

Modena

Emilia-Romagna · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Modena is a prosperous, compact city on the old Roman road Via Emilia, between Bologna and Parma. Its Romanesque cathedral, the Ghirlandina tower and Piazza Grande together form a UNESCO World Heritage site. For more than two centuries the city was the capital of the Este dukes, and their palaces and art collection are still here.

Modena is best known for what it makes. Traditional balsamic vinegar, Lambrusco wine and fresh egg pasta come from here, and the Ferrari and Maserati stories are rooted in the city. The tenor *Luciano Pavarotti* and the racing driver and carmaker *Enzo Ferrari* were both born here. Two or three days suit travelers who like food, art and cars, and the city sees fewer crowds than Bologna or Florence.

When to visit

Late spring and early autumn are the best times: warm days and good light for walking. Summer is hot and humid, with frequent heat waves. Winter is cold, damp and often foggy, with occasional snow.

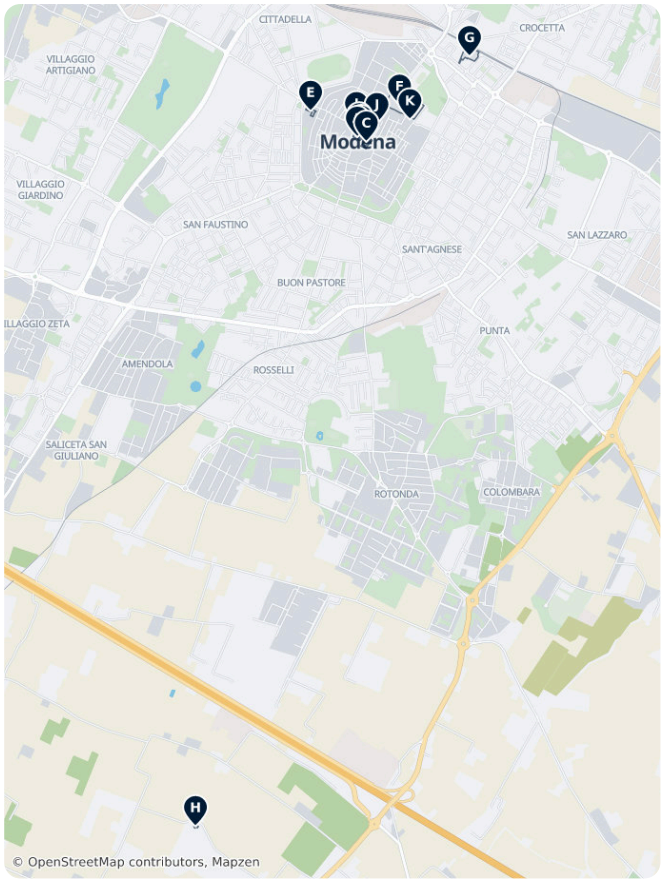
The biggest event of the year is **Festivalfilosofia**, a philosophy festival held over a weekend in mid-September in Modena, Carpi and Sassuolo. Lectures, concerts and exhibitions fill the squares and courtyards, and most events are free. Book a room early for that weekend.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Fair Fair for cycling	10° / 15° Feels like 6°	2° / -3°	Dry air · Calm winds
February	Good Good for cycling	11° / 17° Feels like 8°	3° / -3°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Great Great for cycling	15° / 22° Feels like 12°	5° / -1°	Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 25°	9° / 3°	Dry air · Calm winds
May	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 31°	13° / 9°	Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	30° / 37°	18° / 13°	Calm winds · Up to 5 days above 35°
July	Poor Poor for sightseeing	34° / 39°	20° / 16°	20 sunny days · Humid air · Calm winds · Up to 11 days above 35°
August	Poor Poor for sightseeing	33° / 39°	21° / 16°	Humid air · Calm winds · Up to 10 days above 35°
September	Great Great for sightseeing	27° / 34°	16° / 11°	Calm winds
October	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 28°	12° / 6°	Dry air · Calm winds
November	Good Good for cycling	15° / 21°	7° / 0°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Fair Fair for cycling	10° / 16° Feels like 7°	3° / -2°	Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: May, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



The UNESCO-listed heart of Modena is Piazza Grande, where the cathedral, its tower and the town hall stand together.

