



# CYCLING THROUGH THE PARKS

## GUIDE TO THE BICYCLE PATHS THROUGH THE PROTECTED AREAS OF EMILIA-ROMAGNA



Ten cycling routes within the parks and nature reserves of Emilia-Romagna, which allow you to enjoy wonderful landscapes in the hills and plains while discovering not only the beauty of nature and the environment, but also history and architecture. These routes are intended for all cycling enthusiasts, but also for the less experienced cyclists. They are mapped out with varying degrees of difficulty and can be ridden for the most part by mountain bike, but in some cases also with a normal bicycle. The technical data provided for each bicycle route describes all relevant information in order to choose the most appropriate itinerary: length, gradient, degree of difficulty, travel time and useful contacts. The different bicycle routes are also accessible by train with a path "to the park" marked by specific signage, which departs from the nearest railway station and arrives at the gates of the protected area. Trenitalia provides the bike on board service for a small extra fee of 3.5 euros. Before leaving it is advisable to check out the timetables, prices and conditions on: [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com).

### HELPFUL HINTS

#### WHICH BICYCLE TO USE?

In principle, any mountain bike is fine, and for riding along some paths even the city bike will do; at most, in the few trouble spots, you will have to get off the bicycle and walk for a few metres. The highly-trained biker will not even need clarifications, and yet one should treasure the golden rule that says to go slowly, even in relatively easy routes like these, where, by the way, there are steep descents that are potentially treacherous, especially if unpaved. Those who ride fast will gain only a few seconds, and risk falling, maybe getting hurt seriously, whereas those who ride leisurely are sure to have real fun.

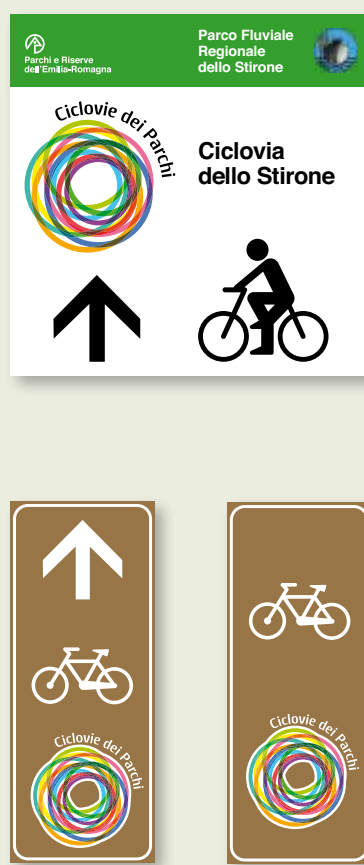


### BICYCLE SERVICE

This guide doesn't provide a list of service points because the proper ones (bicycle mechanics) are located in the cities, and therefore where the routes start, while possibly "minimal" assistance (from the tyre pump to the classic screwdriver) can be found almost everywhere. This notwithstanding, during each ride of this kind each biker must be self-sufficient at least when dealing with normal puncture cases and elementary repairs, which means bringing along the normal equipment any bicycle for suburban tours ought to be provided with. The bike bag should always include a medication kit (plasters, disinfectant and personal medicines).

### IMPORTANT NOTES

It is recommended to comply with the rules of the road and wear protective equipment and clothing that can ensure the well-being necessary to ride safely. Also keep in mind that even though you are riding along bicycle lanes, the presence of hikers walking is very likely; indeed, they are the ones who always have right of way.



