



CALABRIA
STRAORDINARIA

DIARY OF A
CALABRIAN
JOURNEY

THE **COAST**
AND THE **SEA**





CALABRIA
STRAORDINARIA

Regione Calabria
Dipartimento Turismo,
Marketing territoriale e Mobilità

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This guide is part of a series of five *Diaries of a Calabrian journey*, each on a particular way of experiencing this region:

- **Nature reserves and parks**
- **Art and culture**
- **The historic centres and old villages**
- **The coasts and the sea**
- **Wine, food and the land**

The *Diaries* are meant to be a ready to use tool for anyone about to travel round Calabria, wanting to experience it in its fullness and complexity but, in particular, with the intention of looking at it with the eyes of a true traveller.

They are guides, full of advice and suggestions, on the physical and also mental paths that help the traveller not to miss any of the wonders in the area without stopping him/her from following their own instinct, interests and way of existence.

The word 'diary' automatically evokes a book whose pages are normally full of notes, supplemented by sketches or photos. That's why it was chosen as the metaphor for the journey and a very particular way of describing it using both words and pictures - more emotional than educational. It's an experience that purposely recalls the *Grand Tour* which, from the 18th to the early 20th centuries, included an almost compulsory trip into Calabria for European intellectuals of that time who, luckily, left an indelible trace for us in the pages of their invaluable travel diaries.



RIVIERA DEI **CEDRI**

TYRRHENIAN SEA

GULF OF **SANT'EUFEMIA**

COSTA DEGLI **DEI**

COSTA **VIOLA**

● **REGGIO CALABRIA**

GRECANICA AREA

● **COSENZA**

● **CATANZARO**

● **VIBO VALENTIA**

● **CROTONE**

COSTA DEGLI **ACHEI**

COSTA DEI **SARACENI**

COSTA DEGLI **ARANCI**

IONIONIAN SEA

COSTA DEI **GELSOMINI**



YOU CAN SEE THE **SEA** FROM THE TERRACE
AS IF IT WAS COMING TOWARDS YOU ON A SLANT
AND THE **BOATS** THAT GO OUT AT NIGHT
LOOK AS THOUGH THEY HAVE TO MAKE
AN EXHAUSTING ASCENT

I WOULD VISIT THE TINY **BEACHES**
THAT OPEN OUT, HERE AND THERE, ALONG THE COAST
AGAINST A BACKDROP OF **ROCKS**
WE WILL GATHER THE FLOWERS FROM THE VALLEY
THE **CORAL** THAT CAN BE FOUND
ON THE BEACH

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WANT
AND IT IS AS THOUGH THE **SEA** IS
CONSTANTLY ASKING ME
WITH ITS **NOISE** AND **RHYTHM**
BUT WHO CAN UNDERSTAND IT?
IT SPEAKS, BUT ITS **LANGUAGE** IS MYSTERIOUS
AND MAN CANNOT UNDERSTAND

CORRADO ALVARO, IL MARE, 1934



Travel notes

If it wasn't for a slender strip of land, connected to the Pollino mountainous chain, to keep it firmly anchored to the continent, Calabria would be an island. The confines with the two seas that lap its shores, the Tyrrhenian and the Ionian, are much more extensive compared to those of the mainland. So much so, it makes Calabria almost "a peninsular within a peninsular that stretches out into the sea", as once described by Saverio Strati, one of the region's greatest writers.

From any point in Calabria, you only need to travel a few kilometres before you find yourself in front of the sea. But this isn't just any sea, it is the Mediterranean, the cradle of civilisation. And, if you travel from one of those seemingly never-ending, winding mountain roads that slowly descend towards the shore, the sight of this blue expanse in the distance is a truly unrivalled wonder.

That sea, which was once dominated by the ancient Greeks and later the Romans, the *mare nostrum* that has carried historic events and legends in its liquid womb. Legends like Odysseus, which still makes people dream with open eyes and cannot be found in any other corner of the world.

With its only natural outlet being the Pillars of Hercules, it appears to be a closed sea but, in reality, it has always been open to the circulation of goods and ideas, also through its ancient common language, Sabir, which has been spoken for centuries in every Mediterranean port.

When contemplating the Calabrian sea, one cannot help but imagine it still navigated by ancient cargo ships, loaded with amphoras of olive oil and wine, spices and wheat, handcrafted objects and works of art.

But it was also navigated by ships crammed with armed soldiers, their holds laden with war machines, or, more recently, in Mediaeval times, the ships of Saracen pirates who, with their surprise raids, instilled terror in the



coastal populations, often forcing them to abandon the hamlets along the coast and take refuge in the nearby hills.

However, even without knowing about its ancient history and legends, all one needs to do to be enchanted by this region is to simply take in the beauty of its coastline; admire those almost hidden corners that leave you completely breathless, as you gaze upon a seemingly infinite horizon, only occasionally interrupted by the silhouette of an island, the headland, or simply by the sun that, at sunrise and sunset, looks as though it has stopped to sit on the edge of the world.

All you need is to take in the wonders that its diverse landscape provides, which in this case consists of long sandy beaches, perfect for a peaceful holiday by the sea, or the jagged rocks just a few metres away, an area of shoreline that is more likely to interest naturalists, extreme sports enthusiasts or those simply seeking a place for quiet contemplation.



Amantea, Coreca beach



THE TYRRHENIAN COAST

RIVIERA DEI CEDRI

On the Tyrrhenian coast, in the most northern point of Calabria, Riviera dei Cedri (The Citron Coast) takes its name from the ancient custom of cultivating citron fruit, which are as rare as they are precious. Even today, citron plantations are widespread on this stretch of land, which provides the perfect climatic conditions for its cultivation. An attribute that has made the region famous the world over and also led the Jewish rabbi to return here every year, so they can pick the best fruits and take them back home to use in their traditional Tabernacle festival. But even this peculiarity is not enough to describe the beauty of its splendid seaside destinations, like the magnificent Arco Magno beach, delineated by its famous rocky archway, that looks out onto the two small islands of Dino and Cirella, the only islands of Calabria, which are beautiful to visit for their patrimony of natural wonders, with their typical Mediterranean scrub, seabed and marine grottos.

