

VIOLET COAST AND JASMINE RIVIERA

From Palmi to Bova,

among the bergamot fragrances and the scent of the flowers

For the writer Leonida Repaci, the stretch of coast between Palmi and Bagnara was worthy of being called a "Little Paradise": that same stretch had already been baptized at the dawn of time, with the name of Costa Viola, or Violet Coast, by virtue of the amethyst nuance of its sea waters. To date, the seabeds of Cavaianculla, Pietrosa, Chianiti, Pietragalera and Capo Barbi, still conceal archaeological and natural treasures of immeasurable value. Located on a terrace sloping towards the sea and protected to the south by the Sant' Elia hill, is Palmi, a town which is equally by sea and by the mountain: in addition to the golden beaches of Tonnara, Pietrenera and Scinà, the town offers visitors refreshing pine forests, ancient trails to be explored and breathtaking views. Bagnara Calabria, home to the fishing of the majestic swordfish, is a seaside triumph with beaches of overwhelming beauty. There are magnificent and famous natural caves in the area, such as the Grotta del Monaco (i.e. the Monk's Cave) and the Grotta delle Rondini (i.e. the Swallows' Cave), which are favorite destinations for unforgettable boat trips. With its reflection in the waters of the lower Tyrrhenian Sea, Bagnara Calabria introduces us to the enchanting apparition of the Strait of Messina, Stromboli and the Aeolian Islands.

[Scilla - Considered one of the most beautiful villages in Italy, this marvel overlooks the Strait of Messina]

On the canal we find Scilla, a delightful town full of maritime history and culture, rendered immortal by the Homeric and Virgilian Ulysses.

[Aspromonte National Park - The protected natural area offers a wide range of biodiversity and wonderful nature trails]

A pearl of the Violet Coast, its territory extends up to the foothills of the Aspromonte from which it draws artisanal traditions, characteristic crops and gastronomy. It is from the Aspromonte Mountain Massif itself that the Aspromonte National Park takes its name. The park is a protected natural area within the province of Reggio Calabria with peaks that reach in excess of 6,500 feet, and where nature is the main attraction. The National Park of the Aspromonte, the sixth national park to have been established in Italy (in 1989), presents an extremely jagged

structure throughout the territory, from the Tyrrhenian to the Ionian. In addition, due to the particularly favorable climatic conditions, The National Park of the Aspromonte offers a great variety of plant species which generate a wide biodiversity. One may find Oleanders and tamarisks, as well as black poplar, goat willow and black alder, beech tree forests and immense pine forests. The park is also the home of many animal species that had found an ideal habitat in the Aspromonte. The wolf, for example, who has chosen this mountain as a refuge, but also the wild cat, the dormouse, the wild boar and the black squirrel, in addition to foxes, hares, badgers, hedgehogs, stone martens and martens. The roe deer, a species that had been absent in the Aspromonte territories for about a century, has been reintroduced into the park in 2011. The park is full of wonderful nature trails, some of which are suitable for cycling, horseback riding, skiing and canyoning. Still in the Reggio Calabria province, though once again by the sea, another place worth visiting is the strip of the Ionian coast between Riace and Locri, known as the Costa dei Gelsomini (the Jasmin Riviera) due to the cultivation of this scented flower. However, the scented bergamot also thrives in this area. The regional capital Reggio Calabria is home to one of the most important archaeological museums dedicated to the Magna Grecia, and therefore offers access to a significant part of the world's cultural heritage. The National Archaeological Museum has recently been expanded and houses the famous Riace Bronzes. And the Lungomare Falcomatà of Reggio (i.e. the boardwalk), defined by Gabriele D'Annunzio as Italy's most beautiful kilometer, captivates people with the mirage of Morgan Le Fay, that makes it possible to see Sicily closer with its reflection in the sea. Finally, one must layover in Bova, an ethno-architectural jewel of Byzantine, Norman and Medieval art. Capital to the Greeks of Calabria, Bova has been included in the circuit of the "most beautiful towns of Italy": the path to reach it is impervious, yet once reached, its delight to the sight and soul repays the visitor for the all the effort. On her journey through these wonderful lands, Lidia was not only able to enjoy the beauty of this small town, but also managed to taste some of the fragrant breads that are baked here every day: such as the one of Greek origin made of Iermano (rye) flour, or the 'nzerada, made with the remnants of the dough, which was prepared for her by the sweet Angelina, almost an institution among the bakers of Bova.

Fonte: "Il viaggio di Bastianich in Calabria"

Itinerario enogastronomico