- A Duomo di Modena was begun in 1099 by the architect *Lanfranco*. The stone reliefs by the sculptor *Wiligelmo* on the façade tell the story of Genesis. Entry is free.
- B Ghirlandina is the cathedral's bell tower, about 86 m tall, and the symbol of the city. You can climb about 200 steps to the bell-ringers' room. Visits need an advance booking for a time slot.
- C Palazzo Comunale has historic council rooms open to visitors. One of them keeps the wooden bucket from the legend of the *Secchia Rapita* (the stolen bucket).
- D Musei del Duomo sit next to the cathedral. They show the original Romanesque carved panels from the cathedral roof and the cathedral treasury.
- E Galleria Estense holds the art collection of the Este dukes. Highlights are a portrait and a marble bust of Duke *Francesco I d'Este*, by *Velázquez* and *Bernini*.
- F Palazzo Ducale was the Baroque residence of the Este dukes and is now Italy's military academy. It can be visited only on guided tours on weekends, booked through the tourist office.
- G Museo Enzo Ferrari combines Enzo Ferrari's birthplace and his father's workshop with a modern gallery under a yellow curved roof. Its changing exhibitions show racing and road cars. It is a short walk from the station.
- H Casa Museo Luciano Pavarotti is the villa where the tenor spent his last years, on the southern edge of the city. It shows his stage costumes, awards and photos.

In the old town, the I Votive Church of Modena was built after the plague of 1630, and the J Modena Synagogue dates from the 19th century. The K Museo della Figurina celebrates collectible

stickers, a fitting theme in the home town of the Panini sticker company.

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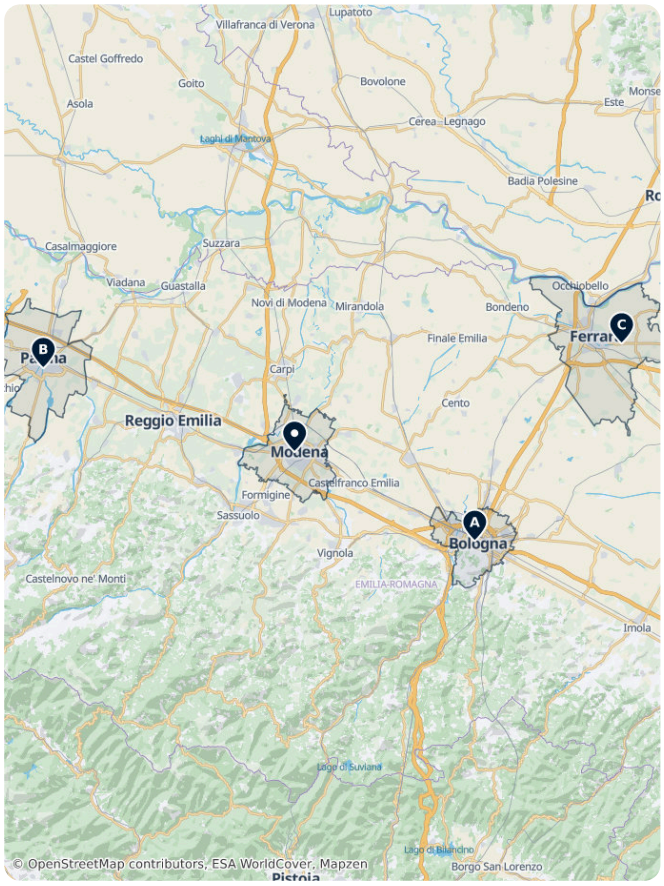
What to experience

These activities are typical of Modena and hard to find elsewhere.

- **Hear an opera in Pavarotti's home town**: the Teatro comunale Pavarotti-Freni is named after *Luciano Pavarotti* and the soprano *Mirella Freni*, both born in Modena. Its opera season runs from autumn to spring.
- **Go deeper into the Motor Valley**: car lovers can book a tour of the Maserati factory in the city.
- **Cycle along the Panaro river**: a mostly flat cycle path leads south from the city through the countryside towards Vignola.

Day trips

Modena is a good base for the Motor Valley, the wine hills to the south and the other art cities of Emilia. These trips are listed from closest to farthest.



