

Third week | 2nd day

The salt and sugar road

Padova - Abano and Montegrotto Terme - Chioggia

From Padua to Chioggia along ancient canals



This stage coincides with the old trade route which connected Padua to **Chioggia**. Leaving the historical centre of Padua you head towards the river ring of the city, on the right bank of the Battaglia canal, heading towards the pointed outlines of the Euganean Hills. In the distance you can see the famous hotels of the biggest spa resort in Europe: **Abano** and **Montegrotto**. You reach Battaglia Terme, natural gateway to the Euganean Hills Park and important river junction: you can visit the interesting Civic Museum of River Navigation and admire the spectacular waterfall, regulated by the old hydraulic post of "Arco di Mezzo". From here you continue alongside the winding Vigenzone canal towards **Chioggia**. The ancient canal was the strategic waterway which hosted the "burci", large transport boats, which carried salt from Chioggia, sugar from Pontelongo and "masegne" trachyte from the hills. The route first leads to Bovolenta, then to Pontelongo – the sugar town – characterised by the fine town hall and Villa Foscari Erizzo, and finally you reach **Correzzola** a small centre with a sixteenth-century Benedictine court founded by the monks who carried out important reclamation works in the area.

On a river bank you pass by the Ca' di Mezzo natural oasis and then head towards Brondolo and Chioggia, a characteristic fishing town.

ROUTE INFORMATION

Starting point: Padova

Arrival: Chioggia

Length: 66 km

Conditions: easy route, almost always on river banks, mostly asphalted, except for some stretches of dirt road

Indications: present

Inter-modality: bike + train

USEFUL ADDRESSES

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Railway stations:

Padova, Terme Euganee-Abano-Montegrotto, Pontelongo, Chioggia



1 Abano Terme, sources of the Montirone river
2 Battaglia Terme, Civic Museum of River Navigation

3 Due Carrare, Veneto countryside
4 Chioggia, Vena canal

TRAVELLERS' DIARY

At Bassanello, where there is the cycling bridge over the Scaricatore canal, you cross the water and then continue on a dirt road alongside the Battaglia canal.

After a long, straight route you reach Battaglia Terme, where the waters join the Bisato canal to form the Vigenzone canal: here the water has been life, energy source, means of communication and transport for more than eight hundred years. From your saddle you can observe the magnificent Castle of the Catajo, a spectacular building with 350 rooms built in the XVI century by the Obizzi family.

At Battaglia Terme – the gate to the Euganean Hills Park – the role played by rivers and canals is shown by the

Museum of River Navigation which reconstructs the history of the important river port bringing together the history and traditions of this centuries-old activity.

Now the route continues winding along the left bank of the Vigenzone canal which touches on small villages that evoke the water civilization – Gorghizzolo, Gorgo, Bovolenta – characterised by the presence of walled bridges, ancient mills, water pumps. At Bovolenta you go onto the Bacchiglione heading towards Pontelungo (long bridge – another name connected to water) and its sugar refinery which has been active since 1910. Don't miss the much felt "Votive Procession", the first Sunday in May, to thank the Madonna

who freed the village from the plague in 1676, with a wooden votive bridge over the Bacchiglione. Now the river leads us towards Correzzola: a metallic footbridge gets you to the other side to reach the sixteenth-century Benedictine court built by the monks who began the process of reclaiming the territory. You soon approach the lagoon, the panorama flattens out and you begin to see the twinkling surface of salt water through the villages of Ca' Bianca, Ca' Pasqua and Brondolo, to then reach the picturesque town on the lagoon which welcomes you with a triumph of fishing boats and brightly coloured lugsails.