



Cesenatico – Galeata – Cesenatico

This sea-hill route is not easy but very stimulating. From the seaside resort atmosphere of Cesenatico to the spurs of the Apennines, towards Tuscan Romagna, so called because of its strong links with Florence. This is a stretch at a fair level of cycling, not exactly short, here and there selective, and featuring many historical references.

Roman and Byzantine Treasures in Galeata

The first 30 kilometres, as far as **Forlimpopoli**, are on the flat and give the chance to warm up and prepare for the climbs ahead.

At Forlimpopoli, at the Fortress, you turn left for **Meldola** which is protected by the wall built in the 15th century by Novello Malatesta. From Meldola the road is increasingly uphill: you head for **Civitella** and then, after about sixty kilometres, for **Galeata** that stands in a broad valley surrounded by the spurs of the Apennines. Of great interest are the Abbey of Sant'Ellero, with its Romanesque façade, and the Museo Mambrini which houses finds from Roman, Byzantine and mediaeval times.

Tough approach to Monte delle Forche

From Galeata you really start climbing to the top of **Monte delle Forche**. The first part is pretty hard and at least 39x25 is advised, then the gradient becomes less tiring and you can maybe manage to get your rhythm with a couple of teeth less. But on the whole it's a difficult climb and you have to be in training to overcome it without too much dragging. At the top of Monte delle Forche (444 metres) you've covered 66 kilometres.

The descent to **San Zeno** gives you a second wind. At this point you can head directly for **Predappio** or turn left and take a variant route to nearby **Premilcuore** (11 and a half kilometres up and down, actually more up than down) and **Santa Sofia**. These two villages are fully paid up members of Tuscan Romagna, having belonged to the Province of Florence until 1923, before coming under Forli.

Variant possible at Premilcuore

In **Premilcuore** (its charming name means "Overwhelms the heart") the Museo della Fauna del Crinale Romagnolo (a museum on the local fauna) is very interesting and is open from spring to summer. The **National Park of the Casentino Forests**, Monte Falterona and Campigna is the habitat of the Apennine wolf, the deer and roe-deer, birds of prey and also reptiles and amphibians, adders, frogs, toads and fish. There is nature, art and history also in **Santa Sofia**, another village of the Park, where enthusiasm for music involves the whole village whose band has existed for 150 years.

Mussolini's house in Predappio

Those who choose the variant can go back by the same route and take the main road to **San Zeno**.

Those sticking to the programme go down immediately from San Zeno to **Predappio**, the village where Benito Mussolini was born in 1883. The village has two quite distinct architectures: the upper part which is mediaeval, and the lower part built at the behest of the dictator.

From Predappio you go up to the nearby **Rocca delle Caminate**. The four kilometre climb is fairly hard, but it's also the last effort because from the fortress you go down to the built up area of **Meldola** where you join up with the first stretch of the itinerary. Then you head for the plain by way of **Forlimpopoli**, **Santa Maria Nuova** and **Pisignano** until you reach Cesenatico after 136 kilometres full of surprises and not negligible climbs.



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