

7. Santo Stefano

Via Santo Stefano 24, Bologna

This complex, also known as the “seven churches,” is on the site of a Roman temple dedicated to Isis. It brings together religious buildings of various epochs, ranging from late antiquity to modern times. According to tradition it was founded by the Bishop Petronius in the 5th-century as a sort of devotional pilgrimage through the stations of the Passion of Christ. From the church of the Crucifix, of Lombard origin, you accede to the Crypt, housing the remains of the early martyrs Vitale and Agricola. Next you enter the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which contained, in its small central temple, the remains of St. Petronius, which are now in the Basilica of San Petronio. The church of Saints Vitale and Agricola contains the sepulchres of these two early Christian martyrs. From here you go on to Pilate's courtyard, which recalls the place where Christ was condemned. The church of the Trinity contains a 16th-century wooden *Adoration of the Magi* by Simone of the Crucifixes. Next we find the Cloister of the Benedictines enclosing a double order of columns with capitols decorated with plant, animal and human motifs, said to have inspired Dante for some of the lost souls in his *Inferno*. Finally, the Museum of Santo Stefano has a



8. Corpus Domini

Via Tagliapietre 21, Bologna

Dating to 1478, the church preserves the incorrupted body of St. Caterina de' Vigri (1413-1463), who founded, in 1456, the first convent of the Poor Clares sisters in Bologna; she is the co-patron saint of the city. The fine Renaissance façade is embellished by terracotta decorations of the portal, dating to the time of the original construction. Also noteworthy are paintings by Franceschini, including the well-known *Transit of St. Joseph* (1692), and Lodovico Carracci, as well as the tomb of the physicist Luigi Galvani and Laura Bassi, the celebrated 18th-century scientist.

www.santuariocorpusdomini.it

9. Santa Maria della Vita

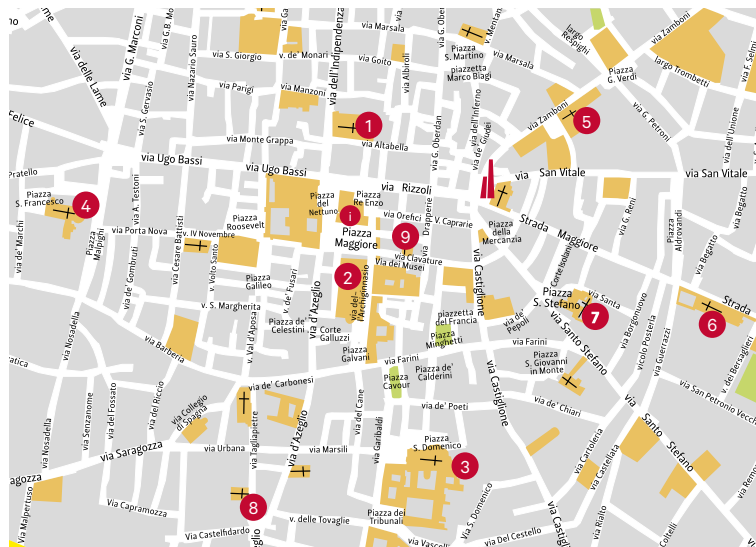
Via Clavature 10, Bologna

In 1261 Riniero Barcobini Fasani, a Franciscan friar and reformer, founded the Brotherhood of the *Battuti Bianchi* (flagellants) and opened a hospital for the infirm and pilgrims. This was also the origin of the church, a major example of Bolognese Baroque, crowned by a majestic dome designed by Bibiena and housing the celebrated sculpture group *Lamentation of the Dead Christ* (1463) by Niccolò dell'Arca, whose dramatic force led Gabriele D'Annunzio to describe it as a “scream in stone”. Alongside the church is the Oratory, with the sculpture group *Transit of the Virgin* by Alfonso Lombardi and the Museum of Health care and Assistance.

www.genusbononiae.it



For more information on Bologna's countless churches: bolognawelcome.com



Churches of Bologna

Take a walk among the main churches and basilicas of the city centre, buildings rich in history and housing inestimable artistic treasures.



