



Name	PIACENZA HILLS AND THE MOST BEAUTIFUL BOROUGHS IN ITALY
Location	piacenza
Address	Bobbio, Castell'Arquato, Vigoleno

Description	<p>The valleys surrounding Piacenza are studded with historical cities, castles and medieval borough: this itinerary includes Bobbio, Castell'Arquato and Vigoleno, it can be done by car or by bus, on a single day or on a two-day trip.</p> <p>Bobbio, the pearl of Trebbia valley, can be seen on the line of the horizon with the sight of the hunchback Ponte Gobbo, the tall bell towers of the Duomo and San Colombano's abbey. On Summer's evenings Bobbio come alive with lights, music and an exciting atmosphere carried about by the delicious smells coming from open air restaurants offering home made 'maccheroni' with hare or beef stew, or mushroom sauce. The borough is a splendid example of medieval architecture: its history is summed up in San Colombano's abbey, which between the 9th and the 10th century became one of the most important religious and cultural centres in Europe. It focused its activity in the production of transcripts passing on the heritage of classic authors. The abbey includes San Colombano's church, the cloister with the City Museum, San Colombano's Museum, Piazza Santa Fara and the former church of Santa Maria Assunta overlooking Piazza Maggiore, and surrounded by suggestive medieval porticoes and noble palaces.</p> <p>In about an hour and a half, visitors can reach Castell'Arquato, travelling across the green Trebbia valley. Leave your car at the feet of the borough and walk along the small alleys with ancient houses to reach the historical centre. In Piazza del Municipio there are the most important buildings symbolizing the religious and political power: the splendid collegiate church of Santa Maria, the Rocca towers from the 14th century and the huge Palazzo del Podestà, built at the end of the 13th century and partially expanded in the 15th. In the borough it is possible to find local artisans' shops, restaurants, wine bars, b&b's and relais de charme to spend a very comfortable night.</p> <p>Vigoleno, another fascinating borough only 15 km away from Castell'Arquato, dominates the valley of Stirone Regional Park. It is enclosed in a small circle of crenelled walls and surrounded by woods and vineyards. The typical product of this village is Vin Santo di Vigoleno, a D.O.C. passito wine that perfectly matches selected pastry and savoury or spicy cheeses. In Vigoleno the romanesque architecture does not need to be described: it neatly expresses itself in bas-reliefs depicting pilgrims, and in its squares once alive with merchants, pilgrims, peasants, and soldiers walking back and forth on the walls around the village, watching over a breathtaking view of the valley beneath. The ancient castle today hosts a relais de charme, whereas shops and restaurants are disseminated along the village.</p>
How to get there	The tour can be taken by car or bus, in a single day or on a two-day trip.