



# Walking in Basilicata

Itineraries through Towns and Nature



Basilicata - Sports and Nature

  
route  
basilicata<sup>®</sup>  
FREE TO MOVE

## **Walking in Basilicata**

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*Managing Director*  
Antonio Nicoletti

*Publishing Manager*  
Maria Teresa Lotito

*Coordination and Text*  
Francesco Forte

*Editorial Review*  
Carmine Cassino

*Itineraries and GPX Tracks*  
Francesco Forte, Carmen Ditrani,  
Pasquale Larocca, Alessandro Cozzi, Rocco Castellano,  
Domenico Porfido, Ivan Rossino

*Technical Processing GPX*  
Alessandro Cozzi

*Graphic design and printing*  
Tecnostampa srl – Marsicovetere (PZ)

*Photos*  
Foto Video Di Noia, Michele Luongo, Francesco Forte,  
Rocco Castellano, Alessandro Cozzi, Pietro Ielpo,  
Daria Lorito, Fabio Limongi,  
Ugo Ferrero, Antonio Lamboglia,  
Ivan Rossino, APT Basilicata Archive

*Translation* Lindsay Watts by Bespoke Lab Studio di  
consulenza linguistica di Maria Rosaria Silvano

*Maps of the Walks*  
Map data ©OpenStreetMap

*Cover*  
Lucanian landscapes, Photos Video Di Noia



# The Rhythm of the World, Step by Step through Basilicata's Thousand Landscapes

*To those immersing themselves in the unspoilt nature, walking along secluded pathways, you sometimes feel a sense of infinity. Those who have experienced it say that it is the peace in the sacred woods, or the wind in the treetops, one step from heaven, or the crystal-clear reflections of the light on the snow or on the water, or again, the sight of the seas of clay and broom on the Badlands ... in short, those who have experienced it say that this all brings us closer to the Divine, inspiring a spontaneous feeling of gratitude and passion. Perhaps also because of this, it is subconsciously, but the thought of the work that you are about to consult also originates from a feeling of gratitude towards a person who welcomed and accompanied so many of us on our journey along Basilicata's pathways, in search of emotions and feelings.*

**Fabio Limongi**, with his big, warm smile, left an indelible mark in the beating heart of Lucanian tourism. He taught many the meaning of the word "hiking", conveying his boundless passion for the land, a passion that persists and is renewed and perpetuated step by step, path after path, mountain top after mountain top and cloud after cloud.

*Passion generates passion, a word that often comes into the mind of those who, like us, work in the field of tourism, in this land that is open to travellers. It is a paradise for nature lovers, where the wildest places are*



home to rare species of flora and fauna, living in perfect harmony, side by side with attractions, from the most poetic, such as the slowest carousel in the world, to the most thrilling, such as the ziplines, suspended bridges, or bobsleighs among the branches, and the cliffs rising over Maratea, with the imposing statue of Christ, visibly joining the blue sea to the dark green woods.

Special thanks go to the author, **Francesco Forte**, a friend and expert pupil of Fabio's; he was assigned an arduous task. As we can see in all the editorial publications that the APT is producing, each book – including a guidebook – is an original story in itself. Each story, also about a place, is never impartial, but gives back what we experience, feel, and interpret through our emotional filter. In this case, Francesco Forte was asked to describe the land, starting from the experience of an expert, and turn it into something original, making it his own. He succeeded, walking along, and tracing over 500 km of paths, suggesting walks from **3 to 23 days in 36 municipalities**, integrating descriptions with practical and useful information and tools for hikers, ranging from papers to digital, GPS and apps ... in short, it is a monumental achievement that offers countless possible journeys through Lucania's thousand diversities.

Lucania's wealth lies in its diversity, and we invite you to come and discover it. You will see that in Basilicata we don't only walk with our legs and feet, but above all, with our heart, and along the most secluded pathways, the rhythm of our breathing becomes one, in harmony with the rhythm of the world.

**Antonio Nicoletti**  
APT Basilicata General Manager

## Introduction

*If I had to advise a visitor on how to discover this land naturally, I would definitely suggest crossing it on foot, losing yourself - metaphorically - in its womb, in its history, simply on foot. I wouldn't add anything else. There is no need to add anything else because walking means sustainably challenging the limits of your body and your mind, but it also means feeling the adrenalin flowing through your veins as you overcome obstacles and conquer mountain tops. Walking is a multi-sensory experience: it means listening to the leaves crackling beneath your feet, listening to the birds singing sweetly, dancing in the trees and listening to the crashing waterfalls resounding in the air; but it also means taking deep breaths and savouring the smell of nature.*

*Walking is also an encounter with the world, but most of all, with yourself. It is a time to reflect, a time for introspection, an opportunity to connect with your soul and find your inner balance.*

*Walking is a profound way of enriching your well-being, what the Japanese theorised as *shinrin-yoku* and what the Americans call "forest bathing." It also means discovering hidden places and secrets, meeting people to share stories and smiles, as well as fears and pain. In short, walking is many things that combine to create a personal and unique vision during every trip that I like to summarise as authentic. Walking slowly through beauty and mystery and doing it with passion. For me, this word has a precise name, the name of the person who inspired it all: Fabio Limongi.*





Every route was conceived as a rediscovery of Fabio's teachings and there was not one day that his presence was not with me. In the end, after walking over 500 km along paths, tracks, tarmac roads and dirt roads, when we put everything together, the result embodied all these feelings. This guidebook aims to offer tourists a natural way to discover Basilicata. The book that you are holding in your hands is a collection of itineraries tailored to meet the most varied needs, routes, which, if taken individually, are designed as a nostalgic postcard to send to a friend, but which, if put together, create all kinds of studies from wild nature, culture and archaeology to food, ancient towns, and natural oases.

Below are seven suggested itineraries that combine the single sections assembled in this guidebook:

- the first, **Discovering the Noce Valley**, unwinding through picturesque towns set on the river of the same name, situated on the western slopes of the Sirino Massif;
- the second, **His majesty, Mount Sirino**: on the trail of Fabio Limongi, this walk starts from Maratea and reaches Marsicovetere, connecting the sea with the snowy mountain tops of the Sirino, crossing and discovering the treasures of the Parco Nazionale dell'Appennino Lucano Val d'Agri Lagonegrese (Appennino Lucano Val d'Agri Lagonegrese National Park), areas and places that were close to the heart of the person who loved them more than anyone else;
- the third, **Along the Castles of Frederick II**, starting from the manor in Lagopesole and reaching Matera, crossing the Parco Regionale del Vulture (Vulture Regional Park) and the Parco Regionale della Murgia Materana (Murgia Materana Regional Park), an itinerary unwinding through history and culture, in the lands of Horace and Frederick II, leading us to discover -Aglianico, the Bradano Valley and the City of the Sassi;
- the fourth, **Basilicata coast to coast. From Places of Worship to Mount Pollino** is an original version of the coast to coast that reaches Policoro from Maratea (or if you prefer, Matera by transfer), scaling the tough climbs in the Parco Nazionale del Pollino (Pollino National Park), in search of the majestic loricated pines and mystic sanctuaries, subsequently heading down towards the Ionian coast;

- the fifth, **Walking through the Most Beautiful Towns in Italy**, starting from Castelmezzano or Pietrapertosa that offers adrenaline and thrills in the Parco Regionale Gallipoli Cognato and the Piccole Dolomiti Lucane, joining up with the third suggested itinerary (Along the Castles of Frederick II), by transfer to Lagopesole;
- the sixth, **On the way to Matera**, starting from Maratea, the Pearl of the Tyrrhenian, and reaching the City of the Sassi, joining the second suggested itinerary (His Majesty, Mount Sirino: on the trail of Fabio Limongi) to the fifth suggested itinerary (Walking through the Most Beautiful Towns in Italy), by transfer from Marsicovetere to Castelmezzano. This incredible itinerary connects four of the five regional parks and crosses 25 towns;
- finally, the seventh, **Walking in Basilicata. Itineraries through Towns and Nature**. A walk that forms a large loop in the region, starting from Maratea and reaching Matera, and then, back to the pearl of the Tyrrhenian, joining the sixth suggested itinerary (On the way to Matera), walking back along the fourth (Basilicata Coast to Coast. From Places of Worship to Mount Poillino).

We have crossed almost all of the most beautiful Towns in Italy in the region, climbed impervious mountain peaks and walked down through enchanting valleys, dreamt in expanses of cultivated fields and meadows adorned with flowers of thousands of different colours; we have suffered the heat in the arid Badlands and felt thirsty when water was scarce. We have found ourselves in dozens of places of worship and scenic points, captivated by enchanting landscapes, hoping to share this gift with new travellers. We have lost ourselves in picturesque countryside, along wild tracks, in search of shade when we were surrounded by the bright light of this land. Our appetite as pilgrims for everything beautiful and good was satisfied by the typical products, our thirst was quenched with pure water and sipping glasses of first-class wine. We have visited places of indescribable beauty, breathing in the scent of history in castles, and discovering the stories guarded in this land that tell of emperors, kings, princes, and barons, as well as poets, craftsmen, peasants, and shepherds.

**Basilicata, an authentic land.**  
**Basilicata, a land of wonder.**  
**Basilicata, a land of walks.**

*Francisco Fort*

## Warning

Preparing to embark upon a walk requires a systematic series of standard recommendations that range from organising your rucksack and the choice of your first-aid kit to the right choice of shoes and technical clothing. Therefore, it is advisable to keep the following advice in mind:



always have some **water and light food**, basic technical equipment (**shoes and clothing**) and a first-aid kit with you. Basilicata is a multifaceted and heterogenic land, we will go from mountain stretches with low temperatures to hot clayey areas, from areas rich in water to places where it is hard to find fountains. So, it is essential to prepare for your needs. Prepare yourselves for everything! Rain, sun and also snow!



**physical conditions**: the suggested walks are suitable for people who are in a good training. Most of the selected itineraries are for walkers that the CAI (Italian Alpine Club) classifies as EE, i.e. **Expert Excursionists**, who can walk an average of **20 km a day**. Those who do not feel suitably prepared and trained can take, from this collection, those walks defined as easy, or possibly divide the proposed itineraries into several stages.



arrange **where to sleep** in advance: consult the site [www.aptbasilicata.it/new-dove-dormire/](http://www.aptbasilicata.it/new-dove-dormire/). A reservation is necessary if you intend to stay overnight in the refuges in Conserva di Sirino, Madonna del Pollino and Picciano in Matera.





**type of walks:** this collection has incorporated important paths (of the CAI, the Cammino Materano and the Cammino Basiliano, which are signposted and accessible; but also new paths, which, despite being marked and without any particular problems, are not signposted yet. We recommend you constantly check the **GPX tracks online which are easily downloadable**, because there may be some slight changes (improvements). New technologies allow us to know where we are and whether we are on the right track at all times, so we suggest you refer to the app at the bottom.



**times:** we recommend starting between April and October, because there are stretches in the mountains (Sirino and Pollino) where it would be impossible to walk in the winter months because of the snow.

Download the routes



You can also follow the routes here for assisted walks



# Map walks



<b>1</b>	Maratea – Trecchina	15	<b>12</b>	Venosa – Palazzo San Gervasio	71
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## Trip suggestions

The following itineraries can be adapted to meet every walker's needs. Time requirements with suggested walks varying from **3 to 25 days**; ideas for seeking out different landscapes ranging from the sea to the mountains, and from castles to places of culture and faith. Each suggestion is tailored to offer an authentic picture of Basilicata's scenic and historical-artistic treasures. So, each itinerary is separate, but at the same time it is also a departure point for a new walk. Our aim is to engage "slow tourists" to discover this land.

The full proposal is a round tour of the region, crossing **5 parks** and **36 towns**, offering a variety of emotions. The times are important (almost one month's walking!), but the idea is to offer a complete experience. Each suggestion can obviously be completed in reverse.

It is possible to combine or separate everything depending on the meaning we wish to give to our journey.





## Discovering the Noce Valley

40 km - 3 days

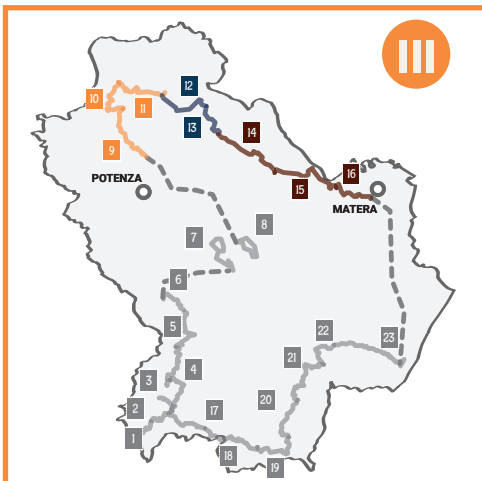
(Maratea - Lago Sirino)



## His Majesty, Mount Sirino: on the trail of Fabio Limongi

110,5 km - 6 days

(Maratea - Marsicovetere)



## Along the Castles of Frederick II

182 km - 8 days

(Lagopesole - Matera)



## Along Basilicata Coast to Coast. Places of Worship to Mount Pollino

187,5 km - 9 days

(Maratea - Policoro)



**Walking through the Most Beautiful Towns in Italy**  
 205,5 km - 10 days  
*(Castelmezzano - Matera)*



**On the way to Matera**  
 314 km - 16 days  
*(Maratea - Matera)*



**Walking in Basilicata. Itineraries through Towns and Nature**  
 501,5 km - 25 days  
*(Maratea - Matera - Maratea)*





Enjoy your walk!



## How to read the guidebook

Each tour is a travel diary that includes technical information, as well as impressions and stories related to the territory, the cultural heritage and this land's prized food and wine products.



The QR code refers to the GPX trail for downloading the route

Each itinerary highlights the different areas of interest found along the way



ART/MUSEUMS



CASTLES



PLACES OF WORSHIP



SCENIC VIEWPOINTS



TYPICAL PRODUCTS



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES



LOCAL ATTRACTIONS



### Tour Info

Read the tour details carefully before starting the walk.



### One more day

The section offers suggestions for extending your stay in the area around the path.



DOWNLOAD THE ROUTE



## From Maratea to Trecchina



### Tour Info

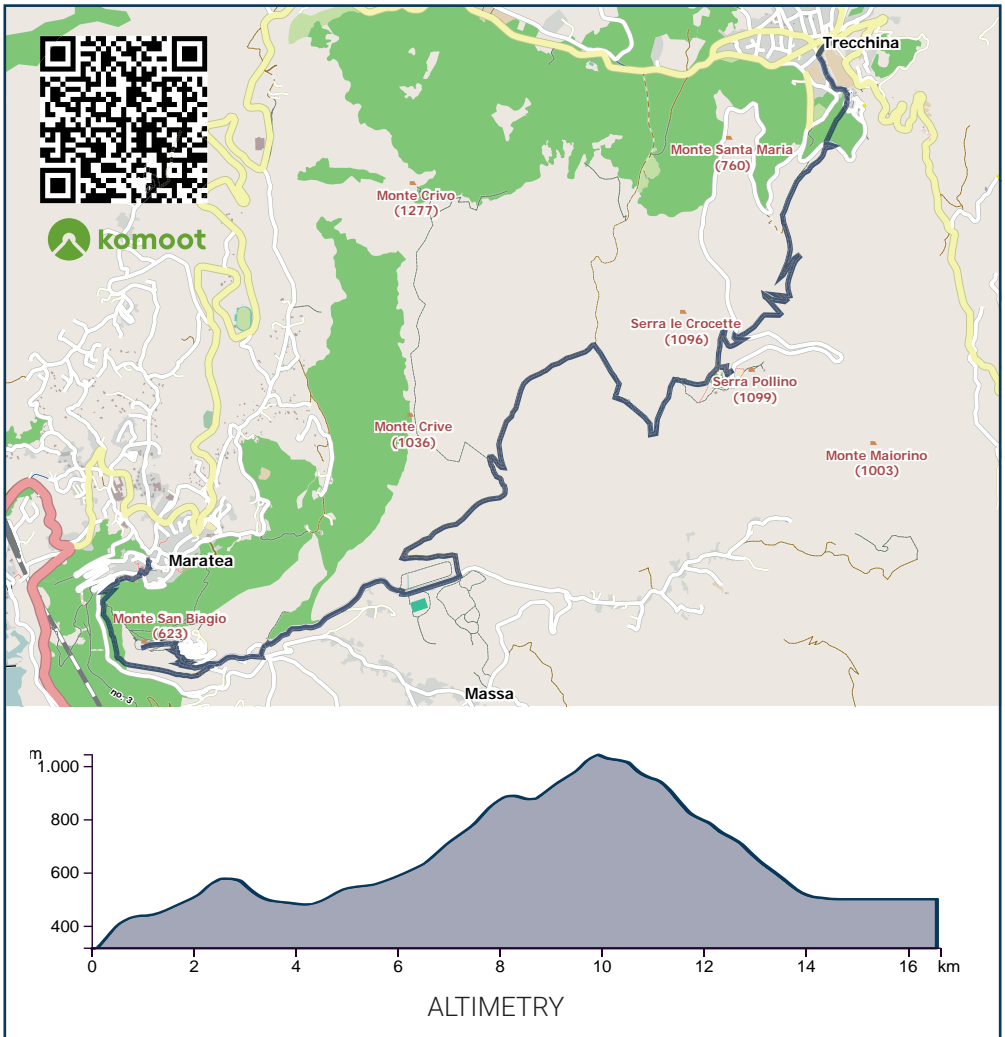
- 📍 **Starting point:** Maratea, Fontana Vecchia Fountain
- 📍 **Destination:** Trecchina, Church of San Michele Arcangelo
- ➔ **Distance:** 16.5 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 6 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 910 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 730 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,060 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 310 m
- Difficulty:** intermediate 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**



HIKING PATH- PATH - TARMAC ROAD

Our journey starts from the *Pearl of the Tyrrhenian Sea*, which was recently included among the most beautiful Towns in Italy. A city bus takes us from the station to the town centre. Maratea is set like a precious jewel beneath Mount San Biagio, almost hidden by the sea and protected from above by the majestic statue of Cristo Redentore (Christ the Redeemer). After descending to Fontana Vecchia, we head on towards the historic centre until we come to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore del Borgo. From here, we start the *Cammino di San Biagio* (Walk of San Biagio) that climbs up, first through the town streets and then the Capocasale





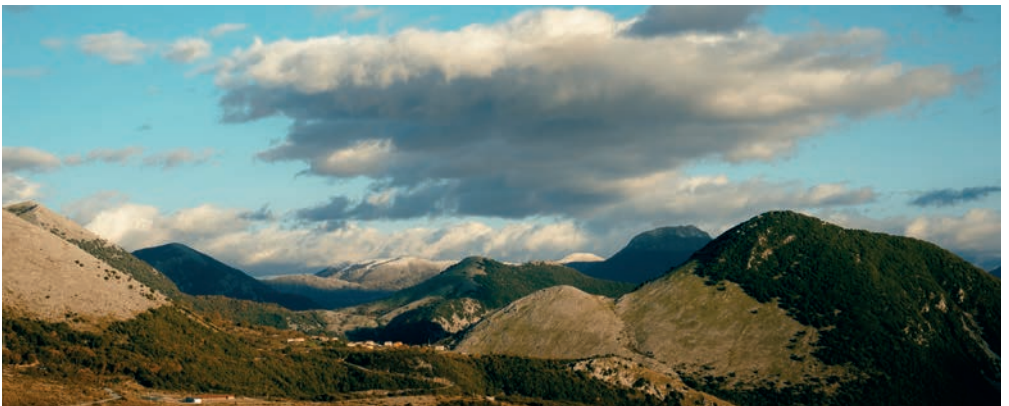
district, where we find another church, the church of San Vito (St. Vitus), which is the oldest in the lower town. Among other things, Maratea is known as the town with 44 churches. Now, although it is not hard to find this definition in other parts of the Southern Italy, in Maratea because of such great popular devotion, it takes on a rich symbolic meaning because of the beautiful setting in which it is located. The presence of so many places of worship is

also functional for the sacralisation of this breathtaking scenery. And it is along this spiritual landscape that we make our way over the path in the shade of a thick wood of holm oaks and hornbeams, surrounded by cyclamens and wild orchids until we reach the panoramic viewpoint. Here, our first stop is a must, which is our reward for our initial hard work: as we look up, an impressive view over the Gulf of Policastro appears before our eyes. As we move



on, our walk passes through the ancient town, built between the 5th and 6th centuries CE, past harsh and subvertical rocky walls. Today, we can see the ruins that reveal how majestic and powerful it must have once been, and as we step through history, gazing at the wonder of this unique place, we come to Mount San Biagio, set at a height of 623 metres, with the sea below us. After a visit to the basilica, we set off again for the **statua del Cristo Redentore (Statue of Christ the**

**Redeemer)**, and as we enjoy this scenic walk, we can't help admiring the skyline. Here, the only fitting word is wonder. We set off again, amazed by such beauty and, on our way back to the sanctuary, for those craving a few hours of pure adrenalin, there is the **Via ferrata del Cristo Redentore (Protected Climbing Route of Christ the Redeemer)** a little further downhill, on the left. Instead, following the municipal road that leads to contrada Brefaro, on the left, we



come to the Maratea Skyline path that branches off between Mount Crivo and Serra Pollino. Step by step, we climb up to the next branching of point where, after turning right and after another slight difference in height, we come to the **Parco delle Stelle** (Park of the Stars). Finally, after an hour of hard work, we reach the top! We are on Mount Serra Pollino, at a height of 1,099 metres. We carry on to the sanctuary of the Madonna del Perpetuo Soccorso (Our Lady of Perpetual Help), where it is possible to see the geography of the land. To the south, the River Noce traces the border with Calabria, a little further behind we can see the Island of Dino, and in the distance we can make out the peaks of Mount Pollino; to the west, an endless stretch of blue and sky-blue appears, where it is also possible to see the cone-shaped silhouette of the island of Stromboli on clear days; to the north, the rocky, impervious coast of Maratea plunges down to the Gulf of Policastro, where the crystalline sea becomes a frame of stone and mediterranean maquis, with its hidden coves where you can see swimmers almost all year round; finally, to the west, the view opens out over the Noce Valley and Mount Sirino, revealing a vast area dominated by the stunning, wild nature. We set off again on the road that leads downhill and, after passing the first bend, on the left, we follow the path of the Madonna, an ancient and mystic sheltered walkway that crosses a thick wood of turkey oaks and chestnut trees, taking us directly to San Michele. Now we are in the highest and oldest part of the town of Trecchina, which is famous for its hospitality and **chestnut** sweets, the perfect blend for our first stop.



## Further info

**Cristo Redentore (Christ the Redeemer)**  
*Commissioned by Count Stefano Rivetti and built in 1965, it was made by the artist Bruno Innocenti. The statue is 22 metres tall and second in size only to the statue of Christ in Rio de Janeiro. The statue of Christ overlooks the whole of the Gulf of Policastro, with his back to the sea, facing the Tyrrhenian town as though protecting his fellow citizens.*

**Via Ferrata del Cristo Redentore (Protected Climbing Route of Christ the Redeemer)**

*It leads along the northwestern slope of Mount San Biagio (623 metres) overlooking the coast of Maratea, with an initial series of rocky projections, which then continues along the mountain ridge and coming out, with two suspension bridges, at the top at the feet of the Christ of Maratea. The route must be crossed safely by experts using progression techniques and all safety devices. Those who are inexperienced, or children must be accompanied.*

**Parco delle Stelle (Park of the Stars)**

*It is situated on Mount Serra Pollino at a height of 1,030 metres in the municipality of Trecchina. Here, you can enjoy an extraordinary natural landscape that allows you to admire part of the Tyrrhenian coast of Maratea from the top and enjoy thrilling attractions.*  
[www.parcodellestelletrecchina.it](http://www.parcodellestelletrecchina.it)

**Trecchina Chestnut Festival**

*This yearly, in which chestnuts play the leading role, has been attracting thousands of tourists for over 20 years.*





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## From Trecchina to Lauria

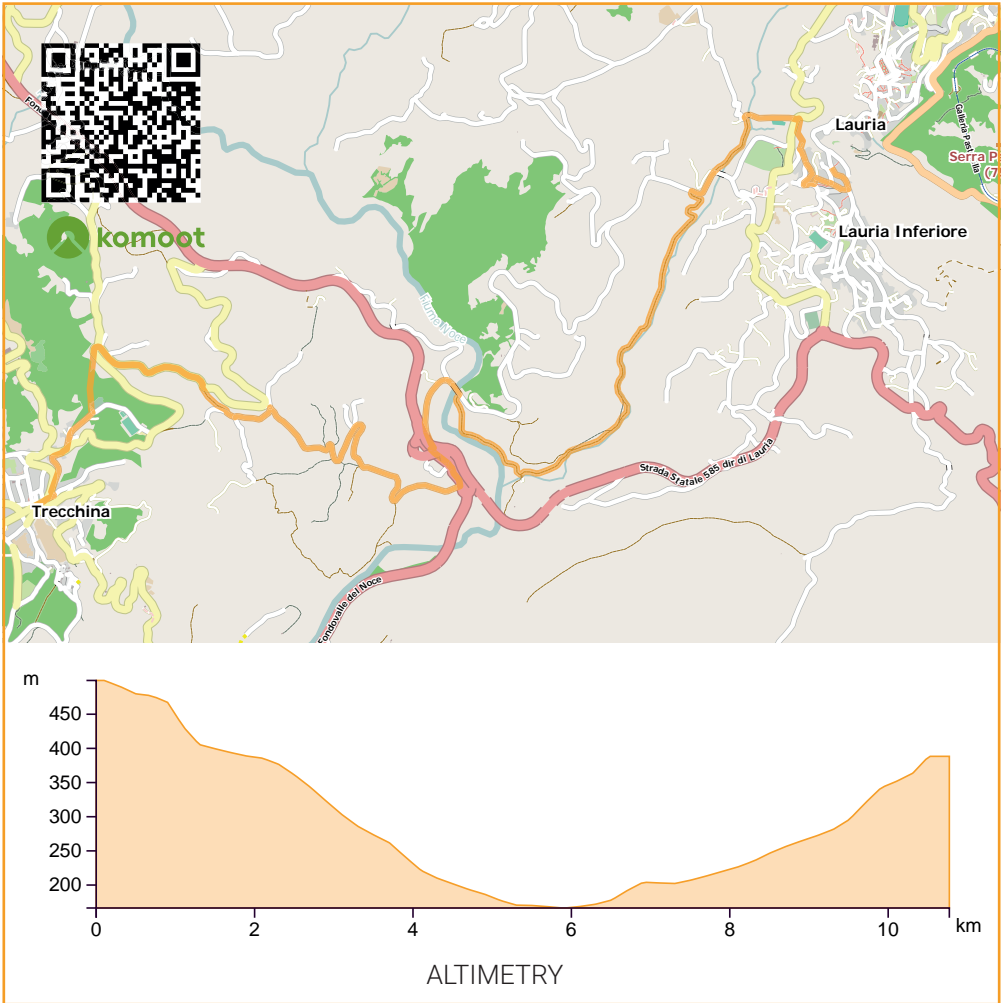


### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Trecchina,  
Church of San Michele Arcangelo
- 📍 **Destination:** Lauria,  
Piazza San Giacomo
- ➔ **Distance:** 10.8 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 5 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 240 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 340 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 500 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 170 m
- Difficulty:** easy 🧡🧡🧡
- Road type:**

