

## THE COAST OF THE GODS

From Pizzo Calabro to Nicotera,

between dream beaches and the land of the Mediterranean Diet

[Pizzo Calabro - Picturesque and evocative, this seaside village dominates the Gulf of S. Eufemia]

Pizzo Calabro is a fishing center perched on a tuffaceous promontory that overlooks the sea in a picturesque and strategic position along the coast of the S. Eufemia Gulf. Although Pizzo Calabro is known for the Castello di Gioacchino Murat, it is also famous for its ice cream, the so-called Tartufo di Pizzo. Going further south is Tropea, also referred to as the "Pearl of the Tyrrhenian Sea", one of Calabria's most visited places by national and international tourism. The higher part of the town offers visitors a romantic historical center which is full of life with restaurants, craft shops and alleyways filled with history. The lower part of the town is closer to the sea and to the small marina, from which it is possible to admire the nearby Aeolian Islands and the volcanic island of Stromboli.

[Tropea - This magical town is worth more than just a visit thanks to its breathtaking views and architectural wonders]

In Tropea, the beaches are simply enchanting, with a transparent and crystalline sea. In July, it is home to the Blue Fish Festival and the festival for the red onion from Tropea, another famous product of the region. The latter is actually what caught Lidia's attention (visual even before taste) when she visited the town: wandering around the alleyways of Tropea, it is in fact very easy to come across actual "necklaces" made of this vegetable. The visual effect is quite particular, as, in hanging from the walls and onto the side of the doors, they seem like brushstrokes with their unmistakable purple color.

[Capo Vaticano - The promontory, in the municipality of Ricadi, overlooks a crystalline sea rich in marine life, a must for many divers]

Proceeding further south, there is the Capo Vaticano promontory – part of the Ricadi municipality - which reaches a maximum height of 408 ft and is made of a special white-gray granite studied worldwide for its geological peculiarities. The evocative coastline and the crystal-clear sea with a seabed rich in fish make Capo Vaticano a "mandatory" destination for divers and tourists alike. The nearby fascinating hinterland however is also very appealing to tourists, and it offers typical local specialties such as the 'nduja of Spilinga and the pecorino of Monte

Poro. On the southern end of the Costa degli Dei is Nicotera, which has one of the busiest beaches of the coast, but more importantly, it is home to the Mediterranean Diet: it is in fact here that, between '57 and '69, its creator, the American professor Ancel Keys, studied the particular longevity of the local population and associated it with the daily consumption of local foods. As Mario Oliverio, President of the Calabria Region recalled, the Mediterranean Diet has been a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity since 2010, a cultural legacy that Calabria has decided to protect with a special law approved in late 2017. At the first International Meeting on the Mediterranean Diet, promoted by the Presidency of the Region and held at Nicotera's Palazzo del Convento on June 8, 2018, Lidia was a special godmother of the event.

[Regional Natural Park of the Serre - Declared a protected area since 2004, it hosts the Marmarico Waterfall, the highest in Calabria]

Lovers of nature and hiking would enjoy going inland and discover the wonders of a place like the Regional Natural Park of the Serre. Comprising 26 municipalities straddling the provinces of Vibo Valentia, Catanzaro and Reggio Calabria, this place has an area of over 17,000 hectares, is surrounded by greenery, and in 2004, it became a protected natural area. The Serre is a rather complex collection of mountains with significant natural landscape value and is connected to the Aspromonte mountains in the south. The park is characterized by the widespread presence of woods and forests, scrubland, pastures and agricultural cultivation. Places of worship (such as the centuriesold Abbey of the Carthusian Monks of Serra S. Bruno, one of the few still currently operating, and the tomb of S. Bruno of Cologne, founder of the Carthusian Order) are of remarkable importance in the Serre, as are those areas which bear witness to the industrial archeology from the Bourbon period. Here, the springs, streams and rivers are abundant and the waterfalls evocative, such as the impressive Cascata del Marmarico which dives into the Stilaro river with a drop of 300 feet. Today, the wildlife of the Serre mainly consists of wild boars, foxes, badgers, wild cats, weasels, martens, Italian hares and, among the birds, gray herons, eagle-owls, hoopoes, peregrine falcons and green, red and black woodpeckers. It is a place that cannot be missed by those who love discovering the wonders of nature.

Fonte: "Il viaggio di Bastianich in Calabria"

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