

THE DESTRA PO ROUTE

From Ferrara to Gorino Ferrarese



Mesola, Castello della Mesola

Leaving from the historic centre of the bewitching city of **Ferrara**, this route runs as far as the sea at **Gorino**, a long and extraordinary journey along the right-hand embankment of the Po that follows that river through to its Delta. A journey that encourages the enjoyment of the plains countryside and leads us to discover flora,

1 GPS + ROAD BOOK www.ferrarabike.com Technical notes

Depart: Ferrara, Piazza Savonarola

Arrive: Goro, località Gorino Ferrarese

Length: 93,220 km

Difficulty level: suitable for everyone. Level route mainly along cycle paths, with short stretches on minor roads. The section at the end of the route is on dirt track.



Railways

Bologna/Venezia • Ferrara/Codigoro

Bicycle transport available.

Please check timetables and availability.

Info: 892021 • www.trenitalia.com

800 91 50 30 • www.fer.it



www.ferrarainfo.com

Ferrara: Castello Estense • tel. 0532 299303

Mesola: Ptta S. Spirito, 3 • tel. 0533 993358

Goro: Via Cavicchini • tel. 0533 995030

Places of Interest

Ro: Mill on the Po • **Serravalle:** the Delta Gateway • **Mesola:** Estense Castle, Gran Bosco della Mesola Woods • **Gorino Ferrarese:** Old Lighthouse, Goro Lighthouse.

Connections with other routes

7 Ro - Copparo - Ostellato

10 Mesola - Lidi di Comacchio - Comacchio



fauna, traditions, history, food, all in their distinct contexts.

The Destra Po Route is part of the Eurovelo network, 12 cycle routes right across Europe, connecting all the countries of the continent; this is the central part of European Cycle Route no. 8, which runs from Athens to Cadiz.



FURTHER INFORMATION

The **River Po**, once known as the Eridano, springs from the northern slopes of Monviso, and at 652 km is the longest river in Italy.

Along its course, which flows basically from west to east, it crosses the Padana Plain lengthways and flows into the Adriatic through a wide delta. The Po enters Ferrarese territory at Stellata di Bondeno, where it meets its last tributary, the Panaro; on its final stages the river dominates wide areas of intensively cultivated reclaimed land.

Capacity:
on average between 1200 - 1300 m³/sec.

Height:
the average height of the river bed in respect to the countryside is +1 metre in Bondeno and Ferrara, and +2.5 metres in the Basso Ferrarese. At its fullest in October 2000, the level of water at Pontelagoscuro rose to 11.8 metres above sea level.

Embankments:
average height 10m at Bondeno, 6.5m at Goro.

This long route is divided into 4 stages.

FROM THE CASTLE TO THE RIVER

Ferrara to Francolino • 10,190 km

In **Ferrara** the rhythm of everyday life seems dictated by the silent procession of hundreds of bicycles, the favourite transport of the inhabitants, which helps (as well as the many green areas, parks and historic gardens) to make Ferrara an ideal city for pleasant strolls and excursions.

From the Este castle, symbol of the city, take the roads to the north leading to the city walls, and on the other side of which the green expanse of the G. Bassani Urban Park. We cross the countryside on the cycle tracks numbered FE202 & FE203 as far as the Po at **Francolino**, where we meet the cycle tourism route FE20, the Destra Po.

THE LANDSCAPE OF "IL MULINO DEL PO"

Francolino to Serravalle • 36,570 km

Out of **Francolino**, which was once an important commercial port, we shall be cycling along the embankment of the river. After Fossadalbero the river runs for some kilome-

tres directly between its embankments, with no waterside area: as it happens, the river is always rising in level because of the sedimentary material carried in it, and the embankments grow ever higher, so as to take on the appearance of a long green wall.

At **Ro** there is a bridge over to Polesella in the Veneto. On the right-hand side stretches the nature reserve named '**Mulino sul Po**' which includes the area immediately around the river which featured in the celebrated *chef d'oeuvre* of Riccardo Bacchelli, '*Il Mulino del Po*' in which he recounts the travails of generations of country people. You can visit a faithful reproduction of the mill, anchored in the tourist marina, evoking those that existed on the river over a hundred years ago, with their mill-wheels for grinding corn.



Rest area with refreshments, bike hire, tourism information point.

After Ro the river runs for a good stretch directly against the right-hand embankment; we head for Guarda, with the imposing bulk of its 18th century church that has its facade turned to the river. After a few riverside

houses we arrive at **Berra**.

After Berra comes **Serravalle**, an important point because here the Po forks for the first time, the beginning of its Delta; one branch heads north towards Venice, one runs south and is called the Po di Goro. In the riverside area is the '**Porta del Delta**' an area laid out especially for fishing, from which we can enjoy a wide view over the wedge of land within the fork, known as the *Island of Ariano*.

AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE DELTA

Serravalle to Mesola • 20,930 km

After Serravalle is the village of **Ariano Ferrarese**, extending between the Canale Bianco and the right-hand embankment of the Po di Goro. It is joined to the village of Ariano Polesine over on the Venetian side by a modern bridge.

At Ariano Ferrarese we take the road that goes alongside the Po di Goro towards Mesola.

Mesola is recognisable from far away with its great **Estense castle** facing onto the river. The castle was constructed on the orders of Duke Alfonso II d'Este in the 16th Century as a country retreat, adjoining an immense hunting reserve. The entire property was surrounded by walls and towers, and it is assumed that the Duke wanted to build a town here, but never completed it because of the sudden end of Este power.

The castle is home to a **Centre for Environmental Education** and the **Deer Museum**.

RIVER HEADING FOR THE SEA

Mesola to Gorino Ferrarese • 25,620 km

Leaving Mesola Castle behind, the route tackles the wide bend that the Po di Goro makes to the north, and then turns south again for around 10 km, marking the boundary of one of the most significant natural areas in the **Po Delta Park**, rich in lagoons of

both salt and fresh water, and woods of great importance. From the embankment we can see to the right the long and dense scrubland of the **Bosco di Santa Giustina**.



Diversion: to visit the Gran Bosco della Mesola, come down off the embankment and continue along **route N° 10**, p.70.

After only a few kilometres we arrive at **Goro**, a village that looks out onto the '**Sacca**' of the same name and is characterised even today by its busy fishing activity; then carry on towards **Gorino Ferrarese**, passing on the left the pontoon bridge that leads to Gorino Veneto.

Gorino Ferrarese is a village dedicated to fishing and to nature tourism, a landscape in transition between dry land, lagoon, river, and sea. From here you can take a boat out to discover the Delta environment at the point where the river finally joins the sea.

Carry on along the track to the old lighthouse (**Lanterna Vecchia**) which once guided shipping, although it is now 4 km from the open sea.

Gorino Ferrarese