PATH - TARMAc ROAD

Our awakening in Trecchina tastes of chestnut sweets and nut biscuits that are a speciality of the place. The town is constantly surrounded by crisp mountain air and as we cross the lively Piazza del Popolo, we leave this charming town centre behind us which acts as a hinge between the Tyrrhenian coast and its hinterland. It is particularly popular with tourists, especially those from the surrounding regions, who choose it as their summer home because of its favourable location, half-way between the sea and the mountains, between the waves and the woods. Looking up, the



Noce Valley appears before us: Rivello, Nemoli, and a scenic view of Lauria; in the distance, Mount Sirino massif overlooks the valley. We briefly leave the Provincial Road SP3 and immediately on the right, we take via Fontanelle. Soon, we come back out onto the provincial road and as we cross it, we follow via San Martino on the left. Back on the provincial road, we bear right at the first junction. Shortly afterwards, (again on the right), we come to the junction of località Foresta. From

here, we descend steeply, past a series of bends, until we reach the bottom, in contrada Rotaro, where we use the old service road to cross the State Road SS585 that passes by the new tunnel, avoiding any unnecessary risks. Once we are on the other side, we start our climb towards Lauria. We set off on the Provincial Road SP3 again, and immediately after the bridge that crosses the Noce River, we turn right, following our path. From here, we skirt the water

until we come to a small hydroelectric plant, but before setting off again, we allow ourselves a 5-minute break on the banks of the Noce River. This river, which originates on the slopes of Mount Sirino and flows out into the Tyrrhenian Sea after 45 km, is what really holds this valley together. In fact, the municipalities of Lagonegro, Rivello, Nemoli, Trecchina and Lauria all overlook its course. The Noce is the common thread for all these communities. It has united their destinies, and continues to do so, presenting constant challenges to defend its extraordinary biodiversity. Its course is a history book: if you were to go back up, north of this point, level with Rivello, you would be able to admire at least seven well-preserved bridges dating back to the early Middle Ages, but we'll leave this suggestion for another time and focus on where we are now. Here, below a large viaduct made of reinforced concrete, the river widens and becomes a torrent that seems to vanish between the gullies and coves, below the walls overlooking Mount Messina. Its beauty is hypnotic, but walkers need to know how to elude the song of the sirens that rises up from these waters and head on again north-west. Setting off along the path that unwinds along the banks of the Cafaro torrent, we leave the Noce River behind us with the hydroelectric plant on the right and walk for a while by the side of the water, in the shade of the beech, chestnut and birch trees in an oasis of peace. At the end of this climb, we find ourselves in Lauria, at the foot of a stunning view over the town that is home to the *Presepe del Ruscello* (Nativity Scene of the Brook). After passing underneath, a stone stairway leads us directly to the built-up area, and going back up it, along Via Fontana, you come to Piazza San Severino, whose







place name recalls noble Renaissance families, where the Convento di San Bernardino (Convent of St. Bernardino) stands out. From the square, we head back up via Giovanni da Procida, past alleyways, 15th-century buildings and glimpses of its glorious past; it is an important road because it reveals the typical flint slab floor, which is called "ansilicata" in local dialect. Looking up, Mount Armo overlooks the built-up area; we can see the Santuario dell'Assunta (Sanctuary of the Assumption) on its ridge, and on the left, the imposing Chiesa di San Giacomo (Church of St. James), with its unique Byzantine dome, arouses our curiosity, showing its different architectural stratifications from the

past. After completing the steep climb, we come out right in the heart of the town, in Piazza San Giacomo, a real town balcony facing the enchanting valley. From here, the Noce Valley reappears in all its colourful charm and greenery that can be found all year round, rising up to the ridges of the mounts that hide the sea. In fact, it is one of the region's most beautiful panoramic spots. On the horizon, we can see the starting point; Trecchina is opposite and a little higher up, we can also see the Santuario della Madonna del Soccorso (Sanctuary of Our Lady of Perpetual Help); turning our gaze north-west, Nemoli and Rivello reveal their outlines, which spark interest in the innate study of village that makes every town in



## Further info

### **Lauria Castle**

*The founding of Lauria castle can be attributed to the Lombard period, but the castle's fame is linked to the figure of Ruggero di Lauria, (1245-1305), a famous admiral from Aragon, who was regarded as an exceptional military genius because he won every battle he took part in. Today, the few remaining ruins are worthy of interest.*

### **Blessed Domenico Lentini**

*Born in 1770, in Lauria, Potenza, from a family of humble origins. He was an ordained priest and lived a life of mortification of the flesh and penance; his clothes were threadbare, and his bed was poor. Upon his death, celebrations lasted for at least seven days and many people took part. Even today numerous prayers and miracles are attributed to the Blessed Lentini.*





our country an inescapable place to be crossed on foot. This is where today's walk ends: suspended over the valley and river, with our next destination, the Sirino Massif, approaching.

**Lauria** is the most important centre in the area, and it is from here that we will set off again, with the option of choosing whether to go north - to Mount Sirino - and then cross the Agri Valley, and reach the heart of the Parco Nazionale dell'Appennino Lucano (Appennino Lucano National Park) or make a detour to the east, towards Castelluccio and enter the Parco del Pollino (Pollino National Park).

Of interest in the town is a visit to the aforesaid Chiesa di San Giacomo Apostolo (Church of St. James, the Apostle), which houses a wonderful 15th-century wooden choir; the district of Cafaro, with Ruggero Castle and the Santuario della Madonna Assunta (Sanctuary of the Assumption); the Chiesa di San Nicola di Bari (Church of St. Nicholas), housing the remains of **Beato Domenico Lentini (Blessed Domenico Lentini)**, the town's patron saint, who is worshipped throughout the whole of the Noce Valley and lastly, the 17th-century convent of the Capuchin monks.



## ...One more day

### Tibetan Suspension Bridge

*Bus services run every day from Lauria to Castelsaraceno where we highlight the longest Tibetan suspension bridge in the world: 586 metres long and 80 metres high, over the canyon crossed by the Raganello torrent, halfway between the Pollino National Park and Appennino Lucano Val d'Agri Lagonegrese National Park: the "Bridge between the two Parks".*







DOWNLOAD THE ROUTE



## From Lauria to Conserva di Mount Sirino



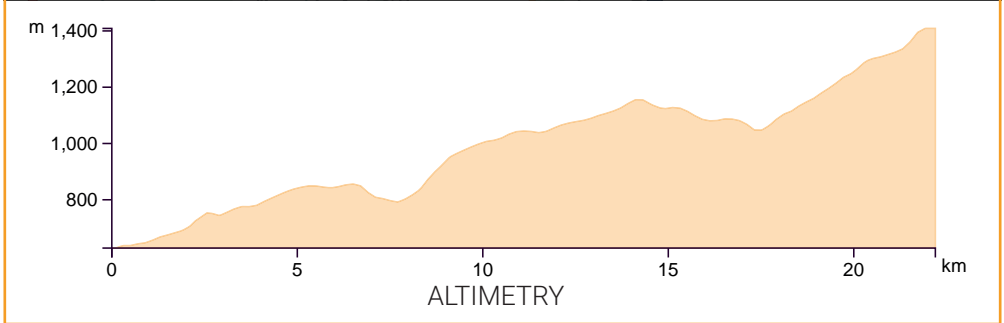
### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Lauria, Borbone Fountain
- 📍 **Destination:** Lauria, Conserva Refuge
- ➔ **Distance:** 22.2 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 8 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 1,040 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 240 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,400 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 600 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH - PATH



Our departure is set for dawn. It is going to be a long, tough, and complicated journey, because we have to reach Mount Sirino. Seen from Lauria, Mount Sirino rises majestically, imposing its authority over the whole valley from which it originates, and thinking about having to reach the top blocks our legs a little. So, before setting off, to encourage ourselves, we re-energise with a typical *viscuttinu c'u naspro* (a sweet iced biscuit) and pack a large supply of *biscotti a otto* (biscuits shaped like pretzels), typical of the Val Noce town. We will be hungry and tired later and there won't be anywhere to stop-off along our journey today. We



set off from the *Fontana Borbone*, in the Taverna quarter of the upper district. Behind the monument, a path climbs up right under the great bridge of the old Calabro-Lucana railway. On reaching the old railway line, we must decide whether to carry on climbing – and enter the Parco Nazionale dell'Appennino Lucano (Appennino Lucano National Park) (towards Mount Sirino) – or head south-east, towards the Parco del Pollino (Pollino National Park) - see tour 17. We decide to head on towards Mount Sirino, but before setting off we spend a minute observing the breathtaking scenery that unfolds before us. Today, the railway line, built between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which was abandoned at the end of the 1970s, is a **tourist cycle-route** and the perfect place for a walk in the unique landscape that unravels through the Noce and Mercure Valley. The route advances along this stretch of road past bridges, tunnels, and unique scenic views. It is a lovely walk! After an hour we come to Pecorone di Lauria. Now, for those wishing to carry on and extend their walk by one day, we strongly suggest reaching Lake Sirino (see tour 3 detour - Lake Sirino). Instead, we leave the cycle route and take the state road that leads to the entrance to the A2 (Mediterranean motorway). It is a particularly busy road, so we strongly suggest wearing a fluorescent jacket when you cross it. After about 2 km, we turn left (follow the sign for “Conserva di Lauria”) near the motorway viaduct and take the municipal road; after less than 1 km, on the right, we come to a dirt road that will take us to the banks of the **River Sinni**. From there, we come to a bridge and cross over the water, following the forest path that passes through the whole



of the *Bosco Canicella (Canicella Wood)*. It is a wild trail, past tall beech trees, turkey oaks and chestnut trees. We stay on the path for about 8 km, cutting through the wood, again on the mountain ridge, until we come to mountain bike road that unwinds straight to the north, bringing us out in *contrada Alvaneta*. Here, we find the tarmac road that will take us to the top, but first we go back down, crossing the River Sinni again, and then, after reaching the first houses, we will come out directly near the *Agriturismo La Cappellina (La*

*Cappellina Agritourism*), where a stop is a must. The difference in height was important because we have reached a height of 1,085 metres in almost 6 hours from the 620 metres on our departure. We ask for some wild strawberries and get a little of our energy back. Most of our journey is complete, only 4 km separate us from Conserva di Sirino. We head off again along the last stretch of tarmac road, fighting our tiredness. Bend after bend, we come to the crossroads that says: Conserva (left) or Laudemio (right). We choose neither of the two options; behind the sign we

follow the *SI (Italian Road) Tour 05*. It is the last half an hour's walk through a thick wood before our destination appears before our eyes: Conserva del Mount Sirino refuge. We have arrived! We are at a height of over 1440 metres, exhausted,starving but extremely satisfied. It was a marvellous walk, worthy of remembering the person who spent their whole life on this mountain, but we'll talk about this tomorrow. Now, it is time to enjoy the amazing splendour of this place with a glass of good wine and a slice of local cheese.



## Further info

### **Tourist cycle-route**

*The Calabro-Lucana Railway was designed to connect four regions and cross seven provinces. The origins of the project date back to the last twenty years of the 19th century. The aim of this great, ambitious project was to relaunch the Southern Italy, but it was only completed in part and set to one side in the 1970s. Today, a stunning tourist cycle-route runs between the Noce Valley and the Mercure Valley along the old railway line that traces this old route over bridges, through valleys, past lakes, parks, and panoramic sea-view plateaus. Starting from Lagonegro and reaching Rotonda, crossing seven municipalities (Lagonegro, Rivello, Nemoli, Lauria, Castelluccio Superiore, Castelluccio Inferiore and Rotonda).*

### **River Sinni**

*The valley of the River Sinni is an enchanted valley far from the classical tourist routes that offers an unexpected, wild and rugged landscape, enriched with the many scents of the thick vegetation. The River Sinni originates at a height of 1,380 metres from the top of Serra della Giumenta, on the eastern slope of the Sirino Massif and crosses the extreme southern sector of Basilicata, from west to east, receiving several tributaries. The Serrapotamo torrent flows into the Sinni in Senise and its course is blocked by the largest packed-earth dam in Europe that forms Lake Mount Cotugno, finally flowing out into the Ionian Sea, between Rotondella and Policoro.*





# Lake Sirino

## DETOUR TOUR 3



### Detour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Lauria, Borbone Fountain
- 📍 **Destination:** Nemoli, Lake Sirino
- 📏 **Distance:** 10 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 4 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 290 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 120 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 830 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 600 m
- Difficulty:** easy 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**



TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH

Once we reach Pecorone di Lauria, for those wishing to enjoy another day walking, we suggest extending your journey towards Lake Sirino. If you stay on the cycle route, it will lead you directly to this enchanting water basin, in fewer than 5 km from Pecorone, the remains of a much greater Pleistocene Period Lake: if you are lucky enough to see it covered with snow, it is a stunning, magical, fairytale like place. On its banks, you can enjoy wonderful hospitality and indispensable specialities, especially bakery products. In summer, the lake turns into a stage for shows, with events that combine history, nature and plays of light, which are very popular with many visitors from the neighbouring regions, testifying to the recognised entrepreneurship in the field of restoration and hospitality that make this place one of the pride and joys of Lucania's tourist offer.



We set off again the next morning, continuing our journey along this trail,

tracing it backwards, and, after reaching Pecorone, we proceed as described in *tour 3*.



## Further info

### Legend of the Lake

*This lake was created by a “divine tear”. There didn’t use to be a lake here, but there was a farmyard with oxen that threshed the freshly cut corn. It was the day of the Madonna of Sirino, a day that was supposed to be completely dedicated to prayer. However, some farmers had decided not to waste their time and work. A surprised traveller stopped and asked them why they were working and not devoting the day to prayer like the rest of the community on that holy day dedicated to the Madonna, the protectress of the*

*community. Annoyed, the farmers told him to leave because it was work that gave them their bread and not prayer. The traveller went away and suddenly the sky turned black. It began to thunder and lightning, and torrential rain poured down. No one was able to find shelter and soon everything was flooded. When the storm had passed, there was nothing left, there was no farmyard, no fields, no men, and no animals. Then, the sky turned blue again and all that could be seen was a great body of water reflecting Mount Sirino.*





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## From Conserva di Mount Sirino to Moliterno



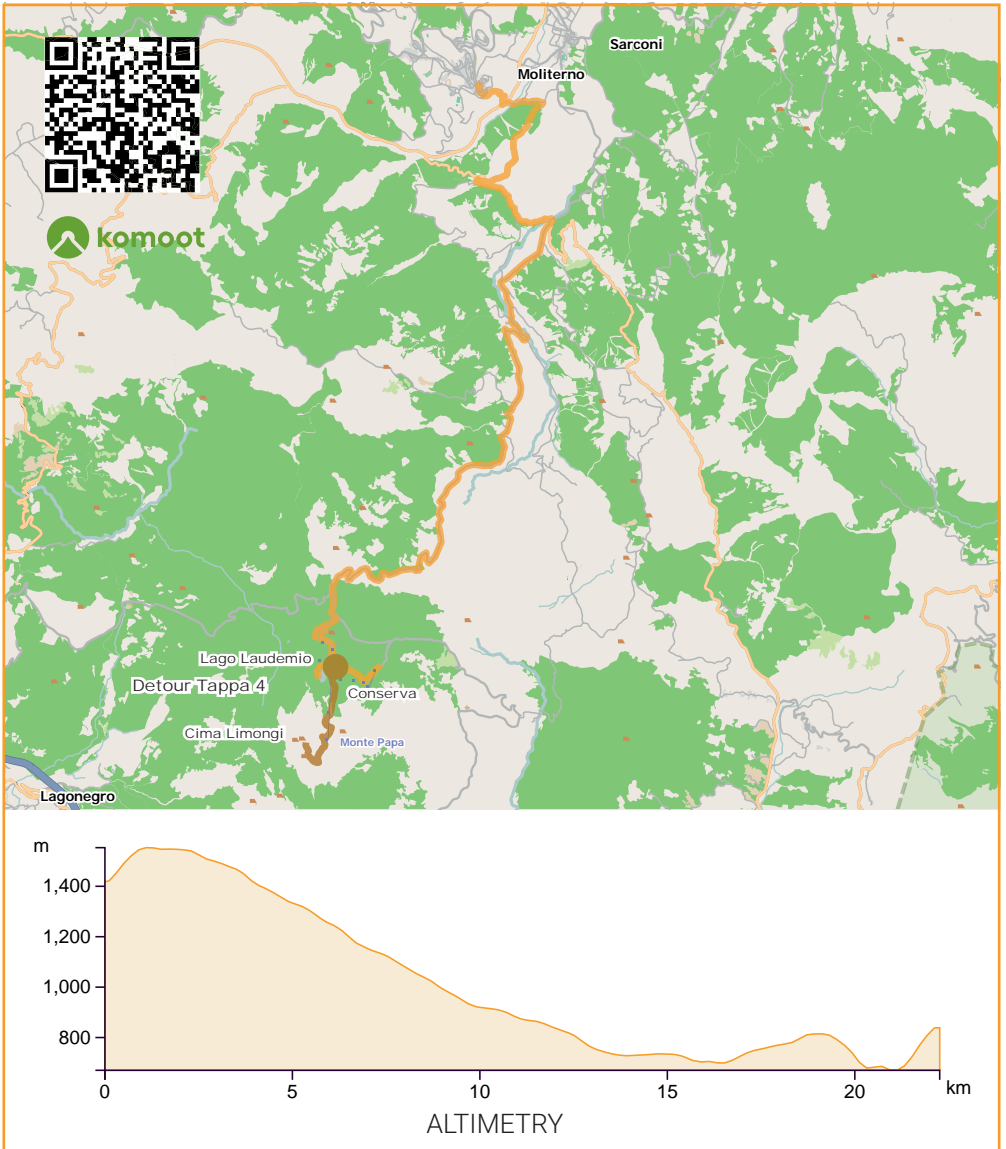
### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Lauria, Conserva Refuge
- 📍 **Destination:** Moliterno, Piazza del Plebiscito
- ➔ **Distance:** 22 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 7 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 470 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 1,030 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,550 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 670 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH - PATH



Waking up in the mountains is a mystical experience. Silence, peace, and a delayed speed of time make our breakfast slow and pensive. After sorting out our rucksacks, and more importantly, our stomachs, we set off again. On leaving the refuge, we head right, following the *SI (Italian Road)* that leads to **Lake Laudemio**. It is fewer than 2 km, but it is a tough hour of technical climbing, but don't be disheartened: on reaching our destination, the effort is amply rewarded. Laudemio is hidden, protected, and embraced by the majestic slopes of Mount Sirino. It is a place of stunning beauty that calms our thoughts, like in a sort of green



nirvana where it is possible to create the calm disconnection from everything that is ephemeral and everything that is superfluous.

It is simply wonderful. We stop, just enough time to rest our gaze and our minds; then, we take a few photos - more

than necessary - and, for those wishing to stay another night in the mountains and enjoy the peace, we point out the Tour extra 2, a detour that leads to Limongi Mountain Peak.

Continuing our walk, we reluctantly turn our backs on the lake, leaving the refuge



on the right - deserted and closed - and start to walk downhill along the municipal road for 3 km, until we pick up signs, on the right, for Taranto – Moliterno. From here, we walk past marvellous views and evocative names - districts - *Paradiso (Heaven)* - *Purgatorio (Purgatory)* - *Inferno (Hell)* - for another 10 km, past one bend and another, until we are downhill, with a difference in height of 800 metres, in Piano di Maglia. The beauty of this descent, with such harmonious nature, accompanies us silently along this walk with dream-like stretches, past sown fields and a cattle and sheep farm, surrounded by ancestral sounds of a suspended time; finally, we reach the bottom. We have come to the Old Bridge of Maglie, where anyone who arrives, feeling exhausted, might wish to go to sleep, but not us. Then, after a short coffee break, we are ready for the last stretch of the day.

After crossing the bridge over the River Maglia, we turn left and begin our climb along the Provincial Road SP 19 for about 2 km until we come to the Church of Santa Maria del Rito. Behind the church, we follow a track, passing dirt roads

and woods that takes us downhill, past cultivated fields and neat early crops. After coming out of the wood and leaving the path, we follow a tarmac road, on the left, which leads us through a tree-lined tunnel, until we are on the Provincial Road SP103, after crossing the Sciaura torrent. Carefully, we cross the road and follow another municipal road, immediately on the right. From here, we head onto a path that takes us in just over 1 km to the historic centre of Moliterno. A gem of history and culture, Moliterno is well-known, amongst other things, as the birthplace of Giacomo Racioppi and Ferdinando Petruccelli della Gattina, prominent figures of 19th-century southern Italian culture. As soon as you set foot in the town, you immediately breathe in this atmosphere of history, culture, art, and nature. Moliterno is also – and perhaps most importantly – known for its taste: it is the town of the legendary - and tasty - **Canestrato di Moliterno PGI Cheese**, our real reward after a long, hard day. We are tired and hungry, the perfect combination for taking full advantage of this historic and important town's acclaimed gourmet food product.



## Further info

### Lake Laudemio

*The lake, of glacial origin, lies in a morainic basin that was formed in the Quaternary Period, when the Sirino Mountain group was covered with glaciers during the Ice Age that sculpted its shape. Laudemio is also known by the name of Remmo and is set at a height of 1,525 metres. It stretches over 25 hectares, and in the summer, the lake loses a lot of water and is covered with algae.*

### Canestrato di Moliterno Cheese

*PGI Pecorino Canestrato di Moliterno Cheese is one of Lucania's gastronomic gems, made from sheep and goat's milk; this cheese, with its mild taste, is put into typical reed baskets, hence the name. A famous age-old festival, which is dedicated to this cheese, is held every year in the first ten days of August.*





# Fabio Limongi Mountain Peak

## DETOUR TOUR 4



### Detour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Lauria, Conserva Refuge
- 📍 **Destination:** Lauria, Conserva Refuge
- ➔ **Distance:** 4 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 4 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 570 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 0 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 2.005 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 1.400 m
- Difficulty:** intermediate
- Road type:**

HIKING PATH - PATH

It is right for a mountain lover to suggest another day hiking in the mountain peaks of Mount Sirino. We suggest a two-night stay to explore these little-known mountain tops that offer breathtaking views over the Parco dell'Appennino Lucano Lagonegrese - Val d'Agri (Appennino Lucano Lagonegrese - Val d'Agri National Park), and other places.

Setting off from Conserva di Lauria, we follow the SI (Italian Path) Tour 06 that takes us directly along the ski run to Lake Laudemio, as indicated in Tour 4. Now, instead of following the tarmac road and starting our descent, we set off on the moraine left by the ice that once covered these lands, where there is a ski lift today. Our gaze sweeps over the enchanting landscape offered by the nature on Mount Sirino, and then over Mount Alpi that rises majestically, downhill, to the east, with its characteristic cone-shaped peak, overlooking the surrounding land.



Continuing uphill, on the left, we find Timpa Scazaridido (1,930 m) and, on the right, the highest peak of the Sirino Massif, Mount Papa (2,005 metres). When we reach the junction, we are presented with a spectacular view over the Noce Valley. On the horizon, we can see the sea and the aforesaid mountain peaks, at the sides, and behind us, it is possible to make out the Agri Valley. On a calm day, it is also not difficult to make out the mountain peaks of Mount Pollino, to the south. From here, the last stretch of our trail gives us time to reflect and unique views, as well as a strange sort of feeling.

For the person who is writing to you, it is a moment of great emotion.

We have reached the Fabio Limongi Mountain Peak, Fabio Limongi, the man

who inspired all these walks and left an indelible mark on this land. For Fabio, every stone, every track, and every tree were familiar, almost loved, and every single step of this trail recalls his passion, his great generosity and his devotion. Fabio Limongi dedicated his whole life to valorising and promoting Mount Sirino; the place that he loved so much and used to call "his office" and with which he had a visceral relationship; it is the place that saw him embark upon his final, ill-fated journey.

This mountain took the soul of the child that loved it more than anyone else. Now his memory remains indelibly impressed and the Sirino-Limongi bond is inseparable.







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## From Moliterno to Viggiano

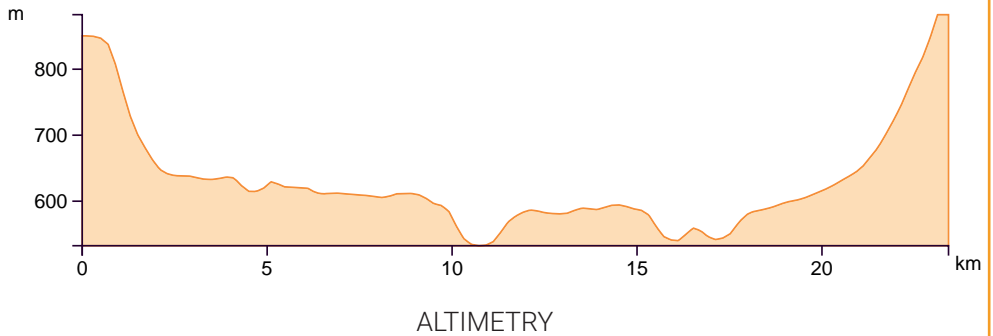


### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Moliterno, Medieval Castle
- 📍 **Destination:** Viggiano, Town Hall
- ➔ **Distance:** 23.5 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 7 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 520 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 440 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 920 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 530 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD – HIKING PATH - PATH

The starting point is the striking medieval castle of Moliterno. Built under Norman rule, even today the monument is enchanting and an imposing symbol overlooking the whole valley. We make the most of the beautiful day to climb to the tower and get a broad view of the place. Everything is clearer from here: we admire the Sirino Massif, Mount Alpi and Mount Raparo; as our gaze sweeps down, the town of Sarconi comes into view and the artificial Pertusillo Lake, above it is Spinoso and, in the distance, Mountmuro. We then see the archaeological area of Grumentum and, on the hill opposite, the town of Grumento Nova. Finally, looking



to the north, there is the town of Viggiano, our journey's final destination.

