

italea

The journey to your roots

Magazine

To your roots

No. 9

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In the context of the project, the Italea Card is envisaged: a digital card that will entitle holders to discounts, benefits, and services from Italea's partner companies.

2024, a year to remember

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This is what "talea" means

The name Italea derives from "talea," a practice by which a plant is allowed to propagate. By cutting off a part of it and replanting it, a new life can be given to it.

Vigo di Fassa TRENTINO ALTO ADIGE



A Dolomites' destination for all seasons

Ladin soul in Val di Fassa, one of Trentino's first tourist centers, it's a top destination for winter sports enthusiasts

Ladin soul in the heart of the Dolomites, Vigo was one of the first tourist centers in the valley in the province of Trento. As early as the 19th century, the village began to be frequented by geologists and mountaineers, later becoming a popular destination for mountain lovers, both in winter and summer. A fraction of the municipality of San Giovanni di Fassa, along with Pozza di Fassa, it was once the administrative and religious center of the entire valley.

The town is overlooked by the Dolomitic group of the Catinaccio and Cima Undici (2507 m). A must-see in the village is the Museo Ladin de Fascia, a modern and innovative museum that houses the ethnographic collections of the Ladino Cultural Institute. Multimedia supports, information points, and the drawings of artist Milo Manara will help you discover the culture of the fascinating people who have lived in



ApT Val di Fassa / Patricia Ramirez



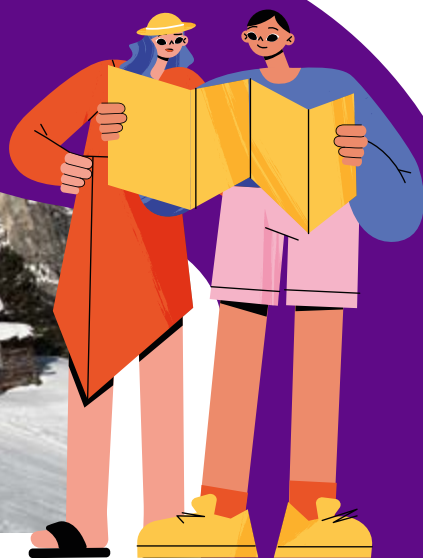
OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

A modern cable car departing from the town center takes you up to Ciampedie, a natural terrace offering stunning views of the Dolomites. From here, numerous trails begin, ranging from peaceful hikes to more adrenaline-pumping treks, all immersed in nature. Near Vigo, you can also find the towns of Canazei, Moena, and Campitello di Fassa. Additionally, Passo Pordoi, Passo Sella, and Passo Fedaia are nearby.



HOW TO GET THERE

The reference airport is Bolzano-Dolomiti Airport (40 km away), while the nearest train station is Ora Auer Station (55 km away). By car from Rome, take the E35 and A22/E45 highways: follow the E35, A1, and A22/E45 towards S.da Statale 12 in Cornedo all'Isarco. Take the exit for Val d'Ega/Eggental from the A22/E45 and continue on SS241 to Vigo di Fassa.



this area for thousands of years. Not far from the museum is the beautiful Pieve di San Giovanni, the symbolic church of Vigo, with its characteristic bell tower standing 67 meters high, covered in larch shingles with grey hues. Also nearby is the Museo Mineralogico Monzoni, which hosts the most complete collection of Dolomitic minerals, emerged from the sea 250 million years ago, collected and carefully preserved. In winter, Vigo is a reference point for snow sports enthusiasts. Thanks to the ski lifts, you can reach the Ciampedie lifts directly from the village, at around 2,000 m above sea level, at the heart of the Catinaccio Ski Area. For younger visitors, there is the Kinderpark Ciampedie Laurin, one of the highest baby parks in the world. In the warmer months, the village becomes a starting point for numerous hikes in nature, offering breathtaking views of the Dolomites. In the summer, don't miss the events of Entorn Vich, with a rich program of food and wine events, concerts, folk group performances, and "revivals" of ancient crafts, with artists and artisans from the village.



ApT Val di Fassa / Patricia Ramirez



Termoli
MOLISE

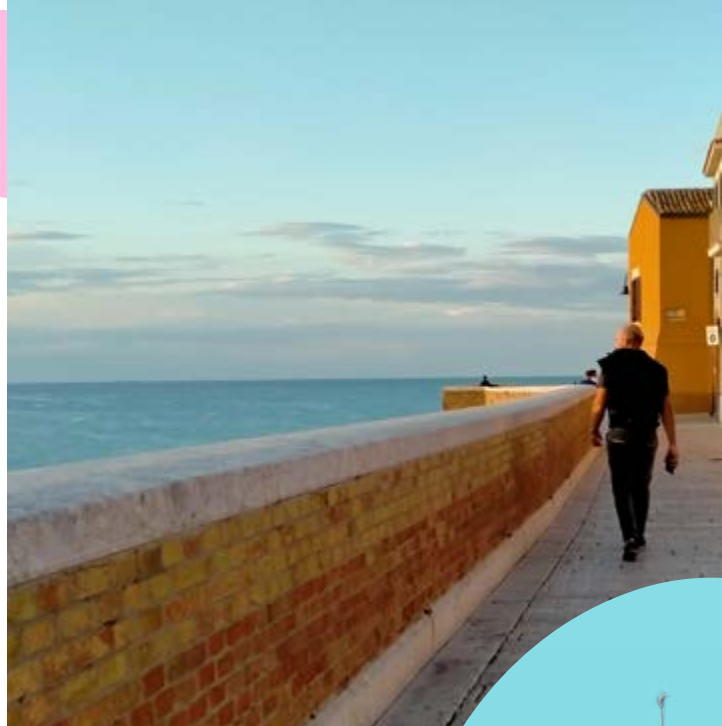
Termoli's seafaring tradition

Overlooking the Adriatic
it's the Molise coast's top village
with year-round attractions