- Nonantola (≈20 min by car): a small town with a large Benedictine abbey, known for its carved Romanesque portal.
- Carpi (≈20 min by train): a calm town with a huge Renaissance square and the castle of the Pio family.
- Maranello (≈25 min by car, or by the pre-booked Ferrari shuttle bus from Modena station): the home of Ferrari. The Ferrari Museum shows race cars and Formula 1 history next to the factory.
- Ⓐ Bologna (≈25 min by train): the regional capital, known for its long arcades, towers and food markets.
- Castelvetro di Modena (≈30 min by car): a hill village with a square paved like a chessboard, surrounded by Lambrusco Grasparossa vineyards.
- Ⓑ Parma (≈30–40 min by train): an elegant city with a Romanesque cathedral and baptistery, and the home of Parma ham and Parmigiano Reggiano.
- Vignola (≈35 min by car): a town with a well-kept medieval castle, famous for its cherries in late spring.
- Ⓒ Ferrara (≈1 hour 15 min by train via Bologna): a Renaissance city with a moated castle and walls you can walk or cycle on.

Where to explore

Modena is one of a chain of historic cities in Emilia-Romagna linked by fast regional trains.

- On the Via Emilia: Bologna to the east and Parma to the west.
- Farther east: Ferrara and the mosaic city of Ravenna.
- On the Adriatic coast: Rimini.

Getting there

- **By air**: the nearest airport is Bologna Guglielmo Marconi, about 50 km away. A direct shuttle bus to Modena takes about 50 minutes. Or take the Marconi Express monorail to Bologna Centrale and a train to Modena, about 1 hour in total.
- **By train**: Modena station is on the northern edge of the old town, about 15 minutes on foot from Piazza Grande. Regional trains run often to Bologna (20–30 minutes) and Parma (30–40 minutes), and Milan is about 2 hours away. See Trenitalia.

Getting around

- **On foot**: the old town is flat and compact, with long arcades that give shade and shelter from rain. Most sights are within a 15-minute walk of Piazza Grande.
- **By bike**: Modena is flat and has many cycle lanes. Cycling is a common way to get around for locals.
- **By bus**: city buses are run by SETA. The simplest way to pay is to tap a contactless bank card or phone on the validator by the front door. The fare is the same as a paper ticket. You can also buy tickets at tobacconists, machines or in the app. See SETA Modena.
- **To the Ferrari museums**: a ticketed shuttle bus, booked in advance, runs a few times a day between Modena station, the Museo Enzo Ferrari and the Ferrari Museum in Maranello.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The flat, arcaded old town puts the main sights within a 15-minute walk of Piazza Grande.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

Modena is flat with many cycle lanes, and cycling is a normal way for locals to get around.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: not for the city, which is easy on foot and by bike. A car helps for the hill villages, the vineyards and the balsamic vinegar producers in the countryside.
- **Parking**: use the paid car parks on the ring of avenues around the old town and walk in, for example the underground car park at Parco Novi Sad.
- **Restrictions**: the historic centre is a **limited traffic zone (ZTL)** watched by cameras. Do not drive in without a permit, or you will receive a fine by post.

Food & drink

Food is central to life in Modena. Look for tortellini in broth, tigelle (small round flatbreads) filled with pesto modenese, a spread of lard, garlic and rosemary, and puffy fried gnocco fritto with cured meats. Zampone and cotechino, two rich pork sausages, are winter dishes. Drink Lambrusco, the local sparkling red wine.

Real traditional balsamic vinegar (Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena) is aged for at least 12 years in sets of small wooden barrels. Many family vinegar lofts, called acetaie, offer visits and tastings; book ahead. For lunch and local products, go to the Mercato Coperto Albinelli, the covered market from 1931. The lanes around Piazza Grande and Via Emilia are full of trattorias. For a special occasion, chef *Massimo Bottura*'s three-Michelin-star Osteria Francescana is in the old town; tables must be booked far in advance.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Pizza Margherita
Thin-crust pizza topped with tomato, mozzarella, and basil, invented in Naples and still best there.

DINNER

Spaghetti alla Carbonara
Pasta with egg, cured pork cheek (guanciale), pecorino cheese, and black pepper, a Roman classic.

