EMILIA-ROMAGNA

Bologna

2 051 / POP 388,400

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

No small wonder Bologna has earned so many historical monikers. *La Grassa* (the fat one) celebrates a rich food legacy (*ragù* or bolognese sauce was first concocted here). *La Dotta* (the learned one) doffs a cap to the city university founded in 1088. *La Rossa* (the red one) alludes to the ubiquity of the terracotta medieval buildings adorned with miles of porticoes, as well as the city's long-standing penchant for left-wing politics.

🗿 Sights

★ San Colombano – Collezione Tagliavini

(www.genusbononiae.it; Via Parigi 5; adult/reduced €7/5; ③ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun) An absolutely stunningly restored church with original frescoes and a medieval crypt rediscovered in 2005, the San Colombano hosts a wonderful collection of over 80 musical instruments amassed by the late octogenarian organist Luigi Tagliavini. Many of the assembled harpsichords, pianos and oboes date from the 1500s and, even more surprisingly, are still in full working order. Listen out for regular free concerts and charge up your phone – this is one of Bologna's most photogenic museums.

MUSEUM

Museo della Storia di Bologna MUSEUM (www.genusbononiae.it; Via Castiglione 8; adult/ reduced €10/8; ⊙10am-7pm Tue-Sun) Walk in a historical neophyte and walk out an A-grade honours student in Bologna's golden past. This magnificent interactive museum, opened in 2012 and skillfully encased in the regal Palazzo Pepoli, is – in a word – an 'education'. Using a 3D film, a mock-up of an old Roman canal and super-modern presentations of ancient relics, the innovative displays start in a futuristic open-plan lobby and progress through 35 chronologically themed rooms that make Bologna's 2500year history at once engaging and epic.

There are many hidden nuggets (who knew Charles V was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in the city?). The only glaring omission is that there isn't too much talk of Mussolini, who was born 'down the road' in Forli.

★ Basilica di Santo Stefano BASILICA (www.abbaziasstefano.wixsite.com/abbaziasstefano; Via Santo Stefano 24; ⊗9.15am-7.15pm Apr-Sep, to 6pm Oct-Mar) Bologna's most unique religious site is this atmospheric labyrinth of interlocking ecclesiastical structures, whose architecture spans centuries of Bolognese history and incorporates Romanesque, Lombard and even ancient Roman elements. Originally there were seven churches – hence the basilica's nickname Sette Chiese – but only four remain intact today: Chiesa del Crocefisso, Chiesa della Trinità, Chiesa del Santo Sepolcro and Santi Vitale e Agricola.

Entry is via the 11th-century Chiesa del Crocefisso, which houses the bones of San Petronio and leads through to the Chiesa del Santo Sepolcro. This austere octagonal structure probably started life as a baptistry. Next door, the Cortile di Pilato is named after the central basin in which Pontius Pilate is said to have washed his hands after condemning Christ to death. In fact, it's an 8th-century Lombard artefact. Beyond the courtvard, the Chiesa della Trinità connects to a modest cloister and a small **museum**. The fourth church, the Santi Vitale e Agricola, is the city's oldest. Incorporating recycled Roman masonry and carvings, the bulk of the building dates from the 11th century. The considerably older tombs of two saints in the side aisles once served as altars

* Basilica di San Petronio BASILICA (2051 648 06 11; www.basilicadisanpetronio.org; & 3-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 7.45am-6.30pm Sat & Sun) Bologna's hulking Gothic basilica is Europe's sixth-largest church, measuring 132m by 66m by 47m. Work began on it in 1390, but it was never finished, and still today its main facade remains incomplete. Inside, look for the huge sundial that stretches 67.7m down the eastern aisle. Designed in 1656 by Gian Cassini and Domenico Guglielmi, this was instrumental in discovering the anomalies of the Julian calendar and led to the creation of the leap year.

PALACE

Torre degli Asinelli

(www.duetorribologna.com; Piazza di Porta Rave-Mar-5 Nov, to 5.45pm 6 Nov-Feb) Bologna's two leaning towers are the city's main symbol. The taller of the two, the 97.2m-high Torre degli Asinelli (the tallest leaning medieval tower in the world), is open to the public, though it's not advisable for the weak-kneed (there are 498 newly re-stabilised steps) or for superstitious students (local lore says if you climb it you'll never graduate). Built by the Asinelli family between 1109 and 1119, it today leans 2.2m off vertical.

Its shorter twin, the 47m-high Torre Garisenda is sensibly out of bounds given its drunken 3.2m tilt. Tickets must be purchased in advance in 45-minute increments from the official website or at Bologna Welcome (p476), or on site by QR code.

Quadrilatero

To the east of Piazza Maggiore, the grid of streets around Via Clavature (Street of Locksmiths) sits on what was once Roman Bologna, Known as the Quadrilatero, this compact district is a great place for a wander with its market stalls, happening cafes and lavishly stocked gourmet delis.

Palazzo Fava

MUSEUM

AREA

(www.genusbononiae.it; Via Manzoni 2; ⊕10am-7pm Tue-Sun) This exhibition space encased in a Renaissance mansion is frequently the site of blockbuster temporary art shows, which range in price from €6 to €14 (adult) and €5 to €10 (reduced). Beyond the exhibitions themselves, the palace's biggest draw is the group of heavily frescoed rooms on the 1st floor, in particular the Sala di Giasone, painted in bright naturalistic style by the precocious young Carraccis (brothers Annibale and Agostino and their cousin Ludovico) in the 1580s, to say nothing of the stunning coffered ceiling.