Diamante, Cirella Island





San Nicola Arcella, Crawford Tower

TOUR OF RIVIERA DEI CEDRI

PRAIA A MARE - SAN NICOLA ARCELLA - SCALEA - DIAMANTE - BELVEDERE MARITTIMO
CETRARO - GUARDIA PIEMONTESE - FUSCALDO - PAOLA - SAN LUCIDO

A visit to **Praia a Mare** means, above all, enjoying incredible views of the sea and Dino Island. A must-see is the **Madonna della Grotta Sanctuary**, which takes its name from the fact it lies inside a large natural grotto overlooking the town and the sea. From here, you can continue your journey with a visit to the **Torre di Fiuzzi**

tower that rises up on a sea stack and was used in Mediaeval times as a watchtower to look out for Saracen ships. Finally, it is possible to stop off at the beach opposite **Dino Island**, nature lovers can take a boat or even swim to the islet and visit the splendid marine grottos or even take a dive and view the wonderful seabed.



Dino Island

Moving on from Praia a Mare, you reach the hamlet of **San Nicola Arcella**, with its characteristic narrow streets that overlook the **Gulf of Policastro**. For an unforgettable bathing experience in its waters, which can be reached by sea or via a narrow road surrounded by Mediterranean scrub, you can visit the **Arcomagno** grotto with its enchanting beach. Opposite the hamlet rises the **Torre Crawford** tower, which was the summer residence of the American writer, Francis Crawford, in the 1800s.

The historic centre of **Scalea** is a must-see for its Mediaeval plan, the ruins of **Castello Normanno** and **Torre Cimalonga**. Here we find ourselves in an area that witnessed the rise of Byzantine culture, important traces of which still remain today, like the frescos that can be admired in the small **San Nicola dei Greci Church**, also known as “**Spedale**”. On a small promontory that stretches out to sea, is **Torre Talao**, a Mediaeval stronghold and, more recently the residence of a circle for artists and intellectuals.

The route then leads us on to **Diamante**, the home of the ancient town of **Cirella**, with its important remains overlooking the shores of the island of the same name: **Cirella Island**. The island is not only significant for its natural habitat, completely covered in Mediterranean scrub, and magnificent sea beds, but also for its archeology, with its Medieval fortress, called **Torre dell'Isola**. The small town is also famous worldwide for its murals, which can be seen in every corner of the historic centre and also Calabrian chilli, which is celebrated every year in an important festival that is held for several days in September.

Belvedere Marittimo, known for its **citron** processing, is a town divided in two, with a medieval centre, with its Norman **castle**, and the maritime district of "**Marina di Belvedere**", served by



Belvedere Marittimo

San Nicola Arcella, Arcomagno





Cetraro, The marina

an important *marina*. The town also has various churches, one of which, called ***Chiesa del SS. Crocifisso***, conserves a wooden crucifix from the 1700s, attributed as the work of Pietro Fasa.

The centre of **Cetraro**, the name of which points to the cultivation and processing of citron fruits, is also home to one of the largest and most important *tourist ports* in Calabria. But its Mediaeval historic centre is also worth a visit and the **Cetraro Marina** has a long, well-equipped, sandy beach.

At **Guardia Piemontese**, a town founded by a group of Waldensian refugees from Piedmont, you can relive the traditions of Provençal origins, which are clearly evident in the ancient customs and the Occitan dialect that is still spoken by its population. The same territory also partly encompasses **Terme Luigiane** springs, where it is possible to take some time out for your health and wellbeing. At just a few metres from the beach rises **Scoglio della Regina**, (Queen's Rock), a 20-metre-tall rock that is one of the most famous and

imposing sea stacks on Riviera dei Cedri.

Fuscaldo is a territory that covers a vast stretch of coastline. The old fishing village is now a modern seaside resort, while the historic centre offers panoramic views overlooking the sea. In the summer there is a food and wine event called “**Alici in Festival**”, an anchovy festival with live music, fireworks and street artists.

In **Paola**, you can visit the **San Francesco di Paola Sanctuary**, founded by Saint Francis and considered one of the most beautiful and important sanctuaries in Calabria. The religious complex consists of a convent next to a church that preserves the remains of the saint, which are both rich in works of art. The historic centre of this small town is also interesting for the **SS. Rosario** Baroque church, one of the most beautiful churches in the Tyrrhenian Cosentino area.

The itinerary ends at **San Lucido**, where it is possible to visit the ruins of **Castello Ruffo di Scilla** castle, while those arriving from the sea can easily reach the town by mooring in the small and characteristic **marina**, which is also used by the local fishermen.



Dino Island



Guardia Piemontese, The Queen's Stack

Scalea, Coastal tower





THE TYRRHENIAN COAST

GULF OF SANT'EUFEMIA

This area is in the heart of the region and a strategic tourist hub in Calabria. It can easily be reached by car from the Autostrada del Mediterraneo motorway; by train, thanks to the station, which is the most important in the region, and by air, from the international airport.

In **Lamezia Terme**, you can combine seaside pursuits with a visit to the very commercial town centre and the ancient residential nucleus of **San Teodoro**, overshadowed by Norman Castle, which is open to tourists and can also be explored inside. Highly recommended is a visit to **the Cattedrale di San Pietro e Paolo (Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul)**, the **Museo Diocesano (Diocesan Museum)**, the **Museo Archeologico (Archaeological Museum)** and the ruins of **Abbazia Benedettina Abbey**. Recently, thanks to its favourable climate and constant winds, the **Gizzeria** coast has become an important destination, especially among international **kitesurfing** enthusiasts, who come here to take part in annual championships and international competitions.



Steccato di Cutro, Kitesurf



Gizzeria

INCREDIBLE **KITESURF** DISPLAYS

Kitesurfing became a mainstream sailing sport in 1999 and is an alternative to wind surfing. In this sport, the athletes basically plane across the water, with their feet firmly planted on a board that is similar but not identical to a surfboard, which harnesses the power of the wind in a power kite and propels them along the water. The board is manoeuvred by a bar, which is connected to the kite by four or five thin cables called lines, which are between 22 and 27 metres long.

Depending on the wind conditions where the sport is practised, larger kites are used in milder wind conditions, while smaller kites are used in stronger winds. In any case, the ideal wind conditions for beginners are between 12 and 24 knots. The boards can also have different characteristics, depending on the style of kitesurfing you wish to do or whether the sea conditions are rough or smooth.

During their displays, the athletes can spin on the water or in the air, making this sport an extremely spectacular sight to behold.



