

Guida Turistica del Molise

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Realizzare questa guida ci è costato tanto, ma siamo stati anche fortunati, perché la fatica è stata ripagata dal Bello che abbiamo incontrato lungo il nostro [Viaggio in Molise](#).

Chi vuole può utilizzare liberamente i nostri testi.

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A **Flavio**

Region of **Molise**



Casacalenda

The town is situated amidst irregular hills, wheat fields and secular olive yards.

It has ancient origins, probably back to the second Punic War (217 B.C.) and it has always been an important center of trade.

The historical center dominated by the ducal palace, enriched by the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, keeping an altar-piece of the XVI century reproducing the Nativity, likely belonging to Fabrizio Santafede, and a Virgin with the Child belonging to Gamba.

But the relationship between art and Casacalenda is still at the present very strong.

In various spots of the municipal territory, some contemporary art installations have been created giving life to an outdoor museum that's a rarity in Italy.

To see

LIPU Reserva

It is about a wood area of 150 hectares constituted of oak, "Roverella" and "Farnetto", where one can see the typical species of undergrowth like the cornel tree, the plum tree and the hawthorn.

In spring a great variety of flowers (primrose, poets narcissus and thirteen varieties of orchids) create a multi-colour carpet, undisputed realm of butterflies (80 species of day varieties detected and about 350 the night ones).



Casacalenda



Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, Casacalenda



LIPU Reserve, Casacalenda

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Region of **Molise**



Since 2001 a Wild Fauna Recover Center welcomes wild animals which are having a hard time, most of them are predators (kestrel, buzzard, owls), but even foxes, hedgehogs, turtles and bats too.

Museum of "Bufù"

The instrument makes a sound when the stick is rubbed by the player who needs to have his two hands soaked or even equipped of a damp wet cloth, making this way the leather vibrate it comes out a strange dark sound, giving name to the instrument itself: Bufù.

In the City Hall palace it has been installed a multimedia museum dedicated to the instrument, which is possible to hear late on the Last Night of the year and the morning of the First Day of the New Year, when the small spontaneous orchestras cross the entire town.

GERIONE

About 2-3 km away from Casacalenda at the top of a hill there are the ruins of the early Middle Ages fortification of Gerione.

Also Polibio and Livio have already told about a site: GERONIUM, as a little village of "Frentani", conquered by Hannibal in 217 B.C.

Today, thanks to the excavations, it is possible to admire the main door of the built-up area, some parts of the fortification wall, a big floored court and the remains of some houses.



LIPU Reserve, Casacalenda



Museum of Bufù, Casacalenda



Gerione, Casacalenda

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Region of **Molise**



Castel San Vincenzo

It is a very small Middle Ages center with less than 600 residents, at the feet of the Mainarde Mountains, in the National Park of Abruzzo Lazio and Molise.

Here the ancient Benedictine monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno used to stand up, it is one of the most important in the Middle Ages.

By visiting the archaeological area one can see the frescos in the Epiphanius Crypt, among the most relevant example of European medieval painting.

Castel San Vincenzo is nature and wilderness either. From the Valle di Mezzo with its woods, its water sources, its fauna (wolves, bears and eagles etc.), many paths start here, joining the top of Monte Mare, the Mainarde mountains highest peak.

A striking natural sight is offered by the artificial lake, its waters are sort of a mirror where the mountains reflect in. That's another postcard landscape all year round.

To see

Monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno

There's plenty of news about the monastery ensemble coming from the "Chronicon Volturnense", a miniaturized code kept in the Vatican Apostolic Library, according to it the monastery was funded by three noble people from Benevento, they were Paldo, Taso and Tato, between the VII and VIII century.

Subsequently Charlemagne in 787 allowed the monastery particular privileges, comparing it to the most important abbeys in Europe.

The IX century is the one characterized by the vastest expansion, but by a crisis too.



Castel San Vincenzo



Lake, Castel San Vincenzo



Archeological area, Monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno

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Region of **Molise**



In the first mid-century the area hosted about 350 monks, ten are the churches and the land properties spread all over the Mid-Southern Italy.

