

LA CIOCIARIA

The historical area of the Ciociaria has represented a privileged communication route between Rome and Naples for over a millennium, coinciding almost exactly with the province of Frosinone and some *comuni* of the provinces of Rome and Latina. The origin of the name is derived from the 'ciocie', the ancient and characteristic shoes worn once upon a time by its shepherds, made of a single piece of leather, tied to the feet by laces, also of leather, and sometimes tied around the calf, which was covered with a strip of white cloth.

The history and the spirit of the Ciociaria are intimately related to the changing forms of its territory: from the pre-Roman period, with its ancient acropolises surrounded by megalithic walls, until the imperial period, with its prosperous towns along the via Latina. The land which we see today is, however, above all that which developed in the first centuries of the Middle Ages, with civilizing influence of the Benedictine abbeys and the splendour of the City of the Popes. A land which is to be discovered and understood through a voyage in the past between history, myth and legend following the footsteps of Cicero, Saint Thomas and Saint Benedict.

ITINERARIES

Celestino V

Ferentino - Fumone

FERENTINO Etruscan city of very ancient origins, the circuit of megalithic walls two kilometres in length with 12 gates is still clearly visible today. Dominating the city is the ancient and imposing **Acropolis** with its Cyclopean walls, facing on to the square is the 11th century **Romanesque Cathedral** and the Bishop's Palace of the 13th century. A short distance away is the **Roman Market** of the Republican period and the **Palazzo dei Cavalieri Gaudenti**. The church of S. Maria Maggiore, the first example of Cistercian architecture in Italy (1150,) and the Romanesque church of **Sant'Antonio Abate** are particularly beautiful. The latter housed the remains of Pope Celestino V whose tombstone is still preserved.

FUMONE "the Olympus of Ciociaria" and the ancient castle, 800 metres above sea level with a spectacular view of over 40 villages: in the past when an enemy attacked, a column of smoke was raised to warn Rome of the danger and during the Middle Ages the castle was used as a state **prison** for the enemies of the church including **Celestino V** himself, the pope who abdicated as recorded by Dante. This **castle**, a mysterious and fascinating place, today belongs to the marchesi Longhi-De Paolis and can be visited. The **medieval centre** is particularly picturesque. Visitors can enjoy a typical dinner in a medieval setting with entertainment in the ancient vaulted wine cellars which date back to AD 1000.

IN THE LAND OF THE CYCLOPS

Alatri-Veroli-Arpino

ALATRI ancient Etruscan city founded, according to legend, by Saturn, is one of the centres of Ciociaria with the richest history. Of great interest is the **Acropolis** (6th century BC) one of the most perfect and best preserved complexes of Cyclopean walls existing in Italy. At its summit lies the **Cathedral** with its imposing 17th century façade. Of great artistic value is the church of **S. Maria Maggiore** in Roman-Gothic style, the **Palazzo Gottifredo**, a Gothic structure of the 13th century, the seat of the Civic Museum and the Romanesque church of **S. Francesco** with its beautiful 15th century frescoes.

VEROLI Etruscan city surrounded by Cyclopean walls, offers the opportunity to admire the sole example of a Roman calendar inscribed on stone and dedicated to the "Fasti Verulani" (1st century AD), in which the holidays were noted, their dates and the markets. The **Basilica of S. Maria Salome**, patron of the city and witness of the martyrdom of Christ, is famous for its **Scala Santa** (Holy Stairway) which gave the same privileges as those more famous examples of Jerusalem and of San Giovanni Laterano in Rome. In the beautiful piazza of the Comune the **Cathedral of S. Andrea** with the rich and precious **Treasury** and the 18th century **Gioviardiana Library** founded in 1773, with 18.000 volumes including rare and precious *incunabola* and manuscripts. The medieval centre of S. Croce with its elegant 14th century palaces is very picturesque.

ARPINO, birthplace of three great personages of the Roman period, *Marcus Tullius Cicero*, *Gaius Marius* and perhaps *Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa*, son-in law of Octavian and constructor of the Pantheon. - In the area of the old town (Civitavecchia) is the **Acropolis** with its impressive Cyclopean walls, the Arch (4th century BC) a striking megalithic gateway unique throughout the world, the **Medieval Tower** and the picturesque medieval *borgo* with the church of S. Vito Martire. In the centre of the town, the Piazza del Municipio, elegant salon of the 18th century with the **church of S. Michele**, the Palazzo Comunale and the Liceo Ginnasio Tulliano.

MEDIEVAL CASTLES AND BORGHI

Alvito -Vico nel Lazio - Boville Ernica - Amaseno - Caietani Towers- Vicalvi - Fiuggi

ALVITO ancient Benedictine possession (10th century) at the centre of the Comino valley, later controlled by the Lords of Equino, is dominated by an imposing castle with the medieval centre whose walls connect it to the Castle with its cylindrical towers. The beautiful historic centre is rich in buildings and monuments of great artistic value including the Palazzo Ducale, built in the 16th century and modified in the 18th century. Of particular interest is a visit to the ghost town "Villaggio Cortignale", which has been completely abandoned for over 400 years.

