

Roadbook

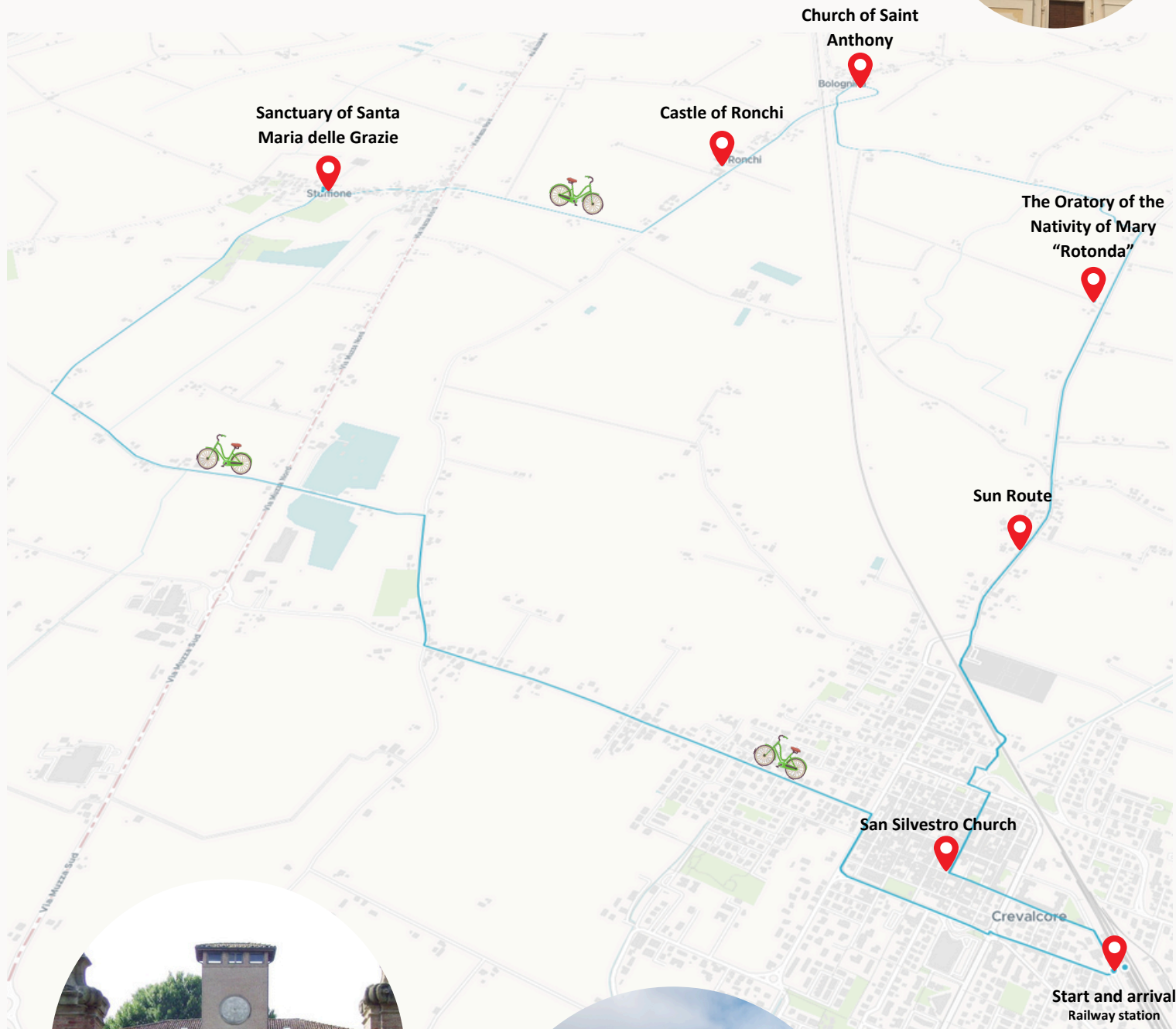


Comune
di Crevalcore
Città Metropolitana di Bologna

By bike through Faith and Beauty



Roadmap



The path is 19 km long

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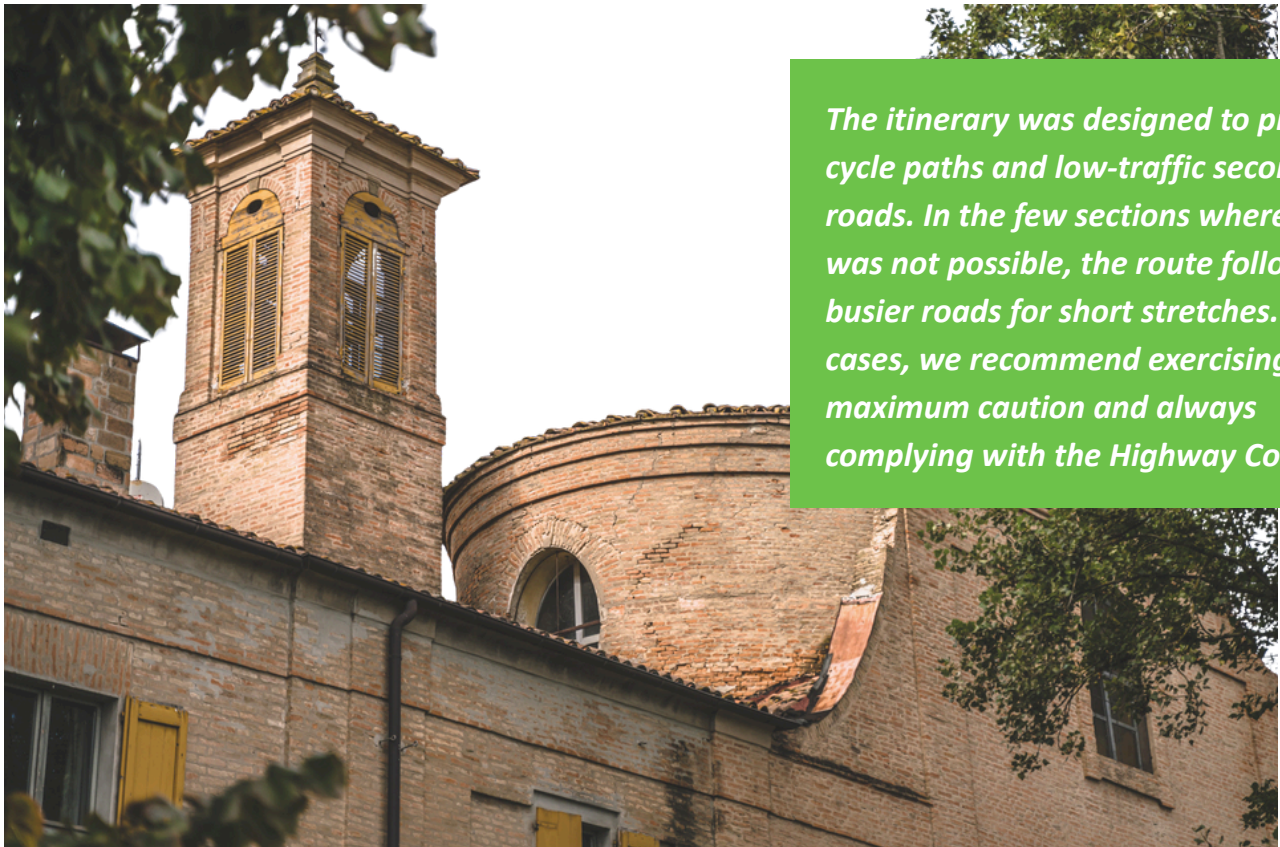


Itinerary

A circular route starting from the Crevalcore railway station, leading to the discovery of **small spiritual and architectural gems** nestled in the quiet of the Emilian countryside. After leaving the town center, you'll cycle along secondary roads to reach the important Sanctuary of **Santa Maria delle Grazie in Stuffione**, which houses the miraculous image of the **Madonna of Montserrat**.

Continuing along the route, you will head towards **Villa Ronchi**, an elegant architectural complex composed of a 16th-century manor house, flanked by two imposing 18th-century scenic towers, and a small elliptical church dedicated to Saint Matthew, commissioned by the distinguished Caprara family. The itinerary then takes you to the **Church of Saint Anthony in Bolognina**, and later to the evocative "Rotonda", a small circular church set among country roads.