Risotto alla Milanese
Creamy saffron-infused rice dish from Milan, often served alongside braised veal shank.

Lasagna · Lasagne al Forno
Layered baked pasta with ragu, bechamel, and cheese, a staple of Emilia-Romagna cooking.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Prosciutto and Cheese · Prosciutto e Formaggio
Cured ham paired with regional cheeses, a common antipasto plate found nationwide.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Gelato
Dense, slow-churned Italian ice cream, traditionally lower in fat and air than American-style ice cream.

Tiramisu · Tiramisù
Layered dessert of coffee-soaked ladyfingers and mascarpone cream, dusted with cocoa.

DRINKS

Espresso · Caffè
A short, strong shot of coffee drunk quickly, usually standing at a bar counter.

Wine · Vino
Italy is one of the world's largest wine producers, with regional styles from Piedmont's Barolo to Tuscany's Chianti.

Aperol Spritz
A bittersweet orange aperitif mixed with prosecco and soda water, a staple of the early-evening aperitivo.

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Safety & health

Modena is a safe city with little crime aimed at tourists. Lock your bike well, as bike theft is common. In summer, heat waves and mosquitoes are the main nuisances, so carry water and repellent. In winter, thick fog can make driving on country roads difficult. Tap water is safe to drink.

History

The Romans founded the colony of *Mutina* here in 183 BC, on the Via Emilia. Roman tombstones from that time line the portico of the Palazzo dei Musei. In the Middle Ages the city grew around the tomb of its patron saint, *Geminianus*. Duomo di Modena was built over his tomb.

In 1325 Modenese soldiers defeated Bologna at the battle of Zappolino and carried off a wooden bucket as a trophy. The poet *Alessandro Tassoni* turned the story into the comic poem *La Secchia Rapita*, and the bucket is still kept in Palazzo Comunale.

In 1598 the Este family lost Ferrara to the Pope and moved their court to Modena. Duke *Francesco I* began Palazzo Ducale in 1634, and the dukes filled the city with churches and art. In 1831 the patriot *Ciro Menotti* led a failed revolt against the duke and was executed; his statue stands in front of the palace. The duchy ended in 1859, and Modena soon became part of a united Italy.

In the 20th century Modena became a centre of fast cars. *Enzo Ferrari* was born here in 1898, and Maserati moved its factory to the city on the eve of the Second World War. The cathedral, the tower and Piazza Grande were added to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1997.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



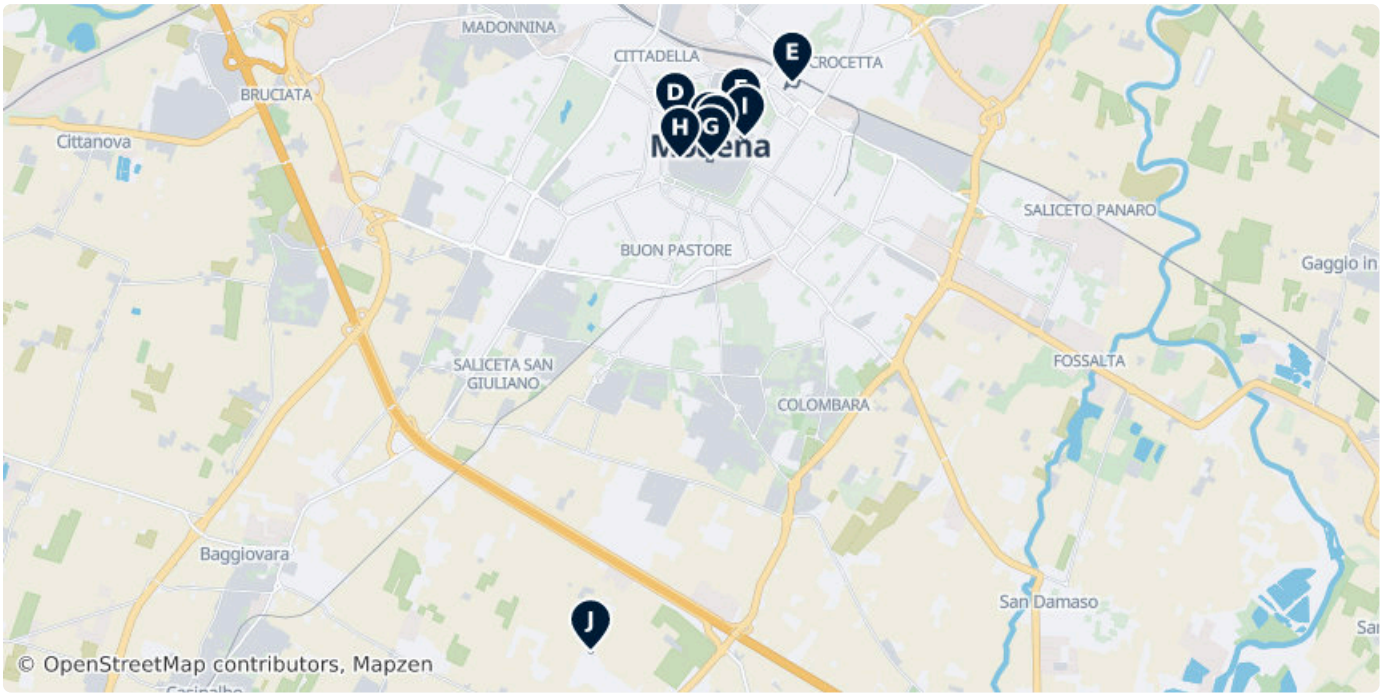
Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Italian

