

# HIDDEN ABRUZZO SARDINIA & CORSICA

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# 20 DAYS



## TOUR OVERVIEW

### HIDDEN ABRUZZO, SARDINIA & CORSICA



Starting and finishing in Rome, with 4 relaxing nights in unspoiled Abruzzo, 8 nights in Sardinia and 7 nights in Corsica, this small group tour is perfect for culture and nature lovers. It provides the perfect blend of traditional island life and off the beaten track travel.

Abruzzo is still a well-kept secret, an Italian region, east of Rome, comprised of an Adriatic coastline and famous for the impressive Apennine Mountains. National parks and nature reserves cover much of its rugged interior but it also encompasses hilltop towns dating back to the medieval and Renaissance periods. The Trabocchi Coast, with sandy coves, is named after its traditional wooden fishing piers.

Sardinia comes with its own rich history and long-held traditions. We follow its enchanting coastline, from Cagliari in the south to Arzachena in the north, the tour takes you to its very heartland, into the mountainous interior, to its vineyards and 3500-year-old ruins.

Birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte, Corsica offers a mix of stylish coastal towns, dense forests and craggy peaks. Located almost in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, its coastline covers an impressive length of over 1000km. Well known for its wine industry, it has been part of France since 1768 but it retains a distinct Italian culture. Its landscapes, monuments and beautiful beaches are captivating.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

**ABRUZZO:** Apennine Mountains • Pescara  
Rocca Calascio • Sulmona • Prezza • Trabocchi Coast  
Ortona

**SARDINIA:** Cagliari • Barumini • Alghero Castelsardo  
Arzachena • Oliena

**CORSICA:** Sartene • Filitosa • Ajaccio • Corte  
Calvi • Aleria • Bonifacio • San Pantaleo

(B/L/D) Breakfast / Lunch / Dinner included

### DAY 1 - ARRIVAL ROME

#### Abruzzo Region (4 nights)

In Rome, our modern coach and tour director will be awaiting you at the airport for transfer to your hotel. After a light lunch and hotel check-in, the remainder of the day is at your leisure to settle in, relax or explore the local area.

With mountains and the sea as its strategic borders and located in Central Italy, the Abruzzo region is still a well-kept secret, full of surprises and medieval hamlets known for their age old traditions and customs. Said to be the greenest part of the country and comprised of national parks and lakes, it is a place where nature dominates resulting in a restful start of your adventure. At night a welcome dinner is planned at the charming restaurant offering typical regional cuisine and wine. Benvenuti! (L/D)

### DAY 2 - APENNINE MOUNTAINS - ROCCA CALASCIO

The tour starts off in a relaxed fashion as we take in the local surroundings and tour the Apennine Mountains including a visit to Rocca Calascio, at nearly 1,500 meters above sea level, the highest mountaintop fort in Italy dating back to the Middle Ages. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)

### DAY 3 - SULMONA - PREZZA

Today we visit a famous pasta production house. Abruzzo has a long history of pasta-making and has produced handmade 'Spaghetti alla Chitarra' for more than 200 years. This variety of egg pasta is pushed through a wooden contraption that has stainless steel guitar-like strings.

For all lovers of Italian food, no doubt you will enjoy your cooking class today. When it comes to wine, Abruzzo is known for its Montepulciano d'Abbruzzo wine and today we venture out to visit a family-run vineyard. At night dinner at the hotel. (B/D)

### DAY 4 - TRABOCCHI COAST - ORTONA

After breakfast we set out to enjoy a relaxing day on the coast. UNESCO World Heritage protected, the 70 km Trabocchi Coast stretches from Ortona to San Salvo and features old fishing net structures known as trabocchi. While no longer in use, historically the net were used by fishermen to avoid deep waters and collect varieties like anchovies, sardines, sea bream and sea bass. Lunch and free time on the coast. Dinner tonight at the hotel. (B/D)







#### DAY 5 - FLIGHT FROM ROME TO SARDINIA

##### Cagliari - Southern Sardinia Region (2 nights)

Take in the beauty and final impressions of the Abruzzo region as after hotel check-out we head back to Rome to board our flight to Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia. Strategically positioned at the center of the Mediterranean, this ancient island has been occupied for about 150,000 years and is known for its numerous archaeological sites and ruins, an impressive coastline and natural beauty.

After hotel check-in, the remainder of the day is at your leisure to explore. At night we sample some of the local cuisine during dinner at the tables of our residence. (B/D)

#### DAY 6 - CAGLIARI - AFTERNOON AT YOUR LEISURE

Discover Sardinia's rich flora and fauna as we set out and visit a national park with salt pans and pink flamingos. Located on the Gulf of Angels, joined by a local guide, we start the day with a guided tour of Cagliari.