Later a earthquake in 860, straightforward a sack by a group of Arabs, serving Athanasius II Duke-Bishop in Naples, brought a dose of poverty.

After many centuries when the monks had to go through the breaking down of the monastic properties, in 1699 the area went eventually under the jurisdiction of the Monte Cassino abbey.

The sightseeing of the area starts by crossing the Ponte della Zingara (trans. The Bridge of the Gipsy) above the Volturno river.

Opposite the ruins of the Northern Church, in its back side there's the entry to the Epiphanius Crypt.

The Crypt has a Greek cross shape, is covered with a barrel vault and it is decorated with a wonderful cycle of frescos, among the most important of the Middle Ages painting.

Crossing what was supposed to be a portico court with a garden, one reaches for the refectory, with a gorgeous bricks floor very well preserved.

On its backs another room called Sala dei Profeti (Prophets hall) because of pictures cycle portraying twelve characters standing up in line, being the twelve prophets.

These area is completed by a polygonal structured assumed to be a monks' collective lavatory and the rooms of the kitchens.

A little beyond this, it is possible to see the abbey of San Vincenzo Maggiore, gathering the real basilica, a series of workshops and Santa Restituta Chapel. To be seen is the pictorial decoration in Joshua's Crypt.

The sightseeing ends in the ensemble of the Nuova Abbazia (New Abbey), going back to the XII century, but entirely reconstructed after the bombing attacks of WW2.

The access to Saint Epiphanius Cryot is restricted, thus is advisable to plan your visit. Call us!



Epiphanius Crypt, Monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno



Sala dei Profeti, Monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno



New Abbey, Monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno

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Region of **Molise**



Castelpetroso

Crossing "Porta del Parco", the only still-existing among the three original doors, visitors will enter a small medieval village with stone alleys and houses, small squares and the big parish church of San Martino with its portal of the 14th century.

In the centre there is the old Norman castle, in which two big rooms at the ground floor are still existing. They host the "Presepe Artistico Molisano" and a small peasant culture museum.

We recommend you to visit San Martino Church.

On the main altar you will admire a blue and gold mosaic representing St. Martin donating his coat to a poor man.

The statue of Madonna Addolorata, instead, is placed on the minor altar, surrounded by seven paintings made by Trivisonno.

The big 17th century painting in the left aisle representing the deposition is also valuable. It constitutes an excellent example of the Neapolitan School and someone says it was made by the great Solimena.

The Presepe Artistico Molisano is worth a visit too. It was made in 1975 and its characters, who are busy doing the ancient activities, are dressed with 18th century costumes from some Molise villages. In this Presepe some of the most important monuments of the region are reproduced.

The representation is made magic by the plays of lights and animations reproducing the flowing of an entire day, from dawn to sunset.

The Santuario dell'Addolorata is placed out of the village. It is a work of art visited by many pilgrims.



Castelpetroso



Church of San Martino, Castelpetroso



Presepe Artistico, Castelpetroso

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Region of **Molise**



To see

Santuario dell'Addolorata

The Santuario dell'Addolorata in Castelpetroso is situated at the foot of Mount Patalecchia.

The slender neogothic structure and the white stones make the church stand out from the green of the surrounding woods and capture the visitors' gaze.

The sanctuary was built near the place where Mary appeared in 1888, which is reachable through a path called "Via Matris" going up the mount.

The layout of the church clearly alludes to Mary's worship. In its central part, it represents a heart pierced by seven swords, Mary's seven pains, constituted by seven chapels.

The façade, made of local hand-cut stones, ends with three angels statues and is situated between two bell towers embellished with the famous bells made in the "Pontificia Fonderia Marinelli" of Agnone, from where the left portal also comes.

Inside, the church's form, the dome's height, the effects created by the light coming from the windows and the mosaics representing prophets, saints and evangelists placed at the dome's foot create a strongly religious atmosphere, which climaxes in the statue representing Mary with dead Jesus at her foot, the description of the apparition made by the seers who saw it.

Trivisonno's paintings placed in the seven lateral chapels and representing scenes from Christ's life are greatly valuable.