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Modena Essentials

Modena's historic centre is defined by the UNESCO-listed Romanesque Cathedral, the Ghirlandina bell tower and the town hall on Piazza Grande. The Este dukes left the Ducal Palace and the art collection of the Galleria Estense. The Enzo Ferrari Museum tells the story of the city's most famous son, while the Teatro Comunale and Luciano Pavarotti's house museum recall its opera heritage. For food, the covered Albinelli Market and Osteria Francescana are the city's best-known addresses.





A Modena Cathedral

Romanesque cathedral begun in 1099, with the stone reliefs of Wiligelmo on its façade. Part of a UNESCO World Heritage site.

8 Via Lanfranco, Modena 41121, Italy (44.64630, 10.92553)

Mo	07:00–12:30, 15:30–19:00
Tu–Su	07:00–19:00

visitmodena.it/it/scopri-modena/eccell... , +39 059 2032660



B Torre della Ghirlandina

The cathedral's bell tower and the symbol of Modena, standing over Piazza Grande. It can be climbed on set days.

2 Via Lanfranco, Modena 41121, Italy (44.64637, 10.92591)



C Palazzo Comunale

The town hall on Piazza Grande, with historic rooms open to visitors, including the room that holds the famous stolen bucket of the Secchia Rapita legend.

18 Piazza Grande, Modena 41121, Italy
(44.64597, 10.92641)



D Galleria Estense

The art collection of the Este dukes on the top floor of the Palazzo dei Musei, with works by Velázquez, Bernini, Correggio and Tintoretto.

Largo Porta Sant'Agostino, 41121 Modena MO, Italy
(44.64812, 10.92092)

gallerie-estensi.beniculturali.it, +39 059 4395711



E Enzo Ferrari Museum

Automobile museum dedicated to the life and legacy of Enzo Ferrari, featuring exhibitions on Ferrari cars, engines, and racing history.

Via Paolo Ferrari 85, 41121 Modena, IT
(44.65196, 10.93659)

Apr-May Mo–Su	09:30–19:00
Jun-Aug Mo–Su	09:00–19:00
Nov-Mar Mo–Su	09:30–18:00

ferrari.com/museums/enzo-ferrari-mod... , +390594397979



F Ducal Palace

Historic Baroque palace built in the 17th century, originally the residence of the Este Dukes and now home to a military academy and museum.

Piazza Roma, 41121 Modena MO, Italy
(44.64855, 10.92969)

Sa–Su	09:00–17:00

+390592032660



G Mercato Albinelli

Historic covered market opened in 1931, with stalls selling balsamic vinegar, Parmigiano Reggiano, cured meats and fresh pasta.

