

THE DESTRA PO CYCLEWAY km 123,810

From **Stellata di Bondeno** to **Gorino Ferrarese** this route crosses the whole of the province of Ferrara, cruising along the embankments of the Po River in very close contact with nature. Through cultural centres, and countryside, at every turn of the pedals the territory unrolls like in a well shot film, rich in the rarified atmosphere typical of the zone.

Start: Bondeno, loc. Stellata **On Roadways:** km 20,170 (16%)
Arrival: Goro, loc. Gorino Ferrarese **On cycle track:** km 103,640 (81%)
Length of Route: km 123,810 **On unmetalled roads:** km 3,280 (3%)

A **Stellata** is right next to the river. Its most prestigious building is its castle, the **Rocca Possente**, built here at the extreme north of Estense territory to guard their possessions inland. Don't miss the **Archaeological Museum** with finds from the area over different historical ages; it is located in the former house of Virgilio Ariosto, son of the famous poet Ludovico.



B The embankment road leaves the Po for a few kilometres to run south along the **Panaro**. This river rises in the Modenese part of the Appennines, and debouches into the Po at one of its most picturesque points, wrapped in a gallery of poplar and willow.

C **Bondeno** is an agricultural centre whose fortunes are inextricably linked to the Po nearby; it is the most ancient inhabited site in the province. Archaeology shows that the area was populated in the Neolithic era, the Bronze Age, Iron Age, and in Roman times. After that, Bondeno was an Estense possession, fortified for defence.

D Here begins a long straight road, with good views over the water. The next thing we see is the **Bosco di Porporana reserve**, an example of riverbank woodland and once part of the Ferrara course of the Po, where there are splendid surviving examples of farnia oak, elm, black and white poplar, mulberry and willow.

E **Diversión:** at Francolino we can come down off the embankment and take the cycle track to Ferrara. This joins with the route from the **City Walls to the River Po**, described above.

F At **Fossadalbero** is one of the Este family's former 'delizie', their country retreats, today the 'Country Golf'; this is very probably the place that saw the beginnings of the ill-starred love affair between Ugo and Parisina, respectively son and second wife of Marquis Nicolò III d'Este.

G Over the bridge that connects **Ro** to Polesella is the expanse of nature reserve known as the the 'Mulino del Po', which includes the area immediately around the river and the zone surrounding, made famous in the great novel by Riccardo Bacchelli, '*Il Mulino del Po*'. In the tourist marina you can visit the mill moored there, a faithful reproduction of those seen on the Po over 100 years ago, with machinery for grinding corn. The area is laid out for visitors with a café, bicycle hire and a tourist information point.

	Roadways	Cycle track	Unmetalled roads
A	0,000		START from Stellata, Rocca Possente. Towards Bondeno along via Argine Po.
	0,410		Continue along the road at the bottom of the embankment.
B	1,440		Turn left towards Malcantone and pass the Pilastresi water plant.
	6,860		Bear left and continue on the embankment (drinking fountain at the bottom of the embankment).
	9,230		Come off the embankment and bear left towards Bondeno.
C	9,580		Once you are in Bondeno turn first to the right and then left to cross the bridge over the Panaro. Then turn left again.
	10,100		At the fork, bear left and continue on the embankment of the Panaro.
	13,250		Bear left staying on the embankment of the Panaro and continue along the cycle route.
D	16,670		Cross the Cavo Napoleonico and go back to the cycle route on the left, continue along the embankment.
	32,900		Continue along the embankment.
	33,690		Once you have passed the Canale Boicelli (Biconca) cross carefully the SS 16 road towards Pontelagoscuro.
	34,470		Once you have passed the railway line and are back on the embankment, continue into via Ricostruzione.
	35,100		Continue straight on and go back to the road along the embankment.
	35,220		Near the Oasi Isola Bianca continue along the embankment.
E	39,300		When you are in Francolino continue along the embankment.
F	40,130		Continue along the cycle route approaching the villages of Pescara, Sabbioni, Fossadalbero and Zocca.
G	50,870		Arrival at Ro. Continue along the embankment undercrossing the bridge on the river Po.
	70,400		Continue straight on.

H The ferry at **Berra** is situated on the site of what was a mooring for the vessels that transported goods along the river. The river was the fastest and most economic means of transport in the era of poor quality unmade roads.

I Right by the river at **Serravalle**, where the Po splits in two for the first time to produce the Delta, there is the 'Porta del Delta' tourism centre, equipped especially for fishing. From here there is a wide vista over the wedge of land between the two branches, known as the *Isola di Ariano*.

L The village of **Ariano Ferrarese** lies between the Canale Bianco and the right-hand embankment of the Po di Goro; it is joined to the village of Ariano Polesine, in the province of Rovigo, by a modern bridge.

M **Mesola** can be recognised from a long way away by the majestic bulk of its Estense castle, built on the orders of Duke Alfonso II d'Este at the end of the 16th century on the edge of an immense hunting ground. The whole of the property was enclosed by walls and towers, and it is presumed that the Duke intended to build a city here, but the project was not completed because of the unexpected end of Este rule in the region. The castle is home to the Centre for Environmental Education and the Deer Museum.



From Mesola Castle, the route tackles the wide bend that the Po di Goro makes towards the north, to then turn south for a little over 10 km, outlining one of the most significant natural areas of the **Po Delta Park**, rich in fresh and salty water wetlands, lagoons, and woodlands of great importance. From the embankment we can also see on the right the long and luxuriant woodland of the **Bosco di Santa Giustina**.

N The village of **Goro** looks out onto the Sacca (cove) of the same name, and was founded in the first half of the 18th century between the river and the sea. Today it is a modern port which retains traces of the fishing village it once was. Fishing and mussel farming are the mainstays of its economy.

O **Gorino Ferrarese**, a village inhabited since 1870, is devoted to fishing and to nature tourism, it is an environment of transition between dry land, lagoons, the river and the sea. From here you can take a boat to discover the natural environments of the Delta as far as the point where the waters of the river lose themselves in those of the sea.



P The Old Lighthouse, the last point on our journey, was replaced by the **new lighthouse** (in the photo) which is nearer the sea. It can be reached on foot or by boat; it shows how the coastline has been advancing naturally into the sea.

	Roadways	Cycle track	Unmetalled roads
H	71,470		When you arrive at Berra , at the mooring point of the River Po ferry, continue along the embankment.
	76,070		Continue along the embankment.
I	76,370		Arrival at Serravalle. Continue along the embankment.
	84,580		Continue along the embankment.
	85,600		Continue along the embankment.
L	85,860		At Ariano Ferrarese continue along the road parallel to the river Po towards Mesola.
	89,720		Stay on the embankment and continue along the cycle route.
	94,220		Once you have come off the embankment, continue to the left towards Mesola.
	97,300		Stay on the embankment and continue along the cycle route.
M	97,720		Arrival at Mesola. Continue along the embankment and pass the bridge on the SS 309 Romea.
	109,220		Continue along the embankment.
	111,660		Continue along the embankment of the river Po. <i>Diversion for Idrovora Pescarina, Santa Giustina, Torre Abate.</i>
N	114,930		Continue along the embankment after the village of Goro.
	118,460		Continue along the embankment with the pontoon bridge that leads to Gorino Veneto on your left.
O	118,610		At Gorino Ferrarese continue along the embankment flanking the village.
	120,530		Once you have come off the embankment, go beyond the car park and continue towards the sluice.
	120,810		Cross the sluice pushing your bicycle and continue along the dirt track.
P	123,810		Arrival at the Lanterna Vecchia di Gorino.