The same author also made the huge paintings placed at the entrance sides, representing Christ's resurrection and Virgin Mary assumption. In particular, the little angels' faces surrounding Mary as she goes up to heaven are very beautiful.



Santuario dell'Addolorata, Castelpetroso



Santuario dell'Addolorata, Castelpetroso



Santuario dell'Addolorata, Castelpetroso

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Region of **Molise**



Castropignano

It is a small town located on a hill dominating the valley of Biferno, really rich in attractions for the visitors.

In the historical center, one must see the Church of San Salvatore, early half of the XIII century, with a Romanic portal enriched by amazing cherubs faces and right out of the ancient walls, the church of St. Mary of the Graces with a 1500s portal (one of the most beautiful of the region), with one of a kind painting and haut-relief sculptures.

The stone of the silent alleys, the short houses and the staircases, is contrasted in the old part of the town by the huge Castello d'Evoli, built on a rock face cliff above the Biferno river.

The landscape is marked by the "Tratturo".

In fact it is here that the "Tratturo" Lucera- Castel di Sangro crosses the Biferno, its waters are here still transparent and rushing and go up towards the town almost touching it.

It is an ideal space for long walks or to ride a horse, one of the most beautiful and better preserved in the whole region.

To see

d'Evoli Castle

The castle has longobard origins, even if in the same area it is possible to see megalithic walls and the ruins of two Roman villas, witnessing that the site was resided even in previous eras.

The structure of the castle is huge.

The side looking on the inhabited area does Il lato che si affaccia sul centro abitato



Castropignano



Historical centre, Castropignano



d'Evoli Castle, Castropignano

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Region of **Molise**



impress the visitor for the stateliness of the defense tower and for the distinction the portal owns, truly monumental.

The inside features a large yard with many service rooms and apartments.

Charming for the visitors are the underground chambers, probably containing a church and the view of the valley of Biferno.

Leaning at the windows opening on the side of the river, one gets captured by the beauty of the landscape and impressed by the stone wall of the castle that goes straight on a cliff for some ten meters.

At the present the castle can be visited if previously booked.

Go see it, maybe even with our help, because it is truly thrilling.



d'Evoli Castle, Castropignano



d'Evoli Castle, Castropignano

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Region of **Molise**



Civitacampomarano

It is a typical medieval town with small streets, alleys and staircases dominated by the powerful Castello Angioino (one of the most beautiful in the region) and surrounded by a territory featured with cliffs and gorges of the mounts faces.

There are so many fields of olive trees (it is one of the town holding the membership of the National Association "Città dell'olio") and these areas where brooms plants and hawthorns dominate.

Very extended are also the woods areas (oak, "orniello", "carpino" and maple trees are frequent) among the which there's the "Vallemonterosso", equipped with a pick-nick area and where every year the beginning of the summer is celebrated with an equestrian meeting.

History, wildness and relax here become something real!

To see

Angevin Castle

The origin of the castle is uncertain, according to someone it is back to the dominance of Carlo d'Angiò (XIV century) for someone else it is back to the mid XIII century.

Two external elements that impress the visitor: the stateliness of the two angular towers cylindrical shaped, that limit a wall curtain, trimmed with hanging arches and enriched by a renaissance lodge; the access front-door is preceded by a staircase.

From the nice internal yard one enters the spaces in the past used to host the guard force, the rackets, the stables and the prisons.

While on the first story there are many rooms used as the noble residence.

All the building, after a long restore work, has been recently reopened to the public and from times to times hosts various cultural events.



Civitacampomarano



Angevin Castle, Civitacampomaramo



Angevin Castle, Civitacampomaramo

Region of **Molise**



Filignano

It is a town dipped in the Mainarde woods, being part on the National Park of Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise. Its origins go back to the Middle Ages, when it was part of the St Vincenzo al Volturno Abbey properties.

Today it owns a striking peaceful nature oasis. Its territory, in fact gets coloured by a strong green in Spring, whereas during the Fall time, the colours that dominate are the red of the cherry trees, the brown of maples, and the purple of wild pear trees.

The visitor is enchanted by the various stone huts, made according to the "dry" ancient technique, called "tholos" and used in the past as a shelter for shepherds.