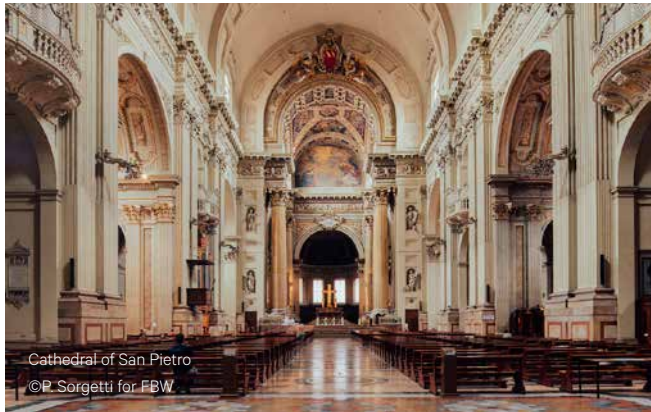
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1. San Pietro

Via dell'Indipendenza 7, Bologna

The Baroque façade has, on either side, two large statues of Saints Peter and Paul. Probably of early Christian origin, the church is embellished with paintings by Prospero Fontana (1579), Ludovico Carracci (1618), Marcantonio Franceschini (1728) and Donato Creti (1740) and two sculptures of special interest, a wooden crucifix between the Virgin and St. John Evangelist (12th century) and a Lamentation of the Dead Christ (1522-1527) by Alfonso Lombardi. The rooms of the cathedral treasury display a precious collection of priestly vestments, episcopal insignia, sacred articles and furnishings used in holy services. One of the main features of the cathedral is the bell tower, 70 meters high, erected in the early 13th century around a pre-existing, 10th century cylindrical tower. The tower, the second-tallest in Bologna after the Torre degli Asinelli, affords one of the best views of city.



2. San Petronio

Piazza Maggiore, Bologna

In order to build the church dedicated to the city's patron saint (who was Bishop in the fifth century), an entire neighbourhood was demolished. The work took two-and-a-half centuries, from around 1390 to 1658, and nevertheless left the building incomplete. At 132 meters in length and 60 in width, St. Petronius is one of the biggest churches in Italy. Its artistic treasures are countless, starting with the main portal, sculpted by Jacopo della Quercia between 1426 and 1438, depicting subjects from the Old and New Testaments. Inside, see the *Madonna and Saints* by Lorenza Costa the Younger, a *Pietà* by Amico Asperti, the stained glass by Jacob Griesinger (15th century) and above all San Rocco by Parmigianino. The ciborium over the main altar was erected in 1547 by Vignola. Also of interest is the 14th century wooden choir stall by Agostino de' Marchi and the two monumental organs. The building hosts a sundial built in 1655 by the astronomer Giovanni Domenico Cassini; its length of 67.72 meters, illuminated by a lighting hole 27 meters up, make it the longest internal sundial in the world. The Basilica was long the property of the City of Bologna: it served as the site of ceremonies, a public meeting place and a tribunal. It conserves the relics of St. Petronius and the remains of Elisa Bonaparte, Napoleon's

sister. In 1530 the Basilica of St. Petronius was chosen by Charles V for his coronation as Holy Roman Emperor. Ownership was not transferred to the Diocese until 1929, and the church was consecrated in 1954. Giosuè Carducci was fascinated by the church, to which he dedicated his poem *"Nella piazza di San Petronio"*.



3. San Domenico

Piazza San Domenico 13, Bologna

Constructed after St. Dominic's death in 1221, the church conserves fine works of art: in the Chapel of St. Catherine, Filippo Lippi's canvas depicting the *The mystical marriage of St. Catherine Virgin and Martyr* (1501); in the Chapel of Bolognini family the St. Tommaso d'Aquino, by Guercino (1662); in the Chapel of St. Michael, the 14th century monument to Taddeo Pepoli and the crucifix by Giunta Pisano (1250); at the centre of the choir stall, a triptych by Bartolomeo Cesi, *The adoration of the Magi* (1625); the domed vault of the Chapel of St. Dominic is decorated with a fresco by Guido Reni, the Apotheosis of St. Dominic; the Chapel of the Rosary displays *The fifteen mysteries of the Rosary*, paintings by Ludovico Carracci, Bartolomeo Cesi, Guido Reni, Alessandro Tiarini and others. Guido Reni and the Bolognese painter Elisabetta Sirani are buried here. The Basilica conserves the remains of the founder of the Order of Preachers: the Ark, begun two centuries earlier by Nicola Pisano and his school, was completed between 1469 and 1473 thanks to the work of Niccolò di Bari, who came to be known as "Niccolò of the Ark" in recollection of this intervention. Other works come from Michelangelo (the small statues of St. Petronius and St. Proculus and of an Angel holding a torch), Alfonso Lombardi and Jean-Baptiste Boudard. The suggestive wooden choir stall by Fra' Damiano da Bergamo (1528-1551) is a masterpiece, a refined piece of inlay work of variously coloured woods of different types. One of the Basilica's organs is the one on which Mozart studied during his stay in Bologna as a student of Father Martini's.