THE TYRRHENIAN COAST

COSTA DEGLI DEI

Located in the centre of Calabria, the diversity of the landscape that unfolds as you pass through *Costa degli Dei* (Coast of the Gods) – the very name of which seems to be suggesting that this place is worthy of the gods themselves – makes this coastline truly unique. The Italians also call it “*Costa Bella*” (Beautiful Coast), precisely for the beautiful corners and panoramas that it offers to the eyes of its visitors: sheer rockfaces over a crystal-clear sea; tiny bays with their boats that look as if they are floating on air; secluded beaches that can only be reached from the sea, and the view of the Aeolian Islands with their unmistakable silhouettes that stand out against the red sky at sunset. One of the most popular holiday destinations is Tropea, the “Pearl of the Tyrrhenian Sea”, which has always attracted tourists from all over the world, and Capo Vaticano, the most extreme point on a promontory that stretches out into the sea, which is topped by a lighthouse that provides an unforgettable view.



Tropea, Riace Bay



Briatico

TOUR OF **COSTA DEGLI DEI**

PIZZO CALABRO - VIBO VALENTIA - BRIATICO - ZAMBRONE
PARGHELIA - TROPEA - RICADI - JOPPOLO - NICOTERA

You cannot go to **Pizzo Calabro** without visiting the small ***Piedigrotta*** church and its magnificent carvings of Jesus and the saints that two local artists carved out of the tuff. Here, a walk through the historic centre, with the ***Castello Murat*** fort that overlooks the sea, where Joachim-Napoléon Murat was executed by firing squad. You can end your visit by stopping off

at one of the numerous eateries in the main square of the town to taste the famous ***Tartufo***, an ice cream invented in Pizzo itself.

On reaching **Vibo Valentia**, you can admire the splendid historic centre with its noble buildings and well-preserved sculpted portals. Here, you can also visit ***Castello Normanno-Svevo***, a castle with



Tropea, The marina

an important **archaeological museum**. In the town of **Vibo Marina**, holidaymakers can also enjoy a recently modernised coastline with long, sandy beaches, while those arriving by boat can make use of the well-equipped **marina**.

Baia della Rocchetta, a small, traditional fishing village, in **Briatico** is definitely worth a visit, for its **small port** next to a coastal watchtower.

Zambrone Marina is a destination that could almost be defined as a tourist pilgrimage to visit the beautiful **Scoglio del Leone** beach that can be reached by taking a short walk through the gorse fields.

The town of **Parghelia** is highly appreciated for its white beach, protected by a picturesque reef which is further beautified by the **Scoglio della Pizzuta** rock, a fascinating natural sculpture. The historic centre is welcoming and modern but still conserves the charming, decorated, eighteenth century **Campanile** bell tower.

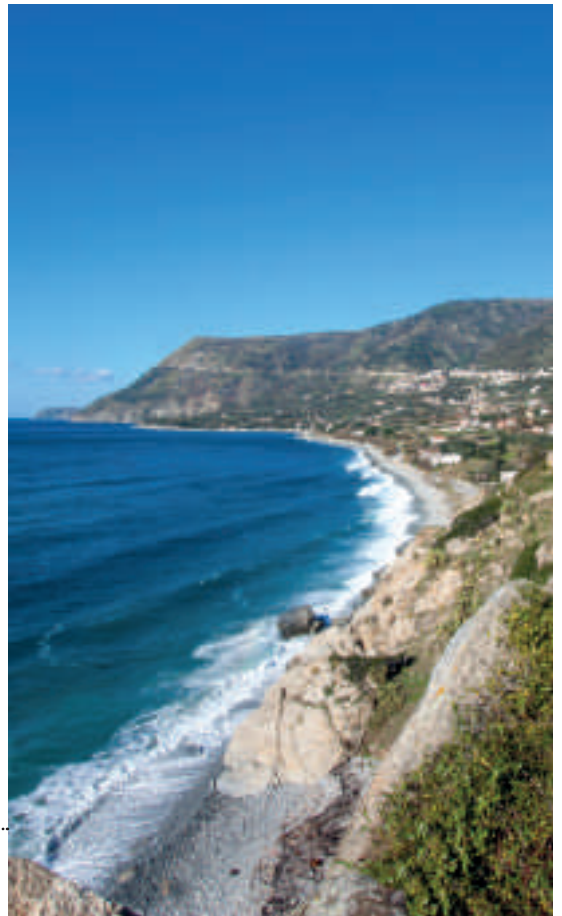
Passing alongside beaches that are considered some of the most beautiful in the region, you will reach **Tropea**, a tourist destination known the world over as “The Pearl of the Tyrrhenian Sea”. Its magnificent historic centre is home to the **Madonna di Romanina Cathedral** and the **Santa Maria dell’Isola Sanctuary**. This area



Pizzo Calabro

has one of the highest number of tourist structures on the Calabrian coast. We recommend a visit to its numerous beaches with their characteristic reefs, alternated by long stretches of white sand. Tropea is also known for one of its food products, the Tropea Red Onion, which is cultivated here and is used as a primary ingredient in many typical, local dishes.

On leaving Tropea behind, we find ourselves in **Ricadi**, on one of the most beautiful and desirable stretches of coast in Calabria. Here you will find a beautiful reef and the **Capo Vaticano** beaches with their numerous panoramic viewpoints, from which the eyes can sweep all the way to the Aeolian Islands and



Nicotera, Costa degli Dei





Vibo Marina, Porto turistico

the Sicilian coast and choose from the numerous hotels and tourist facilities that have sprung up here over the past ten years.

Joppolo is a small hamlet located slightly inland that provides a breath-taking panoramic view of the coast. From here you can see all the way to the Strait of Messina and even the silhouette of Sicily. A part of its territory overlooks the sea and provides tourist facilities.

The last town on the itinerary is **Nicotera** with its beautiful historic centre that stands on a sheer ledge

overlooking the sea; **Castello Ruffo**, a castle that dominates the entire Costa Viola to the Strait of Messina, and the **S. Maria Assunta Cathedral**, with its neighbouring **Diocesan Museum**. Furthermore, the maritime hamlet is a must-see for its last remaining, painted **gozzi** boats that are made entirely from wood. Nicotera is also famous for having been the long-standing home of Ancel Keys, the American pioneer and promoter of the benefits of the **Mediterranean diet** on an international scale, which UNESCO has now declared as an intangible cultural heritage.

MARE TIRRENO

VIBO VALENTIA ●

PALMI ●

SEMINARA ●

BAGNARA CALABRA ●

SCILLA ●

VILLA SAN GIOVANNI ●

REGGIO CALABRIA ●

THE TYRRHENIAN COAST

COSTA VIOLA

To the south of the Tropea promontory, Costa Viola takes its name from the purple hue of its waters, especially as night falls. With its cliffs overlooking the sea and jagged coastline, interrupted by idyllic beaches, there are many places that can be defined as natural terraces with sea views where you can take in a truly unique sight of two active volcanoes - Etna, in Catania, and Stromboli on the Aeolian Island, close to the shores of Calabria. During the swordfish season, it is possible to see the swordfish hunters at work, as they plough through the waves in search of this prized and exquisite prey. There is also Scilla, with its fishing village; the fabulous "Chianalea" with its houses lapped by the sea and the ancient legend of the mythical monster spoken of in Homer's *Odyssey*, and Palmi, with its *Tonnara* (tuna fishing nets) are some of the most famous destinations in the area.

