



TRAVEL

36 Hours in Bologna, Italy

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36 Hours

By **EVAN RAIL**

Scrappy, scruffy Bologna could easily coast on its history, if not just on its culinary history. Home to one of the world's oldest universities, this northern Italian city has contributed dozens of classic recipes and foods to the repertory of Italian cooking, including tortellini, tagliatelle and mortadella — the cold cut whose imitation is known as “Bologna” — as well as ragù Bolognese. As the capital of the region of Emilia-Romagna, Bologna is one of the best places to sample the cheeses, cured hams and vinegars that originate in the area, many of which have been famous for centuries. But modern Bologna is not just about the past. Dozens of cool new attractions have changed the face of the city, from new ways of eating to new museums and new bars. And although several of the city's brightest attractions have appeared only within the last two or three years, many more are yet to come, including Eataly World, a huge culinary theme park scheduled to open here sometime in the next few months.

Friday

1. Museum Gizmos | 4 p.m.

Catch up on the city's back story at the Museum of the History of Bologna. Housed inside a historic palazzo, the high-tech exhibits include a

3-D movie highlighting the city's Etruscan era, as well as a virtual-reality walk through old canals. Despite the many modern gizmos, the massive building — erected in 1344 — offers a real sense of the past. Afterward, walk a block or two under the city's beloved porticos until you reach the soaring Asinelli Tower, one of the Due Torri, or “two towers,” that have long symbolized the city. Unfortunately, there's no modern technology to help you here: You must climb the 498 rickety steps to the upper platform all by yourself. Rest assured that the panorama over all the ancient rooftops is worth the effort.

2. High-Fired Pizza | 7 p.m.

Since it opened in late 2012, the cool little cafe known by its address, Ranzani 13, has become one of the city's favorite casual dining spots, thanks to its excellent, high-fired pizzas, which include unusual combinations like smoked mozzarella with rapini, or Parma ham with gooey burrata cheese and sweet fresh figs. A second draw: the excellent beer list, which includes cult Italian brews like Birrificio Menaresta as well as European favorites like Bayerischer Bahnhof's sour-salty Gose. Make reservations: Ranzani 13 is airy, casual, inexpensive and extremely popular.

3. Birra Crawl | 9 p.m.

Famously idiosyncratic, Italian brewers have been making global headlines in recent years. Continue your testing of the country's pints at the tiny brewpub Birra Cerqua, which produces its own ales just behind the bar. On the other side of town — but only 20 minutes away by foot — several new attractions have opened in the trendy neighborhood around Via Del Pratello. Start at Beer for Bunnies, a year-old bottle shop with a couple of rotating brews on draft and a punkish vibe. Not far away, the new cafe-bar Il Punto serves five drafts from small producers like Birrificio Argo, as well as unusual beer snacks, including a beer cheese from Parma and a version of Bologna's classic tigella flatbread made from the grain left over after brewing. Finish up at a classic: La Tana del Luppolo, a neighborhood bar on a quiet, tree-lined square, which has been serving

craft beers since before many of today's Italian craft breweries even existed.

Saturday

4. The Motor Valley | 10 a.m.

Emilia-Romagna is most famous as a producer of great foods, but car lovers call the region around Bologna the Motor Valley, with a number of luxury automobile manufacturers, many of which welcome visitors. In the neighboring town of Modena — home of the great balsamic vinegar — the Museo Enzo Ferrari opened in 2012, showcasing a handful of classic cars amid a bombastic multimedia spectacle that compares Enzo Ferrari to another local hero, Luciano Pavarotti. From here, shuttle buses ferry visitors past Pavarotti's home to the equally over-the-top Museo Ferrari in the factory town of Maranello. Far more subdued is the excellent Ferruccio Lamborghini Museo, which moved to a new, larger building in the nearby town of Fano di Argelato, just north of Bologna, in 2013. With any luck, your tour guide will be the charming Fabio Lamborghini, nephew of the famous industrialist, who can tell you intimate family stories about the large collection of Lamborghini cars, tractors, speedboats and even a prototype helicopter.

5. New Market | Noon

While everyone awaits the opening of Bologna's Eataly World, a sprawling complex of restaurants, grocery stores, food labs and cooking classrooms, the reopening of the barnlike Mercato di Mezzo market building in April of 2014 brought a new foodie destination to the heart of the city's traditional market district, the Quadrilatero. Though many shoppers come here for fancy groceries, Mercato di Mezzo also makes a great lunch spot: upstairs, a small Eataly pizzeria bakes high-end pies made with organic flour in a wood-fired oven, while the half-dozen stands on the ground floor offer delicious meals like handmade tortelloni with taleggio and walnuts, sliced prosciutto and fresh fish.

