

When you think of Italy, the first cities that probably come to mind are Rome, Florence and Venice. But there's another city that should definitely be on your list: Bologna.

Bologna is the capital of the Emilia-Romagna region in northern Italy. It's known for its food, its university (the oldest in Europe), and its beautiful historic centre. Here are five reasons why you should visit this amazing city.

#### Food

Bologna is famous for its cuisine. It's the home of ragù alla bolognese (known as Bolognese sauce in English). The city is also known for its tortellini and mortadella (a type of sausage). Food lovers will find plenty of traditional trattorias (informal restaurants) where they can try these delicious dishes.

#### Portici

Bologna has the longest portico (covered walkway) in the world. Portici were built so people could walk through the city centre without getting wet when it rained. Bologna's portici are a great place to escape from the summer heat or the winter cold. They're also a good way to explore the city. Start at Piazza Maggiore and follow the portico to the Santuario di San Luca, a church on a hill outside the city.

#### Towers

Bologna used to have over 100 towers, but today only about 20 are left. The most famous are the Due Torri (Two Towers): the Torre degli Asinelli and the Torre Garisenda. You can climb the 498 steps of the taller tower, the Torre degli Asinelli, for a fantastic view of the city.

#### Music

Bologna has a long musical tradition. In the 17th century, the city was home to one of the first opera houses in Europe. Today, Bologna has a lively music scene. There are lots of concerts and festivals throughout the year. And if you're a fan of classical music, don't miss the chance to see an opera at the Teatro Comunale di Bologna.

#### Art

Bologna has some beautiful art galleries. One of the best is the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna. It has works by famous Italian artists like Raphael and Giotto. The city also has some amazing street art. Take a walk around the university area and you'll see colourful murals on the walls of the buildings.

So next time you're planning a trip to Italy, make sure you visit Bologna. You won't be disappointed!