Pinacoteca Nazionale

MUSEUM

(www.pinacotecabologna.beniculturali.it; Via delle Belle Arti 56; adult/reduced €6/3; ⊗8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jun, 8.30am-2pm Tue-Wed & 1.45-7.30pm Thu-Sun Jul-Aug) The city's main art gallery has a powerful collection of works by Bolognese artists from the 14th century onwards, including a number of important canvases by the late-16th-century Carraccis. Among the founding fathers of Italian baroque art, the Carraccis were deeply influenced by the Counter-Reformation sweeping through Italy in the latter half of the 16th century. Much of their work is religious, and their imagery is often highly charged and emotional.

Palazzo Poggi

TOWER

(www.sma.unibo.it/it/il-sistema-museale/museo-dipalazzo-poggi; Via Zamboni 33; adult/reduced €5/3; 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 10.30am-6pm Sat & Sun) Three university museums are housed inside this 14th-century palace. At Museo di Palazzo Poggi, you can peruse terracotta uteri in the Obstetrics exhibition; remarkable anatomical models with wax muscular systems on top of actual human bones; and impressive exhibitions dedicated to 16th and 17th century ships models, stunning old maps, military architectural planning and physics (don't miss Ramsden's 18th-century electrostatic generator, visible in Antonio Muzzi's 1862 painting with Luigi Galvani to its left).

At the guided-tour-only Observatory **Museum** (adult/reduced $\notin 5/3$), you can climb the 272 steps of Bologna's first tower built for scientific study (as opposed to defence), which was erected in 1726. Along the way, take in various rooms housing an astounding collection of 13th- to 18th-century astrological and navigational instruments, celestial and territorial globes, and a mesmerising Chinese constellation map on rice paper from 1634. The view is one of Bologna's best. Reserve ahead for three daily tours Tuesday through Sunday (10.30am, noon and 3.30pm; maximum 15 persons). The free European Student Museum (MeuS) covers student life from medieval times to the 1960s.

Teatro Anatomico HISTORIC BUILDING (www.archiginnasio.it/teatro.htm; Piazza Galvani 1; €3; ⊗ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm Sat, to 2pm Sun) Housed in Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio, the fascinating 17th-century Teatro Anatomico is where public body dissections were held under the sinister gaze of an Inquisition priest, ready to intervene if proceedings became too spiritually compromising. Cedar-wood tiered seats surround a central marble-topped table while a sculptured Apollo looks down from the ceiling. The canopy above the lecturer's chair is supported by two skinless figures carved into the wood.

Casa di Lucio Dalla

MUSEUM (2051 27 35 30; www.fondazioneluciodalla.it; Via D'Azeglio 15; adult/reduced €15/7.50; @tours Fri, closed Jul-Aug) The 15th-century Palazzo Casa Fontana poi Gamberini - the fascinating, pricier-than-the-Colosseum home

Bologna







Bologna

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EMILIA-ROMAGNA & SAN MARINO BOLOGNA

of eccentric Italian singer-songwriter Lucio Dalla (1943–2012) – opened publicly in 2019 and is a thrilling addition to Bologna's cultural arsenal. Dalla, one of Italy's most world-renowned contemporary songwriters, lived here between 1993 until his death and amassed an extraordinary collection of art. Highlights include numerous 18th-century Neapolitan nativity scenes and many provocative works (see the life-sized bronzed flasher in the music room!).

Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca della Musica di Bologna

MUSEUM (www.museibologna.it/musica; Strada Maggiore 34; adult/reduced €5/3;
③10am-6pm Tue-Sun) This mouthful of a museum inside Palazzo Sanguinetti - the former home of Napoleon's Italian minister - chronicles six centuries of European musical history and is one of the pillars of Bologna's designation as a Unesco Creative City of Music. It houses one of the most astonishing collections of musical artefacts in the world, including extinct instruments (cornets, chromatic harps, lutes, trumpet marine etc) and documents (manuals, sheets, notes, scores etc) curated from the lifelong collection of Giambattista Martina, considered a human Wikipedia of musical history.

Santuario di Santa Maria della Vita CHURCH (Via Clavature 8-10; Compianto adult/reduced €4/2, with Oratorio & museum €8/5; \odot 10am-7pm Tue-Sun) In the heart of the Quadrilatero, this 17th-century shrine is one of Bologna's most beautiful and important, not only for its 13th-century foundation by the Congregation of Flagellati (named for their custom of flagellating themselves for penitence), but also as the home of *Compianto del Cristo Morto* (Lamentation over the Dead Christ), a masterpiece of Italian Early Renaissance sculpture by Niccolò dell'Arca.

FICO Eataly World

MARKET

(Fabbrica Italiana Contadina; www.eatalyworld.it; Via Paolo Canali 8; ⊙ 10am-11pm Sun-Fri, to midnight Sat) FICO, the world's largest agri-food park, opened in 2017 to equal parts cheering and sneering in a formerly dilapidated wholesale farmers' market 7km northeast of Piazza Maggiore. Love it or hate it, the 100,000-sq-metre culinary theme park, is a gastronomic juggernaut. It features 45 restaurants, including ventures from Michelin-starred chefs like Enrico Bartolini; and Trattoria da Amerigo (p473), a detour-worthy restaurant in Emilia-Romagna's truffle territory. It also includes endless speciality shops and kiosks slinging Italy's greatest culinary accomplishments and drool-worthy wine and beer sections.

BASILICA

Basilica Santuario della Madonna di San Luca

(www.santuariobeataverginesanluca.org; Via di San Luca 36; ⊙7am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-6pm Sun) About 3.5km southwest of the city centre, this hilltop basilica occupies a powerful and appropriately celestial position overlooking the teeming red-hued city below. The basilica houses a black representation of the Virgin Mary, supposedly painted by St Luke and transported from the Middle East to Bologna in the 12th century. The 18th-century sanctuary is connected to the city walls by the world's longest portico, held aloft by 666 arches, beginning at Piazza di Porta Saragozza.

