



COMUNE DI  
**BUCINE**  
Provincia di Arezzo

“How has the enlargement of the European Union in 2004 influenced citizens in small rural communities in Europe?”



## Quick facts

Bucine was chartered as an independent municipality following the Leopoldine Land Reform of **1772**, in which all 19 villages of the valley centered on the river Ambra - formerly independent - were merged into one greater community, and has been thus ever since.

Its peculiar crest depicts, emblazoned in a white ("argent" according to heraldic parlance) modern French shield, a lion holding either a golden cornucopia or a fishing net of Etruscan origin, whose name was "*bucina*", hence the name of the community.

The community has a surface of **131.08 sq. km (50.61 sq. mi)**, making it one of the largest in Italy of its kind, and a population of **10,182** according to an estimate of December, 2014.

Its geographical coordinates are **43°29' N, 11°37' E**, putting Bucine in the very middle of the Italian Peninsula.

Being in Tuscany, the community lies on gentle slopes covered with extensive woodlands and arable lands, at a mean elevation of **207 m (679 ft.)** above sea level.

Also, being on the southern edge of the province of Arezzo, Bucine shares its borders with the nearby municipalities: Castelnuovo Berardenga (Siena), Civitella in Val di Chiana, Gaiole in Chianti (Siena), Monte San Savino, Montevarchi, Pergine Valdarno, Rapolano Terme (Siena).

The municipality lies on the outskirts of the Chianti mountains, in the middle of the triangle made up by the cities of Florence, **45 km (28 mi)** to the north; Siena, **30 km (19 mi)** to the south, and Arezzo, **26 km (16 mi)** to the east. Already populated by the Etruscans, the area fell under control of Rome in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.

When the Romans met their demise in 476 AD at the hands of Odoacer, the former Empire – including Italy – fell into a state of turmoil. Italy lost its independence (it would re-achieve it only in **1861**) and thus began the era of the “**comuni**” and the “**signorie**” (lordships) waging war against each other, a state of things that would last well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The territory of Bucine, being on the border between Florence and Siena, was fiercely contested by both cities, until formally amalgamated into the Florentine Republic domain in **1350**.

The **Florentine Republic** gave way to the **Grand-Duchy of Tuscany** in **1561**, under the rule of the Medici; when the dynasty became extinct in **1737**, following the death of Gian Gastone, the lordship of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany passed over to the Habsburg-Lorraine, and the municipality of Bucine was formally established by an act of the Grand Duke Leopold – the scion of the Holy Roman Emperor – passed in **1772** and known as “Leopoldine Land Reform”.

The Lorraine ruled over the municipality until **1859**, when the Grand Duchy of Tuscany became entangled in the struggle for Italian re-unification. Following the expulsion of the Lorraine, a plebiscite held on **March 22, 1860** saw **820** Bucinese out of a enfranchised population of **947** decree the annexation of the municipality to the Kingdom of Sardinia (later, Kingdom of Italy). After WW2, the municipality – along with the entire provinces of Arezzo, Siena and Grosseto – voted *en masse* at the referendum of **1946** which established the Italian Republic.

## ***Ghosts from the past***

Italy declared war on the United Kingdom and France on June 10, 1940. However, the Italian army was less than well prepared for a worldwide war, and following the signing of the armistice in September 1943 - Mussolini had been ousted out from government on July 25, 1943 - Italy switched sides, abandoning their alliance with Germany and Japan.

Thus, German occupying troops, along with fascist collaborationists - who did not follow the King's instructions, that is, siding with the Allies, but still followed Mussolini - ruled with the iron fist over the regions, cities and smaller communities of Italy and elsewhere - Bucine included - that still fell under their control.

The war arrived in Bucine in mid-1944, when Allied troops, having already liberated Rome on June 6, 1944, were trailing the retreating Germans throughout central Italy, and wished to arrive and liberate Florence as soon as they could. But when they came to Bucine, they found fierce resistance, and their offensive stopped on the gentle slopes of Valdambra from June to late July 1944. The battle to take control of the territory resulted in a heavy toll in terms of human lives, claiming 125 civilian victims, with San Pancrazio suffering the most, with 73 of his inhabitants killed by German and fascist troops on June 29, 1944, in retaliation for their alleged support given to the Italian Resistance movement.

As of today, the place where the killings took place, namely the cave of the "Pietrangeli farm", has been thoroughly restored, and a "Museum of Memory" was opened in 2014 - on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event - to honour the fallen and their sacrifice. In 1963, in recognition of the heroism of its inhabitants, the banner of Bucine was awarded one of the highest Italian decorations, the Gold Medal for Civic Valor, granted by the Presidency of the Italian Republic.

## ***A welcoming community***

The municipality of Bucine hosts people belonging to **51 different nationalities**, accounting for **9.7%** of the whole population. The first group in terms of importance is made up by Albanians – **237 people**, 24% of the total – followed by Romanians (**198** – 20%) and, surprisingly enough, India, ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> with **189** residents.  
(source: <http://www.comuni-italiani.it/051/005/statistiche/stranieri.html>)

Italy – being in the middle of the Mediterranean basin – has always been targeted by waves of immigration coming from the four corners of the former Roman Empire, including the Balkans, North Africa and Middle East, and it is not surprising at all that the vast majority of strangers residing there are of Albanian or Romanian nationality.

The first ones were encouraged to move to Italy due to the close proximity of Italian and Albanian coastlines – a journey that would take a few hours to complete – while the latter had come in scores to Italy due to their common cultural and linguistic heritage (Romanian belongs to the neo-Latin languages family, as Italian does) to be employed mainly in masonry and in the care of the elderly.

As of today, the Bucine municipality enjoys a kaleidoscope of cultures in which everyone has its own space to flourish and develop, without being neither ghettoed nor repressed in any way.

Moreover, Bucine entertains amiable linkages with many other communities both in the European Union area and elsewhere: it is part since **1992** of the **Charter of European Rural** Communities; besides, it has also friendship and twinning agreements with the French *commune* of **Noiseau**, in the Val-de-Marne *département* near Paris, and with the rural community of **Bakou**, in Cameroon's Western region.

The municipality also maintains a close friendship with the **Saharawi**, an Arab-Berber population living in the Western Sahara.

# ***Video description of Bucine Municipality***

Here at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5q81NJXEj-4> please find a 20-minute video (which is also featured below) highlighting all the beauties of our territory, along with an interview (in Italian language) of our Mayor, Dr. Pietro Tanzini.



***The End***

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***Thank you for watching***



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