



TRIP DOSSIER

ITALY



'The Apennine Explorer'

Land Only Price:

£ 395 per person per week

*Self-catering apartments -all trips must start
and end on a Saturday
May to October*

Tour Grade: A/B

Introduction

Bedonia is to be found in the North-West corner of Italy, in the province of Genova. Enjoy the picturesque scenery of this unique unspoilt corner of the Italian countryside on this self-guided trip in Emilia Romagna. Upon arrival into the airport of your choice in Italy, you will collect your hire car and drive into the hills to the village of Bedonia, into the Parma province. Bedonia is situated at the beginning of the Taro Valley, considered to be one of the most beautiful and welcoming centres of the Parmense Apennines and not far from Tuscany. The town is surrounded by the high reliefs of the mountains but still gives an impression of a vista of wide open spaces. From your self-catering base five minutes walk from the village there are many different options, from walks to cycle rides to lake visits, all set amongst the wonderful Italian culture, with hilltop castles and churches dating from the 13th Century. The warmth of your hosts is legendary – their hospitality always receives the highest praise and they make the difference between just another self-catering holiday and one that is filled with hidden insights, surprises and homely touches making you feel both at home yet on holiday simultaneously!



About the Area

Geography Bedoniese territory is marked by two principal valleys, the Val Ceno and the Val Taro, both getting their names from the rivers which run between them. The Apennines lie between the coast and the inland region of Emilia-Romagna. Despite their proximity to the coastal strip, the Apennines enjoy peace and tranquillity.

Climate Typically Mediterranean, with hot dry summers and cold winters. Snow falls on the mountains in the winter months, but rarely stays in the villages, and clear, sunny days that are the norm here can be enjoyed throughout the year.

Language Italian, but English is spoken by your hosts.

Bedonia and the trip

The walking In Bedonia you will be provided with fully detailed walking notes and maps. Some walks are waymarked, but in general you will need to closely follow the route descriptions. You may be following a combination of mountain roads and ancient pathways.

Trekking conditions This is an A/B grade tour. As there is no set itinerary, the terrain you cover is entirely your choice and you should ask your local host what to expect on the various suggested routes.

Babysitting A daytime and evening babysitting service can be made available at an hourly rate (payable locally). It must be understood however that, as within the UK babysitting regulations are far from rigid, you will be asked to sign a disclaimer if you decide to use this service.

The accommodation You will be staying in one of two apartments in a large family house 'Casa San Bruno'. This modern villa is surrounded by spacious gardens and situated in a peaceful location and superb setting, with stunning woodlands, meadows and mountain views.

The first, 'Emily' apartment is on the ground floor and consists of a charming living/dining room (which includes a sofa bed), and kitchenette, double bedroom and the bathroom. If you are a larger party there is the option of an adjoining bedroom with double and twin beds. Just outside the doors of this apartment is a gazebo for 'al fresco' pasta dinners. Sleeps 2 – 6 people. Further mattresses can be put on the floor if you are a big group.

The garden studio apartment, 'Rosa', sleeps 2 +2, you enter into the living area, which can incorporate a sofa bed and there is a further separate double bedroom with en suite attached. In the living room you will also find a log stove for those cosy winter evenings – or perhaps the pizza! The apartment also has a kitchenette and bathroom. On the patio you will find tables, chairs, sun parasols and sun loungers. For those who would prefer slightly more space (for example 4 adults) there is also the option of a connecting corridor from the kitchenette which leads past the garage to a further double bedroom (or two singles) with en suite bathroom.

Services and facilities Apartments are fully equipped, bed linen is changed weekly, bath and kitchen towels are provided. Washing machine and drying facilities are found in the utility area. There is a barbecue set for use, and a cot and high chair can be arranged on request.

Local shops / restaurants Bedonia has all the shops you need for your self catering supplies, including two small supermarkets. A few of the shop keepers even have some English in case your Italian is a bit rusty. There are also local inexpensive trattorias and gourmet restaurants if you feel like having a night off the cooking. Your host Sandra knows most of the locals and will steer you in the right direction for the 'best deals'. And for a morning coffee you will find cosy pavement cafes and bars.

What you need to provide Your personal equipment as detailed in the clothing and equipment list later in this booklet.

Ecological considerations *We ask for your full consideration and co-operation concerning all ecological matters, especially in the disposal of rubbish. Please carry all rubbish with you and dispose of it properly in the villages.*

Itinerary

Please be aware that although we will do our best to adhere to this itinerary occasionally events out of our control may prevent us from following the exact schedule. Please be assured that the clients' best interests will be foremost in any changes that may occur. A degree of flexibility is essential in travelling on such holidays!

Your accommodation is indicated in *bold italic* at the end of each day.