🔁 Courses

CIBO - Culinary Institute of Bologna

of Bologna COOKING (\supseteq 370 3698230; www.cookingclassesinbologna. com; Via Agamennone Zappoli 5) Bologna's most heralded cooking school isn't cheap, but topnotch classes will have you opening your own trattoria in no time. Choose from handmade pasta (£165), tack on a market visit (£245) or go all in for a multiday culinary vacation (three days from £945).

⑦ Tours ★ Italian Days

Food Experience FOOD & DRINK (2) 338 4216659; www.italiandays.it; tour €150) Maybe Emilia-Romagna's best time for gluttons and gastronauts, Italian Days' take on the region's most popular day trip – the *parmigiano reggiano*, balsamic vinegar and prosciutto combo tour – is the brain child of charismatic owner Alessando Martini's decade-long palette-pleasing perfection.

💐 Festivals & Events

Tour-Tlen

(www.tour-tlen.it; Piazza Maggiore 1, Palazzo del Re Enzo; €5-20; ⊗ Oct 4) 'Tour-Tlen' means 'tortellino' (Bologna's most famous pasta) in Bolognese dialect, and this culinary extravaganza features 24 local chefs reinterpreting the traditional *tortellino in brodo* (porkstuffed pasta in broth) recipe. Palazzo del Re Enzo, one of the city's iconic 13th-century palaces, becomes a foodie free-for-all of the most gluttonous proportions.

FOOD & DRINK

HOSTEL €

B&B €€

LA ROCCHETTA MATTEI

You'll find one of Emilia-Romagna's most fascinating and curious sights at this captivating hilltop castle 50km southwest of Bologna. La Rocchetta Mattei (www.rocchetta-mattei.it; SP62 Riola-Savignano, Riola di Vergato; adult/reduced €10/5; ④9.30am-1pm & 3-5.30pm Sat & Sun summer, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun winter) was the home of eccentric Italian homeopath Count Cesare Mattei, who invented a quack medical procedure called 'electro-homoeopathy' that, despite being considered total insanity by the medical and scientific communities then and now, had its share of believers and 'cured' cancer patients in the late 19th century when it was one of the most practiced alternative medicines.

Mattei's pseudoscience, however, brought him great wealth, resulting in the outlandish marriage of medieval Gothic and Moorish architecture that pervades throughout this labyrinthine castle in the Apennines. Jarringly mismatched rooms, winding staircases, striking courtyards (such as *II Cortile dei Leoni*, or Lion's Courtyard, a recreation of the courtyard of the Alhambra of Granada in Spain) and a thoroughly mesmerising blackand-white-striped chapel (a reproduction of the interior of Cordoba's Mezquita) are wildly out of place and well worth exploration. Moorish arches and turrets, onion-shaped domes and minarets feature prominently. After Mattei's death in 1896 (his tomb sits above the chapel), the castle bounced between various states of private ownership and abandonment (including being ransacked/occupied by both Nazi and American troops in WWII) before a 10-year restoration project saw it finally open to the public in 2015. To reach the castle (weekends only!), take a train from Bologna Centrale to Riola (€4.75) and walk the remaining 1.1km.

📙 Sleeping

Accommodation in Bologna is geared to the business market, with a glut of midrange to top-end hotels in the convention zone to the north of the city. If possible, avoid the busy spring and autumn trade-fair seasons when hotels get heavily booked, advance reservations are essential, and standard prices can literally double or triple. There is a city tax levied on top of room rates that runs between \pounds 1.50 and \pounds 5 per person per night depending on the rack rate.

Casa Isolani

B&B €

(2 338 2881153; www.casaisolani.com; Via D'Azeglio 1; s/d from €90/100; 🐨 🕤) Occupying two meticulously renovated historic residences (one superbly located mere steps from Piazza Maggiore; the other at Via Santo Stefano 16), Casa Isolani offers a bevy of well-equipped, good-value city-centre rooms, many with original details like terracotta ceilings and period furnishings. It's a DIY choice (no reception or personal services), but there are some epic Bologna views on offer.

We Bologna

HOSTEL €

(20510397900; www.we-gastameco.com; Via de' Carracci 69/14; dm €15-25, tw €35-60; P ❀ @ ⑦) On the suburb side of the ring road 1km north of the train station, this massive hostel is a world unto itself, evoking an upscale American university dormitory aesthetic. The 92 rooms are made up of excellent fourbed dorms with private bathrooms and colourful twin private rooms with huge desks, minibars, closets and hot-water kettles.

You can rent a bike, watch a movie in the mini-cinema or whip up some *tagliatelle* in the modern kitchen. From October to July, half the rooms are turned over to university students, so there's always a great vibe. To get here, catch bus 30 from Via Rizzoli just near Le Due Torri, which drops you within a few hundred metres.

Dopa Hostel

(2051 095 24 61; www.dopahostel.com; Via Irnerio 41; dm €20-28, d €60-80, tr without bathroom €60-90; இ@⑦) Barely a kilometre from the train station, this stylish hostel, the baby of detail-oriented owner Paris, features all manner of recycled design touches (Mason-style jars as light covers, beer crates reincarnated as wall shelving), classy tiled bathrooms and a communal kitchen that's above and beyond with an induction stovetop.