Costa Viola, a swordfisher's boat





Scilla, Chianalea

TOUR OF **COSTA VIOLA**

PALMI - SEMINARA - BAGNARA - SCILLA - VILLA SAN GIOVANNI - REGGIO CALABRIA

There are numerous things to see and do in **Palmi**: the *Casa della Cultura Leonida Rèpaci*, which is home to the modern and contemporary art and sculpture gallery, the most important demo-anthropological museum in the region; **San Nicola** Cathedral, and the monument to the great Palmi-born musician, **Francesco Cilea** by Michele Guerrisi. But

the coastline also offers just as many incredible emotions, with its **Scoglio dell'Ulivo** bay set against the Strait of Messina and **Scogliera della Tonnara** bay. Before leaving Palmi, you must stop off at **Monte Sant'Elia** that dominates the entire southern coast of Costa Viola, while to the north your gaze arrives all the way to Capo Vaticano. From here you can take the **Tracciolino**



Palmi, The Olive Rock

footpath that winds through the Mediterranean scrub that runs along the rocky cliffs. When embarking on this walk, which provides breath-taking panoramas all the way to Bagnara, it is advisable to go with an experienced guide.

Seminara is famous all over the world for its ceramics and four precious, sixteenth century *bas-reliefs* that depict key moments from the town's history, which are now conserved in the Palazzo Comunale (Town Hall). **San Marco Church** has a marble statue of *Madonna degli Angeli*, attributed to the sixteenth century sculptor, **Antonello Gagini**. Also worthy of a visit is the *Madonna dei Poveri Sanctuary* and *Cala Janculla*, a beach that can only be reached from the sea, located in a special protected area of Calabria and a site of communitarian interest. The itinerary leads on to **Bagnara**

Calabria, the home of traditional *torrone* nougat, which is still made with typical, natural ingredients using a special artisanal process. The town is also famous for its *terraces*, areas of land, which over the centuries have been created out of the mountainside, through laborious manual labour, to cultivate vines and vegetables. In Bagnara, you can also visit **Castello Emmarita**, **Torre Aragonese** and make use of the *marina*.

But the place where you should linger a little longer has to be **Scilla** which, along with its myths and legends, continues to offer visitors spectacular sights and emotions. Like many other towns and villages on Costa Viola, the town is also famous for its *swordfish hunting* and its ancient "*spadare*" hunting boats, that have survived until the present day. A walk through

Chianalea, with its houses overlooking the sea, that seems almost like a miniature Venice with its boats moored directly under the arches that lead to the houses, is essential. In the main square, you can also enjoy a visit to **Castello dei Ruffo di Scilla** fortress and the village with the beautiful sandy beach of **Marina Grande**.

From **Villa San Giovanni**, you can embark for Sicily on one of the famous ferries that constantly cross the **Strait of Messina**, providing tourists with a brief but breath-taking journey across the sea, a closer view of the Calabrian and Sicilian shorelines, and the highlands of Aspromonte in Calabria and Etna in Sicily.

But this itinerary must also include the city of **Reggio Calabria**, with its rich culture that goes back to Magna Graecia; the numerous archaeological sites; the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (National Archaeological Museum), which is home to a myriad of works of arts, such as the **Riace Bronzes**, which are among the most famous ancient works of art in the world. Other places to visit are **Castello Aragonese**, the **Francesco Cilea** theatre, **Cattedrale dell'Assunta** and the magnificent **coastline** that looks out over the Strait of Messina with its splendid secular plant life.



Reggio Calabria, View of Etna



Villa San Giovanni

Bagnara Calabria





THE IONIAN COAST

GRECANIC AREA

In this area the people still speak the ancient Grecanica language and maintain the traditions of that remote past. It is the only place in the world where bergamot is cultivated, a citrus fruit which is used to extract a very popular perfume essence, which is sent all over the world.





Coast in the Grecanic area



Pentedattilo

TOUR OF GRECANICA AREA

MELITO PORTO SALVO - CONDOFURI - BOVA MARINA

At just a few kilometres from **Melito Porto Salvo**, holidaymakers that stay in this beautiful seaside destination can easily reach the quaint village of **Pentedattilo**, which was abandoned for years but now re-discovered as a tourist destination, with its houses that scramble up the slopes of a mountain that has a shape that resembles five fingers.

Condofuri is the place where **bergamot** is grown. Further inland, you will find the Hellenophone district of **Gallicianò**, with an ethnographic museum, a Byzantine

church and the enchanting abandoned hamlet of **Amendolea**, with its castle ruins and view of the river of the same name.

Bova Marina is characterised by its large beach, where, on a clear day, bathers can see the slopes of Etna. Here they have also recently discovered a very ancient **synagogue**, which was once part of a vast Jewish settlement. The coastal watchtower is also worth a visit, as well as the **Madonna del Mare** bronze statue, which stands on a slope, guarding the village.



THE IONIAN COAST

RIVIERA DEI GELSOMINI

Riviera dei Gelsomini (The Jasmine Riviera) is named after the jasmine flowers that were gathered and sold here in the past to produce perfume essence. Now jasmine flowers, which are no longer as common as they were, have made way for brightly coloured orange blossom, bergamot and prickly pears, livening up this natural landscape of rare beauty. But it is also brought to life by the great civilisations of the past that passed through here, leaving indelible traces, particularly Magna Graecia, with the archaeological sites of Kaulonia and Locri Epizefiri, and the Byzantines who left behind authentic architectural jewels, like Cattolica di Stilo Church and Gerace Cathedral. The Riace Bronzes, two magnificent Greek statues that date back to the 5th century BC, were also found on the seabed - the “*Il Giovane*” (The Young) and “*il Vecchio*” (The Old), or the “*Eroe*” (Hero) and “*lo Stratego*” (The Strategist) are now preserved in the National Archaeological Museum, in Reggio Calabria, just a few kilometres from all the main destinations along this particular stretch of riviera.