VICO DEL LAZIO pretty medieval centre and a masterpiece of military architecture, defined the "Carcassonne of Ciociaria" has a marvellous circuit of town walls, with 24 towers and 4 gateways of the medieval period. Well preserved are the elegant **Palazzo del Governatore** and the parish church of **S. Michele Arcangelo** with its beautiful stone façade and altar decorated with a precious Byzantine mosaic.

BOVILLE ERNICA, surrounded by its impressive medieval walls with 18 towers is a beautiful centre. Among the most important monuments are the church of **San Pietro Ispano** with the Simoncelli chapel which houses inestimable treasures such as the mosaic with the figure of an angel by Giotto, the statues of San Pietro and San Paolo of Bregno, a relief of Sansovino Belli; the **Castello Filonardi**, a medieval construction transformed in the 16th century and now the seat of a Benedictine monastery and the **Renaissance Palaces** of the noble families of the Filonardi, De Angeli, Simoncelli, Marziali and Cometti.

AMASENO a pleasant medieval centre with interesting town walls with towers. The medieval castle which dominates the town is impressive. The architectural jewel of the town is the Gothic-Cistercian church of **Santa Maria**, defined as "one...of the best constructed churches in a town which can be seen in Italy", with a stone façade decorated with a rosone. Inside the church one can admire an elegant medieval stone pulpit, a tryptich of the 13th century and some lovely frescoes. For centuries this church has been the theatre of the **miracle of the dissolution of the blood of S. Lorenzo** which takes place every year between the 8th and 9th of August.

THE CAIETANI TOWERS date back to the 10th century, around which, in the 13th century, the **medieval castle** developed, an impressive quadrangular structure. Today it belongs to the Teofilatto family who have opened it to the public for visits and ceremonies.

VICALVI dominated by the impressive **Lombard castle (12th century)**, an impregnable fortress to which the troupes of the Emperor Charles V retreated during the war against the King of France, Francis I, for the control of Italy.

FIUGGI consists of two centres: Fiuggi town, **historical centre of medieval origins** which lies on a hill; Fiuggi Fonte, the modern settlement in which are situated the **Fountain of Boniface VII** and the **Fountain Anticolana** as well as the majority of the hotels. Fiuggi town has preserved the appearance and structures of the medieval settlement with its piazzas, charming, steep and narrow roads. The palaces of the **De Medici**, with the famous "well of the virgins", Falconi and Martini are particularly elegant. Facing on to the graceful Piazza di Trento e Triesti is the **Grand Hotel Città di Fiuggi**, a building in Liberty style which is now used as a catering school and the **Palazzo del Comune**. The **Collegiata di San Pietro** which houses works of the Roman school of the 17th century is also worth a visit.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CIOCIARIA: BETWEEN MUSEUMS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS

Prehistoric Museum of Pofi - Archaeological Area "Casale" and the Civic Archaeological Museum of Castro dei Volsci - Archaeological Park of Fregellae and the Archaeological Museum of Ceprano - Archaeological Park and Archaeological Museum of Cassino

The Ciociaria has a number of very interesting museums which illustrate the rich history of the area. The earliest evidence of human life in Ciocaria is housed in the **Prehistoric Museum** of Pofi, where the remains of the "Man of Ceprano", the oldest Homo Erectus known in Europe, dating to about 900.000 years ago, are conserved.

The **Archaeological Area "Casale"** (23.000 sq.m) of Castro di Volsci with the remains of a Roman imperial villa with a bath complex and the **Civic Museum** is also very interesting.

Not far away, in the area of Isoletta (Arce), one can visit the **Archaeological Park of Fregellae**, a Latin colony founded in 328 BC on the Via Latina and then destroyed by the Romans in 125 BC. The remains of public monuments and houses can be seen. Many of the finds from Fregellae are displayed in the **Archaeological Museum of Ceprano**. Continuing along the Via Latina we find the important Roman city of "Casinum", present day Cassino. In the **National Archaeological Museum of Cassino** pre Roman and Roman finds are on display. In the adjacent **Archaeological Park** one can admire the Theatre, the Amphitheatre and the impressive tomb of Ummidia Quadratilla.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SAINTS

Certosa di Trisulti (Colleparado) - Abbey of Fossanova (Priverno) - Abbey of Casamari (Veroli) - Abbey of Montecassino (Cassino) - Abbey of sSan Domenico (Sora) - Sacro Speco and Monastery Santa Scolastica (Subiaco) .Castle of the Counts of Aquino (Monte San Giovanni Campano)

CERTOSA DI TRISULTI, a Cistercian monastic complex, in the midst of woods at the feet of Monte Rotonaria, founded by Innocent III in 1204. The **Ancient Pharmacy** is particularly splendid, where one can admire maiolica vases which contained spices, potions and medicines, dating back to the 12th century.

