



Green
is Bologna

Explore

the Via della Lana e della Seta

Bologna-Prato








Two cities bonded by their productive history and connected by a trekking route “Via della Lana e della Seta” (the Wool and Silk Road) that enables you to immerse yourself in the natural beauty of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines filled with excellencies and tradition, and discover the territory's history and culture. The route passes through towns, peaks and valleys and links two historic centres that have grown over the centuries thanks to their wise management of water: Bologna, the city of the Lock and canals and centuries' old silk capital, and Prato, the city of the Cavalciotto, millstreams and fulling mills, capital of the wool and textile district.






How to get there

Bologna and Prato are within easy reach using the main means of transport.

Bologna

-  Bologna G. Marconi Airport
-  Bologna Centrale Railway Station
-  Motorways (A1-A14)

Florence


-  Firenze A. Vespucci Airport
-  Prato Centrale Railway Station
-  Motorways (A1-A11)

Via della Lana e della Seta

⊗ Trekking


1st leg

Length: **20 km**
Elevation change:
+230 m; -200 m
Time: **6 hours**


Difficulty: mainly flat stage with no particular difficulties


2nd leg

Length: **27km**
Elevation change:
+1400 m; -950 m
Time: **8-9 hours**


Difficulty: difficult stage due to overall length and change in elevation


3rd leg

Length: **22km**
Elevation change:
+1100m; -1050m
Time: **7 hours**


Difficulty: difficult stage due to overall length and change in elevation


4th leg

Length: **20km**
Elevation change:
+800m; -1250m
Time: **7 hours**


Difficulty: stage of medium difficulty with changes in elevation throughout


5th leg

Length: **21km**
Elevation change:
+1000m; -1100m
Time: **7 hours**


Difficulty: stage with no particular difficulties

6th leg

Length: **22km**
Elevation change:
+900m; -1000m
Time: **7-8 hours**


Difficulty: in case of persistent or torrential rain pay attention to the downhill rocky segments

Bologna

20 Km

Sasso Marconi

27 Km

Grizzana Morandi

22 Km

Castiglione dei Pepoli

20 Km

Vernio

21 Km

Vaiano

22 Km

Prato

Total km: 130

Overall positive altitude difference: 5,430

Overall negative altitude difference: 5,550

Maximum altitude: 931 above sea level

Minimum altitude: 54 above sea level

Stops: 6

Municipalities: 12

Regions: 2



Bologna

Your journey's point of departure (or arrival) is Piazza Maggiore. You're in the heart of the city overlooked by important buildings such as the San Petronio Basilica, Palazzo dei Notai, Palazzo d'Accursio, Palazzo del Podestà and Palazzo dei Banchi. It became officially known with its current name of Piazza Maggiore only from 1945.



Monte Sole Park

The Historical Park of Monte Sole is above all a place that tells a story and bears witness to a dark past. Monte Sole is a place where history has left deep marks, and a silent warning to not forget. The park is mainly known for the events of the fall of 1944, when the Nazi troops slaughtered hundreds of local inhabitants, erasing centuries of the quiet and laborious life of the local communities.



Sluice of Casalecchio

Started between the 10th and 11th centuries, rebuilt in masonry in the middle of the 14th century and enhanced by Vignola from 1457 onwards, it is the oldest hydraulic work in Europe in operation and used continuously and without interruption. The impressive structure was declared by UNESCO a "Heritage to Promote a Culture of Peace for the Young Generations".



Lakes Suviana and Brasimone Park

Santa Maria Lake is located in the Regional Park of Lakes Suviana and Brasimone. Oak and beech trees and reforested conifers almost entirely cover the slopes and sandstone of the main elevations in the western wall of the ridge and downstream of the Brasimone basin, forming the spectacular front of the Cinghi delle Mogne.



Castiglione dei Pepoli

The recently-restored town centre maintains the characteristics designed by the Pepoli family, who controlled the territory between 1340 and 1796. The old Palazzo Comitale, Clock tower and Palazzina overlook the square.



Santa Maria Abbey in Montepiano

Built starting in the 11th century in a clearing along Setta Creek near the Beato Pietro hermitage, it was entrusted to the Vallombrosan monks who managed a hospice for pilgrims in Mugello and the Bolognese Apennines. The interior of the building features important frescoes from the 12th century.



Calvana Massif

Its rounded peaks create a typical karst setting dotted with caves, sinkholes and springs, recognisable for the meadows on the slopes. Here you can see rare flower species, specimens of the native Calvana cattle and among the low vegetation typical of this area you can find wild horses.



San Salvatore Abbey (Vaiano)

Built by the Benedictine Cassinese in the 9th and 10th centuries and rebuilt in the 11th and 12th centuries, it has three naves. The Renaissance cloister is surrounded by monastic environments that now host the museum, and the tanks and canals of the ancient fulling mill for processing wool are still visible.



Cavalciotto di Santa Lucia

Dating back to the 11th century, it is one of the main examples of Prato's rich industrial archaeology heritage. It is the levee of Bisenzio creek that feeds into the water system consisting of 53 km of millstreams that cross the city and powered the textile factories before flowing into the Ombrone river.

Castiglione dei Pepoli
© Lab051

Cavalciotto
di Santa Lucia
© Lab051

Calvana Massif
© Lab051

Prato, Piazza Duomo
© Lab051



Prato, Piazza Duomo

You have arrived at your destination (or you're getting ready to start your journey). Here in Piazza Duomo is where the oldest settlement in Prato – Borgo del Cornio – was located. Its existence was documented as early as the 9th century and the cathedral is home to frescoes by Filippo Lippi. Ever since the 14th century, the square is where the Sacra Cintola has been displayed from the pulpit designed by Donatello.

Why Via della Lana e della Seta?

The route physically and ideally connects Bologna, the city of the Lock, canals and spinning mills – for centuries the silk capital – to Prato, the city of the Cavalciotto, millstreams and fulling mills, the wool and textile district.

How many days does it take to travel the Via della Lana e della Seta?

It is a medium difficulty route that can be covered on foot in six or more days. If you have no experience, sense of direction or mountaineering skills, we strongly recommend that you contact an expert guide.

When should I travel the Via della Lana e della Seta?

The route is open all year round, but special attention is required during the summer (high temperatures) and winter (low temperatures and snow).

Travel essential

Footwear:

- Ankle boots recommended, sufficiently broken in and well fitted to your foot.
- Anti-blister technical socks

Clothing:

- 2-3 microfibre T-shirts and cotton T-shirts for the night
- Technical trousers, preferably long
- A sweater or sweatshirt or fleece
- A breathable windproof and waterproof jacket
- Underwear
- Gloves
- Hat in winter
- Cap
- Sunglasses
- Microfibre towel or bathrobe

Essentials:

- Trail manual and map (Fusta Editore, Italian and English, 1:25,000 scale)
- 40-50 l backpack, better if weighing less than 10 kg (water included)
- Sunscreen
- Water (at least 3 l per day in summer)
- First aid kit with: bandages, plasters, anti-blister patches, etc.
- A GPS system for orientation (optional)
- Products for personal hygiene

Other:

- Telephone and recharger
- Portable charger
- Camera
- Telescopic poles (optional)
- Rainproof canvas for your backpack
- Snack

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