Termoli, in the province of Campobasso, is a Molisana gem nestled between the Biferno River and the Sinarca Stream. Its origins are uncertain: some believe it is the continuation of the ancient city called Buca, a Roman port of Frentania, while others think it was built on the ruins of ancient Cliternia, although this second hypothesis has now been disproven. What is certain is that Termoli has a long history, as evidenced by the discovery of prehistoric necropolises and Roman villas. It was with the barbarian invasions that the inhabitants took refuge on the current promontory, and Termoli began to form, eventually becoming the county capital by the Lombards, who founded the Duchy of Benevento in 568 and started building a defensive complex.

The true protagonist and symbol of Termoli's history is the Swabian Castle, whose architectural features suggest it was built in the Norman period (11th century), entirely in limestone and sandstone, near a pre-existing Lombard tower. The adjective "Swabian" seems to have been given later, following the reconstruction and fortification commissioned by Frederick II of Swabia in 1240 after damage from a Venetian fleet attack. Also of great interest is the Cathedral in Apulian Romanesque style, located at the highest point of the Termoli promontory and probably existing as early as the 9th or 10th century.

There are many religious buildings in the historic center, which is crossed by Corso Nazionale: the Church of San Timoteo, the Church of Jesus Crucified, the Church of Carmelo, the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Church of San Francesco d'Assisi, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul Apostles, the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, the Church of Maria SS. della Vittoria in Valentino, the Church of the Madonna delle Grazie, and the 16th-century Bishop's Palace. Among the military architecture, four coastal towers should be mentioned: Torre del Meridiano, Torre del Sinarca (16th century), Torre Tornola, and Torretta Belvedere (Norman origin). Among the civil architecture, the MACTE (Museum

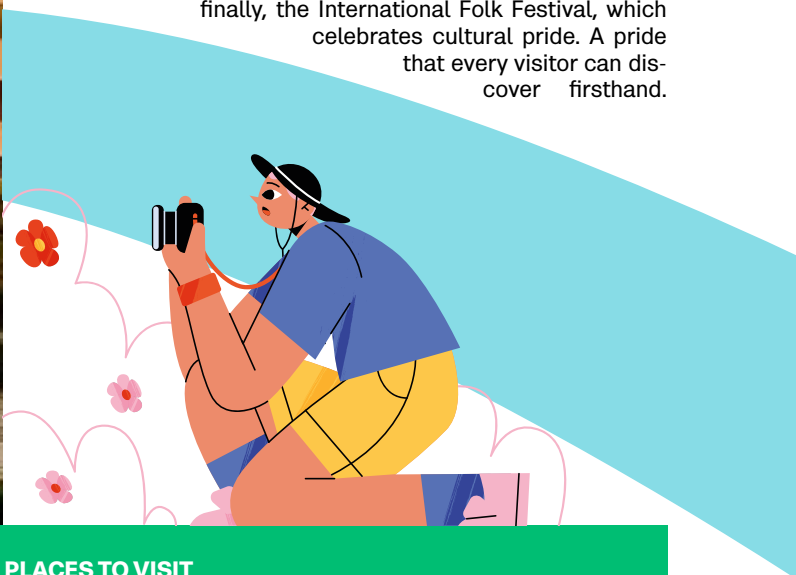




of Contemporary Art of Termoli) deserves a visit, displaying works by Carla Accardi, Giulio Turcato, Gastone Novelli, Raphael Jesus Soto, Mario Schifano, Tano Festa, Nanda Vigo, and Tomaso Binga. A special mention goes to the "A Rejecelle" street, which, along with a narrow alley in Ripatransone, is the narrowest street in Italy, measuring only 41 centimeters wide. In short, Termoli is closely linked to the



sea, as evidenced by the fish festival at the end of August. The cuisine of Termoli is primarily seafood-based, but it also makes extensive use of olive oil produced in the nearby hills. The typical dish par excellence is "u' bredette" alla termolese, a nighttime meal for fishermen returning home from the fishing boats. Other typical dishes include: pasta alla chitarra with cuttlefish or squid sauce, "fesille" (fusilli with vegetable sauces, either white or with tomato ragù), "pulepe 'mbregatorie" (octopus "in purgatory"), "trejje" (red mullets), tubettini with "i maruzzelle" (pasta with sea snails), and "scarpelle di Natale" (leavened fried bread dough). A cuisine that enriches the city's events, such as the patron saint festival of San Basso in August, which culminates in the procession at sea, the historical-popular reenactment of a Turkish landing and the simulation of the "Castle Fire," the altars of San Giuseppe "I Vetare de San Gesèppe" on March 18, and finally, the International Folk Festival, which celebrates cultural pride. A pride that every visitor can discover firsthand.



OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Among the seaside towns, Vasto is definitely worth a visit, as is the Montediorisio Castle.



HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airport is Pescara Airport, located 82 km away. Termoli is also easily accessible by train. By car from Rome: take the A24, A25/E80, and A14 towards Termoli. Exit at Termoli from the A14, then follow the SS 87 Sannitica and SS 16 Adriatica/SS 16 to reach the town.