Perfect for a morning wander and historically outstanding, we will take in its narrow streets and visit the Benedetto Market, the Royal Palace and the Santa Maria Cathedral before heading for the Bastione di Saint Remy to enjoy outstanding views over the bay. The afternoon is yours to explore. At night dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



#### DAY 7 - SU NURAXI BARUMINI

##### Alghero - Central Sardinia Region (3 nights)

After hotel check-out, we set out for the Bronze Age site at Su Nuraxi in Barumini, a UNESCO World Heritage Site where ancient megalithic constructions developed during the Nuragic Age (1900 - 730 BC).

Sardinia is famous for its stone villages and Su Nuraxi is known as one of the most complete examples of this incredible form of pre-historic architecture. We conclude the day with a relaxing visit heading for a traditional farm to taste the local wine, olive oil and cheese before we head north to Alghero, a beautiful coastal town. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)

#### DAY 8 - ALGHERO

The day starts with a guided walking tour of Alghero's historic centre, which sits within its fortified city walls. We start at the 14th-Century Porta Terrace tower, the ancient entrance to the city, before continuing along the city walls. We take in the highlights of the city, including the narrow streets of the former Jewish quarter. In the afternoon, we head out on a boat trip to Neptune's Grotto, a marine cave carved into the cliff face around 20 minutes along the coast. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



## DAY 9 - A DAY AT YOUR LEISURE - ALGHERO

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast as today is at your leisure. The evening is free to explore on your own. (B)



## DAY 10 - CASTELSARDO - PALAU

### Arzachena - Northern Sardinia (2 nights)

After hotel check-out, our next stop is the town of Castelsardo on the island's north coast. This traditional Sardinian town enjoys a spectacular setting on the hilltop of a headland overlooking the Mediterranean. As you wander through its historic streets you will get a first-hand insight into local life.

After spending some time visiting some of the handicrafts shops, we continue along the coast to Palau, the gateway to the islands of the Maddalena Archipelago. Enjoy the sights on a panoramic coach tour around the island before we will enjoy free time for lunch following check-in at the hotel. Dinner at the tables of our hotel. (B/D)

## DAY 11 - ARZACHENA

Together with a local guide we set out to enjoy the breathtaking azure blue seas of the Costa Smeralda (88 km). In this part of Sardinia, we will find the famous white, fine sand beaches and small bays accessible only from the sea. Arzachena is not only sea, but also wonderful woodlands and Mediterranean underbrush with its typical aromas of myrtle and juniper.

The "stazzo" is a typical building in this region. It's an old, rural dwelling and its roof is made of reeds, juniper's branches and trunks. Arzachena also has a very interesting history. The Little Temple of Malchittu dating back to 1600 BC is unique in that it is one of the only four examples of a megaron-shaped nuragic temple (an elongated rectangle) in Sardinia. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



## DAY 12 - FERRY TO CORSICA - SARTENE - FILITOSA

### Ajaccio - Southern Corsica region (3 nights)

After hotel check-out, today we board a ferry (approx. 1 hour) and cross the Strait of Bonifacio. With an impressive 600 miles of coastline, this charming French island in the Mediterranean Sea is a perfect mosaic of diverse landscapes, from sandy beaches and steep, narrow paved streets to rugged mountains. Corsica boasts a long, eventful and troubled history. Rarely has it ruled itself, like so many other Mediterranean islands, it has been fought over time and time again.

En route we visit medieval Sartene, located up the hill in the valley of the Rizzanese river following with a visit to Filitosa, a pre-historic site offering almost 5,000 years of history. Because this area was both fertile and easy to defend, it was populated since very ancient times and was filled with large constructions and menhirs from 1800 BC to 1100 BC. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)





#### DAY 13 - AJACCIO

After breakfast, we set out on a guided walking tour of historical Ajaccio, a port city on the island's western coast and the capital and largest city in Corsica. Famous because Napoleon Bonaparte was born here on August 15, 1769. We'll visit the Maison Bonaparte, the charming historical center with its color-washed, terracotta-tiled houses and narrow backstreets which have changed little in centuries.

We also visit the Venetian Renaissance-style Cathedral, where Napoleon and his siblings were baptised. After some free time for lunch and sightseeing, we head for the Ajaccio countryside for a wine tasting in a typical Corsican domain. Dinner at the hotel tonight. (B/D)

#### DAY 14 - A DAY AT YOUR LEISURE - AJACCIO

Enjoy a relaxing day at your leisure. Surrounded by a fantastic mountain range, Ajaccio is an elegant city, dynamic and renowned for its long welcoming traditions. From the top of its citadel, it has preserved its bay which is one of the most beautiful in the world. Strolling the lanes of the old town, you will discover its prestigious museums, its daily market boasting so many flavours so enjoy the local gastronomy over a long lazy lunch today. The evening is free to explore on your own. (B)





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## DAY 15 - CORTE

### Calvi - Northern Corsica Region (2 nights)

After hotel check-out, en route we explore the medieval town of Corte, once the capital, now a small town in the very heart of the island. Unlike its sister fortress towns on the coast, Corte was not founded by the Genoese, but governed by Pascal Paoli, the father of the Corsican independence movement, after he stormed the Citadel in 1755. This was Paoli's capital - often called the "spiritual" capital, and the town epitomises inland Corsica.

