

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 route (around 100 kms long) is varied, passing through the lively tourist centres of the southern Lazio coast, pausing on the captivating islands of Ponza and Ventotene and, crossing from the fertile plains of Fondi _ Monti S.Biagio and Girigliano, moving inland to the typical hill towns. From the deep blue sea of the Bay of Gaeta to the intense green of the Ausoni and Aurunci mountains, it's one beautiful view after another; economic realities change, as do history and legend, customs and costumes; and yet, wherever you may be, you'll sample the delights of an authentic and diverse cuisine combining the simple recipes and seasonings of the hills with those of the sea. There are many opportunities to visit farms, to taste and buy products, in a region that has come of age.

Moving southwards down the coast, let's begin at **SPERLONGA**, on the SS 123 Flacca. This is a typical seaside township, one of the most picturesque in the entire province, characteristically Mediterranean and, in days gone by, a favourite resort of the Romans. Visit the Grotta di Tiberio and, nearby, the National Archaeological Museum. In the restaurant **Laocoonte da Rocco** (4, via Cristoforo Colombo Tel: 0771 548122; closed Mondays) you can enjoy typical seafood and old Bourbon recipes. Carrying on southwards for thirteen kilometres, you will reach the old town of **GAETA**, former maritime republic and the last of the Bourbon strongholds. Today, the town has two distinct parts: the old quarter, with the lovely mediaeval quarter of S. Erasmo; and the new, basking in the colourful bay of the same name, from which the promontory of M. Orlando and the Regional Park, the Shrine of the Most Holy Trinity and the 'Montagna Spaccata' (split mountain) stand out together. Among the gastronomic specialities are the fish dishes and the celebrated tiella, a country pizza stuffed with flavouring of different kinds. Fish, straight out of the sea, may be found at the **Gaeta Itticoltura** (11, via Firenze, Tel: 0771 464503; closed Sundays) while the tiella and other pizza breads typical of the area may be enjoyed at l'**Antico Forno Giordano** (39, via Indipendenza Tel: 0771 460603; closed Mondays), **Pizzeria 2000** (36, corso Cavour Tel: 0771 464611; closed Mondays) or **Pizzeria del Corso** (25, via Mazzini Tel: 0771 464010; closed Tuesdays). The excellent confectionery specialities of **Giuseppe di Ciacio** (Tel: 0771 311010) are on sale at **I Tesori del Gusto** (84, corso Cavour Tel: 0771 452332; closed Sundays), or at the 'buon

gusto' corner in **Deltagli d'Arredo** (23, via Manzini Tel: 0771 462524; closed Sundays). There is a wide selection of restaurants: **S. Agostino** (SS. Flacca, km 20,643 Tel: 0771 743071; closed Thursdays), **La Siesta** (SS Flacca, km 20,650 Tel: 0771 743052; closed Wednesdays), **Albergo Aeneas' Landing** (SS Flacca, km 23,600 Tel: 0771 741713), **Alla Corte dei Borboni** (9, via Docibile Tel: 0771 460050; closed Wednesdays), **Antico Vico** (2/4 vico 2 del Cavallo Tel: 0771 465116; closed Wednesdays), **La Cantinella** (16/18 via del Duomo Tel: 0771 450005; closed Mondays), **Masaniello** (6, Piazza Comestibili Tel: 0771 462296; closed Mondays) and **Mediterraneo** (42, via Bausan Tel: 0771 461212). **FORMIA** can be reached quickly by carrying on along the SS.213 Flacca. The town's origins, buried in myth, are tied to the legend of Troy and the wande-



lings of Ulysses on his journey home. Situated in the heart of the Bay of Gaeta, Formia has an enviable climate, one that made it an important resort dating from Roman times, of which there are many traces. The regional Park of Giànola-Monte di Scauri and the Blue Oasis begin east of the populated area. Here the produce is very varied. For dairy items we recommend **Lo Spicchio** (SS.7 Appia L. Napoli, km 148,400 Tel: 0771 738005, with points of sale also at Itri, Gaeta and Rome) and its buffalo milk-product range. For extra-virgin olive oil, Gaeta olives and products conserved in oil, it's worth stopping at l'**Azienda Agricola Gli Archi** (production in via Mergataro Tel: 0771 723904; sales point Simeone srl, via Appia 65, closed Sundays). Formia has a diversity of excellent restaurants in which to taste the best products of the region, above all the seafood, and to sample the old Bourbon recipes: **Sirio** (via Unità d'Italia Ovest, km 3,5 Tel: 0771 790047, closed Mondays and Tuesdays), the **Villetta da**