Favignana SICILY



The heart of the Egadi beating between history and nature



Favignana, the name of both the municipality and the largest island in the Egadi archipelago, is an extraordinary blend of history and nature, making it a must-see gem in the province of Trapani. In addition to its natural beauty, which boasts the largest Marine Protected Area in Europe, Favignana also captivates visitors with its rich history, as evidenced by archaeological discoveries on land and underwater, dating back to the Paleolithic era.

Its waters, home to Posidonia meadows, are a haven for diverse marine life, including fish, resident and migratory birds, marine mammals, Caretta Caretta turtles, and the rare Mediterranean monk seal. The island also preserves remarkable structures, such as charming baroque chapels, and boasts coastlines rich with coves, inlets, and caves. Notable landmarks include the castles of Santa Caterina and San Giacomo, both dating back to the Norman period. Beach lovers should visit Cala Rossa, Grotte del Bue Marino, the pristine Cala Azzurra, Lido Burrone (perfect for families), the rugged Scalo Cavallo, Cala del Pozzo, and Punta Sottile. Another unique attraction is the island's tuff quarries, resembling majestic cathedrals carved by

the skilled hands of master "pirriaturi" (tuff extractors). A special mention goes to the Ex Stabilimento Florio delle Tonnare di Favignana e Formica, a historic tuna processing plant that showcases artifacts from various eras, including a 15th-century pilgrim's flask containing wine and amphorae from different periods. The plant is a testament to Favignana's tuna fishing heritage, deeply intertwined with its cultural identity.

Favignana's culture is deeply rooted in its culinary traditions. While spices from trade routes have influenced Egadi cuisine, tuna remains the island's quintessential product. It's no surprise that tuna and its derivatives, like bottarga, feature prominently in Favignana's cuisine, often enjoyed as aperitifs or "aperitunno" during apericenas. Other must-try dishes include "ficazza" (a typical tuna-based salami), spaghetti with sea urchins, tuna meatballs, couscous (a legacy of Arab rule), and "frascatole," a humble dish made from leftover couscous semolina.

For dessert, indulge in cassatelle filled with sheep ricotta, a traditional Sicilian treat dating back to the 1700s, especially popular during Easter and Carnival. The island even hosts a dedicated cassatelle festival in April.

Traditional events include the cassatelle festival and the patronal feast of the Santissimo Crocifisso in September. Between its crystal-clear waters, soothing sea breeze, and unforgettable flavors, Favignana is ready to welcome visitors and showcase the best of Sicily.



OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Be sure to visit the other islands of the archipelago, Levanzo and Marettimo. Don't miss the historic centers of Trapani and Marsala before boarding the ferry.



HOW TO GET THERE

The island of Favignana (along with Levanzo and Marettimo) is connected to the ports of Trapani and Marsala by ferries and hydrofoils operating multiple daily trips. During the summer, it also has a weekly connection to Naples.



The journey to discover our roots continues

Here is the ninth issue of the magazine dedicated to Roots Tourism. The journey continues through all the Italian regions, discovering the wonders in over 800 municipalities that are part of the Italea project.

Genoa

The voices behind the new network
uniting the exhibition paths
that tell the stories of Italian migrations

Connecting generations through Emigration Museums

At the international conference "Italian Diasporas - Representation and Identity Issues," held in December in Genoa, the network of Italian Emigration Museums was presented. Among the key players and protagonists was the Museum of Marchigian Emigration in Recanati (MEMA): «It is a regional, municipal museum. We are in Recanati, a beautiful town. We host numerous root-seeking travelers. Many are able to find information about their origins at our museum. Our journey ends, in fact, with a visit to the CIS-El Archive - the International Center for Studies on Italian Emigration

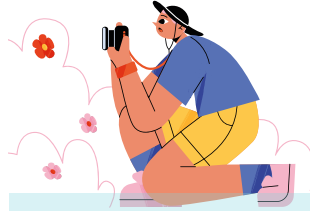
- where often visitors find unknown relatives. Then they take a photo and post it on their social media,» explains Luigi Petruzzellis, head of the Recanati museum. «A visit to the Museum of Marchigian Emigration,» he adds, «allows one to discover the story of the approximately 700,000 Marchigians who, between the 19th and 20th centuries, left their homeland, often making a painful decision to head to an unknown land in search of fortune, as well as those who have made the same decision more recently. We also tell the story of today's emigration,» says Petruzzellis.

Also present in Genoa was Mimì Coviello, coordinator of the technical-scientific committee of the Lucani in the World Nino Calice Center and representative of the Lucanian Emigration Museum, located at the Federiciano Castle in Lagopesole, in the province of Potenza: «Our museum tells 13 stories of more or less well-known Lucanians who left Basilicata during the first waves of emigration. We are now adding another piece to the story, which is more contemporary and comes from recent research and a traveling exhibition on overseas communities and the second and third generations (of Lucanians, ed.).» «I believe,» adds the expert, «that a visit to the museum for root-seeking tourists is very meaningful: it's like rediscovering their origins, finding themselves at home to hear a story, perhaps heard from their grandparents or parents, but in a different light: monu-



Here on the left,
Giovanni Maria
De Vita. On the
following page,
Luigi Maria Vignali





mentalized. It gives a different, collective emotion. Visiting a museum is as emotional for a root-seeking tourist as the journey itself,» concludes Coviello.

The Lucanian Emigration Museum is a museum space located within the headquarters of the Lucani in the World Nino Calice Center. In 2008, Dr. Pietro Simonetti proposed the creation of a museum space connected to the Lucani in the World Nino Calice Center. The idea was to create a multimedia path with interactive installations and visual arts on the theme of emigration as an Italian phenomenon, with particular focus on the Lucanian experience.