Locri, Seafont



Africo, Capo Bruzzano

TOUR OF RIVIERA DEI GELSOMINI

BRANCALEONE - AFRICO - LOCRI - MARINA DI GIOIOSA IONICA - ROCCELLA IONICA - MONASTERACE

In **Brancaleone**, you can visit a beautiful *abandoned village*, located on an inland rise that provides a splendid view of the sea. The coastline is also home to the only beach in Calabria where the rare **Loggerhead** (*Caretta caretta*) sea turtle lays its eggs.

Africo has one of the most beautiful beaches in the area, which, at

Capo Bruzzano, is punctuated by its famous *zoomorphic rocks*.

Locri looks like a modern small town by the sea, but it conceals the remains of a very ancient past. Just outside the town you will find the **Locri Epizefiri Archaeological Park**, where you can admire the Greek Theatres, the Persephone Sanctuary, the Marasà Temple,



Roccella Ionica

numerous necropolises and the Roman Spas. The town is also home to an extremely interesting archaeological museum, which contains several artefacts found on the various sites, including the famous *pinax votive tablet*. A more substantial selection of artefacts is also preserved in the National Museum in Reggio Calabria.

Marina di Gioiosa Ionica offers tourists a beautiful coastline right next to the ruins of a *Greek-Roman Amphitheatre* and the nearby *Torre Borraca*. In the residential

centre, you can also admire *Torre Galea*, an imposing and well-preserved watchtower.

Arriving by sea at **Roccella Ionica**, you can moor in one of the most well-equipped *tourist ports* on the Ionian coast. Here you can visit the *Castello dei Carafa* fortress, with its excellent view of a vast expanse of coast, a promenade and historic centre with numerous churches and beautiful squares that can also be enjoyed by night. There is also the famous “*Rumori Mediteranei*” *Jazz Festival* which is held

here every year, now in its 40th edition.

In **Monasterace** you can set off from the fascinating **Punta Stilo** headland, home to the **Kaulon Temple**, the remains of which seem to rise up directly out of the Ionian sea. This site also has an interesting **archaeological museum**.

The long, sun-drenched beaches of Riviera dei Gelsomini, also pass through the municipalities of **Camini**; **Riace**, where the two famous bronzes were found; **Caulonia**, with its wonderful historic centre; **Siderno**, a small seaside town with a beach that has developed around a Mediaeval hamlet; the coastal centre of **Bovalino**, and **Bianco**, famous for “Greco di Bianco” wine, which is made from dried white grapes.

Locri, coastline



Caulonia

Roccella Ionica, marina



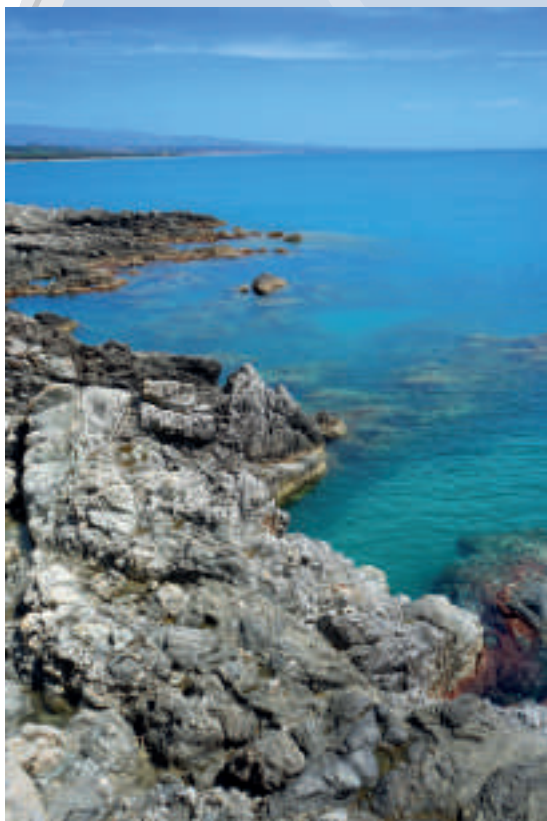


THE IONIAN COAST

COSTA DEGLI ARANCI

In the southern region of the Ionian lies Costa degli Aranci (The Orange Coast), with its typical hillsides laden with orange trees – a fruit that gives this region both its name and colour – that descend gently towards the sea. In fact, from a distance, the fruits look like bright orange dots that stand out strikingly against the intense green of the leaves. Another typical trait of the area are its sandy and pebbled beaches and crystal-clear sea, its rocky promontory, breath-taking views, reefs and marine grottos. If you are travelling to this stretch of coastline, you must stop off for a visit to the Parco Archeologico (Archaeological Park), where you will find the sizeable remains of the ancient Greek city of Scylletium, which later became the Roman city of Scolacium. Here, for a few hours, you can immerse yourselves not only in history but also the beauty of the natural habitat, with its ancient orange trees that spread out between the hills and the sea.

Staletti, Copanello





Costa degli Aranci, Pietragrande

TOUR OF **COSTA DEGLI ARANCI**

**BADOLATO - DAVOLI - SOVERATO - MONTEPAONE - STALETTÌ - SQUILLACE
BORGIA - CATANZARO LIDO - SELLIA MARINA - CROPANI - BOTRICELLO**

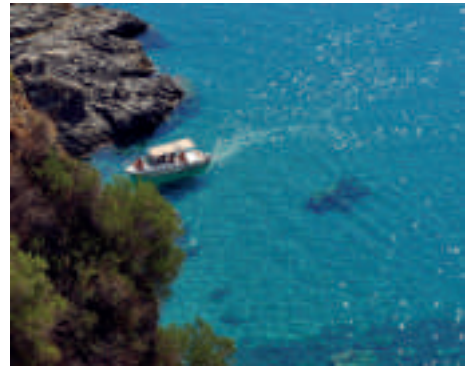
In **Badolato** it is also possible to arrive by sea and moor in the town's *tourist ports*. Due to its urban plan, which is nestled on the slopes of a hill that opens out onto the sea, it is one of the most characteristic historic centres on the Ionian coast. The town has numerous churches: *Chiesa dell'Immacolata*, which lies outside the urban centre on a terrace overlooking the sea; *S. Maria degli Angeli Sanctuary*, with its important wooden works of art by sculptor Fr. Diego da Careri, and *San Domenico* with its interesting façade built from local granite.

Davoli is practically divided into two parts: the internal area with its *ancient Mediaeval hamlet*, where tourists can take a pleasant walk and the coastal district with its modern town and thriving commercial centre, where you can purchase typical products and also visit the *seafront that stretches along the entire coast*.