★Bologna nel Cuore

(2329 2193354; www.bolognanelcuore.it; Via Cesare Battisti 29; s €90-120, d €125-145, apt €130-145; P 🕸) This centrally located, immaculate and well-loved B&B features a pair of bright, high-ceilinged rooms with pretty tiled bathrooms and endless mod cons, plus two comfortable, spacious apartments with kitchen and laundry facilities. Owner and art historian Maria generously shares her knowledge of Bologna and serves breakfasts featuring jams made with fruit picked near her childhood home in the Dolomites.

★Hotel Metropolitan BOUTIQUE HOTEL CC (2051 22 93 93; www.hotelmetropolitan.com; Via dell'Orso 6; d €140-180, ste €220-300; P 🕷 @ 🗟) One of Bologna's few design hotels, the 45room Met mixes functionality with handsome modern furnishings. It injects peace and tranquillity into its frenetic city-centre location with unexpected touches such as superior rooms upstairs surrounding a small courtyard with olive trees and newer slate-toned deluxe 4th-floor rooms with terraces. The rooftop courtyard is superb sundowner territory.

Porta San Mamolo BOUTIQUE HOTEL CC (2051 58 30 56; www.hotel-portasanmamolo.it; Vicolo del Falcone 6; s/d/tr from €70/90/120, ste €150-250; ₩ 🔊) Probably the city's most romantic choice, Porta San Mamolo's 48 rooms are spread about five adjoining buildings centred on an ivy-draped courtyard and patio dominated by a persimmon tree. Standard rooms are steeped in classic elegance but lack wow - you're better off springing for a superior with an intimate terrace. Hardwood desks and wardrobes and gold-leaf light fixtures feature prominently.

Arthotel Orologio

DESIGN HOTEL CC (2051 745 74 11; www.bolognarthotels.it; Via IV

Novembre 10c: s €109-255. d €129-282. ste €185-430; 🖻 🕸 @ 🗟) Affiliated with the upmarket Bologna Art Hotels mini-chain, this refined pile with a prime location just off Piazza Maggiore seduces guests with its slick service, smart rooms furnished in elegant gold. blue and burgundy, swirling grey-and-white marble bathrooms, antique clocks and complimentary chocs. It also sponsors rotating art shows on the hotel walls and in the sweet piazzetta out front. Free bicycles for guests.

Two sister hotels within a two-block radius of the Orologio offer similarly enticing amenities: the Arthotel Commercianti (≥ 051 745 75 11; Via de' Pignattari 11; s €100-180, d €150-260, ste €220-340; **P** 🕸 @ 🗟) and the more modern Arthotel Novecento.

Prendiparte B&B

B&B €€€

(2335 5616858; www.prendiparte.it; Piazzetta Prendiparte 5; d €500; 중) You will never repeat, never - stay anywhere else like this. Forget the B&B tag: you don't just get a

room here, you get an entire 900-year-old tower (Bologna's second tallest). The living area (bedroom, kitchen and lounge with newly renovated bathroom) is spread over three floors and there are nine more levels to explore, with outstanding views from the terrace up top.

The price includes breakfast, a welcome drink on the panoramic terrace and a personal tour of the tower with the convivial owner, Matteo Giovanardi. For another couple of hundred euros, you can have a private dinner catered by a professional chef or a private jazz concert. Find a millionaire to shack up with and pretend you're an errant medieval prince(ss) for the night!

X Eating

Bologna is the kind of city where you can be discussing Chomsky with a leftie newspaperseller one minute, and eating like an erstwhile Italian king in a fine restaurant the next. Two meals into your Bologna stay and you'll start to understand why the city's known as La Grassa.

MARKET

Mercato Ritrovato

(www.facebook.com/mercatoritrovato; Via Azzo Gardino 65, Cortile della Cineteca; @ 9am-2pm Sat) This lively, eco-focused Saturday market is a wonderful spot to escape fellow tourists and wander among booths of craft beer, wine, artisanal cheeses, sweets and readymade meals. Locals plant themselves on picnic tables in the Cinema Lumière (p475) courtvard, chowing down on fried sardines, vegan pastas, tigella sandwiches and other farm-to-table goodies while shopping for organic produce and other sundries.

* Cremeria Santo Stefano GELATO € (www.facebook.com/CremeriaSantoStefano: Via Santo Stefano 70; small/medium/large €2.50/3/ 3.50. closed Jan: ⊗11am-11pm) Offering a welcoming rustic-chic ambience, this locally recommended, family-run gelateria shakes things up among the usual Italian artisanal suspects and brings imported ingredients into the mix, like Turkish pistachios (for the absolutely excellent salted pistachio flavour) and Venezuelan chocolate.

La Sorbetteria Castiglione GELATO € (www.lasorbetteria.it; Via Castiglione 44d; small/ medium/large €2.80/3.40/4; ⊗11.30am-midnight summer, 12.30-3pm & 7.30pm-11pm rest of year) A beloved Bologna institution since 1994, this temple to gelati is a bit peripheral

WORTH A TRIP

TRATTORIA DA AMERIGO

Emilia-Romagna's best dining experience awaits in truffle territory. In the small village of Savigno, a 30km detour west of Bologna, the fantastic **Trattoria da Amerigo** (2051 670 83 26; www.amerigo1934.it; Via Marconi 14-16, Savigno; meals €45-55, tasting menus €38-50; \odot 7.30-10.30pm Tue-Fri, noon-2.30pm & 7.30-10.30pm Sat & Sun) armed with a Michelin star (but lacking any pretension) is the domain of legendary pastamaker Nonna Giuliana Vespucci (you wish she was *your* grandmother!), executive chef Alberto Bettini and his talented young apprentice, Giacomo Orlandi.