Mario (loc. Gianola; via Porticciolo Romano Tel: 0771 723113; closed Tuesdays), **Grande Albergo Miramare** (SS.7 Appia 44 Tel: 0771 320047), **Il Gatto e la Volpe** (33, via A. Tosti Tel: 0771 21354; closed Wednesdays), **Chinappi dal 1957** (8, via Anfiteatro Tel: 0771-790002; closed Thursdays), **Da Italo** (Via Unità d'Italia Ovest, km 2 Tel: 0771 771264; closed Tuesdays), **Da Veneziano** (83, via A. Tosti Tel: 0771 771818; closed Mondays) and **Borgo Antico** (loc. Castellonoro; p.lta Monte Tripoli Tel: 0771 737146; closed Tuesdays). Opposite Formia and Gaeta, the island contours of **PONZA** and **VEN-**

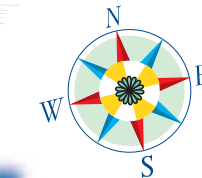


TOTENE and of the smaller islands of **Palmarola**, **Zannone**, **Gavi** and **S. Stefano** loom out of the sea: an archipelago made irresistible by limpid waters, sea-beds teeming with life, volcanic rock formations and a real sense of the Mediterranean. **PONZA**, where myth and legend are bound up with the popular imagination, was first a Roman colony and then a thriving mediaeval commercial centre; today, it is a renowned tourist resort due to its natural splendours and an appetising local cuisine that can cater to discrimi-

nating tastes. This cuisine can be enjoyed at the **Albergo Gennarino a Mare** (60, via Dante Tel: 0771 80071), **La Kambusa** (15, via Banchina Tel: 0771 80280), and **Hotel Bellavista** (via Parata Tel: 0771 809827). **VENTOTENE**, once used by the Romans as a place of detention for members of the imperial family, retains many traces of that period and in some ways a quality of the wilderness, its 'private' setting protected by the Ventotene and S. Stefano Land and Sea Nature Reserve. It's a good rendezvous for those who

The Routes for Good Taste

The Coast, the Islands, the Ausoni and Aurunci Mountains



would like time off to relax and sample an uncomplicated, authentic cuisine, like **Il Giardino** (46, via Olivi Tel: 0771 85090), it offers fish dishes served with the typical local lentils. Back on the coast, you continue south to reach **MINTURNO**, which sits on a slight elevation overlooking the seaside villages of Scauri and Marina di Minturno and bounded by the promontories of Monte d'Oro and Monte d'Argento. This is one of the most historic centres in southern Lazio, with origins that go back several centuries before Christ. Featured among the many traces of the Roman era is the archaeological district of Minturnae. Local produce can be enjoyed at **Il Corsaro** (1737, via



Appia Tel: 0771 622056; closed Mondays). **SCAURI** is another worthwhile stop, to taste and buy cold meats, cured pork and local sausages at **Trippa Norcineria Auriemma** (1135, via Appia Tel: 0771 613266; closed Mondays). Some 8 kms from Minturno, further inland and almost at the boundaries of the Campagna, is **CASTELFORTE**, the last remaining town-



ship in the Aurunci region to have pre-Roman origins and whose urban centre has fully conserved a demonstrably mediaeval character. It sits on a little hill dominating the plain of the river Garigliano, with the thermal baths of Suio on its banks. To appreciate the specialities of this area,



it repays stopping at **Ristorante La Scafa** (208, via delle Terme Tel: 0771 672242; closed Tuesdays). Close enough to Castelforte as to virtually share a single town centre, is **SS**.

