Smiling International School
An Extra Smile

2026

SPRING & AUTUMN TRIP IDEAS

PARCO SIGURTÀ GIARDINO

Via Cavour 1, 37067 Valeggio sul Mincio, Verona (Veneto)

(About 1 hour 45 mins from Ferrara by car)

Opens from 7th March 2026 until 15th November 2026

March, October & November 9 am - 6 pm, April - September 9 am - 7 pm

Last entrance to the park 1 hour before closing time

www.sigurta.it

This is a very beautiful garden which is truly at its best during spring when the tulip and daffodil displays are amazing, but it also provides an array of colours throughout the other months. You can visit the garden on foot although it is enormous, so we recommend that you hire one of the garden's bikes or golf cars. If you prefer to get an overview of the whole garden, then you can take a ride on its tourist train. Whatever mode of transport you choose, you can stop off at the shop and snack bars, which are dotted around the garden with seating areas provided.

It is important to note the following rules:

- No football, no sunbathing, no swimming costumes (as it is a garden rather than a park).
- No pets. The garden however has an agreement with a special day care service at two local dog kennels. For costs & to book in advance check out:
  www.ilcustodedellemuraglie.it / www.ilsognodisilviaenabirra.it

- Visitors are welcome to bring a picnic and blanket to set up on the grass but they are not allowed to set up chairs, tables or a barbecue.
- It is advisable to buy tickets in advance online but it is not compulsory.

Admission prices: adults €18, children aged 5 - 14 €10, children aged 0 - 4 free, over 65s €14

Please note that on the following special dates: 8th March, 6th, 24th 25th & 26th April, 1st, 2nd & 3rd May 2026, the number of visitors to the park will be limited. Tickets must be bought online in advance at the website above.

Special Park Events:

'Tulipanomania' – From mid-March to the end of April admire the amazing tulip displays. Check out the garden's Instagram page for an update on the tulips so that you choose the best day to visit.

'Omaggio all Donne' – To celebrate Women's Day on Sunday 8th March, all visitors will pay €5 instead of €18. Tickets must be bought online.

Caccia alla Uova di Pasqua / Easter Egg Hunt - Saturday 4th April
For children aged 3 - 10 there is a fun Easter egg hunt around the garden. Tickets can be bought online.

Visit the website for other exciting events during the year.

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PARCO NATURA VIVA - FAUNA & SAFARI

Località Quercia, 37012 Bussolengo, Verona, (Veneto)

(About 1 hour 30 mins from Ferrara)

www.parconaturaviva.it Tel: 045 6770033 (9.30 am - 5 pm)

The website is available in different languages and is well organised. It is important to consult the opening times before going as these can vary.

Opening Days & Times:

Every day from 2nd March 2026: 10 am - 6 pm

Entrance to both the safari & fauna park closes 1 hour before closing time

This makes a full fun day out as there is so much to visit. The park is divided into two separate areas: an African safari and a fauna park.

Go on safari in your own car then walk around the fauna park where you can see a variety of animals divided into 5 different continents. Learn about the park's conservation and breeding programmes during your tour. Don't forget to stop by the **'House of the Giants'** - a tropical greenhouse with large and small fascinating creatues. Meet some amazing life-like dinosaurs that walked the Earth millions of years ago at the **'Extinction Park'.** Take a break at one of the numerous exotic restaurants or snack bars located around the fauna park and visit the souvenir shop at the end of your stay.

(It is possible to visit just the fauna park or just the safari)

Tickets cost €25 per person. Children aged 0-2 are free.
You can save money by buying tickets online, visiting both the safari and fauna park, and enquiring about a Season Pass if you plan to go there often. Visit the website for further details.

N.B. There is a car park fee to pay on arrival

COLLODI - PINOCCHIO PARK, GARZONI GARDENS & BUTTERFLY HOUSE

Via San Gennaro 6, Collodi, Pescia, PT (Tuscany)

(About 2 hours, 15 minutes from Ferrara by car)

www.pinocchio.it

Collodi is a beautiful hillside town with a splendid villa. Visit Pinocchio Park where you can walk around fairytale grounds and discover the different artistic areas dedicated to each of the characters from this famous Italian story. Take a stroll through the beautiful, historical Garzoni Gardens and visit Collodi Butterfly House.