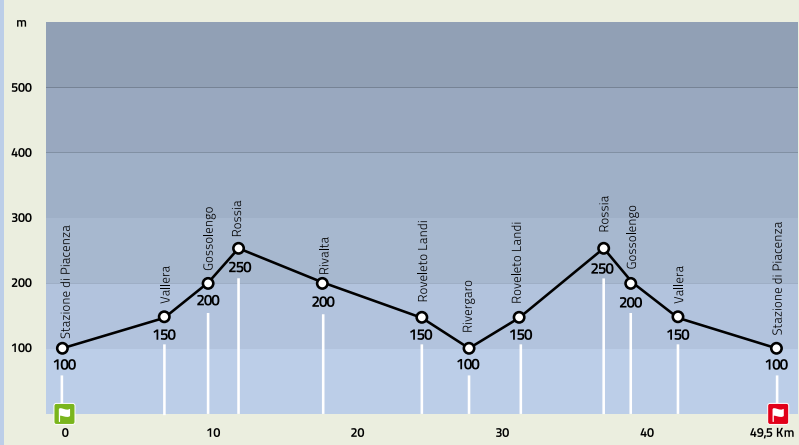
## CICLOVIA DEL TREBBIA

The Trebbia bicycle path is characterised by a remarkable diversity of environments. It starts by crossing the urban environment of the historic centre of Piacenza: once you've left the railway station you ride cobblestone-paved streets, largely pedestrian or without much in the way of traffic, among Romanesque churches and lively squares. You then leave the city centre in a southerly direction, towards the hills, crossing the very green suburban environment on the protected bike path. A beautiful itinerary allows you to safely reach the village of Gossolengo, then, a short stretch inevitably to the side of the busy provincial road leads you to the large bridge over the Trebbia, after which you follow a first ring on the shore, on the left bank below the castle Rivalta. This is the river environment, where you ride on a trail through the sparse poplars and

willows, in practice on flood bed terraces never reached by the floods, but a stone's throw from the braided blue Trebbia meandering among the pebbles. After the advisable visit to the village of Rivalta you return to the bridge over the Trebbia to undertake a second ring, all on country roads, heading to Roveleto Landi and Pieve Dugliara, up to Rivergaro. Here we recommend a possible stop on the verdant riverside before resuming the way back, always on the right bank of the Trebbia. The itinerary is pleasantly varied among small white streets, old mills, more canals, vegetable gardens and the "wilder" river-bank environments, with riparian thickets, shrubs, stony and sunny soils where you can spot the uncommon stone curlews, the little ringed plovers, or the other shy birds, which inhabit the riverbed

### TECHNICAL DATA

**PROTECTED AREAS:** Trebbia Regional River Park  
**LENGTH:** about 50 km without detours  
**GRADIENT:** 300 m  
**TRAVEL TIME:** one day



## TREBBIA REGIONAL RIVER PARK

The Parco Fluviale del Trebbia is the latest park set up by the Region. The protected area extends in the plains, from where the Trebbia River flows into the Po River (just north of Piacenza) up to upstream of Rivergaro, for a total area of 4,049 hectares. The environment is typically fluvial, with a bed of pebbles, very large and heavily influenced by seasonal water flow, which sees periods of prolonged drought, with the river divided into a thousand dynamic rivulets, alternating with rainy phases where the water body becomes compact, laps and submerges the riparian thickets of willow shrubs, which in fringe areas and deeper grounds give way to patches of trees. These are environments of relevant natural value, important points of reference for migratory birds.

The vast bed of Trebbia.



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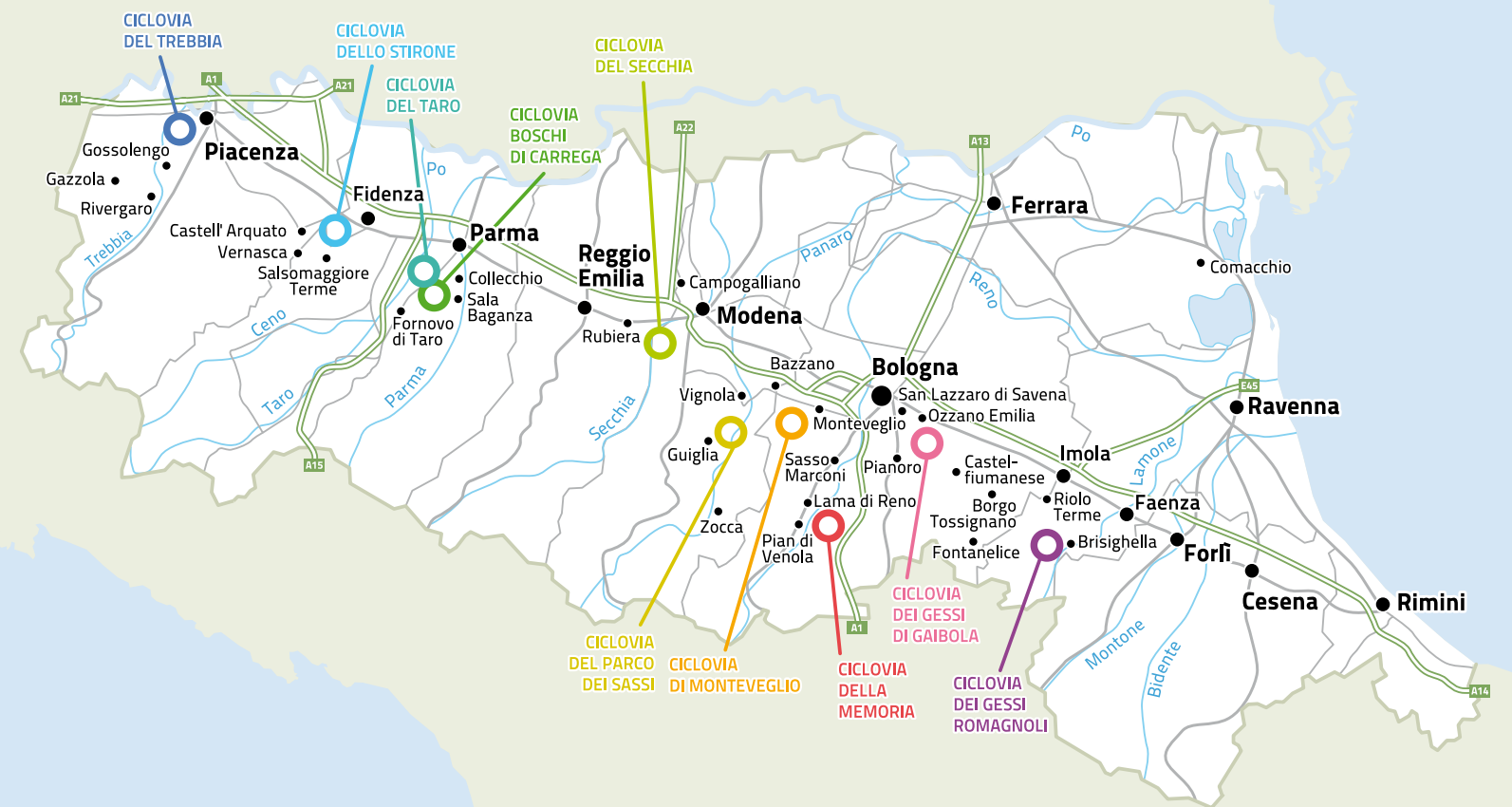
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The castle of Rivalta.



