

# Top 29 Incredible Places To Visit in Italy

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## Bologna

Bologna is a newly booming tourist hub which sees more and more visitors each year. Despite its size, the city is very easy to visit thanks to its medieval grid-like design. If you enjoy delicious cuisine, unique character, elegant shopping and quirky architecture, then Bologna is for you.

The city's gastronomic specialties include pasta and sausages, but you can truly get lost in the cuisine of this important Emilia-Romagna capital, and you're likely to leave a bit heavier than when you arrived.

Thanks to its easy accessibility, old town, cool vibe and fun nightlife, this is one of the up-and-coming places to visit in Italy and many digital nomads are now flocking here to live and work long-term.

## Don't Miss:

- o All'Osteria Bottega: If you want a true foodie experience in Bologna, don't miss this amazing *osteria*. Try the culatello di Zibello ham, Petroniana-style veal cutlets (breaded, fried and topped with Parma ham and parmigiano reggiano with a sumptuous salty broth).
- o Quadrilatero: Still holding onto its ancient tradition, the old market of Bologna was one of the greatest developments in the Middle Ages and kept its trade and bustling energy throughout the centuries. Wander around and watch as goldsmiths, butchers, fishermen, meat curers, barbers and painters go about their business under the high vaulted ceilings.
- o Torre degli Asinelli: The leaning towers of Bologna are a group of medieval structures in the center of town. The two most prominent ones, known as the Two Towers, are the landmark of the city and shouldn't be missed on a visit.

## Best Bologna Tours:

### Verona

Do as the locals do and arm yourself with an ice cream as you stroll along one of Verona's most famous shopping streets, the Corso Porta Borsari. Gaze up at the well-preserved Roman gate as you pass under its great arches before slowly making your way to the quiet Piazza dei Signori.



Verona is known as city of love thanks to its magnificent Arena and its association with Shakespeare's love story, "Romeo and Juliet." This Unesco listed world heritage site is Italy's fourth-most-visited city making it one of the most important tourist destinations in the country.

### Don't Miss:

- **Arena di Verona:** You may have already had the Colosseum in Rome as one of your top places to visit in Italy, but Verona has its own well-preserved Colosseum. Built just 30 years after the death of Christ, this remarkable structure has stood in impeccable condition for nearly 2000 years and awaits your "oohs and ahhs".
- **Castle Vecchio:** Located on the banks of the River Adige, this 16th century castle is an important structure in the city as it once served as its primary defence and was regarded as the greatest feat of engineering during the time of the Scaliger Dynasty.
- **Basilica of San Zeno Maggiore:** Located on the western side of the Adige River, this basilica is one of the most important religious buildings in Verona and was the fictional venue for the marriage of Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's famous novel.

## Parma

This riverside city of Parma may be synonymous with food (think: Parma ham and Parmesan), but it also satisfies appetites for art, music and history. Tapping into many of the things that make an Italian city so special – religious monuments, art, food, architecture, theatre, music, and history – this compact metro-area is actually very easy to walk. Many visitors choose to get around by foot.

### Don't Miss:

- **Eating Parma-ham and Parmesan:** Obviously you don't want to leave Parma without the sampling some of the city's meat and cheeses. See the food and wine tours below for the best way to find, learn about, taste and purchase these Parma specialties and more.
- **Galleria Nazionale:** The National Gallery of Parma focuses on artwork from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Inside you will find some works by van Dyck, Da Vinci, Barbieri, Allegri, and many others.
- **Cattedrale di Parma:** Take a walk around the 11th century dome of Romanesque Cathedral of Parma to find frescos by Antonio da Correggio. Together with the Baptistery of Parma, the Cattedrale usually hosts art exhibitions and educational workshops.

# Trieste

A city at a crossroads, this impressive and historically important port town has been captured by Romans, Venetians and the Hapsburg monarchy and the Germans during WWII. Despite, or perhaps because of this tumultuous past, the city has formed a unique and vibrant culture that enjoys a blend of Austrian, Italian and Slovenian influence.

Geographically isolated from the rest of the Italian peninsula, it's no surprise that Trieste is a place all of its own, and despite not having a single site worthy of writing home about, it's still an enchanting place to visit in Italy and has been an escape for writers, exiles and misfits over the years.

Today, its Slavic, Jewish, Greek, Germanic and Italian cultures intertwine to create a city of cafes, bars, buffets and wines.

## Don't Miss:

- Bagno Marino Lanterna: Hidden behind the Trieste's abandoned 19th-century lighthouse, this pebbly beach is worth checking out, despite being segregated by gender!
- Castello di Miramare: Commanding a rocky outcrop 7km outside of town, Castello di Miramare was built in the 1800's for Austrian Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian and his wife.
- Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia: The main square in Trieste, this piazza is set at the foot of the hill with the castle of San Giusto and facing the Adriatic Sea. It's often said to be Europe's largest seaside square and is definitely worth a visit... in fact, it would be hard to miss this one.

