

The Routes for Good Taste

A visit to one of the farms, to taste or to buy, or a good meal in one of the many restaurants well able to satisfy the most refined tastes: these are our recommendations to Italian or overseas visitors to the province of Latina. Choose between a swim in the clear waters of the central Mediterranean, an excursion or cultural tour, a relaxing walk in the parks or healthy sporting activity, events and festivals of all kinds followed by a night out in one of the many establishments offering entertainment for everyone.

THE PROVINCE OF LATINA

ITINERARIES TO THE GOOD TASTES

OF LAND AND SEA

The stops on this 150 km tour are the hill towns of the northern part of the province of Latina, each with its own unique culture but all of them typified by mediaeval roots to be appreciated as you walk through the vineyards, along paths and up stairways, between perfectly conserved houses and buildings, and observe the traditions still alive today. Here, Nature still reigns supreme, providing a perfect atmosphere for those seeking to relax and to sample a cuisine properly based on local and seasonal ingredients, flavoured with the finest olive oil and accompanied by good wines produced in abundance thanks to fertile land and the expertise of the various farms.

Your starting point is **CORI** (300 m). The town, of very ancient origins, has a characteristic mediaeval centre, still virtually intact. With its churches, monuments, arches and steps, it is an homogeneous urban site of great historic importance. It is also an ideal place for lovers of pasta (celebrated here in August on the occasion of the Festival of the Fettuccine), of homemade bread, game and confectionery. According to many oenologists, the rocky terrain of this area produces an ideal environment for the production of robust, long-lasting red wines. Two famous D.O.C. wines, the Cori Red and White, derive their name from the town. Both can be tasted at the **Cooperativa Agricola Cincinnato**, strada Cori Cisterna, km 2 Tel: 06 9679380 (where you can also try the D.O.C. Castelli Romani red and white, the I.G.T. Dioscuri Red and White, the Vino Frizzante and the sparkling Brut Cincinnato); and at the **Azienda Agricola Biologica Marco Carpineti**, 25 via delle Colonne Tel: 06 9679642 (where they also do the whites I.G.T. Collesanti, Moro and Sauvignon, the reds I.G.T. Novello, Ditrambo and Tufaliccio and the raisin-wine Ludus). At the **Coop. Colle S.Lorenzo Tenuta Pietra Pinta** (52, via Gramsci Tel: 06 9678001) you will instead find the Colle Amato red, the I.G.T.

Chardonnay Lazio white and the Costa Vecchia red. In addition to wine, however, this area is a major producer of olive oil. You can acquire the finished product - table olives and other oil-conserved produce - and call on some of the local companies to observe the old techniques of olive pressing; try, for example, **Tenuta**

Pietra Pinta (52, via Gramsci Tel: 06 9678001) and **Frantoio Agnoni** (loc. Copellaro Tel: 06 9678668). The typical cuisine of the Lepini can be found in such restaurants as **Zampi** (17, via G. Garibaldi, Tel: 06 9679688; closed Mondays), **Sette Camini** (7, via Fontana del Prato Tel: 06 9679536; closed Wednesdays) and **Trattoria da Checco** (174, via della Repubblica Tel: 06 9678336; closed Thursdays). 15 kms from Cori, moving in a north-easterly direction along a road that winds itself between tempting vineyards, offering magnificent views over the Pontine plain on one side and Velletri (in the province of

sed variety of plants and flowers from many different continents. Looking down from its dominant hilltop position, **NORMA** is a necessary stop for the gourmand (The Museum of Chocolate), and for those who appreciate egg pasta (ramiccia) and chestnuts. The town, with its archaeological site and museum of Norba, is also fascinating from an historical and cultural perspective. **SERMONETA** (257m) sits high on a promontory that is covered in olive and chestnut groves. One of the Lazio's best preserved mediaeval towns, wrapped round the imposing Caetani castle and itself encompassed by a fortified perimeter wall, it is the venue for