Leaving the castle, we take Via Lovito, where our adventure begins among little streets, stunning views of the town, several churches - especially Santa Maria Assunta (Our Lady of the Assumption) and Moliterno's interesting museums. Soon, we find ourselves in the elegant "villa comunale" (public garden), from which we follow a road, on the right, which leads us straight downhill. When we reach the bottom, we cross over the Provincial Road SP103 again - taking great care - until we come to the municipality of Sarconi.

Sarconi welcomes us with its neat, brightly coloured countryside. Everywhere we look we can see beans growing, and it is no coincidence: this is the town of **PGI Beans**, called Sarconi beans that are a treasure of the region's agri-food. As we walk on, our gaze is also captured by another striking

monument that tempts us to consider a detour: the **Cavour Aqueduct**. This structure is worthy of a few photographs and a brief visit, after which we set off again for the historic centre, where we make our way through narrow streets decorated with beautiful gateways. After leaving the built-up area, we make a small detour. Keeping to the right, we visit another interesting place, Sir Baden Powell River Park with its ancient Roman bridge that crosses the River Maglie. It is a true oasis located behind the town, where nature and history have created a perfect paradise. It is a truly stunning place that is well-worth visiting and from which we set off again somewhat reluctantly. Back in the town, we follow the Provincial Road SP104, walking along the tarmac road for 5 long and boring kilometres until we come to the entrance to Grumento Airfield. Here, we follow the path, on the







right, that leads us into the wood. It is the start of a fairy-tale like walk, as if we were suspended over a carpet coloured with delicate flowers and orchids, surrounded by majestic beech trees that appear like silent and vigil sentinels until we reach the banks of **Lake Pertusillo**, where we might see a few otters if we are lucky. We head down to the banks of the lake and skirt it for just under 1 km; then, on the left, we follow the path that takes us back into the wood and after reaching the *Bosco dei cigni* (*Swans' Wood*) environmental education centre, we stop for a well-deserved break.



We set off again, crossing the last part of what is referred to as "*Maglie Wood*", continuing for another 3 km along one trail and another, surrounded by the rich cultivated land, until we find ourselves on a tarmac road at the entrance to the **Parco Archeologico di Grumentum** (**Grumentum Archaeological Park**), where a visit is indispensable rather than a duty!





After the visit, we head back onto the tarmac road and follow the signs for Potenza-Taranto until we come to the Chiesa della Madonna delle Grazie (Our Lady of Graces). Behind the church, we follow a path that brings us out, after less than 1 km, onto the Provincial Road SP103. We carefully walk for another km along the state road until the next crossroad, where we follow the signs, on the right, for Viggiano. After 200 metres, we take a secondary road, on the left, which leads us into a wood, at the end of which we come out directly in front of the *Centro Olio Val d'Agri (Agri Valley Oil Centre)*. We follow Via Pellettieri, on the right, for another 2 km until, at the crossroad with the State Road SS276, we carry on climbing straight in the direction of Viggiano. After reaching the



## Further info

### Sarconi PGI Beans

*Available in seventeen ecotypes, Sarconi beans are renowned for the tenderness of the product that makes them particularly appetising and digestible, as well as quick to cook and particularly tasty thanks to the traditional growing methods and, in particular, the climate, land, and water. Of great importance, also nationally, is the festival dedicated to "His Majesty the Bean", a Lucanian and Italian gastronomic product of excellence, with PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) since July 1996.*

first houses, on the left, we follow the last stretch of road that takes us into the town's historic centre.

The last kilometre is very challenging. There is a significant increase in height, but finally, we reach our destination, tired, or rather exhausted, but satisfied with today's wonderful walk.





### **Cavour Aqueduct**

*Erected in 1867 it is a striking work of Romanesque-style architecture, built on arches made of brick and stone. It is one of the oldest examples of hydraulic engineering in the Agri Valley and was crucial for the area's agricultural rebirth. The structure is provided with a double irrigation channel that has served the land between Sarconi and Moliterno for decades.*

### **Pietra del Pertusillo Artificial Lake**

*The lake, whose dam has been in operation since 1963, covers an area of 75 square kilometres and has a capacity of between 145 and 155 million cubic metres of water, which is used for irrigation, drinking water and hydroelectric purposes. The lake has created a complex and delicate ecosystem, inhabited by rare resident and migratory birds, various fish species (trout, chub, carp, largemouth bass) and rare wildlife, like otters, spectacled salamanders, grey herons and black swans.*

### **Grumentum Archaeological Park**

*The Park contains the remains of the ancient Roman town. Founded in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, it became one of the most important centres in ancient Lucania until it was destroyed by the Saracens in the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE. The park contains a theatre, an amphitheatre, baths, temples, and decumani (streets). In short, it is a "piece" of Ancient Rome that lies along our walk.*





DOWNLOAD THE ROUTE



## From Viggiano to Marsicovetere



### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Viggiano, Monument to Madonna dei portatori
- 📍 **Destination:** Marsicovetere, Castle
- 📏 **Distance:** 13.6 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 5 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 900 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 790 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,700 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 800 m
- Difficulty:** intermediate 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

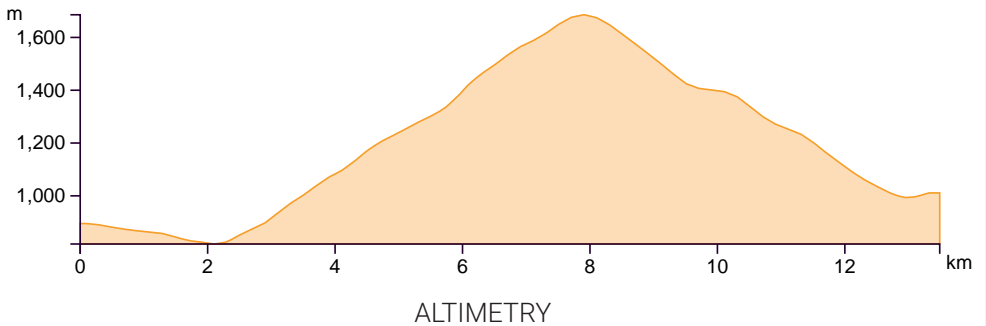


TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH - PATH



Viggiano dominates the upper Agri Valley. The town of the harp, of Mary and also of the largest hydrocarbon extraction plant in Europe, this community is a mix of history, tradition, faith and innovation. Symbolising the religiousness of the area, it guards and protects the **Madonna Nera di Viggiano (Black Madonna Of Viggiano)**, the protectress of the people of Lucania who worship and love her like a glorious mother. After a visit to the Papal Basilica, we set off along viale Vittorio Emanuele and start our journey from Piazza Giovanni XXIII. We follow the signs that lead from here to the *Sacro Mount*, staying on the tarmac road for 2 km, until







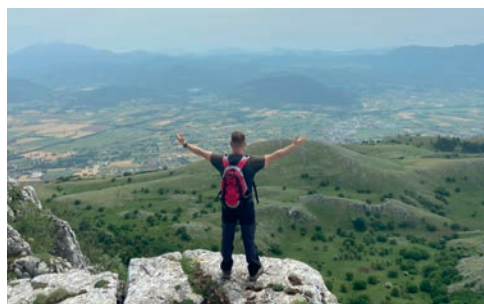
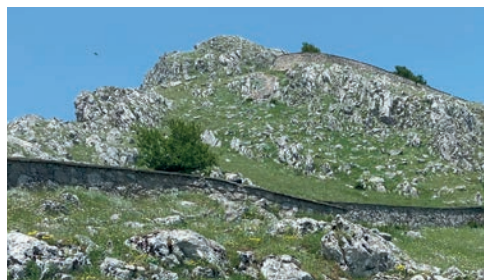
we come to a car park, on the right. Here, a sign indicates the start of the *Antico tratturo della Madonna Nera* (*Ancient Trail of the Black Madonna*). We follow the sign, crossing the Alli torrent, over a newly-built bridge. Once we are on the other side, we begin our walk that leads straight to the mountain, winding over mountain ridges, past fruit and olive trees, across pastures, with cows, sheep and horses roaming free, surrounded by flowers and unique colours. After crossing these 5 km of indescribable beauty, we come to the Fontana dei Pastori, in Piana Bonocore and freshen up to prepare for the last stretch of our steep, tough climb. From here, the track turns into a walk on stone, climbing up and up and winding around the mountain. At a certain point, looking around, our walk seems to be mapped out along a majestic wall that unwinds along the mountain crest. Stones, history, faith, every step makes us reflect, every gaze offers an enchanting view over the valley. Captivated by such charm, we haven't

even noticed that the wall has ended its climb in the square of the Sanctuary of the Madonna.

Silence, peace, harmony, and a sense of gratification overwhelm us, like the fresh air of the 1,727 metres in height. We enter the church and stand in silence for a few minutes. A mystic aura shrouds everything, including the hypnotic effigy of the Madonna, the bearer of peace, which rouses our thoughts. It is incredibly beautiful.

After this pause, we resume our journey, heading towards Marsicovetere, keeping the sanctuary behind us and making our way along the crest of the sacred mountain. Then, we begin our rapid descent, literally enchanted by the surrounding mountain.

After 2 km, we come to a tarmac road, and follow a SI (Italian Road), on the right that descends from Mount Volturino, staying on this route for another 2 Km. Finally, we find ourselves at the bottom in the town of **Marsicovetere**.





## Further info

### **Madonna Nera di Viggiano (Black Madonna of Viggiano)**

*Legend has it that in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when the Arab invasions destroyed much of the valley, this sacred statue was miraculously spared from the Saracen raids. It was later found in the 14<sup>th</sup> century on the mountain of Viggiano, when some shepherds, who were guarding their flocks, noticed a supernatural light on top of the mountain. A flurry of clergy and people gathered at the site and a great procession of men marched to the top of the mountain.*

*After digging just below the surface, they found the extraordinary statue of the Virgin. In 1965, the Madonna di Viggiano was declared the 'Patron and Queen of the Lucanian people' by Pope Paul VI. Today, it is the mystic place par excellence in Basilicata and one of the most important sites devoted to the worship of Mary in southern Italy.*

*The people's devotion is so great that the Marian walks that reach the Sacred Mountain of Viggiano are candidates for the UNESCO World Heritage Site.*

### **Marsicovetere**

*The town of Marsicovetere, perched at a height of 1,037 metres, offers a unique view over the Agri Valley and is a strategic point for excursions to Mount Vulturino. The medieval historic centre is one of the most characteristic in the region. Roads made of stone with arches, splendid buildings, and the castle give the impression of walking back in time. Of interest is the Roman Villa dating back to the Imperial Age, found in Barricelle, which belonged to the Bruttii Praesentes, a Lucanian family of the Empress Bruttia Crispina, the wife of Commodus. Also of note are the convents of Santa Maria dell'Aspro and Our Lady of Constantinople.*



DOWNLOAD THE ROUTE



## From Castelmezzano to Pietrapertosa



### Tour Info

📍 **Starting point:** Castelmezzano,  
via Roma

📍 **Destination:** Pietrapertosa,  
via M. Torraca

➔ **Distance:** 13.3 km

🕒 **Duration:** 5 h

⚡ **Total climb:** 620 m

⚡ **Total descent:** 480 m

📏 **Maximum height:** 1,000 m

📏 **Minimum height:** 680 m

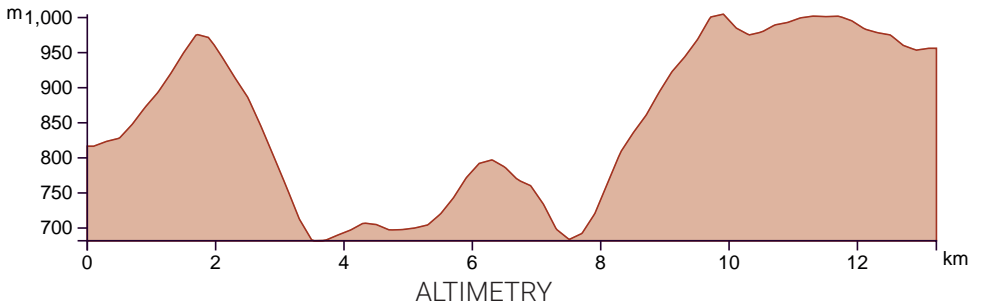
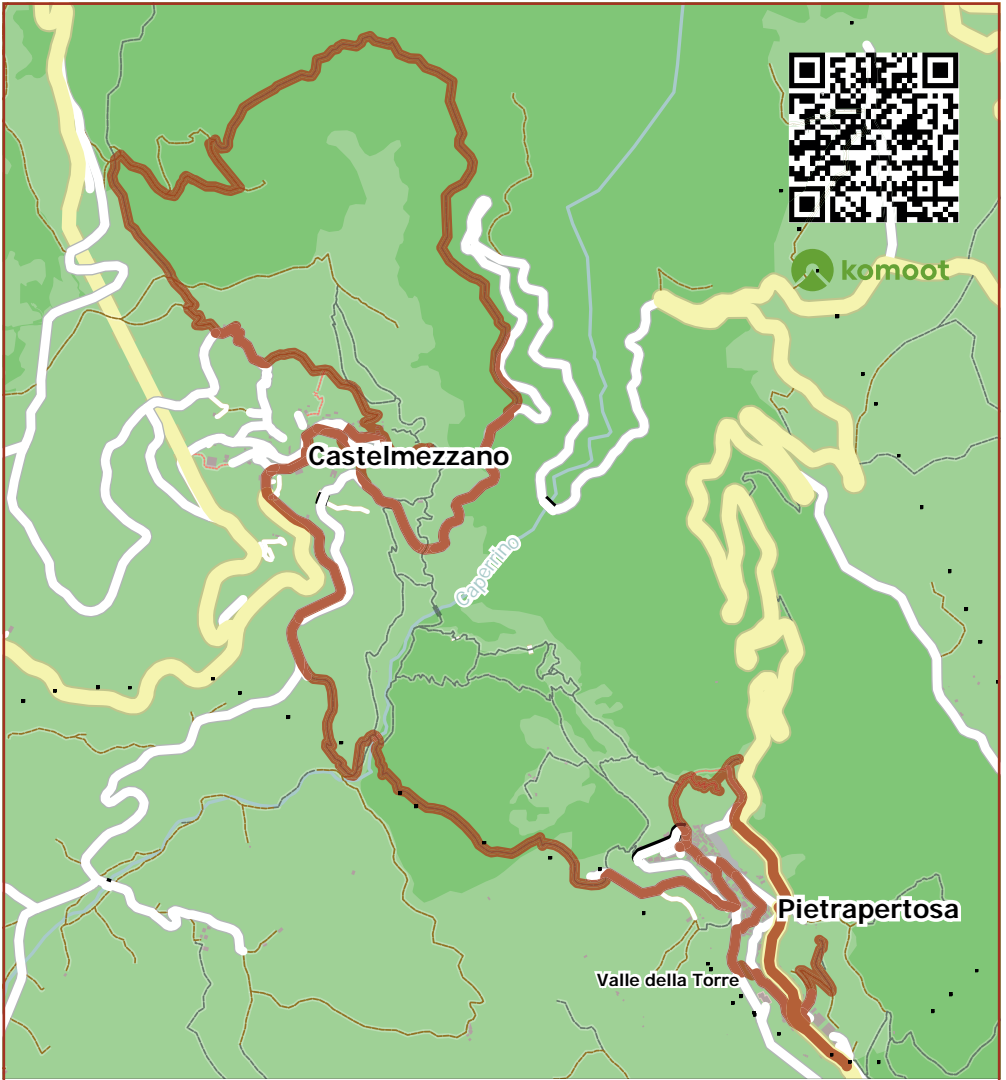
**Difficulty:** intermediate 🥾🥾🥾

**Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH

On reaching Castelmezzano, a town resembling a Nativiy scene in the Lucanian Dolomites, we are amazed by the beauty of the place. It is one of the most fascinating areas in the region, and unsurprisingly is included among the *Borghi più belli d'Italia* (Italy's Most Beautiful Towns). A sort of magic surrounds our gaze, as though frozen by the geomorphological beauty of the place. We start our journey from the historic centre, our reference point is the Ducal Palace. We follow the signs that take us from the town's alleyways to the **Norman Stairway**. Once we are at the top, we study the surrounding rocks with their different







characteristics, enjoying the various panoramic views over the valleys of the Basento River, the Caperrino Torrent, the orography of the land and how people adapted, building this town, protected, and hidden among the dolomite rocks. After coming down from the highest point of the town, we have two options. The first, for those wishing to extend their walk by a few kilometres, offers the possibility of following *Sentiero 710* (Path 710) that forms a loop uphill of the town and comes back out again downhill onto the Provincial Road SP13; while the second takes us directly to the **Sentiero delle Sette Pietre** (Path of the Seven Stones) and meets us directly in Pietrapertosa. As we wish to do the complete walk, we set off along the path that unwinds first through the town's alleyways, then, after



leaving the historic centre, along a brick-paved path that climbs up to the ridge where the **Volo dell'Angelo** (Flight of the Angel) starts. The walk is truly remarkable, and our thoughts are captivated by the beauty of the place for 4 km, then, we make our way to the Provincial Road SP13 for 1 km, an abandoned road used for outdoor activities, until we find ourselves back in the historic centre. Now we are back in the town's little streets, with craft shops and plays of colour thanks to the stone. We continue our journey, following the signs for the *Percorso delle Sette Pietre* (Path of the Seven Stones). It is a route that retraces an ancient rural path for about 2 km, connecting the municipalities of Pietrapertosa and Castelmezzano. The route stretches over various heights, from 770 metres in Castelmezzano, it drops to 660 metres in the valley, crossed by the Caperrino torrent and climbs up to 920 metres in Pietrapertosa.

It is a magical, ancestral trail, of great historical-anthropological value immersed in ancient nature. Step by step, each story that the path tells, seems to come to life and the collective imagination takes shape in our mind. Note that along this path, it is possible to find the start of the two **vie ferrate** (protected climbing routes) and the Nepalese Bridge, which require safety equipment and adequate preparation. In conclusion, the Lucanian Dolomites offer many other possibilities for those wishing to stay another day. After leaving the path we find ourselves directly in another of the most beautiful Towns in Italy (*I Borghi più belli d'Italia*): Pietrapertosa, with its alleyways, stairways and unique views. As we walk, we are captivated by the stunning and particular layout of the place. Built under Saracen rule, it later became a Norman Swabian fortress, and thanks to its almost inaccessible strategic position, Pietrapertosa dominates the whole of the surrounding territory. Today, only the *Rabata* (or Arabata) and the castle ruins remain of its glorious past, but the first thing you notice is the extraordinary brick paving embroidered into the Dolomite rock. We decide to start from the stairway, the part of the town where there are rock paintings and what are known as "*scalelle*," an urban structure of alleyways and stairways that tell of connections between the levels of the built-up area, confirming the community's symbiotic existence with its rocky landscape. The climb leads to the *Chiesa di San Cataldo* (Church of St. Catald), a chapel from 1739. After a compulsory visit to this holy place, a quick stop to admire the panorama is a must. Setting off again, the path begins among the rocks where you can find signs with descriptions of the anthropomorphic



rocks: it is truly breathtaking to stop and admire the sculptures that nature has created with the wind and rain on the stones of the Dolomites, which are shaped, today, like anvils, human faces and animals. We come to the slopes of the castle, beneath which we can find the original centre of the modern-day built-up area that still preserves the name of Saracen origin, Rabata. Heading down the rocks, we come to the Chiesa di San Giacomo (Church of St. James), the Main Church whose belltower overlooks the whole town. Then, we pass into an alleyway that runs along the bottom of the built-up area, after which we can find a





panoramic viewpoint. The path climbs up to a beautiful firwood, to the top of a hill from where you can see the whole town. Structured from top to bottom, the houses follow the course of the land; indeed, they lean against the rock, using it as a wall. In this context, it is possible to recognise the structure of the *basic* house of medieval origins with its single-cell layout and two rows of windows, representing buildings originating from practical needs.



## Further info

### **Gradinata Normanna (Norman Stairway)**

*This is a unique stairway carved into the rock of one of the dolomite gulleys overlooking Castelmezzano. The 54 steps lead to the ruins of the boundary wall of the ancient castle of Castrum Medianum - ancient name of the site - , which is of Norman - Swabian origin.*

### **Vie Ferrate (Protected Climbing Routes)**

*The "Vie Ferrate" are secured routes for climbing the Lucanian Dolomites that allow you to reach places that would otherwise be inaccessible. The two branches of the trail start from the Roman bridge near the area of Antro delle Streghe, provided*

with facilities, and climb up, one towards Castelmezzano and the other towards Pietrapertosa. The Via Ferrata Salemm climbs up on the side of Castelmezzano, while the Via Ferrata Marcirosa climbs up towards Pietrapertosa. The two trails are connected by a Nepalese Bridge.

### **Volo dell'angelo (Flight of the Angel)**

A flight through the air suspended from a steel cable that connects



the towns of Castelmezzano and Pietrapertosa. It is a great attraction in the area. Pure adrenalin.

### **Percorso delle Sette Pietre (Path of the Seven Stones)**

The path draws inspiration from the stories passed down orally among generations and social imaginary on which the text *Vito ballava con le streghe* (Vito Danced with the Witches) by Mimmo Sammartino is based. Along the path, the story turns into visual, audible, and beautiful forms, becoming a story carved into the stone. Each stage includes a specific space to accommodate the incredible work of art of one of the sequences of the story, and an audible setting that offers additional aspects of nature's magic.







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## Gallipoli Cognato Loop



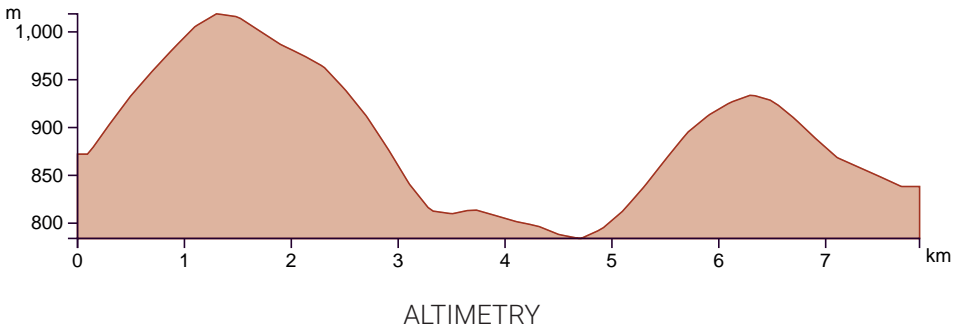
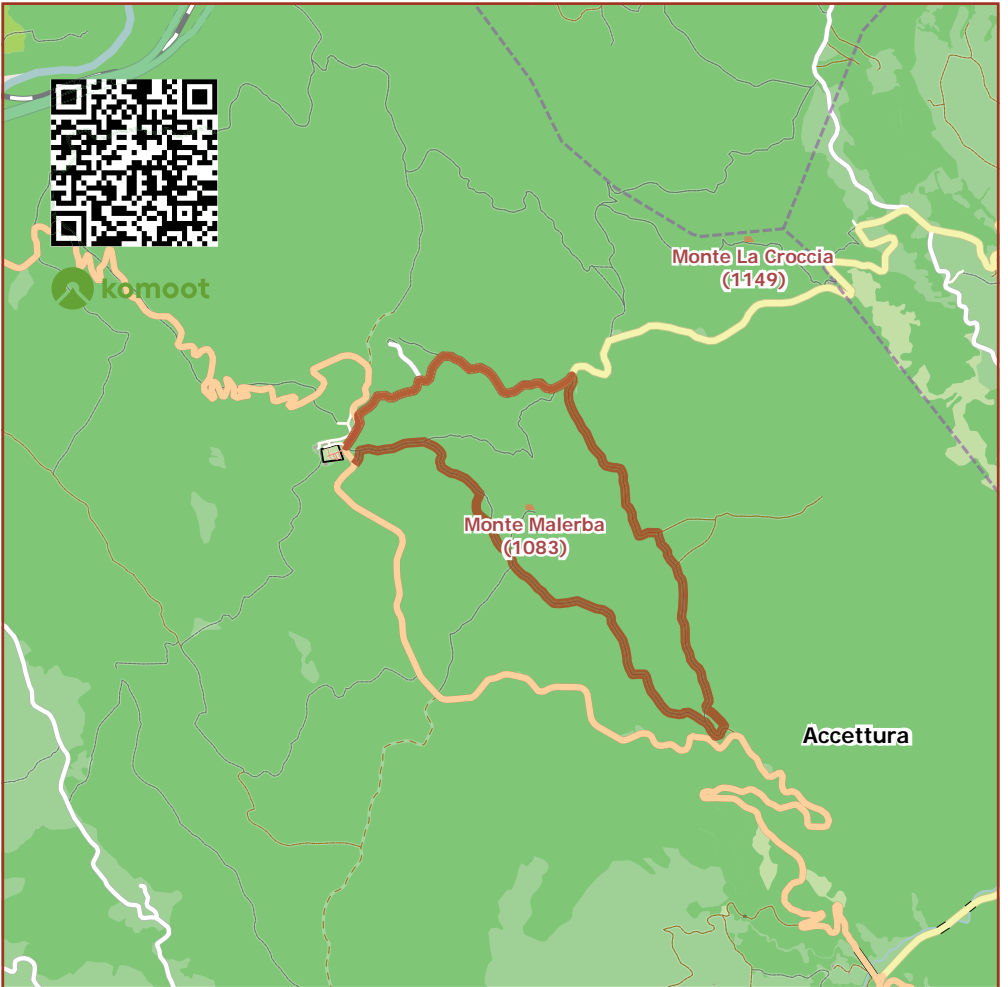
### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Accettura, Caserma Palazzo
- 📍 **Destination:** Accettura, Caserma Palazzo
- ➔ **Distance:** 8 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 3 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 290 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 330 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,020 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 780 m
- Difficulty:** easy 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**



TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH- PATH

For those wishing to enjoy another day in the park, we suggest a walk in the green heart of the region. It is easy to find a transfer to take you from Castelmezzano or Pietrapertosa to the park's main office in Caserma Palazzo, situated in the municipality of Accettura, the town famous for its "Maggio" festival. From here, we start the distinctive nature trail that crosses the mysterious and majestic wood of Gallipoli Cognato, a land that is as wild as it is intriguing. We take the *SI (Italian Road) 706* and, after 500 metres, we immediately turn right into the forest. Its mighty age-old oaks tower to the sky, like ancient guardians,





whose intertwined branches form a sort of green dome, protecting a place that is still unspoilt. It is one of the thickest and oldest woods in the Lucanian hinterland, and it is home to rare plants, such as the *Heptaptera angustifolia*, an endemic species found exclusively in Lucania. The forest trail mainly unwinds along the eastern ridge of Mount Malerba, through the wood of turkey oaks that give way to areas covered by shrubland and overlooked by heather. Each step offers us incredible scenic views of a captivating and enchanting setting – beneficial for our minds. Along the way, if we make a small detour, we can visit the

medieval ruins of Gallipolis, which can be found on Tempa Castello. We continue uphill to the ridge of Mount Malerba, and then head downhill to the crossroads of Manca Giliberti, following the path until the next crossroads where we turn off to the left, along the SI (Italian Road) 714 until we reach the starting point. It was a pleasant, surreal walk, enveloped in a magical atmosphere, past impressive shrubs and delicate orchids, where, if we look carefully and are lucky, we might see the black swan, the symbol of the Parco di Gallipoli-Cognato (Gallipoli - Cognato Regional Park).



