

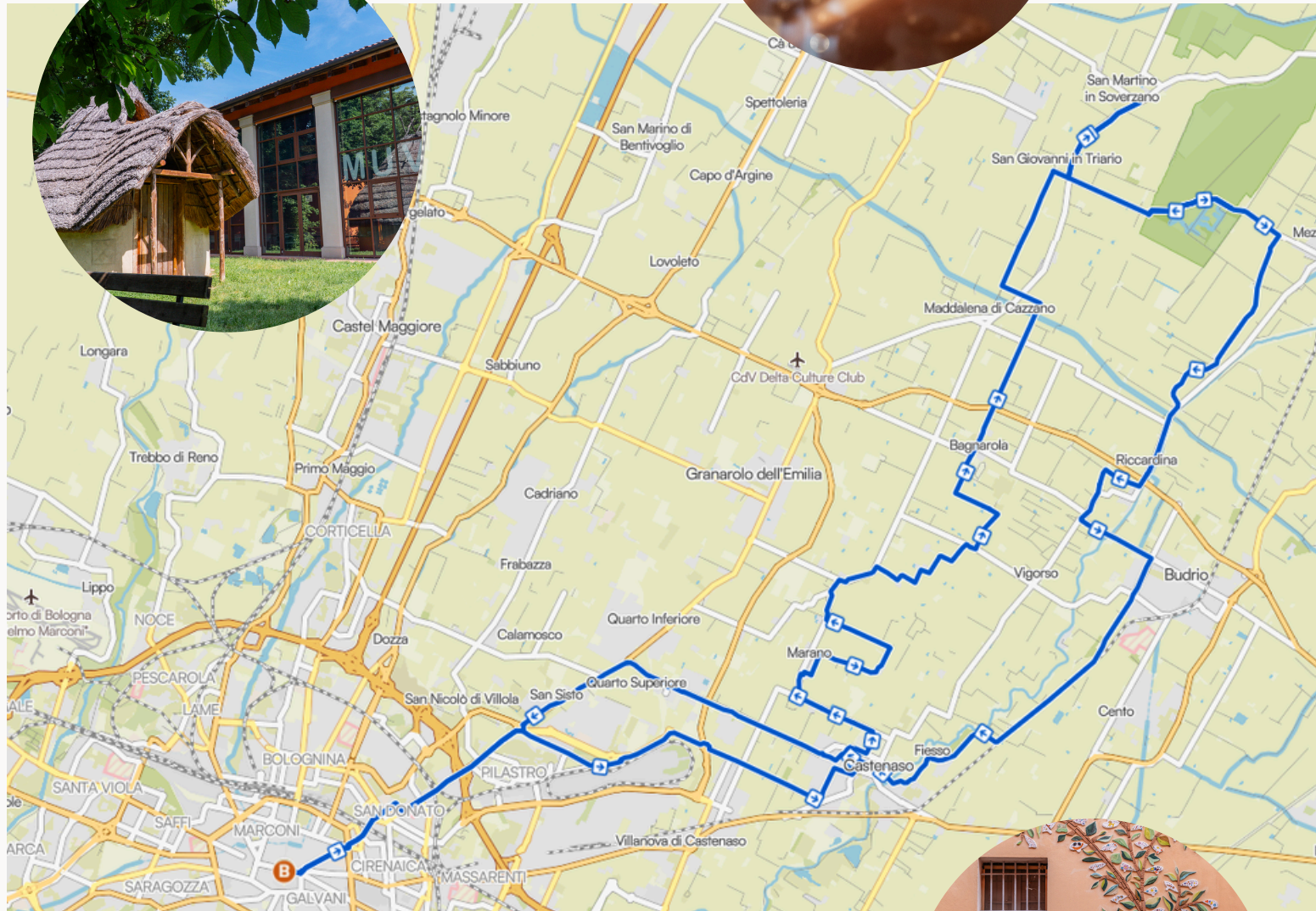
Roadbook

Waters, villas and nature

A loop tour to discover Bologna
beyond Bologna



The map



The route is 68 km long

[Click here to download the GPX track](#)



Or scan the QR code



The itinerary

A loop route that starts in the center of Bologna and heads east, winding through the plains past canals, farmland, and historic villas. The route leads to **Villanova di Castenaso**, home to the **MUV – Museum of Villanovan Civilization**, then continues along country roads and past ancient rural residences such as the Bagnarola villa complex, passing through **San Martino in Soverzano** and, via **Valle Benni**, returning to Bologna via the center of **Budrio**. The route passes by the **Acqua Campus of the Emiliano-Romagnolo Canal** on the Idice river, a site dedicated to experimentation and the sustainable management of water resources.

