Green
is Bologna

Explore

Gothic Line

Walking along the paths of the Gothic Line means retracing the history and the events that involved the men and women who fought in what was the last German defensive outpost during the Italian Campaign.
Between October 1944 and April 1945, the Bologna Apennines were the setting of large battles between the German army and the allied forces advancing from the south of the Italian peninsula. The historic itinerary unwinds from west to east: it starts at Lake Scaffaiolo in the Corno alle Scale Regional Park and arrives in Tossignano in the Park of the Vena del Gesso Romagnolo.

How to find us
Bologna is easy to reach using the main means of transport.

Bologna
- Bologna G. Marconi Airport
- Bologna Centrale Railway Station
- Motorways (A1-A13-A14)

Gothic Line

Trekking

1st Stage:
Length: **15.8 km** Difference in level: **+600 -1,800 m** Duration: **6 h**

2nd Stage:
Length: **14 km** Difference in level: **+600 -1150 m** Duration: **5 h**

3rd Stage:
Length: **15,1 km** Difference in level: **+500 -490 m** Duration: **5 h**

4th Stage:
Length: **20 km** Difference in level: **+750 -1,300 m** Duration: **7 h**

5th Stage:
Length: **15,6 km** Difference in level: **+850 -660 m** Duration: **6 h**

6th Stage:
Length: **21 km** Difference in level: **+1050 -1000 m** Duration: **7 h**

7th Stage:
Length: **16,5 km** Difference in level: **+1100 -1200 m** Duration: **6 h**

8th Stage:
Length: **21 km** Difference in level: **+700 -800 m** Duration: **7 h**

9th Stage:
Length: **20 km** Difference in level: **+700 -660 m** Duration: **7 h**

10th Stage:
Length: **16 km** Difference in level: **+700 -800 m** Duration: **6 h**

Lake Scaffaiolo

Rocca Corneta

Abetaia

Iola

Castel d'Aiano

Tolè

Vergato

Monte Salvaro

Monte Sole

Vado

Brento

Livergnano

Monte delle Formiche

Monterenzio

Monte Cerere

S. Clemente

Monte Penzola

Tossignano

Borgo Rivola

Riolo Terme

Total km: 175
Overall positive altitude difference: 7,550
Overall negative altitude difference: 9,850
Maximum altitude 1,750 m (Lake Scaffaiolo)
Minimum altitude: 98 m (Borgo Tossignano)
Stages: 10
Municipalities crossed: 15

Lake Scaffaiolo

Corno alle Scale

Located at an altitude of 1750 metres, the lake is within the Corno alle Scale area. The path “Sentiero Italia” that stretches along the entire Apennines ridge passes here as far as the Alps (E1 European long-distance path). Near this small lake, we find the oldest Alpine refuge in the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines: Rifugio Duca degli Abruzzi.

Rocca Corneta

Lizzano in Belvedere

Rocca Corneta is located halfway between Lizzano and Vidiciatico. The Rocca Corneta ridge saw the passing of the front line during the complex final phases of the World War II (in February 1945). The church was partly destroyed but has since been restored and it is home to an ancient papier-mâché image of the Madonna with Child visited by a large number of pilgrims every year.

Parks and places of particular naturalistic and environmental prestige:
Corno alle Scale Regional Park, Monte Sole Historic Park, Contrafforte Pliocenico Nature Reserve, Park of Vena del Gesso Romagnola, Rete Natura 2000 (European Union Habitat Directive)

Guanella Monument to the FEB

Loc. Abetaia

The allied and Partisan forces were deployed in the Monte Castello area for months: this is where the most important offensive action of the Força Expedicionária Brasileira (FEB) took place, which is still studied in Brazilian military academies and, indeed, a monument designed by Mary Vieira in 1996 made up of two white granite archways intertwining and resting on a black marble base is dedicated to the Brazilian soldiers who died in the war.

Gothic Line Multimedia Model

Castel d'Aiano

This unique model recreates the main events that occurred along the Gothic Line between August 1944 and the Liberation in April 1945. A multimedia narrative in two languages illustrates the conclusive phase of the World War II in Italy: from the manoeuvres of the armies, great battles and partisan struggles to the Nazi-Fascist massacres.

Rocca Corneta, Monument to the FEB, Gothic Line, Vergato, Tossignano, Winter Line Museum
© Vito Paticchia

Vergato

In October 1944, Vergato became a ghost-city on the front line, almost entirely destroyed by the Allied air forces (23 bombings) due to the presence of railway and road bridges that enabled supplies to reach the Germans on the Gothic Line. There are monuments and memorial stones dedicated to the "praçinhas" in Castelnuovo, Boscaccio and Precaria as well as a monument dedicated to the soldiers on the Gothic Line right above Cereglio. On the German stronghold of Monte Pero, there is a ridge path that enables visitors to discover numerous remains of trenches, firing stations, communication trenches and German shelters.