To be visited is the late Middle Ages archaeological area of "Mennella walls" crossed by an ancient lane today connected to the Park trails.

Not to miss is at last the lyrical music festival, dedicated to the Tenor Mario Lanza, who's from Filignano, in the month of August.

This town has everything: nature, art and culture and since some years it has been discovered by a small Scottish community, who decided to purchase and renew some of the houses.



Filignano



Filignano



Mennella walls, Filignano

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Region of **Molise**



Fornelli

It is a small village on the right side of the Volturno river, situated in a hill landscape, where olive trees take over the place. Here a very good oil is produced and in fact the town is member of the National Association "Città dell' Olio".

The historical center developed around the Marquise Palace, which together with the church, constitutes the original core of the town.

Subsequently they have been built the walls with seven defensive towers and the patrolling walk bridge still visible today.

It is one of the best preserved medieval wall belt in Molise. Since a few years, in summer during the event "Giornate del Borgo" this part of the town is amused by characters wearing Middle Ages costumes and you get a chance to live back atmospheres and emotions of the past.



Fornelli



Historical centre, Fornelli



The walls, Fornelli

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Region of **Molise**



Frosolone

Fantasy, creativity and nature are the elements characterizing this small town.

Along the trails of Colle dell'Orso mountain, on foot, walking or on a MTB one discovers an uncontaminated nature that charms by its perfumes and wonderful colours.

On the meadows hills, in the summer months, it is possible to see free herds of cows and horses grazing around and to protect such beauties there are some giant blocks of rock, proud guards of the territory and time, this is a destination for numerous lovers of climbing.

The inhabited center, with the beautiful Santa Maria Assunta Church back to the XIII century, is an ensemble of alleys, little squares and stone houses.

Walking down these small streets there's a chance to see in some workshop, professional craftsmen all committed in the ancient manufacture of iron and steel.

To see

Blade tools Museum

Inside the museum they're kept hundreds of tools like blades, scissors and knives of all sizes and shapes. Many are the samples that are one of a kind of the old handmade forging art.

In August since a couple of years it is organized a National Exposition of knives and scissors, where all the best pieces of production are shown and it is also possible to see the different stages of handmade forging. This crafty activity, passed generation to generation, made the town famous all around the world, especially for the production of knives and scissors.



Frosolone



Colle dell'Orso, Frosolone



Colle dell'Orso, Frosolone



Blade tools Museum, Frosolone

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Region of **Molise**



Gambatesa

The inhabited center, situated on a hill in front of Occhito lake still keeps the typical medieval villages structure with alleys, porticos, little yards and steep staircases, leading to the church of St. Bartholomew and the surprising castle, one of the most beautiful in Molise, with precious frescos back to the XVI century.



Gambatesa

To see

Castle

Yet from the outside it is easy to understand how the castle structure has been transformed over the centuries from the first original fortress and the following Renaissance palace.



Castle, Gambatesa

The massive squared structure with Guelph merlons on the South-West side and the angular towers are back to the Middle Ages, whereas the windows and the loggia with three round arches of the North-West façade, other than the ashlar portal, are typical of the Renaissance period.

The building raise on four levels.

The first, partially dug into the rock, was destined to stables and storages, with large rooms barrel vault covered and a king size fire place.

On the second story there's the main entry, one access by an outside triple staircase.

Inside the extraordinary cycle of frescos, made by Donato da Copertino and his pupils in 1550, decorates the sitting room and other rooms too.



Castle, Gambatesa

On the walls they're painted landscapes, mythology scenes, allegories and remarkable artistic value pergolas and expression of the 1500s Mannerism.

Region of **Molise**



Particularly beautiful are the four allegoric figures of Charity, Prudence, Fortitude and Justice in the main sitting room.

The third story is composed of large rooms designed as the noble residence and probably in the past decorated with frescos, which there's no trace of today.

The fourth level at the end is the lowest of all and has gone thru numerous transformations but allows one to lean out the renaissance loggia.

The visit to this wonderful residence ends on the embattled terrace where it is possible to see the whole town from and in the back the mirror of water of Ochito lake.



Castle, Gambatesa



Castle, Gambatesa



Castle, Gambatesa

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