## Further info

### Maggio d'Accettura (the Maggio of Accettura)

*The Maggio of Accettura is one of the arboreal rite festivals in the region that sees the town turn into a live stage, with its streets decorated with brightly coloured floral installations in honour of the spring, in an explosion of joy and vitality. The event takes place every year on the Sunday of the feast of Corpus Christi and is dedicated to the patron saint: St. Julian.*

*It is an arboreal wedding, an ancient propitiatory rite when a tree trunk and a treetop, the "bride" and the "groom" are joined together and raised into the sky in a symbolic union. There are two woods, in two parts of the town, and two trees to symbolise the union between them. The male tree, which is the tallest and straightest (the "maggio") comes from Mountpiano and is an enormous turkey oak, while the bride - the female is the "treetop", a holly that comes from Gallipoli Cognato Forest.*







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## From Lagopesole to Rionero in Vulture



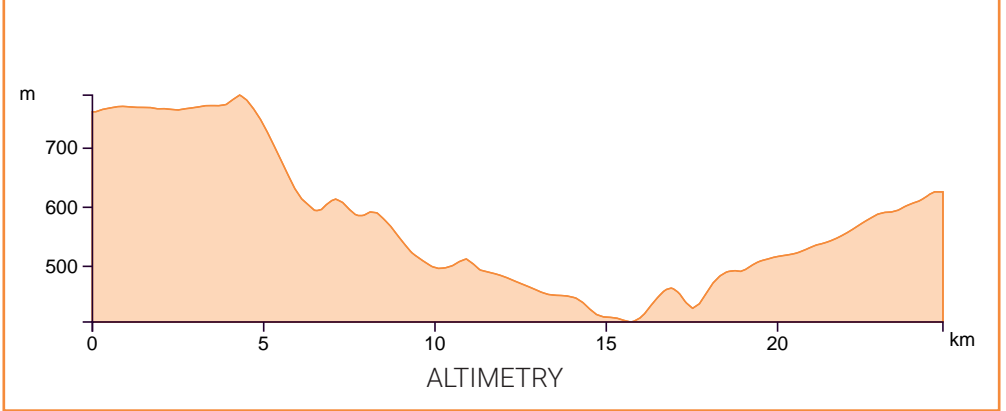
### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Lagopesole, railway station
- 📍 **Destination:** Rionero, via Umberto
- 📏 **Distance:** 24.6 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 7 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 310 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 450 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 780 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 400 m
- 👟 **Difficulty:** difficult
- 👟 **Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH



After leaving Castel Lagopesole station, we take the Appulo-Lucana State Road SS93 in the direction of Lagopesole, a delightful hamlet in the municipality of Avigliano (of interest for its important culinary speciality: **salted cod**). We reach the small village that spreads over the slopes of Lagopesole Castle and pay a brief visit through history and legend to the architectural structure commissioned by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. Each step past the stones and flowers that adorn the place are a step towards the historical greatness of the *stupor mundi* (*wonder of the world*). Lagopesole is just one of the many manors that the



Emperor had built in region of Lucania, but it is important because it is here that he enjoyed falconry and hunting with birds of prey, about which he was also an important theorist, having written a famous treatise on the subject, *De Arte*

*Venandi cum Avibus (The Art of Hunting with Birds)*. Today, the castle is also home to the Lucanian Emigration Museum. Another reason to visit! Leaving the town, we take the SI (*Italian Road*) at the first crossroads on the right,



us, we must taste a slice of the excellent **pecorino cheese**, the gem of the area's agrifood production. Also, of note nearby, are the Paleo-Mesolithic (ca 10,000 BCE) rock paintings in Tuppo dei Sassi, which represent the oldest evidence of mankind in Basilicata. After our break, we walk for 2 km along the Vaccaro SP93 Provincial Road, until we take the *SI (Italian Road)* on our left, just before we come to the State Road SS93 again. For reference, we leave the hamlet of Iscalunga on the other side of the state road.

Still following the *SI (Italian Road)*, we walk along the tarmacked Provincial Road SP Inforchi Sant'Ilario and stretches of dirt road, passing through the hamlets of Don Ciccio - Tittarella, until we come to Inforchia, where we bear to the right at the junction, following the municipal road, right again at the first crossroads and then straight on along this road, past neat fields and cultivated land. First, we cross the Vitalba-Ofantina Provincial Road SP219, then the State Road SS93, until we take a dirt road, on the left that will lead us straight to Atella.

past fields and dirt tracks (crossing the state road again), staying on this road for about 2 km, until we come back out onto the State Road SS93.

At the first built-up centre, we follow the signs for Filiano and take the road on the left that leads us into the town centre in half an hour. Then, we continue until the town exit, following the signs for Rionero-Barletta. Before leaving the town behind



The walk through the historic centre of Atella is a lovely way of immersing ourselves in its ancient atmosphere, with its narrow, winding streets, traditional stone houses and the majestic Angevin tower overlooking the centre. The town is famous for its valued waters that are enriched with a unique effervescence caused by their flowing through the volcanic rocks of Mount Vulture; in fact, Atella is the site of region's main mineral water soft drinks factories. After this "thirst-quenching" stop, we set off for the last stretch of our journey, in the direction of Rionero. We cross the town centre, coming to the State Road SS93 again, where we stay for 1 km until we come to a service road on the left, and immediately afterwards, on the right, we take a dirt road that skirts wonderful, cultivated fields, proceeding at a leisurely pace now that we are approaching our destination, straight on to Rionero, the town of Aglianico wine. We are tired and hungry, but keen to freshen up with a glass of this full-bodied red.

*their guests traditional recipes passed down from generation to generation. Legend has it that it was actually Frederick II who introduced salted cod into the local diet. The Emperor had it sent from the north of his kingdom and since then, Avigliano has been synonymous with salted cod; indeed, today it is one of the most well-known examples of Lucania's culinary tradition, and a model of Italian "poor cuisine", where simple ingredients become tasty dishes.*

### **Filiano Pecorino cheese**

*Filiano pecorino is a hard cheese made from sheep's milk, which is characterised by its intense, aromatic flavour and solid, crumbly texture. This product is an excellent culinary product of Lucanian tradition, valued for its authenticity due to its maturing at a constant temperature for months in natural caves. Legend has it that Frederick II was also especially fond of this wholesome cheese, so much so that he always asked for it when he came to stay on his estates in Lucania.*



## **Further info**

### **Avigliano Salted Cod**

*Salted cod is an institution in Avigliano, so much so that the Lucanian town pays homage to it with an important festival that attracts tourists from all over. Every day the area's taverns offer*







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## From Rionero in Vulture to Melfi



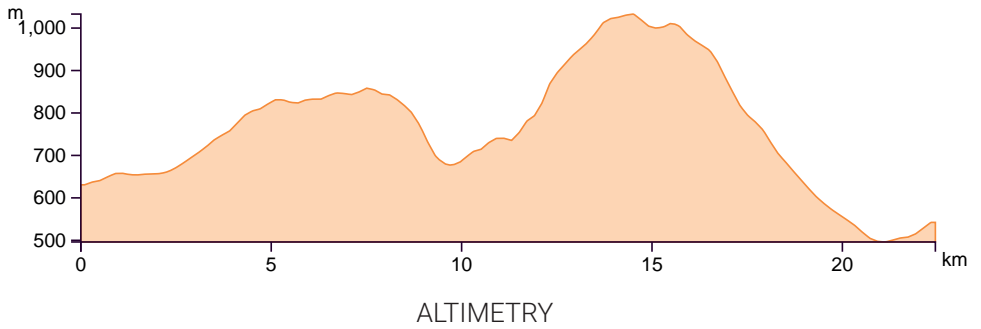
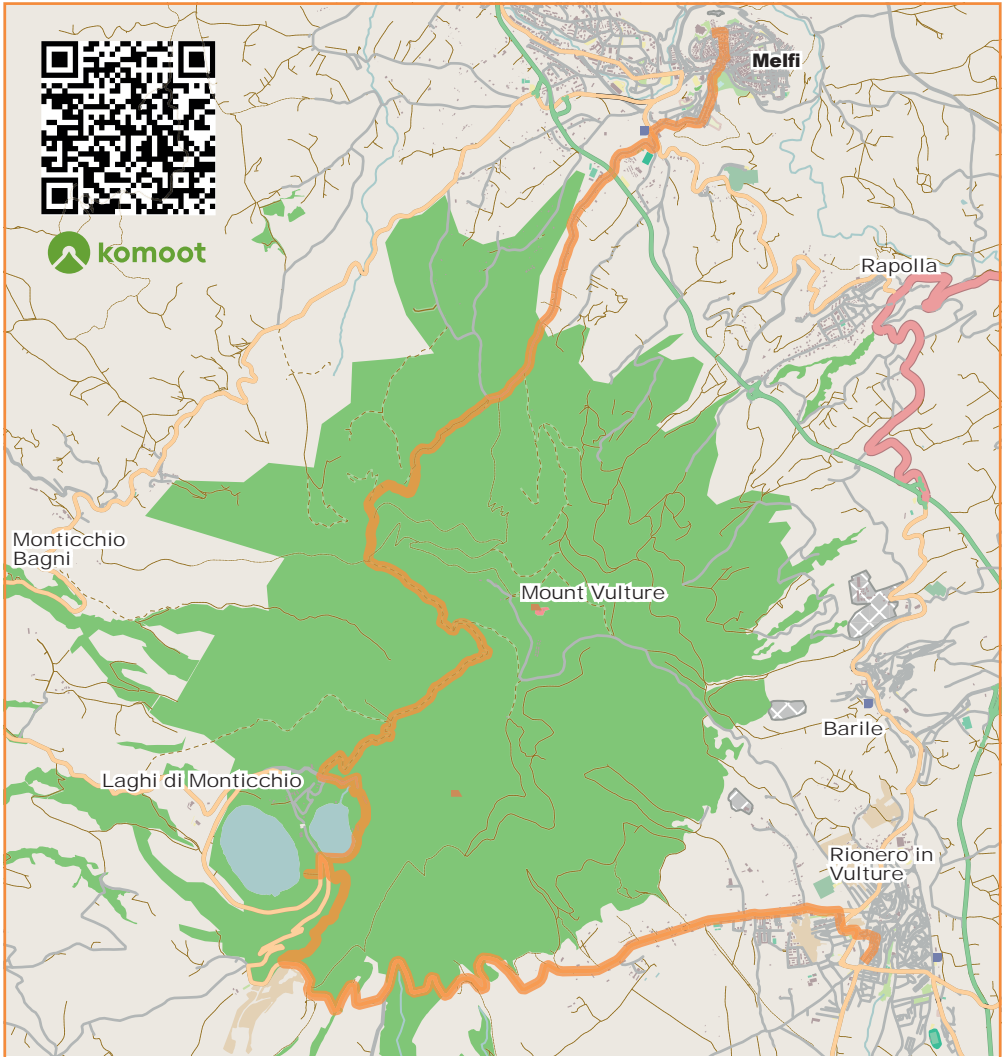
### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Rionero, via Umberto I
- 📍 **Destination:** Melfi, Castle
- 📏 **Distance:** 22.5 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 7.5 h
- ⬆️ **Total climb:** 640 m
- ⬆️ **Total descent:** 730 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,030 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 500 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH



It was a pleasant evening spent tasting various wines in the company of the king of Lucanian wines: **Aglianico del Vulture**. The “*Barolo of the South*” (as some like to call it, perhaps incorrectly so, if for no other reason than its well-structured identity) is the symbol of this town that lies on two hills, at the south-eastern slopes of **Mount Vulture**. It is this particular pedo-climatic condition that makes this area the heart of production of a true gem of Italian wines. However, apart from its good wine, Rionero is also the birthplace of Giustino Fortunato, the jurist and Lucanian politician who raised the *questione meridionale* (*Southern Question*) in Italian





post-Unification history. We continue our walk from Palazzo Fortunato, leaving the town centre behind as we head towards the road for the lakes of Monticchio.

We start with a long and boring tarmac road that climbs slowly towards Mount Vulture, alternating past one wood and another. Luckily for us, the beauty of these views is a real panacea, even though the walk is challenging in parts. After about 8 km, we come to a sign, on the right, for a path that says *Abbazia di San Michele (Abbey of St. Michael)*. We follow it and enter a thick woodland of beeches, firs, maples, and poplars, which brings us out in just over 30 minutes to a unique place: the lakes of Monticchio!

The lakes, known as "Large" and "Small", are two volcanic craters that were formed millions of years ago on the western

slope of Mount Vulture. The place is extraordinarily beautiful both because of its nature and history, and looking around we sense the echoes of this important history - echoes that are reflected in the ripples of the waters of the lakes. The ruins of the *Monastery of Sant'Ippolito (St. Hyppolytus)* situated between the two lakes come into sight, as does the Benedictine Abbey of San Michele Arcangelo (St. Michael Archangel) that houses the *Museo di Storia Naturale del Vulture (Vulture Natural History Museum)*, which towers over the Small Lake, a stronghold that seems to protect this surreal landscape. And yet, this place, a mix of harmony, faith, history, and natural beauty, has also been the site of more brutal stories, but stories that are not without their fascination, like those of the

brigands. The name of Carmine Crocco rings out almost everywhere, as do the events after the Unification of Italy. And following the trails of the brigands, we set off along the SI (*Italian Road*) 101, heading up towards the mountain, continuing our slow and, in places, dream-like climb. After walking for an hour, we take one of the paths of the group of "*Trails of Crocco's Brigands*", on the left that will bring us out in the direction of *Fontana dei Faggi* (*Beech Tree Fountain*), in the locality of Femmina Morta. The majestic and mysterious mountain peak of Mount Vulture lies to our right.

The mountain looms for another 3 km along the path, through a thick wood of gigantic and monumental chestnut trees. We are literally captivated by such beauty. Step by step, the path suddenly comes out onto a tarmac road that reawakens us from our walk and brings us back to reality, which takes shape on the horizon by the solid walls of the Norman-Swabian manor of the town of Melfi, the land of Robert Guiscard and a town dear to Frederick II of Swabia, but that's another journey and another history in this land that never ceases to amaze us.



## Further info

### **Aglianico del Vulture**

*It is the region's prince of wine grapes, representing 60% of cultivation and 9/10 of the production of PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) wines throughout the whole of Lucania. In 1971, it was awarded the certification of Controlled Designation of Origin (DOC) and today this wine represents Basilicata more than any other food or wine product. The distinctiveness of this wine-growing land, close to the extinct volcano, gives the wine its freshness, flavour, and mineral taste. This is because the soil is particularly fertile and rich in potassium, and above all, due to the presence of mineral waters in the subsoil, which flow through the volcanic tuff becoming a source of carbon dioxide.*

*This provides the vineyard with the right amount of humidity, thanks to the water it accumulates in the rocky soil during the winter. The cold temperature climate is perfect for enabling this wine to express itself, and it is regarded as one of Italy's greatest red wines. Of note is the Aglianico Wine Festival that is held every year, in October.*

### **Mount Vulture**

*Mount Vulture towers at a height of 1,326 metres and is an extinct volcano which last erupted about 600,000 years ago. Its slopes are covered with thick, lush vegetation thanks to the naturally fertile land that is characterised by volcanic rocks, and whose characteristics have benefited farming and the production of fine wines, such as Aglianico. The two lakes of Monticchio, basins that were formed in the main crater of the volcano, are also surrounded by lush vegetation.*





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## From Melfi to Venosa

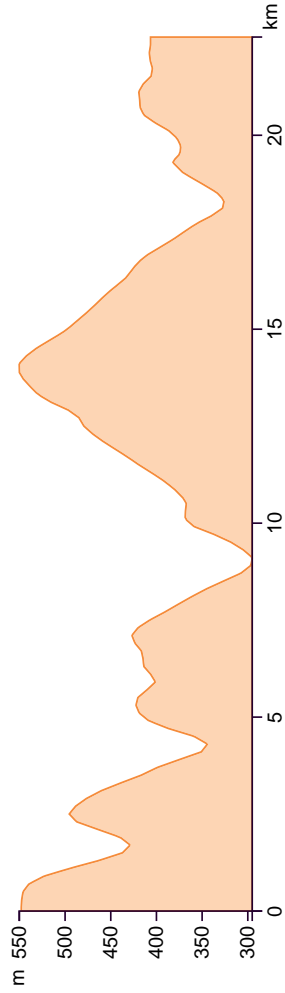
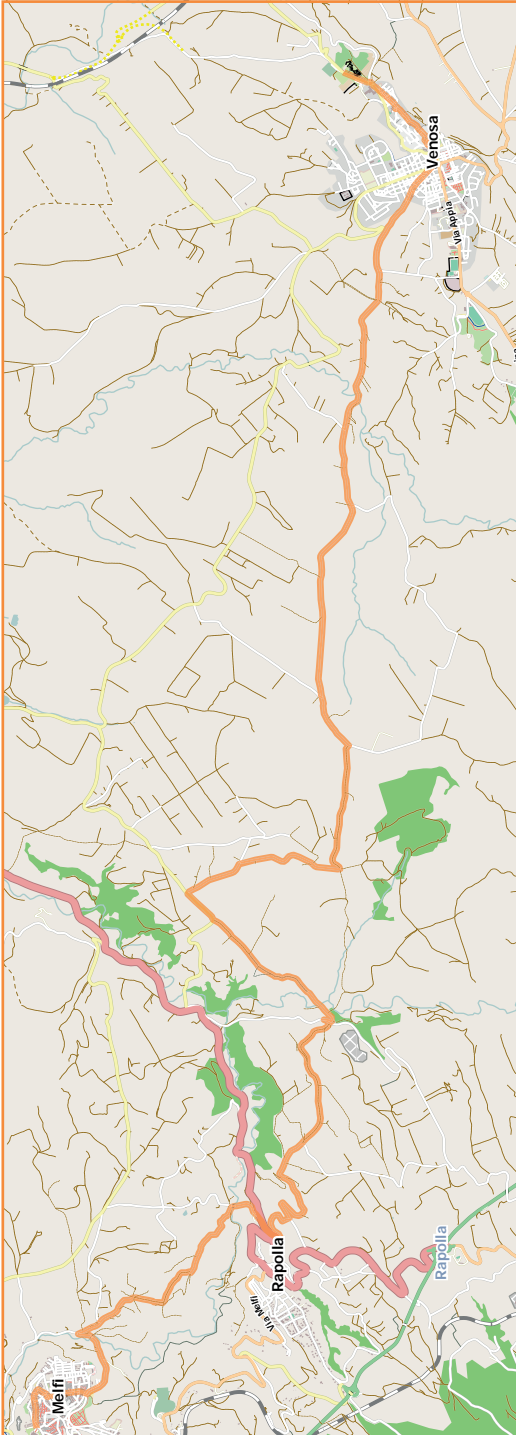


### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Melfi, Norman Swabian Castle
- 📍 **Destination:** Venosa, Unfinished Abbey
- 📏 **Distance:** 22.5 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 7 h
- ⬆️ **Total climb:** 510 m
- ⬆️ **Total descent:** 650 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 500 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 300 m
- Difficulty:** intermediate 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH

Melfi is one of the most important towns in the region and became the capital of the Principality of Salerno and Capua during the Norman period. Here, Norman Count Robert Guiscard, through papal concession, was granted the title of Duke of Apulia, Calabria and Sicily. In fact, it was in Melfi that the great history of the Normans in southern Italy began. The town's most important historical event, however, is related to the figure of Frederick II of Swabia, who promulgated one of the first collections of written laws in Medieval Europe in 1231, the *Liber Augustalis*, also known as the *Constitutions of Melfi*, which were enacted



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inside the famous castle overlooking the town. From this place, steeped in history and royalty, we make our way along via dei Normanni until we come to the *Duomo di Santa Maria Assunta (Cathedral of the Assumption)*. We are captivated by its solid, elegant Romanesque-style belltower that rises over 50 metres into the air. From there follow the signs that take us to the *Porta Venosina* - one of the town's six ancient entrances. From here, if we want to make a detour, we can visit the **Cripta di Santa Margherita (Crypt of St. Margaret)**, one of the most important rock churches in the South Italy. Whereas, if we decide to stay on our path, after leaving the gate, we take the *SI (Italian*

*Road)* – *Tour R12*, immediately on our left, first, walking along a municipal road, and then, after 2 km, along a track that heads back onto a tarmac road that takes us directly to the outskirts of Rapolla. Entering Rapolla, which is famous for the **Sarcophagus** preserved in Melfi museum, and again following the *SI (Italian Road)*, we head along the *Convento Vecchio* municipal road, walking past spectacular olive fields. It is worth pointing out that, besides its wine, this area offers visitors another precious gastronomic delight: *the Vulture DOP – EVO Oil*. This oil has a unique taste with spicy overtones. Mount Vulture is a truly treasure trove of precious gems! Accompanied by expanses of brightly



coloured land and striking olive trees and precious vineyards, we persevere curiously along this path, in awe of this place that amazes us, at times leaving us speechless. And this path remains the same until we come to the Provincial Road SP 110 in *Piano del Cerro*, where we immediately turn right, and carry on walking as far as the eye can see, past olive trees and sown fields. Here, where the tarmac alternates with concrete and gravel tracks, it continues for another 10 km which pass quickly and almost effortlessly. At last, we come to Venosa, the town of Horace and Carlo Gesualdo. This town is also included among the

Borghi più belli d'Italia (Italy's Most Beautiful Towns), yet one more place that is rich in history, art, archaeology, and good food. But for the moment, we quickly cross the town centre and end our journey in front of the **Abbazia Incompiuta (Unfinished Abbey)**, an impressive work of architecture that stands on an old early Christian Basilica, which was built by the Benedictines and extended – but never finished – by the Normans. In short, this striking and mystical place is a gem to enjoy as a reward after a long day. There are so many, perhaps too many things to describe all at once.







## Further info

### Melfi Castle

*Built around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, it represents an important example of medieval military architecture. It is an emblem of the Norman-Swabian rule and rises majestically over the valley.*

*The castle is surrounded by ten rectangular and pentagonal towers, and it is protected by a moat. It was the residence of various sovereigns, including Robert Guiscard, Emperor Frederick II of Swabia, and nobles from the families of Anjou, Caracciolo and Doria. It has been restored several times over the centuries, but it is one of the most impressive and majestic manors in the whole of southern Italy. It was donated to the Italian State in 1952 by the Doria family, and today, it is the site of an important archaeological museum.*



### Cripta di Santa Margherita (Crypt of St. Margaret)

*It is one of the most striking and ancient rock churches in the area, dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The crypt takes its name from the virgin and Christian martyr, Saint Margaret. It is characterised by its single-nave structure and barrel vault ceiling with irregular side walls, frescoed with sacred scenes. Among these is one of the first examples of macabre painting in Italy: the Incontro dei tre vivi e dei tre morti (The Three Living and the Three Dead). The workmanship of the painting and the importance of the theme refer directly to the pictorial cycles from Northern and Central Europe and, which link the town of Melfi to the great network of medieval towns in Europe.*



### Sarcophagus of Rapolla

*It is one of the best examples from the Roman Imperial Age dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE and is preserved in the National Archaeological Museum "Massimo Pallottino" in Melfi, inside the castle. The funeral monument, dedicated to the memory of Emilia Scauro, the daughter of a Roman aristocrat, was found in 1856 along the Appian Way, in Rapolla, near the ruins of a Roman villa. The sarcophagus with its pure white colour and striking classical beauty, has survived up to today in excellent condition.*



### Abbazia Incompiuta - Complesso della Santissima Trinità (Unfinished Abbey - Complex of the Most Holy Trinity)

*It is among the most important monumental sites in the south of Italy. The stratification of Roman, Lombard and Norman elements makes it unique and recall centuries of history.*

*The great abbey is formed by the ancient (or old) Church and the Unfinished (or new) Church, the construction of which was never finished, hence the name Unfinished. Theories about its foundation are still controversial. For some scholars, it was built by the Benedictines before the arrival of the Normans. Its original structure consists of an early Christian Basilica built between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, where there was once a pagan temple dedicated to Hymen. In 1059, the Romanesque Basilica was consecrated by Pope Nicholas II; in the same year, Robert Guiscard had the church made into a shrine for the Altavilla family, where he was also later buried.*





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# From Venosa to Palazzo San Gervasio



## Tour Info

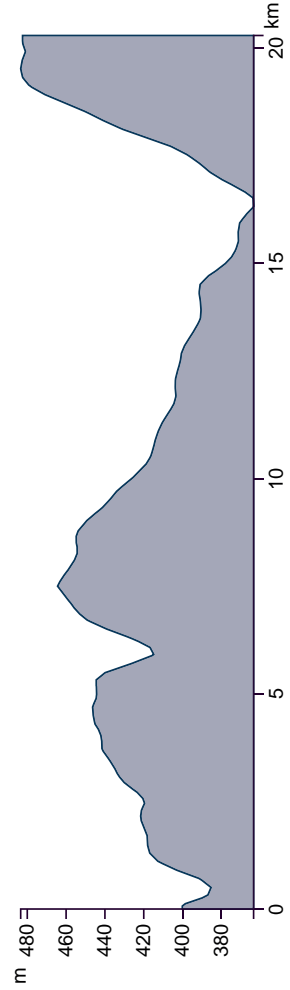
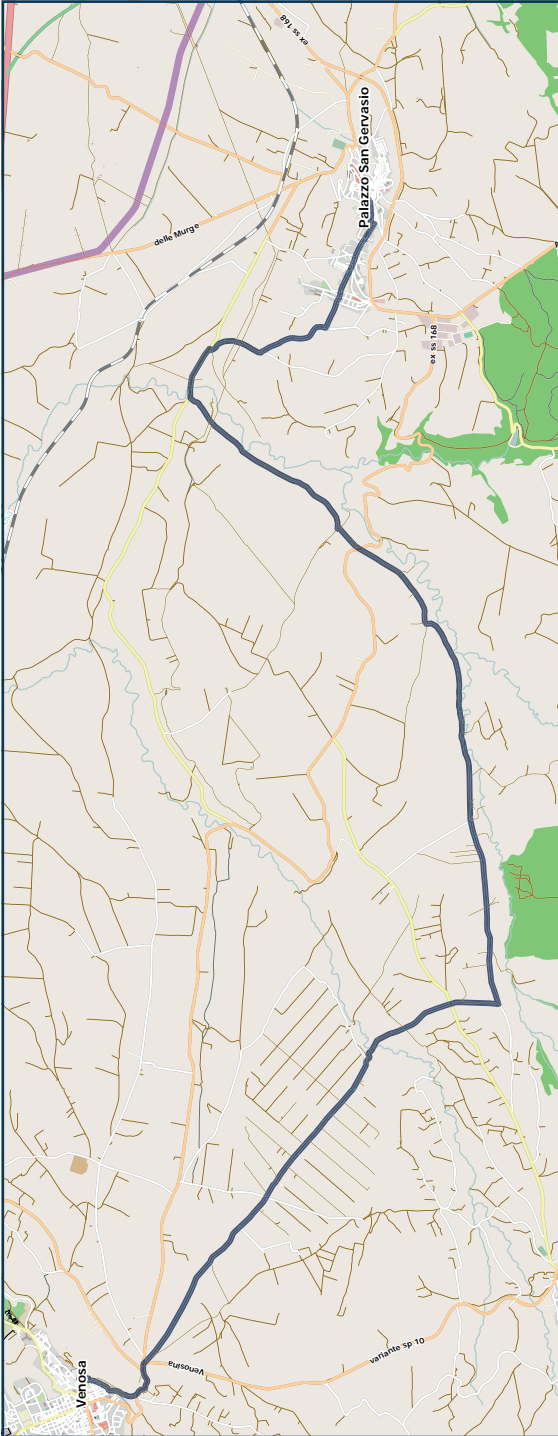
- 📍 **Starting point:** Venosa, Pirro del Balzo Castle
- 📍 **Destination:** Palazzo San Gervasio, P.zza Giacomo Matteotti
- ➔ **Distance:** 20.3 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 7 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 230 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 150 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 480 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 365 m
- Difficulty:** intermediate 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**



TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH



We are in the “heart” of the artistic-historic centre of Venosa, with a stop-off at the magnificent **Aragonese Castle** that majestically overlooks the birthplace of Horace. Here, we can find the national archaeological museum that preserves documents of the town and its territory which dates back to the Roman, late ancient, and early Middle Ages. We suggest stopping for a moment to admire the treasures and wonders of the ancient castle and the elegant square. Venosa, the hometown of the Latin poet **Quintus Horatius Flaccus** and the virtuous 16th-century madrigalist, Carlo Gesualdo, is a charming town that traces the ancient



ALTIMETRY



road system of the Roman town with every step, and two roads that cross the modern-day Corso Vittorio Emanuele and Corso Garibaldi, as well as a series of minor roads. Thanks to a detour, we draw your attention to the site of the **Jewish catacombs**, just outside the town, which are dug out of tuff stone and are rich in graffiti, epigraphs, carvings, and frescoes. From Piazza Umberto I, to the right of the castle, the itinerary continues along the roads of the historic centre with cobblestones, noble buildings, and green countryside. "Savouring" the history of the Lucanian town and heading along via Fornaci, we find ourselves on via Giordano Bruno. From here, if you've never visited it, a detour to the Cattedrale di Sant'Andrea (Cathedral of St. Andrew) flanked by a 42-metre belltower structured into two orders, is a must.