Starting from the Lucanian experience, the history of Italian emigration up until the mid-20th century is narrated, an emigration that involved about 29 million Italians, only a third of whom returned to their homeland. The museum setup reconstructs and tells, using multimedia and interactive technologies such as HD projectors, seat sensors, and multitouch screens, the different stages and modes of the migrant journey via carts, trains, and ships, and their arrival in foreign lands, particularly Ellis Island. The museum displays photographs, objects, letters, documents, and memories that accompany this journey into the memory of Lucanian emigration.

«The MEI, National Museum of Italian Emigration, opened in May 2022 and is the first national museum dedicated to Italian emigration,» explains the curator of the exhibition, Giorgia Barzetti. «It was created thanks to the collaboration of over 50 institutions, including regional and local museums, archives, international museums, research centers, and associations of Italians abroad. This is a museum that aims to tell the story of Italian emigration through the autobiographies of the people who lived it. So, it's a history of Italian emigration that begins with the first-person stories of its protagonists. The museum is a great operation of collective popular memory.»

Marcelo Huernos: «In Buenos Aires, doors are open for roots tourists»

Marcelo Huernos participated in "Italian Diasporas" He is curator, researcher, and content producer at the Muntref Museo de la Inmigración in Buenos Aires, where he has developed content for both permanent and temporary exhibitions. «Our museum receives visitors from all over the world throughout the year, including schools, retiree organizations, and ethnic and community mutual aid groups. We are open to roots tourism because many descendants, especially third-generation ones, come here to seek information about their ancestors who arrived in Argentina,» he explains.

The Muntref Museum is located in the building that housed the famous Hotel de Inmigrantes from 1911 to 1953, the first mandatory stop for millions of foreigners arriving in Argentina with the hope of a better life. It is estimated that more than half of the people who passed through the hotel were from Italy.

«The visit to the Immigration Museum,» Huernos emphasizes, «is very important for those interested in undertaking their own roots journey. It is here that they can find that part of their family history that arrived and stayed in Argentina, often without transmitting any further news after disembarking.»

Henrique Trindade Abreu: «São Paulo as the starting point of a journey»

Also present at the event was Henrique Trindade Abreu, representative of the Immigration Museum of São Paulo: «The Immigration Museum is housed in a historic reception building, the largest of its kind in São Paulo, which hosted about 800,000 Italians. Here, visitors can research information about their ancestors and uncover aspects of their personal history. It is a place to begin a "roots journey" and connect with other immigration museums worldwide, such as the Museum of Genoa. These two museums represent key points for understanding the history of Italian immigration, from the place of departure to the destination,» he explained.

The Immigration Museum of the State of São Paulo (Museu da Imigração do Estado de São Paulo) preserves the history and heritage of immigrants in São Paulo. Located in Mooca, a neighborhood whose history is closely tied to the arrival of Italian workers and their families in the 19th century, the museum is housed in a building that was originally a hotel, constructed between 1886 and 1888, where immigrants could stay for up to eight days before heading to their final destination in Brazil.

From the USA

The Italian-American Nicole Ponti created the brand "Body by Rigatoni" an example of how cultural roots can intertwine with innovation

A brand that tells a family story and the essence of Italy

Nicole Ponti has managed to combine her love for her Italian-American roots with her passion for Italian culture by creating a brand that celebrates the true essence of Italy. With her "Body by Rigatoni," an Italian lifestyle brand, Nicole aims not only to introduce the beauty of Italian culture but also to break the negative stereotypes that often accompany Italian-American identity in the United States. Her story is that of a family that, despite living in Jersey City, has always kept Italian values alive. It is the story of a girl who found her way between traditions and modernity, driven by her grandfather's stories about Italy and the desire to honor her mother's memory.

Nicole was born in Hackensack, New Jersey, in 1991, and now lives in Rutherford. Her paternal great-grandparents emigrated from Campania to the United States in the early 1900s, and her grandfather, Charles Ponti, who lived to be 106 and worked until the age of 101 as a unionist, is a symbol of resilience and the fight for workers' rights. On both sides, the Ponti family has always maintained a strong connection to Italian traditions. Living in community, sharing the little things, eating together, and working side by side in the family restaurant, "Quaglia's," run by her great-grandmother, are just some of the aspects and family stories that Nicole fondly remembers from her childhood.

Nicole's mother, Vera Louise Rotter Ponti, originally from Ireland but raised alongside five inseparable Neapolitan sisters, helped shape her in an Italian-American context rich in family values, food, and tradition. These bonds became the foundation of Nicole's identity and remain essential to her daily life.

Since childhood, Nicole constantly heard about Italy through her grandfather's tales. Her passion for the Belpaese grew over time, and at the age of 25, she fulfilled her dream of visiting her ancestral homeland. She arrived in Venice, and it was an indescribable emotion. From that moment on, trips to Italy became an essential part of Nicole's life, and her ancestral country became a source

of inspiration and experiences that transformed her, helped her through difficult times, and introduced her to special people.