In the heart of the Corsican mountains, Corte is spectacularly set amongst brooding granite mountains with its Citadel rising high up from a rocky outcrop, the rooftops of the old town cascading down to a warren of narrow, cobbled streets, surrounded by the craved out gorges of former bandit country. We continue and travel further north for our stay in Calvi. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



## DAY 16 - SCANDOLA NATURE RESERVE - CALVI

Today we set sail and cruise along the coast to enjoy the fabulous cliffs and calanques of the UNESCO World Heritage listed Scandola Nature Reserve in the Gulf of Girolata. In the afternoon, there is time to explore Calvi on your own.

Located on the Northwest coast of the island, set on a beautifully shaped bay, have a stroll in its marina and esplanade and admire its Baroque influenced St. Jean Baptiste Cathedral. In Calvi, there are the remains of a house that is supposed to be the place where the famous discoverer Christopher Columbus was born. Dinner at the hotel. (B/D)



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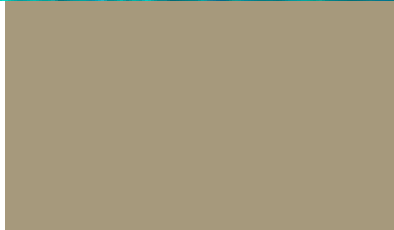
## DAY 17 - ALERIA

### Bonifacio - Northern Corsica Region (2 nights)

After hotel check-out, today we venture south and travel along the 'Mother of Pearl Coast' on the Tyrrhenian Sea for some of the most breathtaking scenery of Corsica, where long beaches of fine sand and crystalline waters will occupy our view.

We continue and head for Aleria, for another delicious tasting of Corsican wines. The wine industry in Corsica has a long history. Two grapes indigenous to the island form a backbone of many Corsican reds. Phoenicians, Romans, Greeks and then the Genoese were making wine here. Wine has been around 2000 years at least. Dinner and overnight in the capital Bonifacio. (B/D)





#### DAY 18 - BONIFACIO

In the morning, together with a local guide we discover the historical area of Bonifacio. Perched high up a white limestone cliff on the southern coast of Corsica lies the medieval town of Bonifacio. Known as the "Mediterranean's Sentinel," or simply, the "Citadel of Cliffs," it's arguably the best-kept secret in France. Blessed by beautiful cobblestone alleyways and a shoreline of sparkling waters Bonifacio is on the southern coast of Corsica, separated from the Italian island of Sardinia by the 11-kilometer-long Strait of Bonifacio, which is named after the town.

The two islands were once joined, but volcanic activity tore them apart, leaving huge parts of granite rock in the turquoise waters. Today the evening is at your leisure to enjoy some local delicacies on your own. (B)





#### DAY 19 - FERRY TO SARDINIA / SAN PANTALEO

##### Cagliari - Southern Sardinia Region (1 night)

We say au revoir to Corsica and cross the waters once more to return to Sardinia. We start the journey south, but not before visiting the Bronze Age Giants' grave of Coddu Vecchiu. We continue on to Cagliari where you will spend the last night on the island. Farewell dinner at the hotel. (B/D).

#### DAY 20 - CAGLIARI AIRPORT - ROME FCO AIRPORT

All good things come to an end, after breakfast and hotel check-out, we head for Cagliari International Airport for airline check-in covering our flight back to mainland Italy. Upon arrival at Rome FCO airport, your tour director will wave goodbye. (B)







## TOUR PRICE INCLUSIONS

Meet and greet Rome FCO International Airport. Return airport transfers in Europe. Economy class return flights from Rome to Sardinia. Return ferry from Sardinia to Corsica.

19 nights in charming boutique accommodation including daily buffet breakfast, 3 course dinner (or lunch) with beverages based on typical traditional regional cuisine where indicated.

Private coach travel in Europe, entry fees covering sightseeing and entertainment, hotel service charges, city taxes, most tipping, baggage handling (1 bag pp), services of a full-time professional tour director and local city guides.



## DEPARTURE SCHEDULE LAND ONLY - 20 DAYS

Start date Rome - Friday, 4 October 2024

Finish date Rome - Wednesday, 23 October 2024

Tour Price pp/twin share - AUD \$13,995

Single Supplement - AUD \$2,495