The itinerary heads back along Via Giordano Bruno and along a path, on the left, which leads to the Provincial Road Sp EX SS168, joining the SI (Italian Road) Tour



R11B. As we walk along the provincial road, our gaze rests on the wonderful panorama of the area of Vulture-Melfi, which is probably the most picturesque in the whole of Lucania. It is a landscape





characterised by vast plots of land sown with cereals and the surrounding green vegetation. Walking on for about 5 kilometres, you come to a crossroads and turn right onto a small path towards Palazzo San Gervasio. The path joins Venosa to this small other Frederician town. This incredible route tells the story of the people who live and work here, in harmony with the surrounding landscape, with the passing of the seasons. All this makes it seem as if time hasn't passed. Walking through a suspended atmosphere, famous for the incredibly beautiful landscape, we pass rows of grapes typical of this area, and never-ending olive groves. It is a scenario of the hinterland that has testified to the rurality and local peasant culture of this place for years, and invites travellers to rediscover the roots of the people of Lucania. Next, we come to the most beautiful part of our journey. The landscape is typical of the countryside, dotted with olive trees and vineyards, alternating with small areas of thriving vegetation and fragrant maquis. Along the way we see some beautiful



farmhouses that frame the hospitality and cordiality offered by the few residents who are still tied to their land.

After about 3 km, we come to a crossroads that intersects the mill road and offers particularly intense scenic views from dusk to dawn. After a few kilometres, we reach Via Giovanni Palatucci, passing by Via Roma and Guglielmo Marconi, until we come to charming Palazzo D'Errico. This building is home to the famous picture gallery of the same name, dedicated to Camillo d'Errico, a refined Lucanian patron and passionate collector.

Here, there is a treasure trove of literary and art collections, including some of the most valuable in the southern Italy. This is where our journey ends. When we visit Palazzo San Gervasio, a visit to the ancient manor castle is a must. It is also known as Palazzo Marchesa and was used by Frederick II for breeding horses. At the top, our gaze is lost in the landscape of the Apulian Murgia.

Today's route was incredibly beautiful, rich in history and archaeology and an unforgettable landscape.







## Further info

### Venosa Castle

Standing on a pre-existing Romanesque cathedral, built between 1460 and 1470, and commissioned by Pirro del Balzo, Venosa castle overlooks the historic centre of the town of Horace, and houses the National Archaeological Museum. You can admire the castle's four cylindrical towers, marking the corners of its quadrangular plan. The entrance is preceded by an impressive, suspended drawbridge, a deep moat and a large courtyard surrounded by a Renaissance gallery.

### Quintus Horatio Flaccus

This Roman poet who lived during the Ancient Roman period is considered one of the greatest lyric poets of Latin literature and his works are still studied and appreciated even today. Horace was born in Venosa on 8<sup>th</sup> December 65 BCE. His father was a *libertus*, a former slave who had earned his freedom, and his mother came from a family of humble origins. Despite his family's modest social status, Horace received an excellent education. He studied rhetoric and philosophy in Rome and later went to Athens to continue his studies. Horace's name is indelibly linked to one of the most famous sayings: *Carpe diem*, which means "Seize the day" in Latin.

This phrase comes from Odes 1.11,

in which he urges readers to make the most of the present and not to worry too much about the future.

### The Jewish Catacombs

This important burial site bears witness to the presence of the Jewish community in Venosa during the Roman Age. The catacombs were discovered by chance in 1853 during the building of a road. They are believed to have been used to bury local Jews between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. During this period, Venosa was an important town in the region, and there was a large local Jewish community. Formed by a system of underground tunnels where the deceased were laid to rest, the tombs are carved into the rock, with niches for the bodies. Many of the beds are decorated with frescoes portraying symbolic Jewish patterns and scenes of everyday life from that period.







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## From Palazzo San Gervasio to Genzano di Lucania



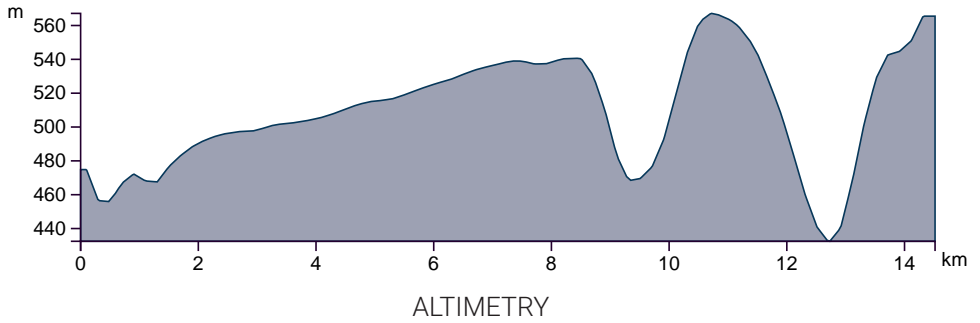
### Tour Info



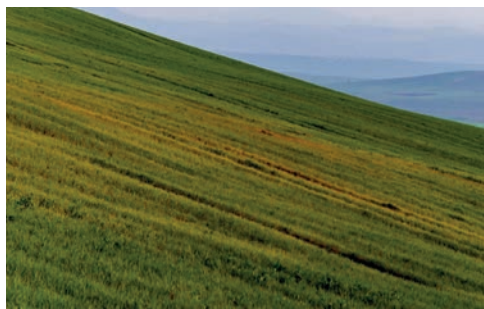
- 📍 **Starting point:** Palazzo San Gervasio, P.zza Giacomo Matteotti
- 📍 **Destination:** Genzano di Lucania, Cavallina Fountain
- 📏 **Distance:** 14.5 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 5 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 310 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 220 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 570 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 430 m
- Difficulty:** intermediate
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH

We set off from the majestic Palazzo D'Errico that guards the **Pinacoteca (Picture Gallery)** of the same name and follow the road Via Calata Banzi out of the town, directly into the enchanting countryside of the upper Bradano Valley. During this long walk, we can admire the different bird species which inhabit these areas and the rich vegetation, which consists of olive groves and rows of vineyards. We then head down along the municipal road of Acerenza that takes us onto the *Provincial Road SP6*, where we will stay for 2 km, until we come to a secondary road, on the left, which attracts our attention because of its



many wind turbines. We enter this moon-like landscape decorated with imposing modern turbines and carry on walking for another 5 km, observing the vast expanses of cultivated fields that change colour and tone like a pointillist painting. Once we are back on the SP6 again, we cross over and follow the road to the historic centre of **Banzi** in just over 1 km. After a short stop to admire the captivating historic and artistic scenery of the village, which is a jewel, surrounded by the walls of an ancient abbey, we set off immediately for our next destination, leaving Banzi behind, and walking along secondary roads and trails, enveloped by countryside and small farmhouses, towards Genzano di Lucania, another of the most important producers of Aglianico del Vulture wine. It is usually kept in the ancient “caves” that open out onto the deep valley of the old town.





Downhill of Genzano, we leave the main road and follow a path, on the left that takes us, like a sort of secret passageway, straight to the town centre, nestled upon a spur of rock. Here, the houses are perfectly interconnected like pieces of a puzzle. After visiting the Chiesa dell'Annunziata (Church of the Annunciation), we carry on along via Carmine to our final destination: **Cavallina Fountain**. As we cross these picturesque roads, we stop to admire the ancient buildings, stone facades, and decorated balconies that symbolise an important and glorious past, which is also shown by the beautiful **Castello di Mountserico (Mountserico Castle)**, a few kilometres from the built-up area, situated on the top of the hill where you can admire the landscape of the valley below.







## Further info

### D'Errico Picture Gallery

*It is one of the most important private collections in the south of Italy commissioned by Camillo d'Errico, a Lucanian patron and passionate collector who arranged for his collection to be housed in Palazzo San Gervasio. It contains masterpieces of Neapolitan painting from 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, a representative group of printed engravings mostly dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and 31 precious ancient books, authentic treasures of an extraordinary cultural heritage.*

### Banzi

*Banzi takes its name from Tabula Bantina Osca, a bronze plate from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, with engravings in the Oscan language. It is the longest and most complex text of those found and written in the Oscan language with Latin characters and today, it is preserved in the Naples Archaeological Museum.*

*Banzi boasts an important archaeological heritage immersed in a fascinating history, like the ruins of the region's oldest Benedictine abbey dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Also of interest is the historic fountain, the Fons Bandusiae, outside the town that was mentioned by Horace.*

### Fontana Cavallina (Cavallina Fountain)

*Built between 1865 and 1893, this incredibly striking architectural structure is shaped like an amphitheatre, with a solid natural cotto brickwork construction, without plaster and with an upper creasing made of bare stone. The paved floor extends to the two access ramps, and in the middle, a Roman-style arch is overlooked by a statue of Ceres, the goddess of fertility. This important archaeological find from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE was discovered in 1800 near Genzano. The fountain draws water from a plentiful spring and is regarded as one of the most beautiful fountains in Italy.*

### Mountserico Castle

*Built on the top of an imposing rocky hill about 15 km east of Genzano di Lucania, it represents an interesting example of medieval architecture in Basilicata because of its characteristic phases of construction. Of Byzantine origin, it was extended by the Normans during the period of Roger II of Sicily. The castle has a trapezoidal plan with two tall square angular towers and the walls are covered with large ashlars. The castle overlooks a great hilly area that was originally covered by large areas of woodland, in a strategic position along important routes, on the border between the Byzantine territories of the middle and lower Bradano Valley.*



## ...One more day

We suggest a visit from Genzano to **Acerenza**, which can be reached on the public or private buses. The city, which is included among the *Borghi più belli d'Italia* (the Most beautiful Towns in Italy), is known as the cathedral city. The town, enclosed

between the River Bradano and the Fiumarella Torrent, situated at over 800 metres above sea level, is famous for its Cathedral, which is dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption and to St. Canius (11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> centuries.).





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## From Genzano di Lucania to Irsina



### Tour Info

-  **Starting point:** Genzano di Lucania, Cavallina Fountain
-  **Destination:** Irsina, Cathedral of Saint Euphemia
-  **Distance:** 27 km
-  **Duration:** 8 h
-  **Total climb:** 410 m
-  **Total descent:** 450 m
-  **Maximum height:** 588 m
-  **Minimum height:** 246 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH



We head towards Corso Vittorio Emanuele from *Fontana Cavallina (Cavallina Fountain)* and then, on the right we follow Via San Francesco to the *Provincial Road ex SS 169*. After leaving the town centre we make our way to Via Colonia that joins a steep, dirt path. This track crosses and cuts through a marvellous wood that is almost an oasis in view of the morphology of the land. Here, it is easy to see birds of prey, like the peregrine falcon, or meet – as is the case of the person writing – shepherds with their cattle, like Pasquale, with his tired and gentle eyes and rough hands who greets us, almost apologetically for getting in our way with



his herd. Once we are out of the woods, we find ourselves on a never-ending dirt road that cuts the fields in half, skirting cottages and farms.

If we look up, on the left, we can make out the shape of the castle of Mountserico, but we walk on, step by step, making our way slowly past surreal and meditative stretches of road. Now we are back on the State Road SS96 bis and immediately afterwards, on the left, we see the check

point: *Borgo Taccone*.

After a brief stop, we set off on our journey again for another 5 km, surrounded once more by a unique landscape, along paths that cross cultivated fields. Now, we are starting to feel tired! And so, we find ourselves again back on the State Road SS96 bis and turn right after a few dozen metres until we come to a new path that cuts through the farms on the left, towards Irsina. The heat and tiredness





overshadow our journey, but after a deep breath - and the last sip of water! -, we begin a long and tiring climb, 4 km of nothingness, where all we can see is red, ochre and yellow fields and more fields. Then, we suddenly find ourselves back on the Provincial Road SP 209 and at last, we reach Irsina.

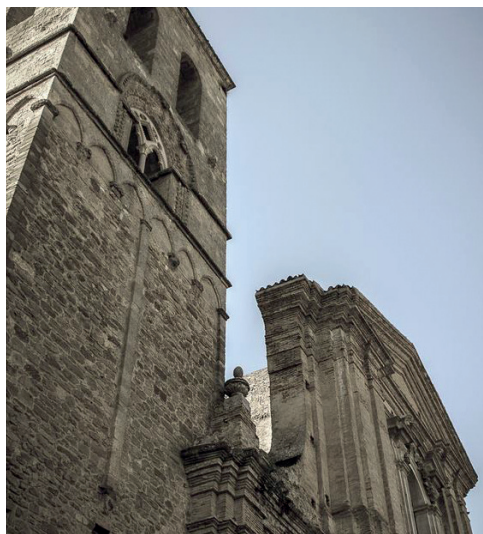
Irsina was a reference point for the Greeks and Romans, and a fortified centre in the Middle Ages that was conquered and rebuilt by the Byzantines, Lombards, Normans, Swabians, Angevins and Aragonese. In the past, it was known as Mountpeloso. Irsina enchants us with its paved roads, churches and medieval architecture, proving why it is included among the *Borghi più Belli d'Italia* (*Italy's Most Beautiful Towns*). After a long walk through the streets in the centre, we suddenly see an amazing sight: the **Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta** (**Cathedral of the Assumption**). The sky treats us to an incredible sunset, a gift to reward our effort, which makes this impressive, religious sight that resembles



a fortress in parts, even more beautiful. Preserved inside the church is a sculpture of **Saint Euphemia** made of Nanto stone, which is attributed to *Andrea Mantegna*,

the only sculptural work attributed to the artist from Padua, and the *De Mabilia Donation*. A visit to the Bottini system in the town is a must: a route of underground tunnels and fountains that was made possible by an ancient technique of channelling the water that ensured the town's water supply. Then, we need to stop and contemplate the noble buildings, each of which recounts a piece of history and life in the town, savouring the authentic atmosphere of the hidden treasures of this delightful place. Finally, we visit the *Chiesa di San Francesco* (Church of St. Francis), which is renowned for its well-preserved frescoes and Renaissance cloister; to conclude, there is the *Museo Civico "Michele Janora"* (Michele Janora Civic Museum) that houses a collection of archaeological finds, recalling the region's history, from pre-historic times to the Roman Age.

Now, before we go and rest, a gastronomic note is a must, because Irsina is famous for its Lucanian black pig farms, our last daily treat!



## Further info

### **Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta (Cathedral of the Assumption)**

*This majestic site dedicated to the Madonna dell'Assunta (Our Lady of the Assumption) has a long and complex history of reconstructions and styles that follow on from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The original site from the Norman period, in Romanesque style, dating to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, was subsequently transformed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, into Gothic style and then restored in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as it was dangerous and dilapidated.*

*The architecture of the cathedral is*

*Romanesque with Gothic influence, although the facade has Neapolitan Baroque forms with a richly decorated doorway.*

### **Saint Euphemia by Mantegna**

*Irsina gained great notoriety thanks to the statue of Saint Euphemia, which was attributed to Andrea Mantegna, an important Italian Renaissance artist. The statue depicts Saint Euphemia the Martyr with one hand in a lion's mouth, symbolising her martyrdom in 304 CE, and the other, holding a triple mount with a castle, symbolising ancient Moutpeloso. The statue was made of Nanto stone and was carved in Vicenza.*



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## From Irsina to Picciano



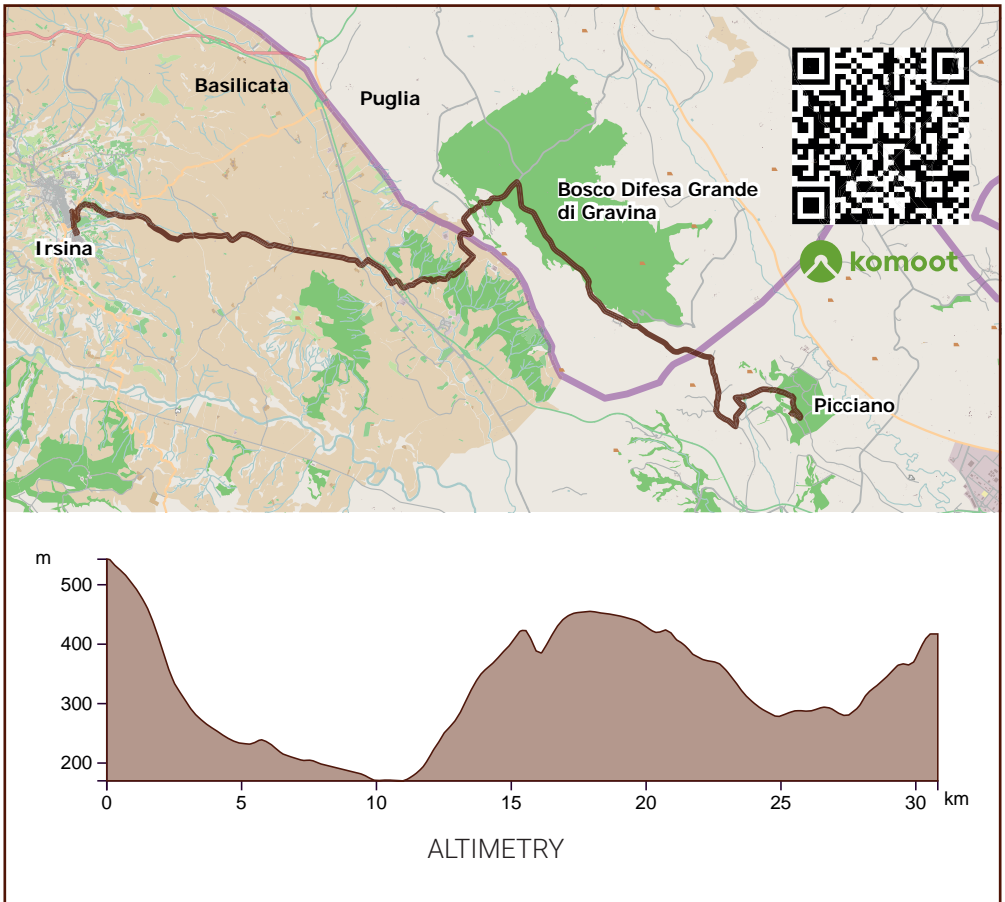
### Tour Info

-  **Starting point:** Irsina,  
Cathedral of Saint Euphemia
-  **Destination:** Picciano,  
Sanctuary of Santa Maria
-  **Distance:** 31 km
-  **Duration:** 9 h
-  **Total climb:** 480 m
-  **Total descent:** 600 m
-  **Maximum height:** 547 m
-  **Minimum height:** 169 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH- PATH

We make our way towards Corso Matteotti from Piazza Garibaldi in Irsina and then, on the right, onto the provincial road ex SS 96. Outside Irsina, the view over the valley is breathtaking, it is an incredible sight! The *horror vacui* ("fear of empty space") is cancelled by the pastel colours; the neat and orderly roads around the fields seem crocheted or embroidered rather than ploughed. Gazing down from above, we can see the exquisite rural areas, and the many pathways. It is a unique, timeless and ethereal landscape.

Soon after, we leave the state road and follow a path on the right for 6 km, coming



back out onto the Provincial Road SP *Val Fosso Acqua di Lupo-Basentello*, where we turn right and stay on this road for another 4 km. Corn fields set against a pastel blue sky can be found both to our left and to our right, accompanying us along our delightful journey until we reach the Provincial Road SP Valle del Basentello. Here, we turn right and then immediately left, crossing the State Road SS 655 Bradanica - very carefully! -, fixing our gaze north-east and towards Serra la Cappella. Then, we leave the tarmac State Road, on the left, and head onto a wonderful route that crosses the area of San Domenico.

Along the way, we see many stone ruins, traces of old farmhouses, evidence of farming activities from the past that are still important even today, just as they were centuries ago. We stay on this slow path for another 4 km and then turn left and take the first branch to the right. From here, we start our climb for another 3 km until we come out onto the Provincial Road SP158. A little further on, we follow the road on the right: *Cammino Materano Via Peuceta – Tour 6*: now, we are in the wood, *Bosco Difesa Grande di Gravina*. We stay in this perfect, idyllic place to meditate. It is a spectacle of



nature for 5 km; in fact, it is a SIC area (*Sito di Importanza Comunitaria - Site of European Interest*) and ZSC area (*Zona speciale di conservazione - Special Area of Conservation*). This wood covers over 3,000 hectares and is one of the last traces of the thriving mesophyte forest that covered this area of the Mediterranean. We cross trails that unfold past oak trees, turkey oaks, and arbutus; it is an oasis of greenery after several kilometres with no shade from the sun! This wood also has an important wildlife system and is a nature reserve for green lizards, hares, foxes, skunks, badgers, porcupines, and wild cats. It also has an important bird population: cuckoos, barn owls, red kites, and buzzards.

It is a beautiful walk that comes to an end after almost two hours along the tarmac *Provincial Road SP 193*.

Once we are out of the woods, we follow the signs - precise and accurate - for the *Cammino Materano*, across the landscape and rolling hills of the Bradano, observing the vast, intensely cultivated land, until we start the last climb towards the hill of Picciano. Exhausted, but content, we reach the top, and today's destination, the **Benedictine sanctuary**, which is also the starting point for our final destination: **Matera**! We are overwhelmed by a flurry of emotions, satisfied with our journey so far, but also sad because our adventure has come to an end.





