



26 Reasons to visit Emilia-Romagna, Italy's hidden gem, in 2026

Tucked away from the usual tourist trails, Emilia-Romagna will be one of Europe's most desirable destinations in 2026, combining global events with authentic Italian excellence. Rimini will welcome *Velocity 2026*, the leading global cycling summit, confirming the region's role as a hub for future mobility and sustainable travel. In nearby Ravenna, *Footprints Ravenna 2026* turns sustainability into practice, making eco-responsible choices easier, more fun and rewarding for tourists amid UNESCO-listed mosaics.

The legendary Motor Valley continues to attract car enthusiasts from across the globe, celebrating its heritage with the *Motor Valley Fest 2026* in Modena. At the same time, food lovers can immerse themselves in the heart of the Food Valley, home to Parmigiano Reggiano, Parma Ham and traditional balsamic vinegar, through unique tasting experiences and farm visits.

From gastronomy and innovation to motors and art, Emilia-Romagna in 2026 is a destination where passion, heritage and creativity converge. Here are 26 inspiring reasons to make Emilia-Romagna your next destination in 2026:

1. Take a walking tour of Rimini, the Roman city by the sea

Rimini's layered history unfolds beautifully on foot. A walking tour reveals the town's ancient Roman roots through landmarks like the Arch of Augustus and the Tiberius Bridge, both astonishingly well-preserved.

Rimini isn't 'just a beach.' Lace up and time-travel from the Arch of Augustus to the Tiberius Bridge, where a Roman grid still shapes a lively Adriatic capital. Cafés hum, piazzas spill into alleyways, and every corner gives you a clean, filmable line between antiquity and the present, sand still in frame.

Why Now? A renewed focus on the city's Roman heritage. Learn more [here](#).

2. Test drive a Ferrari in Maranello

Driving a Ferrari in Maranello is more than a thrill, it's a rite of passage for motor enthusiasts. On the official 40mi (65km) route, visitors will navigate winding country roads and mountain passes with an expert guide. The experience is immersive, with visits to the Ferrari Museum and factory grounds adding depth to the adrenaline. It's a celebration of speed and style in the heart of Motor Valley.

Why Now? Year-round programs integrate themes of automotive design and Electric Vehicles. [Learn more here.](#)

3. Wander Bologna's Quadrilatero, taste of place

The Quadrilatero market in Bologna is a sensory feast, with narrow alleys brimming with fresh produce, cured meats, handmade pasta and the chatter of locals. It's a place where visitors can taste, linger and learn. Just around the corner, Osteria del Sole awaits. Operating since 1465, it's the city's oldest bar, where guests bring their own food and sip wine in a no-frills, history-soaked setting.

Why Now? Slow shopping and craft skills resonate post-pandemic. [Learn more here.](#)

4. Hike to Cascade del Dardagna, a 328ft (100m) waterfall hidden in beech forests

Nestled in the Apennines, Cascade del Dardagna is a multi-tiered waterfall that tumbles dramatically through ancient beech forests. The hike to reach it is peaceful and shaded, a perfect escape for nature lovers seeking serenity and spectacle in equal measure and the payoff fills your frame.

Why Now? Scenic, attainable hikes inspire nature lovers. [Learn more here.](#)

5. Explore the village of Dozza, an open-air art gallery

Dozza is a village like no other and it is worth discovering how a tiny village built a big cultural brand, one wall at a time. The village transforms its medieval streets into a vibrant canvas, where contemporary art meets centuries-old architecture.

Strolling through Dozza is like stepping into an open-air gallery with over 100 murals painted directly onto its buildings.

Why Now? A long-running biennale regenerates a rural region. [Learn more here.](#)

6. Velo-city Rimini 2026 sets the cycling agenda

Velocity Rimini 2026 is set to be a landmark event in sustainable mobility, bringing together urban planners, cycling advocates and policymakers from around the world. The conference will explore how cities can become more bike-friendly, inclusive and

environmentally conscious. Rimini's seaside setting adds a relaxed backdrop to serious innovation.

Why Now? The world's leading cycling-policy summit heads to Rimini, June 16–19, 2026. [Learn more here.](#)

7. Visit the Ferrari Museums in Modena and Maranello

Dive into Ferrari's world at the Museums in Modena and Maranello, where you'll marvel at racing icons from classics to cutting-edge supercars. Learn about design and engineering milestones, observe interactive displays, participate in simulators, and participate in guided tours that reveal the meticulous craft of an iconic brand.

Then shift to Motor Valley Fest in Modena, where Ferrari holds court with Lamborghini, Ducati and Maserati power exhibitions. There will be test drives, e-sport activities and talks on innovation and sustainability from leading designers and industry insiders. This high-octane blend of heritage and future focuses on speed, style, substance, where piazzas become open-air showrooms and the excitement is electric.

Why Now? Discover the automotive genius behind the iconic brand. [Learn more here.](#) and [here.](#)

8. Take a boat tour through the flamingo-filled wetlands of Parco del Delta del Po

Parco del Delta del Po is Europe's largest wetland ecosystem and exploring it by boat is a serene, unforgettable experience. Visitors will glide through its labyrinth of canals and lagoons, spotting flamingos, herons and other wildlife thriving in the protected habitat. A must-see for wildlife enthusiasts.

