



## **Reggio Emilia Study Group General Information**

Throughout these pages you will see many hyperlinks to websites. These are indicated when you see a word or group of words that is underlined.

### *Vancouver Reggio Association*

On the VRA website, there is a [section dedicated to resources](#) to support the March 2020 study group to Reggio Emilia.

### *Travelling to Reggio Emilia*

You will need a current passport that does not expire for at least 6 months after your time in Italy. Make copies of all of your important papers (passport, identification, credit cards, etc.) and leave a copy with someone at home.

You will likely have to make a connection somewhere. The first European country you land in will require you to enter passport control. There is usually quite a lineup, but it goes quickly. Italy is one of the countries covered by the Schengen Convention. For example, if you land in Amsterdam, you will enter Europe through the passport control place, but once you are in Europe, you can move freely. You won't need to go through this again when you arrive in Italy.

#### **AIRPORT – BEST ARRIVAL PLACE**

Bologna is the closest airport to Reggio Emilia. It's about 45 minutes by car from Bologna to Reggio Emilia. You won't likely need to rent a car once you arrive in Reggio.

Milan is another airport option, although a little farther to travel to Reggio Emilia (probably by train).

Rome is also a possibility. There is a fast train that goes from Rome to the new, fast train station in Reggio Emilia. This fast train station is outside of the city of Reggio, so you will need to take a bus or taxi get into the city.

#### **SUGGESTED FLIGHT PATTERNS**

It's likely that you will have at least one stopover. Amsterdam (Schipol Airport) is one of the easier airports to navigate a connection through. Paris (Charles De Gaulle Airport) is also a good choice option.

## **TRAVEL TIME**

Your travel time will depend on your departure point, how many transfers you will have to make, and your mode of travel between the airport and the Reggio Emilia. Expect to lose most of day with travel time and the time difference between your home and Italy.

Try to arrive in Reggio Emilia in daylight so you can have a look around the area. Ideally, plan to arrive on Saturday if possible, Sunday at the latest. You will need some time to adjust to the time change and jet lag. It's best if you can stay awake that day and plan for an early bed time to help adjust. Some people find that melatonin helps them make the adjustment.

Most flights out of Bologna to North America leave very early in the morning. Factor that into your plans. You may wish to plan to spend a night in Bologna before you depart, or pre-book your transportation from your lodgings to the airport on your departure day.

## **GETTING FROM BOLOGNA AIRPORT TO REGGIO EMILIA**

There are several options:

- 1) Train from Bologna to Reggio Emilia. You will have to take a shuttle bus or taxi from the airport to the train station. Here is the link to the Trenitalia website:  
<https://www.trenitalia.com/en.html>
- 2) Taxi from Bologna airport to Reggio Emilia. Plan for about 120 Euros for this trip. You can look online to pre-book taxis. Here is an example:  
<https://airmundo.taxitender.com/book-a-ride-new/plan-your-ride/BLQ>
- 3) Aerbus. Shuttle bus service that runs about 6 times daily between airport and Reggio Emilia. <http://www.aerbus.it/en/>
- 4) Arrange for a car service to meet you at the airport in Reggio Emilia and take you directly to your hotel/airport address. This can be shared between 4-6 people and may actually work out to be less expensive than other options. (After a long day of travel, dealing with luggage, and arriving in an unfamiliar place, this is my preferred way to go!)  
<https://www.suntransfers.com>  
<https://airportstaxitransfers.com>  
<https://kiwitaxi.com>  
<https://gettransfer.com>

*During your stay in Reggio Emilia*

## GETTING ORIENTED

We are looking at organizing a walking tour of the historic centre of the city of Reggio Emilia on Sunday afternoon. This is a great way to learn a little history and become oriented to the area. This is, of course, optional.

The study group will begin officially at around 8am on Monday morning, March 16, and conclude Friday late afternoon, March 20 (final times to be determined). We have suggested that folks arrive by Sunday, March 15, at the latest. It will take a little time to get over being travel weary and adjust to a new time zone. The days are long, with many intense lectures and discussions. Travellers sometimes struggle to be wide awake on Monday morning ;-)

Sunday in the late afternoon you will likely see local people taking part in the traditional [passagiata](#) – a time to see and be seen. Enjoy an aperitivo or a café and do some people watching – or join in!

We are exploring the option of arranging a reception for Sunday evening for a “meet and greet” at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre.