Monte Sole Monument

Monte Sole Historic Park

Here, we find traces of camps belonging to the “Stella rossa” del Lupo Partisan brigade (Mario Musolesi) and of the massacre of September 29th-October 4th 1944 (770 victims, mostly civilian), now safeguarded by the Monte Sole Historic Park to preserve the memory and places where historic events took place. The heart of the park is the “Memorial of the Massacre” where the Nazi troops slaughtered hundreds of local inhabitants. The Fondazione Scuola di Pace Monte Sole which carries out educational activities on the theme of peace is located in San Martino.

Monte Adone

Contrafforte Pliocenico

Its peak is the highest in the Contrafforte Pliocenico Nature Reserve - a natural bastion 15 km long and a natural barrier surrounded by five valleys (west to east: Reno, Setta, Savena, Zena and Idice) strenuously defended by the Germans to block the two main roads leading to Bologna. After holding it throughout the winter, Monte Adone was taken on April 18th 1945 by the 91st American division that freed the way for the advance to Bologna.

Winter Line Museum

Located in the heart of Livergnano inside one of the houses excavated in the rocks of the Contrafforte Pliocenico, the Winter Line Museum boasts an extensive collection of artefacts dating back to the World War II. During the war, the room that is home to the exhibition was first used as a garage for a German tank and then as a shelter by the American soldiers.

Vena del Gesso

An imposing chalk-sulphur chain that extends for 20 km along the Bologna and Ravenna provinces between the valleys of the Sellustra and Lamone rivers. The chain crosses an evocative scenery of a wild beauty that witnessed the considerable sacrifices of soldiers but, most of all, of men. The memory of the mud and cold that tormented bodies making survival so difficult as to put the choice of fighting into question is still palpable.

Tossignano

(Arrival point)

Along Vena del Gesso, you reach the ruins of the ancient fortress in Tossignano (Rocca di Tossignano); a town near the last German defences that remained a “no man’s land” throughout the winter. When it was already completely destroyed, it was freed by the Allied forces on April 12th 1945. Nowadays a war memorial is located in the town square, but the metal Bailey bridge is also of interest - it was built over the Santerno by the Allies and is still visible in Via Rineggio.

What is the Gothic Line?
In the autumn of 1943, just after the armistice was signed between Italy and the Anglo-American forces that occupied Sicily, the German command came up with a defence plan to slow down the advance of the allied armies from south to north. The points of strength were two fortified lines that cut Italy in two joining the Thyrrenian and the Adriatic Seas: the Gustav line from the Garigliano river to Ortona and the Gothic line (Gotenstellung in German and Linea Gotica in Italian) from the mouth of the Magra river to Pesaro.
There were numerous minor lines between the two.
The Gothic line took advantage of the harshness of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines along its 320 km from east to west. Along its route, there were 479 cannons, 2,375 machine guns, 100 thousand mines, around 4,000 pillboxes and 16,000 sniper stations. There were also hundreds of km of barbed wire and countless anti-tank trenches. Called Gothic in April 1944,
Hitler decided to rename it Grüne Linie ("Green Line"), as he feared a propaganda backlash if the enemy were to break through a line named after the German people.

How can I reach one of the stages from Bologna?
As it is a transversal itinerary, there are many chances to intercept the main trail.
You can take the train from Bologna to Porretta Terme. then take the bus to Cavone and hike for a couple of hours as far as Scaffaiolo lake where you find Rifugio Duca degli Abruzzi and Le Malghe. You can also reach the Trail from the following train stations: Marzabotto; Pian di Venola; Vergato; Riola or Pianoro; Vado; Grizzana or even Ozzano; Castel S. Pietro Terme, Imola.
We recommend anyway contacting eXtraBO for help in the planning of your itinerary and to receive information on the Logistics.

IS it possible to walk along part of the Gothic Line?
You can walk along the entire trail (10 stages) or divide it into 2/3 blocks thanks to the train and/or bus lines. Private shuttle and bus services are available for small and medium-sized groups. Please contact eXtraBO for further information and assistance.

How long is the Gothic Line and how many days does it take to complete it?
The Gothic Line is 175 km long and it takes 10 days to complete it. If you decide to start from Lake Scaffaiolo, you have to consider an additional day.

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