Opening Days & Times:

1st March - 31st March 2026 open every day:

Pinocchio Park 10 am - 6 pm (every day)

Garzoni Gardens & Tropical House weekdays 11 am - 6 pm

& Saturdays & Sundays from 10 am - 6 pm

(Butterflies arrive from mid-March)

1st April - 12th October 2026 open every day:

Pinocchio Park weekdays 10 am - 6 pm

Garzoni Gardens & Tropical House weekdays 11 am - 6 pm

Saturdays, Sundays & public holidays from 10 am - 6.45 pm /7 pm Park, Gardens & Tropical House

From 13th October - 1st November (no Butterflies)

Consult the website for further information during autumn months.

For prices and ticket offers, visit the official website above. **We also suggest you double check opening times before your visit.**

N.B. The ticket office closes an hour before closing time.

Telephone: 0572 429342

Email: parcodipinocchio@pinocchio.it

Giardino Garzoni: Telephone: 0572 427314

Email: giardinogarzoni@pinocchio.it

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BUTTERFLY HOUSE & FAIRY FOREST

Via degli Scavi 21 Bis

35036 Montegrotto Terme, Padova (Veneto)

(About 50 minutes from Ferrara by car. 10 minutes from Live Insect Museum Esapolis)

www.butterflyarc.it Email: segreteria@micromegamondo.com

Opening Days & Times:

Closed in winter months. Reopens on 1st March 2026

Ora Solare (Standard Time)

Tuesdays – Fridays: 10 am – 12.30 pm & 2.30 pm – 5 pm

Saturdays & Sundays: 10 am – 5 pm. Closed on Mondays

Ora Legale (Daylight Saving Time)

Tuesdays – Fridays: 10 am – 12.30 pm & 2.30 pm – 6 pm

Saturdays, Sundays & Public Holidays: 10 am – 6 pm. Closed on Mondays

This is a delightful little Butterfly House where you can learn about the life cycle of a butterfly, meet reptiles, parrots and other fascinating insects and creatures as you walk through a special heated greenhouse. You can also visit a magical fairy forest with hidden garden trolls, elves and goblins!

Within the grounds of the Butterfly House there is shop that sells all sorts of nature-related objects, books and toys plus a refreshment area with drinks, snacks and ice-creams. There is a well-kept garden with seating areas if you wish to take your own picnic. Alternatively, you can go out for lunch at one of the nearby pizzeria and restaurants.

On arrival you can book an interactive insect workshop which costs €1. These take place on Saturdays at 3.30 pm, Sundays & public holidays at midday, 3.30 pm & 4.30 pm with a guide.

All-day tickets: adults €12, children aged 13 - 18 €10, children aged 4 - 12 €8, children aged 0 – 3 free. (These price include both the Butterfly House & Fairy Forest)

Useful Information:

-The website says that is not necessary to book tickets in advance and that can buy them directly at the entrance. However we would suggest booking all the same.

- The ticket office closes an hour before the park's closing time.

-It is advisable to visit during the brightest times of the day when the butterflies are most active.

-Tickets last all day so you can leave the Butterfly House for lunch and return later.

-It is possible to book birthdays, guided tours and arrange other events here.

-There is a €2 discount if you have visited the insect museum below (valid for 1 year).

-To book tickets: Tel. 049 8910189 Email: segreteria@micromegamondo.com

ESAPOLIS, MUSEUM OF LIVE INSECTS

Via dei Colli 28, 35143 Padova (Veneto)

(10 minutes from the Butterfly House)

(About 50 minutes from Ferrara - a few minutes from Padova's city centre)

Opening Days & Times:

Wednesdays, Thursday, Fridays 2.30 pm – 6 pm

Saturdays & Sundays 10 am – 6 pm. Closed on Mondays & Tuesdays

N.B: The ticket office closes an hour before closing times

This is Italy's first and largest living museum of insects. It provides an excellent opportunity for children to discover the wonderful world of insects and to encourage them to protect the natural world. Get close (if you have the courage!) to giant cockroaches, stick insects, Praying Mantis, beetles and discover the natural wonders created by insects. Visit a room dedicated to spiders if you dare! At weekends and during the holidays there are workshops for children at an additional cost of €1.

