



BLOGVILLE
EmiliaRomagna

2012

An extra-ordinary
living experience in the
Emilia Romagna
Region of Italy



BlogVille

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Intro

50 bloggers from all over the world, 83 days of live blogging, two bases and over 250 published stories: these are some of the numbers of BlogVille Emilia Romagna, a project created for discovering and promoting the Italian *land with a soul* Emilia Romagna online. I'm sure that all the hosted bloggers agree with this, after their experience here.

That is the impression I got from reading each of the posts that this innovative project generated, and that is why we have decided to create something that keeps all of these precious stories together and shows what BlogVille Emilia Romagna is made of.

In each post you can understand that every bloggers was able to see and feel the real *soul* in every corner of the Emilia Romagna region. The soul of the people living here, that they met every day when going out of the apartment; when in a bar asking for an espresso

or cappuccino; or in a restaurant, whilst falling in love with the food of Emilia Romagna.

The soul of the art and the history while exploring every hidden corners and ancient roads of the Art Cities of Emilia Romagna. The soul of the Adriatic Sea, that they were able to see and hear in every wave crashing on the beach; in the vibes of the Pink Night and in the sunrises that many of them had the chance to experience. The soul of the engines, the motors and the museums of the Italian MotorValley, and the soul in the roars that some of them could hear and feel while driving a Lamborghini, when joined me at the Mille Miglia in Bologna, or attending the World Ducati Week. The green soul of the forests and the nature of the Apennines from Piacenza to Rimini, and the blue and sparkling soul of the spas of the Emilia Romagna. That is why we call it a *land with a soul*. And now this soul has become bigger since it has captured the bloggers' and readers' souls as well.

This e-book is as well a gift for all those who contributed and are still contributing to present this *land with a soul* through blogposts, tweets, photos and videos and to everyone involved in it. The entire Emilia Romagna

says thank you. All bloggers and each reader are welcome here anytime to live and experience this *land with a soul* with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Babbi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andrea" on the top line and the last name "Babbi" on the bottom line.

Andrea Babbi

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How to read this ebook

This eBook would like to sketch out the wealth of the contributions that arrived from everywhere in the world, to enrich the BlogVille project description of Emilia Romagna.

Several dozens of posts, hundreds of pictures, videos and tweets, available on the web. Given this abundance of material, the eBook text offers a selection in order to describe at best the spirit behind this initiative, and the feelings of the bloggers who have taken part into it.

The eBook can be read like a normal book- from the first to the last page (page by page)- but readers may also choose to create their own travel itineraries by picking specific categories such as geographic locations (as described by the words of the bloggers, you may feel is closer to your interests) or by the themes: Wine & Food, Art Cities, MotorValley, People, BlogVille project. There are also chronological and by author indexes.

The table of contents can drive you directly to the photo-gallery with all the pictures, or you can select the videos from the multimedia-gallery.

Moreover, you can also browse the through the references provided at the end of each piece of content. No matter how many hyperlinks you click on, you can always find your way back to the main menu.

For those who are eager to dig deeper into the BlogVille experience and browse the contents that did not make it to the eBook, there are dedicated hyperlinks highlighted by the symbol ↗.

**Have a good journey,
The BlogVille Staff**

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Blog-Ville - The Travel Blogger Apartment in Emilia Romagna, Italy



Melvin Böcher
[@traveldudes](https://twitter.com/traveldudes)

Travel Bloggers... This is so exciting!

You now have the chance to **travel the way you like** and will get supported by the tourism board of Emilia Romagna!

They provide you your base... The Travel Blog Apartment ↗ - Blog Ville ↗... Your home and you will have the chance to explore Italy!



Traveldudes is proud to be partner of this project, which means that if you don't feel comfortable enough that your blog doesn't have the numbers/stats to provide the exposure, we will work together!

That's social media, the way we love it!

Just [contact us](#), Nicholas Montemaggi ([Tourism Board of Emilia Romagna](#)), Kash Bhattacharya ([BudgetTraveler.org](#)) or Melvin ([Traveldudes.org](#)) and we will get you to a fantastic region of Italy!

Eat, feel and live like a local...

Share your experiences with your and our readers!

There are two apartments and two dates to choose from:

Eat, feel and live like a local... in Bologna!

From 23rd of April to the 31st of May

Eat, feel and live like a local... in Rimini!

From the 2nd of June to the 14th of July

You have all the freedom to travel and the Tourism Board is very happy to support you and give you some ideas what to do.

Blog trips are nothing new, but **this kind of blog trip is new!**

We brainstormed and looked for ways to get the most out of travel blogging and social media. We believe that this concept will provide the best results.

Many blog trips were similar to press trips so far, if they were not even combined. But the blogging industry is different and most travel bloggers are no journalists, but travelers who share their experiences.

We all know that you are best in something, when you can stand behind your product. In this case, the product is travel and you are at your best, if you can travel the way you like best. **It's up to you how your itinerary will look like!**

The region Emilia Romagna got all the options for you available:

If you are interested in culture and would like to visit museums, go for it!

If you are a food blogger and love the Italian cuisine, let's have a cooking session in our apartment with an Italian chef, who will share his knowledge with you.

Maybe you like the outdoors and would love to go hiking? Let's get the boots on and find some nice tracks! Or let's get on a bike for one day!

What about the nightlife and beaches of Rimini? This is for sure also worth blogging about!

Emilia Romagna got much to offer!↗

Let us know what YOU like and we'll do our best to help you to promote a wonderful region of Italy!

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The BlogVille project - Wanna eat, feel & live like a local in Emilia Romagna?



Kash Bhattacharya
[@BudgetTraveller](https://twitter.com/BudgetTraveller)

INTRODUCING THE BLOG VILLE PROJECT

It's an idea that started over a few beers (as great ideas always do) at **Buy Tourism Online, Florence** with fellow blogger Melvin Boecher from Traveldudes.org and Nicholas Montemaggi, [Emilia Romagna Tourism Board](http://EmiliaRomagnaTourismBoard.org).

Inspired by the debates at BTO Florence we were talking about the new trends in tourism like the rise of the concept of 'living like a local' when tourists visited a city.

This desire to live like a local has seen a boom in the popularity of holiday apartment rentals like AirBnB,

Wimdu, Roomarama, Migoa, BudgetPlaces.com, Home-Away across the world.

Tourists want to spend more time in the destination, discovering more about the everyday life of locals- visiting local markets, go to the same cafe for breakfast, take time to soak in the spirit of the city and learn more about its people.

The concept of slow travel is a perfect fit for travel bloggers.

When visiting a destination, bloggers tend to provided a jampacked itinerary, similar to the traditional press trip model with only a few days in each location, packing in the 'must see' destinations that the Destination Marketing Organisation is looking to promote.

This is where I believe the traditional press trip model doesn't maximise the potential of travel bloggers.

A travel blogger's USP is to tell a good story and being able to share that message effectively across it's very targetted, loyal social networks.

Whether it's via a tweet, blog post, Instagram picture or a video on Youtube- a blogger is a child of the 21st century,offering a numerous range of multimedia con-

tent possibilites and channels to help drive the story of a destination.

Given the independence, a travel blogger could discover a whole range of exciting stories for a destination, in the process offering a new perspective and adding value to the DMO.

With the **BlogVille** *Emilia Romagna* concept, travel bloggers will have the freedom to stay for a longer period in two fantastic cities- Bologna and Rimini, with the opportunity to discover to eat, feel and live like a local.

Bologna, one of the hosts for the BlogVille project is the perfect departure point for discovering the region's treasures like Modena, Reggio-Emilia, Parma, Piacenza, Ferrara and the Motorvalley, and the top and world famous food producers of the Prosciutto di Parma, the Parmigiano-Reggiano Cheese and the Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena.

I visited Bologna earlier this year ↗ and wow, this is an amazing city full of history, culture and gastronomy **The second apartment is in Rimini** ↗, Emilia Romagna's top holiday destination, famous for its wide sandy beaches, bathing establishments and nightlife.

For the BlogVille apartment locations we have picked 2 fantastic apartments in great locations.



**BlogVille Emilia Romagna: Rooms with a stunning view.
Imagine blogging from here everyday!**

In Bologna, the apartment is located on the second floor of a stately building (with elevator) in the heart of the historical center, in an elegant courtyard with renowned boutiques and art galleries, and is well connected with public transport: bus line Nr. 30 every 10 minutes to Bologna Centrale Train Station.

You can visit the local food markets, cook lunch and create your authentic Emilia Romagna gastronomic extravaganza while for dinner you have the flexibility of the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board to organise a review in one of the city many amazing restaurants.



The kitchen-create your own Emilia Romagna Gastronomic extravaganza

The tourism board will also assist travel bloggers with their travel itinerary- the travel blogger has complete independence.

The travel blogger can then organise their trip and focus on content that works best for their readership.

In return, the Emilia Romagna gets a wealth of fantastic content from a wide variety of bloggers. A win-win partnership.

For more details about the BlogVille project and be part of it, go to <http://www.BlogVille-emiliaromagna.com/> 

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5 reasons you should come to Bologna



Runaway Jane

[@runawayjane](https://twitter.com/runawayjane)

Right now I'm in Bologna, Italy, in the region of Emilia Romagna. I'm here as part of a press trip to the area called 'BlogVille'[↗]. It's sort of a cool initiative brought together by the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board to bring bloggers to the region and check out all it has to offer. Our base here in Bologna has proved to be a pretty cool spot for experiencing authentic Italian cuisine, wine, nightlife, and culture. Bologna is both Italy's food capital, and the UNESCO World City of Music. For me, music and food are two things that are a part of my everyday life. I can't live without either, so Bologna is kind of like the perfect place for me in terms of catering to what I love about travel. However, enough about me, what about you? Why should you come to Bologna?

Food Capital of Italy

Pretty much everyone I meet who comes to Italy or wants to come here talks about how they want to eat local Italian food! It usually ranks in the top 3 things that people want to do while in Italy, if not number 1 on their list. Bologna is the birthplace of cuisine such as Bolognese, Lasagna, and Tortellini. So if experiencing local Italian food is what you're after, then you really can't get a better place to do it other than here. **Food is simply in-bed into the natural fabric of the people here**, and is such a huge piece of what makes this regional capital unique.

Music Lovers Paradise

As I mentioned above, Bologna is the UNESCO World City of Music. That alone should give you an insight into the city's credibility as a destination hub for music. I was very fortunate to be here during the Live Music Festival of the last week of May. There was people and bands of all genres playing music out in the main square (Piazza Maggiore) and surrounding areas. Whether you were into brass bands, rock music, or just something else, you can usually find it there.



A view of the Bologna City Center

Student City (Party Town)

Bologna is student city, and is in fact home to the oldest university in Europe, the University of Bologna. This means that although the touristy areas of Bologna are quite pricey (like most places), you'll also find a lot of cheap deals in and around the University area. If you're going out head to Via Zamboni (University Road). Thursday is student night so you'll find lots of young people out and about on a Thursday night dur-

ing term time, but it's also very busy here on a Friday & Saturday night too.

Day Trips to Modena, Ferrara, and Comacchio

Bologna provides a fantastic base for someone looking to make day trips out further into the Emilia Romagna region. Modena, home to the Ferrari Museum, is a popular spot nearby to spend a day, and is only 30 minutes away by train. If you travel on a slow trains it will only cost you €3.60 to get there from Bologna travelling in 2nd Class.

Ferrara, home to the Castle Estense is also a fantastic spot for a half day out up to the top of the castle, and for those interested in taking a boat out into the Po Delta River, Comacchio is somewhere I recommend nearby to Bologna. It's also just a really nice town for a bike ride, some gelato (Italian ice cream), and a chance to eat some local sea food.

Via Aemilia (The Ancient Roman Road)

Bologna is very well connected to all of Italy's main cities. The North-South railway line between Bologna and Milan also follows the ancient Roman Road, Via Aemilia. If you were looking for a trip to do in Europe

that was combining modern day travel with history, then travelling the old roman road from through Bologna could be an option?

Any trip to Italy should include Bologna...

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24 hours in Bologna



Jan Fuscoe
[@janfuscoe](https://twitter.com/janfuscoe)

What a difference 24 hours can make. Yesterday the residents of BlogVille were very excited. The Mille Miglia – one of the most famous classic car races in the world – was coming through Bologna, and we'd just got a call to say that the region's Tourism Office had invited us to join them in the VIP area. Result – what an opportunity to get close to the cars, some of which we'd only recently seen in the Ferrari museum in Modena, and take some great photos.

Then we were asked if we'd like to stamp one of the route cards that the drivers have to submit as they pass through each of the big towns. Would we ever? We jumped at the chance... and not just one car but a steady stream of the most beautiful cars I'd ever laid eyes on – Alfa Romeos, Ferraris, Maseratis, Lamborghinis along with BMWs and lovely old Austins, all

screeching to a halt in front of us, their drivers – many in their Dick Dastardly racing hats with goggles – waving their cards impatiently so that they could race off again, heading for Modena.



One of the cars taking part into the Mille Miglia

The smell of petrol was intense, the atmosphere electric, the sense of excitement and the rush of adrenalin was shared by all of us, and by the time we got back to

BlogVille we were almost too giddy to eat. We headed for bed grateful to have had such an exciting day. I had no idea what the time was, but in the middle of the night I woke up because my bed was shaking. Then I heard the church bell ring. It wasn't *being rung*... it was ringing because the belltower was moving. Of course I didn't realise that at the time as I was far too sleepy-headed. But once I joined the other bloggers in the kitchen, Frankie soon made sense of that random 'ringing'. The only one who'd slept through it was baby Tuuli. But in spite of the strangeness of it all and the fact that none of us had ever experienced an earthquake (and we were sure that was one), we were remarkably calm, considering. But was that the end of it? or would there be another one? What should we do? It all seemed quiet outside – no screaming, no sirens – so, assuming it was over, we headed back to bed. I don't know what time it was when it happened again but once more the bed shook, and the bell rang and this time, as I lay in my bed in the tower of the house, I started to consider what the best plan of action would be if the roof caved in. Should I turn my bed over and get under the mattress? Perhaps I could drag the mattress under the desk so that there would at least be

something between me and the falling masonry. We'd discussed that it's better to stay indoors as there's less chance of getting hit by collapsing walls. I was thankful that I had a bottle of water close by as, if I was going to die of anything, it could be dehydration. Cheery thoughts. Then the shaking stopped and, exhausted, I fell asleep as the next thing I knew the baby had woken up. Time to get up.

We knew there had been an earthquake and quite a big one, but we were OK. Perhaps it was relief and my own 'aftershock' but as I merrily tweeted my pictures of yesterday's race it didn't occur to me that there may have been a less happy scenario elsewhere. BlogVille's 'Master of the House', Nick, tweeted to ask if we were OK and I blithely responded 'tutto bene, era solo un terremoto, beviamo il te'. But as the twitter feeds came through it became clear that Bologna may have escaped but nearby Ferrara had suffered several building collapses and tragically five people had been killed. And thoughts of the tragedy of L'Aquila in 2009, when over 300 people died, were obviously high in many Italians' minds. It could have been so much worse...

It's been quiet today. It's a Sunday but there's a feeling in the air that we were lucky. As I walked past the

San Rocco church there were several candles lit in the space reserved for 'I Morti'.

I decided to do a canal walk. Something that would take me around the city and remind me that this was a city that had existed for centuries, and as I wandered past the churchgoers and the dog-walkers, the old man sleeping in a doorway and the noisy kids having an argument about football, I was reminded that it will go on surviving a lot longer.

What a difference 24 hours can make to how you see a place, but I was strangely glad to have been part of downs as well as the ups of this beautiful city, even for a short time.

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Weekend in Bologna

#tmBologna



Frankie Thompson
[@bushbirdie](#)

I am currently in Bologna staying at the BlogVille apartment ↗ in the “centro storico” part of town, surrounded by historial buildings and typically Italian arcades and alley-ways.



A Google Map view of Bologna

Frankie's update due to an earthquake in the area:

as the bird flies blog - earthquake update

Bologna is often referred to as the home of “The Fat” and “The Learned” because of its legacy of famous local delicacies and the fact that it boasts the oldest university in the world.



Gob droopingly beautiful evening sky back in Bologna which nicely ends my #tmbologna real-time blogging #blogville #travel #sunset

I can already hazard a guess which group I'll fall into after my trip!

I've been to Italy many times before but never explored this part of the country so I'm really looking forward to getting to know Bologna better over the weekend.

When: Saturday 19th May – Sunday 20th May



Bologna in Instagram Pictures

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The land of ‘Black Gold’: Visit to the Acetaia di Giorgio, Modena



Kash Bhattacharya
[@BudgetTraveller](#)

It's difficult to know one's calling in life....

For example, travel blogging is a profession that has come to me after umpteen reincarnations, millions of pounds of debt, few too many degrees and too many cold winters in Scotland.

Some people don't have that hassle.

They are born with skills and have a calling from day 1.

It's hard for example to think of Lionel Messi doing anything but playing football.

I like to think he came out of his mother womb with a football stuck to his foot.



Attic of Black Gold- Wooden Barrels at the Acetaia di Giorgio where the Balsamico Vinegar matures

So when I meet Giorgio Barbieri in his house, the Acetaia di Giorgio in Modena- gazing up at his 6 foot 5 inch frame (towering a good foot above me), I could see immediately why he was the star for his country's national volleyball team.

He scooped me up in his paddle like arms and dunks me into the attic where the whole magic of creating the Balsamic Vinegar happens.

At 50, Giorgio retired from the Italian Volleyball team. He was faced with a dilemma of a life outside the game. What next?

He looked within his DNA to see if there was something he was passionate about that he could nurture and develop.

He delved into the rich bank of childhood memories and remembered his grandmother.

Every year making through time honoured traditions and methods (known only to the Modenese of course) his Grandmother would make the most amazing Balsamic Vinegar- a wonderful, thick, dark, syrupy, dense, sweet concoction overflowing with flavours and love from the past and present.

The Acetaia Giorgio was born.

Initially, growing Balsamic vinegar was a hobby, a necessity for Giorgio and the Barbieri family.

The balsamico vinegar was to feed the family, for special occasions and also served as great gifts for friends and family.

Plus the Acetaia was also an asset to be inherited – they would be used as dowry for the daughters of the house.

This tradition still holds in many of the houses of Modena, many of whom have the rich tradition of growing Balsamic Vinegar within their households.

Traditions like these are the sacred bond, the glue between the past, present and future generations.

Traditions like a newborn child getting their own battery of barrels and vintage in their name.

Loretta, the lovely daughter of Giorgio who is my guide for the afternoon, shows me her battery of barrels and then proudly presents to me her 25 year old 'Extravecchio' vintage which was released on her birthday last year.

She shares me with a few drops of her 'black gold'.

Matured in cherry barrels, it has an amazing sweetness and depth of flavour.

She gives me a few crumbled pieces of mortadella cheese to taste the vinegar. I taste the cheese to refresh my palate and then sip. Amazing.

Loretta is as enthusiastic as me, as if she is tasting it for the first time.

Without much prompting me, she keeps opening bottle after bottle, diving in for another sip and keeps on refilling my spoon.

She's like a kid in a balsamic vinegar shop.

They only produce 2000 bottles a year + sell this stuff at around 1000 euros a litre!

I savour every precious drop.

I feel humbled by the experience- It's an incredible thing to share with a total stranger like me, something so precious and intimate to the fabric and DNA of a family.

Her favourite bottle is her Dad's 25 year old vintage-matured in Juniper barrels, this is more prickly and has real personality.

My afternoon spent tasting the Balsamic Vinegar is a great revelation.

Almost a healing quality.

I've had a few days of madness at a travel blogger conference, followed by 2 days touring the vineyards of Umbria.

Tasting this is like balm to my weary liver.

I emerge after a few hours into the mellow evening sunshine of Modena feeling... a new man.

It comes as no surprise to learn at the end of my tour that the word *balsamico* comes from Latin word *balsamum*, which means "balsam-like" in the sense of "restorative" or "curative".

Essentials

Acetaria di Giorgio is open year-round.

Tasting Tours are free and can be organized in advance by calling them.

Warning: It is very addictive and hard to leave without purchasing a bottle.

Cheapest comes in at around 45 euros which compared to what you would pay for the same thing in the UK- a bargain.

For more Information can be found at:

www.acetaiadigiorgio.it

Read online

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Pink Flamingos in Italy?



Bethany Rydmark

[@TwoOregonians](https://twitter.com/TwoOregonians)

How do you deepen a friendship? Let your guard down. Share a comfortable meal. Reveal hidden sides of your personality. How do you deepen a friendship with Italy? Turns out, in the same way.

Think of that sheepish smile when a new acquaintance admits an unexpected tidbit of their story and you both discover the link of shared fascinations or pastime...that's how we felt on our visit to Ferrara, "Little Venice," and the Po Delta Wetlands. (*"Pink Flamingos, Italy? No way! You have them, too? We just saw Flamingos in Bolivia...small, small world."*)

Looking past Italy's polished monuments and hotspots in order to get to know Emilia Romagna better is a bit like striking up sparkling conversation with a character at a black tie affair and then being invited to join them for a backyard BBQ.

On a recent day trip from Bologna, Ted and I found Italy with its hair down, kitchen apron on, and *Best of Audubon* and *Birding Italia* laid open on the coffee table.

Stop One: Castelo Estense in Ferrara, Italy

The ancient city of Ferrara is situated near the ticklish spot at the back-of-the-knee on the Italian boot. It's only a few kilometers south of the Po River, and about 50 kilometers off the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

To reach it, we drove an hour or so northeast beyond our home base, through the low, flat countryside between the Adriatic and the Apennines. Out the windows, farmland boasted the largest rice growing region in Emilia-Romagna, and trout fisherman worked the waterways for their morning catch. As we drew near to the city on that sunny morning, brick buildings rose higher, casting a warm glow over the charming streets.

The entire city is a UNESCO heritage site with iconic Castelo Estense looking like it could be the backdrop to a Kenneth Branagh adaption of a Shakespeare play. The fortress was originally constructed in 1385 after a riot among the weary and over-taxed peasants caused the governing family to throw up defenses and estab-

lish a domineering physical symbol above the lowlands of Emilia.

We visited the Castelo with our group of travel writing friends, crawling through dark tunnels into the basement prison cells and then hoofing it up the internal flights of steel grate stairs to gain access to tower balconies overlooking the castle grounds and the city skyline.



The Estense Castle in Ferrara

The architectural heritage and urban development of the city along the Po River had a profound impact on city planning for centuries following, and my first introduction to this castle and city left me (surprise, surprise) curious to learn more↗...

Stop Two: Manifattura dei Marinati and Museo dell'Anguilla in Comacchio

Just beyond Ferrara on the edges of the Po Delta Wetlands lies “Little Venice” – a fishing town built on 13 islands with a culture deeply tied to the land and the sea, with bike rides and canal waterways to win over any seafood-and-leisurely-afternoon loving heart:

More than sights and spokes and sugary snacks, though, this particular spot in Emilia-Romagna offers a respectable heritage of Slow Food↗ roots dating back to medieval times.

The city’s pride is completely entwined with the stalwart eel that spend two to three years crossing the Atlantic Ocean from Central America to arrive in the salt marsh waters of Comacchio and mature in protection from predators.

Protection from predators is well and good, but with the Slow Food comment you may guess where this is going....

A sad tale for the fish, I'm afraid. But respectful, rest assured.

Beginning in 900 (that's right, no "1"), residents of Co-macchio constructed facilities to block the autumn return of the eel to the open sea, harvesting the creatures for sustenance.

We visited the *Manifattura dei Marinati* (the town's historic processing plant) and its *Museo dell'Anguilla* (Eel Museum), to learn more about the local tradition and sample the salt water cuisine. Restored fishing boats and brining barrels and massive fireplaces now tell the tale. The message is simple: respect the eel, respect its life cycle, respect the land and sea and traditions of the region's people, and produce delicious seafood.

The traditional method for producing marinated eel involved decapitating the eel, slicing and arranging them to roast whole on long iron spits, cooking carefully over open flame fire, then packaging in a vinegar and saltwater brine.

Not a bit of eel went to waste.

Chopped heads were given to the poor for making broth. Flesh was roasted; oil drippings used in lamps, fat used for frying fish. Dried eel skin was used to make shoelaces. Remaining charcoal in the firepits was distributed to farmers to spread on their fields, increasing soil fertility and crop production. The meat itself was marinated and preserved, sold for income and eaten in the home.

The 1954 Sophia Loren movie, “The River Girl” {film clip in Italian ↗}, features the actress working on the very same factory floor at *Manifattura dei Marinati*. (Note: pit-hair. What was that about getting better acquainted with Italy?) Also, Ted found the eel toys in the museum lobby. (Incidentally, his pose is #2 in a series that began with the creature at Torres del Paine.) Since our springtime visit was not in tune with the autumn eel harvest, we feasted instead on bite sized shrimp and fish, deep fried to perfection and served piping hot with an accompanying glass of the local Rosso Frizzante wine.

{Note: Ted may or may not have earned the title of “#shrimpface” after his utter love affair with the little creatures. He’s considering launching a line to be sold as a popcorn alternative at movie theaters. We may

host a trial run at some future “Ted and Bethany’s Old Movie Club” event to see how the test-market responds...}

Slow Food at its finest: gratefulness for the provisions of the earth, attentiveness to the seasons, care for the natural systems, and celebration of the goodness of food and life.

Cheers to food and friendship with Italy!

Stop Three: Birding on The Po Delta Wetlands

But what about the flamingos? “There’s a 99% chance that we’ll see them,” I heard someone say. All those deep fried shrimp? Turns out their cousins often go eaten by the pink birds living in the marshy waterways of the Po.

The Po Delta and its Wetlands ↗ are part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites along with the city of Ferrara. The natural area is habitat for a great mix of flora and fauna among its channels, lagoons, rivers, marshes, and the sea, and it’s accessible for up-close investigation by walking and biking trails or by boat.

The timing of our visit coincided with the International Po Delta Birdwatching Fair ↗, a large event held an-

nually in late April. We joined an afternoon boat tour, watching for all sorts of wildlife...



A view of the Po Delta

The *Valli di Comacchio* (Fish Basins of Comacchio) host over 300 bird species, including black-winged stilts, egrets, purple herons, kingfishers, moorhens, coots, mallards, cormorants, and yes, flamingos... And then, after drifting lazily down the channels for an hour or two, the calm afternoon came to a close. The end of a pleasant day on the plains and waterways.

No exclamation points, no giant conclusions. Simply a farewell to a new friend, and the hope to spend time again soon discovering quirks and mining interesting depths of a new character.

In the meantime, I'm not sure how to repay Italy for its hospitality. I'm thinking dinner at our place someday...and we can toast the architecture in our City of Bridges↗, grill Pacific Northwest Salmon, and go for a nature-watching spree on the Springwater Corridor... But we'll take it slow. No need to rush things.

A good relationships grows organically, and it's lovely making friends with the world.

Tips for a Visit:

Ferrara Tourism↗

Details on lodging, food, events, and sights in this part of Emilia-Romagna, Italy

Castelo Estense↗

Visitors information, history, and virtual tour

Comacchio Eel Festival

The city hosts a celebration each fall: Exhibitions, shows, tours, cooking classes, seminars and guided boat tours over the first two weekends of October

Valli di Comacchio – Po Delta Park

Tours run March through the end of October

9am and 5pm boats leave with 10 passenger minimum

11am and 3pm departures are guaranteed

Reservation required: tel. 340 2534267

Visitors Centers of the Po Delta Park ↗

Seven spots including Manifattura dei Marinati in Comacchio, each devoted to regionally-specific artifacts of heritage, food, culture, and ecology.

Thanks for reading our series from Emilia-Romagna ↗: A region of Northern Italy ripe for exploration. Artisan Local Foods (tortellini, lasagne, pancetta, traditional balsamic vinegar, and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese to name a few!), Historical Cities (Modena, Ferrara, Bologna, Rimini, and more), and Beautiful Natural Areas (the Po River Delta, the Apennine Mountains, and the green, green farmland in between). Photos and story snippets are flying on Twitter under the #blogville ↗ hashtag. Feel free to jump into the conversation to share insights on enjoying the best of Northern Italy!

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How I went from squatter to mayor of #blogville



Angie Orth
[@AngieAway](https://twitter.com/angieaway)

“You may have the universe if I may have Italy.” - Giuseppe Verdi

I've just spent an unexpected week in Bologna at BlogVille↗, an innovative project dreamed up by Kash of Budget Traveller↗, Melvin from Travel Dudes↗ and the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board↗. The concept of BlogVille is to provide a home base where writers can pop in for a few days or more, make themselves at home, cook together and explore the rest of the Emilia Romagna region at leisure. The tourism board provides the accommodations, local ingredients in the kitchen and tours as a way of sharing the region with bloggers who might not get a chance to visit otherwise. *(From my perspective as a former travel publicist, I*

think it's genius and won't be surprised to see other tourism entities and DMOs following suit in the near future.)



Views from Bologna

But how did I end up there? It certainly wasn't in the plan. (*Anyone else noticing a theme in my life? Plans are so 2011!*) I woke up on my last day of scheduled Travel Bloggers Unite activities with no inkling where I might end up that night. Fortunately, TBU was chock full of last-minute plan-wingers like me, so in about 5 minutes it was determined that a rough-and-tumble pack of us would head north a few hours to Bologna, where we'd help Kash kick off the first night of BlogVille. I expected to remain for two nights at the Art Hotel ↗ before heading to the Leaning Tower of Pisa or maybe a spa in Switzerland or outer space, perhaps.

Two days passed and I was still in Bologna, lurking around BlogVille and making friends with all the roomies. When Jodi ↗ & I were invited to crash at the apartment for a night or two, the housemates shuffled beds and made space for us in the loft above the living room. Never were squatters made more comfortable! But still I planned to leave in a few days...

I don't know if it was the way the light streams over the uneven stones paving the street or the famous Italian hospitality or just the promise of a cozy bed surrounded by folks that get me... but it wasn't a

hard sell to get me to stick around just one more day.

Then another. And then somehow it became a week. Suddenly I was the Mayor of BlogVille on FourSquare and the resident with the most seniority. Pretty ridiculous for someone who was homeless a few days prior, eh?

BlogVille's Master of the House, Nick ↗ devoted himself to the revolving cast of roommates, taking us to all his favorite local spots. From the rustic bar jammed with communal tables where you bring your own picnic to the apperitivo joint with all-you-want couscous, tapas, finger sandwiches and tomato salad, Nick (*a footballer/kind soul who could be Armani model - he's exactly the kind of Italian guy you want to meet, you know what I mean?!*) showed us Emilia Romagna not just from a tourism perspective, but with the pride of someone born and raised in the region. Unfortunately Emilia Romagna is sometimes overlooked by travelers in favor of silver screen star Tuscany, ancient Rome or Clooney hideaway Lake Como, but BlogVille gave me the opportunity to explore this less visited Italian destination.

Bologna's extensive historic foundations and current youth culture form a seamless juxtaposition, with miles and miles of arched porticos, centuries-old towers and the oldest university in the world founded in 1088. Bologna is effortlessly approachable while still radiating that distinctive Italian glow that puts a soft, mysterious fuzz on everything — even when you're not drinking local wine.

It could be 1476 or 1732 or present day, but you get the feeling that Bologna's character is unchanged throughout history.

So what did I do for a week in Emilia Romagna?

- Gelato. Ferrara. Climbed the tower at Castello Estense.
- Interview with Italian *Cosmopolitan*. Comacchio Eel. Sophia Loren.
- Gelato. Bird-watching in the Po Delta. Bicycling in a skirt. #AngieWeighs.
- Late-night girl talk with Legal Nomads. ↗ Instagram. Hashtags and #Kashtags. Press conference in the living room.
- Gelato. San Petronio spa ↗ girl talk with one of Two Oregonians. ↗ Scusi? Babbedi Boopi. ↗ Gelato.

The warm Italian familiarity you hear about became second nature to everyone at BlogVille. With up to eight people (some friends and some strangers) living in the apartment, sharing one shower (*not all at one time - this isn't MTV*) and acclimating to a new environment and way too much food, we became a Bolognese family quite fast. The whole experience was effortless.

We cooked dinner together, coordinated shopping trips for huge blocks of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, chunks of mortadella and tiny bottles of aged balsamic vinegar, and shared tips on favorite destinations, gelato flavors (BOLOGNA RIDE!) and WordPress plugins. Given the often exasperating nature of 2012 so far, my time at BlogVille was as rejuvenating as it was fun.

Thanks to Kash for the invite, to Nick for the brilliant glimpse at life in Bologna and to the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board for reaching bloggers in a completely new way.

As I said at the press conference, “I know I’ll come back to Emilia Romagna. I haven’t eaten everything yet.”

Check out more BlogVille coverage:

Two Oregonians 

Runaway Jane

Read online

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#blogville first impressions



Tom Jacobs
[@journeytom](#)

In my previous post I told you about Emilia Romagna's amazing BlogVille project.

Well I am now here in Bologna, the red city. The first thing I noticed whilst walking the alleyways to the BlogVille apartment was how the red coloured buildings stood out against the blue sky.

This colour immediately made the city seem so invigorating and interesting. It beats seeing boring white-wash or stone buildings against a depressing grey cloudy sky (I do love London really, but when the rain comes it can be '*oh so depressing*')

Armed with my Google map print off I decided to hunt down the BlogVille apartment which is literally a stone's throw from Piazza Maggiore, the city's main square. I hunted for a little while and just as I was about to give up and call Nick, the master of the house,

for some help, I by chance spotted an apartment buzzer with the words BlogVille.



The Neptune Statue

My first impressions of the apartment are just as great as Bologna itself. It's a great space with beautiful views

over the rooftops of the city. Even better the fridge is packed full of food from the Emilia Romagna region and the lounge has plenty of maps, books and information to help me explore the area further.

My welcome was pretty amazing and I got to sit down to wine and a lovely lunch prepared by Nick and my other house mates. A wonderful introduction!

Sometimes everything just feels right and I get the impression that BlogVille is going to be so much better than I anticipated.

I have some great housemates too [@jess_dante](#) [@twooregonians](#) [@nicolawesseling](#) [@asgeirpedersen](#) Check them out on twitter and find links to their blogs too on my [Link Love page](#)

Make sure you followed the self proclaimed Master of the house too [@n_montenaggi](#)

Stay tuned for much more on BlogVille, Bologna and the Emilia Romagna region.

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I've always dreamed of driving a race car



Ted Rydmark
[@TwoOregonians](https://twitter.com/TwoOregonians)

Generally speaking, I'm afraid to dream.

Letdowns are a letdown for me, so refusing to dream means less disappointment in life. Right or wrong, I feel safer that way. Ironically, my wife is a good dreamer. At 10, she dreamed of marrying her future husband. At 15, she dreamed of being a Landscape Architect. At 20, she dreamed of taking a year off to travel the world.

Needless to say, non-dreamers benefit immensely by sticking close to dreamers.

If you know me, you probably didn't know I've dreamed of driving a race car. That's because I didn't know either. There weren't any exotic car pics on my bedroom wall growing up. I don't really know how en-

gines work. I didn't know a single exotic car model by name before this week.

Last week here in Italy, Lamborghini offered my friend Michael and me the chance to participate in their 2012 Driving Academy. I woke up from a nap in the peaceful city-center of Bologna to the news. Shutup! I thought my wife was pulling my leg.

A few days later, I found myself standing in the pit at a Formula One race track in Imola, Italy.

Without having driven over 80 mph in a car, without having stepped foot in a Lamborghini, without having been on a race track, I was given the keys first to a Gallardo and then to a 2012 Aventador, with 700 horsepower capable of 350 km/h.

I reached 200 km/h on my first lap.

Solo.

Sweat. Screams. Swearwords. Prayer.

Is this something I've always wanted? Yes. I realized that sometime in the past, in the deep recesses of my mind, a dream seed had been planted. No one really knew except Bethany, because I don't entertain most dreams. Nevertheless, it was there.

If the Aventador could talk, it would tell you how scared I was, how I didn't trust it at first, how I learned

I've always dreamed of driving a race car

to trust it later, and how I finally surrendered to instinct and *drove*.

It would tell you that I realized my dream in 24 laps on the race track that day.

Sometimes, we don't know our dreams until they come true.



Ted among the Lamborghinis

Thanks for reading our series from Emilia-Romagna↗: A region of Northern Italy ripe for exploration. And thank you

especially to Lamborghini↗ for hosting us at their 2012 Driving Academy↗. If you'd enjoy coming along for the ride, follow us on Twitter (@twoOregonians), like our Facebook page ↗, and stay tuned for more photos and stories from the race-track and behind the wheel.

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Interactive Travel: Italy! Tell Gina where to go



Gina Stark
[@SuuperG](https://twitter.com/SuuperG)

I'm doing it again. Yes, traveling (I do that on occasion). But more than that. I'm opening my vacation up to the input, suggestions and perhaps even a few dares from my readers (and in this instance, fellow prior BlogVille residents). Be gentle.

So, you may have seen some buzz going around Twitter about [#blogville](#). It's sort of an experiment whereby dozens of travel bloggers have been invited to camp out together (OK, put away the violins. It's a gorgeous apartment) and venture out into the wilds and civilizations of Italy to share our findings with friends back home and worldwide.

Well, I've been invited to stay at the BlogVille apartments in both Bologna and Rimini (with a stint sailing Croatia for a week in between!) and my activity calen-

dar is fairly open and always flexible and I love sussing out the places and eateries that my readers suggest.



A view of the Bologna historical center

I'm so looking forward to the experience, both for savoring new territory in Italy and also meeting fellow wanderlusters from all over. So Bohemian!

I've done this Interactive thingy before and I came out relatively unscathed.

I'll be traveling the first portion of the Italy adventure with my dear friend (and hiking buddy) Helene. She is quite the adventuress, so we can be fairly confident she'll join me where you send me! (She may just end up dragging ME)

So I invite you all to offer up your best. Fill my dance card with activities in the entire Emilia Romagna region. Anything to do with hiking, dance, food, history, music (opera?) or general adventure will be welcome. But even more welcome, are those precious gems you've found that one wouldn't expect to seek out. Little local secrets. I relish the idea of branching out from my normal interests.

And of course, after you've left your tips and suggestions in the comment section, make sure to check back here for the itinerary I follow!

Thank you in advance for playing 'Interactive Travel' with me.

Photos by Gina (on last year's trip to Italy)

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You'll catch more flies with this vinegar!



Michael Turtle

@michaelturtle

The best balsamic vinegar

In the attic, up several flights of stairs of this old farmhouse, are the barrels. It's in these barrels that some of the best balsamic vinegar in the world is being made. A process that's been passed down through generations is taking place. It will take care, patience and years. But that's the Modena way – that's how this region became so famous for its product.

I have never tasted balsamic vinegar so good. How could I have gone so long without realising? I'd been conditioned to buy the cheapest bottle from the supermarket, always thinking it was a simple condiment to add with oil on a salad. But as Giovanna pours me small tastes into a plastic spoon and I bring them to my lips, a new world is revealed.

“Your palette has reached a point of no return,” she says with a knowing smile. I fear she’s right.

Giovanna married into the balsamic vinegar business. Her husband’s parents and his mother’s parents before them all made vinegar in this house in Modena, the home of their small business Acetaia di Giorgio. In the attic, in fact.

One of the secrets to making the best balsamic vinegar is to keep the product at the right temperature. The attic turns out to be the best place. This is where the barrels are kept, each made from a carefully chosen wood which infuses a particular flavour. At Acetaia di Giorgio, the barrels are mainly cherry and juniper – although there are a couple of other varieties and for some of the vinegars the production process involves more than one type of wood.

The Modena balsamic vinegar

I try one of the vinegars and it tastes almost like port, but with an acidic bite. A large part of the flavour comes from the grapes it’s made with, which are all carefully-chosen from local farms. There’s no surprise it has the aroma, taste and colour of fortified wine.

You'll catch more flies with this vinegar!



Modena Balsamic Vinegar bottles

There are two types of balsamic vinegar that can be sold under the local certification rules. Either it must be at least 12 years old or at least 25 years old. That means it's a very slow process up here in the attic. There aren't a whole heap of barrels and I wonder how they make enough to justify the business. But when you consider that a 100mL bottle sells for a minimum 45 euros and, in some cases, well over 100 euros, it makes more sense.

Oh, and did I mention that they supply vinegar to the White House? Yep, that's a real letter of thanks from Barack and Michelle that they've got.

