

THE COAST OF THE ACHAEAN

From Rocca Imperiale to Rossano,
among the aromas of citrus and licorice

[Rocca Imperiale - Among the most famous attractions of the village there is the castle of Frederick II of Swabia, built around 1221]

Alto Ionio Cosentino is one of the most surprising places in Calabria, with unusual and little-known itineraries to discover. Among archaeological ruins, ancient castles, blue flag beaches, lush countryside and opportunities to enjoy exquisite cuisine, this area is ideal for immersing oneself in the wildest part of Calabria without forgoing comfort. First stop: Rocca Imperiale, the kingdom of the fragrant PGI lemons famous all over the world. The name of the village derives from the manor built in 1255 by Federico II di Svevia, also a source of inspiration for the director Pupi Avati. In August, Rocca becomes an even more poetic city thanks to a festival that leaves its mark: the winning poetry is imprinted on a precious majolica and affixed to a house in the country, in order to turn the walls of the houses into pages of a three-dimensional book which collects all the compositions every year. Just four kilometers from the historic center of Rocca, we immediately find the sea: seven kilometers of beach alternating with pebbles and rocks.

[Roseto Capo Spulico - The majestic Federiciano Castle of the city dominates the limpid waters of the Ionian Sea]

Roseto Capo Spulico is one of the most enchanting locations on this stretch of coast, it leaves you speechless from its stone castle, one of the largest in Calabria, of Norman origin and rebuilt at the behest of Frederick II. Roseto was, at the time of Magna Grecia, one of the satellite towns of Sibari. They cultivated roses and used the petals to fill the mattresses on which the Sybarites slept. When you finish admiring the castle overlooking the sea, head toward the beach: the waters that reach the white pebbles and gravel received the recognition of Blue Flag in 2017. Not far from the beach and in front of the castle, there is the famous Scoglio dell'Incudine, one of the symbols of the Calabrian sea. It is one of the most loved and photographed scenes. As we continue to explore, we see a succession of beaches of golden sand and pebbles, clean and crystalline sea: these peculiar elements make Sibari a true paradise. In some parts, the beach can widen up to almost 328 ft. The coast is in the area of the Foce del Crati nature reserve and the area is also known for archaeological excavations, with findings kept in the Sibari archaeological park and in the National archaeological museum of Sibaritide. Here we have tangible and superb testimony of a glorious past, when Sybaris was the queen of Magna Grecia.

[Corigliano Calabro - Thanks to the beauty of its historic center, this town is one of the most evocative and admired in Italy]

After the artificial lakes, you will come across the majestic wonder of Corigliano Calabro, which looks like a pretty village perched on a hill, with one of the most evocative and admired historical centers of Italy. The most iconic place in the village is undoubtedly the Castello Ducale, a fortress dating back to the eleventh century but still perfectly preserved. Roberto il Guiscardo was the client of this true icon of the Calabrian city: even today, it is possible to admire inside the palace numerous frescoes, statues, stained glass windows of remarkable value and beauty, as well as unpublished and original architectural solutions. In Corigliano, there are also religious buildings of great impact, such as the Church of St. Anthony of Padua, built in the fifteenth century, attached to the nearby Franciscan convent, and the Church of San Francesco da Paola, dating back to the '500, also it is connected to the convent. The waters of the Ionian Sea bathe the maritime village of Corigliano: the beaches of Schiavonea are one of the favorite destinations of foreign tourists who wish to thoroughly enjoy one of the most pristine stretches of coastline in all of southern Italy. A little further on, we find ourselves in Rossano Calabro, in the easternmost part of the splendid valley of Sibari, between the Sila and the Ionian coast. This town is the home of licorice (as well as to the famous Licorice Museum), of the variety called "Cordara" in Calabria. Lidia is well aware that during her trip, she not only had the opportunity to taste the unique flavor of this delicacy that has no rivals in the rest of the world, but also to witness the complex and fascinating workmanship. An ideal destination for excursion lovers, Rossano is also the custodian of a precious treasure: The Codex Purpureus Rossanensis, a manuscript from the New Testament in purple parchment, of extraordinary interest from the biblical and religious, artistic, paleographic, historical and documentary point of view, kept at the Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art in the city. A place where one absolutely must visit is the Church of Panaghia, a tiny Byzantine construction hidden in a cluster of old houses behind the Cathedral. At the edge of a cliff, at the southeastern end, stands the Church of San Marco Evangelista, one of the most interesting Byzantine constructions in all of Calabria.

Fonte: "Il viaggio di Bastianich in Calabria"

Itinerario enogastronomico