Rome) on the other, you will come to **ROCCAMASSIMA**, the highest town in the province of Latina (746m) and geographically the first municipal community of the Lepini mountains. Here you can stop and taste olives, olive oil and other produce of the commercial farm **Oscar** (2, Contrada Basso Le Case Tel: 06 9664883), or try out abbacchio (spring lamb), goat's cheeses, truffles and mushrooms. Turning and skirting the hill in a southerly direction, and before heading for the next stop on the tour (**SERMONETA**), it is recommended that you visit the celebrated gardens of Ninfa, a natural habitat for its flourishing and seldom surpas-

a major summer school of chamber music, as well as historical pageants and festivals (in particular the Festival of Polenta). Here, highly recommended, is a visit to **Elia Zaccheo** (9, via San.Maria Tel: 0773 30247) to sample the bread and the delicious local cakes. Coming off the hill in the general direction of Bassiano, you cannot miss the Abbey of Valvisciolo, one of the earliest examples of Cistercian architecture in Italy. From here, the road climbs back up to **BASSIANO** (562m), a small town enclosed within its 17th to 18th century boundary wall, positioned on a small hill completely sur-

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The Lepini Mountains



rounded by oak and beech woods, a peaceful and relaxing environment in mid-summer. This is a perfect base for excursions and treks, right up to the Semprevia, the highest tip of the Lepini mountains that dominates the Pontine plain on one side and on the other the southern stretch of the province of Rome, from a



height of 1536 metres. In July, a festival is dedicated to one of the local dishes, the prosciutto of Bassiano. This ham, an absolute speciality, can be tasted and bought at the **Prosciutto di Bassiano** (10, via Casanatola Tel: 0773 355024), where it is also possible to learn about the old techniques of preparation and conservation. To try out a genuine cuisine show-casing local products, such as fettuccine, bean soup, mushrooms, cheeses and sweets, you could instead go to the **Hostaria La Grôte** (via della Croce Tel: 0773 355387; closed Mondays). From Bassiano you move on to **SEZZE** (319m). With Volsci origins, the city contains archaeological remains that record the presence of man in the final phase of the Palaeolithic era, traces of Roman rule in the polygonal walls, buildings, streets and temples and an almost intact mediaeval town structure. Sezze is one of the province's principal producers of baby broccoli but its true boast is the typical round, spineless Roman artichoke, definitely worth trying, along with the bazzoffia (a vegetable soup served with stale bread), either during the festive season or together with other local specialities such as lacchene pasta, bean soup, bread, ranunchi or confectionery. There are three recommended restaurants: **Roanissimo dell'Azienda**

Agriturismo La Roana (46, via Migliara Tel: 0773 899486; closed Sundays and Mondays), **Santuccio ai Colli** (95, via SS. Sebastiano e Rocco Tel: 0773 888573; closed Mondays) and **Da Barbitto** (47, via Colli Tel: 0773 888523; closed on Mondays). If you follow the Lepini Mountain's S.S.156 you'll be heading for **MAENZA** (358m), home to Thomas Aquinas during his last days and, like other nearby towns, incorporating a well-conserved mediaeval centre developed around the recently restored Palazzo Baronale. Here, in addition to the bitter cherries celebrated on the occasion of the Cherry Festival, you can sample a few specialities (fettuccine and polenta, porcini mushrooms, lamb, olives and sweets) in the restaurant of the hotel **Casal dei Lupi** (via Farneta, km. 0,850 Tel: 0773