Giovanna is also quick to point out that many industrial balsamic vinegar manufacturers sell their product for much more than her family does, while falsely claiming to be the traditional style from Modena.

"I don't say industrial is the devil," Giovanni explains. "I say it's the devil when they try to confuse the customer."

When the time comes, it's sad to leave that house that smells like vinegar. I have a feeling I will not let myself be so easily confused in the future by balsamic vinegar. I also remember Giovanni's warning. My palette will never be the same.

* You can check out the official website of Acetaia di Giorgio here.

Time Travel Turtle was a guest of the Emilia Romagna tourism board but the opinions, over-written descriptions and bad jokes are his own.

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The perfect Bolognese sauce



Michael Turtle
@michaelturtle

Bolognese from Bologna

Fresh out of home, still in my teenage years, and having to fend for myself. I still remember those days when, as a young man fresh out of high school I moved away from my family for study. And, like many before me and many after me, the kitchen became I place that I had to master, not somewhere I could just turn up in and expect food to be already prepared.

What do you do when suddenly you have to cook for yourself – and sometimes cook for others? Well, you fall back on the standard student meal... spaghetti bolognese.

Back then I used sauce from jars. It was much easier to have a sauce already made for me by somebody else (especially when that ‘somebody else’ was often an

Academy Award-winning actor). Deep down, though, I knew it wasn't the right thing and ever since those student years I've felt the need to find the perfect bolognese sauce. Here in the Italian city of Bologna, the home of the sauce, that time has come.



Chef at work

The recipe I'm about to give you comes from Alessandra Spisni, a famous cook in Bologna who now runs the cooking school Vecchia Scuola. It came to Alessan-

dra from her mother and it was passed down to her from her mother. For generations the secret to a perfect bolognese sauce has been shared within the family. Now it's time to share it with you.

The bolognese sauce recipe

Below is the recipe for the perfect bolognese sauce. It's not something that is normally written down – it is passed on by mouth and demonstration. For that reason there are no exact measurements... you'll need to estimate what will work for you.

- Start with carrots, celery and onion and grate them all together into small pieces
- Cook the vegetables in a pot over a medium heat with a bit of pork fat (lard) until they are slightly softened
- Take the vegetables off the heat and add them to minced beef in a bowl.
- Use a grinder (or something similar) to grind the mixed meat and vegetables together. Then add some salt.
- Cook the mixed vegetables and meat in a pot on a low heat. When it starts to smell nice then add some white wine.

- When you can't smell the alcohol anymore, it's time to add the tomato. For this recipe, use a puree called 'passata di pomodoro', or the closest you can find to that.
- Mix all of that together then add a little bit of water.
- Leave everything on the pot on a low heat for at least four hours, stirring occasionally.
- Serve hot over fresh pasta and be amazed at how different this tastes to any bolognese sauce you've had before!

* You can check out the official website of the cooking school Vecchia Scuola in Bologna here.

* You might also be interested in the school's lessons on how to make fresh pasta.

Time Travel Turtle was a guest of Vecchia Scuola and the Emilia Romagna tourism board but the opinions, over-written descriptions and bad jokes are his own.

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San Luca the Great



Nicola Wesseling
[@nicolawesseling](https://twitter.com/nicolawesseling)

On my way to New York I caught the flight from Bologna via Turkey with a Bologna local named Lorenzo.

He exclaimed “Oh I love you!” when I told him I had indeed climbed all the way to San Luca as apparently not many tourists do it.

So from a travellers point of view go to The Sanctuary of the Madonna San Luca, and from a locals point of view you’re crazy not to go there.

You really won’t experience anything else like it as you walk under a long stretch of 666 arches built around the 17th Century and when you finally get to the top this is awaiting you.. Madonna’s sanctuary indeed.

It’s a long walk, and I complained the whole way but when you get to the end... it’s phenomenal. Tom (staying with us from the UK also known as journey-

tom.com in the blogosphere) and I set out on a journey through Bologna that had us traipsing up hundreds of stairs, they are absolutely never ending.



A view of the Sanctuary of the Madonna San Luca

You think you've made it and then there are another set of stairs, my recommendation is not to wear jeans like Tom and I did. It's definitely a shorts and runners thing. San Luca is a beautiful basilica on top of a hill

in Bologna, I could see it from my tower window all week and and at night it is enchantingly it up. I was not disappointed when I got there, I filled up my camera memory card just trying to snap everything.



Keeping positive on the long walk

We spent a while there and when we found a way into the basilica I was again amazed at it's beauty, angels grace the ceilings and gold seems to touch everything lit up by the sunlight creeping through the windows. Yet in true *Girl with the Red Suitcase* fashion something completely random has to happen to shake things up, what made this trip memorable was being locked inside the basilica. As Tom and I were leaving we were hurriedly ushered back inside by an unassuming old lady who locked the large doors behind us... then turned off the lights. I therefore decide that we are going to be sacrificed and desperately look around for an exit. I do have just enough time to send a tweet out saying that I'm locked in San Luca..oh the things blogging will do to your priorities. As I look around the church there are a group of about 12 of us all confused as to what exactly we are doing locked inside. The old lady then reappears and leads us through a hidden door. In my mind this has mass sacrifice written all over it. I'm still not relieved like some were when we are herded into the elevator that is conveniently located inside a centuries old basilica. However we are all walked outside the basilica and I realize that we are free to go.

Now here is where I would like to give some credit to Tom who never lost his cool even when he had a delusional girl chatting his ear off about being part of a mass sacrifice.

Make sure you look at Tom's blog, it's quite wonderful <http://journeytom.com/> Still false alarm on the mass sacrifice aside I do maintain it was fishy behaviour.

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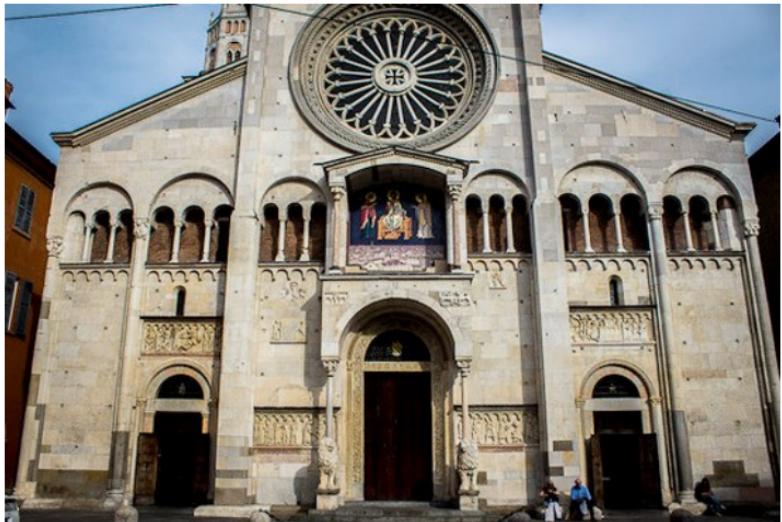
When art and architecture meet



Michael Turtle
[@michaelturtle](https://twitter.com/michaelturtle)

The cathedral in Modena

When the cathedral in the Italian city of Modena was put on the World Heritage List, UNESCO described it as “a masterpiece of human creative genius”. It’s a big call but, then again, over the years this part of Italy has been the birthplace of some of the world’s most famous musicians, painters and scientists. Perhaps it should be no surprise that it would be home to a building like this. The UNESCO description goes on. Apparently the Modena cathedral is a masterpiece “in which a new dialectical relationship between architecture and sculpture was created in Romanesque art”. It seems you have to be a creative genius human to understand what that means.



A front view the Modena cathedral

The best way to understand is with your eyes, not with your brain. Entering the cathedral, bumping into a young man who's standing in the doorway crossing himself, apologising in a whisper, and then looking up for the first time to see the interior of the church... that's when it starts to make sense.

The building is a joint creation of architect Lanfranco and sculptor Wiligelmus. Because of this relationship, the cathedral is not so much a construction as a sculpture.



Modena cathedral – the interior

The figures, the patterns, the scenes which are carved into the walls and the columns seem organic. The very structure of the interior seems in harmony with the artwork and you can't imagine one without the other – at one point I even consider whether the whole place would collapse if you tried to remove some of the statues.

Presumably it wouldn't (in case you were actually wondering too). The cathedral has stood on this same spot since the 12th century and had many alterations

over the years. The numerous changes and the even more numerous tests of time have not damaged the cathedral. It's not on the typical tourist trail but it's definitely worth a visit while you're in the Emilia Romagna region.

This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. [For more info click here](#). You can see all the [UNESCO World Heritage Sites I've visited here](#).

Time Travel Turtle was a guest of the Emilia Romagna tourism board but the opinions, over-written descriptions and bad jokes are his own.

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Who would go to the Lamborghini Academy?



Michael Turtle

[@michaelturtle](http://twitter.com/michaelturtle)

I'm not sure exactly what I expected but it wasn't this. When you think about the kind of people who might go to an exclusive (and not cheap) Lamborghini driving academy in Italy, you think young playboys and middle-aged men going through middle-aged crises. You don't think of a 66-year-old woman who has trouble reaching the pedals.

That seems to be the thing about fast cars, though. They favour no gender, age or nationality. There were only five drivers at the Lamborghini Academy other than myself and fellow blogger [Ted Rydmark](#) – and with those five people, four different continents were represented.

Why would they come here to the Imola Racecourse for this, though? Why would they fly across oceans,

spend thousands of dollars to spend a day behind the wheel and on the track?



External view of my Lamborghini

Well, to find out, I asked them. These are the people of Lamborghini:

Sahbi, 34 years old

Sahbi is a softly-spoken Tunisian but beneath his bonnet is a love of fast cars. He's enjoyed his BMW M6 but

is soon to become the owner of the first Lamborghini Avendorator in Tunisia.

“They have some Gallardos but the Aventador, not yet. I think maybe I will be the first in Tunisia,” he tells me modestly, but clearly with a sense of excitement.

Sahbi has ordered a black one but is still waiting for it to be made in the factory here in Emilia Romagna. He’s come to the driving academy to try out the new car before he gets his hands on his own one.

Life as a tuna farm operator, which is what Sahbi does back home, might be slow but Sahbi is anything but relaxed on the Imola course.

“I learnt how to drive on the chicane, and how to brake,” he says. “But it’s very crazy to drive fast. I love it to drive very, very fast.”

Michael and Jutta, 50 and 49 years old

Michael Wittich is also a man who loves his sports cars. “I like all toys with big engines,” he laughs. “Big boys, big toys!”

At home in Germany he drives a Porsche (what fun on those autobahns!) but his wife, Jutta, gave him the Lamborghini Academy course as a present. Together, the two of them seem to spend almost as much time

laughing as concentrating on the cars. In some ways they're like children in a candy store, unable to believe they're actually here.

Out on the track, though, Michael is all business and he's found it streets ahead of his usual driving experiences.

"A Porsche is for everyday, it's almost a regular sporty car," he explains. "But a Lamborghini is an exotic car." And then he laughs.

Meliza, 66 years old

Before we even get to Imola, Meliza has mentioned a few times that she needs a pillow for the seat. She's not the tallest of women and it seems the Lamborghinis aren't designed for her size. Not that it bothers her too much – she already owns one and is now considering a second.

At 66 years old, she's not the typical Lamborghini driver, and that attracts a bit of attention (from police and other commuters) on the highways of California, where she lives.

"I love speed," she tells me. "And who would think that a senior citizen could drive that fast!"

Meliza owns a business selling vitamin pills, which appears to be very successful. For her, part of the joy of driving these cars is the fact that she can – something that seemed impossible during her poor childhood in the Phillipines.

“When you dream and you achieve your dream it’s a different status in life,” she says. “Because you wanted this and you got it on your own without any help from anyone.”

Peter and Gret, 61 and 54 years old

For Peter and Gret, this is nothing new. The two of them are huge car enthusiasts and take the opportunity whenever they can to drive different cars on the world’s best racetracks.

“We like to drive fast cars,” Gret says. “Every time you go to a race track you can learn new things. We have a lot of experience on the tracks.”

At home in Switzerland, Peter has a Lamborghini Murcielago and Gret has an Aston Martin. Sometimes they take their own cars to the racetracks, sometimes just one or sometimes they drive new ones, like today (although Peter’s the only one who signed up for this particular course).

“It’s just a hobby, just for fun,” Gret explains. “Coming here is for the better handling of the car.”

Ye, 24 years old

At 24 years old, Ye is the youngest of our group at Italy’s Imola Racecourse, but he’s not intimidated by the others. His visit to the Lamborghini Academy is part of a bigger month-long trip around Europe that’s focussing on motorsports.

His passion for cars can be traced back to when he was a young boy in Shanghai. “I think it was from childhood and the mini cars,” he tells me. “I think every boy likes cars I just got a little far, a little bit bigger.”

Whether it’s his age, his skills or something indefinable, Ye is one of the fastest drivers on the track. In one of his last laps, he gets up to a speed of more than 220 km/h.

“That’s cool,” he says to me afterwards (more nonchalantly than I would expect). “But you really have to focus on the way you brake.” Ain’t that the truth!

Previous posts:

- * [The need for speed: on the track with Lamborghini](#)
- * [Fast and safe: Driving tips from Lamborghini](#)

* You can check out the official page for the Lamborghini Academy here.

Time Travel Turtle was a guest of Lamborghini and the Emilia Romagna tourism board but the opinions, over-written descriptions and bad jokes are his own.

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The keys to good music



Michael Turtle
[@michaelturtle](https://twitter.com/michaelturtle)

Maestro Luigi Tagliavini

“I was born on October 7th, 1929,” Luigi Tagliavini tells me. It’s the start of one of his stories.

“My pregnant mother had waited and waited and I didn’t arrive. Finally, on October 6th in a theatre in Bologna, Rossini’s opera Cinderella was played and my grandmother said to my mother ‘the child doesn’t come, let’s go to the opera’. And then they went to the theatre – and I too of course – and a day later I was born. Then my grandmother said ‘oh, he will be a musician’.”

83 years later, it’s clear his grandmother’s prophecy was realised. Luigi Tagliavini is standing at a harpsichord, his fingers on the keys, softly caressing the instrument as it sings. The harpsichord is more than four hundred years old and the Italian treats it with re-

spect... but also with an intimate familiarity. The instrument is one of his.

Over his many years, Luigi Tagliavini has collected the instruments of music – specifically those which are his specialty. As a professional organ player, he has a love of the keyboard and the majority of his collection consists of harpsichords, spinets, pianos and clavichords. “It’s just like a kind of illness,” he jokes.

“If you look for instruments you don’t find them. You have to wait and the instruments themselves find you.”

San Colombano

Maestro Tagliavini has donated about ninety of his prized possessions, the bulk of his collection, to be displayed to the public. Their home is now the remarkable San Colombano church complex in Bologna. Inside this complex, of which parts were first built in the 7th century, the instruments blend in naturally. The walls in parts of the buildings are painted with the most detailed and beautiful iconography. So too are many of the harpsichords, which were once centrepieces in homes of the aristocracy.

Maestro Tagliavini walks amongst the collection, showing me some of his favourite pieces. He explains their history with his passionate and friendly manner.



The Maestro Luigi Tagliavini at work

The spinet made in 1681 which he found at an auction in Bern forty years ago; a light blue instrument that he describes as 'the last grand harpsichord' built in Italy in 1792; a Viennese piano from 1833 which was built by

Schubert's favourite maker; and a small folding Italian harpsichord, of which there are only four in the world. As he shows me the masterpieces, the 83 year-old removes the protective covering from the keyboard and plays a few lines of music. He doesn't talk while he plays. His head turns sideways and up towards the ceiling, eyes wide open and a half smile on his face. He's listening closely because we're supposed to be comparing the sounds of the different instruments. I feel this is a game for one – although I appreciate the sweet melodies, my ear isn't fine-tuned to the variations of each.

I ask about how he chose which instruments to buy. "I don't want or need to have many," he explains.

"The important thing is to have special pieces and also instruments building a unity together. I will never consider the collection as closed."

Bologna: UNESCO City of Music

These days Maestro Tagliavini splits his time between Italy and Switzerland, where he used to teach. But when he's in Bologna he always comes to San Colombano to play his instruments. They are his life as much as they are also his life's work.

He's not the only one allowed to touch the precious keys, though. Promising music students are given the opportunity to play them during regular concerts at San Colombano. Passing on the love of music and fine instruments is part of the joy of having such a wonderful collection.

"One of my best friends is a girl of 10 years old," Tagliavini tells me with a warm smile. "She plays in an incredible way pianos but now she is in love with the harpsichord."

The two of them share an adoration of certain musicians (such as Mozart) and songs. Together they talk about their common interests in a way that seems unlikely with such an age gap between them. It's an art that transcends generations, though.

"That means there is no old or modern music," Tagliavini says. "There is just good and bad music."

And a unique collection of instruments to share that good music.

* You can visit the [official website for the Tagliavini Collection here.](#)

Time Travel Turtle was a guest of the Emilia Romagna tourism board but the opinions, over-written descriptions and bad jokes are his own.

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Still standing



Frankie Thompson
[@bushbirdie](https://twitter.com/bushbirdie)

All day yesterday I was basking in the glory of travel.

I was actively relishing the opportunities it has given me, dining out on the joy of discovering the new, learning about the old and appreciating the different.

I spent the day wandering around Bologna doing some "real-time" blogging for TravMonkey.com, exhausting myself in the best ways possible; food, wine, culture, history. Later in the afternoon we, the other bloggers and I, were then honoured to be invited to the VIP viewing area of the Mille Miglia ↗ cars, which were driving through Bologna. Renowned the world over for its glamorous (and noisy!) parade of vintage cars, watching the Mille Miglia yesterday evening was the realisation of a dream I never knew I had. And when we were

asked to then greet the arriving cars and stamp their paperwork... Mamma Mia!

It was one of the most fantastic experiences. I knew it was a one-off moment, something I'll never do again and for that reason I treasured every crazy second. Thank you travel! Thank you world!

And then the earthquake struck.↗

At around 4am this morning an earthquake struck 20 miles to the north west of Bologna and it measured 6.0 on the Richter scale.

I was actually woken by the sound of the spontaneous chimes of a nearby church bell but instantly realised I was moving. Once awake I was stunned into a calm shock at how strong and how long the shaking lasted. In my mind I kept asking myself "Is this an earthquake? Is this an earthquake?".

It was as if someone had their hands around the BlogVille house and they were shaking us from side to side, up and down like a salt shaker. I heard one of my fellow bloggers, Satu, walking around and calling our names before the quake had stopped but I was frozen in my bed half fearing the worst like the ceiling caving in, half marvelling at the whole experience; my first earthquake.

After the moving stopped, which I strangely didn't expect it not to, I got out of bed and joined Satu and our other housemate Jan in the corridor. Satu was holding her thankfully oblivious, sleeping six-month old and in the dim light we discussed what had just happened. It was also their first earthquake. We relived the fear and confusion, half nervously laughing, half gasping disbelievingly.

Not knowing if it was big enough to make the news I sent my boyfriend and mother a short message each to say I was fine, I tweeted the BlogVille organisers that all was "tutto bene" with us bloggers and then I focused on going back to sleep. But of course, I couldn't. Intermittent after shocks kept me awake for a couple of hours and as the adrenaline evaporated away I began to question the whole experience; what if there was a bigger one to come? (We've since found out we all slept through a 4.2 quake two hours prior to the one which woke us and we experienced a big after shock just before 6 o'clock.) What should I do? Was it right to hide under the bed, stand directly under a doorway arch or perhaps under a table? We were on the third floor, should we try to get lower, closer to the ground?

I never had to think about these things when I lived in Shepherd's Bush!

And this was the moment I realised that no matter how many days I experience like yesterday and how much pleasure I get from exploring it, the world is always in control.



Views from the Bologna city center

We woke this morning to hear that the quake has claimed at least four lives, maybe more; a very sobering conclusion to what would have otherwise been a distastefully thrilling experience.

I've just circumnavigated the centre of Bologna's historic city centre searching for cracks in the walls or

bricks on the floor but virtually no evidence of last night's dramatic events was to be found. Locals were walking their dogs, tourists were tentatively seeking out the sights and the police were present not because of the quake but because they were monitoring a new scheme which is pedestrianising the centre of Bologna on Sundays.

It's now very ironic that my first impressions of Bologna➤ included the word "solid"; I had no idea that this would be so literally tested.

I must be honest and say I felt a little sombre walking around town just now. Quite frankly I felt a little emotional and selfishly wanted a hug from someone I loved. I was also internally debating whether to keep live-blogging on TravMonkey or not. But then I paused in front of the two towers, the taller of which I enjoyed climbing up yesterday. Their origins date back to the 1300s and they are two of Bologna's most prominent landmarks. They have experienced and survived possibly hundreds of earthquakes of varying magnitudes, not to mention world wars and other crises. Surely, if they can keep standing proudly during and after a hefty earthquake, then I can carry on with what I came

to do here; seek out the best of Bologna. So that's what I'll continue to do.

But don't think for a second that I will forget, at least not today, how the world is so much bigger and stronger than I ever imagined it could be, no matter how much I try to see of it.

And likewise don't think for a second that I don't feel incredibly lucky right now because I do and my thoughts are truly with those who suffered much more in last night's earthquake.

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The Mille Miglia as a Solo Woman



Bianca Bauza

[@nomadbiba](https://twitter.com/nomadbiba)

When it comes to motorized vehicles, I have to admit that my knowledge is limited. I mean, I can drive; but just as long as it's not with manual transmission, and only if there's no one else to do the job. Plus, if given the choice, I'd pick a bicycle over a car in almost any situation. On the other hand, I love road trips and I'm a pretty solid copilot and navigator. So I can understand the passion that some drivers have for their machines. This past weekend, I had the opportunity to witness this passion first-hand and at high level during Italy's Mille Miglia, a classic race reserved only for historic cars that runs from Brescia to Rome and back. Dubbed as the world's most beautiful car race, the route passes through some of Italy's most stunning cities: Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, Padova, Ferrara, Spoleto, Siena, Flo-

rence, Bologna, Reggio Emilia, and Rome, among others.



The Mille Miglia enters Bologna

This year, the race began on May 17th in Brescia, stopping in Ferrara at the end of the day; the next morning, competitors headed to Rome, arriving at Castel Sant'Angelo. On Saturday May 19th, they left Rome for the last stretch of the race, which is probably the most intense; since they had to make it back to Brescia in one go. During the race, they covered a total of

1600 kilometers! There were 384 cars participating in this year's edition with drivers coming from almost 30 countries. Most of the drivers were male, but there were also some female drivers and even all female teams.

However, the most impressive of them all, in my opinion was the amazing Sylvia Oberti, one of only 2 drivers riding solo! When Sylvia drove to the control station in Bologna, she was greeted with a whole lot of clapping and exclamations of "Brava! Bravissima!". All that commotion was enough to stir up my curiosity and made me want to know more about her. It turns out, that she first gained recognition a few years back for being the first woman to drive and finish Italy's Mille Miglia while going solo. And that's not the only accomplishment that makes Sylvia Oberti a remarkable woman, what makes her even more special is that she has turned her racing passion into a way to raise funds and awareness for the fight against cancer.

So how did I end up there? Placing Bologna's control stamp on Sylvia Oberti's card as she raced past the crowds making her way through yet another edition of the Mille Miglia? Well, it was all thanks to BlogVille , the project that brought me to Bologna in the first

place. The Tourism Board of the Emilia Romagna region has invited bloggers to come and stay for a few days in an apartment and experience firsthand what their region has to offer.

During my stay in Bologna I got to do and see some pretty amazing things, and my experience at the Mille Miglia was another highlight of my trip to this wonderful red city. For more information about the Mille Miglia, check out [their website](#). And if you'd like to see more photos about my time in Bologna, please visit [my SmugMug gallery](#).

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Festival dei birrai eretici - Craft beer Festival in Bologna, Italy



Brett Domue
[@ourtastytravels](#)

When I think about Italy, usually great food and wine are the first things that come into my mind.

However, being the inquisitive soul that I am, I wanted to find out if there is good craft beer as well.

Last week, Erin and I were in Bologna, Italy for the [BlogVille](#) project, sharing an apartment with a great group of travel bloggers from the US (Oregon), Australia, and Venezuela. Up until one of the last nights, my search for beer had not been very thorough. I do have to admit that I got caught up in the tradition of enjoying some of the wines of Emilia Romagna with our meals, and we'd been too tired most nights to do much in the way of going out to look for a pub to enjoy a beer in the evening. I did see a few beers around that

I want to go back and try, and managed to try a couple craft beers in Ferrara at the Eco + Food Festival we attended, so I was hopeful that I'd have a chance to experience the beer culture in Bologna before we had to leave.

Apologize in advance for the lack of quality photos — Erin had the good camera with her as she was scheduled to do an interview with a local chef!

<u>BIRRE ALLA SPINA</u>		PICCOLA	1/2 PINTA	MEDIA	PISTA
VIA EMILIA - PILS - BIRR. DEL DUCATO		3€	4€	5€	
VICTORIA LIGHT IPA - BIRR. DEL DUCATO	3			5	
FLORA SAMBUCO - MENARE STA	3		4		
WAKE UP DEAD BARREL - R.I. STOUT - LEFT HAND		3,50		6	
BAD KING JOHN - DARK ALE - RIDGEWAY	3			5	
XX BITTER - DE RANKE		3,5	5		
XX BITTER - DE RANKE		3,5	5	6	
BIBOCK - BIRRIFICIO ITALIANO		3,5	5	6	
OLD CESTNUT - DARK STAR (CASK)		3,50		6	
COOLFUSION - PALE ALE AROMATIZ - HARDKNOTT		3,5		5	
A.F.O. - BIRRIFICIO DEL DUCATO			3,5		6
<u>BIRRE in BOTTIGLIA: CHIEDI LA CARTA ALLA CASSA!</u>					

Beer Menu at Lortica

Sadly, on Monday, our initial group of six was breaking up, as Bethany and Ted from [twoOregonians](#) and Michael from [Time Travel Turtle](#) were leaving to continue on their journeys. As Sunday was to be our last night together, and hearing there was a craft beer festival in town, we decided to head out and see what was on offer. Michael, Bianca from [Nomadiba](#) and I wandered down to the university area of town, to where the Festival Dei Birrai Eretici was being held in a collection of pubs and cafes on the via Mascarella. The establishments taking part in the [Festival](#) (and their offerings) were:

Lortica Via Mascarella 26, +39 051 5876455

Birrificio Del Ducato, Roncole Verdi di Busetto (PR), Italy, Via Emilia – 4.8% Classic German Pilsener, slightly hazy blonde color. Fruity and slightly peppery. Pleasantly bitter and refreshing.

Birrificio Del Ducato, Victoria Light IPA – 3.5% American Pale Ale. Clear, light and fun-loving. Strong character given by dry hopping from American and German hops.

Birrificio Del Ducato, AFO – 5.4% American Pale Ale. For those obsessed with hops – 9 different types to get this Pale Ale with a complex and intriguing bouquet.

Birrificio Del Ducato, New Morning – 5.8% Belgian Saison style, created to celebrate the spring. Golden and slightly veiled, particularly spicy, with aroma of wild-flowers, green pepper and ginger.

Vecchia Orsa, Crevalcore (BO), Italy, Saison – 5.5% Dry and refreshing Saison. Very spicy and slightly fruity bouquet.

Menaresta, Carate Brianza (MI), Italy, Flora Sambuco – 4.8% Spice/Herb/Vegetable Style, brewed with Elder Flowers. Intense, strongly characterized by the elder, fresh and fragrant, supported by a good bitter taste.

Left Hand, Longmont, Colorado, USA, Wake Up Dead Barrel-Aged – 10.2% Russian Imperial Stout exaggerated and uncompromising, peculiarly American. 12 months in barrel. Rare and not to be missed.

Ridgeway, Reading, England, Bad King John – 6% Stout, dark but not impenetrable. Tied to the ancient British traditions. The aroma and taste are dominated by liquorice and toffee.

De Ranke, Dottenijs, Belgium, XX Bitter – 6.2% The most bitter of the Belgian Ales. The explosion of noble hops in the nose, fine structure balanced by malt and Belgian spice, giving it an unmistakable rustic touch.

Hardknott, Millom, England, Cool Fusion – 4.4% Pale ale for those who love ginger spices.

Birrificio Italiano, Lurago Marinone (CO), Italy, Vùdù – 5.5% Dunkel Weizen. German style, uncompromising, spicy and refreshing, well-structured body.

Emiliano, Anzola Nell'Emilia, Italy, Forum Gallorum – 5% Inspired by the beers of Cologne.

Girardin, Sint Ulriks-Kapelle, Belgium, Black Label – 5% Geuze, A blend of lambics of different vintages. Wild and refreshing, well-carbonated with citrus notes.

Dark Star, Horsham, England, Old Chestnut – 4% Old Ale, Light in alcohol content but rich in flavor, from wood to dry fruit. Served in a cask, English to the core.

Modo Via Mascarella 24/b, +39 051 5871012

St. Peter's, Bungay, England, Cream Stout – 6.5% Stout. Soft and elegant, very balanced.

Centokiodi, Bologna, Italy, Sveltina – 5% Cream Ale. The slender body makes it a very drinkable bitter beer.

Bruton, San Cassiano di Moriano (Lucca), Italy, Lilith – 5.5% American Pale Ale, Tuscan version, for strong palates.

De La Senne, Brussels, Belgium, Taras Boulba – 5% Belgian Ale, lower alcohol content, with a high bitter content.

Au Allertau, Germany, Weisse – 5% German wheat beer, straight from Bavaria. Banana and clove characterize the traditional bouquet.

Moustache Via Mascarella 5/a, +39 051 235424

De La Senne, Zinnebir – 6% Belgian Ale, Sister of Taras Boulba, shares the bitter elegance and innovative spirit.

Brewfist, Codogno, Italy, Fear – 5.2% Sweet Stout. For those who are afraid of the dark beers. Cream and cocoa beans make for a sweet and soft palate. Romantic. Gwatkin, Hereford, England, Golden Cider – 5% Cider in the best Anglo-Saxon tradition.

Cantina Bentivoglio Via Mascarella 4/B, +39 051 265416

Rurale, Certosa di Pavia, Italy, Seta – 5% Blanche-style Belgian wheat beer. Clear and slightly veiled. Spiced with orange peel and coriander.

Menaresta, Felina – 7.5% Beer with a beautiful amber color, full and enveloping tones of cinnamon spice and ripe fruit.

Birrificio Italiano, Tipopils – 5.2% Classic German Pilsener. The founder of Italian pils, distinguished from its German sisters with a more slender body and more explosive aroma, herbal and peppery.

Bon Secours, Péruwelz, Belgium, Triple – 9% Golden. Dry and floral. Elegant final alcohol.

Bravo Caffe' Via Mascarella 1, +39 051 266112

Revelation Cat/Mikkeller, Copenhagen, Denmark, Cream Ale – 5% Inspired by traditional pre-Prohibition American blonde, it breaks the boundaries of style, being more bitter and more fragrant.

Cremeria Mascarella Via Mascarella 30, +39 051 263236

Granita of Craft Beer

Twenty-seven beers in total as part of the festival, and fourteen of them were from Italy, and none of them named Peroni!

I was very happy to see the high concentration of Italian craft beers as part of the festival, with more than half of the total selection coming from Italy. And the styles of beers presented by Italian craft brewers showed a nice diversity.

Unfortunately, the Bravo Caffe' was closed already when we arrived, so we did not get to try the Revelation Cat/Mikkeller Cream Ale. We passed by Moustache and Cantina Bentivoglio but they were quiet and empty, and we wanted to be more in a crowd. We found L'Ortica, where not only was there a nice mix of

people, but we also managed to snag a table out on the patio where we settled in for the next few hours.

Over the course of the evening, I tried the Via Emilia, Cool Fusion, Old Chestnut, Flora Sambuco and Wake Up Dead. I wanted to try a few of the other Italian beers, but two of the taps were on rotation, and neither Saison was available, the AFO available instead (which I had already tried), and the Vùdù and Forum Gallorum being off the tap in favor of the Cool Fusion. AFO and Bad King John also found their way to the table, and I did take a small taste of the Bad King John when it arrived.

I loved the beers I did try, especially the Old Chestnut, Flora Sambuco and Cool Fusion. The Wake Up Dead was good, but had a bit too much alcohol taste for me. According to Bianca, this would be a great beer for marinating meat with.

Next door to L'Ortica is Modo and we discovered it was quite interesting as well — nice crowd and also a good beer selection — offering a one-two punch for a night out in Bologna. I would definitely suggest making 24 and 26 Via Mascarella your places to stop when you're out for a beer. And I would definitely suggest giving the Italian craft beer selections a chance, as they are

quite good, and show that there is definitely a growing beer community in Italy. Granted, not as strong as the wine community, but certainly not something to ignore for the future.

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Popular destinations within Emilia Romagna, Italy



Erin De Santiago
[@ourtastytravels](http://ourtastytravels)

After spending 10 days touring a small portion of Emilia Romagna in Italy on behalf of the BlogVille project ↗, I have to admit that I wound up surprised to learn just how much the region encompassed. There are a number of historic and gastronomically important cities that make up the collective Emilia Romagna portion of Italy. It stretches from Piacenza at the northwest down to Rimini in the southeast, with popular spots like Ravenna included in the mix. While I only garnered a glimpse into the wealth of what there is to experience in the region, I still managed to fall deeply in love with the cities we visited and called home. Each city or village offers something unique for culinary travelers or those seeking out the region's art, culture, or historical roots. From tradition-

tional Italian foods we enjoy today to the exotic cars that many of us can only dream of owning, Emilia Romagna is truly a destination in itself.

If you have time to devote to the "less traveled" areas of Italy, consider planning a visit to Emilia Romagna as you might find it the most memorable and charming time of your Italy travels.

Here's a look at some of the TravBuddy traveled cities that make up the Emilia Romagna region.

Rimini

Rimini seems to be the most popular stop for TravBuddies in the region. Not surprising, given its prime location on the Adriatic as part of the Italian Riviera. It is considered one of the most famous seaside resorts in Europe, offering thousands of restaurants, bars, and discos. Despite its reputation as a popular party spot, Rimini has a lot of notable buildings and historical elements worth checking out.

Only an hour or so train ride from other spots in Emilia Romagna, you can base yourself on the beach and then take some day trips to other parts of the region for sightseeing and exploring. As part of my BlogVille project with Emilia Romagna Tourism, I will be in Rimini

myself in June and July to scout out the best sights and food in the area so stay tuned for posts on my experience!



Historic fort wall in Rimini (photo: [Danikbates](#)↗)

Bologna

Bologna is the second most popular city with TravBuddies. I just returned from a 10 day stay there and I was definitely

charmed by many aspects of the city. Many consider Bologna to be the food capital of Italy and you will get no argument there from me. Without a doubt, some of the best food I've had while traveling in Italy was in Bologna. The city is a great place to mingle with tourists and locals as it's more of a university area with a rich background in art, music, culture, and of course, cuisine.

Wondering what to do in Bologna? See my earlier post on some of the recommended Bologna activities by TravBuddies. But note, the city is full of a lot more than these just sights highlighted so be sure to add reviews to your favorite spots in Bologna!

Ravenna

Ravenna is the third most popular stop for TravBuddies visiting the Emilia Romagna region. Ravenna is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and primarily a pedestrian area with cafes and bars all over. Some popular sights in Ravenna include the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Basilica of San Vitale and Basilica of S Francesco, which includes Dante's Tomb.

Ferrara

This unexpected gem was one of my favorite spots in Emilia Romagna. It is considered the city of bicycles and people ride bicycles everywhere in Ferrara although the main part of the town is easily walkable. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site and should definitely be added to your Italy itinerary if passing through the Emilia Romagna region. The area is filled with lots of little cafes and wine bars that are worth stopping in. Two of the main sights in Ferrara are the Basilica Cattedrale di San Giorgio and Castello Estense.

Parma

Parma is worthy of a stop for the food alone -- Parma ham and Parmigiano Reggiano cheese -- I could've stayed there forever. TravBuddy recommended stops in Parma include the Baptistry of Parma, the Parma Cathedral, and the Abbey of Saint Giovanni Evangelista. If you are into music and history, be sure to explore more as the area is quite famous for its music and arts history. The Teatro Regio or "Royal Theatre", is the city's opera house and worthy of a visit.

My stay in Emilia Romagna was hosted by the tourism board as part of the BlogVille project, but all views and opinions are

my own. Please keep this area in your thoughts and prayers after it suffered a 6.0 earthquake with a series of aftershocks on Sunday. The quake destroyed some smaller towns' historical and cultural relics, not to mention some lost their lives or were injured. While some villages sustained catastrophic damage to their most visited sites, the cities mentioned here are eager to welcome tourists.

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Pasta making at Casa Artusi - Forlimpopoli



Tom Jacobs
[@journeytom](https://twitter.com/journeytom)

During my stay in Bologna for the Emilia Romagna #blogville project I got to attend a pasta making course at Casa Artusi in Forlimpopoli.

Whilst I throw loads of plaudits at Thai cuisine, Italian comes in a very close second as some of my favourite food to eat. So I was very excited to have the opportunity to learn how to make fresh pasta.

Forlimpopoli was the home of Pellegrino Artusi, hence the name of the cooking school being Casa Artusi. He is the author of the famous Italian book "*La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiare bene*" (*The Science of Cooking and the Art of Eating Well*). Artusi is lauded as being the first person to really establish a true Italian cuisine. He was given a passport to roam free throughout Italy

by the Pope making his cookbook the first to include recipes from all the different regions of the country. **The best thing about Artusi's cookbook is that it isn't just page after page of recipes. Each one included is accompanied by a story describing his experience and the historical relevance of the dish which makes for a fascinating read.**

After learning more about the history of Artusi I was ready to do him and #blogville proud and try to make some pasta. Unfortunately my cooking skills aren't amazing and as soon as I realised I was going to have to use a rolling-pin I knew I was doomed. **My rolling-pin skills are awful although let me use it as a rounders bat and they greatly improve!**

My 'Marietta' or tutor didn't seem suitably impressed with my rolling-pin technique either but I did get an obligatory 'Bravo' out of her a couple of times. I tried to crack a couple of jokes in my poor Italian about how bad I was but I'm not sure I was making any sense.

Whilst not impressed with my ability my 'Marietta' was fantastic. She showed me how to make a huge range of different types of pasta and in the end I was quite proud of what I managed to achieve and she had a big

smile on her face too, its obvious she absolutely loves what she does.



Me and my “Marietta” at work

I am a firm believer that food is an important part of any countries culture and the more you learn about the food the more you will learn about the people of that nation. I would recommend Casa Artusi and the pasta making classes to anyone. This isn't just a normal cooking school. There is a museum explaining the history of Pellegrino Artusi and a collection of artefacts and his books. You will learn about the history of Italian cuisine as well as learning to cook it. Casa Artusi, of course, also has an excellent restaurant and some of the history of each dish is explained to you when it is served.

I managed to keep my apron and hair net from the school and I have promised family and friends I will wear them once again and prove my pasta cooking skills to them.

If you're interested in visiting Forlimpopoli and Casa Artusi you can find [more information on their website here](#)

Whilst I was a guest of the Emilia Romagna tourist board and Casa Artusi my views are all my own

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Learning how to make pasta in Italy



Larissa & Michael
[@Changes_Long](#)

Despite all my efforts, I've never really learned how to make pasta from scratch. On a recent trip to Bologna, I was determined to change all that. I took a pasta-making class at an *agriturismo*, a working farm and inn on the outskirts of Bologna.

For the last ten years, Federica Frattini and her husband have run Podere San Giuliano, hosting overnight guests and feeding them in the restaurant on site. Their mission is to showcase the foods and cuisine native to Bologna and its surrounding region of Emilia Romagna, which of course includes fresh pasta.

Our "How to make pasta" class began with a brief overview of *Ragu Bolognese*. Federica's *Bolognese* was somewhat different to what I had learned (she does not use milk, for instance) but this wasn't surprising.

Legend has it that if you questioned 100 women from Emilia Romagna, you'd likely get 101 different recipes for the signature sauce of the region.



Larissa is learning how to make pasta in Italy

Sauce-making was all very interesting, but I had really come for the messy stuff: turning flour and eggs into pasta. Out to the “classroom,” where each student had a workstation and an apron (much-needed) waiting.