Why Now? Migration patterns align with demand for low-impact trips. [Learn more here.](#)

9. Discover the Byzantine gold depicted in the mosaics of Ravenna's Basilica di San Vitale and Mausoleo di Galla Placidia

Ravenna's mosaics are among the most exquisite in the world. Inside the Basilica di San Vitale, tiles depict biblical scenes. Nearby, the Mausoleo di Galla Placidia offers a more intimate experience, its ceiling a starry night rendered in glass. These UNESCO-listed sites are a testament to Ravenna's role as a Byzantine capital and a treasure trove of sacred art.

Why Now? Enjoy the splendor of Byzantine mosaics and contemporary artworks. Learn [more here.](#)

10. Sip Lambrusco in Modena's rolling hills while learning the art of winemaking

Modena's hills are home to generations of winemakers who treat Lambrusco not just as a drink, but as a tradition. When visiting a vineyard in Modena guests will be able to learn about the art of winemaking from passionate locals, walk among vines and taste sparkling wines that pair perfectly with local cheeses and cured meats. It's a warm, authentic experience that connects you to the land and its flavours. In Modena's soft hills, Lambrusco speaks of soil and salt, pairings with cured meats, lessons in bubbles and balance. There are vineyard walks, hands-on tastings, and makers who talk legacy without the cliché.

Why Now? Rediscover an ancient wine, having a modern Renaissance. Learn more [here.](#)

11. Get lost in Castell'Arquato

Castell'Arquato is a beautifully preserved medieval town perched on a ridge overlooking the Val d'Arda. Its cobbled streets wind past stone houses, towers and a Romanesque church, all set against sweeping countryside views. It's quiet and atmospheric, ideal for a slow wander or a glass of local wine in one of the cellars carved into the hillside. This is the quiet Italy travelers crave: authentic, lived-in, sippable.

Why Now? Find an authentic Italy, off the beaten path. Learn more [here.](#)

12. Taste Comacchio's eel, from kiln to plate

Comacchio is a charming lagoon town, known as 'Little Venice', which is built on thirteen islets, connected by bridges and canals. Its pastel-coloured houses reflect in the water, and traditional fishing huts dot the landscape. The town is famous for its eel dishes, recognised by UNESCO for their cultural significance. Dining canal-side on marinated eel or risotto di mare, visitors will experience a slice of Emilia-Romagna that's both tranquil and deeply rooted in tradition.

In the Manifattura dei Marinati, twelve historic fireplaces tell a smoky tale. The marinated eel, now a Slow Food Presidium, anchors menus and memory. It's food heritage with heat, craft and controversy, made for narrative-driven dining pages.

Why Now? Dine on UNESCO-recognized dishes in a quiet alternative to Venice. Learn more [here.](#)

13. Stand before Renaissance masterpieces at the National Gallery of Parma

The National Gallery of Parma, located within the Palazzo della Pilotta, offers a significant collection of Renaissance art. Visitors can view notable works by Correggio and Parmigianino, alongside pieces by Leonardo da Vinci and Canaletto. The gallery provides a comprehensive overview of Italian artistic development across several centuries.

Why Now? Engage your senses on a comprehensive journey through Italian art history. Learn more [here](#).

14. Join a pasta-making class in Bologna

Bologna is the birthplace of tagliatelle al ragù, and there's no better way to connect with its culinary heritage than by hand rolling pasta. In a hands-on class, participants can learn to knead, shape and cut fresh dough under the guidance of a local pasta maker, called a sfoglina. The experience is warm and communal, often ending with a shared meal and a glass of wine.

Why Now? Skillcations are all the rage in 2026. Learn more [here](#).

15. Wander under the world's longest portico to the hilltop sanctuary of Madonna di San Luca

Climbing the steps to the Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca is one of Bologna's most iconic and rewarding experiences. Visitors can make like a local and take the pilgrimage-like walk not just for spiritual significance but for the sheer beauty of the journey. The route winds through the world's longest portico, passing chapels, quiet corners and glimpses of the city below. It's also a perfect sport for a picnic or to enjoy the sunset while soaking up the scenery. Its urban pilgrimage meets skyline theatre, with golden-hour Bologna unfurling beneath the arches.

Why Now? Wellness and culture can be infused into any activity - even one as simple as an evening walk. Learn more [here](#).

16. The Anatomical Theatre of Bologna where Baroque meets science

Built in the 17th century, the theatre's ornate design contrasts with its clinical purpose, creating a space that's both eerie and beautiful. It's a fascinating glimpse into the history of medicine and the reverence once given to scientific inquiry. A study hall carved like an opera set: wooden statues, a professor's chair, and centuries of anatomical learning. The Archiginnasio's theatre is where curiosity meets courage - perfect for features that splice beauty with the birth of modern medicine.

Why Now? There is beauty to be found in the halls of education and science. Learn more [here](#).

