



Bologna

Culinary and intellectual tradition define one of Italy's most vibrant cities, writes KATIE PARLA.

Getting there

Airlines including Lufthansa and British Airways fly direct to Bologna from Frankfurt and London, respectively, while regular high-speed trains connect with Rome, Florence, Naples, Venice and Milan.

Bologna's towers and Sanctuary of the Madonna of San Luca.



Don't miss

Tagliavini Collection The deconsecrated church of San Colombano houses the newly restored Tagliavini Collection (above), one of the world's finest museums of musical instruments. Among about 70 organs, harpsichords, pianos and spinets are rare masterpieces that date back to the 16th century. Via Parigi 5

SHOP

Antica Aguzzeria del Cavallo started out in 1783 selling knives and fishing and hunting gear. Six generations later, the Bernagozzi family's selection of handcrafted brass pasta tools and carbon-steel pasta knives would be the envy of any professional kitchen. Via Drapperie 12/b, aguzzeriadeltcavallo.it



PHOTOGRAPHY GETTY IMAGES (MAIN).

STAY



I Portici This art nouveau building near the main train station has minimalist rooms and suites enlivened by 19th-century frescoes on walls and ceilings. Like the city itself, the hotel is focused on food, with a Michelin-starred restaurant, pizzeria, bistro and bar, as well as a bottega downtown specialising in pasta all'uovo. Via dell'Indipendenza 69, iportichotel.com

EAT



Cremeria Santo Stefano

From the portico, the appearance of Cremeria Santo Stefano (above) is more Parisian pâtisserie than gelateria. Inside, though, the display case is crammed with tubs of gelato. Flavours range from classics such as pistachio to originals such as crema delle zitelle made with mascarpone and pine nuts. Scoops are available in cups, cones or stuffed into brioche. Via Santo Stefano 70/c

Vâgh in Ufèzzì

This osteria is utterly traditional, serving cured meats with lard-fried crescentine (flatbreads), plump balanzoni (spinach tortelloni filled with ground pork and ricotta) and meaty mains such as bollito misto. The menu changes daily and it's short – a group of four could easily devour the entire list – but always offers a satisfying array of Bolognese comfort food. Via de' Coltelli 9/c, vaghinufezzi.it

All'Osteria Bottega

This place is serious about its cured pork, evident in the impressive cabinet of hanging culatelli, prosciutto's prestigious cousin. Order mixed salumi, ranging from cured back fat to mortadella. Follow with lasagne verde, spinach pasta layered with ragù and besciamella, then baked until the edges are crisp and caramelised. Its tagliatelle al ragù Bolognese and tortellini in brodo are also the best examples of the Bolognese classics to be found outside home kitchens. Via Santa Caterina 51

Even in a city full of excellent food shops, Mercato Albani is special. Stalls champion local produce, while butchers sell cuts ready for ragù. Il Pollaio, a former poultry shop turned wine bar, features natural wines and small plates. Via Francesco Albani