

# Emilia-Romagna (Emilia-Romagna)

## General

Emilia-Romagna (pronounced [eˈmi:lja roˈmaɲɲa]) is an administrative Region of Northeast Italy comprising the historical regions of Emilia and Romagna. It has an area of 22,446 km<sup>2</sup> (8,666 sq mi), and about 4.4 million inhabitants.

The region is divided into the nine provinces. The areas and populations of these nine provinces are:

- Bologna..... 3,702 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 973,255
- Ferrara..... 2,377 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 387,200
- Forli-Cesena ..... 2,377 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 387,200
- Modena..... 2,689 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 686,104
- Parma ..... 3,449 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 431,419
- Piacenza ..... 2,589 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 284,885
- Ravenna ..... 1,858 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 383,945
- Reggio Emilia..... 2,293 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 517,374
- Rimini..... 863 km<sup>2</sup>..... pop. 325,219

The Metropolitan City of Bologna is the Capital City of the region.

Emilia-Romagna is one of the wealthiest and most developed regions in Europe, with the third highest GDP per capita in Italy. Bologna, its capital, has one of Italy's highest quality of life indices and advanced social services. Emilia-Romagna is also a cultural and tourist center, being the home of the University of Bologna, the oldest university in the world, containing Romanesque and Renaissance cities (such as Modena, Parma and Ferrara), being a center for food and automobile production (home of automotive companies such as Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, Pagani, De Tomaso and Ducati) and having popular coastal resorts such as Cervia, Cesenatico, Rimini and Riccione.

## Etymology

The name *Emilia-Romagna* is a legacy of Ancient Rome. *Emilia* derives from the *via Aemilia*, the Roman road connecting Rome to northern Italy, completed in 187 B.C. and named after the consul Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. *Romagna* derives from *Romània*, the name of the Eastern Roman Empire applied to Ravenna by the Lombards when the western Empire had ceased to exist and Ravenna was an outpost of the east (540–751).

## History

Before the Romans took control of present-day Emilia-Romagna, it had been part of the Etruscan world and then that of the Gauls. During the first thousand years of Christianity, trade flourished as did culture and religion, thanks to the region's monasteries. Afterwards the University of Bologna, arguably the oldest university in Europe, and its bustling towns kept trade and intellectual life alive. Its unstable political history is exemplified in such figures as Matilda of Canossa and struggling seignories such as the Este of Ferrara, the Malatesta of Rimini, the Popes of Rome, the Farnese of Parma and Piacenza, and the Duchy of Modena and Reggio. In the 16th century, most of these were seized by the Papal States, but the territories of Parma, Piacenza, and Modena remained independent until Emilia-Romagna became part of the Italian kingdom between 1859 and 1861.

After the referendum of 2006, seven municipalities of Montefeltro were detached from the Province of Pesaro and Urbino (Marche) to join that of Rimini on 15 August 2009. The municipalities are Casteldelci, Maiolo, Novafeltria, Pennabilli, San Leo, Sant'Agata Feltria and Talamello.

On 20 and 29 May 2012 two powerful earthquakes hit the area. They killed at least 27 people and injured over 200 and caused churches and factories to collapse. The 5.8 magnitude quake left 14,000 people homeless.

## Geography

The region of Emilia-Romagna consists of nine provinces and covers an area of 22,446 km<sup>2</sup> (8,666 sq. mi.), ranking sixth in Italy. Nearly half of the region (48%) consists of plains while 27% is hilly and 25% mountainous. The region's section of the Apennines is marked by areas of flisch, badland erosion (calanques) and caves. The

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mountains stretch for more than 300 km (186.41 mi) from the north to the south-east, with only three peaks above 2,000 m – Monte Cimone (2,165 m), Monte Cusna (2,121 m) and Alpe di Succiso (2,017 m).

The plain was formed by the gradual retreat of the sea from the Po basin and by the detritus deposited by the rivers. Almost entirely marshland in ancient times, its history is characterized by the hard work of its people to reclaim and reshape the land in order to achieve a better standard of living.

The geology varies, with lagoons and saline areas in the north and many thermal springs throughout the rest of the region as a result of groundwater rising towards the surface at different periods of history. All the rivers rise locally in the Apennines except for the Po, which has its source in the Alps in Piedmont. The northern border of Emilia-Romagna follows the path of the river for 263 km (163.42 mi).