## CICLOVIA BOSCHI DI CARREGA

The Carrega bike path unfolds in a typical forest landscape and you may ride on it all year round, even in the hottest summer, thanks to the prevalence of cool and shady stretches. We are at about fifteen kilometres south of Parma, an ancient river terraces between Baganza and Taro that have always been covered with forests of great natural value as well as historical, touristic and recreational significance. These are the ancient hunting grounds of the Farnese family, the Bourbons and then finally (in the early twentieth century) purchased by the Carrega Princes. The Woods are composed of mixed deciduous forests to which, over time, exotic species have been added for ornamental purposes, mainly conifers. A special feature is the unique beech forest planted in 1828 by Marie Louise of Austria with specimens taken from the Parma Apennines. The route starts from the Collecchio railway station and, once you've crossed the village, you reach the entrance of

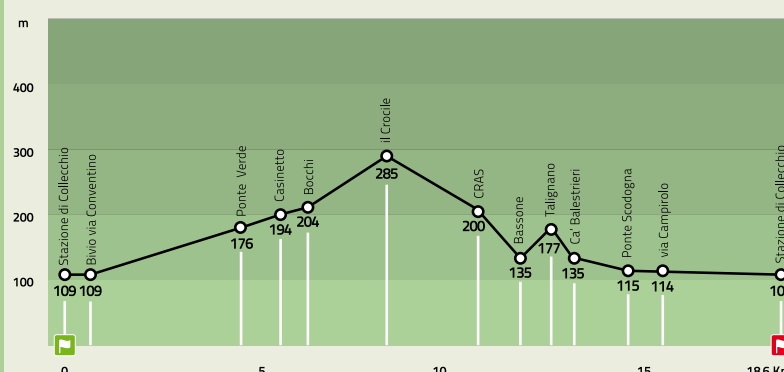
the park, at the end of the side street via Conventino. A strip of asphalt skirts around the Forest of Capannella and goes uphill with two hairpin bends to the straight road where you turn right onto a dirt road that leads quickly to the Casino dei Boschi, a magnificent residence of the Dukes of Parma nestled in a nineteenth century garden-park that now houses the visitor centre of the park. You proceed southbound, still on asphalt but in an environment which becomes more and more that of a forest, up to the 300 metres in altitude of Mount Castione, "turning point" of our itinerary. From this point onwards you'll ride downhill between chestnut forests until Tallignano from where you can reach the Romanesque Pieve di Tallignano (and from there possibly link up to the Ciclovía Taro). Alternatively, if the soil is dry, you can take the MTB trail through Piana Marchesi and the picturesque Lake Svizzera to reach via Conventino, which you already rode on during the first leg.