Route characteristics

Terrain: almost exclusively asphalt

Elevation gain: negligible

Type: linear

Suitable for: gravel bikes, e-bikes, road bikes

Technical data

Distance: 68 km

Travel time: approximately 4.5 hours (excluding stops and visits)

Given the length of the route, it is recommended for experienced cyclists or less experienced cyclists using e-bikes.



The route has been designed to prioritize bike paths and low-traffic secondary roads with mixed traffic. In sections where this was not possible, the route includes short stretches of busier roads. In any case, we recommend paying close attention and always obeying the rules of the road.

Description

The route begins in the center of Bologna, from where you head out along roads leading toward the eastern plain. Soon you reach **Villanova di Castenaso**, home to the **MUV – Museum of Villanovan Civilization**, dedicated to the protohistoric culture that takes its name from this very region.

Leaving Castenaso behind, the route enters the Bologna countryside, winding through cultivated fields and quiet roads ideal for cycling, to reach the important **historic villas of Bagnarola: the Malvezzi Campeggi complex and Villa Ranuzzi Cospi**, passing through **San Giovanni in Triario** and arriving at the castle of **San Martino in Soverzano**.

Passing through **Valle Benni**, you'll then come to the **Acqua Campus of the Emiliano-Romagnolo Canal**, a center dedicated to research and outreach on irrigation techniques and the sustainable use of water in agriculture. Finally, in the center of **Budrio**, you can take a break among the arcaded squares, cafés, and shops.

From here, you'll head back toward Bologna and return to the starting point.



The MUV in Villanova di Castenaso

The **Museum of Villanovan Civilization** is located in **Villanova di Castenaso**, in the province of Bologna, and is an archaeological museum dedicated to the Villanovan civilization, considered the earliest phase of **Etruscan civilization** (9th–7th centuries B.C.). The museum is housed in the former barn of the Casa Sant'Anna rural complex, on the very site where, in 1853, the Bolognese archaeologist **Giovanni Gozzadini** discovered important remains of this ancient culture.

The museum features an exhibition that illustrates the life, traditions, and funerary practices of the **Villanovan people**: on display are numerous artifacts, primarily from the **Marano di Castenaso necropolis**, including bronze objects, everyday tools and grave goods, as well as decorated urns and funerary stelae. These objects shed light on many aspects of **Villanovan society**, such as the distinction between social roles, craft activities, and rituals related to death.

The museum exhibition also utilizes multimedia tools, explanatory panels, reconstructions, and interactive installations that help visitors imagine the life of communities from that era, thereby fulfilling an important **educational and cultural function** by organizing educational workshops for schools, guided tours, conferences, and events dedicated to the history and archaeology of the region.



In-depth look:

The villas of Bagnarola

The **Malvezzi-Campeggi Complex** is located in **Bagnarola**, a hamlet of **Budrio**, in the Bolognese plain. This group of buildings represents one of the most important examples of noble villas in the Bologna countryside, developed between the **16th and 18th centuries**, when aristocratic families built country residences nestled within the agricultural landscape.

The Malvezzi-Campeggi complex includes the **Casino d'Aurelio** and the **Floriano**, featuring decorated and frescoed rooms and spacious architectural spaces. Due to the complex's grandeur and opulence, it has often been called the "**Versailles of Bologna**". Not far away is **Villa Ranuzzi Cospi**, built in the early 18th century, characterized by a striking **loggia** and **porticoed buildings** typical of the country villas of the Bolognese aristocracy.

In the past, these villas served as **places of leisure** and social gatherings for the nobility, where parties, performances, and cultural activities were held. Today, they stand as an important **historical and artistic testament** to the region and continue to host cultural events, contributing to the promotion of the area's historical heritage.



San Giovanni in Triario and San Martino in Soverzano

The **parish church of San Giovanni in Triario** is located in the municipality of **Minerbio**, in the province of Bologna, and is one of the oldest parish churches in the area, likely dating back to the Early Middle Ages.

The building retains the simple, unadorned forms typical of **rural Romanesque architecture**, with brick walls and simple yet evocative spaces. Inside the church is the **Museum of Popular Religiosity**, which houses a collection of objects and documents related to local religious traditions.

The parish church is also known for having been used as a location for several scenes in **Pupi Avati's film The House with Laughing Windows**, a cult classic of Italian crime-horror cinema set in the Emilia-Romagna plain.

The next stop is the **Castle of San Martino dei Manzoli**, an imposing medieval fortress located in the village of **San Martino in Soverzano**, a hamlet in the municipality of Minerbio. It was built in **1411** at the behest of the Bolognese knight **Bartolomeo Manzoli** around the ancient Torre degli Ariosti and restored between **1883** and **1885** by **Alfonso Rubbiani** and **Tito Azzolini**.

