

## 7. Piazza Carducci

The square was named after Giosué Carducci, a great Tuscan poet who spent most of his life in Bologna. After his death the creation of a magnificent art nouveau style monument was planned, made by Leonardo Bistolfi and opened in 1928. Since 1990 the Risorgimento museum is housed inside the last home of Carducci, located at n°5.

[www.museibologna.it](http://www.museibologna.it)

## 8. Piazza San Domenico



The church of San Nicolò delle Vigne, whose name recalls vegetable gardens and vineyards, was devoted to Saint Dominic a few years after his death (1221) and houses his grave. Nicola Pisano, Niccolò dell'Arca and the young Michelangelo made the funeral monument of the founder of the Dominicans, a real masterpiece of Italian sculpture. The academic vocation of the square is shown by the graves of Rolandino de' Passeggeri, the most important Bolognese jurist of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and of Egidio de' Foscherari, great canonist. The square was also used to burn heretics because the Inquisition was housed in some monastery's rooms.

## 9. Piazza Galvani

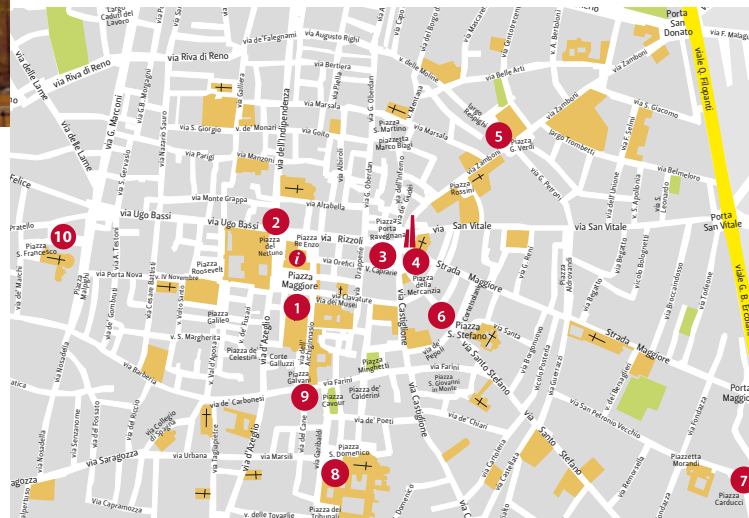
The statue of Luigi Galvani, who discovered biological electricity, stands out at the centre of the square. The northern side is closed by the unfinished apse of Saint Petronius, the eastern side is lined with the long arcades of the Archiginnasio, first seat of the University (1563), featuring the famous anatomical theatre (1637) whose ceiling is decorated by statues depicting constellations and zodiac signs (1648) and whose walls are lined with wooden statues of major bygone physicians (1734). The square, which hosted for a long time the silkworm market, is also known as "Pavaglione" (from the French *papillon*, butterfly, or *pavillon*, hall, tent).

## 10. Piazza San Francesco

The façade of the church (1236), which features a beautiful marble altar made by the Dalle Masegne brothers (1388–93), still shows the signs of the reconstruction carried out after the Second World War. In the nearby square, named after physician Marcello Malpighi, where the church apse is located, there are the tombs of the glossators Francesco Accursio, Odofredo and Rolandino de' Romanzi, as well as a column topped with a Madonna statue designed by Guido Reni.



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Piazza Maggiore

# The squares of Bologna

Squares have always been places for meetings and clashes, a natural stage for events, extremely versatile and ever changing over time, always in the heart of the city life.





## 1. Piazza Maggiore

This square, pounding heart of the medieval city, was opened at the beginning of 1200 during the construction works of the *Palatium Communis Bononiae*, now Palazzo del Podestà. Since 1212 the ringing of its bell, as known as the Arengo bell, used to summon the citizens to the assembly. The core of the City Hall located in the western part of the square, dates back to 1287. In 1365 the building was extended northbound and in 1478 its facade was decorated with the Madonna with child by Niccolò dell'Arca. In 1555 the two parts were connected by the magnificent gate decorated in 1580 with the statue of Gregory XIII. The sculpture is dominated by the inscription "*Divus Petronius, Protector et Pater*" commemorating the Bishop of the V century, city patron. As a matter of fact in 1796 to save the statue of Gregory XIII from the destructive fury of the Napoleonic troops opposed to the papacy, the locals "disguised" him as Saint Petronius: the bishop's mitre replaced the papal tiara, the blessing right hand welcomed a pastoral staff and the writing was put on top. The French, fully deceived, saved the statue, which was re-transformed at the end of the century. The bishop's mitre and the pastoral staff are now on display at the Risorgimento Museum while the inscription was left as historic memory. In 1390 the building works of the large Basilica of Saint Petronius started, strongly wanted by the Municipality of Bologna and designed by Antonio di Vincenzo. Several economic problems delayed the construction that took almost three centuries. The facade, still unfinished, is the clearest sign of a hard story. The Banchi arcades, made by Jacopo Barozzi as known as "il Vignola" in 1568, close the eastern side of the square and hide the medieval district of the market (Mercato di Mezzo), once made of decaying wooden and crick houses. The arcades used to host the stalls of the currency exchangers, extremely important for the thriving business in the cosmopolitan university city. Since its origin Piazza Maggiore has always staged protests, markets and clashes.