### TECHNICAL DATA

**PROTECTED AREAS:** Carrega Woods Regional Park  
**Length:** about 20 km (including the detour to Tallignano)  
**GRADIENT:** 200 m  
**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** low if one is always on the main path, almost all paved, average if you make variants on forest roads (not recommended after heavy rains because of the mud)

### TRAVEL TIME:

half day  
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**  
Park centre "Casinetto",  
Via Olma 2, Sala Baganza,  
Tel. (+39) 0521 836026  
[info.boschi-carrega@parchiemiliaoccidentale.it](mailto:info.boschi-carrega@parchiemiliaoccidentale.it)  
[www.parchidelducato.it](http://www.parchidelducato.it)



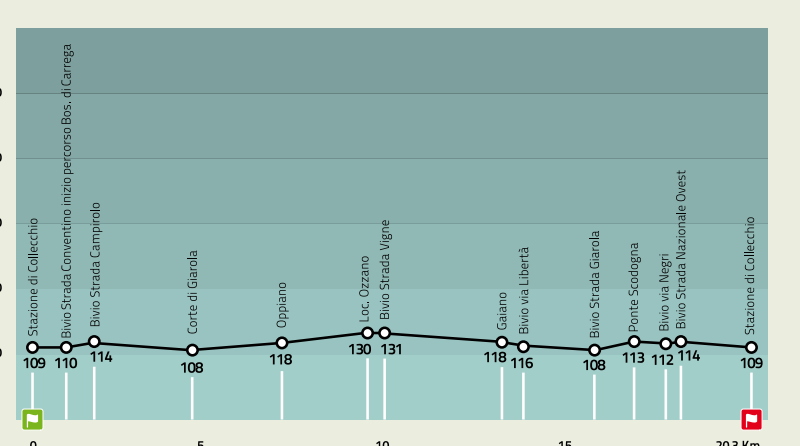
### TECHNICAL DATA

**PROTECTED AREAS:** Taro Regional River Park  
**LENGTH:** about 20 km the first route and about 6 km the second  
**GRADIENT:** minimal  
**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** low in the first route (roads and little roads, paved or gravelled) and medium in the second (trails and a little bumpy tracks, though not difficult)

### TRAVEL TIME:

half day  
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**  
Park centre Corte Giarola,  
Strada Giarola 11  
Loc. Ponteseodogna - Collecchio  
Tel. (+39) 0521 802688  
[info.taro@parchiemiliaoccidentale.it](mailto:info.taro@parchiemiliaoccidentale.it)  
[www.parchidelducato.it](http://www.parchidelducato.it)

**NOTES:** possibility to rent mountain bikes at the Corte di Giarola (also open on Sundays)



## TARO REGIONAL RIVER PARK

The park protects about twenty kilometres of the Taro River flow, from the Via Emilia to Parma, and up to Fornovo. The landscape ranges from parched expanses of gravel on the riverbed, to the surrounding cultivated fields, and riparian thickets. The protected area includes the wide riverbed and the nearby river terraces, both historically marked by man's intense exploitation, but still characterised by a wide variety of environments of great natural value and fundamental importance for migratory birds who stand on the banks of the Taro during seasonal movements. On the sides of the river there are flood plain areas where the rare Tamarisk appears and fireweed and blueweed bloom. There are dry meadows with dense patches of sea-buckthorn and precious orchids as well as vast cultivated fields crossed by ancient canals and dotted with ancient historical rural and religious buildings. Among the birds on the riverbed we should mention: the common tern, the little tern, the little plover and the rare elusive stone curlew.

Aerial view of the Taro River.



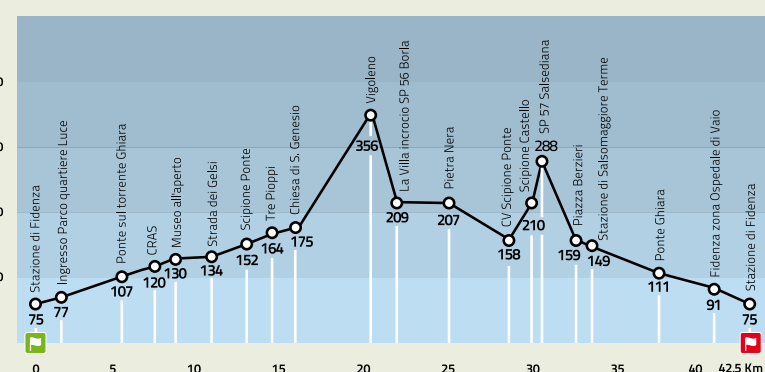
### TECHNICAL DATA

**PROTECTED AREAS:** Stirone e Piacenziano Regional River Park  
**LENGTH:** 42 km the entire itinerary, which can be travelled in both directions. If you do not go up to Vigoleno subtract 7 km. If you are using the railway line Fidenza-Salsomaggiore subtract 10.5 km. Deviations result in differences of some kilometres without significant gradients.