The castle combines the characteristics of an aristocratic residence with those of a fortified building, thanks to its **crenellated walls, moat, four corner towers**, and the **drawbridges** that surround it.

The building is set within a **centuries-old park**, and although it is privately owned and not normally open to the public, an annual fair, the **Fiera d'Ottobre**, has been held next to the fortress since the 16th century and is still held today on the first weekend of October.



In-depth look:

The Acqua Campus



Acqua Campus is the scientific research and technology demonstration center of the Consorzio di bonifica per il **Canale Emiliano Romagnolo (CER)**, dedicated to the study, innovation, and sustainable management of water in agriculture and for irrigation purposes. Located in **Mezzolara di Budrio**, Acqua Campus occupies approximately **15 hectares** of land with about **30 experimental fields**, an advanced analytical laboratory, and a multimedia classroom, where precision irrigation technologies, water-saving systems, sensors, and digital tools are tested and demonstrated to help optimize water use based on climatic, soil, and crop requirements.

Acqua Campus serves both as an **experimental center** where techniques are applied and evaluated in real-world conditions and as a **demonstration area** for agricultural businesses and professionals, to promote the transfer of innovation and sustainable practices in agriculture; here, methods for intelligent canal management and solutions addressing environmental challenges related to climate change are also explored.

Budrio, the home of the ocarina

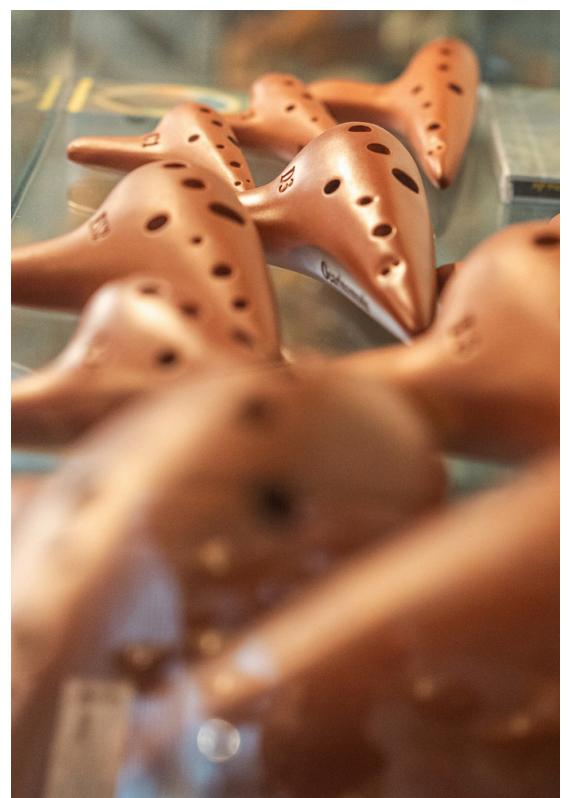
Budrio is a small town situated along the **Idice** River, rich in history, art, and culture. Built atop the site of an ancient Roman and medieval settlement, the **historic center** boasts an elegant 17th- and 18th-century appearance, a testament to its period of greatest economic and cultural splendor between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, when Budrio flourished in part due to its **hemp** industry.

The town is famous above all for being the birthplace of the **ocarina**, the terracotta wind instrument invented here in **1853**: the **Museum of the Ocarina** and Terracotta Instruments is dedicated to this, displaying hundreds of pieces, documents, photographs, and instruments that recount the evolution and international spread of ocarina art, celebrated also through the **Ocarina Festival** dedicated to it.

Budrio is also home to other cultural venues, such as the “**Domenico Inzaghi**” **Civic Art Gallery** and the **Archaeological Museum**, where visitors can admire art collections and artifacts from the region, as well as the **Puppet Museum**, which houses marionettes, stage sets, and objects related to the tradition of folk theater.

The **Teatro Consorziale** is one of the artistic hearts of the city: an elegant historic venue dedicated to theatrical performances, concerts, and festivals, it reflects the importance of music and the cultural scene in city life.

This combination of architectural history, specialized museums, and cultural activities makes **Budrio** an interesting destination for those wishing to explore the artistic heritage and traditions of the Bologna plain.



Thanks for cycling with us!

For more information and itineraries:

eXtraBO

Piazza del Nettuno 1AB, Bologna

+39 0516583109

extrabo@bolognawelcome.it

extrabo.it



Canale
Emiliano
Romagnolo



sustenia
ecologia
applicata



Fondazione
Bologna
Welcome



territori
Bologna
Modena



eXtraBO

VISIT **EMILIA**
ROMAGNA