1. Mixing: We watched as Federica deftly blended eggs into a small crater of flour, slowly incorporating more

and more egg until she had a small lump of dough. This was harder than it looked. More than once my little flour crater collapsed, with the eggs threatening to slither across the board and onto the floor. (This is why all my previous attempts have been made in a bowl, with the sides protecting my wayward yolks from fleeing the scene.)

Federica showed us how to shore up our flour craters with one hand while continuing to blend in the eggs with the other. Eventually I managed a sticky lump, although smaller than Federica's since a large portion of the ingredients now coated my hands in a crusty mess.

With hands appropriately un-gooed, we then kneaded our lumpy dough balls. A few minutes later we each had a smooth, silky mass that looked promising.

2. Rolling: I confess that I have always cheated a bit on this step. My sister once gave me a hand-crank style pasta maker so I could avoid hand-rolling. Not so in Federica's class: "you want to make fresh pasta, you roll by hand".

I'm no stranger to a rolling-pin (no, I have not used it on Michael) but I can do a pretty mean pie crust. However, pie crust is soft and malleable. Something

about this golden elastic dough was intimidating. With the patience of a saint, Federica demonstrated how to flatten and stretch the dough. Drape over the rolling-pin, start at the edge of the board, and press and roll. Drape, press, roll. Repeat. To my astonishment this technique worked and I had large, flat sheet of pasta dough lying complacently in front of me.

3. *Cutting tagliatelle, making nifty nests:* In the past I had simply run my narrow sheet of pasta through the cutting blades of the pasta machine, then laid them in a haphazard pile on a towel. But that technique wouldn't cut it here.

Federica demonstrated an easy technique that for cutting and separating pasta into individual portions (this will equate to roughly one portion when cooked). Place on a dish to dry slightly before cooking.

4. *Stuffing and shaping tortelloni:* We used a fluted cutter to divide our second sheet of pasta dough into 3-inch squares and placed a teaspoon of the ricotta filling in the center. Then came the tricky part: folding and pinching. I had tried this at home and usually come up with something that was functional and tasty, but not very pretty.

Frederica demonstrated the “vertical pinch”: after sealing the pasta closed into a stuffed triangle pinch each side toward the bottom (hypotenuse for you geometry-prone.) This creates a slightly 3-dimensional pocket for the filling, making it less likely to open up during cooking. Roll the corners around two fingers and pinch closed for the final effect. *Tortelloni* are larger than their better-known cousins, *tortellini*—which would have been a little too delicate for our clunky neophyte fingers.

5. EATING!!!: While the fruits of our labors were taken back into the kitchen to cook we went out to the wisteria-shaded veranda to enjoy some antipasti. While nibbling on some local *mortadella* along with fresh-baked *crostini* we looked out over the farm and gardens. Later in the year those fresh peaches and tomatoes will appear on the menu, along with whatever else is ripe.

Then, the moment we had worked for: the pasta arrived at the table! *Tagliatelle* with the signature *ragu Bolognese* and the *tortelloni* dressed with a simple sauce of *burro e salvia*—melted butter and sage.

Sitting with Federica and some of her staff we enjoyed a *pranzo alla Contadina al fresco*—country-style lunch

served outdoors. The elegant simplicity of the meal with its ultra-fresh ingredients was one I will long remember—it tasted even better knowing I crafted the pasta myself.

My only regret was that I had not booked one of the podere's comfortable guestrooms—a nap afterward would have hit the spot.

Many thanks to Federica and the staff of [Podere San Giuliano](#) for hosting me at this class, and to the staff of [Blogville Emilia Romagna](#) for making the arrangements.

(Thanks to Chris Damitio for taking the photos that I'm in.)

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An italian media affair



Nicola Wesseling
[@nicolawesseling](https://twitter.com/nicolawesseling)

An Italian Press conference is not your standard media event. Trust me, I've seen the usual fruit platter/ice water scenario with bored looking executives clicking their pens away. Here in Bologna it involved wine, pasta and a room full of lively Italians. The reason for the buzz is the project BlogVille that has selected bloggers and writers from around the world to live in an apartment promoting the region of Emilia Romagna. You are able to live like a local making this a truly unforgettable and valuable experience. Have a look at the selected writers and housemates here:

www.blogvilleemiliaromagna.com/guestbook/ 

The apartment gradually grew busier and we grew nervous as we watched journalists and media types pour into the not so large living room. Except I really knew it was going to be an unusual day when an Emilia

Romagna tourism official burst into the room waving a salami around that he had made himself.

Being ushered over to the kitchen I am asked “What is your favourite colour?”

“Blue” I reply wondering where this is going.. “Today it is green!” I am told as a very serious looking apron is tied around me. From there I became a cooking assistant and made pasta for the whole conference (being filmed of course). Maybe I should start a cooking show, *How to cook when you really really can't.*

We were interviewed and introduced to the press, I was having such an out of body experience I don't even remember what I said. However, it's the Girl with the Red Suitcase's first media appearance, and where better it to be than Italia?

Watch one of the news features here
<http://www.ptservizi.com/it/rassegna-video/tg-e-tv-blogger-da-tutto-il-mondo-alla-scoperta-dell-emilia-romagna-da-un-appartamento-di-bologna-con-BlogVille/>

Press clippings and media coverage to come! Make sure you follow the people behind the project
[@BlogVilleEmRom](#)  [@BudgetTraveller](#)  [@ERTourism](#)  [@traveldudes](#)  [@n_montemaggi](#) 



Some of the press, Sabrina from Cosmopolitan has the most amazing style!

And check out the tourism website here to plan your next trip to the beautiful region of Emilia Romagna!

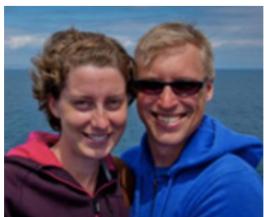
<http://www.travelemiliaromagna.com/>

Photos courtesy of *Turismo Emilia Romagna*

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An afternoon in Cesenatico with Frecce Tricolori



Bethany Rydmark
[@TwoOregonians](https://twitter.com/TwoOregonians)

We took a train from Bologna east to the Adriatic Sea for an afternoon visit to the coastal town of Cesenatico, Italy and a bite of seafood, and unexpectedly ended up with front row seats to Frecce Tricolori's aerial performance. Though we're partial to the Blue Angels, these jets held their own.

Cesenatico↗, founded in 1302, is now a cheery little town of 20,000, most famously home to a port canal surveyed and drawn by Leonardo da Vinci.

It welcomes Italian and German holiday makers more often than English-speaking tourists, and its quaint little streets feel a bit a time trip.

Conserves, giant pits lined with brick, stand as relics of the ancient fish trade: pre-refrigeration storage facilities for layering ice and fresh-caught sea creatures. Weekend markets buzz with berries and color and sunshine.

We walked to the pier to catch a glimpse of beaches and boats...

...and in swooped the Frecce Tricolori!

I'll admit. We nerded out.

I grew up going to airshows with my dad. My favorite PJs as a four year old? An oversized Blue Angels t-shirt.

My uncle was a fighter pilot in the navy. My grandpa once gave me the controls in his little two-seater as we flew high above the brush out in distant Eastern Oregon. My brothers and I watched The Rocketeer a million times: "It's all part of the show..." (*Obscure reference, I know.*)

The surprise performance lasted thirty or forty minutes.

We watched on as the Italian military aerobatics team performed stunt after stunt of coordinated precision and daredevil maneuvers.

Ted snapped at least 45 shots on his iPhone; I was as trigger happy with the big camera....
They're just too cool!



The Frecce Tricolori above the Cesenatico Pier

After the last buzz by the beachfront, we turned to walk toward town and a bite to eat.
Along main street, we paid a visit to a newly opened design shop, Brandina↗, sporting handbags, swim

caps, and accessories made in the style of brightly colored beach furniture of the Italian Riviera.

Turns out that Brandina designer, Marco Morosini, has background in photography and design: he's lectured at the University of Urbino on Theory and Techniques of Image Processing, published two photography collections, designed tourism posters for Italy's coastal hot-spot Rimini, and has been architectural planner and designer for the Ferrari and Maserati auto show exhibits since 2005.

It's always fascinating to me to learn about the characters we meet in far corners of the world.

Thoroughly (and literally) jazzed and champagned from the boutique opening, we set off down the street in search of one more deep fried shrimp meal as followup to Ted's #shrimpface ordeal in Comacchio.

A few fish, shrimp, and a fine beer later, another successful Italian adventure complete.

P.S. We've dubbed Cesenatico the Cannon Beach ↗ of the Adriatic. Now, if only we can coordinate a Blue Angels fly over next time we're at the Oregon Coast...

This post is part of a series from Emilia-Romagna ↗: A region of Northern Italy ripe for exploration. Artisan Local Foods

(tortellini, lasagne, pancetta, traditional balsamic vinegar, and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese to name a few!), Historical Cities (Modena, Ferrara, Bologna, Rimini, and more), and Beautiful Natural Areas (the Po River Delta, the Apennine Mountains, and the green, green farmland in between)...

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An afternoon wandering through Dozza



Bianca Bauza

[@nomadbiba](https://twitter.com/nomadbiba)

Located some 20 km away from Bologna, Dozza is a charming little town known as one of Italy's prettiest villages. When I talked to my hosts for [BlogVille](#) (an innovative project from the Emilia Romagna region to promote this area while collaborating with bloggers) about my interest in street art they suggested a visit to Dozza, as it holds an event every two years where artists are invited to paint murals on the walls of houses within the historic center.

Getting to Dozza seemed simple enough, I took a quick glance at the map and figured I just had to take the 101 bus from Bologna and get off in Toscanella, so off I went. However, not all the 101 buses pass through Toscanella; I learned that some have their final stop at Castel San Pietro. Fortunately for me, someone real-

ized I was totally lost and explained I had to take the next 101 bus with a sign to Imola; which are the ones that do go through Toscanella.



Mural in Via De Amicis, Dozza

Once I got off the bus, I walked about 3 km uphill to get to the charms of Dozza; which are housed within the walls of an impossibly fortress. It was early on a Wednesday afternoon and the streets were deserted except for a few locals and just a handful of tourists.

Almost all the bars and shops were closed, giving the place a very serene atmosphere.

The Biennale di Muro Dipinto is held in Dozza every two years in September; the next one will take place in 2013. The event has been running since 1960 and it brings artists from Italy and abroad to paint beautiful murals on the walls of the historic center; transforming the town into a big open air gallery. It actually started as an effort to put this tiny village “on the map” and attract tourism.

To this day, it’s possible to admire some of the earliest works that date from the 1960s onwards; they actually restore the murals every few years to help in their conservation. Since the start of this event, Dozza has evolved into the capital of modern frescoes. Additionally, since the last couple of editions and thanks to curator Fabiola Naldi, the Muro Dipinto has brought artists from the graffiti domain to take part in it; adding to the already interesting mix of styles present in Dozza.

If you’re headed to Bologna, you should definitely consider paying this charming little town a visit. For more information about the Biennale del Muro Dipinto, you

can visit their website↗ (in Italian only). Also, for more photos & murals check out my photo gallery here!

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Bologna Part One: What I Wore



Frankie Murray
[@swellvintage](https://twitter.com/swellvintage)

If you follow me on Twitter, you will already know that a couple of weeks ago I was fortunate enough to travel to Bologna, Italy to be apart of their BlogVille  initiative. BlogVille , created by the tourist board of the Emilia Romagna region, gives bloggers the opportunity to stay at an apartment in the centre of Bologna and Rimini and live as the locals do.

When I was introduced to the project by my good friend and fellow travel buddy Akeela Bhatty , I couldn't help but think the whole thing sounded a bit too good to be true! My sceptical horror movie-loving brain concluded that there had to be some sort of catch... either we were about to become the stars of Hostel 4 (how many of those films are there now? I'm very behind...), or we were going to sold into the black

market of Italy. So I packed my bags and decided to go anyway - and boy, am I glad I did!



Photo by Katie Antoniou ↗

I saw so much in the few days I was in Bologna, so instead of boring you with a single long winded 30 page blog post, I've decided to break them up into delicious bite-sized parts. I don't know how many parts there are going to be in total as I'm just not that organised, so keep your eyes peeled over the next couple of weeks!

This post is going to be all about what I wore on my travels around Bologna, as this is a fashion blog after all. I warn you now - there are outfit photos of me in this post. If you regularly read my blog (thanks for that, by the way), you'll know I never do outfit posts, but my thinking is that as this was a special trip, special allowances must be made. Don't worry, this won't happen often..

In order to keep my suitcase as light as possible, I decided to take staple pieces that I knew I could rely on whatever the weather. Arguably the most important piece in my travel wardrobe was this amazing maxi dress from HotSquash↗. Not only was it so comfortable and easy to wear, but it also features very clever material that keeps you cool in the heat! Genius or what? I really works too. I'll definitely be investing in more of

their pieces for the summer... when we eventually get some heat!

I'm also so glad that I brought this hat from H&M, as it proved to be a hair lifesaver! My hair is naturally very curly and turns into Jane Austin-style ringlets at the slightest sign of moisture, so this hat covered up the mess and also kept my face out of the sun - perfect! I am officially in love with my London Retro prescription sunglasses. As someone who is a bit scared of contact lenses but still wants to be able to see in the sun, they really made my trip. I love the wayfarer style frame, and they were so comfortable to wear all day. I have the exact same frame (the 'Shoreditch' to fit my East London stereotype), and I can't recommend them enough.

I also wore this paisley print maxi dress from Uttam, as I love the fullness of it. The low cut also meant that I could possibly catch a little bit of sun, although with my pale skin reflecting the rays that was never very likely...

What are your summer travel staples? I'd love to hear them!

That's all from Bologna for now, folks! Keep your eyes peeled for more very soon...

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‘The Sweetest Dolce of My Vita’ – Bologna, Italy



Gina Stark
[@SuuperG](https://twitter.com/SuuperG)

I knew what I was getting into. I mean, who thinks any trip to Italy won’t be infused with artisan crafted, heaven sent and heaven scented foods? Patiently aged cheeses, hams, wines, and even balsamic vinegars make you grapple with the dilemma of whether to devour more of the same dish you just inhaled, or perhaps allow your palate yet a new and exquisite eating experience? And I didn’t even mention the pastas...yet. So I arrive in Bologna fully armed with the insight that this is, after all, Italy. I come prepared to indulge in delectables and walk miles of cobble stoned streets as penance.

I love being unprepared.

“Life is a combination of magic and pasta.” ~ Federico Fellini



Panna Cotta

In my sojourn through the streets and eateries of Bologna and the surrounding Emilia Romagna region, I am happy to report it is easy to fetter out fantastic food stuffs to satisfy many palates. However, comma, after several days of good meals, I wanted to be wowed off of my dinner chair by the best even Bologna had to boast and with the help of Fodor’s (I’m old fashioned, I used their guide book), I was guided to Da Cesari.

A long-time family-run fixture of food in this classic city, Da Cesari has just the authentic aura you would hope for when you make heavenly culinary discoveries. Which I did. They conveniently and blessedly serve up the exquisite Mora Romagnola which I had to order because Glenda recommended I try it after I posted my Interactive Travel post soliciting ideas. I love my readers! It is basically a prosciutto crudo, cured for 30 months, but from a very rare and specific swine. But oh so very not basic. I am happy to proclaim it the hands-down the BEST prosciutto I have ever savored, and I've sampled my fair share.

Panna Cotta – Oral Fixation

But the best “best” and the sweetest dolce of my vita in Bologna was in no small way the panna cotta, aka ‘Heaven in Your Mouth’ also found at Da Cesari (See cover photo!). I won’t get into the nitty gritty of how it’s made or exactly what makes this custard distinctly Italian, but I’ll say that the memory of it melting in my mouth on the rare moments I slowed down and stopped inhaling it were enough to compel me and Sara (my BlogVille roommate) to steal away on our last night and commandeer a last fix and bring it back to the farewell Bologna party. Tim, the certified chefster

sharing the BlogVille digs noted that the chefs in the states just don’t have the same ingredients available to them and so the perfection achieved in the glorious panna cotta such as I sampled – over and over and over – is elusive.

A few nights later, continuing the trend of cool culinary excursions, our charming host of BlogVille, Nicholas Montemaggi, led us to one of his favorite eateries, Le Sette Chiese. Here we were again wowed by artisan cheeses, meats, breads, beers, lambrusco, and rocket (arugula) set in an atmosphere that makes you want to stay and digest, chew the fat with friends, and order another round of prosciutto before the winding walk home through the lamp-lit stone streets of Bologna.

It was here, too, that I dutifully sampled (OK OK, I wolfed it down) the doughy and delicious Tigelle, and also later the Piadina that was recommended by Loredana. If the Tigelle portrait above conveys warm wonderful comfort food bread, I cannot accuse it of false advertising. It didn’t just taste delicious – it chewed deliciously. This seemingly innocent disc of dough was certainly what my gluten-free traveling companion would deem “evil wheat”. Call me a sinner.

If you're wondering about the curious absence of a gelato mention, fear not. An entire post will be dedicated to my serious samplings of the smooth sweetness that is the pride of Italy.

Thank you for indulging with me on my taste adventure. I promise to continue on the quest for memorable delectables.

"You better cut the pizza in four pieces because I'm not hungry enough to eat six." ~ Yogi Berra

Photos by Gina Stark except for cover photo of the panna cotta by co-conspirator, Helene Lohr

For more Bologna, try here: [Beautiful Bologna – Part I in Photos](#)

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Wine tasting in Bertinoro



Jessica Dante
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The third part of our fantastic first day in Bologna consisted of a wine tasting in the hilltop village of Bertinoro. As you can see from the picture below, you can see all of the region of Emilia Romagna from this adorable town. The views were absolutely breathtaking...

At the Celli Winery, we got a full tour and learned about the family history behind it...

Our tour guide Mauro explaining the wine creation process that is specific to this winery.

And then began the best part... the tasting of the wine! Along with our wine we sampled Piadina (typical of the region) with fresh local cheese and greens.



Bertinoro from above

I enjoyed the last wine that we tried the best-- a sweeter white wine that almost tasted like apple juice. After a few glasses of wine in us and full stomachs, we hopped back in our bus to head back to Bologna. The views on the way back were unreal. This is exactly how I've always imagined Italy to be like...



Wine Barrels

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Photo Essay: bird watching on Italy's Po river



Vago Damitio
[vagobond](http://vagobond.com)

During my time in the Emilia Romagna region a few months ago, I was fortunate to be able to take part in a bird watching tour on the Po River. With more than 350 species of birds having been sighted in the Po River Region, this is a territory that at first glance looks unvaried, but is actually quite surprising richness.

Indeed, the agricultural landscapes vary much more than the human eye can see. Birds can profit from this, finding what they need to feed themselves and, in some cases, to breed.

This is one of the best places in the world to watch herons, kites, kestrals, and of course, flamingos. I didn't have the fancy bird-watching camera that many of the other passengers on the boat had, but I still man-

aged to catch some images that I hope show how nice the day was.

In particular, there was a large group of senior citizens from Belgium who are part of an RV camping club, these folks with tattoos and piercings on wrinkled old arms are exactly the type of old person I hope to some-day be.



Pink Flamingos at the Delta of the Po River

While it was exciting to see the Peregrine Falcon, a red-footed falcon and the lesser kestrels, the highlight for me was just being on the water and seeing this unique landscape filled with pink flamingos!

In addition, the French speaking tour guide pointed out some fish smuggling camps. An interesting note was that there are always two doors in the smuggler cabins so that when they see the patrols coming they can run out the back and escape in their long fishing boats.

I'm very grateful to [Emilia Romagna Tourism](#) for setting up this trip.

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Artisti in piazza - Closing down the medieval village of Pennabilli for an annual street artist festival



Keane Li
[@keaneiscool](https://twitter.com/keaneiscool)

It's not often that I can say I sat in a conference room with the mayor of a medieval Italian town to talk about my blog. (Yes, this blog.) A few days ago, the [BlogVille](http://BlogVille.it) crew met the fine folks running Pennabilli, a hilltop town in Emilia Romagna. They welcomed us to their wonderful home prior to the start of perhaps their largest celebration.

The name of the city derives from two formal rivals, those living in the castles at Penna and those at Billi. In the 16th century, they joined together to form the city now known as Pennabilli. Today, the city houses notable art installations by poet and intellectual [Toni-](http://toni-artisti.com)

no Guerra ↗, as well as attractions like meditation gardens and Tibetan bells donated from the Dalai Lama.



One of the artists performing in Pennabilli main Piazza

More relevant to this post, Pennabilli hosts an annual three-day festival known as Artisti in Piazza – Festival

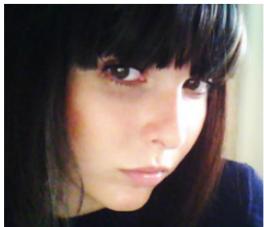
Internazionale dell'Arte in Strada ↗ (“Artists in the Piazza – The International Festival of Street Art”), drawing innovative entertainers from around the world to their cobblestone streets.

If you should ever find yourself in Emilia-Romagna during the time of this festival, do yourself a favor and join in on the fun. It's full of good people, great shows and really delicious food. Even without Artisti in Piazza, Pennabilli is a beautiful place to visit, as evidenced by the videos and photos below.

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Italy's Motor Valley, Emilia Romagna



Sara Näse

[@getpalmd](https://twitter.com/getpalmd)

It does probably not come as a surprise if I say that the main reason why I wanted to visit Italy was the cars. BlogVille offered me a great location in Bologna, in the heart of Motor Valley, close to everything I needed and with a selection of automotive places to visit so huge that it was impossible for me to get to them all in the short period I spent in Bologna. I got to see a lot of places, but I have also several that have to wait until next time – like Pagani and some private car collections, and damn it, Ferrari factory must be doable somehow too. One day, one day.

And there will be a next time, of course. Motor Valley is not an once in a lifetime experience, Motor Valley is an automotive mecca you just want to return to. I could go once or twice a year for the rest of my life and

there would always be something new and interesting there to see and experience, and with that said, I have already marked at least May 2013 in my calendar as my “Italy month” with events like Mille Miglia ↗, Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este ↗ and I wouldn't mind attending Lamborghini Driving Academy ↗ either if they have it available then. Also Lamborghini will celebrate its 50 year anniversary in May 2013, so it is going to be a good month to visit Emilia Romagna – see you there I hope?

Motor Valley wouldn't be Motor Valley without the amazing people you are lucky enough to meet. I love the cars, but I also love the people who share the experience with me. Interesting conversations with museum guides who are so into the same things as you are that you almost find yourself finishing each other's sentences with a person you have never met before. Having lunch with Fabio Lamborghini who is such an incredible gentleman that after five minutes it felt like you have known him forever. That was often how it felt like to meet an Italian, it was like connecting with an old friend! Finding a guy driving a Golf GTI with a Nürburgring decal on it (that is always a good sign) and next thing you know you are listening to sweet car

sounds on Youtube, discussing air conditioning and horsepowers and exhaust systems, and going through the Italian car vocabulary (my favorite word is of course *accelerazione*).

What I am trying to say that Motor Valley will blow you away with the cars, but if you go, you are also very likely to experience the *petrolhead connection* with people alike. You won't be disappointed!





COMING SOON:



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Mosaic man



Michael Turtle
[@michaelturtle](https://twitter.com/michaelturtle)

Mosaics in Ravenna, Italy

Luca Barberini places the small piece of marble into place carefully but with the ease of an experienced artist. He reaches for another as he chats with me, the motions as natural as breathing. Centuries have passed since the first mosaic makers of Ravenna but the tradition lives on – right now, through Luca. Although the original artists might be a bit shocked at exactly what he's doing.

“It’s possible to work with an ancient technique, an ancient language, for contemporary art,” he explains.

Here in Ravenna, a small Italian city in the Emilia Romagna region, the mosaic artworks are more than just a tourist attraction. They are at the heart of the history and identity of the community. The oldest works, which were installed more than 1500 years ago, adorn

the interiors of Ravenna's churches and historic buildings.



The kitchen-create your own Emilia Romagna Gastronomic extravaganza

“We have maybe the best monuments in the world where you can find the ancient mosaics,” Luca rightfully boasts.

It’s not these artworks that Luca is most proud of, though. He is part of the new generation that is using

the same techniques with a modern style – fusing tradition with current taste.

“The ancients used the mosaics like a book,” he explains. “So if you go in a church you can see a figure – for example Christ – and you can learn the story like a cartoon.”

“So for the modern they don’t want to use the figurative things so it’s more like...” he pauses to try to think of an example I might understand, “...Pollock, Jackson Pollock.”

Modern mosaic art

Luca works out of his own studio in Ravenna called Koko Mosaico. At the moment he’s in the middle of one of the more abstract contemporary pieces he was just referring to. Look closely and it seems like he’s randomly placing different sized and coloured pieces. Step back and a crowd of people appears from his work, each figure with their own characteristics.

He’s using marble for some pieces, glass for others. The glass is made especially for mosaic art in an ancient oven in Venice. It’s the same way they made the glass two thousand years ago. Some things in this industry need never change, it seems.

For Luca, other than the style of his art, it is essentially the same process. He does only one thing differently. Rather than cutting all his pieces of marble and glass before he starts to make the mosaic, he does it as he goes. It goes against everything the methodical ancients believed in... but boys will be boys!

“It’s casual,” is how Luca puts it. “I want to work in that way without rules, spontaneously.”



Example of Mosaic Art

Ravenna mosaic art

The art of Ravenna is in the blood of its children. Luca started studying at the art institute of mosaics when he was fourteen and was there for five years. Interestingly, though, he says it was only about five years ago – when he was 25 – that he was able to really express himself creatively.

“I understand just five or six years ago how I explain my personal art in a language – the language is mosaics.”

The style of art is world-famous. To the point where the tourists who come to Ravenna come mainly for the art, where Hollywood celebrities have asked Luca to make artworks for them, and a mosque in Oman has commissioned him and his team to make a 600 square metre mosaic for its design.

I wonder what the artists of Ravenna in the fifth century would make of all of this? Would they be more surprised that their descendants are decorating a mosque in the Middle East or finding inspiration for their from Jackson Pollock? Maybe they wouldn’t mind at all. Maybe they would just be proud that the tradition of Ravenna, the legend of the mosaics, lives on.

* To see more about Luca and his work, head to the [Koko Mosaico website](#).

This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. [For more info click here](#).

You can see all the [UNESCO World Heritage Sites I've visited here](#).

Time Travel Turtle was a guest of the [Emilia Romagna tourism board](#) but the opinions, over-written descriptions and bad jokes are his own.

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I hate bees



Nat Harris
[@acooknotmad](#)

“I hate bees” a fellow blogger said to me when I asked whether she would come with us to visit Miele Praconi, one of the biggest honey producers in Emilia Romagna. I was stunned that someone could feel such a negative emotion towards an insect that is so beneficial to humans but I wasn't really surprised. Bees get a bad rap. They sometimes swarm and are often mistaken for wasps. Unlike wasps, bees are gentle and sting only when they feel threatened, after one sting they die so they pick their battles wisely.

I have long been fascinated by bees and dream of some day having the space to own a hive or two. So you can imagine how excited I was when we arrived at Miele Praconi↗ in San Mauro Pascoli. Miele Praconi is a family owned business and father and son were there to greet us, show us around, and teach us a few things.

While we were talking, bikers started driving up to assemble before going off on a tour.



Bees' cage

For a few minutes everyone was distracted, so I walked out amongst the beehives and just watched and listened to the bees buzzing around. After the bikers were all gone, Mr Praconi senior came out with his smoker and opened a few hives for me to have a look inside.

What looks like chaos is actually a very organized community. Bees all have their jobs, drones, workers and the queen, and they do their jobs well.

Once our inspection was done we were invited into the packaging room where Mr Praconi showed us the centrifuge machine and other equipment.

He pulled out a frame filled with honey and cut pieces off for us to try, telling us that we would never taste honey so fresh.

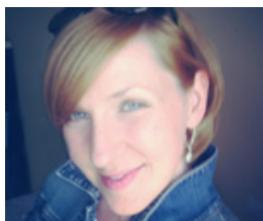
He was right, it was amazing. We also learned that eating the comb helps your body heal your digestive tract. Like most honey producers worldwide, the Praconis have lost many bees and have seen a decline in honey production in the passed two decades. This loss of bees around the world affects everyone. It affects honey producers like the Praconis by cutting into their livelihood. It affects all of us in that bees pollinate one third of the food we eat. If you'd like to learn more about honey production or honey bees and their plight you may want to watch one or both of these movies, [Vanishing Of The Bees](#) and [Queen Of The Sun](#) or plan to visit a local beekeeper.

* We visited Miele Praconi as part of BlogVille Emilia-Romagna  for more information please visit their website. The opinions in this post are our own.

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Carpigiani Gelato University: The Art of Making Gelato



Jeanette Kramer
[@jeanettekramer](https://twitter.com/jeanettekramer)↗

Italy's best gelato is known worldwide and carefully crafted by experienced gelato chefs, educated only by the top instructors in the gelato industry! Carpigiani Gelato University↗, located in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, churns out award winning gelato-makers from Canada↗ to Israel and a few places in between. Future gelatiers from all over the world can spend anywhere from 1 to 4 weeks studying the science and art of gelato-making, perfecting their craft under the guidance of Italy's top gelato chefs and instructors. Many of CGU's students return to their country with the intention of opening an artisan gelato shop and sharing their love of this treasured Italian treat.

I had the sweet treat of spending a day in class last month at the gelato university in Bologna, observing the students in practice and sampling more than a dozen types of artisan gelato made fresh that day! Read on for a glimpse into what it is like to be a student at the famous Carpigiani Gelato University!

But First ... What is Gelato?

According to Carpigiani Gelato University in Bologna there are some important differences between gelato and ice cream and the two are often confused.

It is very common throughout the world for the word *gelato* to be translated into English and other languages as *ice cream* or its local equivalent. However, it must be noted that there are significant differences between Gelato and Ice Cream. Italian gelato contains less fat than ice cream, has less incorporated air, and is served at a higher temperature. Consequently, gelato provides a greater flavor experience because there is less fat that coats the tongue, more flavor per spoonful (due to less air), and the taste buds are more *alive* since the temperature is not so cold as to dull

their sensitivity. Not to mention fewer calories to burn!

It is therefore correct to maintain a clear distinction between the two products, even linguistically.

Carpigiani Gelato University is dedicated to the development of the gelato culture throughout the world and therefore will always refer to the product by its true name, *GELATO*.

Courses at Carpigiani Gelato University

Intensive lessons begin in the classroom at 9:00 am, a half day of theory (and some serious science!) followed by a half day in the gelato lab, ending at 6:00 pm, full of gelato and knowledge.

Seminars at CGU are taught in Italian, English, French and German but with students from the US, Uruguay, Israel, Jordan, the Netherlands, Taiwan and more, English is the common language and the language instruction for the majority of courses at Carpigiani Gelato University.

Gelato is serious business and the morning I visited was spent studying sugars. Sugar-free gelato was the curriculum for the day, therefore students learned

about balancing the natural sugars in a recipe and calculating many things that a non-gelato-maker like myself would never even think of.



Three students working at their gelato

Proper gelato is made using only fresh, seasonal fruits, each fruit bringing a different level of sweetness to the recipe.

The class was divided into groups, each group assigned 3 flavours and given the task of creating the recipes and balancing the sugars for that day's sugar-free gela-

to assignment. Once the recipes were created and the ingredients gathered, the students set off to the gelato lab to design their gelato.



Aldin

The international students worked together to craft their gelato, and finally, nearing 5:00 pm, the most anticipated part of the day began – the tasting! Amongst the sugar-free flavours sampled that day were pineapple, strawberry, passion fruit, kiwi, melon, lemon, chocolate and almond. In total there were 13 flavours up for tasting, not one of which you would guess was made without sugar! Goal achieved!

The student featured above is Aldin, from Uruguay. She was sent to CGU by an investor, for 2 weeks of training, expected to bring her expertise back home to an upcoming gelato shop in her hometown.

If you are interested in attending a course at Carpigiani Gelato University in Bologna, Emilia Romanga in Italy, please let me know↗!

While I was a guest of CGU and Emilia Romanga Tourism↗, all words and photos are my own.

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Blogville Bologna- Part 1



Katie Antoniou
[@katieantoniou](https://twitter.com/katieantoniou)

A few weeks ago, I was lucky enough to travel to Bologna in Italy as part of their BlogVille programme – where travel bloggers from around the world visit their region of Italy and live like a local – staying in an apartment in the centre of town and experiencing everything from food to fashion first hand. This was the view from our apartment- pretty sweet, huh?

I'd been to Bologna once before but only for a 24 hour styling job, so had only glimpsed the city- this time I was able to properly explore.

It had everything I love about Italy- incredible architecture, surprises down every street, stylish locals, delicious food, amazing shops and it was even surrounded by incredible countryside.



Bologna: the view from the apartment

I actually lived in Florence on my gap year, and though I loved it, I have to admit I much preferred the atmosphere in Bologna. The population in Florence is 70% non-Italian- mostly students from abroad studying the

language, history of art or such like. It was great fun but meant that I didn't really feel like I was experiencing the genuine Italian lifestyle, whereas in Bologna I felt we had a much more authentic visit. There are far fewer tourists in Bologna too, which means the locals are always really pleased to see you and keen to chat- such a refreshing reaction and so different to how tourists are treated in London!

This is the first in a series of posts I'll be writing about the trip, as there's so much to say! There are also a lot of thank-yous to be said- so please bear with me!

First off are the airline German Wings who flew us out there and back- we were a little wary as none of us had heard of them before but they were great- much better than RyanAir!

Secondly, I must thank Nicholas ↗ who was our exceptional host in Italy- a real Italian gentleman with excellent taste in t-shirts.

And last but not least, the lovely Akeela ↗ who organised the whole thing for us- she's an absolute legend and fast becoming a travel blogging queen! Here's a snap she took of Frankie ↗, me and Sara ↗, a Finnish blogger who was staying with us too. The pictures above I took on my Diana lomography camera, the one

below is Akeela's- I'm not sure what model she was using.



Frankie, Sara and Katie

There's a bloggers' workshop ↗ at Lomography in London next Saturday 23rd which I think I will pop along to- I'm still learning the ropes!

It's amazing how in foreign cities, we find even the most mundane things like street signs and bicycles seem completely charming.

Having arrived on the Thursday evening, we set off on Friday to discover some of the towns surrounding Bologna- first up, Reggio Emilia. My favourite place here was the beautiful old theatre which had incredible old posters inside, as well as stunning murals.



Here's a picture of Frankie in one of the beautifully decorated rooms people could hire for functions.

On the Saturday we moved from the Blogville apartment to a lovely hotel- The Art Hotel Orologio -organised by Akeela again, pictured here sipping tea in our hotel room. The hotel was part of a gorgeous chain or boutique hotels, this one had a very art deco feel

and was full of ancient clocks. When we arrived we were greeted by From Russia With Love playing on our hotel room television- dubbed into Italian of course! It all felt very glamorous and luxurious, especially when we had breakfast with the hotel owner the next day, a lovely lady, timelessly stylish in that typical Italian way- mixing what must have been antique pearls with a modern Issey Miyake handbag and totally pulling it off! She introduced us to her son who worked for Greenpeace in Milan- between us we tried to explain to her what blogging and social media involved with the help of Frankie's ipad! Said technology was also the source of endless amusement as Frankie shared her 'Speak Italian' app with locals wherever we went - 'I won't do it without a condom' becoming our Italian catchphrase!

More posts to come soon on what we wore, what we bought and what we ate! Ciao for now!

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One scoop of heaven



Helene Lohr
[@HeleneLohr](https://twitter.com/HeleneLohr)

A scoop of utter delight. A Cioccolato so rich and dark, that I'm sure it's the true essence of chocolate melding with my taste buds in utter ecstasy. It's one of those moments that you remember, when all your senses become more intense. The buzz of mopeds whizzing by, the sunlight reflecting warmth off of the golden red buildings and down into the alleyway, and my heavenly first taste of chocolate gelato from La Sorbetteria Castiglione in Bologna. *Oh yeah, it was that good.* Angels should be blowing golden trumpets, because I'd arrived at the pearly gates.

Gelato is a uniquely Italian art. The original traditions, techniques and machines for making the perfect gelato were developed in Italy. The flavors themselves are like the Italian people- both serious and mischievous, with passion and subtlety all rolled up into one. If

you've had truly good artisan gelato, it's an experience that you *will* remember.



Gelato in pictures

At Carpigiani Gelato University, just outside of Bologna, my dear friend Gina (@suuperg of Gitanablog), the awesome @jeanettekramer of Latitude Travel and I got the chance to dive into this wonderfully addictive world of icy sweetness. Even though I've sworn off of sugar in all other areas of my diet, for real

Italian gelato I'd decided to make a very special exception!

Our lovely guide Valentina smiles and gestures into the large work bay, explaining the Carpigiani philosophy: the entire mission of the University is education in the making delectable artisan Gelato, in the spreading of the Italian culture of good taste and the choice of quality ingredients over 'fast food'.

Unfortunately the fast food culture has reached even into the arena of gelato. There are a lot of "fake" gelatos out there. Many companies use substandard materials, using unnatural ingredients to boost flavor, fillers to thicken the mouth feel, and preservatives to increase shelf life of their "product". Carpigiani University of Gelato has entered the fray to combat this trend with their long history of sweet excellence. At Carpigiani, the makers of gelato are true artisans, crafting new favors in accordance with traditional principles of respect for their ingredients and their craft.

We walk towards the classrooms through a corridor above the factory floor. We pass machines old and new- a walk through the history of the craft from machines powered by hand cranks to the latest digitally

controlled models. The long tradition of the company is reflected along the hallway.

In the lecture hall Gelato Professor Luciano Ferrari picks up a glowing yellow lemon from a table absolutely covered in vibrantly fresh fruit.



Professor Luciano Ferrari and his class

My mouth waters. He holds it up for the students and tosses it lightly into the air. It will be *their mission* to transform this fruit into delicious gelato using a com-

bination of scientific formulas and pure unbridled creativity. As professor, he will be the one to judge them on consistency, flavor, texture and presentation. (*Sort of like a of an “Iron Chef-Gelato” competition*).

Luciano paces at the front of the room, occasionally stopping to write at the easel. With lively gestures emphasizing each of his points, he discusses the true essence of gelato. Behind the simplicity of the fresh ingredients, there's a complexity of factors that go into making truly mouth waiting gelato: science, art and cultural understanding. True gelato is dense and flavorful, with natural components, no preservatives. Its fresh ingredients lasts no more than a week.

Science and art are happily married at a true gelateria. The focus is on creativity and passion combined with quality and precision. Students must ingrain the formulas for melting points, the effects of alcohol, the amount of sugar, cream, fruit into their brains. How to make gluten free, sugar-free and a whole host of gelato varieties and still make them equally tantalizing is a key concern. Any ingredient can be used, but one must consider its unique physical and chemical properties... Mouth feel, melting point, color and texture are all critical.

The class breaks up for the lab section and the air is filled with the chatter of a dozen languages. The program is filled with mix of Italian and International students sharing their enthusiasm for this Italian art. When they open their own gelateria they will become ambassadors of Italian gelato culture, good taste and quality food all over the world. Carpigiani's plan to spread gelato culture worldwide has already proved wildly successful. Enrollment has doubled in the last 3 years and graduates are opening up artisan gelateria from California to Singapore.

We watch as the fresh ingredients are transformed. Examined, picked, chopped, blended to a smooth and creamy consistency, churned and chilled to the perfect temperature. *Did I mention before that my mouth was watering?*

Luciano's laughing eyes become serious, considering, as he tastes the gelato offerings of the students. You get the feeling that, for him, enjoying gelato is not only fun, but also a matter of pride, of true dedication. He offers critiques: "Good starting flavor, but unpleasant aftertaste... Good overall taste, but too cold and hard... Not enough pistachio... Too much pineapple", and finally, *(In response to a hazelnut gelato that nearly made my*

knees go weak) a “Perfecto!”, accompanied by a broad smile.

This is the essence of slow food, an ultimate delight. It is a celebration of pure fun, pure joy in the intense flavors. The tart flavors of lemon, tangy raspberry, sweet pineapple and tantalizing pistachio all melt in my mouth. This is a real treat: the chance to savor passion and creativity in every spoonful, every mouth watering bite a treasure to be discovered and enjoyed as the complex flavors dissolve on my tongue.