Via Luigi Albinelli 13, 41121 Modena, IT (44.64487, 10.92564)

Mo–Fr	07:00–15:00
Su	Closed

mercatoalbinelli.it



H Osteria Francescana

Three-Michelin-starred restaurant led by chef Massimo Bottura. It is globally recognized for its contemporary interpretations of traditional Emilia-Romagna ingredients and inventive tasting menus.

Via Stella, 41121 Modena MO, Italy (44.64480, 10.92156)

osteriafrancescana.it, +39 059 223912



I Teatro Comunale Modena

The city's 19th-century opera house, named after the Modena-born singers Luciano Pavarotti and Mirella Freni.

Via Del Teatro 8, 41121 Modena, IT (44.64683, 10.93022)

teatrocomunalemodena.it, +39 059 2033020



J Casa Museo Luciano Pavarotti

The final residence of tenor Luciano Pavarotti, now a museum. The house displays his stage costumes, awards, personal memorabilia, and photographs documenting his international operatic career.

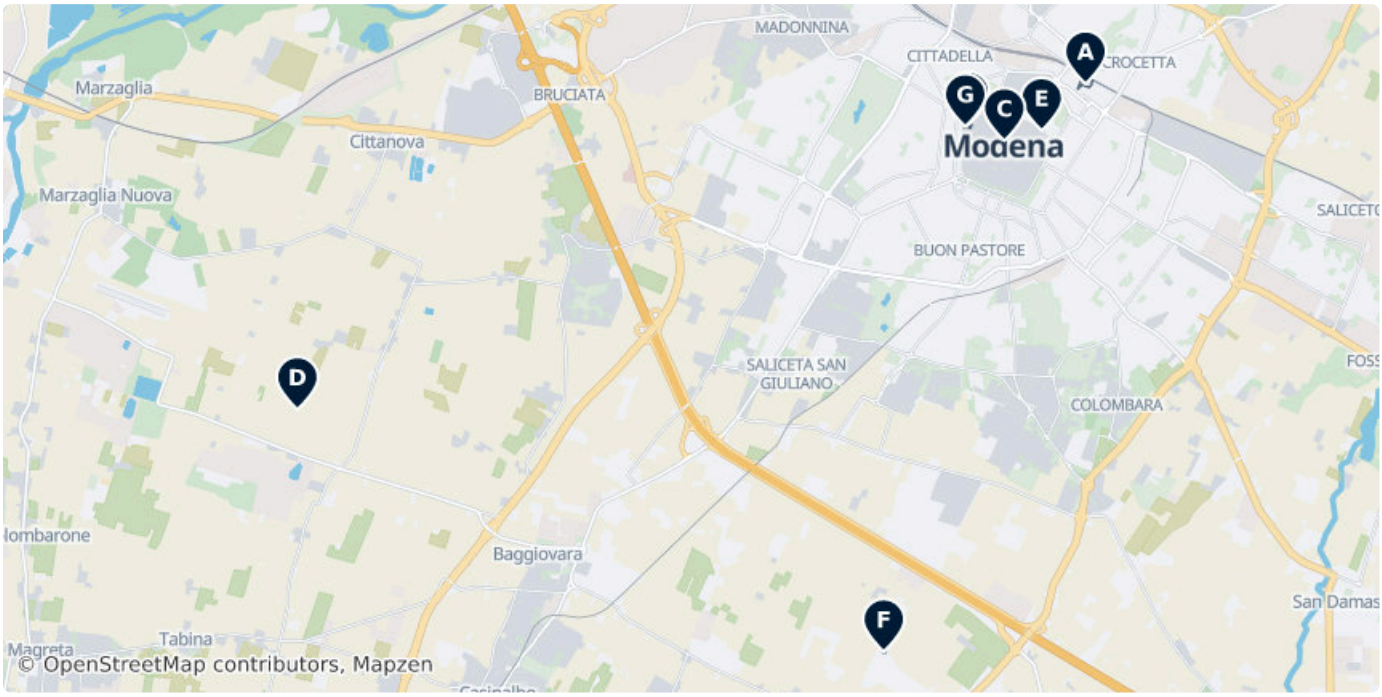
Stradello Nava 6, 41126 Modena, IT (44.59789, 10.90957)

Mo–Su	10:00–18:00

casamuseolucianopavarotti.it, +39 059 460778

Museums and Collections

Modena's museums reflect the city's passions. Car lovers have the Enzo Ferrari Museum and the Maserati collection of the Panini Motor Museum. Art lovers have the Este dukes' Galleria Estense and the cathedral museums. Two unusual extras are the museum of collectible cards, a nod to the Panini sticker company founded here, and the last home of Luciano Pavarotti.





