



Flâneur

# Bologna

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Expert · 3 days · Aug 3, 2026 - Aug 5, 2026

# Piazza Maggiore

Mon, Aug 3

09:00

30 min

RESTAURANT · PATISSERIE

## Caffè Zanarini

Historic cafe on Piazza Galvani, beside the Archiginnasio, long the city's most formal place for a morning pastry or an aperitivo under the Pavaglione portico. Practical note: management changed in June 2026 after a public tender, with a restyling announced that may affect opening. Prices have always sat well above the city average, which regulars accept for the location; verify current status before planning around it.



Google Maps



Website

10:15

1h

TOWER

## Two Towers (Asinelli and Garisenda)

The surviving pair of what were once dozens of noble tower houses. Important practical note: since October 2023 the Garisenda has been under emergency stabilisation after abnormal movement, enclosed behind a container barrier, and the Asinelli has been closed to climbers as a precaution. Work is expected to continue toward 2028, with an earlier partial reopening of the Asinelli under discussion but not confirmed. Verify current status before planning a climb; the Torre dell'Orologio in Palazzo d'Accursio is the working alternative for a panoramic view.



Google Maps

11:30

30 min

LANDMARK

## Palazzo Re Enzo

Built 1244-1246 as an extension of the neighbouring Palazzo del Podesta, and named for Enzo of Sardinia, son of Frederick II, held prisoner here from 1249 until his death in 1272 in what amounted to comfortable but permanent captivity. The Gothic appearance is largely due to Alfonso Rubbiani's restoration of 1905. It now hosts exhibitions and events rather than keeping museum hours, so opening depends on the current programme.



Google Maps

12:15

2h

RESTAURANT · WINE BAR

## Osteria del Sole

Documented since 1465 and arguably the oldest tavern in Italy, operating on one rule: it serves only wine and beer, never food. You buy salumi and cheese from the surrounding Quadrilatero market streets, bring them in, and eat at shared tables. Practical notes: no soft drinks or water, consumption is compulsory, and reservations for a table usually carry a minimum spend. A drinking room with a social function, not a restaurant.



Google Maps



Website

15:00

40 min

CHURCH

## Basilica di San Petronio

Reliefs from the Porta Magna · Jacopo della Quercia

Saint Roch and a Donor · Francesco Mazzola (Parmigianino)

Bolognini Chapel · Giovanni da Modena

Begun 1390 to a design by Antonio di Vincenzo and never finished: the facade remains half-clad in Renaissance marble, half in bare brick. Arduino degli Arriguzzi's 1514 plan would have made it larger than St Peter's; the traditional account blames Pius IV, who in 1560 sited the Archiginnasio exactly where the transept was to run, though most historians now attribute the halt to chronic lack of funds and to Bologna's own politics rather than papal sabotage. Three things reward a slow visit: Jacopo della Quercia's carved main portal (1425-1438), which Michelangelo studied closely; Giovanni da Modena's frescoes in the Cappella Bolognini (c. 1410-1415), the only chapel with its original decoration nearly intact, covering the Last Judgement with a vast Paradise and Hell, the Journey of the Magi and the life of St Petronius in International Gothic detail; and Giovanni Domenico Cassini's meridian line of 1655, the longest in the world, still marking solar noon across the floor. The twenty-two chapels also hold work by Francia, Costa, Parmigianino and Creti.



Google Maps



Website

15:45

1h 45min

PALACE

## Palazzo d'Accursio

Portrait of a Gonfalonier · Artemisia Gentileschi

Madonna and Child · Niccolò dell'Arca

Bologna's town hall since the 13th century, a composite of several buildings joined over time, with a monumental ramped staircase attributed to Bramante and designed for horses. Upstairs, the Collezioni Comunali d'Arte occupy the former papal legate's apartments; the building also held the Museo Morandi until its move, and its future arrangement has been under active discussion, so check what is currently on display before planning around a specific collection.



Google Maps



Website

17:45

30 min

PUBLIC SPACE

## Piazza Maggiore

Fountain of Neptune · Jean de Boulogne (Giambologna)

Bologna's civic centre since the 13th century, deliberately assembled as a single political statement: San Petronio (the commune's own basilica, not the cathedral), Palazzo d'Accursio, Palazzo del Podesta, and Palazzo dei Banchi, whose uniform arcaded facade by Vignola was built purely to screen the disorderly market streets behind it. The raised central platform, the crescentone, is a 1930s addition. Note that the cathedral is San Pietro on Via Indipendenza, not the basilica here.