## Further info

### The Benedictine Sanctuary of Picciano

*Picciano is a hamlet of Matera, and the site of an ancient place of worship, situated on a hill 15 km northwest of the City of the Sassi. The church has a Romanesque-style plan, although subsequent extensions have transformed the structure. Inside, visitors can admire the picture of the Madonna, dating back to the*

*15<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the statue of the Madonna of Picciano inside the chapel, behind the high altar. Legend has it that a peasant from Abruzzo came across a picture of the Virgin in a cave during a transhumance in the area. The picture was seen as a miracle, and the place became a place of prayer and a stop for pilgrims.*





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## From Picciano to Matera



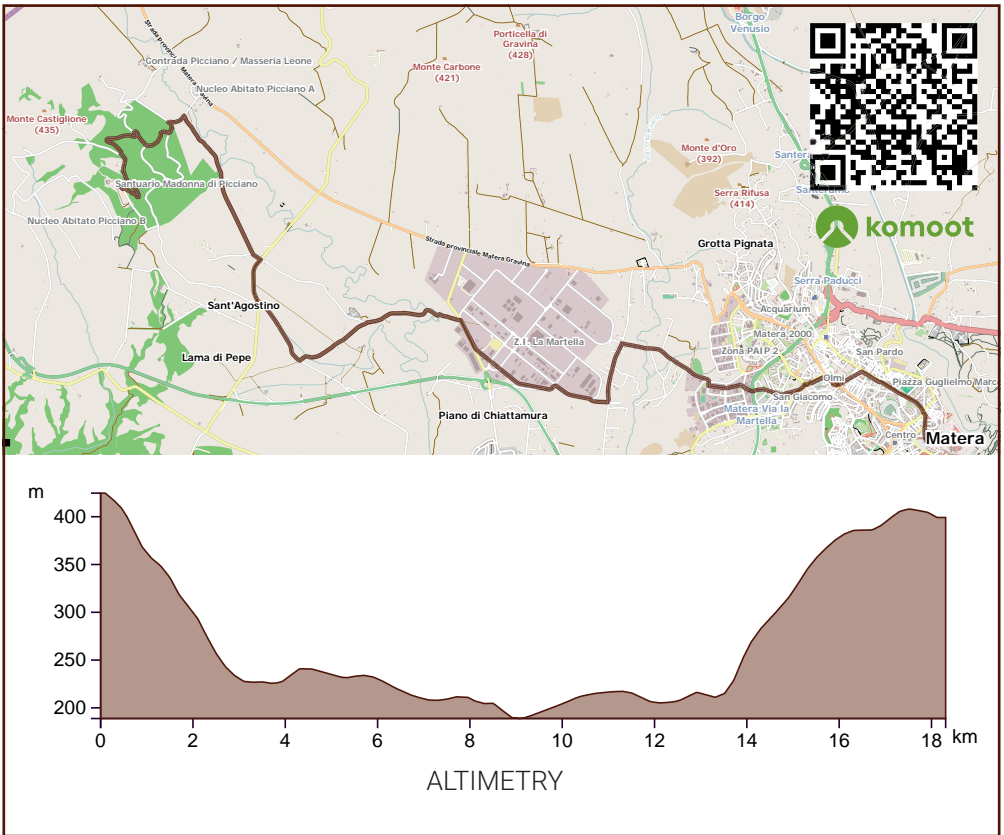
### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Picciano, Sanctuary of Santa Maria
- 📍 **Destination:** Matera, Piazza Vittorio Veneto
- ➔ **Distance:** 18.3 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 5.30 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 250 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 280 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 429 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 188 m
- Difficulty:** easy 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - PATH

Before setting off again from the Sanctuary of Picciano, we choose which itinerary to take to reach Matera. We have two options: the first is to follow the *Cammino Materano Via Peuceta - tour 7*, which is about 30 km long and passes by the *Riserva Naturale di San Giuliano (Saint Julian Nature Reserve)*, heading back up towards Matera; the second is a detour, which is about 18 kilometres long and cuts through the industrial park of La Martella, intersecting the *Cammino Materano* in places. Considering the number of kilometres we have covered so far, and our understandable tiredness, we opt for the second route that will take us





to the City of the Sassi in 5 hours. We make our way downhill from the Sanctuary, bearing to the left and walking for 1 km along the tarmac road; then, we turn right at the first crossroad, following the signs for Matera. Next, we walk through the wood and turn right after 2 km, before reaching the village of Picciano, where we get onto a track that crosses cultivated fields. This part of our journey is very beautiful where it is as if you are walking mid-air through one of Monet’s impressionist landscapes. This magic lasts until we come to the Provincial Road SP 67 Timmari – Santa Chiara. Here, we turn right and then left at the first crossroads onto a secondary road, where we stay for a few hundred

metres. Immediately afterwards, we take a dirt road, again on the left, and after wading through the Gravina torrent - that we suggest you do not cross barefoot -, we find ourselves in the industrial park of **La Martella**.

Skirting the production plant, we stay on Via Pirelli and turn right onto Via Alvino. Soon afterwards, we leave this road and follow a track (again on the right), which comes out onto Prima Strada Guirro, in contrada Chiatamura. On reaching the tarmac road, we turn left and when we intersect Via della Tecnica, we turn right and stay on this road until we come to the Zona Paip 1 in Matera. From here, we continue along Via della Scienza and Via Conversi, and after crossing the





State Road SS7 and coming to Rione San Giacomo, we can say that we are finally in the city! At this point, we follow the signs for the Sassi, along Via Martella, Via Olivetti and Via Manzoni until we reach Via Nazionale (where there is the SI (*Italian Road*) Tour R07A) that brings us to our point of arrival: Piazza Vittorio Veneto. At last, we have reached the heart of one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Now our steps are suspended over the **Palombaro Lungo**, and in the distance, we can see the **Cathedral** belltower, but our curious eyes are drawn to some arches that seem to be hiding something precious in the shadows. So, we make our way over to the corner and realise that we are standing on the *Belvedere Guerricchio* (*Guerricchio Scenic Viewpoint*): the sight of the **Sassi** lights up our gaze, filling us

with so much wonder that would surprise even Stendhal himself.

Matera deserves a stop-off of at least one day to fully discover its visible and underground treasures. The early, complex city of Matera is one of the oldest settlements in the world that has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Matera symbolises liberation for this region that went from being the shame of Italy to the *European Capital of Culture*. It is famous for its bread and excellent food and wine products (from the Crapiata to Matera DOC wine) that also include an old pasta-making tradition. The city is home to the **Parco delle chiese rupestri** (**Park of the Rock Churches**) and the *Cripta del Peccato Originale* (Crypt of the Original Sin) and it is the site of museums

and buildings rich in art. Matera is the beating heart of ancestral traditions - such as *Festival of the Madonna della Bruna* -, which has been held on 2<sup>nd</sup> of July since 1389. Worthy of note is the Centre for Space Geodesy which studies the stars and looks to the future. Matera is a meeting point for numerous walks that plunge down to the prehistoric caves or ravines; and it is also a natural film set, treasured by directors, such as Pasolini, Mel Gibson and Tornatore. Matera is the *City of the Sassi*, a group of ancient dwellings carved into the rock. It is a Unesco World-Heritage Site.

These are just a few of the good reasons to stay an extra day and carry on walking through the winding streets that open out onto courtyards, stairways, and alleyways, where the houses overlap.



This centuries-old collection of buildings offers us unique views of history, immortalised in a stone fresco preserved in silence with mystical tones, in one of the best examples of mankind's ability to adapt over the centuries.



## ...One more day

Thanks to the public bus service it is easy to reach **Miglionico** from Matera. It is also included among the *Borghi più belli d'Italia* (Most beautiful Towns in Italy), and is famous for the *Castello del Malconsiglio* (Malconsiglio Castle), the scene of the famous

*Conspiracy of the Barons*, which took place in 1485, when some important barons from the kingdom of Naples (the Sanseverinos, the Guevaras, the Del Balzos, the Caracciolos and the Acquavivas), conspired and plotted an uprising against King Ferdinand I of Aragon in the halls of this castle.





## Further info

### **Borgo La Martella**

*The village of La Martella developed from a renowned town-planning project in the 1950s that involved people such as Adriano Olivetti and Ludovico Quaroni.*

*It was built according to the special law 619 of 1952 that declared the Sassi of Matera lacking in the minimum conditions of hygiene and habitability, forcing the inhabitants to leave their homes.*

### **Palombaro Lungo**

*The underground world of Matera is what makes this city unique. Indeed, the Sassi are characterised by a water system that is designed to collect water, which is structured into a network of channels and cisterns. From Piazza Vittorio Veneto, you can visit the Palombaro Lungo, which is the ancient city's largest water reserve and a gem of architecture and hydraulic engineering.*

### **The Cathedral of Matera**

*Built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century on the site of the ancient Benedictine monastery dedicated to St. Eustache, the Romanesque-Apulian style cathedral is dedicated to the city's patrons, the Madonna della Bruna and St. Eustace. The building stands on the highest point of the Civita that separates the city's two Sassi. The statue of the Madonna della Bruna can be found on the doorway, and at the sides, you can admire the bas-relief of Saint Eustache and the statues of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. The impressive Romanesque rosette that reposes the theme of the wheel of fortune is particularly striking, as is the belltower with its square base overlooking the Sassi skyline.*





## I Sassi di Matera

*The Sassi of Matera are made up of two great natural theatres, dug out of the rock, the Sasso Barisano and the Sasso Caveoso. The first, to the northwest, is rich in buildings and traditional houses, while the second, to the south, contains ancient caves overlooking a ravine. However, the oldest centre of the built-up area is the district of the Civita that was built around the Cathedral. The Sassi landscape changes depending on the time of day and the intensity of the light; the range of colours blends with the tuff stone, making visitors feel as if they were part of a Nativity scene, dotted with numerous tiny little lights.*

## The Park of the Rock Churches

*This protected area - between Matera and Mountscaglioso - contains over 150 rock churches that recall centuries of spirituality. In some cases, the settlements date back to the Roman times and are adorned with frescoes and splendid architectural features, such as apses, quatrefoil columns, capitals, and vaults that are made even more characteristic with their small domes. The Cripta del Peccato Originale (Crypt of the Original Sin), also*



*known as the "Sistine Chapel" of rock wall painting because of the artistic and theological value of its decorative pictorial compendium, is one of the most interesting rock churches in the whole of the Southern Italy. It used to be a Benedictine monastery dating to the Lombard period. The cave is decorated with an extraordinary cycle of frescoes that show episodes of the Creation and the Original Sin.*





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## From Lauria to Castelluccio Inferiore



### Tour Info

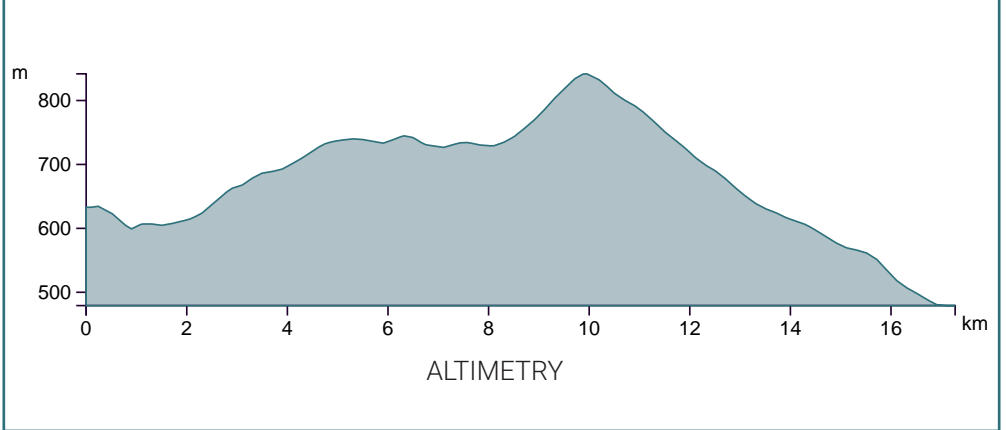
- 📍 **Starting point:** Lauria, Borbone Fountain
- ⊕ **Destination:** Castelluccio Inferiore, Church of St. Nicholas of Mira
- ➔ **Distance:** 16.7 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 5 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 270 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 420 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 847 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 477 m
- Difficulty:** easy 🦶🦶🦶
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - PATH



We follow the path from the *Borbone Fountain* in Lauria that takes us to the railway line (see *Tour 3*). On the iron bridge, we come to a key point of our journey, and keeping the Noce Valley (that stands out before our eyes) as our point of reference, we continue to the left, towards the Parco Nazionale del Pollino (Pollino National Park). Remember that if you go right, you will enter the Parco Nazionale dell'Appennino Lucano Lagonegrese (Appennino Lucano Lagonegrese National Park) - *Tour 3*.

The first steps on the old railway, which is now the aforesaid ciclovía turistica Lagonegro-Rotonda (Lagonegro-Rotonda



tourist cycle route), are in the long, cold and damp Pastorella tunnel. As soon as we are out of the tunnel, we draw your attention to the path on the right that leads to the *Falesia Fabio Limongi (Fabio Limongi Climbing Wall)*; sadly, this climbing wall is rarely visited. When it was opened, the great man himself, Fabio called upon none other than the legendary Maurizio Zanolla, better known as Manolo, one of the great – if not the greatest – Italian climber. A little further on, we come to the first abandoned signalman's house and the sign LAURIA, a visible sign of the deterioration of this important place,



which used to be a breaking point from the isolation of the mountains that it crossed in the first half of the last century. Walking along the path, we make our way through the Menavoli Valley until we come to the Galdo plain, where the railway line temporarily disappears out of sight, but the precise signs enable us to follow the cycle path easily. Looking up, as we cross the industrial area, we can admire Mount La Spina in front of us. If we walk for a few minutes along the tarmac State Road SS19, in just over a kilometre, on the right, we come to the PRESTIERI signalman's house. Here, we pick up the *iron path* again in a long and gentle descent, surrounded by the beechwood until the picturesque and sheltered village of **Castelluccio Superiore** comes into sight. Shortly afterwards, we walk through the **spiral tunnel**, a gem of engineering that separates Castelluccio Superiore from Castelluccio Inferiore, before heading onto via Roma: we have reached the village at the bottom, the gateway to the Mercure Valley and the Parco Nazionale del Pollino (Pollino National Park).

The town is an ancient feud that once belonged to the Sanseverino family; it was built downhill of Castelluccio Superiore (it was one town until 1813) and on the slopes of Cozzo Pastano,

where the ancient *Santuario della Madonna del Soccorso* (*Sanctuary of Our Lady of Perpetual Help*) is perched. Recent archaeological discoveries might rewrite local history as they confirm the theory that Castelluccio is actually the legendary *Nerulum* that appears in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. Today, it is a jewel with its streets, buildings and churches with a medieval plan, characterised by an abundance of springs and water. Indeed, as soon as you reach the historic centre, it is still possible to see the microsystem of mills that used the driving force of the water for spinning. Castelluccio is also perfect for nature lovers, with the *Bosco Difesa* (*Difesa Wood*), the mountain area of Fagosa and the Peschiera valley, not forgetting the wide range of specialities on offer, for example *rafaiul* (ricotta cheese ravioli), *cavatidd'* (gnocchi) and *piccidat'* (Easter buccellato cake).





## Further info

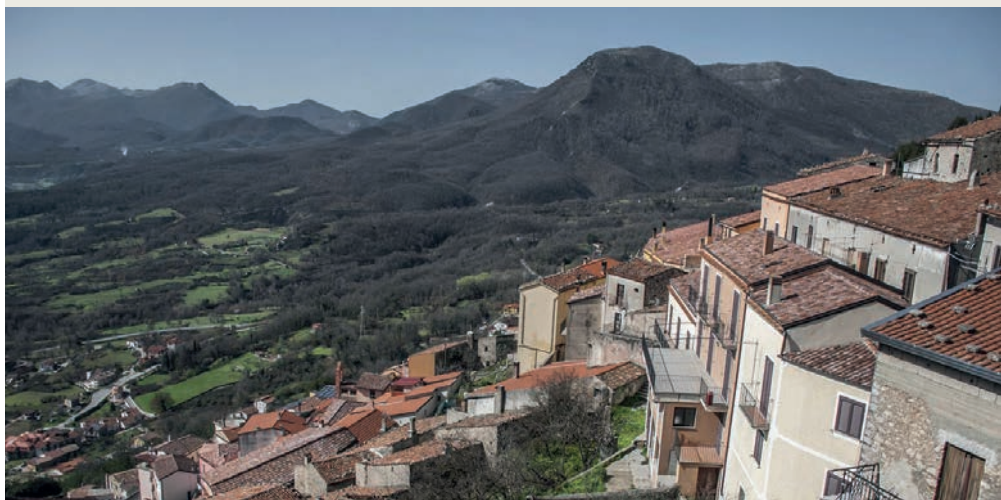
### Castelluccio Superiore

*Its origins are extremely remote: the first settlements date back to the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE. There are various theories about its foundations. According to some historians, the town was constructed on the site of the Lucanian Thebes, which was built by the Oscans and destroyed several times. According to others, it was built on the ruins of Nerulum, an important trading centre that joined via Herculea to via Popilia. The town's modern-day centre dates back to the late-medieval period. One of its particular features is the "misule," ancient terracing that can be found in the historic centre where a variety of medicinal plants, vegetables and pulses were grown. Horticulture was possible thanks to the skilful management of the spring water via an intricate network of channels and drains that unwound*

*from tanks situated at the top of the town throughout the whole of the built-up area. Consequently, the "misule" represented an important work of hydrogeological defence for centuries.*

### Spiral Tunnel

*These tunnels were built to reduce the steep slopes on mountain railway stretches that used the rack system. They were a sort of spiral stairway along the line, which made it possible to extend the route, overcoming great differences in height where there was little space. The one in Castelluccio is a gem of engineering with a 485-metre-long tunnel that has made it possible to reduce the slope with a curvature radius of 120 metres by 20% thanks to a difference in height of 34 metres between the mountain and the valley.*







DOWNLOAD THE ROUTE



## From Castelluccio Inferiore to Madonna del Pollino



### Tour Info

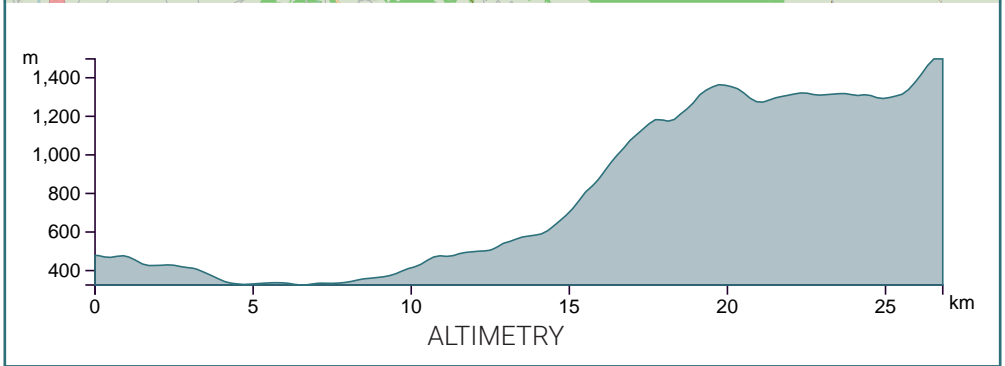
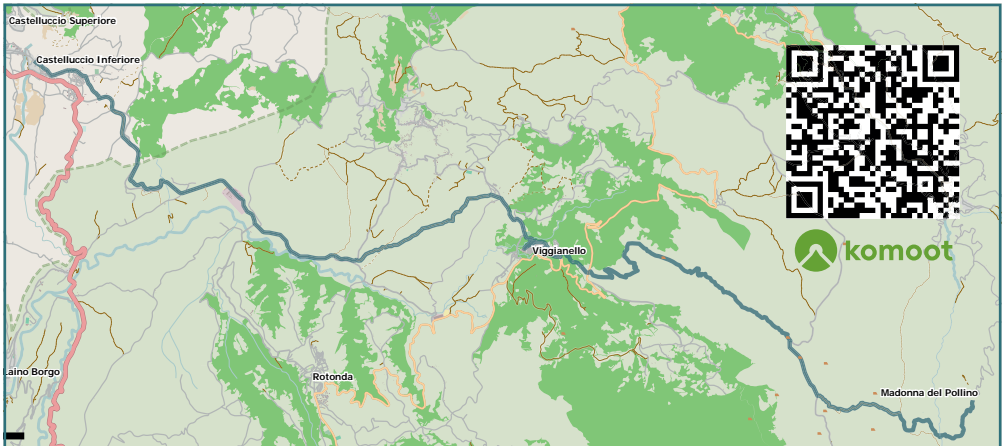
- 📍 **Starting point:** Castelluccio Inf., Church of St. Nicholas of Mira
- ⊕ **Destination:** Terranova, Sanctuary of Madonna del Pollino
- ➔ **Distance:** 27 km
- ⌚ **Duration:** 9 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 1.310 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 300 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,500 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 325 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**



TARMAC ROAD- HIKING PATH- PATH

Our departure, set for dawn, offers us a beautiful awakening in the *Mercurion Valley*, a wide river basin between Basilicata and Calabria that was once filled by a Pliocene Lake. The valley is crossed by the river Mercure, which originates from *Mount Serra del Prete* (Viggianello) and reaches Calabria where its name changes into the River Lao. This beautiful place is also known as the *Valley of Monasteries* because of the many eastern monastic settlements that were built here after the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

We leave the historic centre of Castelluccio Inferiore from via Roma, in the direction of Viggianello. Just outside the town centre,



on the right, we take a secondary road that brings us out into contrada Ceracalla. Now, we turn left and continue until we come to the cycle route where we walk for about one kilometre. We leave the old railway line and follow the Provincial Road SP4, which we cross, following a secondary road, on the left, that brings us out just before the impressive Mercure biomass power plant. The power plant has been at the heart of local news for decades, and not only because of its visual impact on the surrounding area. We continue along the tarmac road immersed in a blue and green landscape surrounded by corn fields, gazing up at the majestic peaks of Mount Pollino. We follow the signs for Pedali and then, on the left, we take the Pedali-Viggianello Provincial Road where

we stay for 2 km. Next, on the right, we follow a dirt path that takes us to the historic centre of Viggianello in 2 hours: another of the *Borghi più Belli d'Italia* (*Most Beautiful Towns in Italy*) that can be found in Basilicata!

It is worth stopping off in **Viggianello** (or maybe staying overnight) to visit the built-up centre, the buildings (especially Palazzo Caporale), the Castle of the Sanseverino Princes or the important, priceless churches! In fact, we could split up today's walk and set off again the following day for **Madonna del Pollino**. We draw your attention to the fact that in addition to our itinerary, in Viggianello, you also meet the *Cammino Basiliano* (*Basilian Walk*), which also reaches our destination.



## Further info

### Viggianello

*The historic centre stretches along the rocky ridge of Mount Serra. It was probably founded by the Romans as a castrum (fortification) on via Popilia, and is a crossroads where ancient and modern paths unfold, leading to the great peaks of the Pollino Massif (Serra Dolcedorme, Mount Pollino and the Great Pollino Plains). Besides excursions, it is possible to take part in recreational activities, such as water trekking - trekking in the Mercure River -, sports climbing and paying a visit to the Botanical Gardens. However, the town is also the site of important tree rituals: The "pitu" and the "rocca." This is a ritual that takes place three times a year, in three different areas: in contrada Pedali (the first week after Easter);*

*in the town centre (the last week in August), where it is associated with the celebrations in honour of Saint Francis of Paola; and in the locality of Zarafa, for the Madonna del Soccorso (Our Lady of Perpetual Help) in mid-September. It is a marriage between two plants that is celebrated to bring prosperity to the community. Also, the La Danza del Falcetto e dei Cirii (The Dance of the Sickle and the Cirii) is a fascinating festival in the hamlet of Pedali that is held on the third Sunday in August to honour the Madonna del Carmelo (Our Lady of Mount Carmel): dancers in typical, local costumes wearing corn bands on their heads enliven the town streets and squares in the hope of a good harvest.*





We leave the historic centre from via San Francesco and as soon as we are on the Provincial Road SP4, we follow the path for the park n.912 on the left that unravels through majestic woods of beech trees, chestnut trees and fir trees. It is a path that climbs rapidly and relentlessly. We quickly hike up to 1,200 metres (with a significant difference in height!) on Mount Serra and Piano Jacco, and then to 1,300 metres in Colle dell'Abete and, it is only when we pass Timpa del Demonio that we are able to get our breath back. Next, we cross the Frido torrent and prepare for the last, challenging and steep road that will bring us to the Sanctuary of the Madonna del Pollino, in the municipality of **San Severino Lucano**.

We have arrived at last, at a height of 1,537 metres. It was tough, but we were instantly rewarded by incredible beauty: wild horses, bright colours, dream-like landscapes and majestic trees confirm that we are in the heart of the Parco Nazionale del Pollino (Pollino National Park).

### **Madonna del Pollino**

*Perched on a rocky spur at a height of 1,537 metres in the hamlet of Mezzana, in the municipality of San Severino Lucano, it is a place of worship that includes the sanctuary, as well as other buildings for pilgrims. This place of worship originated at the start of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Virgin appeared to a shepherd; later, two women went there to pray and their prayers were answered. After these events, a first chapel was built to honour the Madonna. Today, it is a place of great devotion the Virgin Mary and the statue of the Madonna, and in May every year, the statue is carried over the shoulders of the determined bearers from the town's Main Church to the sanctuary, on the sacred mount, and it is brought back again to San Severino on the second Sunday in September. The bronze statue by the artist Daphné Du Barry, overlooking the breathtaking view, near the mount, is also wonderful.*

### **San Severino Lucano**

*The centre owes its name to the Sanseverinos, a well-known family of feudatories in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, to whom the fief belonged for a long time. It offers beautiful scenic views over the Pollino, and the Magnano wood is also well worth a visit. The Peschiera, a tributary of the Frido flows here and it is also the ideal habitat for otters. We draw your attention to the slowest carousel in the world, the RB Ride that was created by the artist Carsten Höller to recover the value of time.*





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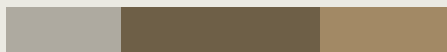


## From Madonna del Pollino to Terranova



### Tour Info

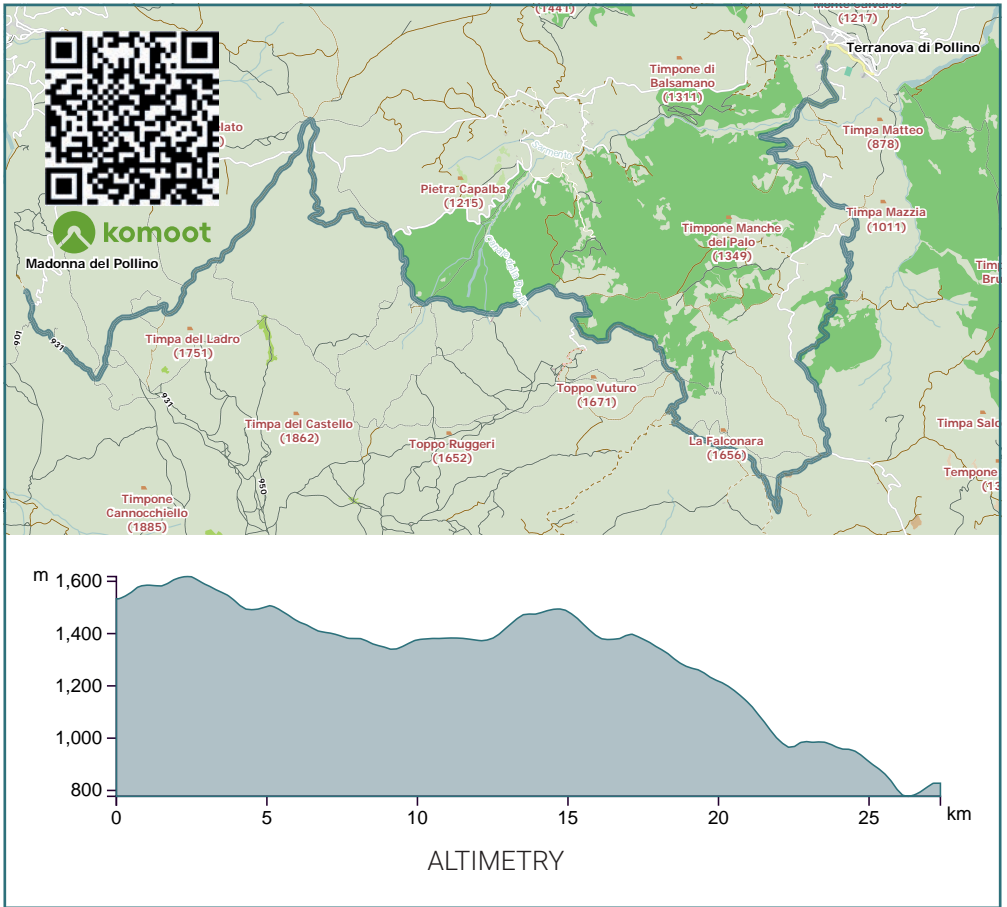
- 📍 **Starting point:** Terranova, Sanctuary of Madonna del Pollino
- 📍 **Destination:** Terranova di Pollino, Piazza Virgallita
- ➔ **Distance:** 23.5 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 8 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 440 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 1,090 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,710 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 760 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**



TARMAC ROAD- HIKING PATH- PATH

What we are going to attempt is one of the most beautiful stages of our walk, surrounding ourselves in nature. We are going to cross the Parco Nazionale del Pollino (Pollino National Park) to admire its peaks and enjoy the force of nature. A force that is also beneficial and therapeutic: when the Greek settlers reached this place, it was no coincidence that they called it *Apollineus*, Mount di Apollo, the God of Medicine.