Most hotels include an impressive breakfast buffet in a dedicated breakfast room as part of your costs. You are likely to encounter other study group participants over breakfast. If you are staying in a private apartment, you’ll probably want to pick up basic provisions. Your host can tell you where the nearest shops are located and what their opening hours are. The majority of shops in Italy open in the morning, close from about noon to 4pm and then reopen.

**WiFi** (Internet) is readily available in hotels and some other public locations, including the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre.

Some hotels may also have **bicycles** for loan. Check to see if your hotel/host has **hairdryers** available. Although you can bring an electrical adapter, I find that when I bring one from home it always malfunctions. If there isn’t one available, you might want to consider picking one up in Italy if you need it.

For other electrical machines, you will need a [plug adaptor](#). If you bring a **laptop**, it should have a built-in converter, but you will still need an adaptor for the plug. You might also consider bring a [portable charger](#) for your phone or camera.

## MONEY

There is no need to bring traveller’s cheques – they are seldom used any more. You should have some cash (Euros) on hand when you arrive. There are **bancomats** (cash machines) located around the city which will usually work with your debit card and/or credit card. You

should let your credit card company and bank know in advance that you will be travelling so they are aware that there may be uncommon charges on your card.

## MEALS

**Breakfasts** may be included in your lodgings. **Lunches** will be included during the study group (Monday-Friday), along with coffee breaks, at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre. In the main piazza inside the International Centre there is a small coffee bar with coffee, pastries, and panini. At dinner time, you will have opportunities to explore the range of wonderful places to eat in Reggio.

**Dinner** is late in Italy – most places don't open until 7:30 or 8:00 pm. Most of the restaurants will have one or two days that they are **closed**, with Sunday being a popular day of closure. There are a range of restaurants, from quite casual to very elegant. Reservations are highly recommended for many of the restaurants. **Menus** will have a variety of courses, but order as you wish. Coffee bars are good place to have something more casual, like a panini. Friends commonly gather for an **aperitivo** late afternoon/early evening, which might involve a glass of wine or an **Aperol Spritz** and some nibbles.

Many restaurants in Reggio open later in the evening, 7:30 or 8:00pm at the earliest. Reservations are highly recommended. There are a range of restaurants from quite casual to more upscale. You can also generally find panini in coffee bars if you prefer to eat earlier. Restaurants typically have a cover charge (coperto) that covers a tip, so tipping isn't necessary. If you'd like to pay a compliment to your server, you can leave a small amount.

Restaurants will generally have a **coperto** (cover charge), so tipping is not the norm. If you'd like to pay a compliment to your server, you can leave a few coins or round up to the next Euro. It is not common to have separate bills, so you might want to plan ahead with your dining companions if everyone is going to contribute the costs of their own meal to the pot, or if you will decide to divide the bill evenly amongst the dining party.

In coffee bars, you will pay one price if you stand at the bar and consume your coffee, and a different price if you sit down and linger over coffee! In the morning, you will see locals standing at the bar having a quick café/espresso. But Italians don't order a latte (or coffee with milk) after noon!

Consider checking out the local specialties: **Lambrusco** (a bubbly red wine), **tortelli di zucca** (pumpkin filled pasta), **erbazzone** (spinach or chard pie), **parma ham**, and of course **Parmigiano Reggiano** (the famous cheese of the region).

## **MARKET DAYS**

Open air markets are set up in various **piazze** (squares) in the city on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Some bartering may be possible. Most vendors will only accept cash. Reggio

Children often will start the day's program a little later on one of these days, knowing that visitors like to visit the markets!

## **SHOPS**

Shops generally open at 9:00 or 9:30 in the morning and close at 1:00pm. Shops open again at around 3:30 in the afternoon and close at 7:30. Most shops will also have a day or a half day of closing.

## **TOILETS**

Most hotels will have traditional toilets and also a bidet. You may occasionally come across a toilet in a restaurant or coffee bar that has an older European style known as a [“squat toilet.”](#)

## **DRESS CODE/SHOES**

You will find that most people dress for these study groups in typical work or comfortable clothes. Although Italy is known for its fashion, dress for comfort in this context. Jeans are perfectly acceptable. You will, however, absolutely need good walking shoes. Count on walking for an hour a day, at least!