The "Body by Rigatoni" brand stems from all of this: the desire to share the authentic essence of Italian and Italian-American culture. It's a project deeply rooted in Nicole's travels in Italy, family stories, and everyday experiences that shaped her. The brand's name itself is a tribute to her passion for pasta, which represents her deep connection to Italian culinary culture. But "Body by Rigatoni" is more than just a brand: it is a way of life, a lifestyle that celebrates Italian values related to family, simplicity, and food, and above all, it celebrates the love between a mother and her daughter. Vera Ponti, unfortunately, passed away in December 2020. A month before her passing, she had made a kitchen apron for Nikki (Nicole's nickname) with an image and the phrase "Body by Rigatoni" to encourage her daughter to start her own business and do something artistic and creative inspired by her deep passion for Italy. Along with the apron she made for her daughter, Vera also made one decorated with a porchetta for their friend chef Angelo, famous for this delicacy in their city. Nicole then began planning a business where, with her mother's help, she would create items to celebrate her love for Italy and design travel itineraries for Italy.





Nicole Ponti
and some
of her creations



Unfortunately, shortly after, Vera Ponti left her loved ones unexpectedly. After her mother's passing, Nicole didn't think she would ever be able to realize her dream, but thanks to her friend Alessandra, "Body by Rigatoni" became a reality. Not surprisingly, her first creation was the "Alessandra Tote," a bag where Nicole drew everything Alessandra, born in Italy and moved to America, missed. The design Vera created inspired the logo, and much more, of her daughter's brand. Nicole opened an Instagram profile to promote her love for Italy and began creating products that tell and celebrate Italian and Italian-American culture. Behind every item, personally designed by Nikki, there is a story. Everything is inspired by what happens to her in her travels in Italy and her daily life.

The most important item in "Body by Rigatoni" merchandise is naturally the "Vera Apron," the reproduction of the apron Vera made for Nikki, which bears her name. Although "Body by Rigatoni" is not a job for Nicole but a passion, in the last year, the brand has grown rapidly. Nikki has worked as a waitress in an Italian-American restaurant for eleven years, and her dream is to open a "Body by Rigatoni Aperitivo Bar," a place where all lovers of Italy can meet. The idea is to create an experience that goes beyond the mere consumption of food and beverages, offering a journey into Italian traditions through cultural events, tastings of typical products, and the opportunity to purchase authentic products from Italian companies. Nicole Ponti is one of the best examples of how cultural roots can intertwine with a passion for tradition and innovation. With her brand, she not only celebrates her Italian-American identity but also offers an opportunity to learn about and appreciate Italy in its most authentic form. Every product, every experience, every encounter with her is a tribute to her family, her history, and the culture that raised her. In a fast-paced world, Nikki invites us to slow down and rediscover the value of being together, of eating together, and of living with heart.

In Munich
The Italian Cultural Institute
hosted a presentation
of the Italea project



A bridge between generations and traditions

Last December, the Italian Cultural Institute in Munich hosted the presentation of the Italea Project, a promotion program for Rooted Tourism launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of the PNRR project and funded by NextGenerationEU. The program aims to attract Italians abroad and Italian descendants interested in discovering the places and traditions of their roots, offering a range of services to facilitate travel to Italy. Luigi Maria Vignali, Director General for Italians Abroad and Migration Policies at the Farnesina, was present at the event and emphasized the importance of the project and its dissemination: «It is important to invite Italians, especially younger generations, to rediscover the places of their roots. For young people, it is less obvious to find these places, the small villages, and the traditions that characterize Rooted Tourism. It is an emotional, experiential journey that we must offer them, helping them understand that it's more than just visiting relatives. It's a discovery of culture, gastronomy, traditions, and ways of life.»

In Munich, Marina Gabrieli, the national coordinator of the project, and three regional coordinators—Elvira De Giacomo (Basilicata), Cristina Lambiase (Friuli Venezia Giulia), and Maurizio Giambalvo (Sicily)—spoke at the event. They all highlighted the importance of the initiative, the successes achieved, and the great passion of the operators driving the project forward.

Sergio Maffettone, the Consul General of Italy in Munich, welcomed the entire delegation and reiterated the Consulate's commitment to spreading the Italea project: «We had the opportunity to delve into a topic of particular relevance for all of us here in Bavaria, given the large Italian community present. It is an invitation to rediscover our "territorial" heritage but also to share and pass on the bonds discovered to future generations: a reconnection with one's identity and that of one's ancestors».



A picture of the event held in Bavaria



A unique opportunity
for six young Argentinians to
rediscover their roots
crossing sustainability

Boomerang 2024-2025 a journey through responsible tourism

The YODA APS association launches the 2024-2025 edition of the Boomerang Call, a unique opportunity for six young people of Emilia-Romagna descent living in Argentina, aged between 18 and 35. The project, supported by the Emilia-Romagna Consultation in the World, offers a training-work experience in Italy in the field of responsible tourism, combining professional learning with the rediscovery of family roots.

The program, titled "Vamola – Young People for Responsible Tourism," will take place in Bologna between September and October 2025 and will include a 15-hour online Italian language course, followed by practical immersion in Emilia-Romagna's culture and traditions. During their stay, participants will explore the region, its unique features, and its challenges, learning how to promote it sustainably through meetings with professionals and local communities.

A central part of the experience will be participation in the IT.A.CA Migrants and Travelers Festival: a festival of responsible tourism, taking place at the same time in Bologna. This event will provide the young Argentinians the opportunity to delve deeper into the themes of sustainable tourism and interact with experts and organizations in the field, further enriching their educational journey. With this initiative, YODA APS aims to strengthen the bond between the younger generations and their land of origin, while promoting a model of tourism based on social justice, sustainability, and respect for local cultures.