Soverato is a modern town with tourist facilities and a lively seafront with bars and nightlife. In the historic centre is *Maria SS. Addolorata Church*, which preserves the



Soverato



Staletti, Caminia

Pietà del Gagini, a white marble sculpture of extraordinary beauty. In the surrounding area, it is also possible to visit the ancient ruins of the town and the **Torre di Carlo V** watchtower, which stands on a rise overlooking the coast.

Montepaone is a modern seaside village and a tourist destination of excellence, with extensive, well-equipped beaches and a **promenade** that is perfect for pleasurable evening strolls.

Leaving Montepaone at your shoulder, you come to the municipality of **Staletti**, home to one of the most beautiful and well-equipped beaches on the Costa degli Aranci, called **Copanello**, a tourist resort with white, sandy beaches and clear, shallow waters. Furthermore, there is also a reef where you will find the Cassiodoro pools and, close to the **Vivarium**, a monastery founded by Cassiodoro, which is also the site of an ancient fish farm that is still in use today. Furthermore, you

can admire what remains of **San Martino**, a small Byzantine church, and the spellbinding **Caminia** and **Pietragrande** beaches.

Squillace is a well-conserved Mediaeval hamlet where you can explore **Castello Normanno** (Norman Castle), which provides a beautiful view of the Ionian coast; visit the **ceramic workshops** where the artisans still use traditional techniques; **Assunta Cathedral**, and the small Gothic church of **Santa Maria della Pietà**.

At just a few minutes from the town of Catanzaro, in the **Borgia** territory, nestled amidst a vast pine grove next to the beautiful **Roccelletta** beach is the **Scolacium** archaeological park with its Roman forum, theatre and one of the biggest and most interesting **archaeological museums** in Calabria. A place that bears witness to two of the most ancient cities in the region: the Greek city of Scylletium and the Roman city of Scolacium. The

park is located on a beautiful natural site, covered with ancient olive trees, where you can also visit the Norman basilica of **Santa Maria della Roccella** and the **Museo dell'olio** (Oil Museum).

The marine district of Catanzaro, **Catanzaro Lido**, has a host of elegant and well-equipped tourist facilities, a recently built **marina** and a **seafront** that provides an ample view of the Gulf of Squillace. Its sandy shores meet the confines of a **pine grove**, where, in the summer months visitors can enjoy the refreshing shade of this coastal forest. One of its unique features is the recently discovered **coastal dunes**, a now rare habitat of great environmental importance that is home to rare and protected species of plants.

Sellia Marina is a modern municipality with a host of tourist facilities and hotel structures. As well as its

sandy, Blue Flag **beaches**, another place to visit is the **Valli Cupe Regional Nature Reserve**.

In **Cropani** you can discover a beautiful historic centre, featuring a **Duomo** with a tall bell tower and an **archaeological museum**. At just a few kilometres away, you will also find the **marine district** with a long sandy beach, which is ideal for bathing.

Botricello is a seaside town with a modern urban centre. Here we reach the end of **Costa degli Aranci** and its long line of sandy beaches, with its great tradition of **bread production and baked goods**.

Other important towns on this stretch of coast that all have magnificent historic centres, bathing and tourist facilities are: **San Sostene**, **Sant'Andrea Apostolo dello Ionio**, **Isca**, **Santa Caterina** and **Guardavalle**.

Soverato



Catanzaro Lido, marina





THE IONIAN COAST

COSTA DEI SARACENI

Costa dei Saraceni is named after the raids of the pirate ships that came from the east and could easily be reached by the Saracens, often forcing the people to abandon their marine hamlets and seek the safety of the nearby hillsides. Today, the natural beauty of its headlands, gulfs, crystalline sea and wild vegetation, together with its manmade riches, such as Greek-Roman, Medieval and Byzantine artefacts, help us to forget those unfortunate times. The area is also home to wine towns, such as Cirò, and what remains of ancient Kroton, one of the most important centres of Magna Graecia, with its Hera Lacinia temple, the only remains of which is a beautiful, single column that stands out against the sea, and Capo Rizzuto Island, with Castello Aragonese di “Le Castella” fortress, which is basically a defensive watch tower surrounded by sea, connected to the land by a thin sliver of sand.

Crotone, coastline



Crotone, Capo Colonna

TOUR OF **COSTA DEI SARACENI**

CUTRO - ISOLA DI CAPO RIZZUTO - CROTONE - STRONGOLI - MELISSA - CIRÒ MARINA - CIRÒ - CRUCOLI

During the summer months in **Cutro** they play *living chess*, in which people impersonate the pieces of this ancient board game, mostly for the benefit of the tourists that flock here to enjoy a holiday by the sea. In fact, the marine district of **Steccato di Cutro** is home to beautiful beaches and important hotel complexes.

The territory of **Capo Rizzuto Island** is home to the largest **Natural Marine Reserve** in Calabria, punctuated with its many promontories, coastal towers and secret beaches that can only be reached on foot. It is precisely in Capo Rizzuto, immersed in nature, where you can see **Torre Vecchia**, one of the tallest towers on the Ionian coast. The coastal itinerary ends



Cirò Marina, Coastal Tower

with an authentic jewel: **Castello Aragonese di Le Castella**, which rises up out of the sea like a fortified island. Renowned the world over, the landmark has led to the establishment of a host of quality hotel complexes and a flourishing, modern village with a *marina*.

It is also on this coast where the history of the town of **Crotone** unfolded. There are numerous testimonies to the existence of Magna Graecia: the archaeological site of **Capocolonna** that extends across the entire promontory, with its fascinating single remaining column of the great **Hera Lacinia Temple** and various other remains of the Greek columns and murals, exhibited at the two **archaeological museums** in Capocolonna and Crotone. But Crotone is also famous for the great **Castello di Carlo V** fortress, its long

beaches and two ports (a trading port and marina).

Strongoli features a beautiful historic centre. Located on a plateau that acts as a natural terrace, which allows it to dominate Marchesato and the nearby coast, the town is believed to be the ancient site of Petelia, but it was also an ancient episcopal see. Surrounded by **age-old olive trees**, it is also home to a **Norman Castle** and important Mediaeval **churches**.

Melissa is famous for its vineyards and excellent **wine**. It has a beautiful historic centre, and, thanks to its wonderful seafront, the **Torre Melissa** marine district has been a Blue Flag holder for many years. The town takes its name from one of the most beautiful and imposing **coastal towers** in Calabria, which

has been renovated and opened to tourists. The town is also home to a **Farming museum**.