## **WEATHER**

In March, the temperature is typically in the high teens/low twenties. You might pack a small umbrella and a light raincoat.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

All of our lectures and discussion sessions will be either delivered in English or be translated into English. Many people in Reggio Emilia (in hotels, some shops) will speak some English, but you may want to learn some [basic Italian words](#).

There are many [language applications](#) available to download on your phone. Here is one list of favourites.

Check with your local cell phone provider to see if they offer a [travel plan](#). You might also think of getting a sim card for use in Italy. Be careful about roaming! This can add up in unexpected charges!

WiFi (internet connection) is generally available in hotels, restaurants, and at the International Centre.

[What's App](#) is one phone application that many people in Italy (and around the world) use. If you have a WiFi signal, it's free, and similar to texting.

Facebook also has both messaging and phone capabilities through its [Messenger](#) service.

A private Facebook group (*Canadian Study Group to Reggio Emilia 2020*) has been set up for this Canadian Study Group 2020. Membership is by invitation only. Invitations will be coming soon – it's up to you whether or not to join, and how to use the group.

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## STUDY GROUP

A detailed itinerary of the study group program will be provided on the first day. Anticipate that the days will be long and intense! They will assign participants to groups. ALL of the centres are well worth visiting! Reggio Children will organize several visits to children's centres. Typically, there are visits to schools planned for part of one day while children are in session, and on another afternoon/early evening to an infant and toddler centre after children have gone home but with the presence of the teachers. Buses will be provided for these visits. Reggio Children arranges these visits in advance. As you can imagine, it's a fair amount of stress for each school and group of children to welcome so many visitors, so Reggio Children makes arrangements to rotate the schools amongst the various study groups. We have indicated our hope to have the elementary school in the International Centre included as we have many school age teachers as part of this delegation.

Most people walk daily from their hotels or lodgings to the International Centre. This may take 30-40 minutes each way, depending on where you are staying. You will need good walking shoes! It will help to burn off the gelato you will likely indulge in. You could also take a taxi to the International Centre. We will make arrangements to meet walking groups at several locations on the first Monday.

There is a very strict “no photo” policy in the schools and some other locations. Reggio Children has an agreement with families to preserve the privacy of their children, and this is something that we agree to honour. Some collections of photos are available in the bookstore, in addition to many books.

You may wish to bring a beautiful notebook and several pens with you. Audio-recording of lectures is permitted. Consider whether an iPad or laptop suits your own needs best. The seats in the theatre do have small tabletops. Remember, you will be walking a lot, so a lightweight backpack might come in handy.

Everyone will receive a certificate of participation at the conclusion of the study group experience. Check with your local jurisdiction to see if this counts as professional development for you. In BC, the Early Childhood Registry recognizes the study group experience for 40 hours of professional development.

### LORIS MALAGUZZI INTERNATIONAL CENTRE

Our sessions will all be at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre. This place has quite a history – it was once a parmigiano-reggiano cheese warehouse of the Locatelli company.

The majority of the study group sessions will take place at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre. This is a good walk from the historic centre of the city. The study group programme includes daily lunches and coffee breaks, served onsite in the International Centre. There is also a coffee bar in the main piazza of the International Centre that serves drinks, pastries, and panini.

### BOOKSHOP

Inside the International Centre is a bookstore that sells all of Reggio Children’s published books, DVDs, etc. Many of these materials are difficult to get a hold of outside of Reggio Emilia. The bookstore also sells some local specialties, like parmigiano-reggiano cheese (vacuum wrapped(parmesan) and balsamic vinegar.

### EXHIBITIONS AND ATELIERS

With the International Centre are a number of exhibitions and ateliers. Make sure you take advantage of opportunities to visit these spaces. During most days there will be a period of time after lunch and before sessions resume.

### [REMIDA](#)

We have requested the opportunity to spend time in [Remida](#), the creative recycling centre. Many of you have expressed interest in this.

### **CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

There are a couple of possibilities we are investigating: a visit to

- a visit to a [parmigiano-reggiano](#) dairy.
- an [ancient vinegar factory](#) that produces balsamic vinegar

Stay tuned for more information.

### [REGGIO EMILIA TRAVEL TOURISM WEBSITE](#)

The [Reggio tourism website](#) is a good site to explore, including for information about local restaurants.

### [SIGHTLINES INITIATIVE WEBSITE](#)

Our study group collaborators from the United Kingdom, [Sightlines Initiative](#), have some good resources on their website.