Last year, over 6.6 million people arrived in Italy, specifically motivated by the desire to visit their country of origin

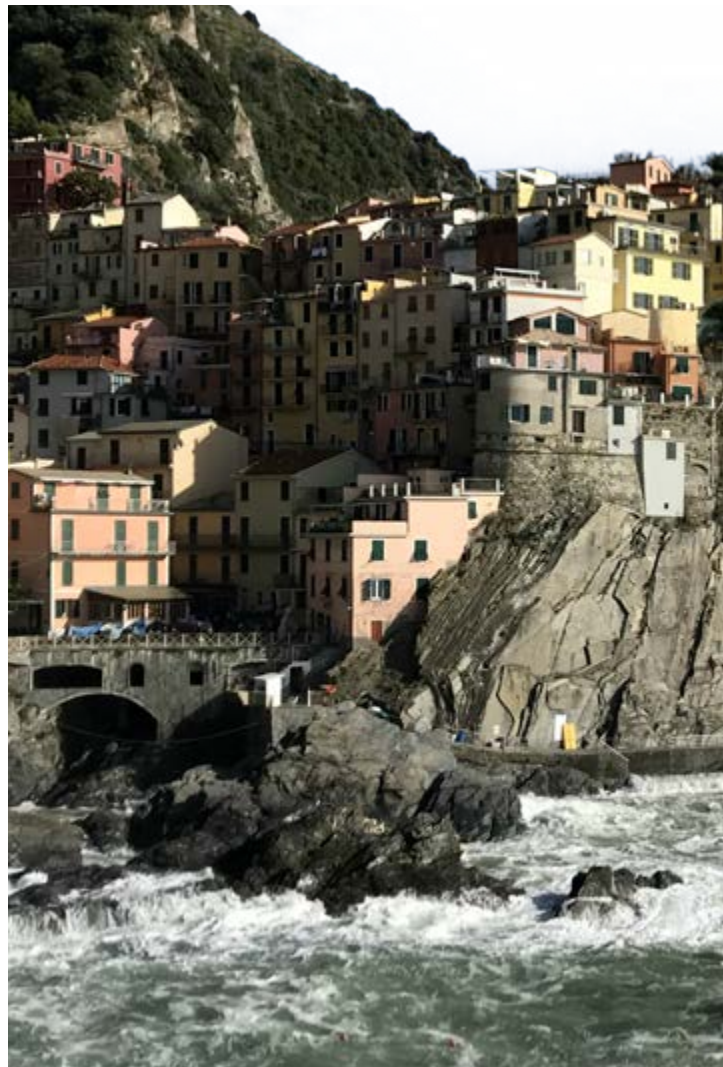
The remarkable figures of Roots Tourism: 34.4 million overnight stays and 5 billion euros in spending

A collaborative effort to bring millions of Italians abroad back to their roots while revitalizing Italy's small villages. The Roots Tourism initiative is gaining momentum thanks to Italea, a project launched in 2024 by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, designated as the Year of Italian Roots Worldwide. This initiative, part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) and funded by NextGenerationEU, aims to encourage the return and hospitality of emigrants and their Italian descendants. This phenomenon is noteworthy, as shown by a study conducted by Assoturismo Confesercenti in collaboration with CST – the Centro Studi Turistici of Florence. In 2024, tourist arrivals motivated by the desire to “visit the country of origin” exceeded 6.6 million, a 6.2% increase over early-year expectations, with approximately 34.4 million overnight stays recorded.

Estimates for 2024 indicate that roots tourism travelers generated about 5 billion euros in spending, a figure projected to surpass 5.5 billion euros by 2026. Early assessments of these results highlight significant progress in this segment, supported by promotional initiatives rolled out throughout the year.

«Roots tourism can spark a flow of visitors that impacts the entire country and is therefore extremely important for the tourism industry as a whole. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is doing excellent work in this regard. It is essential,» says Vittorio Messina, president of Assoturismo, «to institutionalize this form of tourism. We must invest in it so that the progress achieved in 2024 can continue into the future and become a cornerstone of the national tourism strategy.»

The number of returning tourists is rising steadily, with the Assoturismo-CST





At the bottom, the Cinque Terre
At the top, from left to right,
the Dolomites
and the culinary offerings of
Santa Maria di Leuca



report projecting over 3.5 million additional overnight stays and an increase of more than 510 million euros in tourist spending during the 2025-2026 period.

«This study,» Messina explains, «reveals an important reality beyond the numbers. These are tourists, second- or third-generation Italians, eager to reconnect with the heritage of their ancestors' territories. Their interest often lies in places outside Italy's main tourist circuits. That's why roots tourism enhances destinations that may not be mainstream but are equally significant as guardians of scenic, archaeological, and cultural traditions.»

Roots tourism is also a powerful tool for revitalizing hundreds of small Italian municipalities. In 2024, over 800 municipalities mobilized to welcome these special guests, eager to rediscover the places, traditions, and culture of their ancestors. These municipalities were selected through a call launched by the Ministry to fund cultural activities designed specifically for Italian descendants.

Supporting this effort is Italea.com, a platform created to provide a cohesive nationwide response to the growing demand.

«Roots tourism aims to promote areas untouched by mainstream tourism, focusing on inland regions characterized by low growth rates and depopulation, which account for 95% of our emigration,» emphasizes Giovanni Maria De Vita, project manager at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He adds, «We are fostering sustainable tourism, a necessary response to the challenges caused by heavy tourist flows in traditional destinations.»