COSMA E DAMIANO, also overlooking the plain. Here sausages, blood sausage products and strawberry-flavoured wine can be tasted. Carrying on inland towards the north, you'll reach **SPIGNO SATURNIA** with its historic centre up on the hill and the new town below in the valley. The mountains around have a feeling of nostalgia about them, bringing together rural simplicity with the traditional culture of the land. Aside from olive oil, fresh or conserved ricotta and other cheese products

that these days are always harder to find, you can taste the excellent wines of the up and coming cellar **Terra delle Ginestre** (64, via del Fornello Tel: 0771 700297), for example the whites **Promessa** (liqueur-based), **Invito**, **Ginestra**, **Lentisco** and the reds **Ricordi** and **Il Generale**. Back on the Appia you reach, reluctantly perhaps, the end of the first stage of the journey down to Formia. You should now look for signs to **ITRI**, sitting up on the first hill inland, and looking out over a small strip of countryside that stretches till it touches the sea. The town is hidden in the



greens of the woods - oak and beech alternating with the ancient groves where the famous black olive, also associated with Gaeta, is



grown. To taste these, and their exquisite oil, and to try the green olives, you should go to the **Unione Agricoltori Itrani** (40,

via Padovana Tel: 0771 727928; closed Sundays). Leaving Itri, heading inland on the SS.82, you'll come to **CAMPODIMELE**, a small mediaeval town perched on a steep hill, hemmed in by its girdle of walls, whose backdrop is the impressive Monte Faggetto with its sparkling water springs known as 'faggetina'. Campodimele is famous also as the 'town of long life', due to the high average age of its inhabitants. Here, there are many typical dishes still prepared using the old methods, for example pasta and beans or snails cooked in goat's sauce. These can be sampled at **La Longevità** (37, via Trento e Trieste Tel: 0771 598289; closed Wednesdays). Before reaching **FONDI**, the next stop on our way, try making a

small detour to **LENOLA**, on an old trade-route linking the Liri Valley to the plains of Fondi, to visit the Shrine of the Madonna of the Hills, or to taste the goat dishes, fettucine made with eggs, la pètte-la with beans, or game and olive oil. Fondi reaches out onto the fertile plain of Fondi-Monte S. Biagio, bounded by the Ausoni and Aurunci mountains and by the Tyrrhenian coast, where you will find the lake of Fondi. Created according to the legend of Hercules, this is a bubbling coastal centre packed with archaeological sites and monuments and home to one of the most important fruit and vegetable markets in Europe (M.O.E.). Besides citrus fruits and other orchard produce, you will find buffalo cheese (mozzarella) and an outstanding extra-virgin olive oil obtainable at the **Frantoio Oleario Giuglietta Marco** (via S. Magno km 1,2 Tel: 0771 502590). To taste the local delicacies, you are recommended to call in at **Vicolo di 'Mblio** (11, Corso Appio Claudio Tel: 0771 502385; closed Tuesdays), **Il Selciato** (7, via E. Amante Tel: 0771 500556; closed Mondays), and **Osteria Brenta** (8, via Brenta Tel: 0771 504317; closed



Mondays). At the end of the journey, coming back up the Via Appia going north, is **MONTESANBIAGIO**, an old township which once marked the boundary between the Papal State and the Bourbon kingdom, whose history is deeply tied to that of the town. It stands on the top of a hill, looking out over the orange groves, the lake of Fondi and the Muscat-growing vineyards. Just outside the village, a stop can be made at the **Azienda Equituristica Sughereta di S. Vito** (47, via S. Vito Tel: 0771 566997; closed Wednesdays) which takes its name from the largest cork oak in southern Italy, and where you can eat a number of local specialities such as coriander-flavoured sausage and smoked meats.

Sperlonga**Ristorante Laocoonte da Rocco***Owner: Rocco D'Arcangelo*

In the heart of Sperlonga, this elegant restaurant with open-air terrace overlooking a beautiful sea offers fresh products from the province of Latina, as well as good wines, brisk and attentive service and attractive cooking.

Gaeta**Ristorante S. Agostino***Owner: Andrea Valente*

Giving directly onto the beach, the restaurant is managed by the accommodating Andrea Valente who has given his food a distinctive Pontine touch. Offers fresh fish, vegetables from the plain and a good wine list.

Ristorante alla Corte dei Borboni*Owner: Francesco Muscariello*

Stands in a strategic position offering atmosphere, class and good décor in an environment that features many historical touches. The menu is typical and attractive, and includes pizza. The managers are expert in the use of excellent primary ingredients and regional wines.