Together, their traditional takes and seasonal creations are the Italian dishes of your culinary dreams. Think *tortelli* stuffed with *parmigiano reggiano* and wood-fired prosciutto, gnocchi with regional truffles, Parmesan basket-cradled poached egg with regional mushrooms and shaved truffles – we could go on and on... You could drop a pay cheque on the in-house provisions at the attached gourmet shop. Book a bed, too (singles/doubles from €50/80). You'll want breakfast!

to the centre but well worth the walk for decadently creamy flavours like pistachio, *gianduia* (chocolate mixed with hazelnuts) or salted caramel.

Pasta Fresca Naldi

EMILIAN €

(www.facebook.com/pastafrescanaldi; Viadel Pratello 69; dishes $\in 6-8$; \otimes noon-2.30pm & 7-11pm Tue-Sun) Owner Valeria keeps an army of *nonnas* in line at this simple pasta lab tucked among myriad bars on Bologna's booziest street. Pasta is sold raw or cooked and is handmade before your eyes. The rich *tortellini al pasticcio* (pork-stuffed pasta with fresh cream and *ragi*) is immensely satisfying, while *tagliatelle* with prosciutto and lemon is a tart and refreshing change of pace.

Bottega Portici

ITALIAN €

(www.bottegaportici.it; Piazza di Porta Ravegnana 2; meals €5-9; \otimes 7.30am-10pm) This trendy pit stop under the shadow of the towers is great for high-quality Bologna specialities (such as tortellini in *brodo* or with sage and butter, and *tagliatelle al ragú*) served up lightning fast or to go.

It doubles as a gourmet provisions shop (pick up the famous Bolognese broth to go), and the impressive, high-tech Faema E71 espresso machine (which costs significantly more than most Fiats!) means it's a great choice for a stunning *caffé* as well.

Sfoglia Rina

EMILIAN €

(www.sfogliarina.it; Via Castiglione 5b; mains €9.50-11; ^(c) shop 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun, restaurant 11.30am-7pm; ^(c)) Hurry up and wait at this famous Casalecchio di Reno transplant – it's impossible to walk by without salivating over its fresh pasta. Started in 1963 in the Bolognese suburbs, the modern and hip city location attracts oodles of in-the-know pasta lovers for both the traditional (*tagliatelle*, tortellini, *tortelloni*) and weekly-changing creative takes.

Communal seating (write your name, table number and order on the paper provided) under the pasta-basket-draped ceiling and a counter by the fresh pasta shop are the fastest to be seated. No reservations.

★ Trattoria Da Me

(2051555486; www.facebook.com/trattoriadame; Via San Felice 50; meals €29-38; ⊗ noon-2.30pm & 7.30-10.30pm) Bologna's most exciting reinvention is this formerly uneventful trattoria transformed by chef Elisa Rusconi, who triumphed on Italian television show 4 *Ristoranti* and upgraded her grandfather's restaurant – at it since 1937 – into a daring, must-stop dining destination in the city's culinary landscape.

Trattoria Bertozzi

EMILIAN €€

TRATTORIA €€

(2) 051 614 14 25; Via Andrea Costa 84; meals €26-40; \odot noon-3pm & 7-10.30pm Mon, Fri & Sat, 7-10.30pm Tue-Thu) Often touted as Bologna's best restaurant by in-the-know culinarians – especially locals – this unassuming neighbourhood trattoria is both a rousing good-time and a deeply serious dive into Bologna's famed specialities. It's run by a jovial pair who excel as much with hospitality and wine-swilling as they do with *tagliatelle al ragù*, meatballs with peas, and *gramigna* pasta with saffron, *guanciale* (cured pork cheeks) and zucchini.

Come to escape tourists, but not sport fans (on local game days, it becomes party HQ for superfans). It's located 2km west of Piazza Maggiore in Quartiere Saragozza. Reserve.

Trattoria di Via Serra

TRATTORIA €€ (≥ 051 631 23 30; www.trattoriadiviaserra.it; Via Tue-Wed, noon-4pm & 7pm-midnight Thu-Sat; 😨) Book at least three weeks in advance at this seemingly unassuming trattoria in Bolognina, just a step outside the city centre. Flavio and Tommaso came down from their established destination restaurant in the mountains in Zocca seven years ago wielding recipes (carefully outlined on the short menu) that forge a bridge between classic Emilian and hilltop twists.

All'Osteria Bottega

OSTERIA €€

(2051 58 51 11; Via Santa Caterina 51; meals €36-41; @12.30-2.30pm & 8-10.30pm Tue-Sat) At Bologna's temple of culinary contentment, owners Daniele and Valeria lavish attention on every table between trips to the kitchen for astonishing plates of culatello di Zibello ham, tortellini in capon broth, Petroniana-style veal cutlets (breaded and fried, then topped with prosciutto di Parma and parmigiano reggiano, and pan-sauteed in broth), off-menu speciality pigeon and other Slow Food delights.

Oltre

GASTRONOMY CC

(2051 006 60 49; www.oltrebologna.it; Via Majani 1; meals €36-43; @12.30-2.30pm & 7.30-10.30pm Mon & Thu-Sun, 7.30-10.30pm Wed; 🕤) Hip Oltre (Beyond) bucks tradition with its trendy Instagrammable dining space, an absolute detour from Bologna down to nearly every detail. Chalk up the Michael Jordan and skateboard-accented decor to youthful foolishness; it's the adventurous kitchen of Chef Daniele Bendanti that has the city's gastronauts in a frenzy.