952800). Heading back down from Maenza you will come to **ROCCAGORGA**, astride a rocky outcrop of Monte Nero that is



shouldn't miss dishes of kid and snail, or indeed the curious Festival of the Horns, with its ritual tasting of the traditional minestra). A few kilometres along the same road lies the small town of **PROSSEDI**, an ancient settlement situated on a hill (410m) at the very edge of the province of Frosinone, with the valley of the Amaseno stretched out below. Try not to miss the Festival of Figs and the famous Night of the Seven Minestre, a fantastic opportunity to try out some typical local soups. To sample a few recipes typical of the area, we recommend the **Osteria Persei** (vicolo del Montano Tel: 0773 957351; closed Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays). Turning south from here, you'll reach **PRIVERO** (151m), a town with a stun-

ning mediaeval centre encircling a central piazza with the towering Cathedral of S. Maria and the Palazzo Comunale, but whose earliest traces lie in the valley near Mezzagosto where an important archaeological site has been unearthed. From here, the village and Abbey of Fossanova are easily reached, the latter being the finest example of Cistercian architecture in Italy. Priverno shares many of its culinary specialities with Sezze, for example artichokes, baby broccoli and bazzoffia; and it also offers its own very distinctive olives, olive oil, pickles and oil conserves, and above all its buffalo mozzarella. In February, you can taste the falia, traditional focaccia bread filled with baby broccoli, to mark the festival to which it is dedicated. Many of these products can also be found in two restaurants: **Gliò Montano** (10, via Majo Tel: 0773 903838; closed on Wednesdays) and the **Antica Osteria Fanti** (C.da Ceriara, S.S.156 km.27.5 Tel: 0773 924015; closed on Thursdays). Facing Priverno, up on a spur of Monte Curio, is **ROCCASECCA DEI VOL-**



SCI. Its historic centre preserves the characteristic mediaeval style of the baronial

palace, which dominates the skyline. Here, the sheep and goat meats and cheeses are the best of local cuisine. Our tour concludes with a small detour into the Monti Ausoni, to **SONNINO** (430m), a tiny village of tortuous paths, flights of steps, towers, doorways and stairs leaning on stone buildings supported by archivolts, little doors and pillars. This is an area known for its cheese, egg pasta, goat dishes (that have celebrated in their own August festival), but above all the olive oil so widely recognised for its purity and exceptional quality. It is even paraded through the streets to mark a popular festival, during which you can sample the olives and derivative products, also to be found at the **Azienda Maggiara Impero** (10, via C. Pellegrini Tel: 0773 98019). **The Carrubo** (strada Provinciale Sonninese, km.2.2 Tel: 0773 939535; closed Mondays) is among the restaurants to be recommended.

Cori**Ristorante Zampi***Owner: Ottavio Zampi*

Restaurant with a popular atmosphere and simple, authentic cooking that reflects traditional Roman cuisine. Highly rated antipasti and first courses, based on local hill produce, with wines and olive oil from the Cori area.

Ristorante Sette Camini*Owner: Maria Antonietta Cucchiniarelli*

This large and spacious establishment is ideal for banquets and receptions. There is an agreeable open-air terrace overlooking Cori and the surrounding hills. In season you are guaranteed an excellent dinner. The cooking, high standard and authentic, has obvious ties to traditional Roman cuisine.

**Trattoria da Checco***Owner: Luca Zerilli*

Old-established, and located at the historic heart of Cori, this trattoria has been a meeting place for intellectuals from the beginning of the century. It offers reliable cooking based on Roman dishes. An attractive veranda is available to guests in the summer.

Cooperativa Agricola Cincinnato*Owner: Temistocle Lucarelli*

This co-operative is one of the most representative in the Cori area. Concentrating almost exclusively on the traditional local wines, it produces some 350,000 bottles each year. For organisational reasons, visits are by appointment only.

Cooperativa Colle San Lorenzo Tenuta Pietra Pinta*Owner: Cesare Ferretti*

The Ferretti brothers specialise in local grapes. Annual production is circa 400,000 bottles of wine whose quality is assured due to their production methods and experience. The farm is also well known for its table olives, olive oil and oil conserves. Visits are by appointment only.

**Azienda Agricola Biologica Marco Carpineti***Owner: Marco Carpineti*

The farm, now undergoing a period of full development, has used organic methods of farming since 1994 and produces an excellent wine that meets the

expectations of the community. Guided visits, to include the cellars and tasting sessions, are also possible.