## Brescia

This rich industrial city sits between the foothills of Valtrompia and Lake Garda. More famous for its manufacturing of weapons and kitchen accessories than it is for any facet of tourism, the city itself is home to several interesting museums, but little else. So why is it on this list of places to visit in Italy?

Well, many people choose to visit Brescia as a less touristy part of their itinerary and find charm in the fascinating old town, which attempts to compensate for the city's otherwise unappealing urban sprawl.

The narrow streets of the old town are where you'll find some important Roman ruins (some of the best examples in the entire province of Lombardy), a few nice restaurants, some frescos in the corridors of the medieval monastery and a collection of 2000 year old architecture.

### Don't Miss:

- Tempio Capitolino: These old Roman ruins are the last remains of what was once the city's public forum during the Roman Empire, built by the emperor Vespasian.
- Old and New Duomo: This pre-renaissance church has an enormous stone dome and large crucifixes that date back to the 12th century. While you're here, pop in next door to the city cathedral which was built over 150 years ago and boasts the third largest dome in Italy.
- The Castle: Built in the pre-Roman times and last fortified by the Venetian overlords of the 16th century, this castle was once the city's stronghold and it still houses museums of armory and provides picturesque views of the Valtrompia alps which fringe the city itself.

## Monza

Perhaps best known for the Monza Race Track (often home to the Formula 1 Grand Prix), this city lies just 20km northeast of Milan and is often considered a satellite town that has been pretty much fully incorporated into the fashion-capital. Despite the large shadow of nearby Milan, Monza still impresses (its very few) visitors with lovely architecture and a deep and rich history.

## Don't Miss:

- Villa Reale: Built between the years of 1777 and 1780, this former summer home for Italian royalty was actually modelled after Vienna's Schonbrunn Palace and boasts a 3500 square meter interior that's covered in frescoes, stucco work and intricate gilding.
- Duomo: Yes... there's another duomo on this list of places to visit in Italy, but this green and white striped facade is home to the Iron Crown (a medieval treasure apparently made from one of the nails used in Christ's crucifixion), some nice frescoes and a gothic interior.
- Museo e Tesoro del Duomo: Containing what is often regarded as Europe's best collection of religious artwork, the Monza Cathedral Museum is a site not to be missed during your visit. Among the best pieces are a priceless collection of Lombard gold and an intricate stained glass rose window that is thought to date back to the 15th century.

## Como

The town that sits on the lake of the same name, Como is a place you can spend a few days. The dramatic surrounding mountain landscapes, the pristine, calm waters of the lake and exquisite architecture make Como one of the best places to visit in Italy for sure.



This isn't the only village on this beautiful lake, so once you've finished soaking up the gothic ambiance of Como itself, take to the waters of Lake Como and enjoy a peaceful boat ride to visit one of the other lakeside towns such as Bellagio, Lierna and Dervio.

All of these towns offer great views across the lake, and plenty of restaurants and cafes.

### Don't Miss:

- A Boat Ride: As I mentioned above, a trip to Como wouldn't be complete without a ride on a boat to a neighbouring village. The surrounding mountain scenery is best viewed from the water.
- Funicular: The ride up the Funicolare Como-Brunate is definitely worth the €5.60 round trip.
- Walk the waterfront: The city is famous for its picturesque waterfront promenade, spend the day sauntering along here.
- Gothic Como Cathedral: Without a doubt this is one of the most important buildings in the region. It's commonly described as the last Gothic cathedral built in Italy.

## Udine

By now on this list, we've started to list some places to visit in Italy that you never thought you'd find on your itinerary, and while Udine may not compete with the likes of Rome and Florence as far as tourist attractions go, beneath the sprawling urban suburbs you'll find a medieval center with grand Venetian archways, Roman columns and Grecian statues carved to perfection.

The old town is pretty much untouched and devoid of tourists, but also very lively as there are some great bars, restaurants and cafes and a surprisingly buzzing nightlife.

### Don't Miss:

- Udine Castle: Perched on a legendary hill, supposedly built by the Gods, smack dab in the center of the historical area of Udine, this 16th-century castle took nearly 50 years to construct and now houses the History and Art Museum of the City of Udine.
- Udine Cathedral: Consecrated in 1335 as Santa Maria Maggiore and later damaged by an earthquake in 1348, the Duomo di Udine (Cattedrale di Santa Maria Maggiore) is a Roman Catholic cathedral and is currently the seat of the Archbishop of Udine.
- Piazza Libert : Also known as Piazza della Libert  (previously known as the Piazza Cantarena), this is the oldest square in Udine and makes for a great place to stroll or grab some gelato, sit on a step and people watch.