Ristorante Antico Vico*Owner: Cosimo Vaudo*

Managed down to the finest detail with excellent welcome and service overseen personally by Signora Vaudo. The cuisine borrows from the Bourbon style, with seafood dominant. The wine list is uncomplicated, with a predominance of whites.

Azienda Gaeta Itticoltura*Owner: Antonio Di Ciaccio*

This is one of the leading producers of seafood in the Bay of Gaeta, in particular mussels. Accompanied visits are possible and produce can be bought over the counter.

Azienda Antico Forno Giordano*Owner: Enrico Giordano*

One of the oldest bakeries in Gaeta, distinguished not only by its bread, pizza and biscuits, but by its famous and typical tiella or country pizza. Produce can be sampled and bought on site.

Azienda Di Ciaccio Gebäck-Spezialitäten*Owner: Giuseppe Di Ciaccio*

Already established nationally for its traditional confectionery products, among which special mention must be given to desserts such as pastiera, tozzetti, sciucelle and mustaccioli. The house specialities can be bought at the Tesori del Gusto in Gaeta and sampled at the emporium Dettagli d'Arredo.

Formia**Ristorante Sirio***Owner: Claudio Ferrari*

The restaurant, converted from an old mill, is the bedrock of the town's cuisine and is set in attractive and welcoming grounds. The Ferrari family are professional and competent, giving a dependably high quality to both restaurant and kitchen. The wine list is exhaustive.

Pizzeria 2000*Owner: Cesare Cervone*

This pizzeria is famous for its classic tiella, and for a wide choice of pizza by the slice or to take away. The ingredients are exclusively local and authenticity can be relied on in the meticulous preparation of the dough, according to traditional methods of the area.

Pizzeria del Corso*Owner: Angelo Chinappi*

Specialists in the preparation of the tiella according to an old Bay recipe, it offers a wide variety of pizze by the slice. The ingredients used, both in the dough and the seasoning, all come from local producers.

Ristorante La Siesta*Owner: Gianfranco Scotto*

This is a welcoming and agreeable venue, as much for the eating and drinking as for the style of the management and service. Parking, private walks and bar facilities including self-service - these have given La Siesta an excellent reputation. The menu and wine list offer typical local products.

Ristorante Albergo Aeneas' Landing*Owner: Vincenzo Zottola*

Fabulous setting, surrounded by trees and close to the sea. The rooms are elegant without being formal, the service is of a good standard and the cuisine specialises in local products, notably seafood. The wine list is good, with a fine choice of local labels.

Ristorante La Cantinella*Owner: Ugo Cimino*

Unpretentiously managed by the larger-than-life Ugo Cimino, who offers cooking closely tied to the region and its origins; and dishes that change daily.

Ristorante Masaniello*Owner: Salvatore Nancone*

Set in the historic part of Gaeta, the menu and cooking are delightful in their simplicity. The informal style is consistent with a family-run business.

Ristorante Mediterraneo*Owner: Roberto Nocca*

In the centre of Gaeta, this is more of a hostelry than a restaurant due to its typically Mediterranean character and unique atmosphere. It is open only in the evening, but shuts late. Offers a regional cuisine using local produce, a good choice of wines with proper attention paid to Lazio producers, particularly from Cori.



The Routes for Good Taste

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

Ristorante Grande Albergo Miramare*Owner: Antonio Celletti*

Situated in lovely surroundings, the restaurant offers standards to match those of the hotel. The service is elegant and professional with a menu characterised by daily changes and attention to ingredients.

Ristorante Il Gatto e la Volpe*Owner: Tonino und Giancarlo Simeone*

Run by Antonio and Giancarlo Simeone under the charming slogan "dishes of the past for the eaters of today". In a welcoming atmosphere, with friendly service and spacious table layout, you can enjoy simple, down to earth cuisine and an ample array of wines, including local labels.

Ristorante Da Veneziano*Owner: Giovanni Veneziano*

This spacious and well-furnished establishment has a broad menu, well able to satisfying even the highest standards. The attractive summer terrace is perfect for a relaxing dinner.

Ristorante Borgo Antico*Owner: Sig. De Marco*

Large and spacious, this restaurant (Loc. Castellonorato) is ideal for banquets and ceremonies and has big windows giving an incomparable view over the Bay of Gaeta. There is a large choice of fish dishes, a pleasant atmosphere and friendly service.

