

## Title:

Ferrara, an alternative destination for your Italian journey

## Word Count:

586

## Summary:

There are many reasons for a visit to Ferrara, Unesco world heritage city, a magnificent medieval and renaissance Italian city full of artistic and historical monuments and with a rich and varied surrounding territory

## Keywords:

Ferrara, Italy, Este, Ferrara castle, Palazzo dei Diamanti, Po Delta, birdwatching, birding

## Article Body:

The usual trip to Italy proposes the celebrated cities of Venice, Florence or Rome. You will be often lodged in an international hotel, usually very expensive, and you will probably get an aseptic reception and a low quality price ratio. You will be quite lost in a large city area with a heavy traffic and you will share your visits to monuments and museums with mass tourism.

Sometimes it happens that small is better. You can plan instead to visit Ferrara, a small medieval and renaissance city of Emilia Romagna, in the north of Italy. It has been recently declared a Unesco world heritage site, because of its magnificently conserved ancient urbanistic structure, superb monuments and artistic treasures and the rich and varied surrounding territory. In Ferrara and its countryside you can plan your stay in a little hotel, a guesthouse, a bed & breakfast or a farmhouse where you will find a quite cheap accommodation and a warm welcome.

In Italy there is plenty of magnificent old cities, but Ferrara is something different. It hasn't been involved in the frantic transformation and modernization that caused a lot of Italian cities to lose their identity and soul. Ferrara is, in some way, a world apart. The ancient city wall, that had in the past the purpose to defend the city from hostile military attacks, is still preserved. It prevented Ferrara to grow out of control, and also preserved the urbanistic tissue of the city. The ancient narrow alleys had been conserved and the bicycle is still the most utilized vehicle in the city. In fact Ferrara is internationally renowned as the bicycle's city. In the 15th century Ferrara reached its maximum development, under the power of the Este family. The

Maecenatism of the Dukes of Este was a very effective attractant for a lot of artists, in particular architects like Biagio Rossetti, Girolamo da Carpi, Giovanni Battista Aleotti, painters like Piero della Francesca, Francesco del Cossa, Dosso Dossi, Cosme Tura, and literates like Torquato Tasso. This offered the stimulus for the accumulation of so many artistic treasures in Ferrara and the development and renaissance transformation of the city. The Cathedral, masterpiece of Nicolò, the magnificent and perfectly preserved powerful Ferrara castle, the world famous the "Palazzo dei Diamanti", masterpiece of Biagio Rossetti, with its over eight thousand diamond shaped ashlar, and the superb fresco cycle of "the Months" in Schifanoia Palace, masterpiece of the "Officina Ferrarese", a very rare renaissance cycle of paintings of profane subject, are only the main attractions of Ferrara.

Moreover, the surrounding territory is extremely rich of artistic and naturalistic points of interest, first of all the "Delizie Estensi", ancient country residences of the Este family. The main of these, the Belriguardo Castle, was a little Italian Versailles where the court spent the summer time, and was celebrated by Goethe in his "Italian journey".

The near Delta of the Po River is a precious naturalistic area, protected under the natural reserve of the "Delta del Po" Park, and is one of the best spots in Italy and in Europe for birdwatching with more than 300 different species of birds registered.

The last but not the least reason to visit Ferrara is its high quality gastronomy, with first of all the ancient Ferrara bread, the renaissance "ciupèta", still prepared with the old recipe and protected as an European mark "IGP", with its unique and strange shape that recall in the same time the male and the female symbols, and the "Salama da sugo".