The course for specialists already working in municipalities has been presented: it will equip them with additional skills to enhance their ability to provide services

"Hospitality Commissioners" here are the new professionals of Roots Tourism

Training professionals to enhance services for roots tourists visiting Italy in search of their origins. This is the goal of the "Hospitality Commissioners" course, presented on January 9 at the Italian Parliament. The course is promoted by the Department for Development and Cooperation between Italy and Brazil, the Campus Città del Sapere Polo in Naples of the University of Rome, the Touring Club Italiano, and Italea, the roots tourism promotion program launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of the PNRR project. The program aims to attract Italians living abroad and their descendants who wish to discover the places and traditions of their origins, offering a range of services to facilitate their journey to Italy. The course is designed to train professionals already working in local municipalities, equipping them with the skills needed to enhance their ability to provide services to roots tourists.

The conference was opened by Giovanni Maria De Vita, Head of the Italea Project for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: «Training in the tourism sector is essential,» he noted, but often, «in our country, tourist services do not meet the expectations of foreign travelers.» He emphasized the importance of investing in this area because «the service we offer travelers – especially roots travelers – can foster appreciation and generate loyalty.»

«The Ministry gave us the opportunity to receive training on roots tourism through a course that involved all members of the Italea network across Italy,» said Sara Roversi, Head of Italea Campania. «We discovered a heritage that had not yet been fully valued. Following this, the Ministry decided to take an additional step by organizing a course aimed at Italian municipalities, particularly those involved in roots tourism.»

Professor Raffaele Palumbo, President of the Department for Development and Cooperation





Sara Roversi,
head of Italea
Campania

between Italy and Brazil, explained: «Through these courses, we are working to address the gaps in tourism training. The Hospitality Commissioners will acquire a range of cross-disciplinary skills: tourism legislation, technical tourism skills, guiding, and in-depth knowledge of the local territory.»

The conference concluded with remarks from Fabio Porta, an MP elected abroad: «We need to take a qualitative leap and ensure that 2025 becomes the year of competence and professionalism, where roots tourism transitions from a series of interesting and intelligent promotional initiatives to the implementation of projects that Italians abroad have been waiting for years to see realized.»

A path to rediscovering origins and identity

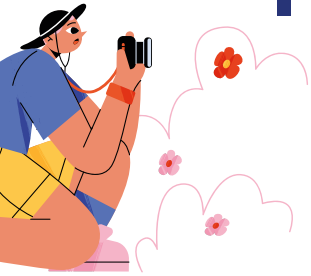
«Roots travel allows people to rediscover their origins and identity. For this reason, Italea Campania has supported the Roots Municipalities from the very beginning, with a particular focus on education and training,» said Sara Roversi of Italea Campania.

«Our goal is to provide Italian descendants with opportunities to learn through authentic experiences and to explore Italy, its gastronomy, and its artistic craftsmanship. These experiences also highlight a modern and innovative Italy. We've even partnered with renowned chefs and launched a collaboration with the Culinary Institute of America. We teach young chefs the principles of gastro-diplomacy: food can serve as a powerful diplomatic tool,» Roversi added. Speaking about the Hospitality Commissioners, she emphasized: «Thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we've had the privilege of working with the Roots Municipalities. It has been a wonderful experience, showing us that many communities are keen to advance the roots tourism project. We are committed to providing them with the right tools and ensuring that these territories acquire the necessary expertise.»



Story

The village hosted an event dedicated to its citizens who emigrated to North and South America



Vinny Del Negro, Billy Curtis and other stars: Atena Lucana rediscovering its talents

On January 5th, the Council Chamber of the Municipality of Atena Lucana, a small town in the province of Salerno, hosted a special event as part of the project "Valle delle Radici: le terre dei migranti" (Valley of Roots: the Lands of Migrants). The event, titled "The American Dream of Emigrants from Atena," marked the presentation of a research lab dedicated to the life stories of Atena emigrants across the Atlantic, a project curated by the Associazione Amici di San Ciro. Through a captivating exhibition of posters and photographs, the successes and struggles of some Atena citizens who sought their fortune across the Atlantic, in North and South America, were shared.

Although held in the new year, the "Valle delle Radici: le terre dei migranti" project is part of the initiatives promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to celebrate

2024 as the Year of Roots. Atena Lucana, along with other municipalities in the Vallo di Diano, joined the initiative under the coordination of researcher Fabio Ragone.

The event was one of many activities already scheduled to enhance the local cultural and historical heritage linked to emigration. «The goal is to make this type of tourism more structured,» explained Francesco Di Santi, municipal councilor. «In 2018, over 10 million people came to Italy to rediscover the places where their relatives once lived. In Atena, we have long welcomed many descendants who visit the homes and streets of their ancestors' historic center or visit the registry office to consult birth certificates. Now, we want to better organize this type of tourism, encouraging visitors to extend their stays in our area.»

During the evening, historian and passionate Regaliano Tommasoni, former commissioner of





Here and on the previous page, some images of the event in Atena Lucana

**Valle delle Radici:
Le Terre dei Migranti**
STORIA, CULTURA, ARTE, GENEALOGIA E LINGUE LOCALI

**Il Sogno Americano
degli Atenesi Emigrati**
Laboratorio di ricerca su storie di vita
degli emigrati Atenesi in America

Saluti:
Luigi Vertucci - Sindaco di Atena Lucana
Don Michele Casale - Parroco di Atena Lucana
Antonio Caporale - Presidente Ass. Amici SanCiro
Antonio Pagliarulo - Assessore al Turismo Comunità Montana Vallo Di Dio

Interventi:
Regalano - ricercatore
Pulso R. - autore etnografico
Testimoni
Modena - consigliere Comunale