But it is in **Cirò Marina**, on **Punta Alice**, that we really start to understand the reason behind the name of this coastline. Here we find ourselves walking beneath the arches of the **Saracen Market** a beautiful and ancient construction overlooking the sea, which stands in front of one of the many watch towers that are scattered across this stretch of land. The town also has a fishing **port** and a **marina**.

In the territory of ancient Kroton, our itinerary takes us on a visit to the wild and peaceful beaches of **Cirò**. The region is dotted with vineyards and olive trees that almost brush the confines of the sea and produce its famous **Cirò wine** and excellent extra-virgin olive oils.

Crucoli has an historic centre and a maritime district called **Torretta di Crucoli** that takes its name from one of the **coastal towers**. It is nicknamed the “paese della sardella” (town of sardella), a typical, local dish made with sardines, chilli and spices that is eaten on bread. During the summer months, tourists can discover this delicious product at the **Sagra della sardella** festival.



Le Castella, marina



Cirò Marina, Saracen markets

Melissa Tower





Le Castella, Castello Aragonese

THE **CAPO RIZZUTO** MARINE NATURE RESERVE

Located on the head of the cape of the same name, the Marina di Capo Rizzuto Nature Reserve is signposted by a lighthouse and has a coastal area that consists of sandy beaches and rocky promontories that rise up out of the sea. But it is also home to unspoilt marine environments, all with their own unique flora and fauna. One of the most enchanting and famous areas is Le Castella, with its sixteenth century fortress that is almost entirely surrounded by water, and the archaeological site of Capo Colonna, with its magnificent Greek column, the only surviving remains of the enormous Hera Lacinia temple.

Visiting the marine area that revolves around **Capo Rizzuto**, you will find a particularly jagged coastline, studded with inlets and tiny beaches that can be used by tourists for an unforgettable swim in its crystalline waters or even an extraordinary diving experience.

From the **small port** of **Le Castella** you can take one of the tourist boats with transparent floors, which will allow you to view the reserve's seabed, which is a unique, protected environment due to the biodiversity of its marine flora and fauna.

However, the area is not merely renowned for the beauty of its natural habitat, the fortification systems dotted along this coast are also extremely interesting. But it is not called **Costa dei Saraceni** by chance. In fact, as the name

clearly suggests, its shores had to be well defended from the incursions of the Saracen pirates.

Just a little outside the area's territory, in the town of Crotone, stands the majestic **Castello di Carlo V** fortress. From here, the coast naturally leads you to **Capocolonna**, the site of the well-preserved **Torre di Nao** watchtower. Also located by the sea, in a beautiful, wild landscape with long expanses of Mediterranean scrub and golden sands, are a succession of perfectly preserved and fascinating places, such as **Torre Scifo** tower in Crotona; **Torre Cannone** in Capo Cimiti; the remains of the **Castello** in the historic centre of Capo Rizzuto Island; **Torre Nuova** and **Torre Vecchia** in Capo Rizzuto and, finally, **Castello Aragonese di Le Castella**, which can also be viewed inside.

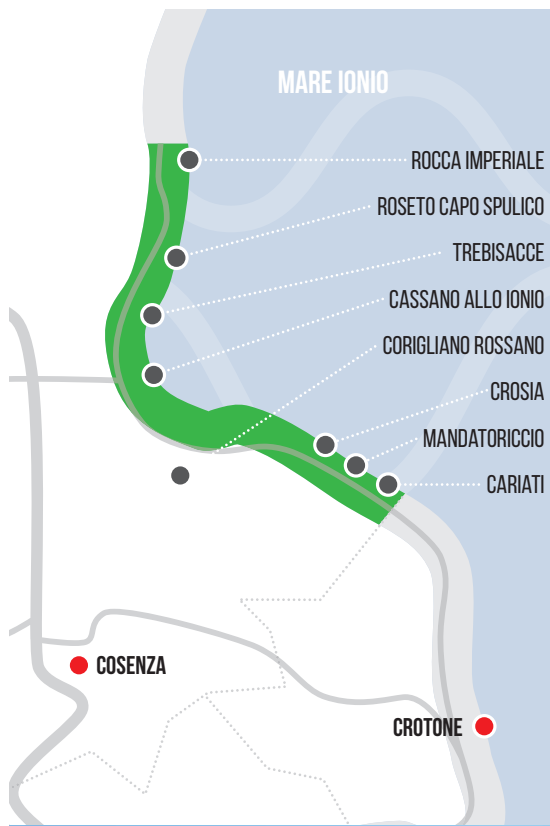
With its close vicinity to the Hellenic peninsular, the ancient colonisers who founded Magna Graecia could easily reach its shores. This has made the area an important *archaeological site*, with a marine park submersed in water that can be explored by divers, and the promontory of **Capocolonna**, which is entirely covered by the remains of the **Hera Lacinia Temple**. A number of artefacts from the site can also be viewed in the neighbouring *archaeological museum*.



Seabed, Snorkelling

UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY

The remains of the ancient town Kaulon - an archaeological area and a museum, are at Monasterace Marina, on the Ionian coast but there are also many Greek architectural elements, dating to the 5th century BC, on the seabed and covered by the sea, only visible on a dive. Some of the material has been recovered and is now preserved in the underwater archaeology section of the museum. The Calabrian seas have, however, yielded treasure of immense value to archaeologists and even today continue to surprise with frequent discoveries of ancient finds, such as crockery of different craftsmanship and even shipwrecks. The Riace bronzes, two imposing Greek bronze statues from the 5th century BC, found in the sea off Riace in 1972 and now kept in the National Museum at Reggio Calabria, are the most important of all.



THE IONIAN COAST

COSTA DEGLI ACHEI

In the most northern region of the Ionian, the Costa degli Achei (Coast of the Achei) inherited its name from the ancient Greeks, whose omnipresent ruins seem to remind the Calabrian people of today that they were truly one people, who did not find their colonies on these shores by chance. An example of this is the legendary Sybaris: a large city in Magna Graecia that was famous throughout the Mediterranean for its culture, wellbeing and civilisation. This stretch of coastline is one of the closest to the Hellenic peninsular, which lies only a few nautical miles away. Famous for its prized lemons, which are used to produce essences and products for the confectionery industry, its beaches provide some of the most varied marine landscapes, in an alternating succession of rocks, shingle, pebbles and fine sands. Whereas, Roseto Capo Spulico, with Castello Federiciano, a castle that stands on the edge of a cliff, and the same town of Sibari, which is today attempting to re-emerge from a vast archaeological site, are the most interesting centres to visit in the area.