From there, the route returns to the historic center, where your ride concludes in the lively main square of Crevalcore, dominated by the majestic **Church of San Silvestro**.



The itinerary was designed to prioritize cycle paths and low-traffic secondary roads. In the few sections where this was not possible, the route follows busier roads for short stretches. In all cases, we recommend exercising maximum caution and always complying with the Highway Code.

Insight

The history of Crevalcore

The first castrum (fortified settlement) of Crevalcore was established around 1130 on the territory of the **Abbey of Nonantola**, near the ancient Byzantine defensive system. Destroyed during the wars waged by Frederick II to reassert imperial authority, it was later rebuilt by the Bolognese in a location closer to the Panaro River. Due to ongoing pressure from the Este family, rulers of nearby Modena, the defensive system was gradually strengthened. In the 14th century, after a brief rule by the **Pepoli** family, the territory passed to the Visconti, who soon after ceded it to the papal troops.

However, it was under the stable rule of the **Bentivoglio** family that Crevalcore experienced a period of peace, during which the Cavamento canal was completed — an important hydraulic work that made new land available for cultivation. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the solid class of local landowners boosted construction activity: this period saw the construction of **the palaces along the main street**, the public school, the Barberini Hospital, and the Municipal Theatre.



The Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Stuffione

Your itinerary begins at the Crevalcore railway station, quickly crossing the town center before heading into the countryside. Following country roads, you will reach **Stuffione**, a hamlet of Ravarino, where stands the **Sanctuary of the Madonna delle Grazie**, historically linked to the **Rangoni family of Ravarino**. The church already existed in the 14th century, but the current Baroque building was rebuilt and enlarged in the early 18th century by order of Marquis Filippo Rangoni, based on a design by architect Silvestro Campiotti. The single-nave interior is adorned with stuccoes and 20th-century frescoes and houses valuable artworks.

In the apse area stands a reliquary temple in scagliola from Carpi, containing the venerated image of the **Madonna of Montserrat**, the focus of local devotion. Above the entrance portal is a **rare 17th-century organ** built by Antonio Colonna of Bologna. The building suffered extensive damage in the 2012 earthquake, which rendered it unusable; subsequent work focused on seismic improvement and restoration of the decorations, as well as on refurbishing the churchyard. From here, continue toward Crevalcore via Via Argini Nord to reach the vast complex of **Villa Ronchi**.



Insight

The image of the Madonna of Montserrat



The image of the Madonna of Montserrat, now kept in the Sanctuary of Stuffione, has a history intertwined with popular devotion and legend. It is a woodblock print on paper, dating from the late 16th century, **probably made by a craftsman of German origin**. It depicts the Virgin seated on a rock, holding the Child on her lap as he cuts a stone with a saw; both are crowned with embossed gold. In the background, one can recognize churches and monasteries, a sign of its connection with **the famous Catalan sanctuary of Montserrat**.

According to tradition, the image hung from an oak trunk in a place known as Fondo Colonna, and soon became an object of veneration. **On April 15, 1623**, the parish priest of Stuffione, Don Vincenzo Muzzarelli, transferred it inside the parish church. The legend recounts that the **“miracle of the ants”** occurred: the insects followed the image in seven rows all the way to the altar, while the once-dry tree miraculously blossomed again. This prodigious event inspired the community to build the sanctuary, turning the image into **a symbol of faith** that continues to attract prayers and votive offerings from devotees.



The Countryside, Villa Ronchi, Bolognina, and the Rotonda



Along Via Argini Nord, on your left, you will see the **Villa Ronchi complex**, built by the Caprara family. Crossing the overpass, you reach the hamlet of **Bolognina**, home to a small church dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua, featuring three altars and paintings by Simone Cantarini and Elisabetta Sirani, donated by the Bolognini family. Following Via Portogiardino, you then reach the “**Rotonda**” on Via del Papa.