4. San Francesco

Piazza Malpighi 9, Bologna

With its octagonal pilasters separating the three naves, six-panelled vaults and ambulatory with radial chapels, the Basilica, constructed between 1234 and 1263, is the first example of French Gothic style in Italy. The altarpiece at the centre of the apse was created, on a commission in 1388 from

the Franciscan Friars Minor, by the Venetian architects and sculptors Jacobello and Pier Paolo Dalle Masegne; it was completed in 1393. The basilica has two bell towers. The earlier and more modest tower dates to 1260; the second was erected between 1397 and 1402 by the Bolognese architect Antonio di Vincenzo. During the years of looting by the French troops at the end of the 18th century the church was deconsecrated, stripped of its artworks and converted into a barracks, and the convent was suppressed. The church was restored between 1886 and 1919 under the supervision of Alfonso Rubbiani. Bombing during the World War II caused further damage, subsequently made good by restoration and reconstruction. Outside, you can find the 13th century tombs of Glossators, some of the most celebrated commentators on Roman law: Accursio, Odofredo and Rolandino de' Romanzi.

www.sanfrancescobologna.org

5. San Giacomo Maggiore

Piazza G. Rossini, Bologna

Built for the Augustinian Friars in the 13th century, in the course of the 16th century San Giacomo became the church of the Bolognese nobility. It contains works by the most highly acclaimed artists of the late 1500s and early 1600s, including Innocenzo Francucci da Imola, Biagio Pupini, Orazio Samacchini, Bartolomeo Passerotti, Lorenzo Sabbatini, Tommaso Laureti and Bartolomeo Cesi, not to mention Ludovico Carracci and his student Giacomo Cavedoni. The apse houses the 15th century Bentivoglio Chapel, commissioned in 1445 by Annibale Bentivoglio and embellished by the frescoes of Costa and Francia. Nearly opposite to the Chapel is the hanging sepulchre of Annibale's father Anton Galeazzo Bentivoglio, by Jacopo della Quercia (1435). The altar is decorated by a panel by Francesco Francia: *The virgin enthroned with Christ and Saints* (1494). Beneath the portico on the left flank of the church is the entrance to the oratory, decorated with ten frescoes by Francesco Francia, Lorenzo Costa and Amico Aspertini that were begun in 1506. Each year on the 22nd of May the church holds the Feast of St. Rita of Cascia (1376-1447), during which St. Rita's symbolic red roses are given out, to be conserved for good fortune for the entire year.

6. Santa Maria dei Servi

Strada Maggiore 43, Bologna

Construction began in 1346, on a plan by Antonio di Vincenzo. In 1386 the church's enlargement got under way, on a plan by the architect and friar of the Order of Servants of Mary, Andrea Manfredi da Faenza. The church houses a number of important works, in particular Cimabue's *Maestà* (Mary Enthroned), from the 13th century. In addition we have a marble altarpiece (1558-61) for the main altar, by Michelangelo Montorsoli, 14th-century frescoes by Vitale da Bologna, a singular framed terracotta polyptych by Lippo di Dalmasio and the fine paintings of G.M. Crespi, Albani, Calvaert and other artists of the Bolognese school. St. Mary's is a traditional centre of Bolognese music. In a niche in the eighteenth chapel we find the venerated *Crucifix of the Servants*, made, according to popular legend, of paper pulp from a large number of playing cards, as a sign of repentance. The portico outside hosts the traditional Christmas fair of St. Lucia.