6. Local Ink | 3 p.m.

Add a collectible pen to your list of potential souvenirs and gifts, starting with Bologna's own Omas brand. Founded in 1928, the A. C. Vecchiotti pen shop stocks classics like the Omas fountain pen with a white-gold nib and a motif depicting the city's beautiful porticos (310 euros, or about \$336 at \$1.09 to the euro), as well as modern designs like the sleek new Cambiano inkless pen (89 euros), created by the Pininfarina design studio in 2014.

7. Concentrated Flavors | 4 p.m.

If you love ice cream, you may be tempted to visit the new Gelato Museum, which opened just outside Bologna in 2012, but fair warning: Reservations are mandatory for all visits, and the remote location is not very easy to reach by public transportation. A better alternative: Head to the city's best-loved producer, Stefino, which reopened in a new location on Via San Vitale in 2013, serving unusual organic gelato with highly concentrated flavors, like fragrant almond and decadent melted chocolate. For a palate cleanser, enjoy a sharply acidic lemon granita under the portico outside, then return to sample more gelato flavors, from pistachio to wasabi.

8. Vintage Shades | 5 p.m.

After your gelato, shop for new — or actually old — clothes among the shady porticos just west of the Piazza Maggiore. At the stylish Fratelli Broche vintage shop, try out Trussardi handbags (80 euros) and vintage sunglasses (usually around 30 euros). Down the block and around the corner, La Leonarda has tons of cool '50s neckties and raincoats, while the nearby Zenobialand boutique stocks cute vintage dresses and antique purses.

9. Anti-Tortellini Upstart | 7:30 p.m.

Bologna might be famous as a town for food lovers, but last fall's arrival of Red Brick brought in a brand-new culinary focus: meat in all its glory, from T-bones to hamburgers, served in a modern bistro atmosphere

with exposed red brick and graffiti-style artworks. In addition to the great steaks and burgers, Red Brick makes an excellent beef tartare, as well as a juicy, clove-scented pastrami sandwich, plated in a pool of rich jus, and tender, slow-cooked Wagyu beef cubes accompanied by onions roasted in stout beer. Though tarred by local detractors as a heretically “anti-tortellini” restaurant, Red Brick manages to make its foreign recipes and techniques seem decidedly at home in food-loving Bologna, thanks to great service, clever platings and a well-chosen list of Italian wines and beers.

10. For Film Buffs | 10 p.m.

Italy’s moviemaking capital is the Cinecittà in Rome, but one of the country’s most important resources for historic film is Cineteca di Bologna, which restores and archives movies from around the globe, with special programs dedicated to Pier Paolo Pasolini and Charlie Chaplin, as well as a major film library for students. In addition to restoration work, the Cineteca also shows films at various local theaters during Cinema Ritrovato, its festival of revival and historic movies. Catch one of the classics — or a modern, first-run blockbuster — at the Cineteca’s own screening rooms, Cinema Lumière, then meet up with other cinephiles at one of the many nearby bars and cafes, which often make the surrounding neighborhood feel like a giant weekend street party.

Sunday

11. Photo Works | 11 a.m.

Visit the cool new Mast Gallery, which offers free entry to all its regular exhibitions, including interactive displays dedicated to design and technology. Opened in 2013 in a run-down, former industrial zone west of the city center, the modern building also hosts its own biennale, dedicated to industrial photography, which runs through Jan. 10.

Lodging

The grandest of the great old hotels in town is the **Grand Hotel**

Majestic Già Baglioni, just across from massive Bologna Cathedral, with 109 well-appointed rooms (Via Indipendenza 8; grandhotelmajestic.duetorrihotels.com). Doubles start around 300 euros.

Slightly less fancy, but still quite posh, the **Royal Hotel Carlton** lies close to a comfortable park, Parco Montagnola, and is not far from the city's main train station (Via Montebello 8; royalhotelcarltonbologna.com). Low-season double rooms start around 190 euros.

In the heart of the Quadrilatero, just steps from the city's most famous delicatessens and food markets, the charming **Albergo delle Drapperie** has rooms starting around 85 euros in low season, including breakfast (Via Drapperie 5; albergodrapperie.com).

Correction: October 1, 2015

An earlier version of this article misspelled part of the name of a film restoration and archiving venue in Bologna. It is Cineteca di Bologna, not Cinoteca di Bologna.

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