At the end of the day, Valentina drives us home to our apartment in the heart of Bologna. As the sun sets orange and red on the Piazza Maggiore late in the evening and the laughter of friends echos across the square, we all know it's time for just one more gelato. *Delizioso!*

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The Big Wheel in Parma



Nat Harris
[@accooknotmad](https://twitter.com/accooknotmad)

We woke up early to catch the train out of Rimini up to Parma where our guide for the morning, Giovanna, was waiting for us at the station. Our hosts at Emilia Romagna Tourism had really pulled some strings for us and had planned a very exciting day.

Thanks to the generosity of the Consorzio Produttori Latte of Parma, Giovanna was taking us to one of Parma's largest Parmigiano Reggiano producers to see what it takes to make Italy's most famous cheese.

Unfortunately the actual forming of the day's cheese was done earlier in the morning but we would get to see every other step of the process, which has been perfected over centuries of craftsmanship since the year 1200.

First off it is important to know that Parmigiano Reggiano is made using only three ingredients; milk, salt

and rennet. Milk is the key to this cheese and nowhere in the world are they as fussy about the quality of their milk. The cows of the region are allowed to eat only locally grown hay, harvested four times per year, and natural vegetable feed. Silage or any type of fermented feed or by-product of the food industry is strictly forbidden. Over a quarter of a million cows in the region are milked twice a day and the milk must be delivered to the cheese house within two hours of each milking. The milk will be used just as it comes from the cows without any treatment or additives. About 600 liters of this precious milk will be used to make one wheel of Parmigiano Reggiano. The milk from the evening milking is placed in large stainless basins where the cream will rise to the top naturally overnight and then be skimmed by hand the following morning. The next day the cheese maker drains the skimmed milk with the whole milk from the morning milking into a huge copper cauldron.

Each cauldron will produce two wheels of cheese, this particular factory had at least ten.

The milk is then warmed up and a natural starter, made from the whey of the cheese making process from the previous day, is added.

Next the rennet, a natural enzyme from the stomach of suckling calves, is introduced, which causes the milk to curdle. The curd is then broken down into pieces the size of a grain of rice using a “spino” (huge balloon whisk). Now comes the tricky part, cooking the curd to expel water from the granules, the cheese master, with generations of experience, knows exactly when to shut off the heat. Once the heat is off the fine curd will sink to the bottom of the cauldron forming a tight mass. The mass is then lifted from the bottom of the cauldron and divided to make two wheels of cheese. The cheese mass is placed in a form called a “fascera” where it is left to rest for 3 days.

The next step is to apply the marks of origin, with a casein disk applied to the top, each individual wheel is identified by its own alphanumeric code.

The repeating words Parmigiano Reggiano in a pin dot pattern along with the number of the cheese house and the date of production are embossed around the rind of the wheel using a flexible stamp that is fitted between the cheese and the second mold.

These unique marks of origin are what assure you are getting real Parmigiano Reggiano.

The next process is the soaking of the wheels in huge tanks of brine (water and natural salt) for about 17 to 20 days.



The Wheel

The brining allows the cheese to absorb the correct amount of salt for its flavour and long aging.

The cheese is now ready for aging and will do so for a minimum of twelve months, which makes it the longest aged cheese in the world. After twelve months,

the cheese is inspected by an expert for its structure, appearance and overall characteristics. If the cheese passes inspection it is branded with an oval mark reading “Parmigiano-Reggiano Consorzio Tutela” with the year of production.

The cheese may then be aged for 24 months or more. Wheels not suitable for further aging are grooved around their circumference, marking them as “Mezzano” and are suitable to be eaten young.

After 18 months the cheese can be re-evaluated for a further certification marking them as “Extra”, guaranteeing superior quality.

Through the course of its aging, the cheese undergoes an amazing transformation converting almost all of the lactic acid into proteins, creating a cheese that is full of nutrition (with the lowest cholesterol of any cheese) and highly digestible.

Cracking a wheel of Parmigiano Reggiano is done with as much finesse as actually creating the cheese. After all that work you don't want to just saw the cheese up but crack it along its natural lines. I was lucky enough to be able to crack open a whole wheel of cheese that was made in 2010 and then sample the freshest possible pieces from within.

The process starts with a set of five specialty knives. The first is a knife that is hooked and allows you to score through the rind around the circumference of the wheel. Then you start the process of inserting the other four knives. Once scored, two spade shaped knives and two longer more squared knives are inserted about half way in at North, South, East and West positioning. They are then removed one at a time and moved between the last two insertion points, again about half way in. With the knives in place you can now push them all the way into the wheel and start to feel it crack along its own natural fault lines, sometimes waiting a minute or two for the actual cracking to occur. Once cracked, you can remove the top half of the wheel to expose the gorgeous cheese inside with an unbelievable smell and texture, the cheese could not taste any fresher or more delicious.

In Italy, Parmigiano Reggiano is not just grated over pasta but eaten as a table cheese in nuggets, shaved over salads in curls or paired with fresh fruit and balsamic vinegar for dessert. It is known as one of the most versatile cheeses and has earned that respect amongst chefs the world over.



Maestri di Parmigiano at work

With our morning coming to an end at the cheese house, we made our way to the small shop displaying huge chunks of Parmigiano Reggiano and an assortment of other local food products.

We left with a couple of blocks of 24 and 36 month aged cheese and some of their wonderful butter made from the cream they skim from the evening milking.

Sitting down to lunch we agreed that we had enjoyed quite a morning seeing the process of the world's most famous cheese being hand made (not produced!) and getting the rare opportunity to crack a whole wheel.

We took the time to film Tim in action, cracking a wheel. Watch the mouth watering video on [YouTube](#)↗

Join us for our next post where we are whisked away from lunch to visit one of Parma's largest Prosciutto producers.

Below are a few ways we enjoy Parmigiano Reggiano other than grating it generously over pasta.

- shaved over cooked asparagus
- in scrambled eggs
- mixed with bread crumbs and used as a crust for fish or meat
- with strawberries and balsamic
- grated over a minestrone soup

How do you enjoy Parmigiano Reggiano?

* We were in Parma as part of BlogVille Emilia-Romagna  for more information please visit their website. The opinions in this post are our own.

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Sandwiched between Parma ham and cheese



Michael Turtle

[@michaelturtle](https://twitter.com/michaelturtle)

Parma hams

They're hanging from the ceiling, bat-like, smelly and dusty. In the darkened basement you feel like they could suddenly come alive, turn on you in a swarm and leave you with no defences. They look menacing – partly because of the dimly-lit and enclosed environment, partly because of their resemblance to cocoons of dangerous and exotic predators, and partly because of the unknown. What are they?

Well, they're parma hams. In this cellar underneath an old castle in the Italian region of Emilia Romagna, more than five thousand pieces of pig are being turned into one of the local delicacies – the 'culatello' variety of prosciutto. It's one of the finest pork products you will ever eat! There's a reason some of the world's rich

and famous order their own supplies from here – see if you can spot a celebrity name in this batch.



Pending Culatellos

What is culatello?

The professionals here at Antica Corte Pallavicina take their work seriously. It is a fine art to create meat like this and they've been using the same technique for generations. First, the softest part of the upper thigh is cut off to be used. It's massaged with wine and gar-

lic and then with salt and pepper. It's left to rest for five days before being put into a pig bladder. It's tied up and then hung in this cellar.

There's a reason all the hanging hams are dusty and mouldy. They'll stay suspended from the ceiling for at least twelve months... and sometimes for as long as forty months!

Once they are ready, the bundles will be taken down, the bladder will be removed and the meat will be left wrapped in a cool cloth for two days. When the cloth is removed, the meat must be sliced within one hour. To eat true culatello you must be here in the Emilia Romagna region because transporting it will ruin the delicate taste.

So much effort and care goes into ensuring the meat is of the highest quality. It starts well before the pig is even slaughtered. At Antica Corte Pallavicina, they grow their own maize, barley and bran to feed to the animals. I would've said the pigs eat better than the humans... but that was before I had my chance to taste the culatello.

Parmigiano cheese

We eat it with cheese – the parmigiano-reggiano – which this region is also famous for. And drink it with a chilled lambrusco made locally. We're finally out of the cellar, in the castle's courtyard, watching the sun go down over the river nearby while peacocks meander through the grounds. The balance of the flavours is perfect. There's a harmony with our setting too.



Parmigiano Reggiano cheese

So much time has gone into preparing this meal – months and months. So much care has been taken with every step along the way. It's a pleasure to take the time and care to savour the moment.

Time Travel Turtle was a guest of the Emilia Romagna tourism board but the opinions, over-written descriptions and bad jokes are his own.

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Nice legs!



Nat Harris
[@accooknotmad](https://twitter.com/accooknotmad)

Just as we finished up our delicious lunch at Ristorante Cocchi, which included fried zucchini blossoms filled with vegetables mozzarella and sardines and braised stuffed veal breast, our guide for the afternoon, Mirca, arrived to whisk us away to the Parma hillside.

Nestled in its own microclimate where the dry winds blow down from the Apennines carrying the soft perfume of pine, olive and chestnut groves, sits the San Pietro Prosciutteria, perfect for the dry curing of their Prosciutto di Parma.

We pulled in to the San Pietro production facility where we were greeted by one of the owners, Annalisa Sassi and shown into their conference room. Sitting at the conference table she briefed us about what we would be seeing and explained a little of the history of

making prosciutto and the San Pietro company. Producing around 300 000 legs of ham per year this is not a small operation (in fact it's the largest in Parma) and San Pietro is known as having the highest quality facility and finished product.

As Annalisa continued, I was completely distracted by the largest and most beautiful slicer I have ever seen. Equipment like this really excites me and as she showed me how it could swivel and adjust I imagined cutting perfect slices of factory fresh Prosciutto so thin the flavour would have nowhere to hide.

Our briefing now over, we donned our factory apparel of booties, caps and lab coats and were ushered onto the production floor.

Starting at the beginning we watched as refrigerated trailers of pigs' legs were unloaded and racked up to be inspected for their quality.

The pig legs must meet some high criteria before they are allowed to enter into the long process of becoming Prosciutto di Parma. This includes having the proper amount of fat around the leg, no cracking or breaks in the skin and no unusual marbling that would affect the outcome of the finished product. After inspection, the

legs are cleaned and sent through a machine that massages them in preparation for their first salting.

The first salting is done using 2 kinds of salt; a wet salt (done by machine) and a dry salt that is applied by a professional, by hand, in different amounts on the exposed meat.

The legs are then racked up and moved to a cold room (1 to 4 degrees) where they are left for seven days. The legs then receive a second, lighter salting that is left on for 15 to 20 days, still under refrigeration. Next the legs are washed and cleaned again and hung to dry for a few days. When they are ready, skilled butchers remove the hip bone and give the legs their final trimming ready to be hung for their initial curing of 3 months in large dark and well ventilated rooms. This is what many consider the most important stage of the cure and where the dry sweet hillside breezes traditionally played a strong roll. In fact in the old factories they would open up large windows (weather permitting) to let the legs dry using this age-old method.

When the legs emerge from their first curing period the exposed flesh has become dry and tough so a coating of pork lard sometimes mixed with pepper (called a "sugra") is applied by hand to the cut end of the leg.

This will effectively seal up the leg allowing the curing process to continue within, slowly and evenly.

The legs are now ready to be hung and finish their curing for a minimum of twelve months (from the beginning of the process) in order to meet the D.O.P. (protected designation of origin) standards.

During their final curing, each leg is also checked by hand using a needle like tool fashioned from a porous horse bone. The bone needle is inserted at five different points around the flesh of the leg and then smelled for quality and uniformity. The master prosciutto maker, who quietly accompanied us, showed us exactly how he does it quickly jabbing and smelling while covering the hole he left by pushing some “sugra” over it with his finger. He then handed me the needle and let me give it a go, needless to say this is a job for a very experienced prosciutto maker.

After the legs have passed all of their inspections and have cured for the mandatory amount of time they are ready to receive their fire branding with the mark of the Ducal five pointed crown confirming them as true Prosciutto di Parma.



The master prosciutto maker examining a leg

As we slowly walked down the length of the oldest curing room, with its wooden racks and thousands of legs hung by twine, Annalisa pointed out the shuttered windows that are still opened when conditions prevail and reminded us that this amazing food is made with only three things; pork, salt and time.

Our tour had now ended as we returned to the conference room to remove our protective garments.

Entranced by the smell and beauty of the gigantic curing rooms, surrounded by one of my all time favourite

food products and filled with respect for how this incredible food undergoes its transformation, I was now ready to sample this delicacy right from the source. Yet the slicer of slicers remained empty!

I spun around scanning the room for a tray or plate of the goods but no, nothing.

A slightly awkward silence filled the room and then it was broken by Annalisa very graciously thanking us for coming while motioning us towards the door. Slightly stunned, our best Canadian manners kicked in and we thanked her very much for an incredible tour, waiving goodbye while heading for the car.

Half an hour later we plunked down in our seats on the train, absolutely exhausted from what was an extremely long and wonderful day and ready for the long ride back to Rimini.

“I still can’t believe we didn’t get to sample that beautiful prosciutto!” I said to Nat. “It was like receiving communion without the wafer.”

* We were in Parma as part of BlogVille Emilia-Romagna  for more information please visit their website. The opinions in this post are our own.

Nice legs!

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International street buskers festival in Pennabilli, Italy



Adam Groffman
[@travelsofadam](#)

While in Rimini, Italy, I took a short break from lounging on the beach and eating piatini (flatbread sandwiches which reminded me a lot of quesadillas) and spent a day in the Emilia Romagna hinterland—the land behind the sea. A nearby city, Pennabilli, was hosting an **International Festival of Street Art** called “Artisti in Piazza.”

The annual street art festival (since 1997) is a 5-day festival with over 200 artists from around the world. I was just there for a single afternoon and evening and saw more than a handful of performances. With performers from Japan, England, Ireland, Italy, France, Spain, Cuba and the U.S. there was a huge diversity of talent. Some standout acts:



Live Violin Performance

Yukinko Akira (Japan)

The rhythmical painter is an artist/DJ from Japan. He danced while simultaneously mixing songs and painting to the beat of the music. His act was pretty captivating because you never knew what he was going to paint. I especially loved that as soon as he finished a painting, he gave it to a member of the audience.

The artwork was good, the music was good, the atmosphere was wonderful. [Read more.](#)

Classycool (England)

This [string quartet from London](#) put on an enthusiastic and lively show. Classycool's aim to present classical music in an exciting way isn't particularly novel, but their energy and talent was certainly captivating. It was especially cool when one of the band members played his violin between his legs.

[Classycool live song](#)

Why is the festival in Pennabilli?

The [Artisti in Piazza festival](#) was set up to support street artists. Until recently, Italy had prohibited unauthorized performances in public areas. Pennabilli took a stand and welcomed street performers by giving authorization to just about anyone. Since 1999 they've even had road signs at the entrance of the city welcoming artists to perform on the street. More information about the festival is available on the [Artisti in Piazza homepage](#) (English).

My visit to the Pennabilli Street Performers Festival was during my stay at the Emilia-Romagna BlogVille apartment and

was part of my tour there. More information can be found on the [Emilia-Romagna tourism website](#).

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Best kept secret: vintage shopping in Bologna



Frankie Thompson
[@bushbirdie](https://twitter.com/bushbirdie)

Can you hear the new post series klaxon ringing? And less than a week since I started Wednesday's Words. But I was too smitten with this idea to not pursue it. This series will see me blogging about the things I didn't expect to find in certain places and I'm kicking it off with a story of rummaging through smelly, already worn clothes and shoes in Bologna.

I used to think I had a good nose for vintage shopping, however my snout let me down as it took my BlogVille roomie Erica ↗ to tell me that there was a vintage shop literally across the way from our apartment entrance. Penelope Recycling is a rather unglamorous name for a shop full of glamorous things. This is upmarket vintage lovingly selected and curated with prices to match. I hasten to add that prices aren't unrealistic and you are

paying for what you're getting; high quality items in excellent condition. This is where you go to buy something striking for a wedding, a party or heck, doing the ironing if that's your thing. These are clothes and accessories to be treasured and enjoyed.



Vintage Clothes and porticoes

I was also very pleasantly surprised to see a respectably sized corner of the shop was dedicated to men's vintage clothing. Bravo!

*Penelope Recycling, Galleria Falcone e Borsellino 3G, Bologna,
Tel: (0039) 51 4121894.*

Around the corner is a cute little shop called *Memories*, that was sadly closed when I headed there with my camera and a heart full of hope, however, through the window I could see collections of cute brooches, designer silk scarves and lavish beads and pearls.

Although my purse heaved a sigh of relief I am still sad I didn't get a chance to do a little rummaging in *Memories* shelves. A little extra research shows that this shop is actually a specialist in vintage posters, artwork and maps.

Memoires, Via de 'Fusari 7/b, Bologna, Tel: +39 (0) 51 223083
This misfortune was quickly erased from my mind when I saw a sign that in vintage shopping terms is the equivalent to a beacon of light for a lost ship at sea: "Mercato dell'Usato". Literally meaning "Used Goods Market" it can be translated in English as "jumble sale" or "flea market" depending on where you're from. I followed the light into a beautiful church courtyard where all four walkways were brimming with vintage goods; clothes, shoes, furniture, books, jewellery... It was heavenly.

The best part of this market was it was organised by the church to raise money for charity work in Indonesia. The second best thing about this market was that everything was cheap, super cheap. I picked up the below items for a total of 6 Euros (though I insisted the kind women kept my change, it's for charidee!)



Vintage Shop – A view of the inside

I can honestly say that I have got use out of all of these already, my favourites being the gold rim coloured

shirt which buttons up at the back and the Ducati scarf (Ducati is a local Emilia-Romagna motorcycle company. I can't guarantee that this market will be running every weekend in Bologna, but it certainly goes to show how important it is to keep your ears and eyes open.

Basilica di San Francesco, Piazza San Francesco, Bologna

Riding high on my flea market finds and with their musty smell wafting from my bag carrying my proud purchases I headed into the rough-around-the-edges (and-in-the-middle) Zona Universitaria prompted by a locals' tip off that this was where the best second hand and vintage shops were to be found. I wasn't disappointed.

On Via San Leonardo I found two shops, which could have kept me happy but not poor for hours. Firstly Zenobialand↗, a shop with multiple personalities, in a good way. Outside were racks of clothes, most of them priced under 10 Euros, to catch my thrifty attention and inside was a collection of charming chintz from vintage luggage, to oriental and Victorian sketches and more clothes hanging on the walls.

Clothes and accessories ranged from recent trends to more classical vintage from the 1960s and 1970s, all

was reasonably priced (between 10 and 30 Euros). The lady working in the shop on the day I visited was warm, friendly and enthusiastic about getting the shop reviewed on my blog, but not in a "I want to make money" way, more in a "I like people to come into my shop and take pleasure in all the many things I've collected". Sadly there aren't that many vintage shop owners like that anymore. I may have left empty-handed (which was my intention now any available space in my suitcase had been filled by the flea market visit) but I also left with a happy heart.

Zenobialand, Via San Leonardo 3, Bologna, Tel: (+39) (0) 95 741938

My final find was of a similar style if less chintzy and with a bit more substance with racks of both men's and women's clothes at very fair prices (most items were under 10 Euros with outside racks of men's clothes for 5 Euros).

Two terrifyingly trendy students sat at the cash desk of La Leonarda  and were initially a little sceptical when I asked if I could take photos. However, when I started to show an interest in a pair of shoes (I think the walking around the shop wearing them and still taking photos was a clue) they warmed to me commenting

on how cool they were and how they wished the shoes had fit them.

These well-loved and well-worn but still well cool beauties cost me 2 Euros. I have no doubt that this is where all the painfully cool students go to update their wardrobes affordably and I am deeply envious of them now I'm many miles away.

[La Leonarda](#), Via San Leonardo 2/2, Bologna (+39) (0) 338 2304173

There is also a huge street market, often referred to as a flea market in guidebooks called the Mercato della Montagnola in Piazza dell'Otto Agosto, however as I covered half of its wide spread I realised that there was little vintage to discover more cheap and cheerful fashion and essentials; this is definitely the place to go to buy a complete outfit of questionable taste including a pair of shoes, a bra and a pair of knickers for under 10 Euros.

And for vintage books, I actually noticed a number of street stalls selling beautiful old novels (mostly in Italian) and of course there are many bookshops in the University area though I can't vouch for their affordability or range.

If you want to see where most of these spots are on a map of Bologna take a look at the real-time blogging I did for TravMonkey one weekend during my stay↗. It was also the weekend of the earthquake in Bologna↗ and though it was disrupted it was far from ruined. I wrote more about why an earthquake should not put you off going to beautiful Bologna here↗.

If this has got your vintage juices flowing then take a little look at my online vintage shop↗, which I re-opened recently. I'll be shipping a load of orders in early July so please take a look at what's there↗ and have 10% off with the code ASTHEBIRDFLIES.

Bird was staying at BlogVille, an Emilia Romagna Tourist Board sponsored initiative to give bloggers a free nest while exploring the local life. I paid for my own flights, gelato and definitely these wonderfully musty smelling vintage gems. My opinions are always my opinions and this post is full of them.

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Rimini more than just a beach town



Nat Harris
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Beach vacations aren't for everyone but the hundreds of thousands of beach chairs in Rimini are proof that many people enjoy the sand and sea.

There are over 100 bagni (plural of bagno, Italian for beach), pick one, go to the booth and pay then someone will show you to your chair.

You can spend the whole day lounging. No need to pack a lunch, great food, coffee and drinks are available at the bar.

If you like baking in the sun this is heaven but we were here for a limited time and were anxious to see the city.

Our first stop was Marvelli Sapori for a strong espresso and a bombolino.

We were there about 10 minutes and already we felt like the owner was an old friend. Realizing that I (Nat), spoke French, he told us about the state of Italy, how it got to this point and his fear for its future. With his wife of 56 years by his side this was a real mom and pop operation that deserved our support. So every morning, before we went out exploring, we stopped in for coffee, sometimes alone, sometimes dragging the BlogVille crew.

One morning we walked into town, no more than half an hour away, through a treed park with long grasses on either side. The entrance to the old centre (centro storico) is the Arco d'Augusto, a Roman arch so massive you can't help but be in awe that it was built in 27 BC.

In fact, Rimini has a few sites that should blow you away. Not as old as the arch the Pescheria Vecchia (the old fish market) was built in the 18th century, it is surrounded by bars and restaurants whose patrons spill out onto its marble counters for a smoke and conversation.

Walking East we arrived at the Ponte di Tiberio, another Roman engineering masterpiece, completed in 20 AD and still used as a major thoroughfare for Rimini.

ni's frantic commuters. Imagine the traffic it has seen over the centuries from donkeys to automobiles, never rebuilt only paved.

On the other side of the bridge is the neighbourhood of San Giuliano with murals, colourful facades and the smells of nearby trattorias, it is a treat to wander this picturesque suburb.



Borgo San Giuliano

By this point we were starving so we decided to walk back to the beach front and stop at Casina del Bosco for a local speciality, piadina. A piadina is a sandwich made on flatbread, served hot or cold. They are seen throughout Emilia Romagna in varying thicknesses depending on what area you are in. Of course after eating them a few times we had to try making them.



Home-made Piadina

Thankfully the BlogVille apartment was equipped with its own piadina pan (similar to a crepe pan). So with our ingredients in hand, salami, squaquerone (local cheese that resembles a very soft cream cheese) and arugula, we made piadina for our room mates. We were so happy to be able to discover another side of Rimini and to realize it's much more than just a beach town.

Here is how you can re-recreate the piadina at home.

PIADINA (Serves 3)

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/8 tsp baking powder
- 1 1/2 Tbsp shortening or lard
- 1/3 cup warm water
- 1/8 cup warm milk

Cooking Directions

Suggested fillings: Prosciutto, arugula, bresaola, salami, mozzarella, cream cheese, or whatever other ingredients you enjoy, you can also make a vegetarian version with grilled vegetables.

1. Place flour in a mound in a large bowl.
2. Add on salt and baking powder, and mix with wooden spoon.
3. Make a well in the center. Drop in the shortening and rub it together with the flour using your fingertips. Lumps are okay! And it will still be pretty floury.
4. Make a well and pour in water and milk.
5. Mix until dough comes together. Add a little more warm water or flour, if needed. You want a soft dough, not sticky at all.
6. Use your hands and knead for a couple minutes, roll into a log shape.
7. Divide the dough into 3 equal pieces. With one hand, gently roll each piece into a ball.
8. Sprinkling each ball with flour and let rest for 5 minutes.
9. Heat a griddle or cast iron pan.
10. Roll out dough to about 9 inches in diameter.
11. Place on hot griddle, score the piadina all over with a fork. If bubbles appear, quickly pierce them with the fork.
12. Cook each side for a few minutes or until it develops a golden colour with some brown spots.
13. Remove to a clean dish cloth.

14. Repeat with each ball, and stack each cooked piadina over one another.
15. When done, cut piadine into halves or quarters and enjoy with your favorite sandwich ingredients.

Do you enjoy a beach vacation or would you rather explore?

* We were in Rimini as part of BlogVille Emilia-Romagna for more information please visit their website. The opinions in this post are our own.

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Five reasons to visit Emilia Romagna



Keane Li
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While I wait for the restoration of Internet connectivity at my place after returning from Italy, I'm forced to leave all my awesome videos (like this one of [the view from the clock tower in](#) ↗ or this other one of [a horse-drawn carriage ride in a nature reserve in](#) [Savio](#)) of Emilia-Romagna on my computer, lest I jam up the connection for everyone else in this cafe with large uploads.

I don't want to be *that guy*.

Anyway, I've been reminiscing about all the great moments I had in Emilia Romagna as a part of [BlogVille](#) ↗. There are so many reasons to visit this beautiful region in Italy; here are my top five.

1. Food

A huge majority of Italy's most delicious exports originate from Emilia-Romagna. There's Modena's balsamic vinegar, the great cheeses of Parma, prosciutto, lasagne, ravioli, tagliatelle al ragù (oddio!), Sangiovese wine and the amazing piadina. Along the coast, fresh seafood is in abundance, often served as a mixed platter of fried goodness. In short, it's impossible not to get a little *grasso* here.

That's Italian for "fat."

2. Fairy Tale Towns

It only takes a short train or bus ride to get from one idyllic town to the next. Many cities, like Pennabilli, or Santarcangelo di Romagna offer panoramic views from their highest points. Others, like Verucchio, feature amazing castles that seem to come straight out of fairy tales.

3. Street Fairs

I was fortunate enough to experience three large town festivals during my two weeks in Emilia-Romagna: Pennabilli's Artisti in Piazza, the Palio di Ferrara and La Notte Celeste in Bagno di Romagna. During the lat-

ter, we met the president of the tourism board of Emilia-Romagna, were interviewed by the Italian press (I responded in Italian, guys!) and were invited on stage in front of the entire town to say hello.

Needless to say, that was one of the greatest experiences of my trip; a huge honor.



At the Verucchio Castle



Basilica di San Vitale, internal view

4. Unbelievable Cultural Attractions

While pretty much all of Italy is a hotbed for culture, Emilia-Romagna offers its own unique offerings. It was in Savignano sul Rubicone ↗ where Caesar “crossed the Rubicon,” Ravenna served as the capital of the Western Roman Empire before its decline, and the famous Gothic Line of World War II ↗ passed straight through

Rimini  where a great battle was fought between the Allied and Axis forces.

A favorite of mine was the Basilica di San Vitale in Ravenna. The mosaics were simply breathtaking. Even compared to all the churches I saw in Rome, this one really stood out.

5. The Great Outdoors

I have to admit that nature and active life weren't high on my list of things to do in Italy, however Emilia-Romagna really offers something for everybody, whether it's hiking through the Apennines or biking down the official Ferrari race track. My favorite outdoor activity, however, was the grueling task of enjoying a Spritz on the warm Rimini beach.

La dolce vita davvero.

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Parma - Hike to Monte Marmagna



Bianca Bauza

[@nomadbiba](https://www.instagram.com/nomadbiba/)

After spending a few weeks touring Italy and tasting all its deliciousness without any sort of restraint, I was ready to enjoy some time in nature and get active to burn some of those calories. At the same time, I wanted to see how much I could do after spending a couple of months being cautious while recovering from a sprained knee.

Fortunately, on this occasion I had the opportunity to sample some more of the legendary Italian hospitality thanks to [BlogVille Emilia Romagna](#)↗, an innovative project by the regional Tourism Board for which they have invited bloggers to see what their region has to offer. With the help of their colleagues in Parma, they organized a special itinerary that included a hike to Mount Marmagna, which is located within the Appen-

nino Tosco Emiliano National Park. Additionally, they provided me with a guide, Gemma Bonardi from Liberi Spazi ↗, to make sure I didn't get into any trouble :D



En route to Monte Marmagna

When we set out on our hike it was already mid-morning on a cloudy day. We started from the Rifugio Lagdei ↗, which had kindly provided us with accommodation the night before. The refuge is set on a plain at 1250 meters above sea level, there is a stream nearby and it's surrounded by forest; making it the ideal starting

point for some of the most beautiful excursions in the park.

At the beginning, the rocky trail goes through the thick forest, which provides a nice and cool shade. On the way, we saw some nice carvings made in stones; but apparently they were made in more recent times. After 40 minutes we made it to Lago Santo, the biggest glacial lake in the Emilia Romagna region, located at 1507 meters above sea level.



Lago Santo

After passing the lake, the vegetation grows thinner; but as we got higher the views were more magnificent. One of the things I enjoyed most about hiking with Gemma was all the information she gave me about the local fauna & flora. While hiking we heard a few times the call of the cuckoo bird, and Gemma explained that some of them are quite opportunistic creatures as they lay one egg in other birds' nests; so then their young push the other little birds out of the nest and get raised by the other species.

Finally, after about two hours from our starting point we reached the summit of Mount Marmagna at 1852 meters above sea level. We stopped to take in the beautiful views, have our lunch and take some more photos. Normally, you can see the sea from the top of the mountain; but not on that day.

We noticed the clouds getting thicker and it looked like rain might follow, so we decided to start our way down before getting caught in it. In the end, I was happy that I was able to hike well and that my knee didn't bother me much; even if I still didn't feel like I was totally recovered yet. At least I was in good enough shape that Gemma said I was one of the strongest girls she's met, so that's pretty cool :)

If you want to get more information about the Appennino Tosco Emiliano National Park, you can visit their site [here](#). Also, if you're planning a trip to Italy, you should have a look at the [BlogVille site](#) for more information about this fantastic region. Finally, I want to thank again Gemma Bonardi from [Liberi Spazi](#) and the [Rifugio Lagdei](#) for their great Italian hospitality. And if you'd like to see more photos of my time in Parma, have a look at [my photo gallery](#).

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Eat, Party, Live: (M)ein Roadtrip durch Emilia Romagna



Doris Neubauer
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Hätte Elizabeth Gilbert ihre Selbstfindungsreise ausschließlich in Italien verbracht, hätte sie statt “pray” und “love” wohl eher “party” und “live” gelernt. Die ItalienerInnen jedenfalls scheinen MeisterInnen darin zu sein. Beweis: Auf unserem Tagesroadtrip ins Hinterland von Rimini wurde in jedem der mittelalterlichen Städte und Dörfer zelebriert. Was? Das Leben natürlich – und dass dazu jede Menge köstliches Essen genauso gehört wie Wein, das ist eine Selbstverständlichkeit. Schließlich sind wir in Italien! Alte Pflastersteinwege schlängeln sich durch enge Gassen. Die Gemäuer, hier und da verfallen, geben immer noch beeindruckendes Zeugnis einer Zeit, die kein Hollywood-Film standesgemäß darstellen kann. Da-

zwischen überraschen uns Kunstwerke, moderne rot-gelb-abstrakte Gemälde an Außenwänden neben steinernen Liebenden in den Parks neben Schnecken aus Messing, die als Brunnen dienen. Ringsum liegen grün-ockerfarbene Felder und kaum etwas, was den Blick über die ruhige Hügellandschaft trübt. Idyllisch, ja fast schon kitschig präsentieren sie sich, die Städte und Dörfer in der Region Emilia Romagna, genauer gesagt im Marecchia-Tal. So idyllisch, dass wir die Strände Riminis vergessen, an denen sich Liegestuhl-an-Liegestuhl und Hotel-an-Hotel reiht. Dabei sind sie noch nicht einmal eine Autostunde entfernt.

“Achtung!” kreische ich. Zu viel geträumt! Hätten uns jetzt doch glatt rasende ItalienerInnen in ihrem kleinen Fiat von der Straße gedrängt. Mein Freund bleibt souverän ruhig, und ich bin wieder einmal froh, ihm das Steuer überlassen zu haben. Ich hätte so meine Schwierigkeiten gehabt mit der temperamentvollen Fahrweise der ItalienerInnen, die sich in den steilsten Kurven an uns vorbeidrängen. Sie straft den ruhigen Schein der mittelalterlichen Gebäude ebenso Lügen wie die Bau-Gerüste, die uns einige gewollt stilvolle Fotos zunichte machen.

Route: Rimini – Pennabilli – Petrella Guidi – Sant’Agata Feltria – San Leo – Montebello

“Fertig, Feuer, Los!”, werden wir besonders – nunja – herzlich in San Leo begrüßt, einem der “schönsten Dörfer Italiens”. Kaum ist der Ruf verklungen, rennen an uns schon fünf Menschen in blauen T-Shirts vorbei. Verfolgt von einer Gruppe in gelben und einer anderen in roten Hemden. Wir sind mitten in ein Teambuilding-Seminar eines Kräuterherstellers geraten. Ja, es wird gelebt in Penabilli, Sant’Agata Feltria, Montebello,... – so die Namen der Städte auf unserer Route. Selbst im als “Geisterstadt” angekündigten Petrella Guidi heißen uns bellende Hunde, der Duft von Pasta und vor allem Bagger wie Traktoren willkommen. Ausgestorben?! Nein! Haben sich doch auf Einladung des kürzlich verstorbenen Künstler Tonino Guerra, dessen Spuren überall in der Region zu sehen sind, ganze Familien am Fuße der Festung angesiedelt.

Während wir uns auf den Straßen trotz GPS wegen der schlechten Beschilderung – “ist der Pfeil durchgestrichen oder nicht?” – immer wieder verfahren, finden wir uns in den Städtchen selbst gut zurecht. Überall müssen wir einmal steil bergauf zur Festung, um dann vor den Toren derselben zu entscheiden, doch lieber

draußen zu bleiben. Die brütende Hitze lädt mich nicht sonderlich ein, mir in Museen oder Burgen gegen Eintritt Rüstungen anzuschauen – auch wenn es zwischen den alten Steinmauern vielleicht sogar die erhoffte Abkühlung gegeben hätte.



Sant'Agata Feltria

Da bevorzuge ich, den Blick von hoch oben über die rot geziegelten Dächer der Stadt schweifen zu lassen

– und mir hier den Schweiß von der Stirn zu wischen. Meine Lieblingsaussicht erhasche ich schon am Anfang auf unserer ersten Station in Penabilli. Da kommen wir nämlich zufällig auf den Hügel “Campana di Lhasa”, wo tibetische Fahnen an den Besuch des Dalai Lama vor sieben Jahren erinnern.

Aber zurück nach Italien! Schon am Anfang unseres Tagestrips wussten wir, wohin er uns abends führen würde: Zur 16. Festa Artusiana↗ nach Forlimpopoli nämlich, einem Slow Food Festival. Doch es wäre nicht Italien, wäre es das einzige Fest, das sich in diesen Tagen um die wichtigste Sache, das Essen, dreht. Am selben Wochenende verwandelt auch die “Festa del Pane” den Ort Maiolo↗ zwei Tage lang in einen einzigen großen Brotbackofen, zumindest abends, denn natürlich sind wir nachmittags zu früh dran, um das Spektakel in seiner Blüte zu erleben. So beobachten wir nur wie fleißig Stühle und Tische geschleppt, Teller hergerichtet, Bühnen aufgebaut, Gärten geschmückt werden und natürlich gebacken wird. An einer der sechs Stationen, die später ab 16.30 süßes, würziges, hartes und weiches Weißbrot servieren, wird uns sogar ein Ständchen gesungen: Italienisch und für unsere Ohren recht

schwülstig hören wir von einem schwarzärtigen Gitarrenspieler über “Amore” und “bella vita”....

Wir verzichten aber darauf, uns für 9 Euro durch “Pene cumpanatic”, “Dulc Dulcin e Dulcet”, “Crustein ad tuti tip” und Co. durchzukosten: Wir wollen mehr! Pasta und getrocknete Tomaten, duftendes Basilikum, frische Piadina und herrlich riechender Käse, süß-tropfendes Eis, reife Pfirsiche und erfrischende Melonen, starker Kaffee... mit knurrendem Magen und hängender Zunge verlassen wir das Marecchia-Tal und treten die Fahrt in den Norden Riminis nach Forlimpopoli an. Es liegt nicht wirklich auf der Route und wäre das Festival nicht, hätten wir die Gegend wohl an einem anderen Tag besucht. Doch dafür haben wir – diesmal – keine Zeit. Schneller als gedacht sind wir eine Stunde später am Ziel. Der erste Eindruck: Enttäuschend! Nach den mittelalterlichen Siedlungen sieht die Stadt zu modern, ja fast wie ein Industrieort aus. Gottseidank nur auf den ersten Blick. Kaum kommen wir ins Zentrum, sind wir wieder in “unserem” Italien mit seinen Pflastersteinen, einer beleuchteten Burg (diesmal nicht auf dem Berg!), schönen Menschen, spielenden Kindern, geschmückten Restaurants und Ständen mit jeder Menge kulinarischer Köstlichkeiten. Und wir?!

Wir machen an unserem letzten Abend, der gleichzeitig Abschluss der Festa Artusiana ist, genau das, was wir in der Emilia Romagna gelernt haben: Essen, feiern, leben!



Notizen auf dem Festa Artusiana

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Two faces of Rimini



Emma Gray
[@scottishemma123](https://twitter.com/scottishemma123)

I didn't expect to like Rimini all that much, if I'm honest. I'd visited before with my parents when I was twelve, and all I could remember was the beach and the pool at the hotel we stayed in. When you type Rimini into google (the fountain of all knowledge, right?!) all that comes up are tales of the beach, bars and clubs. It seemed like that was all there was to Rimini.

This couldn't have been further from the truth.

Sure, the seemingly endless stretch of beach and the bars and clubs are there in abundance, and there's many people who are attracted just by these features, but there's so much more to Rimini.

On my first full day in Rimini I walked towards the old town through the quiet park and arrived at L'arc d'Auguste. Dating back to 27 BC it was once part of the city gates and today stands alone today as an im-

posing reminder of the rich history which lies beneath the surface of the city.



L'arc d'Auguste

Passing through the archway I entered the old town, Centro Storico. It's full of real Italian charm, unique boutique shops and striking architecture. My favourite part of the city was the area across the Tiberus Bridge, San Giuliano. Here I found an old fisherman's town,

with quaint, colourful houses and painted murals on almost every building. The area was quiet and peaceful compared to the rest of the city and I was captured by the tranquility and lack of other tourists. It seemed we were the only ones there.



Colourful houses

Whilst Rimini might seem on the surface to be little more than a beach and party town, it also has rich cul-

ture, history, charm and authenticity. The old town, Centro Storico, was so much more than I was expecting.

The newer area of the city is a great area for partying and relaxing on the beach if that's the type of holiday you enjoy. Everyone is different and, whilst I do love a good party (there'll be a post on Rimini's vibrant nightlife coming soon!), I always crave a bit of culture and history when I'm travelling. Rimini had both of these, and I think that's the reason I enjoyed it so much more than I expected to. I left having had a great time, and with a far better impression of Rimini than I possibly imagined.

I guess I shouldn't always trust google...!

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Medieval village of Petrella Guidi in Italy



Adam Groffman
[@travelsofadam](https://twitter.com/travelsofadam)

During my day trip around the Romagna region of Italy, we stopped at the 13th century medieval village of Petrella Guidi. Located about six kilometers from Sant'Agata Feltria, the small village (and by small, I mean *small*) isn't far from nearby [Pennabilli](#).

The Petrella Guidi village and castle dates as far back as the Middle Ages when it was a fortified hillside town governed by a noble faction. Throughout history, the medieval village passed through many different noble families. The original castle of Petrella Guidi was surrounded by two walls—both of which can still be seen. Today, **Petrella Guidi** is a bit of a historical hideaway. It was “re-discovered” and renovated so that it could be recreated as the medieval village it once was. It’s a good representation of what other 13th century cas-

tles of similar sizes would have looked like. Walking through the town was a bit like stepping back into history. It's a bit of a quirky place because everything looks so pretty and pristine, but then you remember that much of these buildings are quite old.