A Enzo Ferrari Museum

Automobile museum built around Enzo Ferrari's birthplace, with a yellow-roofed gallery of Ferrari and other sports cars and engines.

Via Paolo Ferrari 85, 41121 Modena, IT
(44.65196, 10.93659)

Apr-May Mo–Su	09:30–19:00
Jun-Aug Mo–Su	09:00–19:00
Nov-Mar Mo–Su	09:30–18:00

ferrari.com/museums/enzo-ferrari-mod... , +390594397979



B Galleria Estense

The art collection of the Este dukes on the top floor of the Palazzo dei Musei, with works by Velázquez, Bernini, Correggio and Tintoretto.

Largo Porta Sant'Agostino, 41121 Modena MO, Italy
(44.64812, 10.92092)

gallerie-estensi.beniculturali.it, +39 059 4395711



C Museums of the Modena Cathedral

The cathedral museums, with Romanesque sculpture from the cathedral, including the famous metopes, and the cathedral treasury.

Piazza della Torre, 41121 Modena MO, Italy (44.64655, 10.92572)

Mo	Closed
Tu–Fr	10:00–14:00, 15:00–18:00
Sa–Su	10:00–14:00, 15:00–19:00

museidelduomodimodena.it/it/, (+39) 059 216078

D Panini Motor Museum

Private collection on the Hombre organic farm outside the city, with a famous group of historic Maserati cars, plus motorcycles and tractors.

Strada Corletto Sud, 41123 Modena MO, Italy (44.62095, 10.83103)

Mo–Su	09:30–13:00, 14:30–18:00

paninimotormuseum.it, +39 059 5962181



E Museo della figurina

Museum of collectible cards and stickers in Palazzo Santa Margherita, built on the collection of Giuseppe Panini.

Corso Accademia Militare, 41121 Modena MO, Italy (44.64753, 10.93071)

comune.modena.it/museofigurina



F Casa Museo Luciano Pavarotti

The tenor's last home, south of the city, with stage costumes, awards and photographs from his career.

Stradello Nava 6, 41126 Modena, IT (44.59789, 10.90957)

Mo–Su	10:00–18:00

casamuseolucianopavarotti.it, +39 059 460778



Lapidario Romano dei Musei Civici

Roman funerary monuments and inscriptions from ancient Mutina, displayed under the portico of the Palazzo dei Musei.