17. Pomposa Abbey: Stillness in colour

A bell tower rising from wetlands offering a striking silhouette against the sky, a church where mosaics glow against monastic hush. Pomposa is a day trip from Ferrara that reads like a meditation - strong on lines, texture and time. It's a quiet, contemplative place where history whispers through stone and glass.

Why Now? Beyond the bustle of city centers, contemplation awaits in the quietest of places. Learn more [here](#).

18. Join a truffle hunt and taste your finds with a rustic lunch

In the wooded hills near Bologna or Rimini, truffle hunting is both a tradition and a thrill. Guided by trained dogs and passionate locals, visitors can search for these elusive culinary treasures beneath the forest floor. The experience is earthy and immersive, often followed by a rustic meal where the freshly unearthed truffles are shaved over pasta or eggs, and lunch is washed down with some local wine.

Why Now? Forage-to-table and hyper-local dining is the latest culinary trend. Learn more [here](#).

19. Visit Italy in Miniature play it big

A pop classic reframed, Italy in Miniature is a quirky theme park that offers a scaled-down tour of the country's most iconic landmarks. From the Colosseum to the Leaning Tower of Pisa, each model is crafted with care and detail. Interactive exhibits and boat rides through tiny canals add a playful touch, making it ideal for families or curious travelers. It's a light-hearted way to explore Italy's geography and architecture in one afternoon.

Why Now? Nostalgia and visual wit make pleasant travel companions. Learn more [here](#).

20. Cesenatico: beach with a blueprint

Cesenatico is a seaside town with a golden beach and a historic canal designed by Leonardo da Vinci. The beach is perfect for sunbathing, swimming or enjoying seafood at one of the many beach clubs. The town itself offers a blend of maritime history and relaxed charm, with fishing boats bobbing in the harbour and gelato

shops lining the promenade. It's a laid-back escape with a touch of genius.

Why Now? How many towns boast canals designed by da Vinci? Learn more [here](#).

21. Take some quiet time at the first public library in Cesena

The Malatestiana Library in Cesena is like a time machine, it was Italy's first public library and is now an UNESCO-listed site. Founded in the 15th century, it houses chained books in their original wooden desks, preserving the atmosphere of Renaissance scholarship. The architecture is austere yet elegant, with frescoes and vaulted ceilings adding gravitas. Visiting feels like stepping into a time capsule of learning and quiet reverence.

Why Now? This library was awarded UNESCO Memory of the World relevance in the AI era. Learn more [here](#).

22. Follow in the footsteps of Fellini and Byron

Here you will find two compact museums with two outsized imaginations. Fellini's dream machinery in Rimini; Byron's exile and fevered romance in Ravenna.

At Museo Fellini Museum, in Rimini, visitors can explore the surreal world of Italy's most visionary filmmaker through props, sketches and film clips. In Ravenna, the Byron Museum traces the poet's time in Italy, revealing his romantic entanglements and legacy. Together, they offer a poetic and cinematic journey through Emilia-Romagna.

Why Now? Museum storytelling is aligned with strong national hooks. Learn more [here](#).

23. Trekking on the ancient pilgrims' routes

Emilia-Romagna's ancient pilgrimage routes wind through forests, villages and sanctuaries, offering a blend of spiritual reflection and natural beauty. Whether you follow the Via degli Dei or the Cammino di Francesco, each path is steeped in history and tranquillity. Trekking here is not just physical but a meditative experience that connects you to centuries of devotion

Why Now? Sometimes we all need to pause for rest and reflection. Learn more [here](#).

24. Get lost in Labirinto della Masone

Step into the world of wonder at Labirinto della Masone, the world's largest maze made entirely out of bamboo. Designed by art publisher Franco Maria Ricci, the maze is nestled in the countryside close to Parma and covers seventeen acres (seven hectares). At its heart lies a stunning cultural complex that includes Ricci's private art collection, featuring works from the Renaissance to the 20th Century, as well as a library of typography and graphic arts.

Why Now? Enjoy the best of landscape and culture in one controlled location. Learn more [here](#).

25. Put your best foot forward in Ravenna

Travelers are invited to take part in the Footprints Campaign in 2026, where they can explore Ravenna over five days through plays, walks and bike rides while bearing sustainability in mind. Curated itineraries will trace the stories, landscapes and traditions that define this region of Italy, with sustainability in mind.

Why Now? This citywide program, running through 2026, focuses on sustainable tourism. Learn more [here](#).

26. Slow travel in the quintessential Italy

Find Italy's essence off the main stage in Emilia-Romagna's villages. Swap queues for quiet lanes, baroque bell towers and kitchens where lunch is still handmade. Walk stone alleys to family trattorie, meet winemakers and artisans, wake to church bells not tour buses. From Apennine hamlets to Po Delta fishing towns, choose trains and trails over tick-lists: slow, local, generous—where guests become neighbors and time finally breathes.

Why Now: Slow travel is overtourism's cure. Learn more [here](#).

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For further information on Emilia Romagna, visit www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it/en

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