Admission: adults €12, reduced prices for children aged 13 -18 €10, children aged 4 – 12 €8, children aged 0-3 are free, over 65s & students €10

There is a discount for people who have also visited the Butterfly House (valid 1 year)

Website: www.esapolis.eu Tel: 049 8910189

Email: segreteria@micromegamondo.com

IL PARCO FAUNISTICO VALCORBA

Via Val Corba 18, Stroppare di Pozzonovo, Padova 35020 (Veneto)

Motorway exit Rovigo north to Stanghella.

(It is only 40/50 minutes from Ferrara)

www.valcorba.it

Opening Days & Times:

The park re-opens in March 2026, 10 am - 5 pm (last entrance 3 pm) but it depends on the weather. Therefore contact the park to check if it is open during this month: 351 331 7939 (or look on Social Media / website above)

From 1st April – 30th September: open every day from 10 am to 6 pm

October: 10 am - 4 pm

N.B. The last admission to the park is 2 hours before closing time.

This is an ever-growing zoological garden that participates actively in worldwide projects protecting endangered species, breeding and reintroducing animals back into their natural habitat. There are no bars or restaurants inside the park. However, there are lots of picnic table areas and they allow you to bring your own food. There are drinks machines, toilets, a children's play area and a free car park. Pets are not allowed. In case of bad weather, visitors are advised to telephone beforehand, especially during the months of March and October.

Admission Prices:

Adults = €20

Children aged 3 - 10 = €15

Children aged 0-2 = free

Useful Information:

-The park's rural location sometimes means that paying by card may not be possible so we recommend paying in cash.

-It is not necessary to book in advance

-Email: info@parcovalcorba.it

NUOVA TERRAVIVA

Via dell'Erbe 29, Ferrara, off Piazza Ariostea (Emilia Romagna)

www.nuovaterraviva.org

Nuova TerraViva manages one of the few precious green spaces found in our city. It promotes biodynamic agriculture and offers an imaginative and environmentally-friendly space for children and adults to enjoy. Discover its vegetable gardens, animal area, tree houses, secret gardens and tunnels plus its special beehives.

The association holds vegan and vegetarian food events, celebrates spring and autumn with festivals, organises summer camps and hosts birthday parties. You can even become a member, or simply visit the garden, respecting the special areas and nature found there.

N.B. No dogs are allowed in the park.

BIKE TRIP IDEAS

How about downloading a "Bike map" to discover some of Ferrara's surrounding territory? This website also provides useful information where you can hire bikes, find bike services and book bike package deals with organised tours. Go to:

https://www.ferraraterraeacqua.it/en/cycle-tourism/cycle-tourism

VISIT THE SEASIDE

Lidi di Comacchio / Lidi Ferrarese (About 1 hour 30 mins. by car, traffic permitting)

Why not visit the 'Lidi'? These are a series of seven beaches near the fishing village of Comacchio(also worth visiting). During the summer months, many families transfer to the Lidi for the weekend, to get away from Ferrara's humidity. There are lots of organised activities for children and the family, for example, sports and fitness events. Each beach offers different things, so choose which one suits you. Visit this website below for further information:
https://www.ferraraterraeacqua.it/en/discover-the-area/nature-and-environment/sea-beaches

EXPLORE THE PO DELTA - DELTA DEL PO

Valli di Argenta - The Valleys of Argenta

Motorway A13 direction BO-PD, exit at Ferrara Sud
and follow SS16 towards Ravenna (Emilia Romagna)
(About 40 minutes away from Ferrara) www.vallidiargenta.org

The protected Oasis of Campotto (also known as the 'Valli di Argenta') covers over 1600 hectares and offers a variety of natural habitats to explore, including beautiful wetlands and a wood. It is home to a variety of beautiful birds and plants, and is truly an oasis for nature lovers. To visit the Oasis of Campotto and have the full experience go with a guide either on foot or by bike.

Private guided tours with a minimum of 5 people can be organised by telephoning the tourist information Welcome Room at: 0532 330276 or emailing info@vallidiargenta.org Bike rental service available

Check out this useful website where you can discover and book a variety of excursions in the Valleys of Argenta month by month:
https://shop.atlantide.net/circuito-amaparco/ecomuseo-di-argenta/

For boat trips in the Delta visit this website: https://www.marinocacciatori.it/it/

VALLE SANTA (PART OF THE VALLI D'ARGENTA)

You can visit the Valle Santa wetlands without a guide, every day and all year-round. There are birdwatching towers along the way to catch a sighting of some of the local birds. On Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from March until December it is possible to do a circular tour on foot or by bike (9km) along the embankments. On the other days, once you arrive at the end you have to go back the same way. There are birdwatching towers along the way.