Caseificio Lo Spicchio*Owner: Lorenzo Di Toro*

The specialities of this company are cheeses such as mozzarella, caciocavallo, le ciliegine, nodine, and treccie, all of which are made from buffalo milk. There is a small tasting area with qualified personnel and a counter for retail sales.

Ristorante Chinappi dal 1957*Owner: Stefano Chinappi*

Managed enthusiastically by Stefano Chinappi and his family, the restaurant offers a diverse fare (from oyster pizza to sushi and tempura) and several set menus distinguished for the selection of primary ingredients. The impressive wine list offers a large selection of labels from the Pontine and Lazio regions.

Azienda Agricola Gli Archi*Owner: Marina Simeone*

A young olive-producing company, concerned with optimising the quality of extra-virgin olive oil and the typical olives of Gaeta. Open to visitors. The products, all of them excellent, can be bought at 65, via Appia.

Ponza**Ristorante Albergo Gennarino a Mare***Owner: Francesco Silvestri*

Characteristic restaurant, built out over the sea on a pier, in the bay of S. Antonio, with private moorings for boats and rubber dinghies. The cooking makes use of ingredients and products that are healthy and typical of the island tradition, such as fish, lobster, shellfish and seafood of various kinds.

Ristorante Hotel Bellavista*Owner: Erasmo Mastropietro*

Inviting and airy premises, the large overhanging balcony supported by an ornate structure. The welcome is warm, the furnishings simple but practical and the service good. The menu is traditional and uncomplicated.

Ristorante La Kambusa*Owner: Settimio Cipollini*

Located in the port, this restaurant is convenient for visitors. The furnishings and rooms are pleasing, the welcome warm, and it offers a well-balanced menu and good table service. Many dishes showcase the island's staple produce.

Ventotene**Ristorante Il Giardino***Owner: Candida Sportiello*

A medium-sized establishment with an inside room as well as a veranda. Situated in the interior of the island, it has a magnificent view over the sea. Whilst not offering a vast choice, the cuisine is of superb quality thanks to fresh local produce: the famous lentils, in addition to the fish.

Minturno**Ristorante Il Corsaro***Owner: Giovanni D'Arienzo*

More pub than restaurant, more bakers than pizzeria, but with some conventional touches, this establishment is not easily classifiable. The young and enthusiastic management team enjoys innovation.

Spigno Saturnia**Azienda Terra delle Ginestre***Owner: Giulio Marrone*

This small growers' cooperative was born with the aim of raising the quality of local grapes. It is possible to buy the products and make one-off visits by appointment, accompanied by members of the cooperative who give polite assistance during tasting.

Itri**Azienda Unione Agricoltori Itrani***Owner: Sig. Manzi*

This is a significant cooperative that produces not only very fine extra-virgin oil but also many derivative products that can be bought directly from the farm or from various shops in the province of Latina.

Campodimele**Ristorante La Longevità***Owner: Germano Sepe*

A specialist in meats and vegetables from the nearby hills, the restaurant offers a good choice of first courses, grilled meats and side dishes. The wine list complements an informal atmosphere also characterised by uncomplicated food.

Ristorante Il Selciato*Owner: Davide Fusco*

Located in the historic centre of Fondi is this elegant restaurant run by Davide Fusco. It provides a warm atmosphere. The furnishings reflect care and attention; the service is polite and efficient. The food is well prepared and the wine list inviting.

Osteria Brenta*Owner: Valter Di Manno*

Tucked away in a small corner of Fondi, the hostelry run by Valter Di Manno and his wife offers simple food, making use of the freshest possible ingredients. The menu is only a rough guide to what is available, and is often superseded by 'dishes of the day' introduced at the table. Most are based on what is available at local fish and vegetable markets.

Azienda Il Frantoio Oleario Guglietta Marco*Owner: Marco Guglietta*

This is a hospitable, family-style farm. Appointments are made every Thursday evening for olive oil tasting. It is worth noting the efficient distribution of the farm's products, even beyond provincial boundaries.

Monte S. Biagio**Ristorante Azienda Equituristica Sughereta di S. Vito***Owner: Ida Brancaleone*

The location is a natural paradise. Set on the Equine Tourism farm, the restaurant relies heavily on products from the Lazio and Lucania; great attention is paid to sourcing ingredients, all of which are of outstanding quality.