ABBEY OF FOSSANOVA consecrated in 1208 in Gothic-Cistercian style, it is the oldest abbey of this order in Italy. Here, in 1274, S. Thomas of Aquino died. A visit to the **Castle of the Counts of Aquino** at **Monte San Giovanni Campano**, where Saint Thomas was imprisoned by his father in 1273 is also interesting.

ABBEY OF CASAMARI together with that of Fossanova this is a masterpiece of Gothic-Cistercian architecture. Of notable interest is the Church itself, the Sala Capitolare, the Refectory, and the Cloister.

ABBEY OF MONTE CASSINO founded by Saint Benedict in 529 was, during the Middle Ages an important centre for the diffusion of monasticism in Europe. Destroyed and rebuilt several times through the centuries, the Abbey was raised to the soil in the bombing of 15th February 1944 and rebuilt immediately after the war in the original style. The crypt of the church contains the reliquaries of the founding Saint.

ABBEY OF SAN DOMENICO founded by Saint Domenic of Foligno in 1011 in Romanesque style, rebuilt in Cistercian style in circa 1250, it was almost completely destroyed after the earthquake in 1915. Of particular interest is the main doorway of the Church decorated with sculptural fragments from a Roman villa (perhaps the villa of Cicero which was situated in this area) and the beautiful crypt which still preserves the body of the founding Saint.

SACRO SPECO AND THE MONASTERY OF SANTA SCOLASTICA Of great artistic and religious interest, the Monastery of Santa Scolastico is the sole survivor of thirteen monasteries founded in the area by Saint Benedict before he moved to Montecassino. A vast complex of buildings concentrated around three cloisters and the church with its Romanesque belltower. A few kilometres away is the Sacro Speco or the Monastery of Saint Benedict, dating from the 12th century, above the cave where the Saint passed the first years of his monastic life. The medieval frescoes which decorated the numerous cells and caves of the monastic complex are splendid.

IN THE CITY OF THE POPES: ANAGNI

ANAGNI, a town which still preserves its medieval appearance, situated on a rocky outcrop dominating the Sacco Valley, ancient capital of the Ernics, the period to which the polygonal walls date. The town is famous above all because it was the residence and birthplace of four Popes, including Boniface VIII, founder in 1300 of the Jubileo. The **Romanesque Cathedral** of 1077 is spectacular, reworked in Gothic style in the 13th century. **The crypt** with its cosmatesque pavement, is defined the "Sistine chapel of the Middle Ages", with frescoes of the period 1231-1251. In this church, in 1160, Pope Alexander III excommunicated Federico Barbarossa and the antipope Vittorio IV. In the medieval centre, the **Palazzo Civico**, the **Barnekow House** and the **Palace of Boniface VIII** with the room of the famous slap.

NATURE

San Donato Val di Comino, Isola del Liri, Trevi nel Lazio, Collepardo, Nature Reserve of the Lake of Posta Fibreno, Nature Park "La Selva" of Paliano, Caves of Pastena

SAN DONATO VAL DI COMINO, centre of the part of the **National Park of the Abruzzo** which borders Lazio, includes in its territory the gorge of **Forca d'Acero** and the area of Macchiarvana, used for skiing in the winter and an unpolluted area for walking in other seasons. The village has a well preserved historic centre with the medieval quarter Castello. **The Centre for Environmental Culture** is important, representing a multifunctional space for 'reading' the landscape, focusing in particular on the National Park of the Abruzzo. It uses virtual images, showcases, panels and fossils to illustrate the landscape. The Centre also has a Foresteria able to put up 30 students and an eating area.

ISOLA DEL LIRI is known above all for the spectacular waterfalls of the same name, over 30 metres in height. Their unusual setting, they lie right in the centre of the town (the only example in Europe), is enhanced by the green rich vegetation and the imposing presence of the medieval Castle Boncompagni-Viscogliosi which dominates the waterfalls.

TREVI NEL LAZIO, one of the main centres of the Regional Park of the Monti Simbruini, its territory includes the most important area of the **Altipiani di Arcinazzo**, one of the most popular mountain resorts in central Italy. The Altipiani are the departure point both for those who enjoy skiing in the nearby resorts of Campocatino, Campo Staffi and Monte Livata, as well as for walks and trips in the fields and woods as far as the Arch of Trevi (a building of Roman date), situated along the slope which leads to Campocatino. In the environs of Trevi nel Lazio there is also a beautiful waterfall, an offshoot of the waters of the Aniene river. Finally the village has a pretty historic centre with the remains of the ancient acropolis and the medieval **Rocca dei Caetani**.