Al Sangiovese

TRATTORIA CC

(2051 58 30 57; www.alsangiovese.com; Vicolo del Falcone 2; meals €24-40; @12.15-2.30pm & 7-10.30pm Mon-Sat; 🕤) A convivial husbandand-wife team as generous with their portions as they are with their hospitality runs this somewhat off-the-beaten-path trattoria in the centre. On a cold day, the savoury passatelli in brodo (passatelli pasta in broth) is immensely satisfying, but heaping platefuls of tagliatelle al ragù and strozzapreti pasta with porcini mushrooms, peas and prosciutto are nearly impossible to overlook.

Drinking & Nightlife

Hit the graffiti-strewn, somewhat seedy streets of the university district (Via Petroni) after sunset and the electrifying energy is enough to make any jaded 30- or 40-something feel young again. For a more upmarket, dressier scene head to the Quadrilatero. Try the more down-to-earth Via del Pratello for the city's coolest concentration of bars.

🖈 Le Serre dei Giardini Margherita BAR (2370 3336439; www.vetro.kilowatt.bo.it; Via Castiglione 134; Sam-1am Mon-Fri, 9am-1am Sat & Sun Mar-Dec, to 8pm Mon-Wed, to midnight Thu-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun Jan-Feb; 🕤) 🖉 Bologna's best time: parking yourself, with an Aperol spritz (€4) in hand, among the cool kids and digital nomads at these formerly abandoned city greenhouses. They have been transformed into an immensely cool and highly recommended co-working space, vegetarian/vegan restaurant (Vetro) and community gardens in the heart of Giardini Margherita, the city's largest green space.

🖈 Ranzani 13 CRAFT BEER (2051 849 37 43; www.ranzani13.it; Via Camillo Ranzani 5/12; @noon-2.30pm & 7pm-1am Mon-Thu, to 2am Fri, 7pm-2am Sat, 7pm-1am Sun; 🕤) Ditch the city centre and venture just outside Bologna's ring road to a distinctly unremarkable apartment block where one of the city's best craft-beer bars and gastropubs awaits. Twelve rotating taps (beers €3 to €6; good Belgian and Danish choices) complement a delectable selection of gourmet pizzas like Happy Pork (slow-cooked pork shoulder, burrata, basil and Parmesan) and more.

II Punto

CRAFT BEER

COFFEE

(www.puntobologna.com; Via San Rocco 1g; ⊙ 5.30pm-1.30am; 중) Bologna's best and most Italian-focused craft-beer bar offers eight taps of birra artigianale (including one hand-pump; draught beers €3.50 to €6) and over 150 mostly local and Belgian choices by the bottle, which you can take at the small bar or at one of the informal hardwood tables inside or out.

Aroma

(www.ilpiaceredelcaffe.it; Via Porta Nova 12b; ⊗8am-6pm Mon-Sat) You'd walk right past this seemingly typical Italian caffè and never think twice, the wince-inducing logo certainly not helping matters. But inside, Alessandro Galtieri's passion and fierce dedication to single-origin and micro-lot speciality coffee (five espressos on offer per day; €1.20 to €2.80) is the city's best (to say nothing of his third place at the 2019 World Brewers Cup).

CINEMA

JAZZ

Antica Drogheria Calzolari

(www.anticadrogheriacalzolari.it; Via Giuseppe Petroni 9: 38am-2pm & 4-8.30pm Mon-Sat) This standing-room-only wine bar is one of Bologna's most social, attracting an eccentric early-evening crowd - bohemian art professors, seasoned drunks, wayward wanderers - who spill out onto the sidewalk along lively Via Petroni.

Caffè Rubik

(www.cafferubik.com; Via Marsala 31d; ⊕ 7am-1am Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm Sun; (2) This bohemian pop-art coffee and amaro bar packs a wallop of soul into a tiny space. Cassette tapes and old school lunchboxes line the walls, and the exquisite espresso - among Bologna's best – is unexpectedly served in Japanese porcelain. For something stiffer, the amaro selection is the city's best.

Osteria del Sole

BAR 1d:

BAR

WINE BAR

(www.osteriadelsole.it: Vicolo Ranocchi ⊙10.30am-10.30pm Mon-Sat) The sign outside this ancient Quadrilatero dive bar tells you all you need to know - 'vino'. Bring in your own food, and elbow past the alley-filling cacophony of smashed students, mildly inebriated grandpas and the occasional Anglo tourist for a sloppily poured glass of chianti, Sangiovese or Lambrusco. It's a spot-on formula that's been working since 1465.

🌠 Entertainment

Bologna, courtesy of its large student population, knows how to rock - but it also knows how to clap politely at the opera. The most comprehensive listing guides are bilingual Bologna Welcome (www.bolognawelcome.it; check under 'Live') and Bologna Agenda Cultura (http://agenda.comune.bologna.it/ cultura). During the summer, Cineteca di Bologna (2051 219 48 26; www.cinetecadi bologna.it; Piazza Re Enzo 1; ⊗10am-7.30pm) hosts films in Piazza Maggiore on the biggest open-air cinema screen in Europe.

Covo Club

LIVE MUSIC

(www.covoclub.it; Viale Zagabria 1) The city's best alternative-rock club, located about 5km northeast of the centre. It has drawn the likes of Franz Ferdinand, Mars Volta, the Decemberists, Modest Mouse and the XX in recent years.

Oratorio di Santa Cecilia

LIVE MUSIC (www.sangiacomofestival.it; Via Zamboni 15) The annual San Giacomo Festival brings regular free chamber-music recitals to this lovely

space. Check the website or the board outside for upcoming events.

Cinema Lumière

(≥ 051 219 53 11; www.cinetecadibologna.it; Via Azzo Gardino 65; tickets €7) One of Italy's top indie cinemas, run by the world-renowned Cineteca di Bologna. Films are shown in their original language. Tickets are reduced to €5 on Wednesdays.

