



Ravenna is Nominated the City with the Best Quality of Life

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Italian daily newspaper Il Sole 24 Ore has published its 25th annual survey on quality of life in Italy: Ravenna (Emilia-Romagna) wins as the province where life is at its best, while the province of Agrigento (Sicily) turns out to be the worst.

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The top ten spots in the classification are assigned to the mountain villages in the north-east of the



country (Trento is second, Belluno is fourth and Bolzano is tenth) and to other towns in Emilia-Romagna (Modena, Reggio Emilia and Bologna). Big cities like Milan and Rome are left behind but they are improving.

Every year, the survey compares and contrasts living conditions in the different Italian provinces through a comprehensive set of parameters divided into six chapters of investigation, each based on six parameters and a specific classification: Standard of Living, Business and Job Market, Environmental Services and Health, Population, Public Policies and Recreational Activities.

Ravenna is at the top for the first time ever, mostly thanks to its high ranking in Environmental Services (great hospitals and kindergartens), Business and Job Market (they have registered a high level of employment) and in Population (due to a large presence of youth). The only drawback is in the Public Policies sector as there is a high number of reported crimes. That of security is an issue for several northern provinces and also for large metropolitan areas. Indeed Agrigento scored high in crime, but is doing pretty bad in all the other parameters, most of all in Environment and Job Market. Central Italy also scores well, thanks to Tuscany: Siena ranks ninth and Livorno ranks eleventh.

The south appears in the top ten thanks to one region only: Sardinia and its provinces of Olbia-Tempio, Sassari and Nuoro. The rest of the south, with a majority of Sicilian, Calabrian and Pugliese provinces, is all at the bottom of the list. Naples, which scored last in 2013, has seen some improvement and lands at number 96. As we mentioned earlier, both Milan and Rome have progressed. Milan is at number 8 and Rome at 12.

Located on the Adriatic coast in North-East Italy, Ravenna was briefly the capital of the Roman Empire and later the Italian capital of the Byzantine Empire. During this time, incredible mosaics were constructed throughout the city. Described as a symphony of color in Dante's Divine Comedy, Ravenna's well-preserved mosaics are some of the finest remaining in the Western world. Ravenna has eight UNESCO World Heritage sites (listed below), museums, Dante's tomb, and offers many cultural events throughout the year.

For some good food stop at a piadinerie for piadina served with cold cuts, jam, Nutella or local cheeses. Enjoy Tortellini and Cappelletti as well as local wines such as SanGiovese.

UNESCO World Heritage sites
(from <http://goitaly.about.com> [2])

- **Mausoleo di Galla Placidia:** Galla Placidia was the daughter, sister, wife, and mother of Roman emperors. She had this mausoleum built in the mid-fifth century. The interior is breathtaking. The mosaics are some of the oldest in the city.
- **Battistero degli Ortodossi:** This baptistery was built in the late fourth to early fifth centuries and is the oldest of Ravenna's monuments. Spectacular mosaics decorate the dome.
- **Battistero degli Ariani:** This baptistery is one of the few remaining monuments of the Arian cult, the official religion of the court of Theodora. The dome is again decorated with beautiful mosaics.
- **Basilica di Sant'Apollinare Nuovo:** The basilica was originally a Palatine church. Byzantine style mosaics cover two walls reflecting both early-Catholic and Arian cult beliefs.
- **Basilica di San Vitale:** The Basilica di San Vitale is one of Italy's most important monuments of early Christian art. The Basilica has an elegant cupola and stunning 6th century mosaics in its apse.
- **Chapel of Sant'Andrea:** The chapel was built as a private chapel. Inside are mosaics of flowers, figures of Christ, and at least 99 species of birds.
- **Mausoleo di Teodorico: Teodorico,** king of the Ostrogoths, had this tomb built in 520AD. The tomb is made of Istria stone. It is the only one of the monuments without mosaics, but it does have some stunning friezes.
- **Basilica of Sant'Appolinare in Classe:** The basilica is outside Ravenna in the ancient Roman port of Classe by the archaeological park. Its apse is decorated with mosaics and it holds the sarcophagi of former archbishops.



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