COLLEPARDO, as well as being a pretty centre of medieval origins (it preserves the remains of the walls with towers and old houses), offers various naturalistic attractions. In its territory we find the **Caves of the Bambocci**, so-called because of the form of the rocks which resemble human figures, 180 m. long and with vast caverns rich with stalactites and stalacmites. Not far from the Caves, the atmospheric **Pozzo d'Antullo** represents a real natural rarity: it is a great karstic chasm with an average diameter of 100 m, and 60 m deep, created by the collapse of the vault of a cavern. Still at Collepardo we find the **Botanical Gardens "Flora Ernica"**, founded by the WWF in 1985. It represents the only botanical garden with wild appennine plants in central Italy and boasts 400 species which grow amongst rocks, woods and fields which reproduce the original environment of the plants. Finally at Collepardo one can visit the **Museo delle Erbe** in which hundreds of medicinal plants are displayed alongside tools for the working and processing of the herbs.

NATURE RESERVE OF THE LAKE OF POSTA FIBRENO is one of the most beautiful naturalistic oases of central Italy. The Lake, with the area of the Piana del Fibreno (the river which supplies the lake) and the surrounding hills, was established as a Nature Reserve in 1983. In the freezing and limpid waters of the lake, coming from the nearby mountains of the National Park of the Abruzzo, one finds **"the floating island"** formed by an accumulation of roots, peat and

algae. The island, cited by Pliny the Old 2000 years ago, can be seen from the nature path "Puzzillo", one of the four paths which permit one to appreciate the lake in all its wild beauty.

NATURE PARK "LA SELVA" OF PALIANO is one of the great faunal parks created and managed by Prince Antonello Ruffo of Calabria in the comune of Paliano. It extends over 450.000 sq.m. of wooded terrain, a third of which is occupied by small lakes in which many species of aquatic birds now live. It is ideal for bird watching and for the study of humid ecosystems, it also offers eating and rest places for visitors. The town of **Paliano**, with its town walls, has a pretty medieval historic centre dominated by the imposing mass of the **Rocca**, the ancient castle. The parish church of **S. Andrea** is interesting with its funerary monuments of the families of the **Colonna** and **Palazzo Colonna** with valuable 18th century paintings of roman landscapes.

CAVES OF PASTENA are situated at the bottom of a karstic valley, the fossilized branch extends for 880 m and that of the active branch for 2217 m. The rocks are between 80 and 50 million years old. The tunnel of the **Meraviglie (Marvels)**, the room of the **Salice Piangente (Weeping Willow)** and the room of **Monte Calvario (Calvary Hill)** are very atmospheric. The latter is so-called because a great formation of rock and of mud form a small hill on which some stalagmites seem to represent three crosses, exactly as on Monte Calvary Hill. The karstic territory of **Colleparado** presents some unusual geological phenomena which have left features of exceptional naturalistic interest. Among these are the **CAVES of COLLEPARDO** and the **WELL OF ANTULLO**, a very rare karstic dolina 50 metres deep and 140 metres wide, over whose origins many popular legends have developed. The Botanical Gardens are also worth visiting.

WINES AND TRADITIONAL COOKING

Piglio - Acuto - Atina

A journey amongst forgotten flavours and perfumes, where the traditional taste of country home cooking lives once again on the tables of the numerous and typical *trattorie* where one can still enjoy the excellent D.O.C. wines such as *Cesanese* and the *Passerina* of **Piglio**, the *Cabernet* of **Atina** and the *Torre Ercolana* of **Anagni**.

ACUTO a village whose economy is mainly based on pasture and agriculture is one of the production centres of the *Cesanese*. In the **Perinelli** wine cellars it is possible to organize the tasting of wines and typical products.

PIGLIO, a centre of medieval appearance with the remains of a great castle, is famous for the exceptional healthiness of its area and the excellence of its wines. The *Cesanese* "deep red like a ruby" and the white *Passerina*. The traditional *Sagra dell'Uva (Festival of the Grape)* (1st Sunday of October) is worth a visit. At the wine cellars of the agriturismo **Berucci**, amongst the largest and most expert producers of *Cesanese*, it is possible to sample traditional *Ciocciara* cooking accompanied by exceptional wines.

ATINA, centre of the **Comino** valley, of very ancient origins, preserves the remains of the *Cyclopean* walls of the 5th-4th centuries BC, the **Palazzo Ducale** and the 18th century church of **S. Maria**. The most famous local dish is a sublime *pasta e fagioli* (pasta and beans) with the precious *cannellini* beans of **Attina** accompanied by the excellent D.O.C. wine *Cabernet* of **Atina**. At the wine cellars of the producer **Palombi** it is possible to organize the tasting of local dishes accompanied by wines of exceptional quality.