MAIN BIRDWATCHING AREAS IN THE DELTA

Oasi Val Campotto, Oasi Valle Santa – one of the largest colonies of Cormorants in Italy, various species of Warbler, Little Egret and Great White Egret, Osprey, Bittern, Terns.

Oasi di Bando – Wild Geese, White Stalk, Waders, Great Crested Grebe, Coot, Silt, Sandpiper.

Anse Vallive di Ostellato – Grey Heron, Night Heron, Egret, Kestrel, Marsh Harriers and different species of owl.

Bosco della Mesola Nature Reserve – Bue Tit, Great Tit, Nightingale, Warbles, Barn Owls, Tawny Owl, Little Owl.

Sacca di Goro – Great and Little Curlew, Sandpiper, Bittern, Purple Heron, Terns, Avocet, Stilt and ducks.

Cannevié-Porticino Oasis – Black Totan, Shelduck, Snipe, Kingfisher, Pink Flamingo, Marsh Harrier, Avocet, various species of ducks.

Saline di Comacchio - Pink flamingos which nest in spring, Spoonbill, Stilt, Oystercatcher, Avocet, Tern and Gulls which nest in this area.

Boscoforte (accessed with a guide) – Herons and Waders, Cormorant, Spoonbill, Nightjar, Marsh Harrier, ducks.

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You may also be interested in visiting the Civic Museum in Argenta (Via G. B. Aleotti 46, inside church San Domenico) to learn more about the local history as well as Pieve di San Giorgio (Via Pieve) - one of the oldest churches in the province of Ferrara founded in 569, which you can visit with a guide. Contact Argenta's tourist board above to organise your visit. It also has a free park ideal for family picnics.

MESOLA WOOD - BOSCO MESOLA

Bosco Mesola Via dei Frassini 24
Free to visit on Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays
Until March 29th 2026 8 am - 4 pm 8 am - 6 pm 30th March - 25th October 2026
(About 50 minutes from Ferrara by car)
Restricted areas can be visited with a guide only. Admission €3
www.parcodeltapo.it email: servizioinformativo@parcodeltapo.it

The ancient woods of Mesola, once belonging to the Estense family in 15th century and a favourite hunting ground of the Duke, is home to a variety of wildlife and fauna including the Mesola deer. Sadly, much of it was destroyed when the nearby marshlands were drained. Luckily, the remaining part was turned into a fully protected nature reserve. There are quite a few trails which are open to the public and these can be visited on foot, by bike or by a special eco bus. A tiny wetland inside the woods and the surrounding marshes mean that a variety of bird species can be seen regularly in this area as well as Red and Fallow deer.

By car or bicycle: from the Bosco Mesola (aprox. 7 km from the municipality Mesola), follow the road towards Gigliola for 2 km. There is a large car park at the entrance to the woods.

N.B. Bosco Mesola is a nature reserve therefore dogs are not allowed.

SALTWORKS OF COMACCHIO - SALINA DI COMACCHIO

www.salinadicomacchio.it

Tel: 366 3457442 (About 1 hour by car from Ferrara)

To book or for further information contact: info@salinadicomacchio.it or cea@cadf.it

This fascinating flat landscape with canals and saltwater basins was manmade. Since being abandoned more than thirty years ago, it has become home to a variety of bird species including pink flamingos who come and go as the seasons change. This area can only be visited by eco train, bike or on foot with a guide. To book a tour, visit the website above, email or telephone the organisers.

HEALTH SPAS AND THERMAL BATHS

These health spas make a great weekend away with friends or family and come highly recommended. Have a look on-line at weekends away at: 'Le Terme di Monterenzio' in the hills close to Bologna, spas in the town of Montegrotto Terme or Abano Terme in the Euganee hills near Padova, which are famous for their thermal baths and various spa treatments.

Whilst every effort has been made to include accurate and up-to-date information, An Extra Smile is not responsible for any inaccuracies or changes in the programme of events, dates or times. We recommend that you always consult the websites provided, email or phone the organisers before a trip.

The car journey times are an approximation and depend on routes, traffic, days and seasons. We always advise using a SatNav or Google maps to plan your trip.