We set the alarm for dawn so that we won't miss a single piece of this mosaic of divine beauty that stretches before our eyes, from Madonna del Pollino. Looking east (towards the Ionian Sea) or west (towards



the Tyrrhenian Sea), we are surprised by the pink hues and, surrounded by this beauty with its transcendental echoes. There are few words to describe it. We must use our eyes rather than words. We set off again from the sanctuary and after passing the refuge, we follow the SI (Italian Road) 931 to Piano di Jannacce. The road collects all the water that runs down from Serra di Crispo, where believers used to camp before the last part of the road that separated them from the Madonna. Here, the path heads south and passes by the **Giardino degli Dei (Garden of the Gods)**. Instead, we leave





the *SI (Italian Road)* and take the road on the left that leads to *Timpa del Ladro*. As we slowly walk on, the majestic peaks of Mount Pollino, the highest peaks in the south of Italy, rise like a fan: Serra di Crispo (2,054 m), Serra delle Ciavole (2130 m), Serra del Prete (2,180 m), Mount Pollino (2,248) and Serra Dolcedorme (2,267 m). It goes without saying how each of these crests should be climbed with an ad hoc trip that would mean stopping for a few more days. In this place of platonic love for



Mother Nature that straddles Basilicata and Calabria, in the largest protected area in Italy - 1,925 square kilometres! -, if we were to penetrate the mountain tops, it would offer us close encounters with wild horses and grazing cattle; it would allow us to enjoy the intense perfumes of juniper, myrtle, maples and broom, but most of all, it would enable us to see the majestic **Loricata Pines**, age-old monuments and the symbol of the Park.

We pass through a thick beechwood in the *canale di San Francesco*, crossing what is known as the *via dei Briganti (the Brigands' Path)*, (which follows the trail of Antonio Franco's band) until we reach Acqua Tremula. From here, we take a forest road to the south that crosses the wood of Cugno dell'Acero and comes to Lake Duglia, where we stop for a few minutes. The place is truly enchanting!

We set off along a path travelling east, passing in front of the Rifugio Segheria and heading on towards Toppo Vuturo (1,671 m), where the solitary, majestic Mount la *Falconara* begins to come into sight. When we get there, if we look up (and are lucky), it won't be difficult to see





## Further info

### Giardino degli Dei (Garden of the Gods)

*This particularly beautiful name indicates a natural garden, near Serra di Crispo, where you can walk past and admire millenary loricated pines. The path is dotted with imposing masses of rocks, framed by juniper bushes and spectacular Loricated Pines. It is one of the most fascinating and seductive areas in the whole of the massif, hence the name. The view over the Frido and Sarmento Valley is breathtaking, as is the view over the Pollino Planes.*

### Loricated Pine

*The *Pinus heldreichii*, often known as *pinus leucodermis* (from leuco - white - and dermis - skin) is a precious botanical rarity, a real living fossil or dinosaur of the trees that populates the tops and rocky cliffs of these mountains. First, they are majestic and straight, then, they are shaped by the relentless elements, clinging to the rocky cliffs, or dry and white, like ghosts, the Loricates create an evocative vision of life, death and rebirth, revealing the force of this wild and primordial nature. They are a millenary species with a great capacity to adapt, found at a height of 800 to over 2,200 metres and they are the only trees that can survive above the beech woods. The park symbol, the Loricated Pine, is a particularly common species*



*in various parts of the European Balkans, including Mount Olympus, but much less common here in Italy, where they are only found in this area. The particular characteristics of this species, whose name derives from the resemblance of its bark to the armour, the characteristic bodice of the Roman legionaries, is its height - it can reach up to 35 metres - and its bark, tending to light grey with reddish and brownish tones. In fact, on the sunniest days, these majestic evergreens take on a shiny appearance.*





a red kite circling in the clear sky. The mountain appears like a «massive rocky tooth poking out of a soft clay gum, the *Falconara* rises from the south with its characteristic pyramid shape» (*Giorgio Braschi*).

We are weary, but most of the journey is complete - although there are another 10 km to go! We walk around the mount - from the right - and leave the path, heading downhill, past cultivated fields, continuing along a dirt road for about two kilometres, and then on the right, we take a path and cross another wood, and then

another dirt road followed by a tarmac road in a constant, steep descent to the Sarmento, one of the largest affluents of the River Sinni. Now our journey really is at an end and, after crossing the river, only two kilometres separate us from **Terranova di Pollino**, where our effort is rewarded with a taste of a typical delicacy and some local wine. Exhausted, but content, we admire this new valley that stretches in front of us: the Sarmento Valley, the eastern edge of the Pollino.



### **Terranova di Pollino**

*Considered the "Gateway to the Park", it stretches to the slopes of Mount Calvario, situated at 900 metres, downhill, at the start of the Sarmento River. It was founded in the 16th century by the Marquis of Cerchiara and Lord of Noepoli, with the name of Terranovella di Noia - ancient name of Noepoli. The urban structure is a sort of boundary wall that reaches around the mountain, where rows of houses run parallel. The Chiesa di San Francesco di Paola (Church of St. Francis of Paola) and the sanctuary of the Madonna della Pietà (Our Lady of Mercy), dating back to the 16th century, are particularly noteworthy.*







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## From Terranova to Noepoli

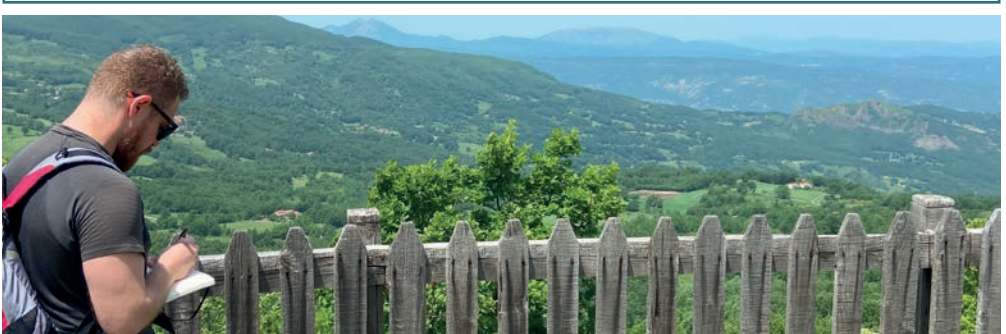
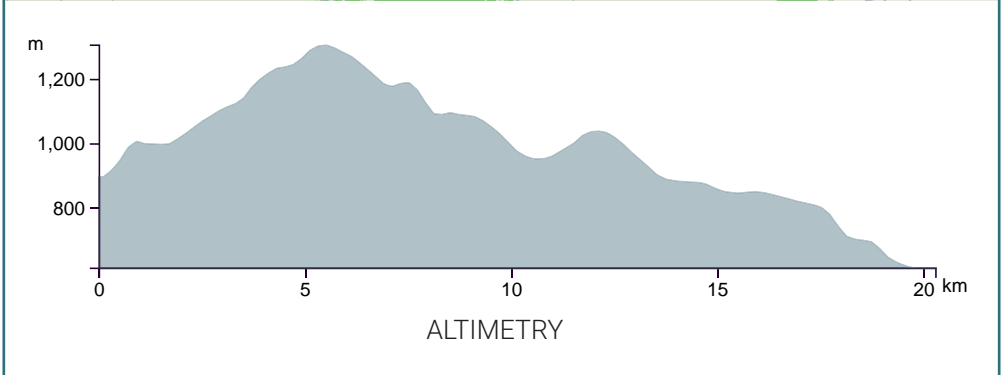
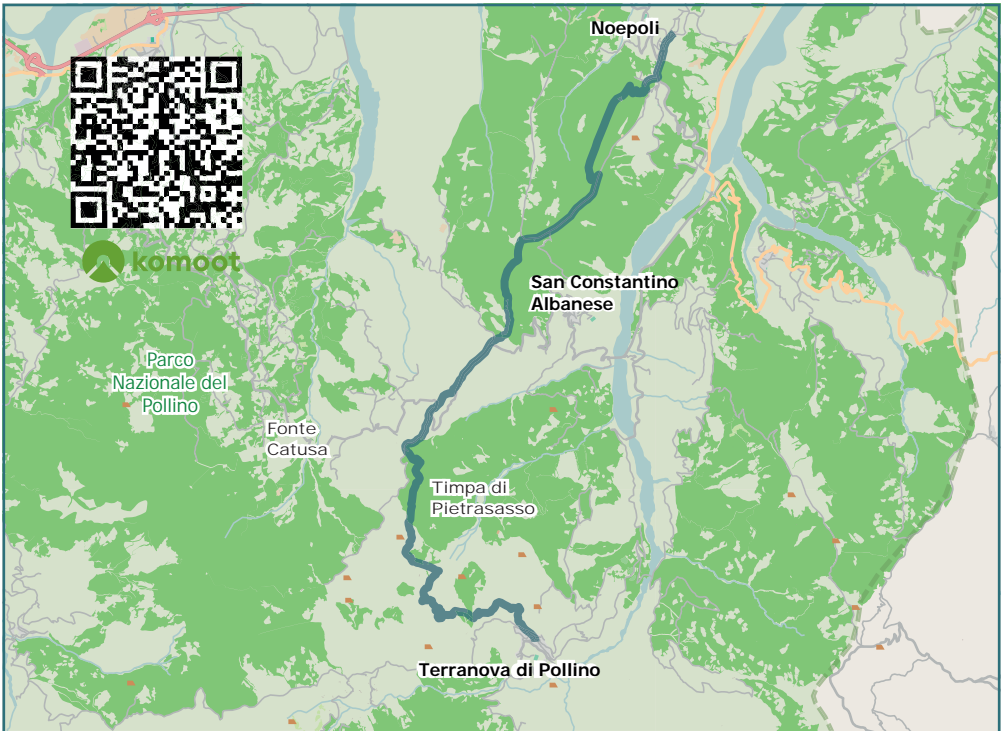


### Tour Info

- 📍 **Starting point:** Terranova di Pollino, Piazza Virgallita
- 📍 **Destination:** Noepoli, Piazza Guglielmo Marconi
- ➔ **Distance:** 20.7 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 7 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 550 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 800 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 1,305 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 614 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH- PATH

Leaving the village of the **Sarmento Valley**, we set off from piazza Virgallita along the main street in Terranova and then onto via Convento. Soon after, we follow a paved road on the right. This is where our journey begins, first unwinding to the slopes of Mount Calvario, then skirting *Timpa Angiolicchio* and finally reaching *Timpa di Pietrasasso* (1,362 metres). After this initial tough sprint - 6 km uphill! -, we pause to admire the beauty of the place. A gigantic, spell-binding monolith, surrounded by holly and turkey oaks and observed by birds of prey, towers over the Sinni Valley, scrutinising the Ionian Sea in the distance. It is a place of sheer





beauty that also helps us understand the geological history of the park since its formation into an ocean. Timpa di Pietrasasso is an outcrop of ophiolites, that is, pieces of ocean crust that were carried to the top of the mountains by the tectonic events, which led to the creation of the Apennine chain, dating back 130 million years. It is essentially a piece of the ocean in the heart of Mount Pollino!

We resume our journey, which will now be a slow and leisurely descent to Noepoli from this point on. After a few minutes, our path intersects a dirt road that we bring to your attention because of a detour. If we follow the track that we have just met, to the left, we will come to a truly



## Further info

### Sarmento Valley

*Six small municipalities lie in the Sarmento Valley: Noepoli, Cersosimo, San Costantino Albanese, San Giorgio Lucano, San Paolo Albanese and Terranova del Pollino. This place of great ethno-anthropological interest represents a millenary fusion of nature and work. Even today,*

*this area of outstanding beauty is still intact and wild and offers an incredible variety of landscapes and ecosystems. It is crowned by majestic mountains covered with beech woods, white firs, flourishing forests and ancient trails that stretch along the Sarmento, one of the greatest tributaries of the Sinni River that originates in the east of the Pollino.*



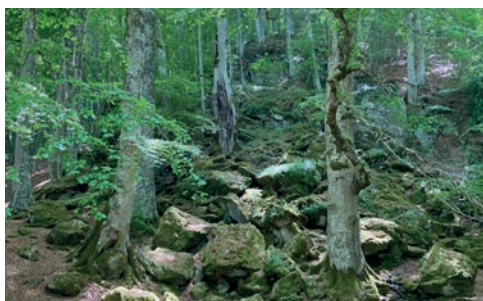
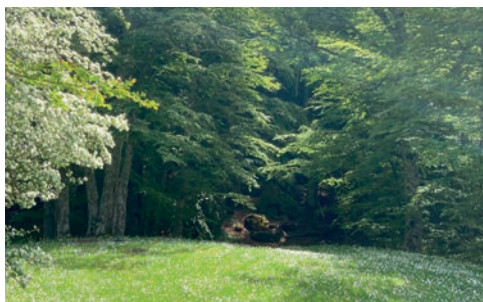
magical place: **Fonte Catusa**. Whereas, if we go straight on, continuing our descent, we will come to the *Rifugio Acquafredda* (Acquafredda Refuge) in a good half hour, but first we pass the *Belvedere Tumbarino* (Tumbarino Scenic Viewpoint) with its striking views over the Sinni Valley.

From the Rifugio Acquafredda, we head off in the direction of San Costantino Albanese until we come to the *Provincial Road SP 107*. After crossing this, we follow a track on the right that will bring us back out onto the provincial road again, where we continue for another kilometre. Now, on the left, we take a secondary road that joins a track immediately on the right, which comes back out onto *via dei Briganti* (Brigands' Path).

### Fonte Catusa (Catusa-Quelle)

*It is a real sanctuary, situated at a height of 1,280 metres. It belongs to the Municipality of San Giorgio Lucano and is surrounded by Terranova del Pollino and San Costantino Albanese - an enclave of Matera in the province of Potenza -.*

*Fonte Catusa is a charming place, immersed in a wood of age-old beech trees and vast expanses of violets and wild orchids that give the place its fairytale-like atmosphere. The spring lies at the foot of a steep slope, covered in moss and hidden in the dark woods. It is dominated by majestic beech trees with sprawling visible roots that give the place its unique charm. The area is made all the more beautiful by the faint light filtering through the leaves, and the temperature that is always just above zero.*



Soon after, we start one of the most relaxing stretches of the whole walk, an authentic Path of Well-being, with chirping sparrows, finches and age-old monumental *farnetto trees* (*Quercus frainetto*). We walk in silence contentedly, at a leisurely pace for over 10 km through the *Bosco della Farneta* (Farneta Woods). Once we are out of the woods, we make our way downhill past clay and stone, beech trees and pine trees. We cross the *canale della Farneta* (Farneta Canal) and head onto the State Road SS92. After a few bends, **Noepoli** comes into sight, sheltered and unassailable, with its mighty walls that tower over the last valley to be crossed, the Sinni Valley.

## Noepoli

*The finds of this ancient Enotrian-Lucanian centre are preserved in the Siritide Museum in Policoro. In feudal times, this ancient centre belonged to the Sanseverinos and Pignatellis of Aragon. The original centre of Noepoli – new city – is divided into two parts, the old part that stretches around the 15th-century castle, with its characteristic stone houses and outside family oven, and the village downhill known as Casale, which is characterised by its small, simple houses. The old feudal name of Noia comes from the Latin word Novium (damp and oily soil suitable for grazing) and was later replaced with the name of Noepoli following the abolition of feudalism.*







## ...One more day

From Terranova del Pollino we recommend a visit to **San Costantino Albanese** for two good reasons. The first is because it is one of the most characteristic towns of Arbreshe culture in Basilicata, which preserves the name, the lifestyle of the Albanian people who sought refuge here in over the centuries, the spoken language, traditions and culture. The second is to experience the thrill of the **Volo dell'Aquila** (Flight of the Eagle), a flight mid-air with a hang-glider fixed to a steel cable which glides at a speed of about 90 km/h over the Sarmento Valley.





DOWNLOAD THE ROUTE



# From Noepoli to Colobraro



## Tour Info

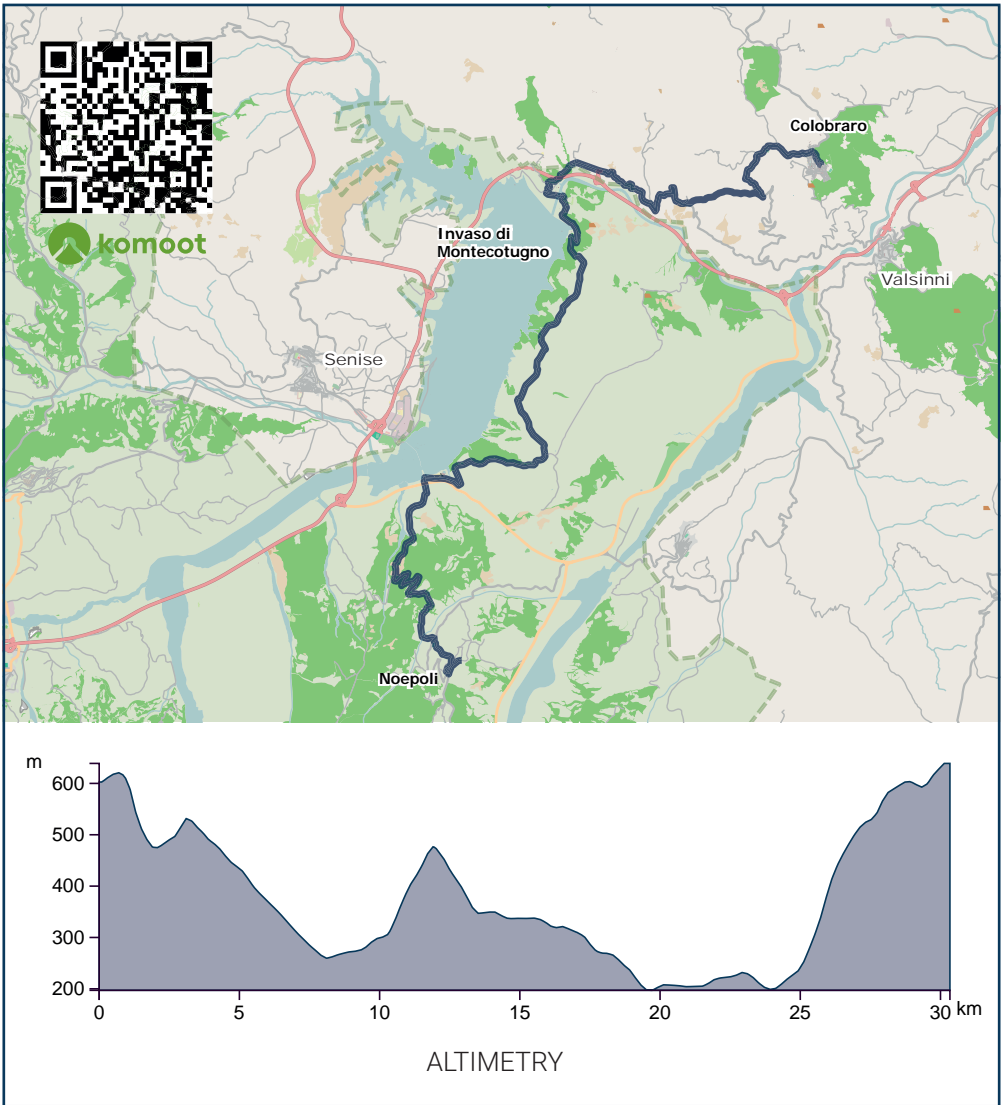
- 📍 **Starting point:** Noepoli, Piazza Guglielmo Marconi
- 📍 **Destination:** Colobraro, Count Carafa Castle
- ➔ **Distance:** 30.5 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 9 h
- ⬆️ **Total climb:** 770 m
- ⬆️ **Total descent:** 770 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 640 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 200 m
- Difficulty:** difficult 🥾🥾🥾
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - PATH



As soon as we leave the historic centre of Noepoli we turn right - from via dei Lucani - onto the municipal road of Manche Porticelli. We carry on downhill until we come to the *State Road SS92*, where we follow the signs for Senise. This slow descent offers enchanting views over the Sinni Valley that change on every bend, from ChiaroMount that rises in the distance, to the west, Senise that appears in front of us, and **Mountcotugno Dam** that dominates the surrounding landscape.

At the bottom, we cross the *State Road SS742* - carefully! - and continue, following the signs for Arena Sinni. Our



path starts here and unravels for 12 km along this service road that skirts the dam. The impressive dam is like a sort of inland sea that gives the entire landscape hues and colours that make it unique. The tarmac road unfolds across the clay land, constantly accompanied by conifer trees on the left and cultivated fields on the right. It is a beautiful path for our

eyes that soothes our soul. After passing the *Osservatorio Avifaunistico (Avifauna Observatory)*, a recreational oasis for ornithology and birdwatching enthusiasts - it is the perfect habitat for mallards, wigeon, shelducks, grey wagtails, herons, grey herons, cormorants, red kites, etc. -, we set off up a short hill towards Timpa di Castelmarino. Once we reach the top, we





## Further info

### Mountcotugno Dam

*Built between 1970 and 1982, along the Sinni, in the area around Senise, it is founded on an alluvial deposit that, in turn, covers sandstone, sand and Pliocene silt, in an area where the riverbed narrows. With a capacity of 530 million cubic metres, it is the largest packed-earth dam in Europe and represents the nodal point of the Ionian-Sinni water scheme. The dam was put into operation in 1983 and its flows are intended for various uses, from drinking and irrigation water to water for farming and industry. It is a basic system for collecting water that satisfies the needs of this valley, as well as those of neighbouring Apulia.*

### PGI "Crusco" peppers from Senise

*Crusco, red gold or zafaran (saffron), whatever you want to call it, the Senise pepper is one of the most precious treasures of Lucanian enogastronomy. A true ambassador for Basilicata around the world. The explosion of taste that this vegetable offers is indescribable. You can enjoy it on its own, with pasta, cod and sausage, and fried with egg, or with a thousand other variations that conquer the palate of all connoisseurs. Thanks to its sweet, crispy taste, it has become an indispensable treat. Hanging from the balconies, the peppers are skilfully dried in nzerte (rows), decorating the small streets in*



feel the need to comment on this stunning panorama. To the right, the Sinni unwinds and disappears into the wild landscape that it has shaped over thousands of years. At the top, perched upon a hilltop overlooking the land below, we can see Colobrarò, today's destination. Then, two colours stand out in front of us and on the left: sky blue and ochre. It is incredibly beautiful, but we must set off again! We make our way downhill, and on the left and on the right, we see old and modern farmhouses surrounded by fields of olive trees, apricots and perocca peaches, but mainly the famous (and delicious) "Cruschi" peppers from Senise.

Upon reaching the bottom of the valley, we walk behind the barrier and cross the riverbed - which is now dry -. At this point, we must take a deep breath to prepare for the climb to Colobrarò that awaits us! We

the towns that produce it, mainly, Senise. In August, the celebration, "U Strittul ru Zafaran" ("The Street of the Pepper") is dedicated to this typical product, where you can taste these crispy products in a variety of different dishes.

### The Land of Magic

Renowned for the superstitions that called it the "town that must not be named", because, according to popular belief, if you did, it would bring you years of bad luck. Pronouncing the name of Colobrarò has been a taboo in Lucanian society for many years due to strange stories and superstitions. However, Colobrarò is a vital place in Lucania's ethnoanthropological geography; think, for example, of the studies on magic carried out here by Ernesto De Martino. Its inhabitants cleverly succeeded in taking advantage of its ill-fated reputation, dedicating a whole series of cultural events, most importantly, the "Sogno di una notte di quel paese" ("Dream of a Night in That Town"), which exorcises and self-mockingly plays on this disparaging belief.



immediately turn right and, after passing under the state road flyover, we find ourselves back on the State Road SS104 - which is now deserted and broken -, following the signs for Valsinni. We stay on this historic route that once connected the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Ionian Sea, and after 3 km, we see a secondary road that rises on the left. We follow this road and continue along the track that goes through *Petto della Serra*. After 2 km - and a lot of effort! -, we are back on the tarmac road and turn left onto the Provincial Road SP154. One last stint, one last climb, and finally there it is: **Colobrarò, the land of magic!**





DOWNLOAD THE ROUTE



## From Colobraro to Tursi



### Tour Info

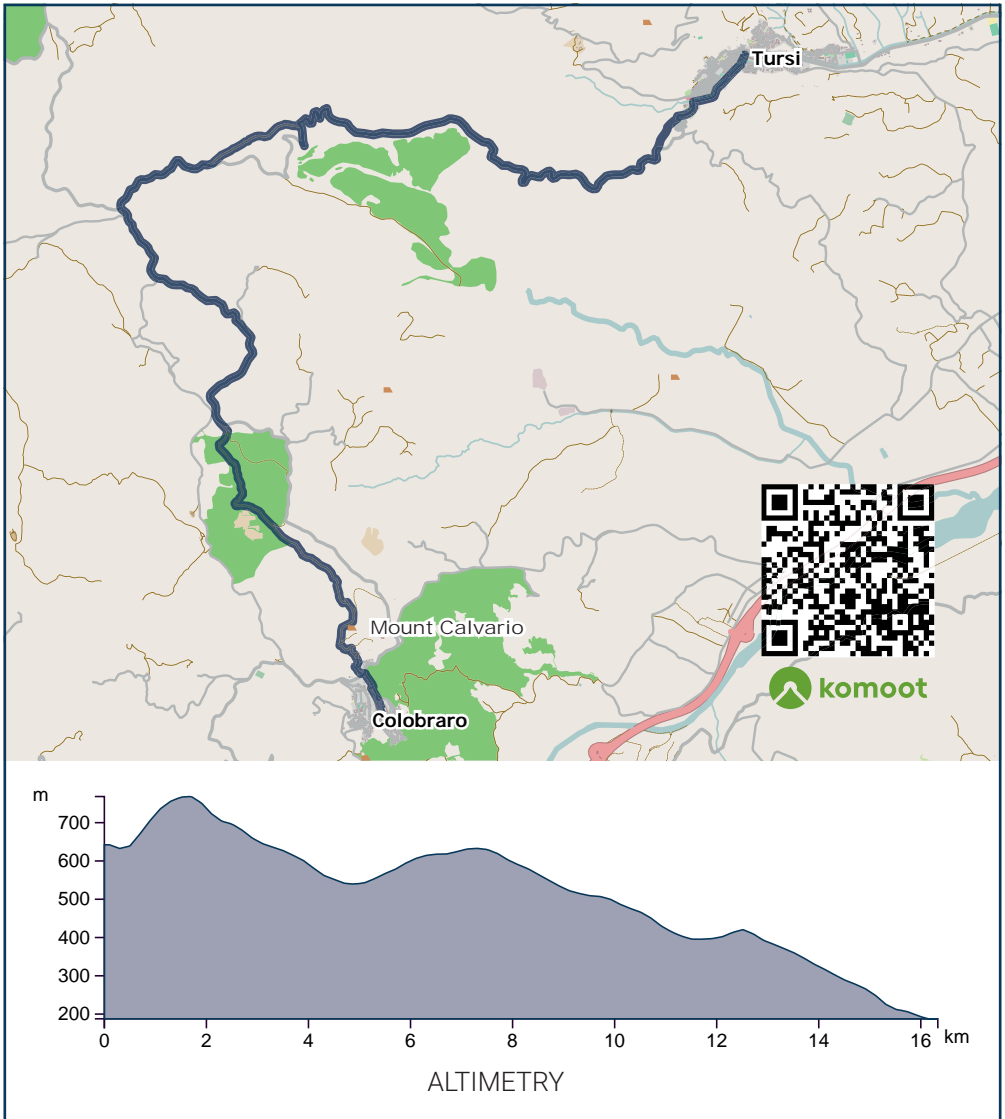
- 📍 **Starting point:** Colobraro, Count Carafa Castle
- 📍 **Destination:** Tursi, Piazza SS. Maria D'Anglona
- ➔ **Distance:** 16.4 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 6 h
- ⚡ **Total climb:** 250 m
- ⚡ **Total descent:** 700 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 770 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 190 m
- Difficulty:** easy 🧡🧡🧡
- Road type:**

TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH - PATH

The view overlooking the valley that “controls” Valsinni, below, is a balcony over this wild land that continues from the Pollino mountains down to the Ionian coasts. We are captivated as we walk over the ancient cobblestones of this charming town, past the ancient buildings, castle ruins and precious churches set in stone: it is a pleasant discovery! This is the real magic of this enchanting place.