Walking through the Village

Petrella Guidi memorial to Fellini



The Federico Fellini memorial

There's even a monument and memorial to that famous Italian director Federico Fellini and his wife Giulietta Masina. Why is their a memorial at Petrella Guidi? Well, the director allegedly spent many days sitting on top of the hillside village of Petrella Guidi enjoying the view of the Romagna countryside. The

memorial was initiated by Tonino Guerra, an Italian screenwriter who co-wrote many of the Fellini films. Guerra (who recently passed away) created the memorial because Fellini had apparently confided into him that when he died, Fellini wanted to be buried somewhere in a field of grass with a bench nearby for those people that want to keep him company. So in 1994, Guerra arranged for this memorial and monument to Federico Fellini.

My visit to the medieval town of Petrella Guidi was during my stay at the Emilia-Romagna BlogVille apartment and was part of my tour there. More information can be found on the [Emilia-Romagna tourism website](#).

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Bologna, Italy - A Traveler's Triathlon



Gina Stark
[@SuuperG](https://twitter.com/SuuperG)

If you worry that your fitness regimen may be challenged when you travel, fear not. On one beautiful day in Italy, my girlfriends Helene, Sara and I managed to create and conquer our own Bologna Triathlon. First we climbed the 500 steps of the ancient Asinelli tower (barefoot) and monkeyed around on top while taking in the high altitude views of the ancient city center of Bologna. In my new math, this equates to one serving of gelato, which we of course procured. This tower is one of the iconic Due Torri of Bologna and the only one open to the public as it's partner, Garisenda, is leaning precariously. In a pre-trip interactive travel post, my friend Miriam had insisted I visit these towers. I can cross that off the list!



A view of the Garisenda Tower

*“As when one sees the tower called Garisenda
from underneath its leaning side, and then a cloud
passes over and it seems to lean the more,
thus did Antaeus seem to my fixed gaze
as I watched him bend...”*

Dante Alighieri, Divine Comedy, Inferno

After this exertion, we made a mad dash on the main street (still barefoot), past a rollicking parade, to catch a bus down to the Reno river for a date with a rafting tour. (Mad dashing until you're breathless earns one a fine dinner including the best salumi selection.) My sincere thanks and grazie goes out to the fabulous people at Walks of Italy for arranging this tour – which is not on their ordinary repertoire – for me and Helene. We met up with our guide at the Centro Sportivo who nicely waited for us as we slid into home plate just in time. The three of us shared one raft and a guide who was forced to tolerate both our giggling and our insistence on helping to paddle down the lazy, serene river. In the past, this same company has had rafting tours that go under the city in old tunnels and waterways, regaling riders with classic tales of Bologna and reading Dante's Inferno. With the city's blessing, they hope to resume this segment in the near future, and I would certainly keep an ear out for that one!

The walk back up through a park-like setting was equally rewarding, and if the raft ride was mild, the car

ride back offered more of an adrenaline rush when we kept begging our guide to race around the rings faster and faster.

Our cool down was a walk back through town to our BlogVille flat where we were treated to a ‘farewell Bologna’ dinner (we earned it!), crafted by master chef Tim, of A Cook Not Mad fame and his dear wife and sous chef Natalie. The smells of the rich asparagus risotto cooking up in the cucina promised to sate the hunger we had worked up during our active day. And Tim fulfilled the promise. Sara and I had to dash out and bring back some of the Da Cesari panna cotta for a final savor, knowing it was our last chance to indulge. And we had earned it!

I’ve climbed the Eiffel Tower (no small feat!) and the La Giralda tower in Sevilla in an effort to stay fit. I’ve gone hiking in the Italian Dolomites, swum “laps” along the coast of Ko Thao in Thailand, and climbed a frozen glacier in New Zealand.

In addition to tower climbing and other pursuits, I’ve also enjoyed bike tours when I travel, as they keep you “in” the city and the surrounds but covering more ground than the usual walking tours. We hopped on bikes several times on this visit and I’m sure we an-

noyed the pedestrians with our over zealous bell ringing.

What triathalons have you conjured on your travels to earn your foreign food fix? I'd love to hear them, share them and try them! Thanks for reading and traveling with me.

All Photos by Gina Stark unless I'm IN them! Then, thanks to Sara and Helene or the occasional random kind stranger.

*Special thanks to the amazing team of people at Emilia Romagna BlogVille (especially the dynamic, amiable and uber capable Nicholas Montemaggi) and also at Walks of Italy who invited me to savor the delights of Bologna and Italy at my own pace – whether harried or lazy. Stay tuned for more...

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Sophia Loren and the eels of Comacchio



Vago Damitio
[@vagobond](https://twitter.com/vagobond)

Legend has it that at the height off her career, Sophia Loren became fascinated with eels and asked that they be incorporated into one of her films. The most beautiful woman in the world, the greatest actress of her era – and she was asking to co-star with slimy electric tubes that have the capacity to creep most people out...what in the world was happening here? And what the heck was so special about eels?

Sophia Loren wasn't the only one to wander this. Sigmund Freud spent an entire summer slicing eels apart to find their sex organs – he didn't succeed. In fact, to this day, the sexual life of eels remains a mystery and the place where it takes place, Mexico's deep Sargasso Sea still holds the mysteries – but one thing is certain – such is the power of the eels urge to reproduce

that it drives them from the far points on the globe – places like Iceland, Turkey, and the small Italian town of Comacchio which sits on a lagoon where the Po River meets the Adriatic Sea.

The lifecycle of the eels is, frankly, rather astounding. The females lay a couple of million eggs which hatch into little leaf-like things and then drift across the Atlantic before growing into tiny ‘glass eels’ – these then continue to the place where their genes come from where they grow for several years before heading back across the Atlantic to the big eel orgy at the bottom of the Sargasso Sea.

But there is more to the eel than that – they are one of the few creatures in the world that can effortlessly move from salt water to fresh water, they produce an electric current which they use to hunt their prey, they are fairly long lived with lifespans of up to 85 years but they die after spawning. They are also very tasty and around the world they are said to offer some incredible benefits to those who eat them. For example, drinking wine that has been infused with eel skin is said to cure alcoholism, eating the heads (or any other parts) is said to create massive sexual desire and health, and more.



Sophia Loren and the eels

But, back to Sophia Loren. While she didn't talk about the eels in her memoirs, what we do know is that in 1954 she played a worker in an eel factory in the film *La Donna del Fiume* – or the Woman of the River. The film was set in Comacchio and show Sophia at the

height of her beauty proudly displaying her armpit hair and a can of pickled eels.

As to Comacchio itself, this beautiful Italian town is worth more than a short visit. The best way to see Comacchio is by bicycle – don't be surprised when you find yourself wondering if you've accidentally wandered into Venice. The city is composed of thirteen different islets which are surrounded by canals, ponds, and the Po River Delta. All the this is connected together by a series of beautiful bike paths, hiking trails, and even a couple of great Italian Gelato shops. Bikes are available from the tourism authority.

Comacchio is one of those wonderful gems that you don't find much about in the guidebooks, you don't see a lot of travel writers writing about, and as a result – a holiday in Italy becomes much more affordable, less crowded, and interesting when you go there.

The city is located in the Emilia Romagna region and is roughly half way between Venice and Bologna. In fact, in it's history, the city was once a main rival for the salt trade with Venice and has shifted from independent to subject city of Ferrara and Venice both. Today, the salt ponds still exist and the city has a couple of tourist draws – bird watching in the Po River Delta has be-

come a big business and visitors flock there (sorry for the pun) all summer to see flamingos, cormorants, falcons, and more in a beautifully preserved estuary environment.

In addition, you can visit the eel canning factory and museum. While it may not sound all that interesting, in truth, it is and you will find out more about the eels, their migration, their importance to Comacchio, and see the every interesting specialized tools the local population used to farm and harvest them. In addition, you can eat them and drink some very nice local wine here as well. Plus, they have a theater that shows the Lady of the River in a constant cycle.

There is much to do in Comacchio – from shipwrecks recovered from the lagoons to the massive nature reserve to strolling through this UNESCO world heritage city center – you won't get bored. If you do, you can head to some of the nearby beaches, ride horses, or take a boat ride through the canals in a Gondola for much less than you have to pay in Venice.

The eel pickling museum has 12 working fireplaces where from October to December you can eat the eels just the way the locals always have. Heads removed and roasted on spits. Maybe you can figure out the se-

cret of the eels, but one thing for sure, you will find them delicious.

If you want to eat fresh eels in Comacchio, you will have to get them in autumn or winter but the pickled variety are available year round. If you want them to costar with you in a film – La Donna del Fiume is due for a remake – right Hollywood?

Further Information

[Hotels in Comacchio](#) 

[Backroads of Northern Italy Travel Guide](#) 
[Emilia-Romagna Tourism](#) 

[Read online](#)

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The Valmarecchia



Audrey & Luke
[@ciaobologna](#)

Oh, Valmarecchia! I'm so happy to have met you.

After a handful of trips to popular and busy destinations (most of which were outside Italy), I've been itching to spend more time in Italy exploring lesser known places, especially in the region surrounding Bologna. I got the chance to visit the Valmarecchia during my stay at BlogVille (see [my last post](#)), and this beautiful valley fit the bill to a T.

The Valmarecchia (also called the Marecchia Valley) is a long valley that borders the Marecchia River, which runs from the Apennines in Tuscany into the Adriatic Sea near Rimini.

The Marecchia Valley is truly a treat for the eyes. Its landscape alternates between rolling green hills and castles and villages perched atop impressive cliffs. The villages themselves are picturesque with lovely old

homes, dotted with bright flowers and hanging laundry. Then you add the panoramic backdrop of the countryside and ocean and it's enough to make your eyes well up.

From the valley and neighboring villages, you also get a great view of the Republic of San Marino (one of Europe's smallest countries, which is ALL-hill and surrounded by Italy on all sides).

In addition to its panoramic views, the Valmarecchia is rich in archaeological and historical sites. Most of the castles in the region were built by the rivaling Malatesta and Montefeltro families during the early and late Middle Ages. The area is also known for its traditional food products and crafts, including wine, olive oil, Fossa & Squacquerone cheeses, the Piadina Romagnola, and rust-dyed hand-printed cloth.

Villages to Visit

I'm only writing here about villages I've visited myself, so the list will likely grow (or I'll write a new post) as I continue to explore the Valmarecchia. You can research other villages using the resources at the bottom of this post. I first visited the Valmarecchia from Rimini during my stay at BlogVille, but the valley can also

be visited as a day trip from Bologna (1.25 – 2 hrs depending on which parts you visit). While I've provided some recommendations for places to see and eat, all the villages are small, walkable, and have ample signage, so wander freely, get lost, and enjoy!

Verucchio

A medieval town rich with history. The hilly landscape provides great views of the town itself and the surrounding Marecchia Valley.

What to see: The main square Piazza Malatesta, the Malatesta castle Rocca del Sasso, the pre-Etruscan artifacts found in Verucchio tombs at Museo Civico Archeologico, & the stunning view through Porta di S. Agostino

Where to eat: Ristorante La Rocca, via Rocca, 34

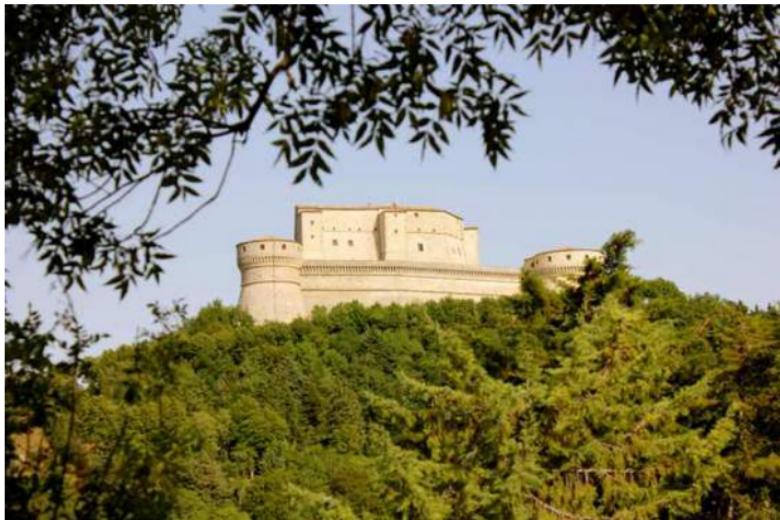
Some links: [Discover the area – Verucchio](#)

{ciao bologna photoblog} [Post-bike/hike gelato](#)

{blog} [Verucchio, we love you! – Part I](#) ↗ and [Verucchio, we love you! – Part II](#) ↗ (scroll down halfway for the English versions)

San Leo

The view of San Leo from afar is impressive as the Fortress of San Leo is built on a cliff with steep sides, and seems to grow out of the rock on which it is built.



The San Leo Fortress – this angle doesn't quiet capture how the fortress is built on a steep cliff. Guess I'll have to go back!

What to see: La Fortezza, il Duomo, la Pieve, & la Torre Civica

Where to eat: Osteria Belvedere, via Toselli, 19

Some links: [Discover the area – San Leo](#)

San Leo Tourism (in Italian)

{ciao bologna photoblog} Can you tell we liked San Leo? Couldn't stop taking pictures

{ciao bologna photoblog} Pranzo at Osteria Belvedere in San Leo

Santarcangelo

A charming town with narrow, picturesque streets that open up onto quiet piazzas. Santarcangelo provides views of San Marino on one side and the sea on the other.

What to see: The mysterious underground caves, Stamperia Artigiana Marchi where they make traditional cloth linens & use the only *mangono* in the world to iron them, the Malatesta fortress, & Piazza Ganganelli

Where to eat: La Sangiovesa, Piazza Beato Simone Balacchi, 14

Ristorante Lazaroun, Via del Platano, 21

Calycanto, via Dei Nobili, 14

Osteria L'Ottavino, via del Platano, 27

Agriturismo Locanda Antiche Macine, via Provinciale Sogliano, 1540

Some links: Discover the area – Santarcangelo

Santarcangelo Tourism ↗ (in Italian)

{ciao bologna photoblog} Escaping the heat in one of the grotte di Santarcangelo

{ciao bologna photoblog} Keeping Tradition Alive at Stamperia Artigiana Marchi

{blog} Un mistero si nasconde sotto la terra di Santarcangelo ↗ (in Italian)

{blog} Santarcangelo di Romagna: sotto c'è un mistero... ↗ (in Italian)

Petrella Guidi

A tiny Medieval village. It's no surprise that this town now often serves as an inspirational haven for artists because it is extremely scenic and serene. There are no roads, only brick and grass paths. When we visited, we saw two men in front of one of the houses, but otherwise, we had the whole town to ourselves. Bring a picnic or just sit by the castle and take in the scenery.

What to see: Memorial to director Federico Fellini. The story goes that Fellini spent a lot of time in Petrella Guidi and had always wanted to be buried in a peaceful place with a bench so that people could sit or chat with him. Although Fellini was buried in Rimini, his

colleague, Tonino Guerra, later proposed that a memorial for him was built here.

Some links:

Petrella Guidi Website  (in Italian)

{ciao bologna photoblog} Petrella Guidi

{blog} Medieval village of Petrella Guidi in Italy

Montebello

Another lovely village with views onto the Marecchia and Use valleys.

What to see: Il Castello di Montebello

Some links: {ciao bologna photoblog} Visiting the ghost of Azzurrina at Castello di Montebello

{blog} Nel Castello di Montebello con Azzurina  (English translation provided)

Additional Valmarecchia Resources

Valmarecchia Tourism Portal  (in Italian)

{PDF} Castles & Fortresses in the Rimini Area

{PDF} A guide to the Malatesta Seignory  (the Marecchia Valley section starts on p. 36)

I first visited the Valmarecchia as part of the BlogVille  project, an innovative social media initiative hosted by Emilia-Romagna Tourism. While BlogVille hosted me in a sweet

beach-side apartment in Rimini, all opinions in this post are my own.

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La notte celeste in Bagno di Romagna - Oiled up and rubbed down in a italian spa town



Keane Li
[@keaneiscool](https://twitter.com/keaneiscool)

“Put your robe on the hanger,” the massagiatrice said to me in Italian. I was wearing board shorts and Calvin Klein briefs (in case you needed the image).

“Now take those off but sdfjl;aghnasmdfnfdfj.” I didn’t understand the last part, so I responded with my stock phrase of not being able to understand Italian sometimes.

“Okay. Your swimming clothes...” “Yes.”

“Are you wearing anything underneath?” “Underpants.”

“Okay. Take the shorts; leave the underwear.” “Understood.”

The important matter of how much clothes to take off demands further confirmation.

So began my first spa experience, a full-body oil massage in the [Hotel delle Terme Santa Agnese](#) in Bagno di Romagna, a popular spa town in Emilia Romagna. The scent of steam and sulfur is apparent upon entering the city as thermal water flows naturally here. Bagno di Romagna consists of one main street and a large central piazza. Each of its many shops are charming and friendly, and the town features high-end, even Michelin-starred restaurants. The [BlogVille](#) team was lucky enough to dine at such a restaurant with the distinguished leaders of the Emilia-Romagna tourism board.

It was perhaps one of the most festive nights of the year in spa towns across Emilia-Romagna, [La Notte Celeste](#), when all the spas in Bagno di Romagna open to the public and the town celebrates with live entertainment throughout its streets. Of all the local festivals I'd been to, this was the most fun. Families stayed out late as both young and old danced to festive music, a blend of Italian and classic 80s tunes.

It was also a complete honor to be invited on stage to say a quick "ciao" to the audience in the main square. It's inspiring to see such a small town so welcoming to bloggers, something I feel is still misunderstood even

in America. The festival also celebrated the importance of water with a team of little kids dressed as water droplets (cute) and a long film about water and space travel (strange but cool).

And while we were interviewed by an Italian film crew, I bit the bullet and responded in Italian, scratching off one from my bucket list of things I didn't know I wanted to do.

I suppose my Italian isn't entirely bad.



Notte Celeste Street Lamps

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National Ice Cream Day: you say ice cream, I say gelato



Erin De Santiago
ourtastytravels

Back in 1984, President Ronald Reagan declared July to be National Ice Cream Month and July 15th to be National Ice Cream Day in the United States.

Like most kids in America, I grew up eating ice cream regularly, especially during the summer months. I can still remember lounging in the pool and waiting for the sound of our neighborhood ice cream truck making its way down the street. My best friend and I would bolt from the pool and make our way to the front yard as soon as we'd hear the music, which now, as an adult, I find extremely annoying ironically.

One thing I learned early on in my childhood was regular ice cream soon bored me. I think there's a reason they refer to boring things as "vanilla" sometimes. I was not a vanilla ice cream kinda girl, unless it had

heaps of caramel on it. I can distinctly remember driving my parents bonkers during multiple pouting fits if we went to our local Foster Freeze and they didn't have chocolate that day.

As I got older (aka had my own money) I started buying more interesting and unique flavors of ice cream — the more stuff mixed in, the better!

And then in 2006, I visited Italy for the first time. Gelato...The answer to all my frozen dessert dreams. Sadly, it seemed to be a fleeting affair as I did not indulge in too much gelato since that trip. Perhaps, it was discovering Movenpick's decadent ice cream and various shaved ice desserts the last few years in Asia that distracted me from my true love.

And then, the BlogVille project ↗ with the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board presented itself, and I suddenly found myself back in Italy three different times for a total of 25 days between May and now. In fact, I just returned from Italy yesterday.

Gelato and I were reunited and it was love at first bite all over again — we picked up right where we left off so long ago.



Enjoying gelato with a view in the historic city center of Rimini, Italy during BlogVille

Wonder what the differences are between gelato and ice cream? Despite many saying that gelato is just Italian ice cream, there are noticeable and important differences that separate gelato from the traditional ice cream many of us grew up with.

Gelato has Less Air and Lower Fat

Gelato has much less air than traditional ice cream, which can be as much as 50% air. And for those concerned about the fat content in ice cream, check out gelato! Gelato typically has 4-6% fat whereas ice cream may contain as much as 16% in some cases.

Gelato is Made Daily

Typically, gelato is made on a daily basis in gelaterias in Italy whereas ice cream is often made in large batches incorporating ingredients designed to ensure its lengthy storage in the freezer.

Gelato has a Stronger Flavor

Because of the less incorporated air, lower fat, and higher temperature, you have probably noticed you get a more pronounced flavor profile versus eating ice cream of same flavor. According to the [Carpigiani Gelato University](#) in Bologna, this is because the higher fat content in ice cream coats the tongue, the less air in gelato provides more flavor in each spoonful, and your taste buds are not dulled from the frozen temperature of ice cream.

The stronger flavor profile, the softer and more smooth texture, and the lower fat content are just a few of the reasons I prefer authentic gelato over ice cream. I could not, and would not, eat ice cream every day, but I could, and did in a few instances, eat gelato every day in Italy. *Blog posts of all the amazing gelato I consumed in Emilia Romagna still to come!*

I think it's safe to say after BlogVille, my love affair with gelato is likely to transition into a more long-term romance. Fortunately, there is a pretty decent gelato place next to the new apartment in the Netherlands, and I am thinking of taking my love of gelato to a new level — perhaps taking a class and learning how to make it myself!

While my stay(s) in Emilia Romagna were hosted by the tourism board, all views and opinions are my own.

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Fishing Boats in the colourful Leonardo da Vinci harbour in Cesenatico, Italy



Melvin Böcher
[@traveldudes](https://twitter.com/traveldudes)

Cesenatico's port canal was surveyed and drawn by Leonardo da Vinci at the request of Cesare Borgia, as part of his plans to fortify the nearby town of Cesena.

The Leonardo da Vinci harbour of Cesenatico is built very effectively and doesn't have as much trouble as other harbours of getting too much sand into it. It's narrow and long. It divides the city in two big zones, Ponente in the North and Levante in the South.

At the end of the harbour, you'll also find a few very colourful museum boats.

Cesenatico lies around 20 kilometers North East of Rimini on the East Coast of Italy.

Thanks to the tourism board of Emilia Romagna for inviting Traveldudes and for a successful Blog Ville project.



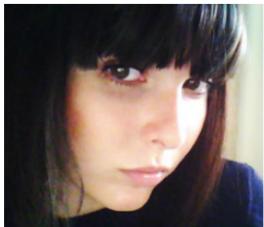
The Leonardo da Vinci Harbor in Cesenatico

[Read online](#)

Fishing Boats in the colourful Leonardo da Vinci harbour in Cesenatico, Italy

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Faenza - Ceramics, a frog & chocolate salami



Sara Näse

[@getpalmd](https://twitter.com/getpalmd)

I actually enjoyed Faenza a lot, although it would probably never cross my mind to do all this if I went to these places solo. But because it is the city of ceramics we visited the museum **Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza** and a potter with a small shop nearby (Geminiani Gino at 13 Via Nuova). I rarely go to museums. It would be wrong to say it's out of my comfort zone, because I don't really have one – like with food, I think you should try as many different things as possible. You won't like everything you try, but that's not the point either. However museums – and cultural events like theater, ballet, exhibitions, even concerts – are things I just don't attend unless I have a very good reason (so good company who wants to see something and I join them, or something like

this – an arranged trip). Doesn’t at all mean I don’t enjoy them when I am there, but for some reason I just stay quite far away from them even when traveling (unless there are cars, surprise surprise). However a few good experiences later and I am now ready to try this more often!

But ceramics are more fascinating than I would have imagined. I made a few pots when I was a kid, but remembering what they looked like I haven’t really thought about the fact that with skills people are able to create pretty epic things with their hands. So lets go cultural and look at some beautiful stuff I found there. I actually enjoyed the modern ceramics a lot (the fly, the man coming out from the artwork, the orchid etc), it’s the type of style I could see in my own home. And the “squeezed” espresso cups in all the bright colors – absolutely love them!

Our visit to Faenza was short but the town looked cute – however I really don’t think there’s a “not cute” town in Emilia Romagna so probably just repeating myself in all my posts. I kissed the small frog on the fountain by the way (no frenchie this time), you do what you have to do right... but based on my personal

test results it didn't really work as you'd expect it to work.

Because all days in Italy end with booze (eh, wine) and loads of food – or actually there's first the huge lunch, and then the huge dinner, so you eat like a horse twice a day – the post needs some foodie pics too. [La Baita](#) got us, and it's actually rated the number one restaurant in Faenza on [Tripadvisor](#). Food was really really good, but lets talk desserts for a few seconds – [chocolate salami](#) , oh my GOD! Sweet things make you happy for a short moment, until you get back home – I'm now on a diet for a while!

I was in Italy for [BlogVille Emilia Romagna](#) – for more information please visit the website.

Read online and view the photo gallery

A day in Emilia Romagna with #blogville



Giulia Cimarosti
[@giuliaccia](https://twitter.com/giuliaccia)

During my recent stay in Emilia Romagna I had a lovely time with the BlogVille crowd! The whole project is based on a very cool concept: giving bloggers a house in Italy from where they can start their explorations and live like locals without time constraints, therefore without the typical rush of most blog trips. The two cities that were chosen as a base for the bloggers were Bologna and Rimini. Even if BlogVille has been created for foreign bloggers, I had the honor of participating as my blog is in English and has an international audience. The final goal is to show that Italy is not only about Milan, Rome, Florence and Venice, but there's so much more to do and see – and Emilia Romagna is the perfect region to demonstrate it, with its unique food, beautiful landscape and unbounded cul-

ture. The BlogVille program organized a day trip for bloggers every week and I was lucky to take part in one. We went to Cesena to visit the famous Biblioteca Malatestiana (the only ancient library in the world which is still completely preserved, codexes included) and then to Forlimpopoli for the annual Festa Artusiana (a food celebration... of course! Welcome to Italy.). I am going to tell you about my lovely time through some photos I took. Enjoy!



Our guide at work

This is our guide telling us about the life of Novello Malatesta, the man who ideated the project of the library thanks to his wife's idea.



The Door of the Malatestiana Library

The symbol of the Malatesta Family was the Indian Elephant.

The ribbon says “Indus elephas culices non temet”, meaning “the Indian elephant does not fear mosquitos” and referring to other minor families of that time. Two keys open the big wooden door of the Malatestiana Library.



The library – Internal view

This is how the inside of the library looks. To me, it looked like a church, and when I pointed this out to the guide he said that it does have the same structure of a church but instead of God this building celebrates the mankind and its intellect.

The pews of the library still contain the ancient codexes of more than 500 years ago. It looks like time has stopped. On the sides of the seats there are symbols of the Malatesta Family.

After visiting the library, we attended a short gothic calligraphy workshop in the same building, to learn about the medieval techniques for writing the codexes. It was fun but not easy!

We were given a sentence to copy, ink and nibs. The colors came in traditional sea shells.

The sentence goes like “Books are food for the youth and joy for the old age” -Cicero.

We were shown an example of a work by one of the students at the calligraphy school. They learn how to write and build the book itself as it was done 500 years ago.

It was time to go and reach Forlimpopoli, a town in Emilia Romagna where every year there is a celebration called “Festa Artusiana”: it is a food fair with ref-

erence to Pellegrino Artusi, a man that wrote the first book of recipes in Italy. The title of the book is “L’arte di mangiar bene” (“the art of eating well”) and it’s still considered as the “bible” of the Italian food. The recipes came from all over Italy from women who sent him their recipes, and Artusi translated them from the dialects to Italian and published them.



Giulia Cimarosü

An ancient copy of *The Art of Eating well*

This is our guide showing us an old copy of the book.



The Pellegrino Artusi's In front of Casa Artusi

This is Pellegrino Artusi's silhouette, overlooking the restaurant at "Casa Artusi". This is a cooking school, library, restaurant and cultural center founded in Forlimpopoli in the name of Artusi.

The cooking school at Casa Artusi with 20+ kitchens for practice.

In the piazza just in front of the castle of Forlimpopoli, there were food stalls and displays of traditional cooking tools.

We were ready for our dinner! As VIPs, we were taken to the castle to eat on the terrace of its tower.



At the Festa Artusiana

Here is a view of the piazza from Forlimpopoli's castle, where we had dinner.

I especially enjoyed the crostini, with bacon, zucchini, porchetta, onions and tomatoes. I am making myself hungry while I write...



Quote by Pellegrino Artusi

This quote by Pellegrino Artusi tells so much about the Italian (and Mediterranean) food culture: “The hypocrite world doesn’t give food any importance, but then there’s no civil or religious feast where one doesn’t lay the tablecloth on the table and eat the best food possible”. Agree?



Traditional Artusi Pudding

I love desserts! And this one, the traditional Artusi pudding, was decorated with a cute Forlimpopoli tower on the side.



Giulia Cimarosti

Coffee Sorbets

This coffee sorbet was served in little waffles, and was really one of the most delicious things ever. Have you ever tried coffee sorbet? Oh I want one now!

The following day we relaxed on the beach for a while, where I had my first typical piadina! Yes I am Italian and I never tried one. It was so delicious. I chose the

one with arugula, prosciutto and stracchino (a very sweet and creamy cheese).

In the afternoon I strolled around the city center that was surprisingly beautiful! I particularly liked the Bridge of Tiberius, dated 21AD! The reflections in the water were so perfect and I had fun taking photos.

It was great to have the opportunity of discovering a part of my own country that I didn't know well before! Thanks to BlogVille I had experiences I wouldn't have had otherwise. Thank you to the wonderful crew!

And thanks to Erin, Nicola, Jan and Carola for being amazing companions :) Thanks to Nicholas for being a perfect master of the house!

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Biking Rimini to Verucchio



Audrey & Luke
[@ciaobologna](#)

As I mentioned in [this post](#), a couple of weeks ago, I participated in Emilia Romagna's [BlogVille](#) project.

During my week at BlogVille, I experienced a lot of firsts.

- It was my first time participating in a “press trip” (I lucked out as BlogVille was an innovative social media project and not your typical press trip).
- My first time riding a horse (see the pic [here](#), @ Club Village & Hotel Spiaggia Romea)
- My first time riding on the back of a moto (with the trusted “Master of the House” [@n_montemaggi](#))
- And I ate my first Piadina Riminese and drank my first caffè shakerato (see pics [here](#))

To top it off, I'll be writing my first “Getting Outdoors” post. I've benefited a lot over the years from others

who blog or post trip reports about their outdoor adventures, and I always vowed that I would give my contribution to the interwebs someday.



My typical outdoor excursions are hiking and rock climbing, but as I was researching the Rimini area before going to BlogVille, I came across this biking itinerary from Rimini to Ponte Verucchio. It's described as easy and flat. Perfect. Just my style. I also saw some amazing pictures of the medieval town Verucchio (located up the hill from Ponte Verucchio). And so, I de-

cided to combine the biking itinerary with a visit to Verucchio Centro Storico.

[View of Verucchio - See the slideshow on-line](#)

Description: The route from Rimini to Ponte Verucchio is completely flat so it's a good ride for new or wannabe bikers. The trail follows the Marecchia River, or I should say, the path where the Marrecchia River used to be (after Rimini, the river has dried up, so there actually is no river). The trail terrain varies slightly throughout the course. Most of the time the trail is wide and covered in a sandy gravel. At times, the trail narrows and has more pebbles. As you start biking away from Rimini, you first pass a few industrial buildings and trailer parks. But as you continue riding, you enter farm country passing farm houses, small vineyards, and hay bales. On the return, the trail is wide and smooth the whole way, and you ride past Parco di Villa Verucchio and the Rimini Golf Club.

The starting point of the trail is the Tiberius Bridge in Rimini (Ponte di Tiberio). You ride through Parco Marecchia until you reach the soccer field. Behind the soccer field, you'll find a small trail that goes uphill and takes you to the river bank. Take this trail to the left. After 300m, cross the wooden bridge. Turn left

when you get off the bridge and you are on the trail that will take you all the way to Ponte Verucchio (about 11 miles). At Ponte Verucchio, the trail ends. From here, walk up to the street from the river bank. You can cross the bridge and go down to the river bank on the opposite shore to return to Rimini. Or, if you're up for more adventure, you can walk/ride uphill (up a big, big hill) to Verucchio Centro Storico. The walk to Verucchio was grueling, but worth it, and I was able to replenish my energy with snacks and strawberry gelato once I arrived.

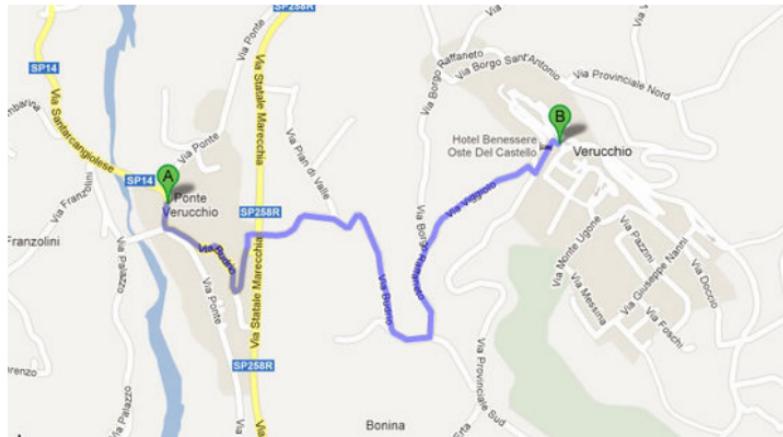
Verucchio is one of several charming villages in the hills of the Marecchia Valley (which you can read about in my post [here](#)). Verucchio provides stunning views of the surrounding valley and is also rich with history. You can grab a gelato (Caffeteria L'Angolo Dibino), some tagliatelle al ragù (Ristorante La Rocca), visit the Malatesta's Rocca del Sasso, or check out the pre-Etruscan burial artifacts at the Museo Archeologico. To get to Verucchio from Ponte Verucchio, I searched for directions to Verucchio's main square, Piazza Malatesta, in Google Maps.

Length: 39.6 km (24.6 miles). It's 35 km roundtrip (21.7 miles) from Rimini to Ponte Verucchio. I added an ad-

ditional 4.6 km roundtrip (2.9 miles) by visiting Verucchio Centro Storico.

Time: 3 – 4 hours if you are just biking to Ponte Verucchio. 4 – 5 hours of travel time if you add a to visit Verucchio Centro Storico (plus however much time you spend in Verucchio. I stayed for 4h). It's more or less 2 hours of biking to/from Ponte Verucchio depending on how fast you bike. Then it's 30 minutes walking uphill from Ponte Verucchio to Verucchio Centro Storico. Returning to Ponte Verucchio after visiting Verucchio is faster as you can cruise downhill on your bike.

From Bologna: I was already staying in Rimini for BlogVille, so this excursion was convenient for me. It's a bit of a trek coming from Bologna. The starting point, the Tiberius Bridge, is about 1.5h from Bologna by car about the same by train. But if you find yourself near Rimini and are looking to get outdoors, this is certainly a good option.



Directions from Ponte Verucchio to Piazza Malatesta in Verucchio Centro Storico

You can find other biking itineraries in the Rimini area [here](#).

I did this bike ride during my stay at [BlogVille](#), an innovative social media initiative hosted by Emilia-Romagna Tourism. While BlogVille hosted me in a sweet beach-side apartment in Rimini, all opinions in this post are my own.

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Party on Italy's seaside: Rimini and Riccione



Erin De Santiago
[@ourtastytravels](http://ourtastytravels)

Up until about three weeks ago, my experience with Italy and its coastline consisted of Naples, Capri, and Venice – not exactly the most budget-friendly destinations in some respects.

As part of my ongoing work with the [Emilia Romagna Tourism Board](http://www.visititaly.com) and the [BlogVille](http://www.blogville.it) project, I was back in Italy two weeks ago for World Ducati Week – which coincidentally was being held in part on the Italian seaside.

We were based in the beach town of Rimini and also had the chance to party in the nearby town of Riccione – both excellent options for budget-conscious travellers looking to experience the calm of the Adriatic during the day and the all-night party atmosphere this region is known for.

Rimini

We were quite lucky to have beachfront accommodations provided by the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board, but with over 1,000 hotels and lodging options to choose from in the city, there are options at every budget level, including those seeking hostels.

During the day the vibe is quite casual and laid back, but as the sun begins to set, it is not uncommon to see everyone dressed for the club, even if they are just grabbing a gelato and coffee at a nearby café.

While there is a historic city center and ancient sights worth checking out, it is immediately evident the draw to Rimini is the beach and nightlife. You can't walk a block near the beach without someone asking "Disco tonight?" With as many bars, clubs, and restaurants as there are hotels, there is no shortage of nightlife whether you are looking for a quiet local pub or a discothèque.

Food is relatively inexpensive and if you go with the local specialty, the piadina, you can stuff yourself for only several euros a meal. Piadina is a thin flatbread that they fill with a variety of meats and cheeses, or even sweet versions like Nutella. I mistakenly assumed I would tire of eating piadina after a few days, but I've

been gone nearly two weeks and I find myself craving it again. Thankfully, I'm back in Rimini until July 14th so I can get my fill (and possibly a traditional dish to make piadina at home).

The people are friendly, and while Italian and Russian visitors seem to be most prevalent, we did encounter a number of English speakers throughout the week. From our favorite barista to the guys we hung out with nearly every night that worked at one of the local pubs, I found Rimini to be one of the most welcoming cities in my Italian travels.

Riccione

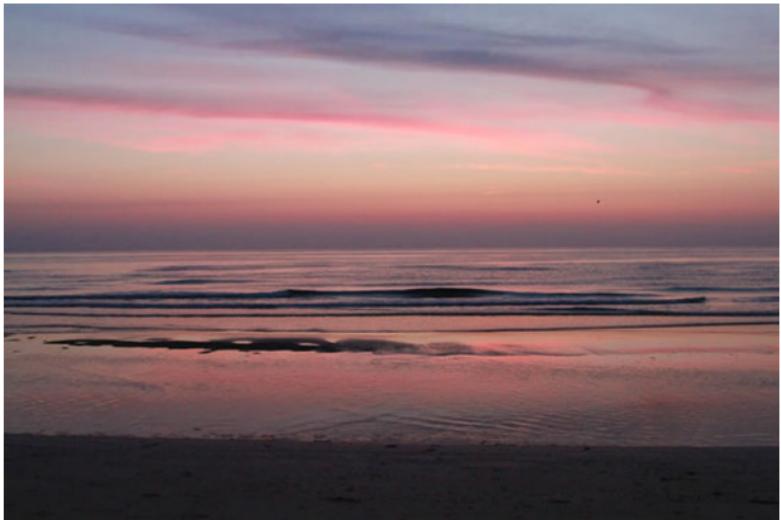
Admittedly, I cannot speak much to the history and culture in Riccione as I was only there for one evening but what I experienced can be summed up in three words:

Free Beach Bars

Riccione is quite close to Rimini – about 10-15 minutes by car or you can take the train as well.

We were in Riccione for the party and concert for World Ducati Week, which was one of the most amazing events in itself with all the fans, legendary racers, and the Ducati All-Star Band (who I randomly got to

talk to the following day at the Bologna Airport) coming together to celebrate the world's best motorcycle.



Sunrise in Rimini

After the event, we headed to one of the most popular spots in Riccione – the all night beach bars. There are four or five bars that charge no cover and they are all packed – literally breathing room only. Being diligent, we checked out each of them until we found one that had our preferred vibe and mix of dance music.

No all-nighter is complete without a good sunrise and my last morning at BlogVille proved to be a winner. We left the clubs in time to drive back to Rimini and catch the sunrise from our beach and it definitely didn't disappoint.

Getting to Rimini and Riccione

Carriers like Ryan Air fly into Rimini, although flights tend to be more expensive than other airports. I recommend flying elsewhere in Italy (I flew in and out of Bologna) and then take the train to Rimini and on to Riccione. The train from Bologna to Rimini takes anywhere from one hour for the high-speed to just under two hours for the regular train. You can also rent a car, but there can be a lot of traffic during peak times so taking the train and buses may be the best option.

I was a guest in Emilia Romagna at the invite of the tourism board and Ducati Motorcycles but all views and opinions expressed are my own.

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19. Festival - Notte rosa Urlaub in Rimini



Christine Neder
[@Lilies Diary](#)

Seit sieben Jahren wird einmal im Jahr die adriatische Riviera zur Barbie World. Es ist das Silvester des Sommers, der St. Patrick Day der Italiener und einfach eine riesen Sause 110km entlang der Riviera.