Comune di Atena Lucana
italea
Comune delle Radici
MINISTERO DELLA CULTURA



the Sala Consilina Highway Police, shared the stories of some Atena emigrants who left a mark in the United States. Among them, the figure of Billy Curtis (stage name of Luigi Curto), an actor born in Massachusetts to Atena parents, who worked alongside Clint Eastwood, Gary Cooper, and appeared in famous films such as "Planet of the Apes" and "The Wizard of Oz," stood out. Other fascinating stories include that of Linda Jordan, actress in "Arrivederci Roma" with Mario Lanza and Renato Rascel; Lou Albano, an American wrestler and actor who appeared in the TV

series "Miami Vice" and "Super Mario"; and Vinny Del Negro, a basketball player and coach for the Chicago Bulls, as well as a winner of the Italian league championship with Benetton Treviso. The event saw the participation of numerous figures, including Luigi Vertucci, mayor of Atena, Don Michele Casale, parish priest of the city, Antonio Caporale, President of the Associazione Amici di SanCiro, Antonio Pagliarulo, tourism assessor for the Vallo di Diano Mountain Community, Fabio Ragone, researcher, and Michel De Matteis, an American citizen with Atena origins. Through initiatives like this, Atena Lucana aims to strengthen the bond with its emigrants and their descendants, turning historical memory into an opportunity for cultural and tourism development in the area.

Experiences

From Agnone to Venice: Italy offers immersive activities with the aim of evoking memories and emotions

Casola-Valsenio



Explore the Herb Garden a journey for your senses

Casola-Valsenio, located in the province of Ravenna, is home to a wonderful Herb Garden that dates back to 1938 and bears the name of its founder, a pioneer of Italian herbalism. There, you can close your eyes, breathe in the scents of the herbs, and let yourself be transported back to memories of your grandparents' home. You'll be able to distinguish the fresh aroma of mint, the intense fragrance of rosemary, and the sweet scent of lavender. This path is called the "Gallery of Scents," and after a fascinating guided walk, you will be invited to participate in a workshop on preparing and tasting infusions and herbal teas using fresh herbs and flowers gathered from the garden's crops.

Galatina



Bring home the taste of your Salento journey

Pastry cream, shortcrust pastry, sugar, and vanilla beans: these are some of the ingredients needed to create the pasticciotto, the most famous dessert from Salento. It has a relatively recent history in local pastry tradition, yet it has managed to gain significant popularity over the years, even overseas. However, to succeed, the recipe should include another key ingredient: craftsmanship, passed down from hand to hand. This is why, in Galatina, there is a workshop where you can observe and assist a pastry chef from the renowned "Galatina school" in preparing the pasticciotto. Galatina is a charming town in the heart of Salento, where the original recipe was born.

Venice



Unveiling the historical art of Venetian mask-making

Venetian masks are one of the symbols of the lagoon city. Initially not associated with Carnival, they were used as a precaution for risky business dealings (such as gambling or smuggling) and to adopt a different role from the one people held in their everyday social life. Over the years, they became exclusively associated with the Carnival period. Their use was regulated between the 13th and 15th centuries, when the "mascareri" (mask makers) guild was established. In the Lagoon, you can also learn how to decorate or even create these masks at one of the most famous Venetian workshops: Ca' Macana, which has been producing and selling them since 1984.

Sant'Apollinare



Discovering the secrets of Abruzzese cellipieni

If you want to immerse yourself in the authentic culinary tradition of Abruzzo, you can participate in the free cooking class "Chef for a Day" in Sant'Apollinare (CH), where you'll have the opportunity to discover the secrets of cellipieni, one of the region's most beloved traditional sweets. The class will teach you not only the preparation technique but also the history that makes these sweets a symbol of local culture. Under the expert guidance of chefs and passionate guardians of tradition, you will learn to make cellipieni to perfection, following methods passed down through generations. During the class, you'll also have the chance to taste the different variations of this delicious dessert.

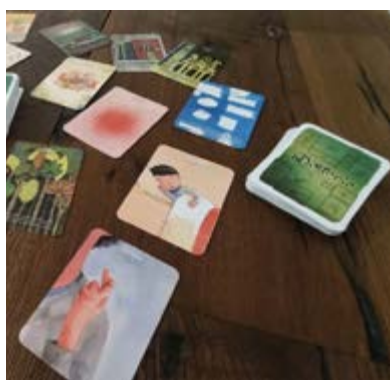
Agnone



Resonating heritage with "The Sound of the Bell"

Agnone, known as the "Athens of Sannio," is the main town of Upper Molise. Walking through the alleys of the historic center offers a complete immersion in the history and curiosities of this ancient settlement. History is also the focus of the activity "The Sounds of the Bell." This experience aims to provide the opportunity to connect with ancient crafts and admire the skill of local artisans. In this case, with a visit to the ancient Marinelli Foundry in Agnone, renowned worldwide for its bell production, a symbol of the region's artisanal and spiritual tradition, participants will have the chance to engage with and witness the creation of a bell firsthand.

Rosarno



"Distorie": the "origins" game that helps learn about Calabria

Discover the history, traditions, and emotions of the Calabrian emigrants with "Distorie: Cards of Origins," a unique card game that blends creativity, culture, and learning. Featuring 162 cards divided into categories inspired by five books, this game, created in Rosarno (RC), allows you to explore characters, places, events, and emotions tied to the Calabrian diaspora. Each card tells a fragment of Calabria's rich history, from the symbols of emigration to objects that narrate the challenges and successes of Calabrians around the world. With customizable gameplay modes, you can create original stories, relive historical events, and even use your own family history to complete unique missions.

italea

The journey to your roots



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