The Oratory of the Nativity of Mary, also known as the Rotonda, stands in the countryside north of Crevalcore. It was built by Countess Maria Vittoria Caprara as an **ex-voto for the grace received** after her husband, Count Francesco Caprara, miraculously survived a fall from his horse — an event commemorated on a plaque above the entrance. Once connected to the Castle of Ronchi, to which it belonged, it now stands isolated because the construction of the railway interrupted the original visual axis.



The Oratory of the Nativity of Mary “La Rotonda” is located on Via del Papa, a mixed-traffic road with no dedicated cycle path. Cyclists are advised to exercise caution due to vehicle traffic.

Insight

Villa Ronchi e i Caprara

Villa Ronchi, locally known as the **Castle of Ronchi**, was the grand country residence of the noble Caprara family of Bologna. Despite its impressive size, it is not a true castle: the two symmetrical towers flanking its entrance date back to the 18th century and were designed for scenic effect rather than defense. The oldest part is the central structure, the Manor House, mentioned in a 1501 notarial document as *domus magna*.



The palace is connected to the two towers by buildings that once served as stables and coach houses. At the end of the 16th century, the palace underwent major renovations: it was raised in height, battlements were removed, the current windows were opened, and a central tower-like projection was added. Between 1580 and 1620, the rooms were decorated with friezes and frescoes — restoration has confirmed the hand of a young **Agostino Carracci**, then only eighteen years old. In 1702, work began on rebuilding the Church of Saint Matthew, with an elliptical floor plan. In 1815, Count Francesco Caprara gave Villa Ronchi to his daughter Vittoria, who sold it in 1823. In 1985, the Municipality of Crevalcore purchased the entire complex. The building was closed after the damage caused by the May 2012 earthquake, but the large park remains open for special occasions and hosts events, festivals, and historical reenactments that bring local traditions and history to life, **thanks to the cultural association that has animated it for years.**



Thanks to restoration work, Villa Ronchi **will soon be open again to visitors**. The park, cared for by the cultural association *Sempar in Baraca*, continues to serve as an ideal setting for events that blend history, art, and community. The most famous events include historical reenactments such as “4 Steps into the Middle Age” “The Villa of Time”, and the English-themed “For the King and the County”.

The Square, the Statue of Malpighi, and the Church of San Silvestro

Continue along the Sun Route to return to the center of Crevalcore. Along Via Matteotti, you'll find the town's main buildings. Upon reaching the square, you'll see at its center the bronze monument to **Marcello Malpighi**, sculpted by Enrico Barberi in 1897. Crevalcore was, in fact, the birthplace of the famous physiologist.

Behind the statue stands the **Church of San Silvestro**, rebuilt in the early 20th century to replace the previous 14th-century church. The reconstruction allowed the creation of the square by setting the church façade back and rotating its axis by 90 degrees.

Inside the church are a fragment of a fresco attributed to **Simone dei Crocifissi**, a wooden Crucifix from the 15th–16th century, a painting of Saint Sylvester by Giovanni Maria Viani, Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata by Giacomo Cavedone, and an Adoration of the Magi by Orazio Samacchini.

The civic tower, offset from the church, also serves as its bell tower. Continuing along the main street toward Porta Bologna, you will find on the left **the Municipal Theater**, designed by Antonio Giordani, decorated by Gaetano Lodi, and inaugurated in 1881. The theater is currently undergoing restoration and repair work following the 2012 earthquake.



Insight

The Sun Route

The Bologna section of EuroVelo 7, the cycle route stretching from North Cape to Malta, **passes through Crevalcore**. The first Italian section was inaugurated on April 13, 2021, **at the former Bolognina station**, a symbolic site where a tragic train accident occurred in January 2005.

Built along the old Bologna–Verona railway line, the Sun Route also offers the advantage of **bike–train intermodality**: at Crevalcore station, you can board or alight with your bicycle to reach another point along the route. Outside the historic center, the cycle path allows you to explore the countryside and reach **Villa Ronchi**, the historic residence of the Caprara family. Heading north, you can reach the Panaro River embankment and then Camposanto, the first town in the Modena area; cycling south takes you easily to San Giovanni in Persiceto.

For more information, visit www.cicloviadelsole.it.



Thank you for cycling with us!

For more information and other itineraries:

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