We set off again along viale Vittorio Veneto and at the end – once we are out of the historic centre, before reaching the *Provincial Road SP154* – we follow the paved road that climbs towards *Mount Calvario*. Just before we reach the top, we





turn left onto a track that crosses Serra Cortina, bringing us out onto the *Provincial Road SP154*. This is the road that will take us straight to Tursi.

We walk downhill along this road that unravels through the clay hills, covered with majestic olive trees and enchanting

**Gardens** straddling the Sinni and Agri valleys. For centuries people have taken advantage of this fertile land, with its mild climate and proximity to the sea, to gather delicious fruits, which are today a symbol of Lucania's farming tradition. There are a few detours along this road that we stay



## Further info

### The Gardens

*The Gardens are Lucania's lands that have been cultivated according to ancient rural practices. These treasure troves of biodiversity and Slow Food Presidia are rich in orchards, olive groves and vineyards. The Gardens stretch between Tursi, Moltabano and Grassano (on the hill just behind the Ionian), exploiting the particular conformation of the land (clay and fertile land) and the favourable position (mild climate that benefits from the sea currents). Colobraro is also of interest for the production of the Signora della Valle del Sinni (Lady of the Sinni Valley) pear, which is valued for its sweet and aromatic taste, while Tursi is of interest for the Staccia Orange, which was imported by the Saracens in around the year one thousand, and the Percorco Settembrino peach, which has been grown in situ since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

on until we reach our destination: the first is after about 8.5 km and intersects *Cozzo Tre Querce*; the second is after about 15 km - on the outskirts of Tursi - and crosses the pinewood, coming out directly into the town.

The beauty of Tursi suddenly comes into view. It was founded by the Arabs in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, on a sandstone hill, between the Sinni and Agri rivers. Tursi soon became a destination popular with the Saracens in the years that followed. The warm stone of the Rabatana, which overlooks the town



centre from above, is the emblem of this millenary domination. However, besides the architectural influence on the town, the Arabs left clear traces in the city's material and immaterial culture: from the terracing - agricultural and urban - and the import of the genotype of the *Staccia orange* (citrus sinensis), to the language that still preserves traces and influences of the Islamic world. Tursi is also the birthplace of Albino Pierro, a Lucanian poet who was nominated several times for the *Nobel Prize* (of interest is the *Parco Letterario e il Museo della Poesia Pierriana* – Literary Park and the Pierriana Poetry Museum), as well as the Bishop's Seat that was also important in the 10th century. A visit to the *Cattedrale dell'Annunziata* (Cathedral of the Annunciation) is a must. It was founded in the fifteenth century and is home to various artistic treasures. Finally, the beautiful *Convent of St. Francis*, built in the fourteenth century just outside the

### The Rabatana

*The most well-known quarter of Tursi is the Rabatana, from rabat, which means fortified place in Arabic. The sheltered and inaccessible quarter, which literally spreads over the built-up centre, stands on the ruins of the ancient castle that dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It is a maze of steep streets and winding stairways that lead to deep precipices and scenic views over the valley. From the highest point, where there is the Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore (Church of St. Mary Major), which was founded by the Basilians, you can reach the historic centre, further downhill by the stairway known as à pietrizze, which is studded with important noble-family buildings. The Rabatana presented its candidacy to become a UNESCO World heritage site a few years ago.*







Rabatana, is also noteworthy. After being abandoned for a long period of time, it has now been classified as a *National Monument*. The town is a labyrinth of small streets and alleyways that unravel through the town's maze, past modest houses, buildings, and churches, bearing witness to the historical importance and cultural value of this place where Christians and Muslims have lived in peace for years.



### ...One more day

*Valsinni* is built on the opposite bank of the Sinni, in front of the town of Colobrarò. The history of this town, anciently known as Favale, is inextricably linked to the history of Isabella Morra. In the 16th century, this poet from Lucania was barbarically killed by her brothers because of her platonic love for Diego Sandoval de Casto, Lord of Bollita, present-day Nova Siri. At the age of just fifteen, young Isabella was caught writing love poems to him, which unleashed the violence of her family and ended up costing her her life. The exploits, poetry and sad and fascinating story of this



*unfortunate girl are remembered by the Parco Letterario Isabella Morra (Isabella Morra Literary Park), a route that unwinds from the heart of the medieval town of Valsinni to the castle, where the Morra family*

*once lived. Today, Isabella, whose work was greatly admired by Benedetto Croce, is one of the most important poetic voices of the 16th century and the symbol of female poetry in the region.*





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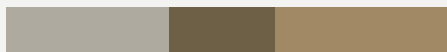


## From Tursi to Policoro



### Tour Info

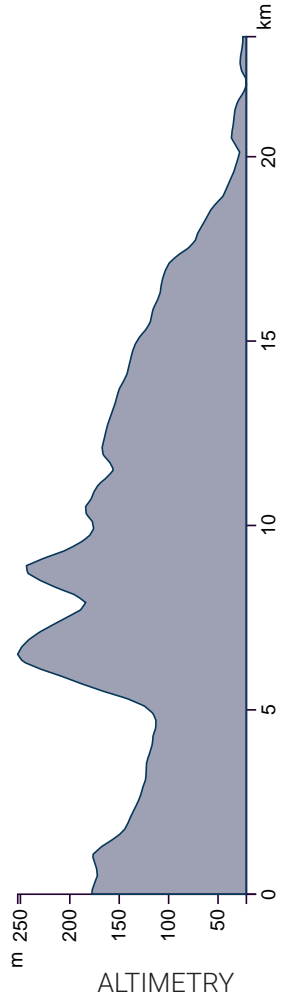
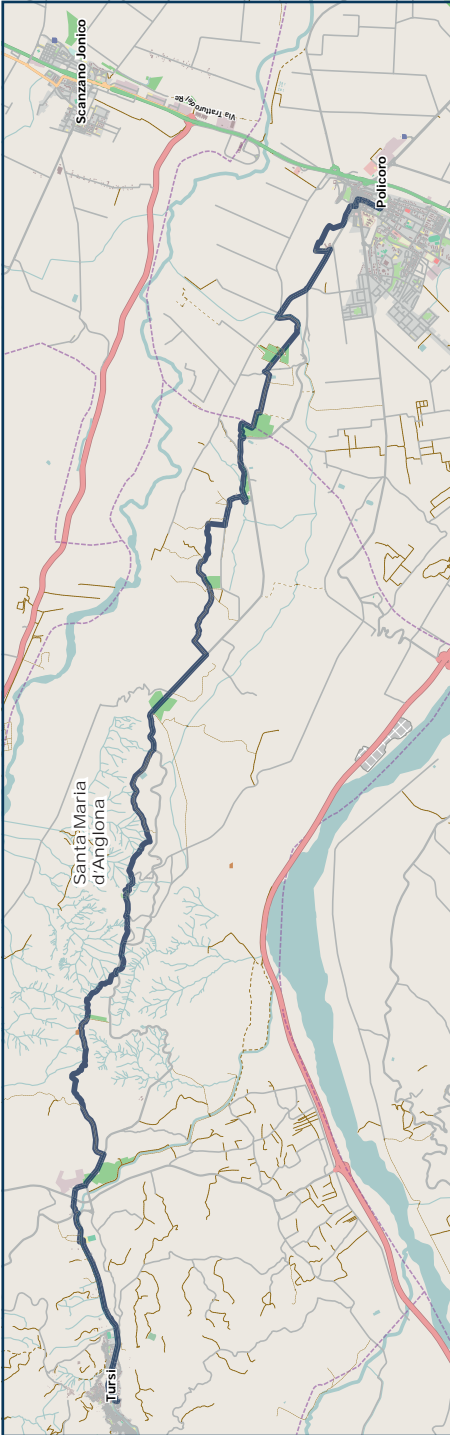
- 📍 **Starting point:** Tursi, Piazza SS. Maria D'Anglona
- 📍 **Destination:** Policoro, Public Garden
- ➔ **Distance:** 23.2 km
- 🕒 **Duration:** 7 h
- ⬆️ **Total climb:** 230 m
- ⬆️ **Total descent:** 380 m
- 📏 **Maximum height:** 250 m
- 📏 **Minimum height:** 20 m
- Difficulty:** intermediate
- Road type:**



TARMAC ROAD - HIKING PATH - PATH

We set off from the cathedral, first along via Roma, and then along via Eraclea, crossing the Pescogrosso canal at the first pedestrian bridge. We continue along the pavement in via Sant'Anna until we come to the sports field. Now, we cross back over to the other side of the canal and onto a path that comes out onto the Tursi Rabatana provincial road, on the right. We bear right and, at the first crossroad, we head on for Policoro, along the Tursi-Policoro provincial road. After 500 meters, on the left, we take the path that unwinds - with a considerable difference in height! - through the Badlands, crossing Croce d'Anglona. It is







## Further info

### The Badlands

*The Badlands are a geomorphological phenomenon of erosion of the land that is formed on clay type rocks with scarce vegetation where deep furrows are created along the side of a mountain or hill due to the action of water in time. The result is an unusual landscape that has developed over the course of millions of years. They can be found along the eastern side of the southern Apennines, but in Basilicata they symbolise an exclusive place at a landscape-geomorphological level. In fact, the Badlands blend with the Mediterranean maquis, creating unique enchanting places. The Riserva Regionale dei Calanchi Montalbano Jonico (Montalbano Jonico Regional Badlands Reserve) - slightly further north of Tursi - is one of the most important protected areas in Italy.*

### Sanctuary of Santa Maria d'Anglona

*Built on a hill in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, at a height of 263 metres, 11 km from the centre of Tursi, it is one of the region's most important medieval architectural monuments. In fact, it is so important that it was classified as a National Monument in 1931. The splayed Romanesque doorway that leads into the church is surmounted by an arch made of tuff above which you can admire some bas-reliefs depicting the Lamb and the Evangelists, while at the sides you*

a scorching day and walking across this arid, moon-like landscape makes us feel as though we are in a desert. After a while, we come back out onto the provincial road and a little further on, we follow the signs for the **Sanctuary of Santa Maria d'Anglona**. The place stands on a hill, halfway between the rivers Sinni and Agri, on the ruins of the legendary Greek city of *Pandosia*. The sight of the place gives us a complete view over the surrounding valleys and villages: from Colobrarò, Valsinni and Rotondella to Nova Siri, Montalbano and Policoro. Then, on the horizon, where the straw-yellow Badlands blend with the light sandy shore, and the bright blue Ionian Sea merges with the pastel blue sky, the vision becomes sublime, almost metaphysical. However Santa Maria d'Anglona is also a jewel of medieval architecture, with its splayed Romanesque doorway and the precious works of art preserved within.

After a pleasant break, we set off again towards the valley. As soon as we are out



of the woods that surround this sacred place, we follow a dirt road, on the left, that comes out again onto the provincial road. At the hottest time of the day, with the burning tarmac, we cross fields sown with the first produce of the season and greenhouses teeming with the famous (and sweet) **Candonga Strawberry**, the undisputed queen of Lucanian farming. After 2 km on the burning tarmac - near a large barn and some stables -, we turn off to the left following the dirt track, which takes us off the burning provincial road for 4 kilometres. Every centimetre of this land is used for farming, and all the fruit and vegetables that come from this flourishing land almost seem to be beckoning us to taste them. After an hour, we find ourselves back on the provincial road. After a few metres, we leave this road and start walking along a different stretch of cultivated fields. This proves the importance of the **Piana di Metaponto**, a thriving land that has been known for its prosperity since antiquity. So, we walk on, following the tracks that separate the different farms until we come to viale Matera and then to via Cristoforo Colombo. This is the last stretch of road

*can see the apostles, Sts. Peter and Paul. The valuable paintings that decorate the inner walls recall episodes from the Old and New Testaments, while saints are depicted on the columns. The central nave, instead, is adorned with the whole cycle of the Genesis, dating to the 16th century, and figures of saints from the 15th century can be seen on the columns.*

### **The Candonga Strawberry**

*Produced from natural crossbreeds of the prized Sabrosa-Candongia strawberry, it has found its perfect*

*habitat in Metaponto's optimal climatic conditions, which has made it a unique strawberry. It is grown in greenhouses and accounts for 90% of all the land's production variety. The fruit, with its intense aroma and sweet taste, is bright red and rich in vitamins, with juicy and firm flesh. This distinctive exclusively Lucanian product, which was awarded the Candonga Fragola Top Quality® mark, has conquered the tables of all Italian and international markets. This strawberry, which is grown from February to June, has a long shelf life and can keep for up to 7 days.*

### **Metaponto Plain**

*The name of the plain originates from the ancient Greek city of Metaponto, and also indicates the historic region where the Magna Graecia civilisation developed, with the three great archaeological areas of Metapontum (Bernalda), Heraclea (Policoro) and Siris (Nova Siri). The plain overlooks the Ionian Sea, into which the region's four rivers flow: the Sinni, Agri, Basento and Bradano. It is the only plain of importance in Basilicata. The Mycenaean described it as a bountiful land. Then, when the Greeks arrived in the 6th century BCE., archaeological research showed that this plain totalled about 300 farms and many necropolises. It is also known as the "California of South Italy" and its quality produce finds an important market of reference abroad. Today, it is one of the most celebrated fruit and vegetable-growing areas in Italy.*



that skirts the *Parco Archeologico di Siris Herakleia* (*Siris Herakleia Archaeological Park*) and passes in front of the *Museo Nazionale Archeologico della Siritide* (*Siritide National Archaeological Museum*), finally bringing us to the centre of present-day Policoro, the town that was born on the ruins of ancient Heraclea, facing the Ionian Sea and the final destination of our journey. Now it is true: our journey has come to an end!

In this last endeavour, my soul is overwhelmed with a host of feelings that merge until they are beyond recognition, from melancholy and joy to excitement and sadness. We have crossed dozens of villages, waded across countless rivers, admired various landscapes, scaled impressive mountain peaks, traversed

numerous valleys, and enjoyed the specialities of Lucanian cuisine. Now, in the final step of this adventure, we are weary, and the end of this trip should raise our spirits, but in truth, a bitter aftertaste prevails! So, to comfort ourselves, we walk another 6 km that separate the centre of Policoro from the sea, to get a clear idea of the journey that we have completed, starting on the Tyrrhenian coast, and ending on the Ionian coast, from the impervious coves of Maratea to the paradisiacal beaches of Policoro. Now, all that we need to do before this stretch of golden sand is to dive into these crystalline waters and remember, once more, the person who inspired all this.

Yes, you would have liked it.  
Goodbye Fabio!





## ...One more day

The Ionian coast with its golden sand and crystal-clear sea is a true paradise that stretches over 35 km. The shallow sandy seabeds are the perfect destination for holidays spent relaxing in waters that have been designated as a Blue Flag Beach on several occasions. Apart from the clear sea and beaches covered with areas of Mediterranean maquis and stunning pinewoods, this shore is a gem because of its archaeology. Metaponto is an emblematic site.

Metapontum, which literally means "set between two rivers" - the Bradano and Basento -, was built on the coast of Bernalda. Dating back to the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. it was founded by the Greek settlers of Achaia and became one of the most important cities of Magna Graecia. It owes its importance to its incredibly fertile lands. Traces of a glorious past made of heroes and divinities, warriors and philosophers are impressed in the archaeological area and in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Metaponto (Metaponto Archaeological Museum). Most of all, we should remember Pythagoras, the great mathematician who founded his school in Metaponto and died in 495 BCE, but the real symbol of the ancient Greek city is the remarkable Tavole Palatine (Palatine Tables), fifteen Doric-style columns, the ruins of the Temple of Hera, one of the greatest examples of a place of worship in Magna Graecia.



## ...One more day

Public buses leave Policoro every day for towns that are well worth a visit:

- Matera.

Services run regularly from Policoro to Matera for those wishing to reach the City of the Sassi and connect to the other parts of Camminare in Basilicata (Walking in Basilicata).

- Pisticci

Some scholars trace the etymology of Pisticci back to the Greek Pistoikos, faithful place (from Pistis: faith and Oikos: place), because during the war between Taranto and Rome - in 291 BCE -, Pisticci was the only Metaponto town that remained faithful to Taranto. The historic centre spreads over the hills of Serra Cipolla, San Francesco and Mount Como, overlooking the moon-like landscape of the Calanchi (Badlands) and the valleys of the Basento and Cavone rivers. Of interest is the Abbey of Santa Maria del Casale built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Chiesa di Sant'Antonio (the Church of St. Antony) and the Convento di Santa Maria delle Grazie (Convent of Our Lady of Graces). In the historic centre, Palazzocchio and Palazzo Giannantonio are particularly important, while "Terrazzino del

*Melograno*, characterised by its arches and splendid murals, is also particularly noteworthy. Pisticci is surrounded by a system of defensive towers, such as Torre Bruni, Accio and Minnaia, and the Castle of San Basilio is also well worth visiting.

It was built in the 6<sup>th</sup> century by the Basilian monastic community as a fortified farmhouse and later transformed by the Normans into a proper castle with the construction of the central keep. The vast area is divided into important hamlets, like Marconia, where we draw your attention to Piazza Elettra which was built in 1940. It is an example of a rural square dating back to the fascist period that complies with the standards dictated by the regime. Also worthy of note are Pisticci Scalo and Marina di Pisticci that extends from the mouth of the Basento, where we can find the Porto degli Argonauti (Port of the Argonauts), to the mouth of the Cavone with the splendid beaches of San Basilio, San Teodoro and Macchia. Thanks to the Vena family, one of Basilicata's iconic products also originated from Pisticci: Amaro Lucano.

- Bernalda

The town was built in around the sixteenth century on the ruins of the ancient town of Camarda, a cluster of houses to where the population of Metaponto - today a hamlet of Bernalda - moved at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE after it was destroyed by the Romans. Bernalda, hence the name, was founded by the baron, Bernardino de Bernaudo, King Alfonso II of Aragon's secretary, who decided to move the village of Camarda to the area of the castle. Today it is known as the hometown of Francis Ford Coppola's grandparents, and the director is extremely fond of this place. The town lies between the Bradano and Basento rivers, on a steep plateau that leads down to the sea and from which you can enjoy a breathtaking view over the Ionian Sea and the neighbouring district of Metaponto. Walking around the town, past the noble buildings, you will see the majestic Palazzo Margherita, a historic residence dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which belongs to its exceptional owner, Francis Ford Coppola. Bernalda Castle is also extremely impressive and very interesting.





# Fabio Limongi

Fabio was born in Maratea on 15<sup>th</sup> July in 1972. From an early age his curious, restless nature and desire to discover the world led him to look away from his schoolbooks to the mountain peaks of Mont Sirino that he observed in awe from his bedroom. In his youth, he discovered his passion for the mountains, photography as well as motorcycles. After obtaining his surveyor's diploma, military service offered him the chance of a taste of adrenalin, when he was assigned to the paratrooper unit in the legendary *Folgore Paratroopers Brigade!* In that period, he enrolled in the CAI (Italian Alpine Club) and promoted various activities. He also acted as a catalyst for dozens of young people that he metaphorically pushed towards the association, and to whom he transmitted his passion for the mountains. It was from this passion that he managed to make a living. In 2007, he became an *Official AIGAE* (Italian Association of Nature and Walkine Guides) *Guide*, recognised both by the Parco Nazionale del Pollino (Pollino National Park) and the Parco Nazionale dell'Appennino Val d'Agri-Lagonegrese (Appennino Val d'Agri-Lagonegrese National Park). The following year he became a *Ski Instructor* and opened the first official ski school on *Mount Sirino*. Soon after, he became one of the first qualified Instructors for Teaching Skiing to the Disabled. Fabio was always ready to help others, put a smile on their faces and reach out to those in difficulty. When he married Katia,



the love of his life, in 2008, he set aside part of his wedding gifts to build a school and help children in Nepal.

In 2011, he started working as an entrepreneur and opened his first travel agency in Lauria and then, a branch in the region's capital. As a *Tour Operator*, he constantly proposed innovative and transversal tourist packages and events for his customers, from night-time snowshoeing and trekking to canyoning and "vie ferrate" (protected climbing routes). His projects that attracted tourists from far and wide, were aimed at promoting the land he was so in love with, and his ventures ranged from Mount Sirino, Mont Pollino and Mount Vulture to the Lucanian Dolomites, Matera and

the Sarmiento Valley, as well as beyond regional borders. There is not one tour operator in this region - and further afield - who Fabio did not know and with whom he hadn't planned or created something! During that period, he became a technical supervisor for the ski-lifts on Mount Sirino and manager of the *Volo dell'Aquila* (Flight of the Eagle) in San Costantino Albanese. He was a force of nature, dedicated to activities and schemes to which he was fully committed on several fronts. Every day of the year Fabio was somewhere. His life was a constant discovery!

In 2014, he became one of the promoters of the *Cammino verso Matera 2019*, (Walk to Matera 2019) where dozens of young people from all over the region set off for the City of the Sassi to support its candidacy for the European Capital of Culture. In that context, Fabio's charismatic figure emerged as a giant, and there is not one group – of specialists or enthusiasts – that didn't refer to him.

After years of training and undertaking voluntary work in the Alpine and *Speleological Rescue Unit of Basilicata*, in 2015, he qualified as a *Basilicata Helicopter Rescue Expert*. At the same time, he continued his photography training courses and certifications to use drones, video cameras and everything connected to it. His goal was simple: to convey his passion with every means possible. He constantly promoted Basilicata through every innovative and technological channel, from reportage, promotional videos to social campaigns and meetings. Fabio was a volcano of ideas, many of which were implemented thanks to his vision and perseverance despite the many difficulties that systematically came up. Bad news did not discourage him, almost as if he was



prepared to overcome every obstacle, whether bureaucratic and technical. It was in his nature: to go one step further! Even today, we can still see attractions in the area, such as the *Falesia di Lauria* (which is dedicated to him), the *via Ferrata di Cristo Redentore* (Protected Climbing Route of Christ the Redeemer) and the Maratea Skywalk. These structures would probably not even exist had it not been for his decisive contribution. He also worked as a location man on important film productions, including *No Time To Die*. Fabio was also a marathon runner, passionate about sport, and one of the few to succeed in climbing the Pollino's 5 mountain peaks - all over 2,000 metres! - in fewer than 6 hours. In short, Fabio was many things: a driving force of ideas, a catalyst for people, a businessman, a philanthropist, an instructor and a true *Mountain Giant*.

Indeed, the Mountain with a capital letter that Fabio revered: Mount Sirino and it was from the top of his office (as he liked to call it), that this day-dreaming child had learnt to tie his boots, climb, and suffer. From Mount Sirino, he climbed Gran Sasso d'Italia (2,912 metres), Etna (3,329 metres) and Mont Blanc (4,696 metres). He also had another great dream: *the Seven Summits*. He started with the climb to the top of Island Peak (6,189 metres) in 2005, on the Himalayan chain in Nepal; in 2009, he climbed Aconcagua (6,962 metres) on the Cordillera of the Andes in Argentina, the highest mountain in America and in the Southern Hemisphere. In 2011, he continued on Kilimanjaro (5,895 metres), the highest mountain on the African continent; then, in 2015, Mount Elbrus (5,642 metres) on the Caucasus mountains, the highest mountain in Russia and in Europe according to some





geographical covenants. He conquered these mountain peaks one by one, while making plans for the future, Antarctica, Japan...but then came 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021. It was a cold, dull, grey winter's afternoon. Fabio was on a trip with some friends in the Mountain, on those snowy peaks that he knew better than his own home.

It was a trip from which he would never return.

That Mountain is home to the soul of the man who loved it more than anyone else, and today, one of those mountain peaks bears his name: Fabio Limongi Mountain Peak. Those mountain peaks that he studied, loved, and imagined as a child have become the guardians of the *Mountain Giant's spirit*.



*This publication is the result of a long and hard physical and emotional effort dedicated to Fabio Limongi. Thanks go to all those who cooperated on the achievements of this book. A particular mention goes to Fabio's family, in particular to Katia and Claudia, for their precious and continued support.*



*"Everyone wants to live on top of a mountain, but happiness is found along the way".*

Fabio Limongi





## Photographic References

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Matera  
Via De Viti De Marco, 9 - Tel + 39 0835 331983

Basilicata Open Space  
Matera, Piazza Vittorio Veneto -  
Tel +39 0835 406464; +39 0835 408816

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