids or diamonds covering its two facades. The complex of **Palazzo Massari**, with its magnificent garden adjoining, houses important collections of art, among which are the museums named after Giovanni Boldini and Filippo de Pisis; nearby is broad **Piazza Ariostea**, with a statue of the poet Ludovico Ariosto. The route then visits the **church of San Cristoforo in the former Carthusian Monastery** with its unmistakable massive bulk embraced by porticos, and its interior with precious furnishings and paintings which represent its historic and spiritual memory. At the end of the journey there is the simple **house of Ludovico Ariosto**.

Certosa, Loggiato di San Cristoforo



Cycle tourism routes to and from the Province of Ferrara, complete with maps and technical notes.

### ***Towards Ferrara***

Routes leaving from:

Bolzano

Padova

Venezia-Chioggia

Ravenna

Bologna

Modena

### ***Around Ferrara***

Routes in the province of Ferrara

### ***In Ferrara***

The cycle trail along the city walls and other routes in the historic centre

Detailed road-books, maps, GPS and Google Earth files are available for all routes on the website

**[www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com)**

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