„The Pink Side of the Moon“, ist das Motto der Notte Rosa in Rimini. Überall hängen pinke Schleifen an den Bäumen und pinke Teppiche liegen vor Shops, pinke Luftballons fliegen am Himmel und Männer in pinken Bodies mit Häschenbommel am Po, radeln durch die Gegend. Sogar mehr als 3000 Straßenlampen werden ausgetauscht, damit der Strand pink leuchtet. Getrunken wird pink, gegessen wird pink und gehört wird pink - Pink Floyd. Und Modern Talking. Ich traue meinen Ohren kaum, aber ich hörte allein am

Bahnhof von Rimini zweimal Cheri, Cheri Lady und Sexy, sexy Lover. Das macht mir Angst.



Immer für die Notte Rosa bereit

Ich habe erst neulich die komische Geschichte gehört, dass irgendein Typ um die 20, reich geerbt und ausgesorgt für das Leben, um die Welt gereist ist um komische Theorien über Modern Talking aufzustellen. Seine letzte Mission war es herauszufinden, wie weit ver-

breitet Modern Talking wirklich ist. Seinen Triumph hatte er, als er in Indien im nowhere in einer Kneipe auf seiner Gitarre angefangen hat „You're my heart, you're my soul“ zu singen und alle zahnlosen Bauern mitsingen konnten. Seitdem denkt er Modern Talking sind die einzigen, die es wirklich geschafft haben die Weltherrschaft an sich zu reißen. Pink sieht man viel lieber, als das man darüber schreibt, deswegen hier ein Video die Notte Rosa Urlaub in Rimini.

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Wrapping up the BlogVille project: Reflections on Emilia Romagna



Erin De Santiago
[@ourtastytravels](#)

Over the past 2.5 months, I had the opportunity to spend a total of 25 days on three different trips to the Emilia Romagna region of Italy. I was hosted by the tourism board for the blogging project "[BlogVille](#)" that resulted in about 50 different writers touring the region to share its beauty and sights and raise awareness on tourism opportunities there. This idea was a collaboration between the tourism board and well-known bloggers, Kash ([Budget Traveller](#)) and Melvin ([Traveldudes](#)).

We cycled in and out of the BlogVille apartments, first in Bologna and then in Rimini, with some hosted trips, but really the idea was for us to experience Italy like a local. We were free to do and see what we wanted on

our own, writing about topics that catered to our specific blog(s) niche and audience. Ultimately, BlogVille saw a diverse and interesting group of writers over the course of the project -- some specializations included culinary travel, architecture, history, budget, couples travel, arts & culture, fashion, and even LGBT travel. I was there on behalf of my culinary travel blog and other outlets I write for, so I took advantage of the opportunity to soak up as much culture and tradition I could during my multiple stays.

While the project has physically come to an end -- July 14th was our last day at the BlogVille apartment in Rimini -- the memories, friendships, and professional contacts we made will live on forever. Although we were there at the invite of the tourism board, every single one of us fell in love with Emilia Romagna all on our own. From the food rooted deep in tradition to the physical remains of ancient times, Emilia Romagna is the lesser-known heart of Italy. I think I can safely speak for probably every blogger involved that we all left with a piece of the region in our own hearts (and, in some of our cases, certainly our waistlines!)



Estense Castle, Ferrara, Italy

I've only been home several days obviously, but I already find myself missing everything about Emilia Romagna. For any TravBuddies planning a trip to Italy, consider reserving some time for travel within Emilia

Romagna. The cities that make up the region tend to be less hectic than the more well-known and visited regions, the people are very friendly, and in most cases, lodging and food tend to be cheaper as well.

Sitting here outlining all the upcoming blog posts and articles for my various writing outlets, I find myself still mentally processing everything I experienced during my trips. Here are a few of my post-BlogVille reflections and reasons why you should consider travel within Emilia Romagna:

Gastronomic Center of Italy

The Emilia Romagna region is the gastronomic center of Italy and many of the country's culinary traditions and renowned foods developed here. Traditional balsamic vinegar, egg pastas, Parmesan cheese, many Italian wines, and piadina flat bread are just a few of the gastronomic gems of the region. Here you will find producers, restaurants, and local products that are not subject to the commercialization and typical tourist mark-up you may find in other parts of the country.

Land of the Motors

If you think about some of the most renowned cars and motorcycles in the world, they all originate in the Emilia Romagna region. Ducati Motorcycles, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati -- speed freaks can satiate their craving for sexy cars and motorcycles in Emilia Romagna. There are museums, factory tours, and events that all pertain to Emilia Romagna's unrivaled production of some of the world's most sought after motors.

Laid Back Lifestyle

From the moment I arrived in Bologna that first day, I could immediately feel a difference from places like Rome, Venice, etc. First off, I was able to cross the street without the feeling I might never make it to the other side alive. People were friendly, with many speaking English, making most of the cities within Emilia Romagna very easy to navigate. And if we had issues, people were more patient and welcoming -- they were happy to share traditions and information with us.

Mixture of Modern and History

The cities we visited had a great mix of modern amenities, along with remaining in history and tradition. Rimini was one of the more interesting spots -- at first glance, it is a huge beachfront city, sometimes referred to as the "Ibiza of Italy". However, leave the Adriatic seafront and take a 10 minute bus ride, and find yourself in the city center that has stood the test of time, including well-known sights like the Tiberius Bridge, started in 14 A.D. and completed in 21 A.D. From Rimini, UNESCO World Heritage rich cities like Ravenna and Ferrara are a short train ride away, and popular tourist spots like Venice or Milan are only a couple hours by train.

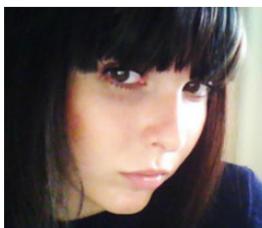
Have you traveled within the Emilia Romagna region of Italy? What is your favorite city or area?

Thank you again to Emilia Romagna Tourism for hosting me during this special BlogVille project. While I was a guest at their invite, all views and opinions expressed are my own.

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Italy's Motor Valley in Emilia Romagna



Sara Näse

[@getpalmd](https://twitter.com/getpalmd)

Italy's Motor Valley is a dream come true for anyone who loves Italian cars.

In the region of Emilia Romagna you can enjoy visits to car factories, museums, showrooms, and even private collections. Obviously if you're interested in motorcycles too, there is a lot more to see - vintage collections and of course, Ducati.

But here are some of the automotive highlights in Motor Valley, for a complete list of places to visit you should check out the website www.motorvalley.com↗

Lamborghini Museum & Factory, San't Agata Bolognese

The Lamborghini museum and factory is a must-do to any fan of these spectacular supercars. In the muse-

um, that might be better described as a beautiful showroom or as I called it in one of my blog posts, "*an art gallery for the car lover*", you can find production models like Miura, Diablo, Murcielago and similar, as well as concept cars and some one of a kind special models. For the price of 40€ you get a guided tour both in the museum and factory and that will probably be one of your best spent 40€ ever. A car manufacturer assembly line - especially if you get to see something as special as the making of an Aventador - can't be described, you have to see it for yourself.

Lamborghini is open Monday to Friday (exc. holidays)

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

Ferrari Museum, Maranello

Unless you own a Ferrari, or perhaps know the right people, you can't get a full factory tour at Ferrari. But the museum is surely worth a visit anyway, because the collection there is *nice*. Not only F1 cars and prototypes, but also some of the most stunning production models in the Ferrari history - the F40, Enzo, Dino and of course more recent names like 458 Italia. A private guide is available for 150€ and I can highly rec-

ommend one - for a small group it is not a huge investment when shared. A petrolhead always loves a good chat with another petrolhead, obviously, and the guides there are very passionate about their work. A bus tour is available to the factory and Fiorano race track, however you will stay in the bus during the tour and photos are also not allowed, so consider it more like an appetizer to prepare you for the day when you can drive in there with your own Ferrari, and take the full tour!

Official Ferrari Museum is open every day (exc. Christmas Day)

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

Pagani, San Cesario sul Panaro (Modena)

Also Pagani welcomes visitors to see their cars in their showroom as well as the production area in their headquarters located close to Modena. Guided 45 minute tours in English, Italian or Spanish are available every weekday at 11 am or 3 pm. Price is 24€ / pp or for a group over 15 persons 20€ each. To book you have to send an e-mail to their address and wait for their confirmation. You do not want to miss this if you are in the area - I mean Pagani is after all Pagani, *super exclusive*.

Pagani is open Monday to Friday
www.pagani.com↗

Maserati, Modena

The Maserati SpA headquarter is located in Modena and their showroom with the latest lineup of their cars is open to the public. A tour inside the factory is unfortunately only available for Maserati owners.

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

Museo Panini - Maserati Cars Collection, Cittanova (Modena)

One of the finest collections dedicated to Maserati, this collection of cars can be seen in the town of Cittanova just outside Modena. The list of cars there is a dream come true for any Maserati fan - Maserati A6G/54, Maserati Tipo A6GCS Berlinetta Pinin Farina, Maserati Simun, Merak Turbo and many more.

Can be visited by appointment only, information how to book a guided tour can be found on the website
www.paninimotormuseum.it↗

Ferruccio Lamborghini Museum, Dosso (Ferrara)

An absolutely stunning museum to visit and you will have the nephew of Ferruccio Lamborghini, Fabio Lamborghini, as your guide. This is not an ordinary museum visit, and this is not an ordinary guide either. To hear about the Lamborghini history and the cars there from a member of the family is a priceless experience. Gorgeous cars - many of them one of a kind and the highlight is by far the red gorgeous Miura that was Ferruccio Lamborghinis personal car. There is even a helicopter, a golf car once owned by the pope, and of course the tractors. You might not go there only for what's on display in the museum, you probably go there also because you want to see who the man behind the name Fabio Lamborghini is - and you won't be disappointed, he is so incredibly friendly. A true Italian gentleman.

Ferruccio Lamborghini Museum is opened exclusively on request

To arrange your private visit call +39 051 86 26 28 or email fabio.lamborghini@libero.it
www.museolamborghini.it 



The Casa Enzo Ferrari from the outside

Casa Enzo Ferrari, Modena

Opened in 2012, Casa Enzo Ferrari is a fresh and modern museum in the heart of Modena. The old building that Enzo Ferrari and his family lived in has been renovated and what is inside it will give you a glimpse of the Ferrari history. Next to it a new spectacular construction has risen, holding a historically important collection of cars - from Ferrari to Alfa Romeo to Maserati to De Tomaso and you might even get to see the first car Enzo Ferrari fully designed and built him-

self, Auto Avio Costruzioni 815. In the small movie cinema a documentary about Enzo Ferrari and the Ferrari history is rolling, and you find yourself unwilling to leave the room before it has finished. An inspiring place to visit!

Museo Casa Enzo Ferrari is open every day (exc. Christmas Day and New Year's Day)

www.museocasaenzoferrari.it↗

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Brandina by Marco Morosini



Nicola Wesseling
[@nicolawesseling](https://twitter.com/nicolawesseling)

Marco Morosini designer of the Italian brand Brandina opened a new boutique in Cesenatico this April adding to his extending collection of beautifully designed stores all over Europe and the USA. A photographer turned designer and business owner he creates accessories made from fabrics associated with the sea side, the perfect combination of timeless style and innovation.

What I love about traveling is constantly being surprised and that is what Italian brand Brandina is, surprising. When I was invited to the Brandina store opening in Cesenatico I hadn't expected the feeling of being inside the boutique, it is innovative yet effortless reflecting the essence of the Italian seaside. It imagines days spent lounging in the sun, bike rides in the morning and spritzers in the evening. The bou-

tiques are reflections of the brand in the best way. They are stylized to absolute perfection that invite you to a world of perpetual summertime where even parting with your hard earned dollar is turned into something fun. When the sales assistant passes you your receipt you are asked to open a cabinet that looks like a mirror, once opened the receipt is passed through a slot that definitely makes you laugh in surprise, one of the designers joys. Marco Morosini is the designer behind this growing force in Europe and USA he explains that “even when my employees leave the store after a day of work I see them look back at the store and smile, and that is what I want, fun.”

Marco Morosini’s innovation started with the design and compilation of a photographic book of which once completed he knew there was something missing. He decided to use the fabric from a sun bed to cover the book which was so effective that he decided to design bags and accessories out of the same.

The accessory line is so stylish it’s hard to believe they were made from the same fabric that covers a sun bed, especially to foreigners like myself, a sun bed in Australia usually isn’t made out of anything particularly elegant. Yet, after spending some time at the beauti-

ful beach in Rimini I can see Brandina everywhere, the sun beds and umbrellas colourful and elegant all stand out fabulously against the blue skies and tanned bodies.



photo courtesy of Brandina the Original

The original samples were made from a producer of windsurfer sails, this peculiar fact is all part of the charm, hand made, quality and fabrics that remind you of sweet lighthearted days at the sea side. Marco ex-

plains that everything is meticulously made and designed to the highest quality and looking around nothing appears to be out of place, I very much believe him. Upon stating this he replies “well you should have seen me this morning, I was frantically hand painting the wooden interiors” It’s hard to believe the Brandina team could ever be stressed with a live band crooning and champagne circulating it seemed pretty dreamy to me, but then again Morosini is an expert in creating these spaces and I can tell you if you are looking for beach accessories there really is no better place to shop to feel like you’re on holiday.

Now my creative readers, many of you I know are working hard to get your designs out there. I asked Marco what advice he gives to you. “Perseverance” he says very surely. “There are people who will not support your ideas, but believe in the brand you want to create and persevere to achieve it.” He also stresses that being involved with the whole process is integral, he is with his brand every step of the way and seeing Marco walking around his store and even pouring champagne for the guests brings home just how personal the brand is and exemplifies how much of his design ideals are saturated throughout the brand.

Grazie Marco! Get yourself a piece of the Italian Rivera and have a look at the website here for store locations and stockists <http://www.brandinatheoriginal.it/>

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We're getting outdoorsy in Campigna



Jessica Dante
[@Jess_inFlorence](https://twitter.com/Jess_inFlorence)

An early morning bus ride brought us to our first event of the day-- a hike in the protected woods of Emilia Romagna. Nicola and I did not have any sneakers, so our guide Riccardo brought us on the path that he informed us that they brought disabled children on the week before. In other words... it was super easy. Good thing, because I'm not much of a hiker... shoes or not.

This park has been elected as the best natural reserve in Europe a few years in a row.

The rocks, greenery and other natural parts of absolutely beautiful. It was such a nice change from being in Florence, where it's difficult to find greenery anywhere.



Our Guide Riccardo

Our guide informed us that the massive amounts of super tall trees were planted by monks over one thousand years ago because these types of trees are straight, just like church pillars, and they would use the trees to build churches and monasteries. Today, these trees are still used in churches in Florence and monks are often seen going to this area to pray.

Romagna Trekking  leads many different types of hikes and excursions all throughout Emilia Romagna. It was pretty cool to get away from the typical Italian scenery and get a little outdoorsy...

Up next.. the meal that may have been the best of my life. Get ready..

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Ponte di Tiberio (Tiberius Bridge) in Rimini: One of Italy's oldest roman bridges



Erin De Santiago
[@poohstraveler](https://twitter.com/poohstraveler)

On the surface, the beachfront town of Rimini, Italy seems like a very modern place to lay down your beach towel and party for a few days. What I quickly discovered however is the 'centro storico' portion of Rimini is home to some interesting and important structures dating back to Roman times. During my stay for the BlogVille project, my first roommate joked about wanting to visit this particular bridge but continued to miss it after being sidetracked by the decadent gelato shops along the way. After sampling two of them on a subsequent trip, I can certainly understand why! One evening during the last week of BlogVille, four of us (Norbert from [Globotreks](#) ↗, Kathryn from [Travel with Kat](#) ↗, Suzanne from [The Travel Bunny](#) ↗,

and I) set out to explore the historic area of Rimini. Surviving the repeated calls of the gelato (admittedly, we stopped at one first), we did make our way across town and happened upon the Ponte di Tiberio right as the sun was setting. Once we arrived to Ponte di Tiberio, I instantly forgot the Adriatic Sea and 1,000+ modern hotels and bars just minutes away.



Ponte di Tiberio in Rimini at sunset

Tiberius Bridge Dates Back to Ancient Roman Times

If you don't know anything about the history of the Tiberius Bridge, you might think it's just a beautiful stone bridge and go about your walk. Also called Ponte d'Augusto, this particular bridge dates back to ancient Roman times, with construction starting under Augustus' reign in 14 A.D., and seeing completion under his successor Tiberius' reign, in 21 A.D.

Importance and Construction of Ponte di Tiberio

Located at the northern end of the main street, Corso d'Augusto, Ponte di Tiberio connects Roman Rimini with the suburbs of San Giuliano. It was built with all Istrian limestone and stretches 70 meters long with five arches. The Doric style bridge was originally built to cross the Marecchia River, but the river was later diverted, shortly before the Second World War. The water seen today is just the "marina" of Rimini. The bridge is quite important given it became a major connector. From it came two consular roads, the Via Emilia and the Via Popilia, which are still in use today. The Via Emilia connects to the northern end of the Emilia.

ia Romagna region in Piacenza, while the Via Popilia went through Ravenna to Aquileia.

Inscriptions on Tiberius Bridge

One of the key elements of this historic bridge is the inscriptions not easily seen when the sun is quickly setting — but there are inscriptions noting Augustus and Tiberius and the bridge is “given from two emperors”.

Ponte di Tiberio Has Resisted Destruction

Getting a brief history lesson on this bridge prior to visiting was definitely eye-opening. Not only is it one of the oldest bridges, it has resisted destruction from earthquakes and wars. It is said to be the only bridge on the Marecchia that German forces were unable to destroy during World War II, despite repeated attempts. One reason it may have withstood battle is what lies beneath the waterline. The foundations are not disjointed from each other, but are on a system of wooden poles, ensuring its stability. Today, the bridge is open to vehicular and pedestrian traffic, barring heavy trucks.

If you are into historical sights while traveling, definitely carve out some time to explore the Roman part of Rimini and the Tiberius Bridge. Sunset is a great time to go and then you can wander over the bridge and enjoy a nice dinner — just be sure to bring bug spray. Not sure who ate more — me or the mosquitos who feasted on me that night!

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A taste of Italy - Acetaia San Giacomo - Traditional balsamic vinegar of Reggio Emilia



Akeela

[@ActuallyAkeela](#)

We began day two in Bologna with breakfast at our apartment, before piling into a bus, which would deliver us to a day, filled with adventure. Our first stop brought us to the nearby city of Reggio Emilia↗ and an exploration of the area before we emerged on a tour of the Reggio Children International Centre↗, a hub for innovative teaching and learning and place for professional development. After a magnanimous buffet lunch and the obligatory espresso, we made our way to the friendly town of Brescello↗, famed for Italian film characters *Don Camillo* and *Peppone*; their tale was com-

pletely alien to me, but I imagine it is a must visit place for avid fans.

The day's events however, were simply an appetizer to our final excursion of the day – indulging in an education on *Traditional Balsamic Vinegar* and more importantly, the tasting of said vinegar. Balsamic vinegar remains one of my favourite cooking ingredients. I use it predominantly in salad dressings, but it tends to find its way into pasta sauces too and is a must with sweet summer strawberries. So you could say I was a little excited (read: seriously, jumping up and down excited) to be visiting Acetaia San Giacomo↗, a producer of traditional Italian balsamic vinegar.

Upon arrival, we were greeted by owner Andrea Bezzecchi who would be giving us a tour of the site, but as one fellow BlogVille↗ writer chased after a playful cat, Andrea thought it only fair to introduce the cat lovers amongst us to a mother and her eight beautiful kittens. Balsamic vinegar forgotten for a good ten minutes, we delighted in carrying and cuddling the adorable balls of fun and fur before our tour officially began.

Andrea began with an introduction to *Traditional Balsamic Vinegar*, its history, concoction and preparation,

all of which was illustrated wonderfully on the walls by a local artist (a great vehicle for learning if like me, you're dyslexic and have a short attention span). Now until this visit, I was unaware that there is a clear distinction between *Traditional Balsamic Vinegar* and the balsamic vinegar we at home are familiar with. The latter can be produced legally by anyone, anywhere and at best has matured for three years and at worst, has been artificially sweetened and aged in steel barrels.

Traditional Balsamic Vinegar or *Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale* is a very different product, following a distinct and strict procedure, produced only in **Reggio Emilia** and **Modena** and is protected by EU classification. The process begins with cooking the 'must' – unfermented whole white grapes (yes, white grapes – who'd 'ave thunk it?!), usually Trebbiano or Lambrusco, and reducing it to a rich dark syrup. The reduced 'must' is then poured into a wood barrel containing balsamic vinegar from a previous batch. That balsamic vinegar is then poured into a smaller barrel containing a small amount of balsamic vinegar from an older batch and so on and so on. With the barrels produced from a variety of wood, such as cherry, oak, juniper

and more, each batch of *Traditional Balsamic Vinegar* is unique in its flavour.

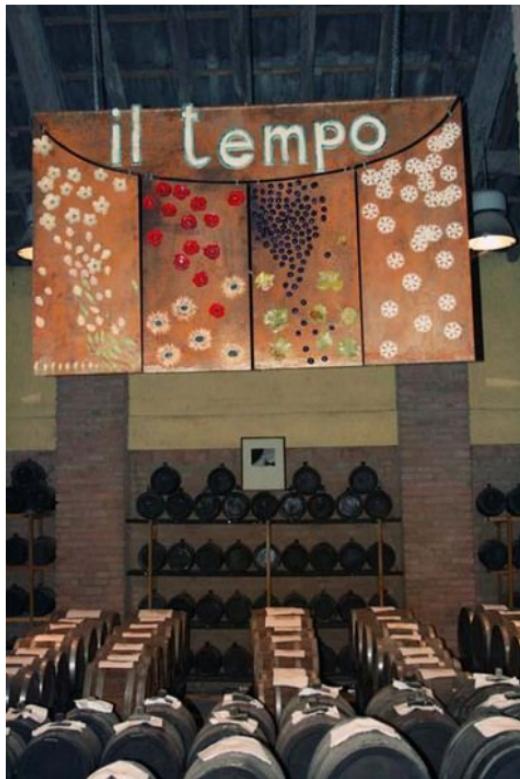
Speaking of flavour, we were all yearning for the tasting session to commence and enthusiastically followed Andrea into his home, where atop a long wooden dining table, sat a curious combination, a plate laid with baked Parmesan crisps, dressed in coffee, fresh mint and Balsamico. I hesitantly picked one up and bit into it – it was unusual, but I found myself reaching for another – strangely delicious.

Next, we were introduced to a balsamico referred to as ‘*Saba*’ – a product made from the same un-fermented grapes, but is not fermented or aged; a balsamic with a sweet caramel flavour, with a hint of tartness. We then tried the youngest of the *Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale*, aged for at least 12 years and referred to as ‘*Aragosta*’ and identifiable by its red lid. The silver label ‘*Argento*’ is an 18 year old Traditional Balsamic Vinegar and gold label ‘*Oro*’, a Traditional Balsamic Vinegar aged for at least 25 years. I felt rather privileged to be tasting a *Oro*, but to my surprise, I found I favoured the *Argento* best. If that wasn’t enough of an indulgent treat, we were then served bowls of vanilla ice-cream drizzled lavishly with the sweet ‘*Saba*’ we had initially tasted.

You might think it an odd combination, but the pairing was a perfect fit.



Andrea Bezzechi



Acetaia San Giacomo- the inside

As you might imagine, a bottle of *Traditional Balsamic Vinegar* is pricier than what you might pay for a bottle of the non-traditional variety, but if you enjoy good food, investing in a bottle or two (to be used sparingly,

of course) should not disappoint. And if you are ever in *Emilia Romagna* or planning a trip to the region, I would highly recommend this tour!

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My top 5 reasons to visit the Italian town of Ferrara this summer



Kathryn Burrington
[@travelwithkat](https://travelwithkat.com)

Last month two earthquakes rocked the villages and towns of northern Italy including the late medieval and Renaissance town of Ferrara. Established by the powerful Este dynasty this UNESCO World Heritage site is a town of bicycles, black magic and imposing architecture suspended in time. Although there was some damage to the magnificent buildings in the town's centre, thankfully no one was killed here; restoration work is already well underway and nearly all sites are now open to the public.

1. The d'Este Castle

This impressive castle, parts of which date back to 1135, is well worth a visit. It towers over the Piazza

Castello where jazz, rock and folk festivals are held throughout the summer; a magnificent backdrop to a wonderful collection of concerts.

2. Al Brindisi, the oldest wine bar in the world

Follow in the footsteps of Titian and Copernicus in this charming enoteca in an unimposing side street tucked away behind the cathedral; the perfect spot for a pre-dinner aperitif or a late-night drink any time of the year.

3. International Street Musicians Festival in a beautiful Renaissance setting

The breath-taking facade of the Romanesque-Gothic cathedral overlooks the Piazza Cattedrale where the buskers' festival held every August is the biggest of its kind in the world with musicians from around the globe covering every conceivable musical genres.

4. Cappellaci di zucca

Dating back to the court of the d'Este dynasty the local pumpkin filled pasta, cappellaci di zucca is delicious washed down with a cold glass of Lambrusco, a mildly fizzy, red wine with the flavour of raspberries. Pump-

kin season starts in late summer and Osteria delle Porte Serrate, in Via Montebello is the perfect place to discover these and many other tasty dishes and fine wines on a warm September evening. The building dates back to the 1500s; eat inside in the smart restaurant or outside in the enchanting courtyard.

5. A chocolate cake fit for a queen

For dessert don't miss out on a slice of tenerina; created for the Queen of Italy's visit to Ferrara in 1900, this mouth-watering cake is made with chocolate instead of flour. Need I say more!

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La Dolce Vita



Janice Fuscoe
[@janfuscoe](https://twitter.com/janfuscoe)

Cool hotels, stylish bars and endless beaches, Rimini just got its mojo back.

Film director, Federico Fellini, and his iconic films, such as *La Strada*, 8 ½ and *La Dolce Vita*, are shorthand for cool and sexy, but his birthplace of Rimini was once considered a little down-at-heel; harsher critics described it as the 'Southend of Italy' – all funfairs, cheap tat and beaches packed full of holidaymakers who, in spite of every health warning, still consider that it's not a holiday unless your extremities are pink and peeling. It's true that some residual disappointment from my last visit could have coloured my opinion too – that was when I was nine and ¾ and thought that the ratio of ice cream available to ice cream consumed (about 20:1, as I recall) was a poor one. But to be fair, that wasn't Rimini's fault... and fortunately this time I made

my return with Emilia Romagna's amazing [BlogVille](#) project and was given an opportunity to really explore this great town. I was totally wowed by just how hip it is. Where to start...

Thanks to BlogVille, a group of us were staying in Piccadilly Residences with a fabulous view of serried rows of multi-coloured beach umbrellas all the way to the sea. The location is perfect and the accommodation simple, but for lovers of luxury, there are a host of über cool places to stay. First up is the Duomo, the first hotel designed by stylemeister Ron Arad, opened in 2008, which was swiftly followed by the gorgeous Hotel Rimini i suites in 2009. The classic art nouveau Grand Hotel, all white and turreted, was Fellini's choice and it's possible to spend the night in his favourite suite as well as book a dinner based on the Fellini menu. But if you're on a budget and just want a place to flop, there are over 1,100 hotels here so you're sure to find something to fit the bill.

And how do the beaches compare? Well, there are 15 kilometres of them for starters, with over 200 bathing establishments, each designated by different coloured umbrellas. The sea is warm, the water quality tightly controlled, the sandy beaches are clean and safe, and

everything – sports activities, showers, changing rooms, even yoga and t'ai chi classes – is included in the price of your umbrella and sun lounger. And then, as we visited in June, we had around ten hours of blazing sunshine to go with it... beat that, Southend!



Sunset in Rimini

On the strip below our hotel there was the odd shop selling the sort of stuff you'll find on any seafront – in-

flatables, beach balls, spades – but they're far outnumbered by decent eateries, interesting craft shops and a host of hip bars, which brings me neatly to nightlife. On our first evening foray we walked straight into what looked like an impromptu street party – hordes of young things hanging out at Hobo's, a cocktail bar open straight onto the street: the music was loud, the look was cool and the mojitos strong. And what a friendly bunch! We hooked up with some locals who took us to nearby Bar Rumba – another outdoor bar – where the barman insisted we try the house mojito with a passion fruit twist. It could have been the twist, the buzz, the company or the second cocktail, but we lost track of time and didn't head home until the early hours, passing plenty more places that could have kept us up until morning. Nightlife, check.

The next day, I was determined to investigate the cultural side of the city. The historical centre is compact and easy to navigate with little traffic and a surprising number of bikes ridden by the very young to the unfeasibly old. Rimini has an unexpectedly rich past as it was a Roman city officially founded in 268 BC. The city took its name from the colony, which was called Ariminum after the original name of the River Marec-

chia (Ariminus). There are still plenty of signs of Roman presence here, including the Bridge of Tiberius, built over 2,000 years ago, which lies on the ancient via Emilia that continues on for another 1,000 km to Piacenza, and the Arch of Augustus – the oldest of all Roman triumphal arches – on the via Flaminia which continues to Rome. There is even a perfectly preserved Roman doctor's surgery, the only one in existence, that was opened to the public in 2007.

Rimini also had a significant Renaissance period with its own artistic school, and some of the school's frescoes were recently discovered in the Church of St Augustine in via Cairoli; following an earthquake, a portrait believed to be of Dante was revealed beneath some 18th-century frescoes, giving a clue to their true date. Another of the city's masterpieces is the Malatesta Temple, built by Sigismondo Pandolfo as a mausoleum for himself and his beloved wife Isotta. Inside you'll find masterpieces by Giotto and Piero della Francesca.

On nearby via Pescheria, the slabs from the original 18th fish market are used to sell flowers from. The fishermen who once inhabited the San Giuliano area are long gone, and this same area where Fellini once en-

joyed kicking a tin can about is now a much-desired part of town where a wander along cobbled streets, admiring pretty pastel coloured houses, will give you a taste of a quieter pace of life that can still be found here.

And for all the culture, Rimini is *still* heaven for kids – endless sandy beaches, a huge range of summer activities and entertainers, even cartoon festivals. And enough ice cream to make even a grown-up kid smile...

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36 hours in Bologna isn't nearly enough



Alex Berger

[@AlexBerger](https://twitter.com/AlexBerger)

“Hi Mom and Dad, I ended up taking a quick detour before returning to Copenhagen. I hope all is wel-wait, what?”

“You studied in Bologna? I thought you did your semesters abroad in Sienna?”

“Really? Both!? Wow!”

Just like that I learned something new. You would think that something as big as the topic of where my mom had studied abroad when she was my age would have come up...perhaps it did...but it definitely surprised me as I sat in my hotel room, freshly arrived in Bologna. It also changed my relationship with the city completely. Not only had I found myself in what was

shaping up to be a gorgeous city after a last minute change of plans, I was now retracing family history. Not a bad start.

I found myself in Bologna as a last minute guest for the BlogVille Launch Party. The concept is a really cool one. Basically the local tourism folks at tourism Emilia Romagna set up two apartments, one in Bologna and one in Rimini, for travel bloggers to stay in free of charge. The goal? To showcase the region and boy-oh-boy did it work! My trip to Bologna started in a parking lot in Narni as I prepared to head to Rome before catching my flight back to Copenhagen. That's when I got my invitation. Kash, of Budget Traveller who was helping launch BlogVille mentioned that a few of us should join him last minute in Bologna. I hesitated briefly and then decided to toss my existing plans out the window and to give it a go – who doesn't love a good launch party with great company? So I joined Kash, Jodi of LegalNomads, Alexandra of Fluent in Frollicking and Angie of Angie Away for a race to Perugia where we caught a train to Florence, and then on to Bologna. As it worked out Ken Kaminesky's trip back to Florence aligned with the first two thirds of our itinerary. What ensued was a hilarious train ride up the mid-

dle half of Italy. Luckily we all made it (generally) in one piece, though most of us were sore from non-stop laughter for the next couple days.



Live performance in Piazza de Neptune

Things continued to maintain their entertaining ambiance even after we arrived. As we waited for our host Nicholas who was our local facilitator and BlogVille representative we relaxed in the Piazza de Neptune. In the photo above you'll see quite possibly one of

the coolest street musician setups I've ever run across. Parked in Bologna's central square by the fountain of Neptune, this gentleman had a full three piece speaker setup, sound mixer, and mobile generator all attached to his motorcycle. As if that wasn't cool enough he was jamming out on a headless guitar. See the glowing patch on his shirt? It's very possible that this was Iron Man on an incognito vacation.



Piazza Maggiore at night

Our arrival was just before sunset and Nicholas promptly showed us to the last minute accommodation they had lined up for us. As last minute arrivals the BlogVille house was already full. But, glad to have us and incredibly fast acting they reached out to a local hotel who put up Jodi, Alexandra, Angie and I for our two night visit. As it turned out the hotel, Art Hotel Commercianti, was situated just off the city's gorgeous Piazza Maggiore and the rooms overlooked – yes, I said overlooked – the main Duomo. The hotel's interior was every bit as elegant and beautiful as its view. As an Art Hotel, the entire building was decorated with a museum quality mixture of historical artifacts and beautiful artwork. The breakfast buffet was large, fresh and even had a gluten free section. The rooms were spotless, modern, well equipped and our host Dott. Mauro Orsi was an absolute class act. One of my favorite highlights was the authentic suit of armor they've setup on one of the sofas in the reception area. While he may not be the world's greatest conversationalist (conversation was a bit hollow) he definitely makes for able bodied company while waiting for friends to arrive.

The City

To put it simply Bologna is a much more attractive and vibrant city than I expected. Which isn't to say I didn't expect it to be attractive, I did...which perhaps makes its impact on me even more pronounced. The city center is relatively flat and feels like a fairly large city. After all, it has nearly 400,000 residents. So, it has excellent high end shopping, bustling streets, and the ambiance of a city that is not just there for show, but which is alive and being lived in. There's no mistaking Bologna for a small countryside-town and that's part of its distinct charm. Especially given one of the city's major claims to fame: the oldest University in the World. A University which incredibly dates back to 1088.

Bologna is...alive. As you walk through the city's large, open squares you can feel the city's heartbeat throb around you. Which is probably why in addition to being an incredible University town Bologna has also been hailed as a UNESCO City of Music, and a European Capital of Culture. Heck, after seeing the motorcycle musician I'd say that by itself earns the UNESCO designation.

The city's visual style is also representative of the region and indicative of the city's historic importance and wealth. The streets are all lined by richly colored buildings, most of which are painted in orange and golden hues. At sunset the late afternoon light really brings out the color, making it a magical time to wander the town. The architecture is impressive and has a sprawling elegance that brings to mind everything one might imagine when mentally picturing the might and Majesty of Renaissance Italy.

The old city center is also home to a fantastic mixture of winding and confusing streets. For me, this is a hallmark of a good city. There's just something charming about getting lost in a zig-zag of narrow avenues and wide open boulevards that worm through neighborhoods full of small squares, corner cafes, and opportunities to glimpse locals living and engaging with their city.

As I mentioned earlier, the architecture that marks the city's main buildings has a very distinct appearance to it. In many cases this visual style is similar to what is found in Florence, Venice and across the Northern parts of Italy and marked by a distinctly martial feel. While no doubt terribly imposing when first built, I

find the more modern effect to be quite inviting. Each window, supported rampart and tower seems to offer a mystery worth exploring. I only regret that I lacked the time to properly explore Bologna. Though, I definitely intend to return to the city upon my next visit to Italy.

As we toured the town with Nicholas we eventually expressed an interest in finding a small cafe for lunch, all eager to take advantage of a well-versed local host. He quickly wound us through a variety of back streets, and past a wonderful mixture of local shops and kiosks, many of which were overflowing with fresh produce and local meats.

Perhaps it was all an elaborate plan to ensure our mouths were salivating and our stomachs rumbling by the time we completed our brief 10 minute walk. Or more likely it's just impossible to walk through the city's downtown area without almost falling into shop after delicious looking shop.

The synergy between Italian city and Italian University town results in even more cafe's and small bar districts than you'll find in your typical Italian town. Which makes Bologna a fantastic destination in good weather, and perfect for travelers interested in engaging

with and really immersing themselves in the city's culture and ambiance.

As we settled into our cafe on a small side street and ordered from their menu of the day I had the opportunity to people watch. I'm always impressed by just how fashionable the Italians are, and as one of Italy's most affluent cities Bologna is definitely anything but the exception to the rule. As the locals relaxed, made their way past on bikes (or more likely a moped) and casually strolled along the street often looked as though they were straight off the pages of a leading fashion magazine....and of course, always make their whole appearance look effortless.

After a refreshing lunch it was time to explore once more. One thing that always makes me chuckle is European fountains, and Bologna is no different. The fountain of Neptune – one of the city's famous landmarks – takes an interesting approach to depicting the female form. Did I say interesting? I meant hands on. I'd love to see the sculptor's thought process. I'm sure it went something like, "what does this statue of a giant naked Neptune need? Women. Squeezing their breasts. Breasts squirting water. Yes, THAT is the mark of a good fountain". Regardless, the end result is an ex-

tremely impressive statue with beautiful depictions of the human body (and various sea monsters).

Still partially immersed in our food coma's Nicholas responded to one of the girl's requests for ice cream by taking us to what he claimed was the best ice cream shop in town. Located right next to one of the city's other famous landmarks – the Two Towers of Bologna. Of these one is 97 meters tall and largely straight while the other is 48 meters tall and leans heavily. Oh, and the ice cream? Nicholas was right and the shop (not to mention the view) was fantastic.

In addition to the seeing the towers and the fountain of Neptune there's a lot to see and do in Bologna. Unfortunately, with my limited window I only had the opportunity to get the smallest of tastes before I had to catch a 4AM train back to Rome for my flight. That said, what I did see and experience during my time in Bologna definitely caught my attention in a major way. The city is awash in fantastic food, rich nightlife, and a wonderful history with several day's worth of sights to see. I'll definitely be back to Bologna, and with ample time to properly explore the city.

If you're interested in learning more about Bologna I definitely suggest checking out posts from BlogVille

guest bloggers. Either by accessing the BlogVille site, or just doing a generic google search for “#blogville”. Overall I was extremely impressed by all aspects of the visit. The city is stunning, the professionalism, energy and vision shown by Nicholas and the local tourism folks was fantastic, and the time spent with the other #blogville bloggers was delightful.

As a fun aside, out of the launch party several of us were interviewed by an Italian Journalist. The interviews led to pieces in both Glamour Italy and Cosmopolitan Italy. You can view the Cosmo piece [here](#).

Oh, and I almost forgot. A special thank you to Dott. Mauro Orsi and Bologna Art Hotels for the gift of a fantastic Bolognese Cooking Heritage book by Barbara Bertuzzi. It contains a bunch of pure culinary delights, some of which I might just share with you all soon!

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World Ducati week in der Emilia-Romagna - It's a man's world



Doris Neubauer
@tripwolf_DE

Knatternde Motorengeräusche. Surrendes Brummen. Schwarzes und/ oder rotes Leder. Luftig bekleidete Damen mit Beinen bis zum Hals. Ja, sogar an eine Waschstraße für Motorräder ist hier gedacht worden – mit Wet-T-Shirt Garantie für die Wäscherinnen. Wäre ich ein Mann, würde ich von der World Ducati Week träumen.

Zum 7. Mal fand von 21. – 24. Juni 2012 das weltweit größte Ducati-Treffen am Misano World Circuit ↗, einer internationalen Rennstrecke mitten in der Region Emilia-Romagna in Italien statt. Ob es sich wirklich um “vier Tage voller Leidenschaft” handelte, wie auf der Website noch immer angekündigt wird, das kann ich nicht beurteilen. Heiß waren sie allemal, die 24 Stun-

den, die bei unserem Trip in die Region dem unter Umständen teuersten Spielzeug auf zwei Rädern gewidmet waren.



Willkommen auf dem roten Planeten, willkommen bei der Ducati World Week.
Foto: Doris

In der Region Emilia Romagna ist die World Ducati Week jedenfalls richtig: Als “Land of Motors” oder “MotorValley” wird sie auch in einem Flyer der in unserem Apartment aufliegt, bezeichnet. Beim ersten Aufschlagen wird mir auch klar warum: Neben sage

und schreibe 22 Sammlungen oder Museen zähle ich ganze acht Auto- und Motorrad-Hersteller in der Region – und Ducati ist, wer hätte es gedacht, einer davon. Seit 1926 lässt “Ducati Moto” Männeraugen leuchten. Wie, davon habe ich mich selbst überzeugen können, hat uns doch Nick von der Emilia Romagna-Tourismusbehörde Eintrittskarten besorgt.