Frantoio Agnoni*Owner: Romualdo Guidi*

Olive-producing farm with a long tradition, certified for organic methods, boasting a wide range of products: table olives, extra-virgin olive oil, aromatic oils and every kind of vegetable preserved in olive oil. Tasting facilities are available to visitors and there are qualified personnel to help.

Roccamassima**Oscar Azienda Agricola***Owner: Patrizia Priori e Mauro Del Ferraro*

The olive plantations of the farm are predominantly of the Itri variety, producing the so-called Gaeta olives, whose quality and flavour are unmistakable



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The Tour of
TYPICAL RESTAURANTS and FARMS
in the Province of Latina

Bassiano**Hostaria La Gròtte***Owner: Adriana Salvagni*

Set in large grounds, the restaurant is annexed to the hotel Locanda Bella Lisa. It offers a family atmosphere, comfortable and evocative, characterised by old grottos, partially used as wine cellars (outdoor space is also available).



The quality and freshness of the local products lie at the heart of the most classical traditional recipes.

Azienda Prosciutto di Bassiano*Owner: Ruggero Reggiani*

In the small shop situated in the historic centre of the town, it is possible to taste and buy various specialities such as the different types of bread (casercio, made of whole wheat and flavoured) and the typical sweets of the area (tarts with home-made marmalade preserves, orange amaretto and the serpetta).

**Ristorante Da Barbitto***Owner: Guàltiero De Angelis*

This restaurant, to be found in the countryside near Sezze, offers a number of dining rooms adaptable for banquets. The cuisine is typical, relying on seasonal produce prepared according to traditional local methods, and dishes of the day are on offer.

Sezze**Ristorante Roanissimo Azienda Agrituristicca La Roana***Owner: Mayte Torre*

It is not easy to find this restaurant, set deep in the Pontine countryside, but it offers a pleasing gastronomic experience. Its interior design and architecture together create an original yet classical atmosphere. The restaurant is on a farm, which ensures the source and quality of the products, above all buffalo but also produce from the vegetable garden and wines from the magnificent cellars.

**Ristorante Santuccio ai Colli***Owner: Giannino Perciballe*

This restaurant, in the Sezze countryside, has a dining room with a family atmosphere. The kitchen focuses on authentic homegrown products, meaning to say almost entirely local and strictly seasonal ingredients at table.

Maenza**Ristorante Albergo Casal dei Lupi***Owner: Gianluigi Alla***Prossedi****Osteria Persei***Owner: Angela e Daniela Vani*

This elegant hostelry, located in the heart of the old township of Prossedi, offers an interesting choice of food and regional products supplied by small local farms. The terrace is charming and there is a small outside area overlooking the neighbouring hills. With good local or national wines and service that is polite and attentive, this is a most attractive place to eat.

Priverno**Ristorante Gliò Montano***Owner: Elvira Frasca*

Situated in the historic centre of Priverno, deep in the Lepini mountains, the restaurant was developed from an old building that once housed an ancient olive press. It has a charming atmosphere and a simple down-to-earth menu that invokes tradition and the taste of locally produced foods.

**Antica Osteria Fanti***Owner: Tommaso Fanti*

At the Fanti hostelry, every dish has its links with the culinary history of this part of the country. The products set a high standard, and are prepared with a light and experienced touch. There is an excellent wine list and a choice of spirits and cigars. For those seeking local cuisine, buffalo meat as well as greens and vegetables from the Pontine region are all on offer.

Sonnino**Ristorante Il Carrubo***Owner: Giuseppe Celani*

Just outside Sonnino is Il Carrubo, a family managed establishment, with simple but decorative furnishings. Here you will find a typically Pontine cuisine with plenty of traditional dishes made from almost exclusively local ingredients.

**Azienda Maggiarra Impero***Owner: Impero Maggiarra*

Among the best known and long-established in the region, the azienda has a very wide range of high quality products such as local olives, aromatic oils and oil-conserved products. Its extra-virgin olive oil is the pièce de resistance. Ample room is set aside for tasting and for the sale of products.