Google Maps



Website

20:00

2h

RESTAURANT · PIZZA

## Span Pizzeria

Neapolitan-style pizzeria with several Bologna locations, wood-fired, puffy cornicione, classic toppings alongside a few local hybrids like the Mortadella pizza. Straightforward counter-to-table format, good for a quick, reliably good pizza rather than a slow dinner.



Google Maps



Website

# University Quarter

Tue, Aug 4

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09:00

30 min

RESTAURANT · PATISSERIE

## Pasticceria Sebastiano Caridi - Caffè Letterario

Patisserie and cafe inside the historic Palazzo Fava, part of the Genus Bononiae museum circuit, run by pastry chef Sebastiano Caridi (Faenza-trained, competition-show winner). Known for classic French-technique pastries (macarons, laminated croissants) and an eight-variety single-origin hot chocolate. The setting, a restored noble palace with portico seating, is as much the draw as the pastry.

[Google Maps](#)[Website](#)

10:00

1h 10min

MUSEUM

## Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna

[Adoration of the Child](#) · [Francesco Francia](#)[Altar Bentivoglio](#) · [Francesco Francia](#)[Landscape with a castle](#) · [Annibale Carracci](#)[+7 more](#)

The reference collection for the Bolognese school, organized chronologically from 13th-century gold-ground panels through Vitale da Bologna, Francia and Costa, to the Carracci reform and the Baroque generation of Reni, Domenichino and Guercino. The single work most visitors come for is Raphael's Ecstasy of St Cecilia (c. 1515), painted for a Bolognese chapel and still the collection's anchor. Housed in a former Jesuit novitiate next to the university district.

[Google Maps](#)[Website](#)

11:45

1h 10min

MUSEUM

## Museo di Palazzo Poggi

Portrait of Giovanni II Bentivoglio · Ercole de' Roberti

University museum reconstructing the laboratories of the Istituto delle Scienze, founded 1711 by Luigi Ferdinando Marsili, across rooms frescoed by Pellegrino Tibaldi, Niccolo dell'Abate and Prospero Fontana. The obstetric and anatomical wax models are the reason it is internationally known: 18th-century Bologna became a European reference for anatomical waxes precisely because cadavers were scarce. Also holds Ulisse Aldrovandi's 16th-century natural history collection and Ferdinando Cospì's wunderkammer.



Google Maps



Website

13:15

1h 45min

RESTAURANT · SICILIAN

## Da Maro

Sicilian kitchen in the middle of tagliatelle country, committing fully to the island's register rather than softening it: raw seafood, caponata, pasta con le sarde with wild fennel. Useful on a longer stay when the Emilian repertoire starts to repeat itself, and for anyone who wants seafood in a city that is fundamentally about pork.



Google Maps



Website

15:30

1h 10min

MUSEUM

## Civico museo bibliografico musicale

Two Cabinet Doors with Shelves of Music Books · Giuseppe Maria Crespi

The former name, in use from 1959, of what since 2004 has been the Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica in Palazzo Sanguinetti. Its core is Padre Giovanni Battista Martini's 18th-century library, over 17,000 volumes, plus portraits, autograph letters and instruments. Martini taught the fourteen-year-old Mozart here in 1770. Most bibliographic material is consulted at the separate Piazza Rossini site; the display rooms are on Strada Maggiore.



Google Maps



Website

17:30

40 min

CHURCH

## Basilica di San Domenico

Tomb of Saint Dominic · Niccolò dell'Arca

Marriage of St. Catherine · Filippino Lippi

Angel Candle-bearer from the Tomb of Saint Dominic · Michelangelo Buonarroti

+2 more

Burial church of St Dominic, whose Arca di San Domenico is a collective work by three generations: Nicola Pisano's workshop carved the reliefs (1264-1267), Niccolò dell'Arca added the canopy (hence his name), and the young Michelangelo carved three small figures in 1494, including the angel holding a candlestick on the right. Also holds the Mozart Chapel, where the fourteen-year-old Mozart studied counterpoint with Padre Martini in 1770, and Guercino's St Thomas Aquinas.