Hält sich die Veranstaltung selbst mit Schildern auf dem Weg zurück (ja, wir haben uns wieder einmal verfahren), wird mir beim Näherkommen eines klar: Die World Ducati Week ist eine andere Welt und auf dem “roten Planeten” stehen Motorräder im Mittelpunkt. Und davon gibt es jede Menge. Unüberschaubar viele, um genauer zu sein. Ich bin von der Wucht der Motorengeräusche, der zweirädrigen Gefährte, der dröhnen den Musik – und sicher auch der schwülen Hitze – überfordert – und froh, nach oben in den Pressebereich “flüchten” zu können. Dort gibt es nicht nur kühle Getränke, sondern auch eine gute Sicht auf eine der Rennstrecken. Auf der werden gerade Stunts vorgeführt, die – buchstäblich – ganz schön viel Staub aufwirbeln.



Ducatis, wohin man auch schaut: Einmal im Jahr wird die Region in rote Farbe gehüllt. Foto: Doris

1988 wurde die World Ducati Week als Dankeschön an die Fans, die den Namen des Unternehmens weltweit bekannt gemacht haben, ins Leben gerufen wurde. Von denen gibt es – offensichtlich – viele und das Sprachgewirr rund um mich beweist, dass die Liebhaber der “Roten aus Borgo Panigale” nicht nur aus Italien kommen. Von überall her scheinen die Leute hergefahren zu sein. Ob sie alle mit ihrer Ducati unterwegs waren, das weiß ich allerdings nicht. Mein Kopf dröhnt wegen

der vielen Sinneseindrücke auf diesem – nunja, wie nenn ich es? – Festival, so sehr, dass sich mein Freund ins Getümmel stürzt. Vermisst hat er mich dabei vermutlich wenig.

Ich würde das Philosophieren, Fachsimpeln und Stauen über diese “roten Männerträume” ohnehin nicht verstehen...

Mehr Infos:

Nachdem die nächste World Ducati Week aber erst wieder 2013 stattfindet, dürfen sich alle anderen mit dem [“Museo Ducati”](#) trösten. Oder eben eine der anderen Sammlungen, Museen und Ausstellungen im “Land of Motors” besuchen, mehr dazu auf der [MotorValley-Website](#).

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Rimini: the other side of Italy



Norbert Figueroa
[@globotreks](#)

A few weeks ago I was invited by [Emilia Romagna Tourism Board](#) to participate on their [BlogVille](#) project. What is BlogVille, you might ask? Basically it is a bunch of bloggers living together -in Rimini in this case- and exploring the region with a more local perspective.

By the time I got to Rimini, I had already spent some time in Italy. I had visited the uber famous cities of Rome, Florence, Venice, and Milan. So, what about Rimini? Quite honestly, I had not heard about Rimini before I got to know about the BlogVille project, so to me this city was a complete new Italian experience. But, was it an “Italian experience”?

As soon as I arrived in Rimini the only essence I had of Italy was just the Italian language. As I walked down

the main street, it literally felt like I was walking down Fort Lauderdale or Ocean Drive in Miami Beach. Rimini felt purely like a beach town. I admit that I loved the vibe. But wait!, was I still in Italy? This is not the Italy I know, that I've studied in countless history books, and that I've read so much on other travel blogs. Well, it is a new Italy for me, and a *very* cool and vibrant Italy indeed.



The very first Instagram picture I took right after I arrived to the BlogVille apartment. This was our view... The Beach!!!

Like I mentioned, aside from the Italian language (oh, and the piadinas, gelatos, and granitas that I later discovered are so popular in Rimini), this town presented a different side of Italian tourism. In fact, the beach front side of Rimini is a sunbather's haven.

Colored umbrellas grid the entire beach as far as your eyes can see and little cafes and shops keep the water-front active all day long.

What took me a few days to realize was that there is indeed an “Italian experience” in Rimini. This is one of those cities that doesn’t necessarily scream “traditional Italy”, but once you go deep, you’ll find a lot of Italian tradition and the essence of what makes Rimini so unique.

Hidden behind all this beach glory, there is actually a bit of the traditional Italy. Yes! There is an old town. While it does not compare with Rome or Florence, architecturally wise, the old town in Rimini offers a broad look to history in a condensed space. In fact, the old town does not look *that* old today, since it was the second most destroyed city in Italy after Montecassino, but it still conserves a few historical pieces that date the city well back to the medieval times and even farther back to the Roman times.



Tiberius Bridge

I promise I'll go into more detail on the architecture not to miss in the old town in a following post, but one thing I want to mention now is that the Tiberius Bridge cannot be missed. This one was by far my favorite architectural piece in Rimini and one that speaks loudly about the engineering capacity of the Romans. It is one of the oldest bridges in all Italy. It was started by Caesar Augustus in 14AD and finished by Tiberius in 21AD. This is pure Roman architecture still in action! On the opposite side of the old town there is the Augustus Arch, which is the oldest triumphal arch still

surviving in northern Italy. It was built in 220BC to mark the entrance to Rimini from the Flaminian Way that linked Rimini with Rome.



Augustus Arch

These two historical pieces, as well as many others in Rimini, might go unnoticed between the high-pitched fanfare that famous structures in Rome and other major cities have. But certainly, these little pieces are important in the puzzling of the whole Roman history. Now, back to the beach!

I can't finish talking about Rimini without mentioning one of the best things you *have* to do there. Watch the sunrise!

Following the BlogVille tradition, my very first night in the apartment was an all-nighter with my roomies Erin of [Our Tasty Travels](#) and Emma of [Emma's Travel Tales](#). In the end, we watched the sunrise while making jokes along the beach.

The sunrise... a beautiful experience that cannot be missed. This is part of the essence of Rimini.



Sunset in Rimini

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Live blogging from Rimini **#fjRIMINI**



Colo Burmester
[@fourjandals](#)

We are really excited to be involved in one of the coolest tourism campaigns ever, the BlogVille project in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy.

We will be lounging on the beaches, savouring the cuisine and exploring the region from the 1st – 10th July. Below you will find all our favourite Instagram photos, travel tips and places we visit during our trip to help you plan your next trip to Rimini and the surrounding areas.

Make sure you follow along with us via our hashtag on Twitter #fjRIMINI. However, we are not the only ones taking part in the campaign so make sure you also check out the #blogville, #EmiliaRomagna and #Rimini hashtags too because there are loads of photos, posts

and updates from other fabulous bloggers to keep you entertained.

If you have any tips, advice or questions for us then please make sure you send us a tweet, [Facebook message](#) or drop a comment below so that we can make the most of our trip as well.

Our favourite Instagram shots:



Our Instagram Gallery

Where we have been:

Make sure you click the play button!



Our Itinerary

Disclaimer: We are staying with the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board but as always our thoughts are our own. Find out more about the BlogVille project here.

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Parma - Cycling to the Castle of Torrechiara



Bianca Bauza

[@nomadbiba](https://twitter.com/nomadbiba)

During my first visit to Parma, I was enchanted by how much its citizens love bikes; all over the city's center bicycles roam freely and rule the streets. That's my kind of place, definitely! I was very impressed to see all kinds of people cycling around: business people, families, young people, older people... No wonder they all look so happy and healthy! And when I saw how green and beautiful was the landscape that lies beyond the city, I knew I had to get myself on a bike ASAP and pedal my way around.

So after a bit of planning, a day trip was arranged by the amazing [BlogVille team](https://www.blogville.it) and in collaboration with the lovely Gemma Bonardi from [LiberiSpazi](https://liberispazi.it) to go cycling in the area surrounding the Castle of Torrechiara, located just 18 km away from Parma. By noon, we got

to the village of Torrechiara, which lies below the castle and our bikes were already waiting for us, courtesy of [A.S. Torrechiara](#). A few minutes later, we were on our way uphill towards the castle.



Cycling in Parma

It was just a short ride up a gentle hill, we wandered a bit around the castle before deciding to go inside. The Castello di Torrechiara was built between 1448 – 1460 by Pier Maria Rossi, Count of San Secondo di Parma, in honor to his lover, Bianca Pellegrini. The castle is

the most visited in Parma since it's very well preserved and it combines medieval elements with those of the Italian Renaissance.

Inside, the rooms are decorated with “grotesque” frescoes, alluding to ancient works that are found in grottoes as oppose to ugly or distorted figures. Also, as it was the custom in those times, each room is named after its most important decoration: *Sala di Giove* (Jupiter), *del Pergolato* (Arbour), *degli Angeli* (Angels), *Salone degli Acrobati* (Acrobats' Room, details in the photo below), etc.

In my opinion, some of the most beautiful work was on the ceilings of some rooms where they had painted many different types of birds flying in the sky; my favorite is the one below, depicting a scene at sunset. It is just breathtaking! However, the most famous room in the castle is the Camera d'Oro (the golden room), which was Pier Maria Rossi's bedroom. The walls in this room are covered with frescoes alluding to the great love between the Count and his lover, Bianca Pellegrini.

Pier Maria Rossi was sent to Milan to study and when he was just 15 years old he was forced to marry Antonia Torelli in order to unite their two families and

avoid conflicts between them. However, while he was in Milan he fell madly in love with Bianca Pellegrini, a court lady of the Duchess Visconti. After several years of marriage and having 10 children with Pier Maria, Antonia Torelli retired to a convent; leaving the way free for him to get together with Bianca Pellegrini and build for her a couple of castles. In the picture below, Pier Maria gives Bianca his sword as a sign of complete submission.



Castello di Torrechiara, frescoes in the Camera d'Oro

After visiting the castle, we continued to cycle on the roads around it and I got a chance to photograph the Castello di Torrechiara from a lot of angles! It was a great afternoon and I am grateful I had the opportunity to mix my passion for biking with a visit to this very impressive site.

For information about the castle's opening hours and prices you can visit [Parma's tourism website](#). Also, if you'd like to see more photos about my time visiting the province of Parma, you can check out my gallery [here](#).

This day trip was part of my experience at BlogVille, an initiative from the Emilia-Romagna Tourism Board to bring bloggers to explore their region and showcase what they have to offer. If you are planning to visit Italy, you should have a look at the stories compiled by [all the bloggers](#) to get some nice ideas for your trip.

Bologna - La Grassa La Gusto



Suzanne Courtney
[@TheTravelBunny](https://twitter.com/TheTravelBunny)

Of the three epithets bestowed upon Bologna; La Dotta – The Learned, La Rossa – The Red and La Grassa – The Fat, it was the latter, fatter moniker that caused me concern. Since I have little willpower where food is concerned I knew I would return from Italy a good few pounds heavier (three if you must know) having gorged myself on pasta, succulent cured meats, gelato and yet more gelato. Let me share the foodie delights that Bologna, food capital of Italy, brought to the table. The **food markets** of Bologna are tucked in a network of back streets just off the Piazza Maggiore where the city's merchants have bought and sold since medieval times. The shady alleyways of Via Clavature, Via degli Orefici and Via Vecchio Pescherie are lined with stalls

displaying ripe, succulent fruit, vibrantly coloured vegetables and the freshest of fish.



Street Market in Bologna

Salumeries abound tempting passers-by with **cold-cuts**, cheeses, **Balsamic vinegar** and **Mortadella** – an age-old, cured and spiced pork sausage originating from Bologna. Row upon row of **prosciutto** legs loiter

from the ceilings - you can choose which part you'd like your meat sliced from - one side is better for eating as an anti-pasto with cantaloupe melon or fig, the other good for sandwiches or cooking.



Bologna Delikatessen Shops

Cheese is big in the Emilia Romagna region and tantalising aromas waft from the many formaggerias - there's enough cheese here to quell the strongest of cheesy cravings. Huge wheels of **Parmigiano-Reggiano**

ano from Parma, **Formaggio di Fosse**, a cheese ripened in pits to an ancient recipe, **Parmesans** rest temptingly at nose-level on the counters of well-stocked, gourmet cheese shops.

You won't find Spaghetti Bolognese in Bologna - I know, we looked - fortunately a friendly waiter enlightened us. The Bolognese sauce is known simply as ragù and is never served with spaghetti. Ever. It comes with tagliatelle ribbon pasta, invented in the city; the rich, meaty sauce and golden, eggy pasta with a glass or two of red wine really hit the spot after a long days sightseeing.

Bologna took **pasta** to a whole new level. My travelling companion, Kathryn, ([Travel with Kat](#)) discovered Serghei a tiny Trattoria on Via Piella. The waiter didn't speak English and the menu was in Italian so unsure what I was ordering I chose Tortelloni di Zucca. When I took my first mouthful it was a moment of culinary heaven. Each, perfect, al dente, ravioli parcel contained soft **buttery pumpkin** with just a hint of sweetness - mouth-wateringly superb and if I ever find a recipe for it I'll be sure to share.

And finally Gelato...

Bologna was the venue for my first ever Gelato. We were in need of refreshment and couldn't decide whether to have a **coffee** or a **gelato** when inspiration hit – coffee gelato! Kathryn went for dark chocolate and when I saw it I have to confess to a little gelato-envy. However, mine too was magical; a cone full of silky-soft, creamy deliciousness and the first of many... Hopefully walking some of the many miles of porticoes helped burn those gelato calories off.

So there it is, a food-fest worthy of all the fuss? Gastro-nomic Bologna is La Grassa for good reason in a city where over-indulgence is compulsory...

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Learning to make pasta in Italy



Satu Vänskä-Westgarth
[@SatuVW](https://twitter.com/SatuVW)

Even though in the springtime Katja covered a good bit of Italy here in Skimbaco, I thought that I would dare to do one article more. Or two. A little while back I got the chance to join the BlogVille project ↗ of the Emilia Romagna region in Italy, and consequently me and my baby girl spent few days in a beautiful house with fellow bloggers and writers in the Bologna city center, getting to know the ins and outs of the region and the city.

For me food and travel go hand in hand in such extent that of some destinations I mainly remember the food, in good and in bad. And what a better destination to travel for food than Italy, where the food is so simple yet so delicious that it can create memories that last a lifetime? And what better place to do this than in the

food capital of Italy, or the “fat one” as Bologna is also known due to its cuisine heritage!

Where as the movie Julie & Julia brought Julie Child and her Mastering the Art of French Cooking in to the limelight, is anyone here familiar with Pellegrino Artusi and his Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well? Shame to admit, I wasn’t. However, this is THE book of the Italian home cooking, published first in 1891 by Artusi, who then produced fifteen more editions of the book based on the recipes, comments and suggestions Italians sent to him. Interactivity almost similar to that of today’s social media time but way before the birth of the Internet. Hence you could even say that this is the book of the Italian home cooking, written by Italians for Italians.

But back to the food. And cooking. While in Bologna, I had the chance to visit Casa Artusi↗, the first Italian center dedicated to homecooking. A place where “the taste of culture meets the culture of taste”. And I got to learn the art of making pasta. Without even the help from a pasta machine, may I add.

Homemade pasta is something I’ve never thought of making at home. It’s too complicated and time-consuming I thought. But it wasn’t. Take 100 grams “00”

(zero zero) flower per one egg and mix them together gently, knead the dough, let it set for about thirty minutes and then roll the dough into a thin layer with the help of rolling pin and you are ready.



We're both learning to make pasta!

Ready to make garganelli, tortellini, pappardelle, farfalle, tagliatelle, capelletti...

This was my first experience of learning the skills to make local food while traveling and it was definitely something I would like to do again. It was a great way of being able to take something back home with me from my travels, something that doesn't take any shelf space or gather dust, and something I can share with my family and friends. I also brought home a rolling pin and some real Italian pasta flower so now I have no excuses; this is going to be the year of home made pasta parties!

Have you ever attended a cooking class whilst traveling or tried to recreate the dishes you enjoyed abroad at home? What would you recommend? Where would you like to travel to for learning the skills of local chefs?

NOTE: Me and my baby visited Bologna and the surrounding regions for four days as part of the [BlogVille project](#), supported by [Emilia Romagna](#), [Budget Traveller](#) and [Travel-dudes](#). While the accommodation and some of the activities were provided for, all other expenses, including travel to and from the destination was covered by myself.

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Treated like some VIPs at the Palio in Ferrara



Jessica Dante
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On my last day of the Rimini BlogVille trip, we traveled to Ferrara for their annual Palio. The Palio is a traditional horserace that has existed in Ferrara since 1279. It's typically held in May, but because of the earthquakes that shook the Emilia Romagna region in May (which destroyed some towns surrounding Ferrara), the race was pushed back until June. Lucky for us, that meant we got to see it!

Before the parade and the race, we stopped at a cafe next to this gorgeous church. We were all a bit tired and it was SO hot, so we tried to cool off for a bit.

We all ordered a *Caffe Shakerato*, which is the Italian version of iced coffee.

There were tons of bikes in Ferrara, so many that it's often called the Amsterdam of Italy. My kind of city!



The parade begins

Each neighborhood in Ferrara is represented in the races, and they all have citizens dress up and parade throughout the city to the racetrack.

The *Castello Esterno* is one of the biggest attractions in Ferrara and has a great view of the city from the top, but was partially damaged during the earthquake.

I loved how much greenery there was in Ferrara. SO much more than Florence..

We were escorted to the VIP seating to watch the races and sat next to many of the city and regional officials. There are four races at the Palio-- boys running, girls running, donkey racing, and the horse race. Here, the boys are racing...

The girls getting ready to run. The girl and guy who won this year are the same that won last year too.

The donkey race was very interesting. Those things do NOT behave! We didn't get to stay for the horse race because it was going to take them about two hours to sift the race track and a couple of us bloggers had planes and trains to catch. Maybe next year!

BlogVille↗, it's been real. Thanks for everything (especially master of the house Nick!) and can't wait for BlogVille 2013!!

Be sure to check out the other bloggers' pictures of our Rimini and Bologna trips on my Pinterest board↗!

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Old Sheet Music and Toilet Seat Art - 13 of Bologna's offbeat museums



Vago Damitio
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A visit to Bologna, Italy is usually characterized by great food, exploring the wonderful architecture, perhaps doing the Portico walks, checking out the tall towers, and perhaps enjoying music, art, or cinema at Bologna's many festivals.

Hidden in the midst of all of that, are several wonderful offbeat museums that are definitely worth your time. First of all, near the train station and slightly away from the center is a museum filled with works that just about no one thinks of when they go to Bologna – Modern Art.

The Museum of Art Moderne Bologna or MAMBO is bursting with treasures both inside and outside. The Museum covers Italian Art from World War II to the present.

The Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna opened in 1975 in the spaces specially designed by artist and architect Leone Pancaldi; it was born in the atmosphere of intellectual fervor that pervaded the city at the beginning of the Sixties. Before GAM's opening, more than a decade of events, exhibitions and competitions had taken place in hope of its construction, culminating in the opening activities joint under the title "A museum today."

Inside you'll find a wide array of rotating exhibits and a wonderful permanent collection that ranges through such an eclectic mix as tribute to New York break dancing videos to Toilet Seat art (which, by the way, the security seems a little uptight about – when I began lifting the lids to see the symbols painted under them, a very upset guard began yelling at me in Italian and then followed me the rest of the way through the museum – my contention is that there was art un-

der the seats, so obviously the artist intended it to be seen!) Due to the close scrutiny, I was unable to take a photo of this wonderful toilet seat display. Shit!!



A shot of the wonderful Marcel Broodthaers at MAMbo in Bologna, Italy

When I visited there was an immensely interesting Marcel Broodthaers temporary exhibit which highlighted his artistic path and how it developed over the course of an extraordinary career that lasted just

12 years, from 1964 to 1976. Titled, *Marcel Broodthaers. L'espace de l'écriture*, the exhibition was extraordinary. Another Bologna Museum that I found to be well worth my time was the Museo Internazionale e Biblioteca Della Musica (International Museum and Library of Music)[!\[\]\(ec250687b2e1eccf788824a9fb3a42f6_img.jpg\)](#). While this was a small museum, for music lovers it is a must see. Tucked away inside the 16th century Palazzo Sanguinetti, this museum was designed to hold the musical objects of the city of Bologna, but quickly grew to become an international library for sheet music! With wonderful murals, a delightful old curator, and plenty of old instruments – you won't be sorry if you pay a visit.

The frescoes alone are worth the price of admission as they are meticulously restored 18th century examples of Neo-Classical and Napoleonic art that are unlike just about anything else in the city.

Here is a blurb from the museum's website:

The first and most important intent was to bring awareness to the greater public of the rich variety of musical heritage that the Comune di Bologna owns and has kept for a long time. Until now, much of this heritage remained confined in

warehouses for various reasons – the first and foremost being the lack of adequate space – and was only brought out occasionally for temporary expositions.

The museum's core musical collections were created by Franciscan Father, Giovanni Battista Martini in the 1700's who was not only a great scholar and collector but also the teacher of Johann Christian Bach and Wolfgang Amadé Mozart. In addition to enriching his library day after day, gathering manuscripts and musical works of various kinds, Padre Martini collected portraits of musicians.

For me, the most fun was to see the instruments: lutes, flutes by Manfredo Settala from 1650, the pochette, various little violin, the ghironde, the serpentoni, the extraordinary series of horns and cornets from the 16th and 17th centuries, and finally, the tiorba, which is in the shape of a khitára.

So, as you can see – Bologna offers much more than just food and architecture. Here are a few more museums you may want to explore while you are in the heart of good living.

1. [The Tapestry Museum in Villa Spada](#) ↗
2. [The Leccaro Collection of Modern Art](#) ↗
3. [The Herb Museum](#) ↗
4. [Missionary Museum of Chinese Art](#) ↗
5. [Civic Medieval Museum](#) ↗
6. [Museum of Comparative Anatomy](#) ↗
7. [The Toy Soldier Museum](#) ↗
8. [Resistance Movement Museum](#) ↗
9. [Industrial Heritage Museum](#) ↗
10. [The Communications Museum](#) ↗
11. [The Museum of Bee Keeping](#) ↗

If those thirteen museums aren't enough for you, there are about fifty more within the center of Bologna and that ought to keep you busy!

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Paying homage to Enzo Ferrari's Prancing Horse



Cole Burmester
[@fourjandals](#)

“Death will destroy my body, but my creatures will keep on living ever after, in the years to come.”

- Enzo Ferrari

There are few brands in the world that everyone can recognise.

Ferrari's prancing horse happens to be one of those brands. And it is not recognisable because it is commonplace. Quite the opposite. It is rare. It is largely unattainable. It is extraordinary.

It is recognisable because it is an object of beauty.
“I don't sell cars; I sell engines. The cars I throw in for free since something has to hold the engines in.”

- Enzo Ferrari



The Ferrari Logo

Visiting the Enzo Ferrari Museum

Stepping through the swinging doors out of the scorching Italian summer sun into the gloom my eyes blink furiously to adjust. Dust motes glitter from the artificial lights before blinking out of sight.

A faint trace of fresh paint hangs in the air where the stench of oil and grease should have been. The steady hum of the air conditioning breaks the deepening silence.

Standing in Enzo Ferrari's old factory, and birthplace,
I am struck by a sense of longing for days gone by.
A time that I never even lived.

A time when there were no such things as traction control, power steering or even seatbelts. Racing car drivers seemed reckless with their lives and cars were only just becoming mainstream.



Inside the Museum

As I wander through the old workshop examining Enzo Ferrari's life in minute detail, I wonder what it must have been like 60+ years ago. Working away in this tiny shed in the middle of the Italian countryside developing a car and a brand that what would become a legacy. He was the first to believe that cars could be a luxury object. **Cars could be a work of art.** To him, cars had to be a mix of power and style. A combination of speed and elegance.

“Everyone dreams of driving a Ferrari, it was my intent from the start.”

- Enzo Ferrari

These are words I can relate to.

As a boy, and still to this day, **I often dream of driving a racing car.** And not just any racing car. It would have to be the best. A Formula One racing car.

They represent everything that is extravagant and excessive about motor racing.

The Formula One car that I would choose to drive? **Ferrari.**

Why? Because there has been no other team that has dominated the Formula One World Series over the course of history. Even though they have had rocky pe-

riods with no wins for, they have also had a grip on the trophy more times than any other team.

“Second is the first of the losers.”

- Enzo Ferrari

Enzo Ferrari's passion for success has pushed Ferrari to be the best in the racing world. And for that, everyone that has ever owned or driven a car, should be thankful.

Because not only are Ferrari's considered some of the best racing cars in the world. But Formula One cars are the reason most road cars have been developed to where they are today. Nearly every technological advancement in speed, safety, aerodynamics and handling has been developed during testing and racing Formula One cars.

It is why I felt such an honour to stand where the best have stood before.

Whether you like Ferrari or not, visiting the Museo casa Enzo Ferrari in Modena to pay homage to one of the greatest Italian's that ever lived is a must for any motoring enthusiast.

Enzo Ferrari

18th February 1898 – 14th August 1988.

“The most important victory is the one which has to arrive.”
- Enzo Ferrari

Extra Travel Tips:

The Enzo Ferrari Museum is located in Modena in the heart of Motor Valley in the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy.

Opening hours: 9.30am – 6pm (1st October – 30th April) and 9.30am – 7pm (1st May – 30th September)

Cost: €13 per adult. Also available is a discount to the Ferrari Museum in Maranello if you combine the two museums for €22 per adult.

Disclaimer: I was invited to visit the Enzo Ferrari museum as a guest of the Emilia-Romagna tourism board as part of the BlogVille project. As always, our thoughts and dreams, are our own.

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Bologna - Street Art



Bianca Bauza

[@nomadbiba](https://twitter.com/nomadbiba)

When I first arrived to Bologna, I was surprised to see so much senseless tagging on the city's historical center; there where colorless scrawlings devoid of any aesthetical sense plastered all over the place. It took me some time to find the more interesting pieces, those unique works that fuel my search for urban art everywhere I go. This time, I was after something in particular: I wanted to see murals by local artist Blu. It was during one of my first visits to Berlin that I first came across Blu♂'s gigantic murals (pictured above), and his works took my fascination with street art up to a whole new level. When I knew I was going to spend some time in Bologna, Blu's hometown; I was looking forward to see and photograph as much of his impressive murals as I could find.

What I like most about Blu's work is not just the style and originality of his designs, but also his not so subtle social critique.



Blu #1

More often than not, his murals play around with the failings of our modern society; depicting humanity in some of its less brilliant moments. But Blu doesn't stop at the images that get frozen in time for his murals, he has experimented and gained praise with videos

as well. For a sample, check out [Big Bang Big Boom](#)↗; in which he gives us a glimpse of evolution through his paintings. Also, in Bologna I got to see a couple of works by Blu in collaboration with another street art master, [Ericailcane](#)↗; I was familiar with his work from photographs, but this was the first time I saw his murals “live”. His style is also very particular as he fills his murals with dressed up animal figures in surreal situations with a humorous twist, such as the one below.



Ericailcane #1

Now, coming across these murals required some research as they are well off the usual tourist path in Bologna and outside the walls of the historic center. To help me on my quest for big murals, I had the support of my friends from [BlogVille](#)↗, who put me in touch with Claudio Musso, one of the curators of [Frontier](#)↗; a project focused on promoting street art in Bologna that is promoted both by the city and the Emilia Romagna region. There are two phases for this project, the first just finished last month with the creation of 13 artworks in big walls on buildings around the city by both local and international artists. The second phase will take place in Bologna on January 2013, where an international symposium will be held at the [MAMBO](#)↗, one of the entities backing up this initiative. For some images of the finished walls, check out [Frontier's Facebook page](#)↗.

With a project like Frontier, Bologna aims to be at the forefront as a centre of aesthetic production that involves street art, one of the more interesting phenomena in today's contemporary art landscape. After my conversation with Claudio, I thought that experiencing these big murals in person could very well be the reason that will bring me back to Bologna. We'll see. In

the meantime, check out my gallery ↗ for all my photos of my time in this lovely city.

Practical Information

For a map showing the location of the murals from the Frontier project, please click here ↗. Some of the murals featured in this post and in my photo gallery can be found in:

- *Blu & Ericailcane*: Xm24 Bologna – Via Fioravanti 24
- *Blu & Ericailcane*: Scuola di Pace, Via Lombardia 36
- *Ericailcane, Will Barras & DEM*: mural in Via Capo di Lucca
- *Several artists*: Giardini Luneta Gamberini

During part of my stay in Bologna, I was hosted by BlogVille ↗; a project from the Emilia-Romagna Tourism Board for which bloggers were invited to explore what the region has to offer to visitors. They also kindly provided me with a bicycle so I could get around effectively while looking for street art to photograph. A big thank to all who helped me craft this post!

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Cooking piadina in the heart of Rimini's hinterland



Kathryn Burrington
[@travelwithkat](https://twitter.com/travelwithkat)

Last month I had the chance to spend a day exploring the countryside (and cuisine) of the Rimini hinterland, thanks to the Emilia Romagna tourist board. I had never been to this part of Italy before and it was fantastic to discover such beautiful scenery. It is a little wilder and more rugged than the gently, rolling hills of its more famous neighbour, Tuscany.

The Culinary Heart of Italy

As well as many wonderful ancient towns and villages and stunning medieval cities plus some breath-taking scenery, Emilia Romagna is the culinary heart of Italy. It is the birthplace of numerous pasta's including the tortellini of Bologna and many other well-known specialities such as prosciutto di Parma and Modena's bal-

samic vinegar, to name but two. Rimini, itself, is home to the ancient flatbread piadina, which dates back to the Romans and is just as popular now as it was then being found in homes, restaurants and street stalls throughout the region.

Locanda di Onferno's Piadina

During our day out in the hills of Rimini we were treated to a cookery lesson at a delightful inn, Locanda di Onferno, near the little village of Gemmano, making crescione, a type of the piadina with their superb chef, Maria.

How piadina is made varies a little from town to town, village to village and home to home but we were shown a traditional recipe with a healthy twist in that the lard that is found in an authentic list of ingredients was replaced with olive oil. At this inn they use an old variety of sweet red wheat called Gentil Rosso, which grows in the hills of Montefetro , to make the flour used.

Ingredients for 10 piadina (serves 4):

- 2 1/4 lbs or 1 kg unbleached flour (plus a little to use on the work surface)

- A heaped teaspoon of salt
- 200ml olive oil
- Water

Instructions

1. Make a mound of the flour on your work service and form a large well in the centre of the mound.
2. Pour the oil and salt in to the well.
3. Slowly mix the oil and flour together while adding some water, little by little.
4. Roll into a ball and knead energetically for about 7 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic .
5. Divide into 10 round balls, cover with a cloth and leave to stand for at least half an hour. (At this point you can set some aside and keep in the fridge for up to a week for cooking later if you do not need them all now.)
6. With a little flour on the work surface take each ball, flatten it slightly, then roll out, giving it a quarter turn after each roll so that you end up with a round flat 'pancake' just a few millimetres thick.
7. Cook the piadina in a hot skillet for 3 to 5 minutes, until it is speckled brown.
8. Serve with the filling of your choice and fold into a sandwich.



Filled Piadina

Local Variations: How thick the piadina should be varies depending on where you are in Emilia Romagna, in some places it should be so thin that it is almost translucent. Some use milk instead of water and another variation uses part water and part white wine. You can also add a little honey to give the piadina an amber hue.

Crescione

To make a stuffed variation of piadina:

1. Make the dough and roll it out as above.
2. Place your stuffing on half the of the dough and fold it over.
3. Use a fork to pinch round the curved edge sealing in the filling.
4. Cook as with the piadina making sure the filling is heated through.

Fillings

Traditional piadina fillings include cold cuts such as prosciutto di Parma or salami with salad leaves such as rocket, local Romagna cheeses or grilled vegetables. In more recent times they are also served with sweet fillings such as Nutella.

My crescione was stuffed with a delicious local sausage meat and herbs.

Are you hungry yet?

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Wild Rocket



Helene Lohr

[@HeleneLohr](#)

On a Wild Rocket Ride

Hanging out with other international travelers broadens your world a little bit each time. I've been missing my dear new friends, the very fashionable british [BlogVille](#) babes Frankie [@frankiestyling](#), Akeela [@actuallyakeela](#) and Katie [@katieantoniou](#). So I thought I a post on a theme that they inspired would be fitting.

We learned from our british BlogVille babes that the deliciously spicy greens that we were enjoying in Italy were not just plain [Arugula](#) (as we boring Americans label it) but should actually be referred to as "Rocket". It didn't take much to win me over for this name change. Personally, I think "Rocket" is a name much more in keeping with this crisp, spicy, slightly bitter green that helps any salad have that extra *oomph* of flavor.

We had rocket with our meals nearly every day in the beautiful city of Bologna- as a large salad by itself, underneath the primi piatti as a delicious heaping base and as a simple side garnish to a caprese salad with creamy fresh mozzarella and a dribble of heavenly sweet balsamic vinegar (My new balsamic addiction is from Acetaia San Giacomo- a small farmstead producer of deep brown vinegar with a rich flavorful sweetness). It's also an easy choice for a celiac while traveling- salads in Italy are pretty much always whole foods ingredients and the dressings are simple and rarely prepackaged. (Rather unexpectedly, Italy is actually an *awesome* place for celiacs to explore the cuisine, but more on that in another post!)

There's something so satisfying about that spicy crunch, the deep green of the spiky leaves, accompanied by their fresh clean scent as you raise the fork to your mouth. I always feel both supremely healthy and decadent at once when eating my fresh rocket salad. (Here's a link to some mouth watering rocket salad recipe ideas).

I've been back in the states a week or so and I've already been missing my daily dose of "rocket", so I decided to order out from one of our fine local restau-

rants Cafe Aroma ([@cafearoma1](#)) and feed my addiction. Behold (below): fresh wild rocket salad topped by goat cheese, candied pecans, strawberries, peaches and a balsamic vinegar dressing. Delizioso!



Rocket (Arugula) Salad with goat cheese, peaches, candied pecans and balsamic vinegar at Cafe Aroma in Idyllwild

Transported back to Italy for the night, I leaned back in the teak chair on my back porch savoring a glass of red wine and my wild rocket salad. Next mission? Head

over to the market tomorrow to stock up on some more rocket- hopefully the clerk won't look at me too strange when I ask for it!

Rocket: A Quick Nutritional Overview:

Want to make a healthy, tasty salad? Walk right past that nutritionally bereft iceberg lettuce (I call it "crunchy water") in the produce aisle and straight head over to the Rocket. Arugula (Rocket) is a nutritional powerhouse of a green. It has many vital phytochemicals, anti-oxidants, vitamins, and minerals that can immensely benefit your health.

- **Rocket is abundant source of phytochemicals** such as indoles, thiocyanates, sulforaphane and isothiocyanates. Together these phytochemicals have been found to counter carcinogenic effects of estrogen. This helps protect against prostate, breast, cervical, colon, ovarian cancers by inhibiting cancer cell growth, and cytotoxic (killing) effects on cancer cells. In addition, the di-indolyl-methane (DIM) in this great green helps your immune system regulate itself properly and has anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties.

- **Rocket is also very good source of B complex vitamins** such as folate, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine), and pantothenic acid. These are essential for energy metabolism, and optimum cellular enzymatic functions. Folate in the diet is particularly critical as a common dietary supplement to help prevent neural tube defects in newborns. (Eat your greens, moms to be!)
- **Like spinach, rocket is an excellent source of vitamin A** (in the form of Beta Carotene). Vitamin A and flavonoid compounds in green leafy vegetables help protect from skin, lung and oral cavity cancers. So, before you think about slathering on potentially chemical laden sunscreen to protect from skin cancer, make sure you build up your body's own defenses first.
- **Fresh rocket leaves also contain good levels of vitamin C**, a powerful, natural anti-oxidant. Foods rich in vitamin C help your body fight against infectious agents (boosting your immunity) and remove harmful, inflammatory free radicals from the body.
- **Arugula is also a good source of minerals, especially copper and iron.** It has a mix of small amounts of some other essential minerals and electrolytes such as calcium, iron, potassium, manganese, and phosphorus, all of which play critical enzymatic, chemical and structural roles in the body.

Whew! All in all, that's pretty good for a small spiky green leaf!

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Bologna top 5



Asgeir Pedersen
[@AsgeirPedersen](https://twitter.com/AsgeirPedersen)

The size of Bologna is perfect for walking and exploring the many fascinating facets of this unique city. Like most cities Bologna also has a number of must-see places, but unlike many cities that I have been to myself over the years, Bologna is more like a state of mind or a feeling, than about particular places as such. In short, Bologna is so much more than the sum of the parts. On every piazza or street corner and under every portico (arcade) you will find something to enjoy. Choosing five distinct places to visit in Bologna is therefore next to impossible but here are my suggestions:

1/ Piazza del Nettuno and Piazza Maggiore

[Piazza Nettuno](#) and Piazza Maggiore are adjacent to each other like one big piazza. The imposing Neptune

statue and fountain with the nereids was created in 1567 by the artist Giambologna and the piazza is the obvious starting point on our Top-5 list. On both sides of the fountain there are some interesting buildings; the public library in Sala Borsa ↗ (bourse) and Palazzo Re Enzo ↗.

Piazza Maggiore ↗ is the livingroom of Bologna, surrounded by impressive historic buildings on all sides. In clockwise order there is the gothic style (inside) San Petronio Cathedral. Palazzo d'Accursio with the clock tower, Palazzo del Podestà with the arcades and restaurant and on the far side the Renaissance style Palazzo dei Banchi. Sit for a while at one of the cafès or restaurants by the piazza or simply right on the piazza itself, with the locals, and take it all in.

On our way to the Asinelli Tower we could take the shorter route, up the main street (via Rizzoli) but if you walk towards Palazzo dei Banchi and under the arch and into the narrow back streets you will find a lively fresh foods market with fruits and vegetables vendors; pescherie, macellarie, salumiere, all the best foods you can imagine, most if not all from the Emilia-Romagna region.



Due Torri (Asinelli & Garisenda)

2/ The Asinelli and Garisenda Towers

The Asinelli Tower  dates all the way back to 1109, it is 97 meters high and has 498 steps for you to climb to get to the top. The panoramic view from the top is absolutely worth the effort. This tower has an overhang inclination of about 2.2 meters. The Garisenda tower next to it is only 47 meters high but with a 3.2 meters inclination. In other words two leaning towers.

The towers are situated right where the via Emilia (Strada Maggiore) enters Bologna. Via Emilia was built

by the Romans and it goes in a straight line through many important towns all the way from Piacenza to Rimini. Good to know.

3/ **Via Zamboni and the University area**

Should you feel like having a gelato after having climbed up and down the steep and narrow stairs inside the tower, then now is your chance. Right at the start of via Zamboni you will find one of the best gelaterias in Bologna.

Via Zamboni takes us into “area Universitaria” with the oldest university in Europe, dating from 1088. On an average weekday you will immediately notice all the students and the lively energy in this street. It might not be the prettiest street in Bologna with all the mindless graffiti and scribbles but there is something about the combination of youthfulness and all the history that surrounds you that makes this part of Bologna so special. Stop for a while in Piazza Verdi and see if you agree. Right around the corner from Piazza Verdi is the Museo di Palazzo Poggi (Scienza & Arte). and further down the street you will find Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna↗, located almost at the

end of the street, on the corner where via delle Belle Arti meets via Zamboni.

If you go back to Piazza Verdi and turn left into via Giuseppe Petroni you will arrive in via San Vitale ↗ after a few minutes walk. Every main street in Bologna has its own flavor and they are all worth seeing as such. Via San Vitale is a personal favorite. Head down the the gate, to Porta San Vitale, and then backtrack and continue past the Torresotto gate and soon you will find youreself in Piazza di Porta Ravgnana (with the gelatiera, remember?) and the Due Torri.

4/ **San Luca (via Saragozza)**

The San Luca Basilica ↗ is situated on a hill south-west of the city, on Colle della Guardia. You can walk all the way from the city center, it's about 5km. The alternative would be to catch bus no. 20 and get off at the Meloncello arch. The ascent to San Luca starts there. Via Saragaozza start just a few hundred meters from Piazza Maggiore and its porticos (arcades) are among the most colorful in all Bologna and the fact that you can walk almost all the way for the city center to San Luca without getting wet should it rain, is in itself very special. The uphill climb starts at the Meloncello arch and

there are 666 arches under the arcades to pass before you arrive at the top, to San Luca. About halfway or so up the hill you will get a quite good panoramic view of Bologna and the hills.