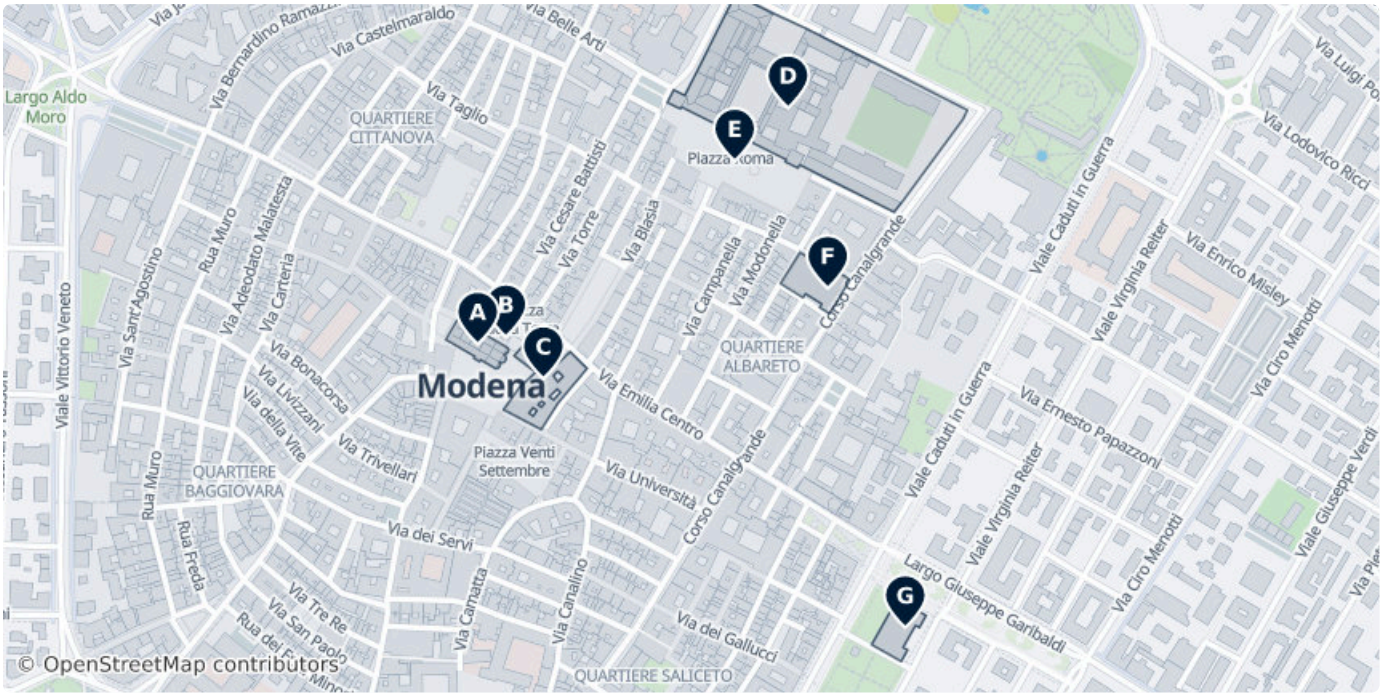
337 Largo Porta Sant'Agostino, Modena 41121, Italy
(44.64790, 10.92049)

Mo–Fr	07:30–19:30
Sa	08:00–19:30
Su	09:45–07:30

palazzodeimuseimodena.it

Historic Architecture

Modena's architecture runs from the 12th-century Romanesque Cathedral and the Ghirlandina tower, through the medieval town hall on Piazza Grande, to the Baroque Ducal Palace of the Este dukes and the wide Piazza Roma in front of it. Two 19th-century theatres complete the picture of a ducal capital.





A Modena Cathedral

Romanesque cathedral begun in 1099 by the architect Lanfranco, with façade reliefs by Wiligelmo. A UNESCO World Heritage site.

8 Via Lanfranco, Modena 41121, Italy (44.64630, 10.92553)

Mo	07:00–12:30, 15:30–19:00
Tu–Su	07:00–19:00

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B Torre della Ghirlandina

The Romanesque-Gothic bell tower of the cathedral, the tallest structure in the old town and the city's emblem.

2 Via Lanfranco, Modena 41121, Italy (44.64637, 10.92591)



C Palazzo Comunale

A group of medieval civic buildings joined behind a single arcaded front on Piazza Grande, with its own clock tower.

18 Piazza Grande, Modena 41121, Italy (44.64597, 10.92641)



D Ducal Palace

Historic Baroque palace built in the 17th century, originally the residence of the Este Dukes and now home to a military academy and museum.

Piazza Roma, 41121 Modena MO, Italy (44.64855, 10.92969)

Sa–Su 09:00–17:00

+390592032660



E Piazza Roma

A spacious pedestrian square in front of the Ducal Palace, with water jets set into the paving and a monument to patriot Ciro Menotti.

Piazza Roma, 41121 Modena MO, Italy (44.64805, 10.92897)



F Teatro Comunale Modena

Neoclassical opera house by Francesco Vandelli, opened in 1841, with a horseshoe auditorium of boxes.

Via Del Teatro 8, 41121 Modena, IT (44.64683, 10.93022)

teatrocomunalemodena.it, +39 059 2033020



Teatro Storchi

Late 19th-century theater designed by Vincenzo Maestri in neoclassical style. Opened in 1889, it is a primary venue for prose and drama performances.

Largo Giuseppe Garibaldi 15, 41124 Modena, IT
(44.64360, 10.93126)

emiliaromagnateatro.com/teatri/teatro-... , +39 059 211426

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