**GRADIENT:** 100 m to get to Trabucchi; 300 m if you also go to Vigoleno, another 100 m to Salsomaggiore

**DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY:** moderate to Trabucchi, average in other cases because of length and gradient.

**TRAVEL TIME:** one day  
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**  
Visitor centre and nature museum  
Loc. Scipione Ponte 1  
Salsomaggiore Terme  
Tel. (+39) 0524 581139  
[info.stirone-piacenziano@parchiemiliaoccidentale.it](mailto:info.stirone-piacenziano@parchiemiliaoccidentale.it)  
[www.parchidelducato.it](http://www.parchidelducato.it)



## STIRONE E PIACENZIANO REGIONAL RIVER PARK

The park was established in 2011, and was created by uniting the Parco Regionale dello Stirone and the Riserva Naturale Geologica del Piacenziano. The bicycle route, however, crosses only the section of the park located along the Stirone valley floor. Especially in the first stretch, the river flows encased in a sort of canyon between Pliocene clays. The morphology is wild and escarpments reveal fossil beds of considerable importance. As for the vegetation cover one can distinguish between the farming environments in the valley bottom and those of the pebbly shore, with willows and poplars, while the highest parts, from Ponte Trabucchi to Vigoleno, are covered with mixed forests. The fauna is rich and diverse: even the "passing by" cyclist cannot help but notice several species of nesting birds along the river including the colourful bee-eater, a migratory bird that builds the nest in tunnels dug into the slopes.

Landscape along the Stirone.



## CICLOVIA DEL TARO

The bike path Taro is composed of two different routes, which are physically distinct but complementary. If desired, they may be ridden one after the other. You start from the Collecchio railway station and, after crossing the centre of town, you go south along the old Cisa State road for a couple of kilometres, turning right onto secondary roads up to Corte Giarola, the monumental complex of great historical and architectural charm, as well as the park headquarters and visitor centre, where one can also rent bicycles. The first route is rather easy, all on flat terrain, along quiet rural roads that wind their way south (upstream) touching the monastic building of Ospiano, an ancient stopping point for pilgrims crossing the valley floor towards Fornovo, along the Via Francigena to Rome. Beyond the village of Villanova you reach Ozzano Taro, back on the Cisa State road,

where you turn left to close the ring passing through Gaiano. Here, possibly, you may connect with the ciclovía dei Boschi di Carrega (bike path Carrega Woods). The environment is always rural, without traffic, between hedges, with rows of mulberry trees and isolated oak or walnut trees between the fields. The second loop also starts from Corte Giarola but winds near the Taro and the ancient canals that branch off from the main body of water, in river environment proper (woods, thickets, rocky environments of gravel bed), on a path with natural ground, which is flat, yet pleasantly varied and more "adventurous". You'll need to pay a little attention to some sudden changes of direction, some relatively narrow passage or with a little rough bottom (rocks, roots, puddles sometimes), and a few small fords.

The tern is the park's emblematic bird.



View towards the castle of Vigoleno.



Landscape along the Stirone.



Roe deer (Capreolus capreolus).



## CARREGA WOODS REGIONAL PARK

A refined atmosphere, historic and noble, even if sometimes decadent, surrounds the park, the first to be established in the Emilia-Romagna region in 1982. The protected area, spread over 1,270 acres, is an enchanting mosaic of forest (one of the few left in the foothill areas of the region), vast glades, scenic lakes, glorious noble mansions adorned with romantic parks, shady valleys, ravine basins, cultivated fields. The Carrega Woods retain the imprint attributed to them first by the ducal families and then by the Carrega family, starting from the second half of the '700 until the first decades of the '900. The abundant wildlife that inhabited the ducal game sanctuaries is still one of the greatest assets of the protected area. The most representative animal is the roe deer, which is housed in a particularly favourable environment for the alternation of woods and glades.

Aerial view of the Villa of the Casino dei Boschi.