The region has a temperate broadleaved and mixed forests and the vegetation may be divided into belts:

- the Common oak-European hornbeam belt (Padan plain and adriatic coast) which is now covered (apart from the Mesóla forest in Province of Ferrara) with fruit orchards and fields of wheat and sugar beet;
- the Pubescent oak-European hop-hornbeam belt on the lower slopes up to 900 m;
- the European beech-Silver fir belt between 1,000 and 1,500 m; and
- the mountain heath belt.

Emilia-Romagna has two Italian National Parks, the Foreste Casentinesi National Park and the Appennino Tosco-Emiliano National Park. In the first one are enclosed the forests with the most beautiful and lively autumn colors of Italy and one of the last old-growth beech forest of Europe (Sasso Fratino).

### Land use

Emilia-Romagna has been a highly populated area since ancient times. Inhabitants over the centuries have radically altered the landscape, building cities, reclaiming wetlands, and establishing large agricultural areas. All these transformations in past centuries changed the aspect of the region, converting large natural areas to cultivation, up until the 1960s. The trend then changed, and agricultural lands began giving way to residential and industrial areas. The increase of urban-industrial areas continued at very high rates until the end of the 2010s. In the same period, hilly and mountainous areas saw an increase in the registration of semi-natural areas, because of the abandonment of agricultural lands.

In the Emilia-Romagna plain, which represents half of the region and where three quarters of the population of the region live, the agricultural land area has been reduced by 157 km<sup>2</sup> while urban and industrial areas have increased to over 130 km<sup>2</sup> between 2003 and 2008. The impact of land use and particularly of the urbanization of the Emilia-Romagna plain during this period has had some strong consequences in the economical and ecological assessment of the region. The loss of arable land is equivalent to a permanent loss of the capacity to feed 440,000 persons per year from resources grown within the region. The increased water runoff due to soil sealing requires adaptation measures for river and irrigation canals such as the building of retention basins, at a total cost estimated in the order of billions of euros.

### Government and politics

The Regional Government (*Giunta Regionale*) is presided by the President of the Region (*Presidente della Regione*), who is elected for a five-year term. The Regional Government is composed of the President and the Ministers (*Assessori*), of which there are currently twelve including the Vice President and the Under-Secretary for the President's office.

Apart from the province of Piacenza, Emilia-Romagna was historically a stronghold of the Italian Communist Party, forming the famous Italian "Red Quadrilateral" with Tuscany, Umbria and Marche. This is probably due to the strength of the anti-fascist resistance around the time of World War II as well as a strong tradition of anti-clericalism dating from the 19th century, when part of the region belonged to the Papal States. The strength of the anti-fascist resistance is one of the main factors, along with the effectiveness of trade-unionism that led to the dominance of the Italian Communist Party in the region.

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Emilia-Romagna has since World War II been a left-wing stronghold, nowadays led by the Democratic Party, since its creation in 2007.

## Language

Apart from Standard Italian, Emilian and Romagnolo, two closely related languages that are part of the Emiliano-Romagnolo language family, are the local languages of Emilia-Romagna. They are Romance languages spoken almost exclusively in the region and in San Marino. The town of Faenza is on the border between Emilia and Romagna, half is Emilia and half is Romagna. They belong to the Northern Italian group within Romance languages (like Piedmontese, Lombard, Ligurian and Venetian), which is included in the wider group of western Romance languages (including French, Occitan, Catalan, and Spanish). They are considered minority languages, structurally separated from Italian by the Ethnologue and by the *Red Book of Endangered Languages* of UNESCO.

## Economy

Emilia-Romagna today is considered one of the richest European regions and the third Italian region by GDP per capita. These results have been achieved by developing a very well balanced economy that comprises Italy's biggest agricultural sector as well as a long-standing tradition in automobile, motor and mechanics manufacturing and a strong banking and insurance industry.

In spite of the depth and variety of industrial activities in the region, agriculture has not been eclipsed. Emilia-Romagna is among the leading regions in the country, with farming contributing 5.8% of the gross regional product. The agricultural sector has aimed for increased competitiveness by means of structural reorganization and high-quality products, and this has led to the success of marketed brands. Cereals, potatoes, maize, tomatoes and onions are the most important products, along with fruit and grapes for the production of wine (of which the best known are Emilia's Lambrusco, Bologna's Pignoletto, Romagna's Sangiovese and white Albana). Cattle and hog breeding are also highly developed.

