

DAY 1

At a glimpse: Hike and food tour

Travel agenda: Arrive hungry because lunch is at **Sfoggia Rina!** The pasta shop turned restaurant offers a quick reprieve in the central city. Order the totellini in brot or any pasta which is served with bread and a side of veggies.

Then set your sights on the **Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca**. It's an hour walk from the restaurant and the best way to see this authentically real Italian town filled with medieval porticoes and arches. Before the 20-minute hike up to the main sanctuary, stop at true locals hangout **Bar Billi** for a coffee and sustenance. The basilica church is beautiful, but it's the rolling hill views at the top that are worth the climb. Hop on the **San Luca Express** for a short ride back to the main city center. You can buy the ticket on the train, though they only offer round trip prices.

At 5pm, make your way to **Piazza del Nettuno** to meet your food tour crew. **Delicious Bologna** offers a **Nightfall Walking Food Tour** led by a local with tastings, sit-down meals and fun facts and history along the way. It's the perfect orientation to the city. For a late night drink and jazz music, you won't regret heading to **Cantina Bentivoglio**.

DAY 2

At a glimpse: Walking tour of Bologna landmarks and food

Travel agenda: Seize the day with an espresso and pastries from **Aroma**. This is an Italian breakfast (for more Italian tips and etiquette guidelines click here.) Then begins the self-guided walking tour which starts in **Piazza Maggiore**. The **Basilica di San Petronio** is the main landmark and a very quirky one at that. It was a third of the way complete in 1390 when Pope Pius IV halted funding after he found out it was planned to be grander than St. Peter's. Though they may have the needed funds to finish it soon, locals now love their peculiar church and "wouldn't change it for a thing!" Things of note: twenty-two side chapels and the longest interior meridian line in the world.

Continue walking to the **Basilica di San Francesco**, built in 1236 and a great example of French Gothic architecture. Check out the tomb of Pope Alexander V and the marble altarpiece. Next stop is a 12-minute walk to the **University of Bologna**, the world's oldest university still in operation. The **Archiginnasio** was the main building in the 16th century and includes

both the library and the ornate wooden anatomical theater. Other points of interest: walls and ceilings of the halls surrounding the palazzo's courtyard and the thousands of coats of arms.

For lunch stop at **Pigro** for a simple mortadella sandwich to hold you over until this afternoon! Or walk just 10 minutes out of the way to get a popular sandwich from **The Corner Bar**. Then the **Complesso di Santo Stefano**, or the Complex of Seven Churches, is the next destination. This multifaceted site is worth at least an hour to explore the charming smaller chapels, courtyards, cloisters and convent.

Head back to the hotel to rest, but by 6pm you'll want to head to the picturesque **Via delle Pescherie Vecchie** for aperitivo. At **Salumeria Simoni** you can order a charcuterie board and glass of wine, to "prep" for the big meal. As an alternative, **Enoteca Storica Faccioli** is a great local wine store with snacks. Finally, for dinner walk to **Osteria dell'Orsa**. If you're solo, you won't have a problem squeezing in to one of the communal tables but otherwise you'll likely have to put your name on a list! Order the house wine and the tagliatelle al ragù (bolognese) to end a truly Italian day.

DAY 3

At a glimpse: A view and more food

Travel agenda: Start with a cappuccino and croissant breakfast at the **Cafe Terzi**. Next head to the **Two Towers**, the quintessential Bologna monuments. Buy a ticket to climb the **Asinelli Tower**. After the 496 step winding wooden staircase to the top you can admire the 360-degree view of the terracotta roofs and pinpoint the Sanctuary from *day 1*. End the trip with the best gelato at **Cremeria Santo Stefano**.

Tip: The Asinelli staircase doesn't look very sturdy, and as they allow groups to walk up together, you'll be a close-knit crew bumbling for space at the top. Don't go if you're claustrophobic or afraid of heights, but otherwise it's a small rewarding adventure spectacle.

** If you have an extra day, consider a side trip to Modena or a Bologna vineyard tour! Bon Appetite!