Cantina Bentivoglio

(≥ 051 26 54 16; www.cantinabentivoglio.it; Via gna's top jazz joint, the Bentivoglio is a jack of all trades: part wine bar (over 600 labels), part restaurant (eat elsewhere) and part jazz club (live music six nights a week most of the year). This much-loved institution oozes cosy charm, with its labyrinth of chambers sporting ancient brick floors, arched ceilings and shelves full of wine bottles.

Bravo Caffè

(www.bravocaffe.it; Via Mascarella 1; ⊗8pmlate) Hosting the university district's most dependable and varied mix of live music, Bravo begins nightly operations as a restobar with homemade Bolognese specialities and a 300-label wine cellar. It then moves into club mode, with an eclectic mix of rock, blues, funk, jazz and more. Throughout Emilia-Romagna, it's renowned as a livemusic reference.

Teatro Comunale

(≥ 051 52 90 19; www.tcbo.it; Largo Respighi 1; ⊗box office 2-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat) This venerable theatre, where Wagner's works were heard for the first time in Italy, is still Bologna's leading opera and classicalmusic venue.

Shopping

If you came for the food, head for the Quadrilatero, a haven of family-run delis and speciality local food shops; head to FICO Eataly World (p470) for Italian-wide specialities. You'll find myriad Italian boutiques and upscale shopping along main avenues like Via Rizzolo, Via Ugo Bassi and Via dell'Indipendenza. Don't miss the Mercato Antiquario Città di Bologna (Bologna Antique Market; Piazza Santo Stefano; 😪 8.30am-6pm, closed Jul & Aug).

New Dandy

(www.newdandy.it; Via Marescalchi 4; ⊕10am-2pm & 3-8pm Mon-Sat) For those looking for a true made-to-measure Italian suit, an exquisite

LIVE MUSIC

THEATRE

CLOTHING

experience awaits at this fiercely artisanal tailor, where Leonardo and Gianluca will take you (and your suit) on a journey of oldschool craftsmanship that forges a creative bridge between classic Napolese tailoring and English sensibility.

Paolo Atti

FOOD

(www.paoloatti.com; Via delle Drapperie 6; \odot 7.30am-7.15pm Mon-Thu, to 7.30pm Fri & Sat) This shop in Bologna's famed Quadrilatero neighbourhood specialises in beautifully packaged boxes of traditional Bolognese tortellini stuffed with prosciutto, *mortadella* (pork cold cut), fresh Parmesan and nutmeg. Decorative boxes run €10 or €18 empty, and then can be filled with as much as 1kg or 3kg of pasta (€37.90 per kg).

Crete – Pièce Unique

DESIGN

(www.cretepieceunique.it; Via San Felice 48a; \odot 9.30am-1.30pm & 3.30-7.30pm Tue-Sat) An interesting shop for unique, nearly 100% Italian-made (there's one Spaniard represented) jewellery, funky ceramics and interior design pieces, many of which are created in the design studio out the back.

Information

Bologna Welcome (Tourist Office; 2051658 31 11; www.bolognawelcome.it; Piazza Maggiore 1e; ⊕ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Bologna's official tourist-information hub offers daily, two-hour morning and afternoon walking tours (€15), among other excursions, and can help with bookings. It puts out a handy daily **Ospedale Maggiore** (**2** 051 647 81 11; Largo Nigrisoli 2) West of the city centre.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Bologna's **Guglielmo Marconi airport** (2051 647 96 15; www.bologna-airport.it; Via Triumvirato 84) is 8km northwest of the city. It's served by more than 40 airlines, including Ryanair, easylet and British Airways.

BUS

Intercity buses leave from the **Autostazione di Bologna** (Bus Station; 2051 24 54 00; www.autostazionebo.it; 2024hr) off Piazza XX Settembre, just southeast of the train station. However, for nearly all destinations, the train is a better option.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Bologna is linked to Milan, Florence and Rome by the A1 Autostrada del Sole. The A13 heads directly to Ferrara, Padua and Venice, and the A14 to Rimini and Ravenna. Bologna is also on the SS9 (Via Emilia), which connects Milan to the Adriatic coast. The SS64 goes to Ferrara.

Major car-hire companies are represented at Guglielmo Marconi airport and outside

THE PATH OF GODS

Few would argue that Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany offer two of Italy's most idyllic and bucolic countryside landscapes – why not make a week of walking it? The ancient 130km **Via degli Dei** (www.viadeglidei.it) connecting Bologna and Florence through the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines mountains was once traipsed upon by Etruscans and Romans, but it had remained largely lost until its discovery by mountaineers Cesare Agostini and Franco Santi in 1979.

In 2018 the two regions joined forces, stepping up both the infrastructure and their marketing of the trekking route, leading to 10,000 hikers legging the path that same year. The route can be covered on foot (five to eight days) or bike (two to three days), taking in a variety of landscapes, including centuries-old chestnut groves and the dramatic rock formations making up **Riserva Naturale Contrafforte Pliocenico** in Emilia-Romagna to olive tree-draped hillsides of Tuscany; in parts, the Roman-laid Flaminia Militare road (dating back to 187 BC) leads to Medicean villas and of course there's an abundance of traditional osterie (casual taverns) and trattorie along the route.

The path remains open year-round, leaving from Piazza Maggiore in Bologna and finishing in Piazza della Signoria in Florence. There is a network of campgrounds, *agriturismi* (farm stays), hotels and B&Bs along the way to rest your weary head (and feet!). Weatherwise, April, May, June, September and October are your best bets.

the train station. City offices include **Budget** (2) 051 634 16 32; www.budgetautonoleggio. it; Via Nicolo dall'Arca 2d; ③ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat, 8.30am-12.30pm Sun) and **Hertz** (2) 344 1908587; www.hertz.it; Via Boldrini 4; ③ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat). Recommended **B-Rent** (2) 334 8593840; www.b-rent.it; Via de' Carracci; ④ 8am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, to 1pm Sun) is the only agency operating from within the train station itself.