## 2. Piazza Nettuno

Created in 1564 by tearing down a block in order to enhance the large Neptune fountain wanted in 1564 by Paolo IV Medici. Tommaso Laureti designed the base while the Flemish artist Giambologna made the statue. The god of the sea reminds of the importance of waterways for the economic city life: since the 13<sup>th</sup> century waters made the wheels of several manufacturing works move, including the paper mills and the silk mills, the first were strongly needed by the



University and the latter were well-known all over the world. On the eastern side stands out Palazzo Re Enzo, which was named like that by the locals because in 1249 the last floor became the orison of King Enzo, son of Emperor Frederick II of Swabia took as prisoner during the battle of Fossalta.

## 3. Piazza Ravegnana



Photo: Patrizia Ansaloni

The square, named after the gate of the first round of selenite walls turned towards Ravenna, was a major crossroad. In ancient times a market took place where country produce was sold and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century the textile products of the Drapers corporation. The elegant Strazzaroli Palace, also known as Drapers' Palace, started in 1486, closes the western side. The red curtain at the centre of the façade hides a picture of Madonna with the child and it is unveiled only for solemn occasions like the descent to Bologna of the Madonna of Saint Luke. The two towers, the city icon, overlook the square. The Asinelli tower, 97 meters high, is the tallest tower in Bologna but the Garisenda, mentioned by Dante Alighieri in his Divine Comedy is certainly the most leaning one. At the towers feet there is a statue of Saint Petronius made for the Art of Drapers in 1683.

## 4. Piazza Mercanzia

The ancient customs house to pay for the duties of the inbound and outbound goods was located here. In 1384 a more imposing building was erected, the Palazzo della Mercanzia, which housed the merchants' court. The small balcony was used to read out to the population, mostly illiterate, the economic measures, the rulings and the court's decisions. The Luccardina bell, now on display at the Medieval Museum, was rung to summon the citizens.

## 5. Piazza Verdi

In ancient times it was surrounded by the buildings of the Bentivoglio family, who ruled Bologna from 1401 until 1506. Today it hosts the city Opera House, built in 1764 on the ruins of a former Bentivoglio palace and of a part of a boundary wall called "del Mille" (of the year 1000). Together with Zamboni Street, featuring several academic faculties, this square makes up the heart of the University district.

## 6. Piazza Santo Stefano

The extremely ancient complex of Santo Stefano dominates the square. In 393 A.C., Ambrose, bishop of Milan, ordered to build a church devoted to the saints Vitale and Agricola, just next to a Roman temple devoted to Goddess Isis. During his episcopate (432–450 A.C.) Petronius transformed the Roman temple into a Christian church with an eight-sided layout and chose it for his burial while the service areas of the temple became the Martyrdom church. Later, in the 8<sup>th</sup> century the Longobards erected the church devoted to Saint John the Baptist. Since the 9<sup>th</sup> century the complex was known as the "*Bolognese Saint Jerusalem*" and between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century it was adapted to the layout of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem re-built by Emperor Costantine Monomachos in 1048. In 1743, Pope Benedict XIV made the head of Saint Petronius be moved to the Basilica located in the Piazza Maggiore. The body was re-united to the head only in 2000. Since 1934 the square was divided in two parts: one for pedestrians and one for vehicular traffic. In 1991 the historic parvis was restored and brought back to a single level but with new granite slabs. Palazzo Isolani closes the northern side of the square with its articulated structure made of buildings and courtyards. The southern side is lined with fifteenth-century buildings, namely the peculiar Bolognini Amorini Salina palace decorated with large busts of men and women.

