

### The topography

The name "Bologna" comes from the latin term "Bononia", but the city was born as "Felsina", an Etruscan village. Three levels of walls were built during the next centuries. The last one is partially still existing today and 12 gates belong to it.

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Bologna is the main city of the Emilia-Romagna region and has a population of 400.000 people and is the seventh biggest city in Italy. It's also the centre of a metropolitan area and hosts one of the biggest exhibition areas of Europe.

### The University

The university of Bologna, the Alma Mater Studiorum University, is the eldest of the western world, founded in 1088. Bologna has the nickname "La Dotta", which means "the erudite", thanks to the University.

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More than 85.000 students attend this university today. It has many branches in the region: in Cesena, Forlì, Ravenna and Rimini. The main building is in Palazzo Poggi and contains the rectorate. The Archigymnasium, in Galvani Square, is the ancient building.

### The towers

In the Middle Ages more than one hundred towers were built in Bologna. At the time not many buildings were made of bricks, but the towers were. They had military defense functions and they also symbolized the power of the most important families.

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Today the Two Towers, that are named Gariselli and Asinelli, are the symbol of the city. Only twenty out of one hundred towers are still here, the others were destroyed mostly to enlarge the streets and also by fires and wars. But today there are seven new towers: they were built by the architect Kenzo Tange over the exposition area.

### San Petronio

When the original architect, Antonio da Vincenzo, died in 1514 Arduino degli Arriguzzi proposed a new plan for the basilica in the form of a Latin cross that would have been bigger than the church of S. Pietro in Rome: so S. Petronio was born, but never finished. Inside it houses the world's longest sundial, which was added later.

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According to legend, Pio IV stopped the construction of this imposing basilica because he wanted to focus on the building of the Archiginnasio. Therefore, the façade remained unfinished and along the sides of the building you can still see exposed brick where the work was interrupted. Nevertheless, it is the sixth bigger basilica of Europe.

### The porticoes

From San Luca to the streets of the city centre, Bologna is full of porticoes, which were built after the birth of the University that brought the necessity to build new apartments. The porticoes had to be higher than 2,5 metres, in order to allow a man on the horse to pass under it.

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The porticoes measure more than 38 kilometres and 53km if we also consider those that are outside the city walls. In 2006 they were included in the Italian "Tentative List" of the sites nominated to become world heritage UNESCO.