TRAIN

Bologna is a major transport junction for northern Italy, with most trains arriving at **Bologna Centrale station** (\supseteq 89 20 21; www.trenitalia. com; Piazza Medaglie d'Oro 2; \odot 24hr, ticket windows 6am-9pm). The high-speed train to Florence (from €17) takes only 35 minutes. Other lightning-quick *Frecciarossa* links include Venice (from €17, 1¼ hours), Milan (from €23, 1¼ hours), Rome (from €27, 2¼ hours) and Naples (from €36, 3½ hours). Slower, less expensive trains also serve these destinations. Check Italo (www. italotreno.it), Trenitalia's upstart competition, for alternative departures and prices.

Do as locals do and ask taxis to drop you directly at the underground high-speed platforms ('Stazione Alta Velocità') at the station (though occasionally *Freccia* trains are moved elsewhere).

Frequent trains connect Bologna with cities throughout Emilia-Romagna, including Modena, Parma, Ferrara, Ravenna and Rimini.

Getting Around

BICYCLE

BikeinBo (2347 0017996; www.bikeinbo.it; Via dell'Indipendenza 69a; bike rental per day/ week €15/58; ⊗ 9am-8pm) Delivers a rental bike to your door anywhere in Bologna. Rates include helmet, lock, maps and front basket; an optional child seat costs €2 extra.

MoBike (https://mobike.com/it) Bologna's bike-share scheme offers 2200 bikes at 200 stations around the city. Download the app to get moving – fares start at €0.30 per 30 minutes with a €20 deposit.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bologna has an efficient bus system, run by **TPER** (\supseteq 051 29 02 90; www.tper.it), with information booths at Bologna Centrale train station and the nearby Autostazione di Bologna. Navetta (shuttle) A or bus 27 from Piazza XX Settembre are the most direct of several buses that connect the train station with the city centre. A single costs €1.50 (€2 on board; transfers are free within a 75-minute window of your ticket validation); a 24-hour ticket (giornaliero) is €6 and a 10-trip City Pass is €14.

Tickets can be purchased at tobacco stands (tabaccherias), newstands (edicolas) or on

WORTH A TRIP

GELATO MUSEUM

Opened in 2012, the family-friendly Gelato Museum Carpigiani (2051 650 53 06: www.gelatomuseum.com: Via Emilia 45. Anzola: adult/reduced €7/5. run by Carpigiani, Italy's most famous gelato-machine manufacturer - traces the history of frozen desserts from ancient times to the present. Discover 19th-century ice-cream carts, try out vintage gelato-making equipment and sample a flavour or two on the Taste Gelato History tour, or don an apron and create your own gelato under the expert guidance of teachers from the adjacent Gelato University.

board; as well as via the bilingual **Roger** app (iOS/Android; www.rogerapp.it).

Fines are issued regularly for those without valid tickets.

Modena

2059 / POP 186,000

If Italy were a meal, Modena would be the main course. Here, on the flat plains of the slow-flowing Po, lies one of the nation's great gastronomic centres, the creative force behind *real* balsamic vinegar, giant tortellini stuffed with tantalising fillings, and sparkling Lambrusco wine. It boasts backstreets crammed with some of the best restaurants no one's ever heard of, and one, Osteria Francescana, that everybody's heard of – it was awarded top spot on the coveted 'World's 50 Best Restaurants' list in 2016, and again in 2018, the first Italian restaurant to nab the honour.

For those with bleached taste buds, the city has another equally lauded legacy: cars. The famous Ferrari museum (p490) is situated in the nearby village of Maranello. Modena is also notable for its haunting Romanesque cathedral and as the birthplace of the late Italian opera singer Pavarotti, whose former home is a worthwhile museum just outside town.

📀 Sights

Several of Modena's museums and galleries, including Galleria Estense and Musei Civico, are conveniently housed together in the Palazzo dei Musei on the western fringes of ©Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd



If You Like...Try...

Like Florence? Try Bologna

Climb the 498 steps of medieval Torre degli Asinelli and the city unfurls before you like a map. There were once more than 100 such towers here, but only some 20 remain. Notwithstanding, the vista is still impressive. Rather like the local politics, it's also strikingly red with terracotta porticos stretching like elegant walkways through the city's diverse urban districts, including the seedy but strangely alluring University quarter. Bologna's university is the oldest in the world and was the first to adopt the moniker *universitas*.

In the central square, Piazza Maggiore, locals and tourists recline as if at the beach. They're probably considering Bologna's other great achievement, its food. This is the home of yolky pasta: fine ribbons of *tagliatelle* entwined with *ragù* (meat sauce), *tortellini in brodo* (pork pasta parcels in a thin soup), and the artisanal ice cream of 1950s parlour La Sorbetteria Castiglione (p472).

Like the Dolomites? Try the Parco Nazionale della Majella

Welcome to a haunting, spiritual land dotted with lonely medieval hermitages and sprinkled with ancient beech forests where some of Europe's last surviving bears and wolves eke out a precarious existence. Perhaps, the most surprising fact about Parco Nazionale della Majella is that it lies barely 90 minutes by car from Rome (far closer than either Florence or Naples).

Yet, like much of Abruzzo, it's largely ignored by international tourists. What they're missing is a mystic mountain massif: wild but, at the same time, refreshingly user-friendly and accessible.