

Travel



THE SOUL, AND THE FOOD, OF A CITY

GETTING THERE

The most direct way to get to Parma from New York is to take a flight to Milan and then a connecting flight to Parma. Based on a recent Web search, round-trip fares in January start at about \$800 on Alitalia. A cheaper, but marginally more complicated alternative is to fly to Milan and take the train to Parma, a journey that can take anywhere from a little over an hour to almost two hours, depending on which of the many daily trains you catch. (Details at www.raileurope.com/index.html) The tiny Parma airport is only a few miles from the city; a bus service runs to the center of town, and there are taxis, too.

Once you have reached the city center, everything is within easy walking distance — or you can rent a bike and pretend to be a native.

WHERE TO STAY

As far as I'm concerned, there's only one truly satisfactory place to stay in Parma, **Palazzo Dalla Rosa Prati** (Strada al Duomo, 7; 39-0521-386429; www.palazzodallarosapрати.it), which offers suites with kitchenettes in a handsome renovated palazzo right on the Piazza del Duomo. A small suite costs 180 euros for two, or about \$257 at \$1.43 to the euro. There are other hotels in Parma, but they're soulless, modern affairs. **Hotel Torino** (Borgo Angelo Mazza, 7; 39-0521-281046; www.hotel-torino.it) is friendly, unpretentious and fairly comfortable — and affordable, from 95 euros for a double, breakfast included.

WHERE TO EAT

Meals are a delight in Parma; if you're on a diet, stay home. Lunch for two, with wine, of course, should cost you about 60 euros; dinner, with more

wine, about 90 euros. There are fancy restaurants too, but what's the point when so many unpretentious trattorias can dish up heavenly pasta?

La Filoma (Via 20 Marzo, 15; 39-0521-206181). The décor is a bit cutesy, but the food is impeccable. Try the risotto with prosciutto and Parmesan — it sounds too obvious, but the flavors will astound you.

La Greppia (Strada Giuseppe Garibaldi, 39/A; 39-0521-233686) is more formal than necessary, a little more expensive, and the menu more wide-ranging.

Sorelle Picchi (Strada Farini, 27; 39-0521-233528) is only open at lunchtime. Don't miss the salami.

La Duchessa (39-0521-235962), on the Piazza Garibaldi, serves first-rate pizza.

WHAT TO READ

Richard Howard's 1999 translation of "The Charterhouse of Parma" (Modern

Library) is excellent, and the edition contains, as an added treat, Balzac's review of the novel. "All those to whom Italy is dear," he wrote, "will read La Chartreuse de Parme with delight."

Stendhal's autobiography is called "The Life of Henry Brulard" (NYRB Classics). The author's real name was Marie-Henri Beyle, and over the course of his career, he used more than 200 pseudonyms. Needless to say, there's nothing straightforward about his autobiographical impulse.

For an elegant critical appraisal of Stendhal's work, see Harry Levin's "The Gates of Horn: A Study of Five French Realists" (Oxford).

David Ekserdjian's "Correggio" (Yale) is a breathtakingly beautiful coffee-table book, and also a learned treatise on the artist's work. The only hitch is the \$115 price tag. **ADAM BEGLEY**