Farm cooperatives have been working along these lines in recent years. With their long tradition in the region there are now about 8,100 cooperatives, generally in the agricultural sector and mainly located in the provinces of Bologna (2,160) and Forlì-Cesena (1,300).

Industry in the region presents a varied and complex picture and is located along the Via Emilia. The food industry (e.g. Barilla Group) is particularly concentrated in Parma, Modena and Bologna as is the mechanical and automotive industry (e.g. Ferrari, Ducati, Lamborghini, De Tomaso, Maserati, Pagani, Sacmi). The ceramic sector is concentrated in Faenza and Sassuolo. Tourism is increasingly important, especially along the Adriatic coastline and the cities of art. The regional economy is more geared to export markets than other regions in the country. The main exports are from mechanical engineering (53%), the extraction of non-metallic minerals (13%) and the clothing industry (10%).

The region of Emilia-Romagna has a very good system of transport, with 574 km of motorways, 1,053 km of railways and airports in Bologna, Forlì, Parma and Rimini. The main motorway crosses the region from north-west (Piacenza) to the south-east (Adriatic coast), connecting the main cities of Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, Bologna, and from here further to Ravenna, Rimini and the Adriatic coast.

## Cinema

Emilia-Romagna is the main setting for Bernardo Bertolucci's epic *1900*. Rimini is the birthplace of Federico Fellini and Ferrara of Michelangelo Antonioni.

## Cuisine and gastronomy

Emilia-Romagna is considered one of the richest regions of Italy with regards to its gastronomic and wine-making tradition. The region is known for its egg and filled pasta made with soft wheat flour. Bologna is notable for pasta dishes like *tortellini*, *lasagne*, *gramigna* and *tagliatelle* which are found also in many other parts of the region in different declinations. The Romagna subregion is known as well for pasta dishes like, *garganelli*, *strozzapreti*, *sfoglia lorda* and *tortelli alla lastra*. In the Emilia subregion, except Piacenza which is heavily influenced by the cuisines of

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Lombardy, rice is eaten to a lesser extent. *Polenta*, a maize-based dish, is common both in Emilia and Romagna. The celebrated balsamic vinegar is made only in the Emilian cities of Modena and Reggio Emilia, following legally binding traditional procedures. Parmigiano Reggiano (Parmesan Cheese) is produced in Reggio Emilia, Parma, Modena and Bologna and is much used in cooking, while Grana Padano variety is produced in the rest of the region.

Although the Adriatic coast is a major fishing area (well known for its eels and clams), the region is more famous for its meat products, especially pork-based, that include: Parma's *prosciutto*, *culatello* and *Felino salami*, Piacenza's *pancetta*, *coppa* and salami, Bologna's *mortadella* and *salame rosa*, Modena's *zampone*, *cotechino* and *cappello del prete* and Ferrara's *salama da sugo*. Reggio Emilia is famous for its fresh egg-made pasta *cappelletti* (similar to Bologna's tortellini but differing in size), the typical *erbazzone* a spinach and *Parmigiano Reggiano* salted cake and its *Gnocco Fritto* some kind of mixed flour stripes fried in boiling oil, enjoyed in combination with ham or salami. *Crescentina* best known as *tigella* is the typical thin round bread that originates in the Apennines around Modena and it is usually filled in with the typical *cunza* (a spread made from pork lard and flavored with garlic and rosemary) or with cold cuts, cheese and salty dressings or sweet spreads. Piacenza and Ferrara are also known for some dishes prepared with horse and donkey meat. Regional desserts include *zuppa inglese* (custard-based dessert made with sponge cake and Alchermes liqueur) and *panpepato* (Christmas cake made with pepper, chocolate, spices, and almonds). An exhaustive list of the most important regional wines should include Sangiovese from Romagna, Lambrusco from Reggio Emilia or Modena, Cagnina di Romagna, Gutturnio and Trebbiano from Piacenza.

### Music

Emilia-Romagna gave birth to one of the most important composers in the history of music, Giuseppe Verdi, as well as Arturo Toscanini, one of the most acclaimed conductors of the 20th century, and the world-famous operatic tenor Luciano Pavarotti.

The region is well known in Italy for its popular rock and folk musicians, such as Laura Pausini, Samuele Bersani, Luciano Ligabue, Vasco Rossi and Zucchero. "Romagna mia", a song written in 1954 by Secondo Casadei, is considered by many as the unofficial anthem of Romagna.

*Above information obtained from Wikipedia, 2018*