Google Maps



Website

20:00

2h

RESTAURANT · BOLOGNESE

## Trattoria Ristorante - Casamerlò

Trattoria near the Due Torri run by chef Dario Picchiotti and Francesco Tonelli, built around dishes that have largely disappeared from Bolognese menus: 1970s-80s classics like vichyssoise and Ruote alla Vodka, alongside solid tortellini and tagliatelle. A useful contrast to tradition-only trattorie: same regional base, more playful execution.



Google Maps



Website



# Quadrilatero

Wed, Aug 5

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09:00

30 min

RESTAURANT · PATISSERIE

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[Google Maps](#)[Website](#)

10:15

1h 10min

CHURCH

## Santa Maria della Vita

Lamentation over the Dead Christ · Niccolò dell'Arca

Church whose reason for existing, from an art-historical standpoint, is a single sculptural group: Niccolò dell'Arca's *Compianto sul Cristo Morto* (c. 1463), six terracotta figures whose extreme expressive violence, especially the running, screaming Magdalene, has no real precedent in Italian sculpture. It sits in a side chapel of a dome-topped 18th-century church in the Quadrilatero. The Oratorio dei Battuti upstairs is a separate, worthwhile part of the same complex.

[Google Maps](#)[Website](#)

11:25

1h 10min

MUSEUM

## Oratorio dei Battuti

Samian Sibyl · Guercino

Lucretia Preparing for Suicide · Guido Reni

Tancred Saving Clorinda in Battle · Giuseppe Maria Crespi

+2 more

Upper-floor oratory of the Santa Maria della Vita complex, rebuilt 1604-1617 by Floriano Ambrosini and among the best-preserved Baroque interiors in Bologna. The centrepiece is Alfonso Lombardi's *Transito della Vergine* (1519-1522), fifteen near-life-size terracotta figures, to which Vasari devoted a chapter. Most visitors stop downstairs at the *Compianto* and miss this floor entirely; the combined ticket covers both plus the Museo della Sanita.



Google Maps



Website

13:15

1h 45min

RESTAURANT · TRADITIONAL

## Sfoggia Rina

Fresh pasta shop and canteen descended from a 1963 laboratory opened by Rina De Franceschi in Casalecchio, now run by her grandson on Via Castiglione, where the sfoglina rolls the pasta in the street window. Format is deliberately fast-casual: no bookings, you write your order on a pad and hand it in, and the queue is normal. Around 12 euros gets a plate of ragu better than many formal restaurants at double the price. Arrive before 12:00 or after 14:30 to avoid the wait, or buy pasta raw by weight to take away.



Google Maps



Website

15:30

1h 10min

MUSEUM

## Museo Civico Medievale

Mercury · Jean de Boulogne (Giambologna)

Medieval and Renaissance civic collection in Palazzo Ghisilardi, strongest on two things specific to Bologna: the carved tomb monuments of university professors, the sepolcri dei glossatori, showing masters teaching from a lectern to rows of students, and a substantial collection of medieval bronzes, ivories and arms. Useful for understanding Bologna as a university city in material terms, not only through its architecture.



Google Maps



Website

17:30

40 min

CHURCH

## Santa Maria della Carità

Crucifixion and Saints · Annibale Carracci

Church rebuilt in 1583 by Pietro Fiorini on the site of a chapel attached to a travellers' hospital, enlarged a century later by Bergonzoni. The reason to step in is a single early work: Annibale Carracci's Crucifixion with Saints (1583), painted when he was around twenty-two, alongside later Bolognese Baroque canvases by Cignani and Franceschini. Modest from the outside and frequently closed; verify opening before making the detour.



Google Maps



Website

20:00

2h

RESTAURANT · ITALIAN

## Parlor

Contemporary Italian kitchen making its pasta daily and following the season without making a display of it, with a wine list weighted toward Emilian producers. Positioned between trattoria and modern restaurant; often more available at lunch than the traditional addresses, which is when it is most useful.



Google Maps



Website

# Useful links

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## 01 Getting there

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Compare flights to Bologna for your dates. Add your departure city to see prices.

[Search flights to Bologna](#)

## 02 Where to stay

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Hotels in Bologna for your travel dates.

[Find hotels in Bologna](#)

## 03 Getting around

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Tap a contactless card or phone on the green validator on board the TPER bus

[Plan routes in Citymapper](#)

## 04 Stay connected

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Skip roaming with a local eSIM for Italy, installed before you land.

[Browse Italy eSIMs](#)

## 05 Entry requirements

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Check visa and entry rules for Italy based on your passport.

[Check entry requirements](#)