

# THE LANDS OF THE ALTO FERRARESE

## Circular route Ferrara - Cento



Cento, Piazza del Guercino e Palazzo del Governatore

### 3 GPS + ROAD BOOK [www.ferrarabike.com](http://www.ferrarabike.com) Technical notes



**Depart:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Arrive:** Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

**Length:** 93,390 km

**Difficulty level:** suitable for everyone. Level route partly along cycle path (FE 101 Burana), partly along minor roads. Section on dirt track along the Cavo Napoleonico, on the return to Santa Bianca.



[www.ferrairainfo.com](http://www.ferrairainfo.com)

**Ferrara:** Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303

**Cento:** Via Guercino, 41 • tel. 051 6843334

#### Connections with other routes

**2** Circular route Ferrara - Bondeno - Destra Po



#### Railways

##### Bologna/Venezia

Bicycle transport available. Please check timetables and availability. Info: 892021 • [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

This circular route unwinds to the west of **Ferrara**, the area known as the Alto Ferrarese, higher ground where the waters have been easier to control throughout history. The journey reaches into the province of Modena, crossing agricultural country dominated by fruit and grain production, between the Panaro to the north and the Reno to the south. Its artistic destination is the town of **Cento** with its own great houses, museums and castle.



The first part of this route is the same as that of the 'Great Loop of Water', Burana-Destra Po (see route n° 2, p.38). At **Bondeno** take the road that runs alongside the Panaro and head for **Finale Emilia**, leaving the province of Ferrara for a moment. From up on the embankment we can see the Santa Bianca sluice and the water works of the same name, part of the Burana land reclamation. Water is really the dominant element of this route, although the watercourses are contained behind high artificial embankments.

**Finale Emilia** is an old waterfront town, worth rediscovering. It is dominated by the bulk of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Castello delle Rocche, built by the same Bartolino da Novara to whom we owe the Este Castle in Ferrara; it is one of the best preserved in the region.

From Finale Emilia cross the Panaro back into Ferrarese territory, and after **Alberone**, **Dodici Morelli** and **Renazzo**, we get to **Cento**.

Guercino and his studio, *The Dinner at Emmaus*, Cento, Municipal Gallery



Cento - a little jewel of art, architecture, cuisine and commerce - has ancient roots but they are not well documented. It was owned by the Bishop of Bologna in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, then given to the Estensi by Pope Alessandro VI Borgia as part of his settlement for the marriage of his daughter Lucrezia to Alfonso d'Este. In the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries it saw years of great splendour thanks to the rebuilding of the town, as well as a flourishing artistic and cultural life, when the great painter Giovan Francesco Barbieri, known as 'il Guercino', was active.

An old Cento tradition is its Carnevale, today an internationally known event.

After visiting Cento, on the return leg we use the minor roads with little traffic through **Dosso** and then **Molino Albergati**.

Turn towards **Santa Bianca** along the track that runs alongside the Cavo Napoleonico and back to **Bondeno**, and then to **Ferrara** along the FE101 Burana cycle track.



Sant'Agostino, Bosco della Panfilia

### **Diversion to the Bosco della Panfilia**

These woods at Sant'Agostino can be visited at any time of the year, but preferably in autumn or spring. The entrance is beside the Cavo Napoleonico, and the wooded area extends along a riverside terrace of the Reno, which has determined the vegetation. The river takes a clear turn to the south-east here, and forms the southern border of the Province of Ferrara.

Santa Bianca, water works

