



Emilia-Romagna & San Marino

Emilia-Romagna has long been overlooked as little more than a stepping stone between the Veneto and Tuscany. But take time to explore this underrated region and you'll discover an area rich in art and culture, an area of mouthwatering food and robust wine, of cosmopolitan resorts and quiet backwaters.

Much of its medieval architecture dates to the Renaissance, when a handful of powerful families set up court here: the Farnese in Parma and Piacenza, the Este in Ferrara and Modena, and the Bentivoglio in Bologna.

The regional capital, Bologna, is one of Italy's unsung joys. A foodie city with a hedonistic approach to life, it's home to Europe's oldest university and a stunning medieval centre. A short hop to the northwest, Modena boasts a superb Romanesque cathedral and a hint of the gourmet delights that await in Parma, the city that gifted the world *prosciutto crudo* (cured ham, popularly known as Parma ham) and *parmigiano reggiano* (Parmesan). In the countryside to the south, castles pepper hilltops as flat plains give way to the Apennine peaks. Ferrara and Ravenna are the highlights of Romagna (the eastern half of Emilia-Romagna). Both are within easy distance of Bologna and both merit a visit – Ferrara for its beautiful Renaissance centre, Ravenna for its sensational Byzantine mosaics. If, after all that high culture, you need a break, head to Rimini where the crowded beaches and cutting-edge clubs promise more earthy pleasures, or San Marino where armies of day-trippers enjoy vast views. Alternatively, saddle up and take to the road – cycling is one of the region's most popular pursuits.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lap up the animated atmosphere in **Bologna** (p413), the region's dynamic capital
- Marvel at the kaleidoscopic colours of shimmering mosaics in **Ravenna** (p449)
- Pay homage to the king of cars at Maranello's **Galleria Ferrari** (p426)
- Study the finer points of Romanesque architecture at Modena's inspiring **cathedral** (p423)
- Throw yourself into the medieval maelstrom at Ferrara's **Il Palio** (p446), the oldest horse race of its kind in Italy
- Add a drop of *aceto balsamico* (balsamic vinegar) to a hunk of *parmigiano reggiano* (Parmesan) and bite while in **Parma** (p434)



■ POPULATION: Emilia-Romagna 4.1 million;
San Marino 29,600

■ AREA: Emilia-Romagna 22,121 sq km;
San Marino 61 sq km