Day 1. You can fly to either Genoa, Milan, Venice, Pisa or Bologna (*see 'Flights' section near the end of this document*) where you will collect your hire car and drive to the delightful village of Bedonia. Your accommodation is self-catering. ***Bedonia.***



Days 2 to 7. On this holiday there is no set itinerary, but your hosts will be able to advise you on numerous day or half-day walks that are available from Bedonia. For these you will be supplied with route notes and maps. You can walk the ancient roads, stopping along the way at neighbouring whitewashed villages to admire the balconies of flowers and to enjoy a leisurely drink in a bar. Within easy walking distance rises the Castle of Compiano on the top of a pretty walled village, with a panoramic 'piazzetta' from where you can enjoy a wonderful view, breathing the atmosphere of by-gone ages whilst sipping a glass of wine. For the more fit and eager, there are a wide variety of more

challenging walks which take you up to Monte Maggioreasca (1799 m). Your evenings can be spent in your apartment or exploring the evening delights of Bedonia. There are also a number of optional activities that are available to you which can be arranged and paid for locally as detailed in the following section. ***Apartment, Bedonia.***

Day 8. Return your car to the airport. Depending on the time of your flight, you might like to spend your last half day further exploring the village. ***Home.***

Activities

Below is a list of many of the activities that are available from Bedonia. Some will entail an extra cost and these can be arranged and paid for locally; you can decide exactly what you would like to do after you have arrived and had a chance to discuss the various possibilities with your hosts.

- ❖ **There are many trails, some leaving directly from Bedonia, so you can make your packed lunch and be off! Some of the walks take you to mountain villages, where you can take a refreshment before heading back. Your walks can be as short as 1 hour and as long as a whole day.**
- ❖ **Local walking, alpine guides are available in Bedonia as well, if you would like to have a guided day in the hills.**
- ❖ **For a spectacular day out you can drive to the ‘Park of a hundred lakes’. The drive is 1½ hours and you can walk through the beautiful tree clad hills to the pristine and still glacial lakes in the mountains. As this area sees snow in the winter, you can always take a chair lift to a lake and hike down. There are remote parts of the park if this is what you are looking for too.**
- ❖ **There is a local open-air swimming pool available during the summer months.**
- ❖ **If you are interested in mediaeval castles these are plentiful in the area including the impressive Bardi Castle (and its ghost!), and imposing fortress perched on a huge crag of red rock. Or you can go to the turreted embattled Torrechiara castle rising above the vineyards.**
- ❖ **Trips to the local river for fishing and/or swimming.**
- ❖ **There is also the protected area and nature sanctuary ‘Oasi di Ghirardi’ where you can follow a guided nature trail seeing the beauty of the local flora and fauna, including deer, foxes, wild cats, birds of prey, rare flowers and monumental oaks.**

“Not far to the east of Bedonia, just north west of Borgo Val di Taro, lies the large WWF wildlife sanctuary of Oasi dei Ghirardi. Comprising 600 hectares of woods, meadows, creeks, bushy areas and streams, the area is a haven for a multitude of plants and animals, some of which are endangered species. Roe deer, wild boar, a variety of rare oaks, flowers, up to thirty-two different orchids, as well as fungi, birds, and butterfly areas. The Oasis was created in 1979 and in 1996 was incorporated into WWF-Italy's system of Oases and Sanctuaries. The walking offered here is more of the slow and contemplative sort, taking in the details of the flora and fauna. Even the guided tour is not very long geographically, although a six year old in our party needed a refuelling stop and then had to be carried for some of the way, but enjoyed it. The guided walk took three and a half hours due to the frequent stops. Decent walking shoes, rather than boots, are quite adequate. A few short medium-steep sections might tire small children if not carried.” *Client comment Summer 2002*

- ❖ **A local volleyball court and other sports facilities.**
- ❖ **Cycle hire – Bedonia has a limited number of mountain bikes to hire (15 Euros for a weekend), but you can drive to Chiavari (50 kms, away) on the coast to hire bikes. These bikes are 30 Euros (approx £18.50) for the week. Your host can suggest many biking routes for all levels of experience for you to try out.**
- ❖ **Day excursions to Pisa (to see the leaning tower) or the more culturally interesting and authentic mediaeval town of Siena are possible.**
- ❖ **Horse Riding is also available on request**

Practical Information

Passports and Visas Citizens of EC countries require a valid passport to visit Italy, but do not need a visa.

Food and Accommodation Your accommodation in Bedonia is in a self-catering apartment. There are shops and restaurants available in Bedonia.

Local transport You will be provided with a hire car upon arrival at the Italian airport of your choice.

Baggage Please ensure that your baggage is clearly marked with your name, inside as well as outside, in case the labels get detached. We will be sending you a complimentary Walks Worldwide kitbag about two weeks

prior to the tour. If you want to use your own hard suitcase of this tour that is not a problem. Your entire luggage should, if at all possible, be packed into one kitbag/suitcase.

Vaccinations and medical precautions No vaccinations are necessary for Italy and health problems in the area we visit are quite rare. It is advisable to take an E111 form just in case you need to see the doctor for any reason. The only 'medical precaution' that you might otherwise like to take is a small first aid kit to cater for blisters, headaches, coughs, colds, etc. A high factor sun protection lotion is essential, as sunburn can be severe on hot days in thin mountain air. Water from springs and is generally safe to drink, but you may like to take Iodine tablets to sterilize water that you drink from streams or springs.