Amendolara, Broken Tower



Cariati, The marina

TOUR OF **COSTA DEGLI ACHEI**

**CARIATI - MANDATORICCIO - CROSIA - CORIGLIANO ROSSANO - CASSANO ALLO IONIO
TREBISACCE - ROSETO CAPO SPULICO - ROCCA IMPERIALE**

The itinerary starts at **Cariati**, which is the only village in Calabria that still maintains its original **ancient walls**, with its towers and city gates that enclose and protect the entire historic centre. The coastal area provides an equipped **marina**.

Further inland, on the crest of a hill, you will find the historic centre of **Mandatoriccio**. The **Castello**

(Castle), with its two, typical round towers, overshadows the main square of the town, which is a sort of terrace with a view of the sea. The **beach** can be reached in just a few minutes and is suitable for bathing.

Crosia comprises a historic centre and the seaside hamlet of **Mirto Crosia**, with its idyllic **beaches** that have recently been awarded the



Roseto Capo Spulico, Frederician Castle

Green Flag. Another attraction worthy of a visit is the **fortified Masseria** (fortified farm).

Continuing onwards, you will come to *Schiavonea*, a coastal hamlet in the town of **Corigliano Rossano**. Here, when you gaze to the north, the confines of the sea seem to meet with the Pollino mountain chain. Corigliano is the site of **Castello Ducale**, one of the most striking and best preserved castles in the region, which still has its original furniture and paintings. Rossano is home to an **AcquaPark**, one of the biggest in Southern Italy, providing a day of

guaranteed fun. But it is also a “Byzantine city” par excellence, with its numerous monuments, including **San Marco Church** and **Madonna Achiropita Cathedral**. However, one of the main reasons to stop off at Rossano is a visit to the **Museo Diocesano** (Diocesan Museum), which is home to the **Codex Purpureus**, which UNESCO has inscribed in its register of the Memory of the World. Rossano is also the port of the Sila Greca area and, on a road that leads to the mountain, you will find the magnificent **Abbazia di Santa Maria del Patire (St Mary of Patir Abbey)**, of Byzantine influence, with an

artistic mosaic floor. But it is ancient **Sibari**, which is now part of the **Casano allo Ionio** territory, that is the real attraction on this coast, with its **Archaeological Park** and the **Museo della Magna Grecia** (*Magna Graecia Museum*). The area also offers numerous tourist resorts, including **Laghi di Sibari**, which is a one-of-a-kind attraction in the region: a small lagoon, with houses that can be reached by boat, built on slivers of land that emerge from the sea.

Trebisacce is a seaside destination with a characteristic **coastal hamlet** and a lively **marina** and fishing **port**. Its coastline is so beautiful, it has been awarded Blue Flag status.

As you continue onwards, immediately overlooking the sea, you will come face-to-face with **Castello Federiciano di Roseto Capo Spulico**, the interiors of which are perfectly conserved and open to visitors. A visit to the Mediaeval historic centre is also essential.

The itinerary ends with the beautiful views from the historic centre of **Rocca Imperiale**, which is located on a rise, at just a few kilometres from the sea. To the north-east you can see the last towns of Basilicata and the Achei coast to the south. Here you will find the **Castello Federiciano fortress** and a well-preserved historic centre.



Roseto Capo Spulico, the Anvil Stone



Corigliano Rossano, the Schiavonea beach

Corigliano Rossano, Patirion



THE BLUE FLAG RESORTS AND MOORINGS 2019

Operative in Europe since 1987, the “Blue Flag” scheme is an international eco-label that certifies the environmental quality of the coastline, with particular attention to the beaches and tourist destinations. Implemented by the non-governmental, non-profit organisation “Foundation for Environmental Education” (FEE), the scheme is now successfully affirmed and recognised the world over by both tourists and tour operators. The principal objective of the scheme is to promote sustainable tourism on the coast, guaranteeing the respect of specific requirements, in terms of attention to the environment and the territory, evaluating various criteria, including the beauty of the beaches, the quality of the bathing water and the viability of the terrain.

Currently, the Calabrian municipalities in the **Cosenza** Province that hold the Blue Flag for the quality of their beaches are:

- **Trebisacce**, for its southern seafront (Riviera dei Saraceni, viale Magna Grecia and Riviera delle Palme beaches);
- **Tortora**, for Pineta Fiume Noce beach;

- **Roseto Capo Spulico**, for its seafront;
- **Praia a Mare**, for Punta Fiuzzi beach;
- **San Nicola Arcella**, for Arcomagnano beach;
- **Villapiana**, for Villa Scalo and Villa Lido beach.

Catanzaro Province:

- **Sellia Marina**, for the Ruggero, San Vincenzo, Sena Jonio and Rivachiarà seaside destinations;
- **Soverato**, for Baia dell’Ippocampo bay, named due to the presence of two species of sea horse (hippocampus).

Crotone Province:

- **Melissa**, for the Torre Melissa coastline;
- **Cirò Marina**, for Punta Alice beach and the other beaches in the Cervara and Madonna di Mare area.

Reggio Calabria Province:

- **Roccella Jonica**, for its lido.

Whereas, the Blue Flag tourist destinations in Calabria are:

- The marina area in the **Cetraro** Port (in the Cosenza Province);
- The Grazie Port in **Roccella Jonica Port** (in the Reggio Calabria Province).

TOURISTS PORTS, DOCKS AND MOORINGS IN CALABRIA

Those looking to navigate the lengths of the coast, stop off for a short break or excursion in some of the most beautiful and interesting coastal destinations or the nearby inland towns and villages, will find plenty of places to moor along the coast of Calabria.

Tyrrhenian Coast (from north to south)

Praia a Mare, Scalea, Diamante, Belvedere Marittimo, Cetraro, Paola, Amantea, Gizzeria, Pizzo Calabro, Vibo Marina, Tropea, Gioia Tauro, Palmi, Bagnara Calabra, Scilla, Villa San Giovanni, Reggio Calabria.

Ionian Coast (from north to south)

Rocca Imperiale, Roseto Capo Spulico, Trebisacce, Sibari, Corigliano, Cariati, Cirò Marina, Crotona, Le Castella, Catanzaro Lido, Copanello, Soverato, Badolato, Monasterace, Roccella Jonica, Marina di Gioiosa Jonica, Sidero, Bovalino Marina, Saline Joniche.

For those who love boating and sailing, circumnavigating Calabria and stopping off at the various marinas and mooring locations is a unique experience that not only provides you with a privileged view of the seas and the Calabrian coast, but also the opportunity to visit some of the most beautiful marine destinations in the Mediterranean.

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