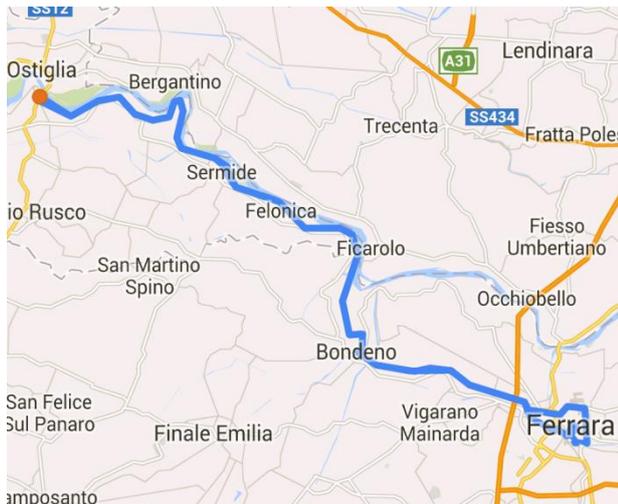


VISIT TO FERRARA, CITY OF BYCICLES

Distance: km 134 (return trip including tour of the city walls embracing the old town center).

Trip Grade: tough only due to its long distance.

Route: fully paved on the Right River Po banks until Bondeno; a brief stretch on a dirt patch of well-trod soil, to finish back to paved roads.



PLEASE NOTE: WE SUGGEST TO TAKE WATER WITH YOU DUE TO LACK OF DRINKING FOUNTAINS ALONG THE ROUTE.

For this one day long trip, we suggest departure from the river Po bank in Revere.

Once we left the farm we turn right and drive for 5 km; before the bridge on the river Po we turn right again and then immediately left, we park the car and unload the bicycles. We take the cycle lane on the right river Po bank towards Ferrara.

After about 20 km we come to Sermide, where we will find the signs for the natural oasis 'La Digagnola', typical wet area situated between the two river banks, offering recreation areas, animal watching huts and a health pathway.

We keep riding till Felonica, the most eastern Municipality of Mantua province and of the region, situated in a strip of territory surrounded by Veneto and Emilia Romagna regions. For some distance the 'Great River'



flows slowly next to the cycle lane, to hide later and give us the images of verdant floodplains and gorgeous poplar plantations.

We ride for 8 km until we reach Stellata, a little hamlet which played an essential role in the Middle Ages both from the commercial and military point of view, thanks to its strategic position: at the border between Mantova and Ferrara provinces and on the shore of the most travelled river. At the entrance of the village, the Church, evidently damaged by the earthquake of May 2012, welcomes us.



A little ahead, we find the beautiful mighty Fortress, which is worth stopping by (also here you have the chance to stop for a quick break in the green lawn with tables and benches surrounding the fortress). Built around 1000 AD it was enlarged and reinforced by the Estensi family in 1362. Its strategic position on the river Po allowed it to control the navigation together with the Fortress of Ficarolo, situated on the opposite shore, to which it was connected by a chain which prevented or allowed the ships to pass. The Fortress was destroyed in 1521 and promptly rebuilt. The shape of its walls is peculiar, they are positioned on the bias, to better fight the enemy artilleries. Its star-shaped structure probably dates back to 1570. This distinctive shape gave the name to the hamlet of *Stellata* (literally "star-shaped").



We go ahead until Bondeno (little town of about 15000 inhabitants in the province of Ferrara, situated on the shores of the river Panaro) riding in the verdant nature, among the fields and old abandoned farmhouses.



The signage for Ferrara is clear and constant. We proceed on a route stretch recalling mountain landscapes – this is the only moment when we ride in a shady area.



Once come to Ferrara we can choose to visit the old town center, or we can keep riding on the city walls (about 10 km). It is important to underline that the City of Ferrara is very sensitive towards cyclists. Being aware to be not only the Italian city with the highest number of cyclists, but to be ranked also at a European level, led the Administration to dedicate several projects and initiatives to improve and increase the bicycle use since 1995. At the tourist info office it is possible to collect brochures about cycle lanes in the city.

To organize the return trip, from whatever part of the city, follow the signs allowing us to take the cycle lane on the right river Po bank towards Bondeno, Revere, Mantova.