Currency The Euro is the currency in Italy. At the time of writing (November 2006) the Euro is approximately £1 = €1.48. Please check the currency converter website www.xe.net cash points are widely used.

Electricity 240 volts A.C.

Time GMT + 1 (BST + 1 in summer)

Contact details It is not our policy to provide addresses and telephone numbers of every location that you will be staying at on this tour as, due to frequent changes in contact details, it is very difficult to provide an accurate list for all our tours. Your Final Joining Instructions, which you will receive 2 weeks prior to departure, will show any local contact details that are required for your tour. However we would be glad to provide you more details if you have a specific reason.

Mobile phones do work in Italy. If you have not used your mobile outside the UK before you will have to contact your operator to enable international calls. *Please ensure your phone is set for roaming if you are taking a mobile.* Please note that it is expensive to phone both to and out of a mobile when abroad. We do not however encourage mobile phone use whilst walking on any of our trips – out of courtesy to other clients please use your mobile phone discretely. If you do need to get in touch, or if anyone needs to get in touch with you, please contact the Walks Worldwide office (01524 242000) during office hours.

Maps You will be supplied with the necessary walking maps on arrival, but to obtain copies in advance you may like to try either The Map Shop, 15 High Street, Upton-on-Severn, Worcs WR8 0HJ (Tel: 01684 593146) www.themapshop.co.uk or Stanfords at 12-14 Long Acre, London WC2E 9LP (Tel: 0207 836 1321) www.stanfords.co.uk

Included in the price

- Accommodation on a twin/share basis
- Car hire
- Advice from your hosts on walking routes and places to visit
- Route notes (supplied before you leave).
- Use of route notes / maps in Bedonia

Extras

- Tips
- Drinks personal spending and souvenirs
- Optional activities
- All meals
- Fuel
- Flights and taxes

Flights As far as possible it is preferable to fly into Genoa, the closest airport to Bedonia. The best and cheapest way to do this is using Ryan Air fly from Stansted to Genoa. Ryanair also fly from a number of regional airports to Milan, Pisa and Venice. Easyjet flies into Milan, Venice and Pisa. Alternatively there are scheduled flights into Genoa, which usually cost around £200. We can look into the options for you if you wish.

What our clients have said!

‘Walks Worldwide was the best for family walking trips that we could find.’ **L.C. June 2002.**

‘Our host, Sandra and her husband were fantastic! She has a heart of gold, very generous and was always concerned that we saw as much as possible and that we had a good time. She went out of her way to help us, so we had a real holiday to remember. Fabulous time! We wanted to go walking in Italy, this was the first company that I came across that has a good reputation, that did trips to Italy.’ **W.S. June 2003.**

Clothing and Equipment Lists.

At least one set of smart casual clothes will be useful in hotels on this holiday. Whilst walking you must not worry about how you look: comfort and protection against bad weather are of prime importance. Because hill weather is so very variable, we recommend a number of thin layers rather than a few thick ones. Take old, well-worn clothes rather than rushing out to buy new ones, since they will probably get rough treatment on trek. The following list of clothing and equipment is intended to be fairly comprehensive, and experienced trekkers will take a good deal less luggage than we recommend.

CLOTHING	NUMBER	Check	EQUIPMENT	Check
Walking boots	1 pair		Camera, film and accessories	
Socks	Personal choice		A variety of plastic bags	
Casual shoes/sandals	1		Sunglasses	
Underwear	Personal choice		Torch	
"T" shirts	3		Daypack/small rucksack	
Long trousers	1		Binoculars (optional)	
Short trousers	1		Washing and shaving kits	
Light sweater	1		Water bottle	
Waterproof jacket	1		Reading material	
Waterproof trousers	1		First aid kit	
Warm jacket	1		Notebook/diary	
Sunhat	Essential (we hope!)		Money belt/pouch	
Gloves	1 pair		Walking poles (optional)	
Casual Wear	For the evenings			

The following items should also be considered, **and those in bold type essential.**

ITEM	Check	ITEM	Check
Moisturising cream and lipsalve		Small sewing kit (<i>do not pack in hand luggage</i>)	
Safety pins (<i>do not pack in hand luggage</i>)		Insect repellent	
Penknife (<i>do not pack in hand luggage</i>)		Blister Protection	
Spare bulbs and batteries		Universal travelling adaptor	
Nail clippers (<i>do not pack in hand luggage</i>)		Small mirror	
Cold water detergent		Scissors (<i>do not pack in hand luggage</i>)	
Spare glasses or contact lenses		Boot wax	
Spare boot laces		Sweets for energy/trail snacks	
PASSPORT		Suncream - lots of it!	
DRIVING LICENCE		MONEY / TC'S	
'Dry' handwash/sanitiser / wet wipes		AIR TICKET	