5/ Art and Bologna on the inside

As mentioned above (2) Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna has a wonderful collection of paintings by renowned masters as well as many from the Emilia part of this region, mostly from the 13th to the 18th century.

On Piazza Maggiore, on the second floor of Palazzo d'Accursio you will find Museo Morandi. Georgio Morandi was a native of Bologna and some of his delicate still-lives are very "bolognese". Frederico Fellini paid tribute to Morandi by including his painting in his film "La Dolce Vita" and apparently President Obama chose two of Morandi's painting for the White House collection.

There are several churches worth visiting in Bologna, first and foremost San Petronio on Piazza Maggiore, but also San Francesco and San Domenico. In San Domenico there are three little known sculptures by Michelangelo. Also worth visiting is the renaissance

church Chiesa dei Santi Bartolomeo e Gaetano ↗, situated right behind Torre Asinelli. The entrance is under the porticos in Strada Maggiore.

The Archiginnasio di Bologna ↗ (entrance in Piazza Galvani) was once the main building of the University of Bologna. The walls are covered with thousands of coats of arms. Visit the Anatomical Theater on the second floor.

There are canals running under Bologna and if you go to via Piella, just off via dell'Indipendenza, you can see one of them on either side of the street.

There are certainly numerous other places worth visiting in Bologna and if you have a suggestion please do drop me a line ↗.

Thanks for reading!

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La Notte Rosa sunrise in Rimini



Cole Burmester
[@FourJandals](https://twitter.com/FourJandals)

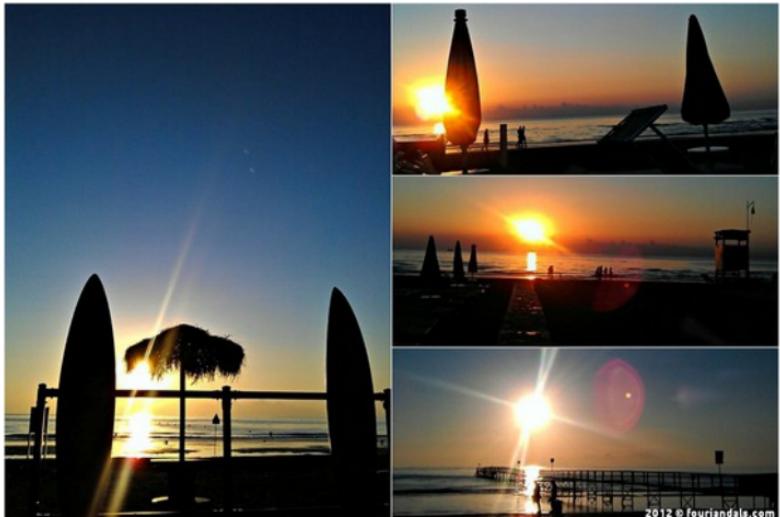
Rimini was hugely popular with the tourists in the 80's and 90's before quickly falling from grace as the go-to-place for summer vacations. Luckily there has been a huge push for tourism redevelopment in the area to attract the tourists back.

While we were exploring [Emilia-Romagna](#), we had had the chance to hangout and relax at the beach in Rimini. While I didn't take my speedos we did embrace the **"live like a local"** mentality.

Early morning swims and sun-baking between [pasta cooking classes](#) and visits to the [Ferrari museums](#) were all part of the days routine.

Although the relaxing was fun, one of our favourite experiences was [La Notte Rosa](#) or *Pink Night*. While the name doesn't suggest that it is one of **the most awe-**

some parties in the world you would be sorely mistaken if you thought that.



Sunrise shots

Created specifically to draw the tourists in, it has become one of the largest Festivals in Italy. A weekend-long celebration held every year in July. More importantly, a gigantic beach party along the length of the Italian Riviera coastline. And with our

fellow #BlogVille travellers we partied with the best until the sun rose out of ocean.

These were the views we were treated to...

La Notte Rosa Sunrise

Endless white sand beaches, cheap accommodation options, delicious food and sunrises like this every morning are turning back the clock. It is no wonder that Rimini is again becoming a hot destination for a European summer getaway.

Get in quick before it is overrun. Again.

Extra Travel Tips:

If you can visit around the 6th July then you will be able to take part in the La Notte Rosa festival. Lots of local concerts and bands play all weekend. Travel to Rimini from around Europe either by Rail (www.trenitalia.com) or by flying direct to the International Federico Fellini Airport↗.

The best beach access in Rimini is at Bagno #44 Pino. Mario, the owner, will help you fit right in. Speedos optional.

Disclaimer: We were guests of the Emilia-Romagna tourism board as part of the hugely successful #blogville project. As always, our thoughts and photos, are our own.

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Random food musings in Emilia Romagna: Italian soul food, appetizing views, artful eating



Carola C. Reuben
[@earthyreporter](https://twitter.com/earthyreporter)

In a land of culinary masterpieces, Maurizio makes clay dishes to bake the most basic of nourishments.

“Some people have wine, some do not, but everyone has bread,” Maurizio contends. He digs up his own clay to make plates to bake *piadina*, the flat bread typical of the Emilia Romagna region of Italy.

“In every culture, bread is important. It is a religious symbol,” says Maurizio from his home in Montetiffi, high on a mountain with a view of a medieval castle, vineyards, and trees loaded with apricots.

Piadina is “not just for the stomach. It is also for the soul,” asserts Maurizio. He and his potter wife own the business, Le Teglie di Montetiffi.

In the Emilia Romagna region, one grows accustomed to hearing words like soul, art, *passione*, coupled with “food”.



From poetry to pottery: The site where Maurizio courted his wife by reciting poetry

In fact, “the father of Italian gastronomy” referred to eating as an art. Pellegrino Artusi, a native of the re-

gion, compiled Italy's first cookbook, "The Science of Cooking and the Art of Eating Well" ("La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiar bene.")

Publishers rejected Artusi's work. So, in 1891 at the age of 71 he self-published the book, then kept updating it for 20 years. Now a culinary complex stands in his hometown, Forlimpopoli; it includes a library, cooking school, and museum <http://www.casaartusi.it> ↗. An annual gastronomic festival also celebrates his contribution. <http://www.festaartusiana.it> ↗

Compatriots in Artusi's region can easily heed his advice to cook with fresh produce in season, considering Emilia Romagna is one of Italy's prime agricultural areas. Eel, rabbit, and poultry are raised there; different kinds of mushrooms, olives, grapes, apricots, peaches, pears, cherries are harvested in the region. Emilia Romagna also produces sea salt, salamis, cheeses, wines, olive oil, balsamic vinegar. From April through November people feast on the food products at festivals dedicated to pumpkin, ham, rice, truffles, fish, certain wines, and at other festivals with more general gastronomic themes. <http://winefoodemiliaromagna.com/> ↗

Meanwhile, at least one local gourmet is critical of Italian food in the U.S. "It is not prepared the Italian

way. *Non e cozi,* ” Francesco asserts, indignantly. His observation is based on watching cooking programs on American television. It seems natural in that country that Francesco, a young man, talks about cooking. Food is “a fundamental element in Italy,” he says, stating the obvious. He works at the reception desk of Palazzo della Mercanzia in downtown Bologna. The castle dates back to 1384, and until today it houses the city’s chamber of commerce (photo near top of story.) He gave me a cookbook of Bologna’s culinary specialties to take to places where Italian dishes are not prepared correctly.

The local delicacies in the cookbook are plentiful in restaurants in Bologna, the region’s largest city. For instance, pumpkin tortellini, roast rabbit, and veal topped with thick slabs of huge porcini mushrooms are among the dishes on the menu at Trattoria La Corte Galuzzi, which has a typical medieval view of the Galuzzi tower.

Yet, in spite of downtown Bologna’s reputable restaurants with medieval views, Italians flock to several McDonald’s. The McDonald’s in Bologna look like other McDonald’s located in Anywhere Land.

According to one local taxi driver, the attraction is the cost of the meals at McDonald's. "But," I said to him, "One 'Il Mac' costs 7.30 euro, hardly a bargain." Nearby Caffé Zamboni offers an 8 euro dinner buffet with any drink, including wine, I pointed out.

The buffet is stocked with about 10 items, including a variety of salads topped with olives and herbs, *piadina* sandwiches, cheeses, watermelon.

<http://www.cafezamboni.it> 

Later I met a young soldier in Piazza Maggiore, and his conversation immediately turned to food. It had become a routine subject. It was not surprising that the first thing the soldier said of the region was, "*Si mangia bene in Emilia Romagna.* One eats well in Emilia Romagna."

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Dante's Tomb: Small But Divine



Norbert Figueroa
[@globotreks](#)

Ravenna, Italy might be well known for its mosaics, but did you know that it is also where Dante's mausoleum is located?

While I enjoyed watching many of the buildings, churches, and mosaics in Ravenna; Dante's tomb was the one that caught my attention the most. Although Dante was born in Florence, and loved dearly that city, he spent the last years of his life in Ravenna after being exiled from Florence. It was in Ravenna, during those last years, where he wrote *The Divine Comedy*.

The mausoleum is quite small, but it is well worth seeing since it is a small piece of art, and of course, Dante Alighieri is considered to be one of the major Italian poets of the Middle Ages, and probably of all times.

The mausoleum is quite easy to find, as it is located near the Church of San Francesco, where his funeral was held.



Dante's Tomb: view from the outside

Even though Dante died in 1321, this mausoleum was built in 1780 (he was previously buried at the Church of San Francesco).



Dante's Tomb: the inside

On the outside, you will be able to identify it by the inscription that says, “*Dante Poetae Sepulcrum*”. Inside the mausoleum you will see a burning candle hanging from the ceiling. As an interesting fact, the city of Florence supplies the oil from the lamps that burn in the tomb, as a penance for exiling Dante. On the rear wall, you will see a well-decorated pedestal with two columns and an arch, all framing the marble bas-relief of Dante.

As mentioned before, the space might be small, but what it lacks in space it supplies in details. From the ornaments and bas-relief at the base of the dome and pendentives, to the mosaics on the floor, and the contrasts of colored marbles, this mausoleum deserves more than a few minutes of admiration.

Right next to the mausoleum you will also find a mound of earth. From March 1944 to December 1945, Dante's urn was buried here because it was feared that his tomb would suffer from the bombings of World War II. Luckily, it didn't happen.

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Bologna in a Blur



Jodi Ettenberg
[@legalnomads](https://twitter.com/legalnomads)

There has been much discussion in travel blogging groups and at conferences about how to best match up tourism boards and the people who make their living from writing about places they visit. In an age where the traditional guidebook is important but an accessory to a growing body of information and work online, many tourism boards are trying new projects, a mashup of sorts between a traditional press junket and a more relaxed self-created itinerary, but with emphasis on social media sharing.

After my trip (my [delicious, delicious trip](#)) through [Umbria](#), I made an extremely last minute decision to join a few other travel bloggers in Bologna. I had never been, I had nowhere to be until later in the month and the tourism board for the Emilia Romagna region had begun a creative project called [BlogVille](#), spear-

headed by their very charming and – it has to be said – extremely adorable Nicholas Montemaggi↗.

The house worked like this: booking in advance with Nicholas, travel bloggers would arrive every few days into a quiet apartment in downtown Bologna (photos here↗). They had the option of seeing the city, wandering around and also taking part in smaller trips – to Modena for balsamico, to Maranello for Ferraris and racing cars, to Parma to eat Parmasean. There was no obligation to specifically write a certain amount of posts. Instead, it was a way to facilitate viewing the region, and do so with colleagues but in a more intimate setting than a traditional trip.

Say what you will about old media bumping up against new; I think Nicholas did a great job at putting together a sandbox for people to play in and inspire good work. For example, the posts from my temporary roommates the Two Oregonians, who I had the pleasure of meeting in Italy, reflect history learned, visitor information and genuine fun↗.

I had not planned to visit the city until I was invited by Kash↗, who was involved in planning the project with Nicholas. I thus crashed Blogville; despite not being a part of the official project, they let me stay on the

couch as it was in its infancy. Also, I'm small enough that they assured me I'd be able to sleep on a footstool if needs be. (Happily, a couch was available.) Given my unceremonious and unplanned arrival, I only remained at in the house for a few short nights. I didn't want to overstay my dubious welcome after all. This also meant that I did not take many of the trips offered by the tourism board, but instead wandered around Bologna, a city I hadn't planned to visit at all.

The lack of itinerary meant that I got to explore the city on my own schedule and without a guide, which was lovely. I was also able to get to know some of the colleagues I didn't see in the chaos of Umbria, and I ate (oh did I eat!). Of note: there was a particularly delicious gelateria in town where all of the gelato was gluten free. I have no photos because I was too busy stuffing my face with gelato, but for those of you who are celiac as well, get thee to La Sorbetteria Castiglione.

Bologna has a very different energy than some of the other big cities in Italy. It's a different type of liveliness – not a slow musing, not a haughty intensity but something more raw. The city is full of students, rich in culture and art and music and with all of those domains

in one place, it's no doubt that the lingering feeling is a quickened pulse and a reinvigorated spirit.



One of the “Two Towers”, both of them leaning, in the heart of Bologna. Named after their the families who funded them (Asinelli and Garisenda) they dominate the views of the city. Especially lit up at night. They were built some time around 1000-1200AD.

The city's original inhabitants are said to have settled approximately 1000BC, and as the region passed hands (from Etruscans to Romans and more) it maintained its role as cultural capital.



Bologna is also famous for its sprawling porticoes, which circle much of the historical centre. Just beautiful to see.

Much like another Northern City, Chiang Mai↗, it has been linked throughout history to learning and art –

though unlike Chiang Mai, it did not have a prolonged quiet period when it was abandoned.

Of its many universities, of note is the University of Bologna, founded all the way back in 1088. With a long history of education, curling, portico-filled street, narrow and mysterious and cobblestone squares, it was a big change from Asia and a lovely snapshot of a city I'd like to see in more detail.

It's a gorgeous place, and I'm sure you'll agree.

And, a final bonus from the trip: we were interviewed by Cosmo Mag in Italy while in the apartment and they published my interview whilst calling me ... The Ettenberger. HA!

Thanks to [Nicholas](#) and the [Emilia-Romagna tourism board](#) for the last minute “hey let’s just add her to the house!” acceptance, and to the [Art Hotel Commercanti](#) for hosting me on the first night, when the [Real World Bologna](#) BlogVille house was full. ;)

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The kitchen-create your own Emilia Romagna Gastronomic extravaganza

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A view of the Bologna City Center

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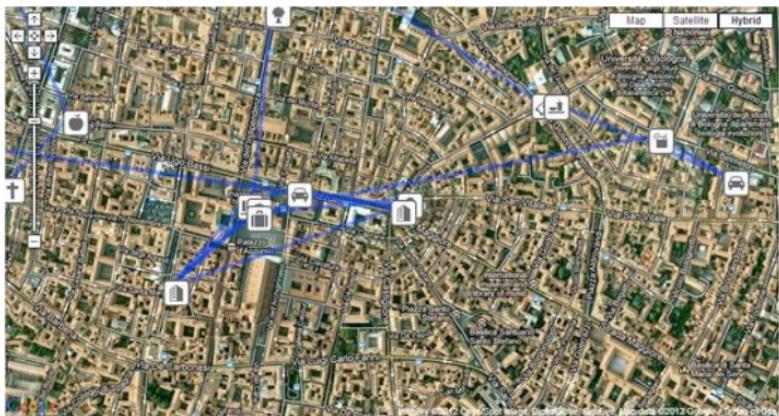
One of the cars taking part into the Mille Miglia

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Gob droopingly beautiful evening sky back in Bologna which nicely ends my
#tmbologna real-time blogging #blogville #travel #sunset

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A Google Map view of Bologna

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Bologna in Instagram Pictures

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Attic of Black Gold- Wooden Barrels at the Acetaia di Giorgio where the Balsamico Vinegar matures

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The Estense Castle in Ferrara

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The Neptune Statue

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Ted among the Lamborghinis

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Modena Balsamic Vinegar bottles

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Chef at work

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A view of the Sanctuary of the Madonna San Luca

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Keeping positive on the long walk

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Modena cathedral – the interior

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External view of my Lamborghini

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The Maestro Luigi Tagliavini at work

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Views from the Bologna city center

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The Mille Miglia enters Bologna

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<u>(BIRRE ALLA SPINA)</u>		PICCOLA	1/2 PINTA	MEDIA	PINTA
VIA EMILIA-PILS	-BIRR. DEL DUCATO	3€	4€	5€	
VICTORIA LIGHT IPA	-BIRR. DEL DUCATO	3		5	
FLORA SAMBUCO	-MENARESTA	3	4		
WAKE UP DEAD BARREL	-R.I.STOUT-LEFT HAND	3,50		6	
BAD KING JOHN	-DARK ALE - RIDGEWAY	3		5	
XX BITTER	-DE RANKE	3,5	5		
BIBLOCK	-BIRRIFICIO ITALIANO	3,5	5	6	
OLD CESTNUT	-DARK STAR (CASK)	3,50		6	
COOLFUSION	-PALE ALE AROMATIZ	3,5		5	
AFO	-BIRRIFICIO DEL DUCATO		3,5		6
<u>BIRRE in BOTTIGLIA: CHIEDI LA CARTA ALLA CASSA!</u>					

Beer Menu at Lortica

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Historic fort wall in Rimini (photo: [Danikbates](#) ↗)

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Me and my "Marietta" at work

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Larissa is learning how to make pasta in Italy

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Some of the press, Sabrina from Cosmopolitan has the most amazing style!

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The Frecce Tricolori above the Cesenatico Pier

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Mural in Via De Amicis, Dozza

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Photo by Katie Antoniou ↗

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Panna Cotta

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Bertinoro from above

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Wine Barrels

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Pink Flamingos at the Delta of the Po River

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One of the artists performing in Pennabilli main Piazza

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The kitchen-create your own Emilia Romagna Gastronomic extravaganza

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Example of Mosaic Art

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Bees' cage
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Three students working at their gelato

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Aldin

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Bologna: the view from the apartment

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Frankie, Sara and Katie
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Here's a picture of Frankie in one of the beautifully decorated rooms people could hire for functions.

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Gelato in pictures

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Professor Luciano Ferrari and his class

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The Wheel
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Maestri di Parmigiano at work

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Parmigiano Reggiano cheese

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The master prosciutto maker examining a *leg*

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Borgo San Giuliano

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Home-made Piadina

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At the Verucchio Castle

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Basilica di San Vitale, internal view

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En route to Monte Marmagna

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Lago Santo

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Notizen auf dem Festa Artusiana

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Colourful houses

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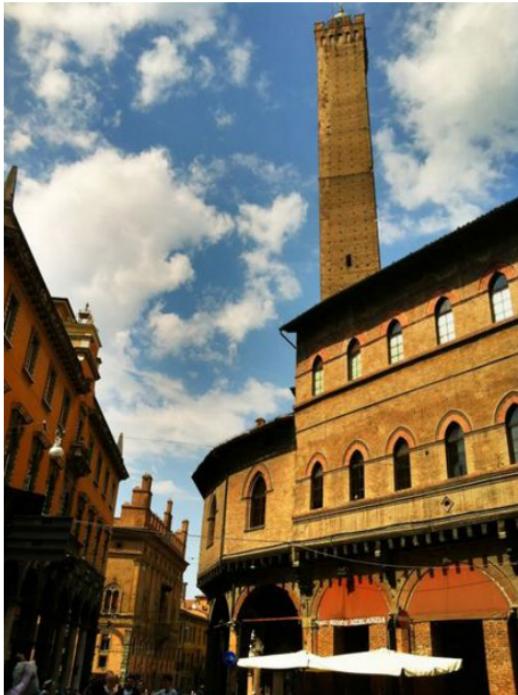
Walking through the Village

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The Federico Fellini memorial

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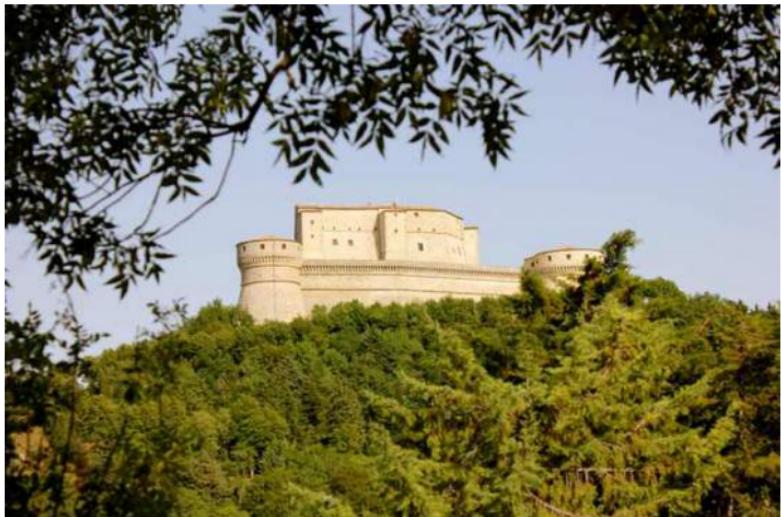
A view of the Garisenda Tower

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Sophia Loren and the eels

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The San Leo Fortress – this angle doesn't quiet capture how the fortress is built on a steep cliff. Guess I'll have to go back!

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Notte Celeste Street Lamps

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Enjoying gelato with a view in the historic city center of Rimini,
Italy during BlogVille

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Our guide at work

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The library - Internal view

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An ancient copy of *The Art of Eating well*

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The Pellegrino Artusi's In front of Casa Artusi

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At the Festa Artusiana

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Quote by Pellegrino Artusi

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Traditional Artusi Pudding

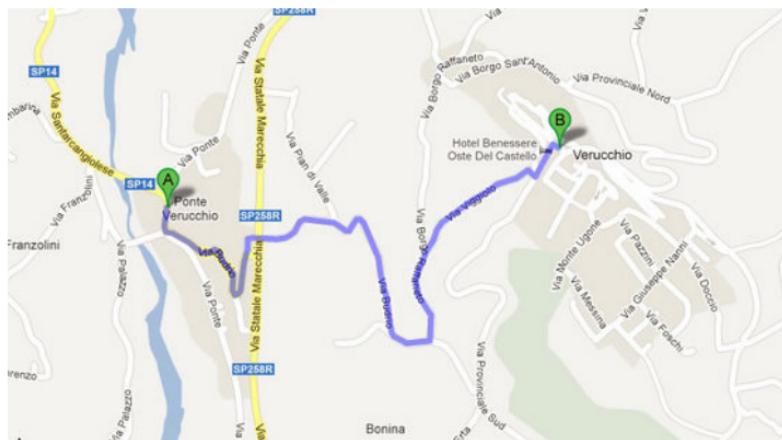
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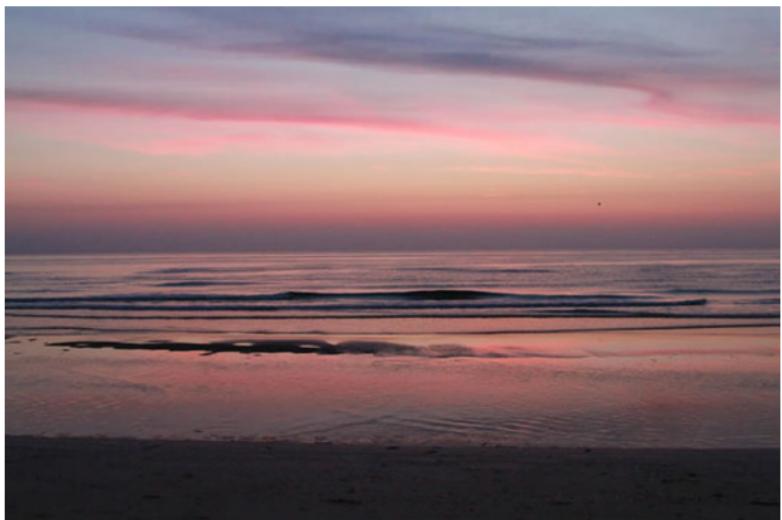
Coffee Sorbets

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Directions from Ponte Veruccio to Piazza Malatesta in Veruccio Centro Storico

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Sunrise in Rimini

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Immer für die Notte Rosa bereit

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Estense Castle, Ferrara, Italy

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The Casa Enzo Ferrari from the outside

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photo courtesy of Brandina the Original

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Our Guide Riccardo

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Erin De Santiago

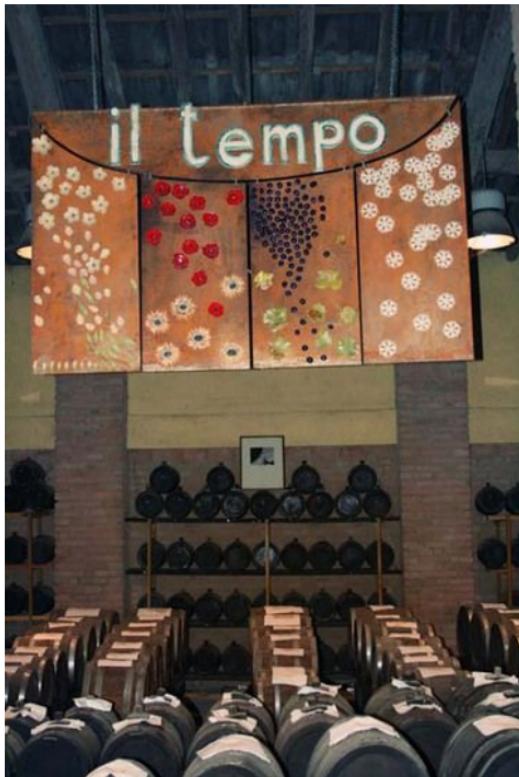
Ponte di Tiberio in Rimini at sunset

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Acetaia San Giacomo- the inside

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Sunset in Rimini

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Live performance in Piazza de Neptune

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Piazza Maggiore at night

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Willkommen auf dem roten Planeten, willkommen bei der Ducati World Week.

Foto: Doris

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Ducatis, wohin man auch schaut: Einmal im Jahr wird die Region in rote Farbe gehüllt. Foto: Doris

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The very first Instagram picture I took right after I arrived to the BlogVille apartment. This was our view... The Beach!!!

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Tiberius Bridge

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Augustus Arch

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Sunset in Rimini

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Our Instagram Gallery

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Our Itinerary
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Cycling in Parma

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Castello di Torrechiara, frescoes in the Camera d'Oro

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Street Market in Bologna

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Bologna Delikatessen Shops

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We're both learning to make pasta!

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The parade begins

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A shot of the wonderful Marcel Boadthaers at MAMbo in Bologna, Italy

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The Ferrari Logo

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Inside the Museum

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Blu #1

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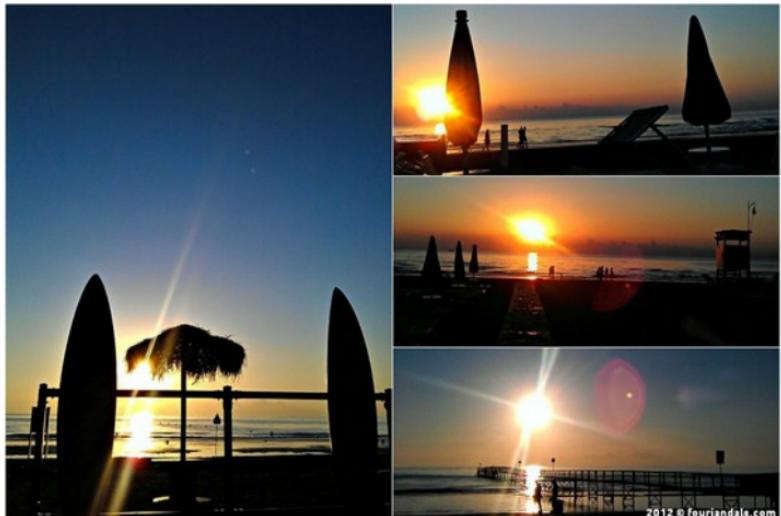
Filled Piadina

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Due Torri (Asinelli & Garisenda)

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Sunrise shots

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Photo by Carola C. Reuben
earthyreporter.blogspot.com

**From poetry to pottery: The site where Maurizio courted his wife
by reciting poetry**

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Dante's Tomb: view from the outside

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Dante's Tomb: the inside

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One of the “Two Towers”, both of them leaning, in the heart of Bologna. Named after their the families who funded them (Asinelli and Garisenda) they dominate the views of the city. Especially lit up at night. They were built some time around 1000-1200AD.

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La Notte Rosa sunrise in Rimini

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Italy's Motor Valley in Emilia Romagna

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BlogVille's Authors



@n_montemaggi

BlogVille Emilia Romagna Master of the House and co-founder. Living 24h a day the #blogville experience, helping the residents to enjoy at best the Emilia Romagna region and taking them along the journey.



@traveldudes↗

Love to travel, to discover the world, to travel free & untroubled & still be informed like an insider! For Travelers, By Travelers! & founder of Traveldudes.

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@BudgetTraveller ↗

I Blog: BudgetTraveller.org + Europe-budgetguide.com .Visit Britain Super Blogger. Working on: Guide to Luxury Hostels of Europe Follow #luxuryhostels

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@runawayjane ↗

Solo female traveller who has been travelling for 6+ years. Here to help you get on the road! Also a huge dog lover, and drink way too much IRN BRU!

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@nicolawesseling ↗

This is the long awaited travel blog of a jet setter who never leaves without her little red suitcase. Kicking myself for not starting this earlier when my adventures began I'm still excited to post stories and travel advice.

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An italian media affair

Brandina by Marco Morosini



@journeytom ↗

Live, breathe, eat, sleep & work travel – writing my own blog please check it out AFCB Fan, Badminton Player, Music listener, Guitar & Drum player + lots more

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@michaelturtle ↗

With everything on his back and all the time in the world... travel writer and beer lover.

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The keys to good music

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Sandwiched between Parma ham and cheese



@ourtastytravels ↗

We've traveled 50+ countries on the hunt for good food & wine. Tweets from Erin(@poohstraveler) & Brett(@metsbw). Erin is Taiwan/Hong Kong Member Coord IFWTWA.

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@nomadbiba ↗

Born in London, raised in Caracas, studied in Montreal and just left Barcelona to pursue a full on nomadic lifestyle. Follow me & see where my journey takes me!

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@janfuscoe ↗

Travel writer specialising in Naples & Genoa; Member of British Guild of Travel Writers.

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[La Dolce Vita](#)



@bushbirdie ↗

Ex-London blogger who flew the Bush to travel/dream/blog/write/take semi-decent photos indefinitely. Member of @travelettes. City-hopping my way across Europe.

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@SatuVW ↗

Traveling lifestyler & professional. Blogger. Outdoor addict at home in the Norwegian mountains. Kayaker & mom-in-training. Tweeting both in English & Finnish.

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@SuuperG ↗

Voracious Traveler, Tweeter & Peace-Monger I tweet travel dance hiking food friends photography green+. Freelance blogger.Caution: I make up words! #BA75

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@HeleneLohr ↗

Adventuress, Wilderness instructor, Search & Rescue, nutritionist & traveler with deepish thoughts. Exuberantly healthy #GlutenFree & Paleo girl.

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@ActuallyAkeela ↗

Freelance creative writer/journo and Huff Post blogger – always aspiring author! Fashion, travel, vintage and coffee enthusiast. Serial daydreamer.

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@acooknotmad ↗

Food travels guided by a chef's stomach and a photographer's eye. Join us for a taste of real food, authentic people and true stories.

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@keaneiscool ↗

Travel writer with @gogobot; Contributor for @PerformerMag; Frontguy of @festizioband; SF Italian Culture Examiner; Human

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@travelsofadam ↗

i like #hipster things. i pack skinny jeans & skinny ties when i #travel. gay tweets at @mygaytravels, life & travel tweets here. say hi

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Medieval village of Petrella Guidi in Italy



@lilmsitchyfeet ↗

Green & Vegetarian, always with my travel bug and wanderlust, full of passion to explore, discover, develop, meet, greet, eat and learn.

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We are Audrey and Luke, two American transplants (almost) living in Bologna, Italy.

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A “homeless” journalist’s stories from the Earth...Travel with me to experience different slices of life.

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Adventure Kiwi Couple providing travel tips, advice & experiences for backpacking couples.

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@scottishemma123 ↗

Passionate traveller, travel blogger, English Literature student and eternal optimist. Find me on Facebook, come say hi!

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@travelwithkat ↗

Travel photographer and writer discovering new countries, cultures and cuisines. Also tweet @nyodem

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@giuliaccia ↗

Travel photographer&blogger. From a broken vertebra to world conquest! On a slooow RTW trip. Traveling is my oxygen.

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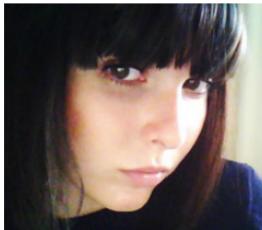
@globotreks ↗

Professionally trained as an architect and naturally educated as a traveler. My goal is simple, to travel and to make traveling the most rewarding experience.

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@getpalmd ↗

Petrolhead, car travel fashion life blogger / freelance writer, hungry for extreme sports – and good food of course.

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@changes_Long ↗

Larissa & Michael, global explorers & travel writers, sold everything for a year-long RTW. Also writing about the journey for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

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@angieaway ↗

Publisher, PR, Media Consultant, Digital Strategist, Writer, Best Job in the World Finalist, eBook Author, Girl Next Door, Christian & Nomad

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@vagobond ↗

Travel / Tourism Consultant. Yogurt Lover. Vagobond is a site dedicated to the spirit of adventurous travel and the love of life that comes from it.

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@twooregonians ↗

Landscape architect + social worker journey around the globe. Food systems + social services, people + place. Pictures. Stories. Life on the road.

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@AsgeirPedersen ↗

Web and graphic designer, passionate about photography, art, design, music, architecture, travel...

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@Jess_inFlorence ↗

Freelance Social Media Specialist, Editor of You'll Find Me in Florence, and SM Specialist/Contributor for @BohemianTrails!

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@moscerina ↗

Writer|Pernicious Know-it-all| Fancy pants Freelance writer, backseat driver and cupcake taster living in Rome and Italy.



@swellvintage↗

Jewellery designer, fashion stylist (@frankiestyling), blogger, beauty vlogger, lover.

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@katieantoniou↗

Editor of London arts&culture site @run_riot. Writes travel stuff for The Guardian. Opinions my own, definitely not my parents'.

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@jeanettekramer↗

Study & work abroad expert, entrepreneur, travel photographer & blogger. Living & working in Italy.

Read:

Carpigiani Gelato University: The Art of Making Gelato



@browngirlsfly ↗

Two sisters who are passionate about the art of travel and who obsess over languages & cultures, great deals, and inspiring others!



@bairdstravel ↗

Follow Dougie Baird as he travels the world. Tour guide and Travel blogger Dougie is from Scotland Owns Westend walks of Glasgow. Founder of #Scotlandhour



@lilies_diary ↗

Be as much person as you can be – Freie Online-Redakteurin / Social Media Managerin / Autorin / Travel and Lifestyleblog

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@thetravelbunny ↗

Explorer Travel Blogger. Can be found nosing around odd & interesting places in Sussex & far away. Enjoys tennis, golf, skiing. Snap happy. Works in travel

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@legalnomads

World traveler, marshmallow enthusiast, writer & former lawyer from Montreal. Contributing editor at @longreads. Tweeting brainfood & fun links to learn from.

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@AlexBerger

I love Travel, Hosteling, V Worlds, Humanism, and Salsa Dancing. I've had the travel bug since before I could walk.

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emiliaromagna
terra con l'anima

Turismo Emilia Romagna CHANNEL

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Riproduci tutto

17 video 36.22 durata 133 visualizzazioni

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2 Welcome to Emilia Romagna Bloggers! di turismoER 438 visualizzazioni 2:44

3 Introducing the story of the Emilia Romagna #blogville project di turismoER 229 visualizzazioni

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Il canale video del turismo della regione Emilia Romagna

21 playlist Visualizza tutti i video 112794 visualizzazioni 123 iscritti Iscriviti

Playlist in primo piano

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BlogVille welcomes @vagobond

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Notte Rosa - @traveldudes and @budgettraveller explaining the BlogVille Idea

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BlogVille: Notte Rosa

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BlogVille The Master of the House says thank you!

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BlogVille Emilia Romagna presentation at TBEX12 Girona, Spain

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Douglas Baird joined BlogVille project Based in Rimini, Emilia Romagna. Starting from Rimini you will have the chance to reach some of brilliant places.

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La Notte Rosa takes place all along the coast, from the Lidos of Comacchio to Cattolica, but the heart of the event is the Riviera of Rimini.

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Melvin Böcher, www.traveldudes.org from Germany and Kash Bhattacharya www.budgetTravel.org from Holland talk about "La notte Rosa" @Grand Hotel in Rimini

See the video online 



During #Blogville we teamed up with the amazing chefs at Casa Artusi, the "center of gastronomic culture", to cook like locals in the Emilia-Romagna Region of Italy. As part of our cooking class we learned to make traditional pasta by hand.

See the video online 



Dougie Baird takes a day trip to Cattolica Italy

See the video online 



Cracking a wheel of Parmigiano Reggiano at a factory in Parma, Italy with Tim of A Cook Not Mad - www.acooknotmad.com

See the video online 



A taste of true Italian food: Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena, aged twelve years and shared for the first time at Blogville with @BudgetTraveller @twoOregonians @legalnomads @angieaway and @runawayjane

See the video online 



A lesson in the history of Italian language, language development and hand gestures courtesy of Mr Andrea Bernardoni, lawyer, author and professor of Italian language and culture at ARCA Italian School Bologna in the beautiful region of Emilia Romagna. Part of the BlogVille Emilia Romagna project.

See the video online 



La Notte Rosa takes place all along the coast, from the Lidos of Comacchio to Cattolica, but the heart of the event is the Riviera of Rimini.

[See the video online](#) 

A Lesson in Italian Hand Gestures & Culture

Jeanette Kramer

[Iscriviti!](#)

14 video ▾

Learning Italian Hand Gestures with Andrea Bernardoni plus Who Is Italian?



A lesson in Italian hand gestures courtesy of Mr Andrea Bernardoni, lawyer, author and professor of Italian language and culture at ARCA Italian School Bologna in the beautiful region of Emilia Romagna. Part of the BlogVille Emilia Romagna project.

See the video online 



I love coming across bits of live music. Here is some I found in Bologna an the Emilia Romagna region

See the video online 



Starting off the annual Palio di Ferrara, the Ancient Flag games competition sees groups of musicians and flag dancers squaring off against each other in the traditions of the Estensi Court. This was the first troupe competing on May 12, 2012.

[See the video online](#) 



I bloggers sono rosa in nome della luna

See the video online 



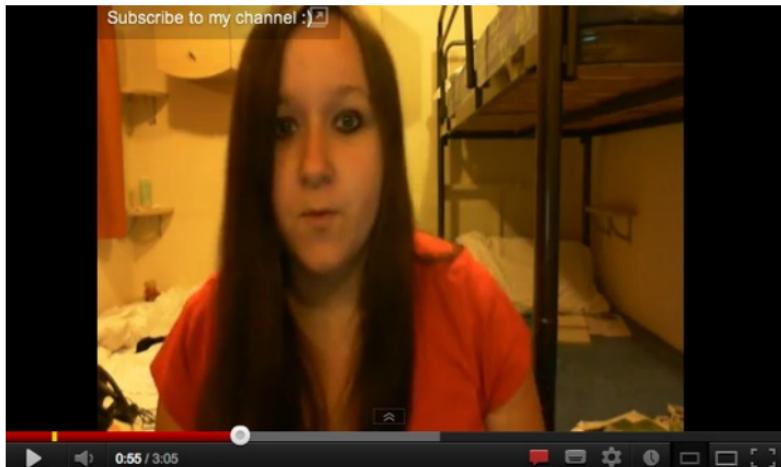
Time lapse from 4:30 am to 6 am, sun rising over Rimini Beach. #blogville

See the video online 



Urlaub in Rimini - die Notte Rosa

See the video online 



Vlog: TBU, BlogVille, and working with PLUS hostels!

See the video online 



Knights battle in the medieval town of Castell'Arquato (Piacenza)

See the video online 

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BlogVille

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TRAVELDUDES

For Travelers, By Travelers!



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