



Mission Italea



Magazine

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The journey to your roots

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Leaving? Yes, but with the Italea Card

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

2024 marks the Year of Italian roots worldwide, dedicated to welcoming roots travelers, and signaling the perfect time for a journey to the Belpaese.

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.



Campione del Garda LOMBARDY

The municipality in the province of Brescia is nestled between towering rocky cliffs and the waters of the lake

Campione del Garda, a paradise for sports and nature lovers

Campione del Garda, nestled between towering rocky cliffs and the calm waters of Lake Garda, is a small hamlet within the municipality of Tremosine, located in the Alto Garda Bresciano Park. The charm of this paradise lies in its extraordinary location, where the San Michele stream delta flows into the lake, creating a unique natural setting. The origin of the name "Campione" is uncertain, but it seems to derive from the Latin "Campestris," meaning "arable land," recalling the area's ancient agricultural vocation.

Today, Campione del Garda is primarily known for its lake and mountain activities, making it a must-visit destination for water sports and hiking enthusiasts. Thanks to constant winds, such as the Ora and Pelèr, the village has become a hub for windsurfing, kitesurfing, and sailing. The pebble and gravel beach, equipped with bars, restaurants, and amenities like showers and loungers, also hosts sailing and kite schools where visitors can rent equipment and learn these sports. Every summer, the village hosts the Surfers' Festival, an event that celebrates a passion for wind and waves with amateur competitions, food stalls, and beach parties, attracting enthusiasts of all ages.

For those keen on exploring the lake's depths, Campione offers spectacular diving opportunities, reaching one of the deepest points of Lake Garda, about 370 meters down. Among the vertical walls and rock formations, divers can discover the famous Pinnacle, a natural underwater sculpture that mesmerizes diving enthusiasts. This corner of the lake is truly a paradise for those who love to immerse themselves in a world of silence and wonder. But Campione del Garda is not only about the lake. As part of the Alto Garda Bresciano Park, it offers countless opportunities for hikes and rejuvenating walks in nature.

Trails and bike paths allow visitors to explore the surroundings, with routes of varying difficulty suitable for both beginners and experienced hikers. Among these, the Path to Pieve di Tremosine offers breathtaking views, while Trail 267, which connects Campione to Prabione, is for more experienced hikers. The Campione Loop, on the other hand, is a moderately challenging trail that offers captivating views



Photo TuttoGarda

of the surrounding landscape. For those seeking a more adventurous experience, the San Michele Gorge provides an exciting opportunity for canyoning, revealing the hidden beauty of the stream's valley.

Despite its proximity to the bustling cities of Lombardy, Campione del Garda feels like a tranquil oasis, a place where time seems to slow down. Here, surrounded by nature of unparalleled beauty, it's easy to forget the stresses

The journey to discover our roots continues

Here is the sixth 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.



OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Ferries depart from Campione del Garda, providing convenient access to the beautiful locations of Riva del Garda, Desenzano, Sirmione, Salò, Gardone Riviera, Tignale, Maderno, and Gargnano.



HOW TO GET THERE

By car, Campione del Garda can be reached from the north via the Brennero A22 motorway, taking the Rovereto Sud exit, then continuing towards Riva and following the SS45bis road until you reach Campione del Garda. By train, the nearest station is in Desenzano. From there, Campione can be reached by bus or ferry. For air travel, Campione del Garda is served by Orio al Serio, Verona Villafranca, and Montichiari airports.

of daily life and reconnect with the environment. In recent years, the village has undergone urban redevelopment, making it even more appealing. The pedestrianization of the center, with its old houses, restaurants, and shops, has created an ideal space for strolling and enjoying the scenery, especially along the lakeside promenade. Despite some challenges, such as the closure of a road connecting Campione to other villages due to a 2014 landslide, the village's charm remains intact.

Campione is also home to the Università della Vela, a unique facility that serves as a training center for sailing sports. Located directly on the lakefront, it offers not only courses and training but also comfortable rooms, a restaurant, a gym, and ample space for storing sports equipment. This center has become a reference point for sailing enthusiasts from around the world, who find the perfect environment here to train and enjoy the beauty of Lake Garda.



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The journey to your roots

Fiumefreddo Bruzio CALABRIA



The fortress of Calabria's rich heritage

The village in the province of Cosenza was established as a Roman colony
Today, it is experiencing a renaissance among enchanting squares and seaside viewpoints

Fiumefreddo Bruzio is a village in the province of Cosenza, named after "Flumen frigidum," the spring of drinking water that flows from the local rock. Its history is tumultuous; likely founded as a Roman colony, the town has been contested throughout its history, and today it is a treasure trove in Calabria. Fiumefreddo Bruzio is currently seeking to rejuvenate itself, featuring marine viewpoints and enchanting squares, as well as excursions to the Hermit's Cave atop the Timpa Badia cliff, where the green hills meet the breath of the Tyrrhenian Sea, or to the wild area of the Bocca d'Inferno.

The entrance to the historic center from the east is marked





OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Don't miss the 2nd-century B.C. Hannibal Bridge, an enchanting Roman bridge. For families with children, it's worth visiting the Potame Adventure Park and the Santa Monica Aquapark.



HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airport is in Lamezia Terme (39 km), while the train station is in Paola (14 km), from where you can continue by bus. By car from Rome: take the A1/E45, A30, and E45 towards E846 in Quattromiglia, exit at Rende-Cosenza Nord from E45, then follow SS 107 Silana Crotonese and SS 18 Tirrena Inferiore towards SP45 to Fiumefreddo Bruzio.

by the Merlata Gate, which opens onto Piazza del Popolo, where the cobbled stone alleys begin to appear, bordered by three monuments: the Mother Church of Saint Michael the Archangel, built in 1540 and remodeled over the centuries, the Baron's Palace of Del Bianco, and the Gaudiosi Palace. There are many points of interest in the village worth admiring: Palazzo Zupi with its splendid portal; the ruins of the castle; the 16th-century Palazzo Pignatelli, once the residence of various feudal lords; the Church of the Addolorata with ancient origins (11th century) but a Baroque appearance; the 17th-century Palazzo Mazzarone; the Church of San Francesco di Paola, built in 1709 with a beautiful Baroque portal; the Convent of the Minimi Friars, now the town hall; the Church of Santa Chiara, dated 1552; the 18th-century Church of San Rocco on the Cliff; Palazzo Santanna; Palazzo Pitellia with its inner courtyard in the Roman style from the 18th century; and the 16th-century Palazzo Castiglione-Morelli.

In the locality of Badia, there is also the Church of Santa Maria di Fonte Laurato, built by the Basilian monks, destroyed in 1201, reconstructed by Simone de Mamistra, and entrusted to the abbot Gioacchino da Fiore, who died in 1202 in a state of holiness and is mentioned in Dante's Divine Comedy as "endowed with a prophetic spirit."

In addition to the numerous historically significant buildings, what impresses about the village is its connection to its cultural roots. Among the celebrations, the Emigrant Festival on the first Saturday of August and the Feast of the Assumption on August 15 stand out, culminating in the distribution of "filiciata," the characteristic fiordilatte placed on ferns. This is a delicious dish made of fresh cheese served on fern leaves, originating from the pastures on the Apennine ridges and traditional processing techniques. Another typical dish is the potato omelet, best accompanied by red wine. Among the sweets, be sure to try the "cuddruri" made with eggs, sugar, cinnamon, and anise. All that's left is to experience the traditions of Fiumefreddo Bruzio and discover its beauty.

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The journey to your roots

Buenos Aires



Italea shines in Buenos Aires celebrating Italian roots

Great Success for the Italian Pavilion at the Latin America International Tourism Fair (FIT) in Buenos Aires from September 28 to October 1.

At the focal point of Italy's proposal for this edition was the Italea project, a program promoting roots tourism launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of the NRRP and financed by NextGenerationEU for the period 2022-2025. The Regional Italeas that participated in the mission in Argentina were Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Liguria, Marche, Piemonte, Puglia, Sardegna, and Lazio. The Regions that participated in the FIT were Marche, Lazio, Sardegna, and Toscana. Among those present at the fair were Franco Cuccureddu, Councillor for Tourism of the Sardinia Region, Paolo Giuntarelli, Director of Affairs of the Presidency and Tourism of Lazio, Mirko Bilò, Regional Councillor of Marche, Francesco Tapinassi, President of Tourism Promotion of Tuscany, and Marcella Di Feo from the Territorial Promotion Agency of Basilicata.

During the four days of FIT, the details of the Italea project and related regional initiatives were presented. Also present were Italian-Argentine artists and VIPs, such as Puglian chef Donato de Santis and actor Darío Lopilato, of Lucan-

ian descent, who were engaged in promoting roots tourism. During the official presentation conference, Giovanni Maria De Vita, Embassy Counselor and head of the Roots Tourism Project of the Farnesina, emphasized: «The goal of the project is to facilitate the journey of roots for all those who wish to undertake it. We have found a strong desire among the eighty million Italian descendants worldwide to visit Italy to discover the places of their origins. However, it is not a simple journey. While it is relatively easy to reach well-known tourist destinations like Venice, Rome, or Palermo, visiting the small villages from which the great Italian emigration began is more complicated. Moreover, these travelers are not ordinary tourists; they do not come just to see a place, but to live a deep life experience, often the dream of a lifetime.» According to the organizers, the event received an excellent response: on the first day alone, Saturday, September 28, over 60,000 people visited the Fair.

On Sunday, September 29, the Festival of Italian Roots took place at Plaza República Oriental del Uruguay in Buenos Aires, organized by the Federation of Italian Associations in Argentina (Feditalia) and the government of Buenos Aires, with the support of the Italian Embassy in Argentina and the General Consulate of the capital. Throughout the day, a



large stage set up in front of the Argentine Public TV headquarters featured performances by artists, dance groups, and representatives from various Italian communities across the country.

The official event saw the participation of notable figures such as the Italian Ambassador to Buenos Aires, Fabrizio Lucentini, General Consul Carmelo Barbera, Embassy Counselor and head of the Roots Tourism Project at the Directorate General for Italians Abroad of the Farnesina, Giovanni Maria De Vita, Buenos Aires Mayor Jorge Macri, President of the Committee of Italians Abroad in Buenos Aires (Com.It.Es.), Dario Signorini, and President of Feditalia, Carlos Malacalza.

«This dream began when Counselor De Vita proposed Buenos Aires as one of the five major cities in the world to celebrate the Year of Italian Roots in 2024,» explained Malacalza during his speech. «We couldn't be here celebrating our roots if it weren't for all the Italian associations in Argentina, who work with love and passion every day in every corner of the country, protecting and strengthening the Italian roots represented in this meeting today,» he added.

The day was very important for promoting the Italea project, the roots tourism promotion program launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of the NRRP and financed by NextGenerationEU for the period 2022-2025, which was present with a dedicated stand managed by representatives from the regional Italeas of Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Liguria, Marche, Piemonte, Puglia, and Sardegna. Dario Signorini, President of Com.It.Es., emphasized: «Argentina is undoubtedly the place where Italian roots have found the most fertile ground to grow. It is no coincidence that 1.2 million compatriots live here and that 25 million Argentinians proudly bear their Italian surname. This is a heritage to celebrate.»

«From here, one can clearly perceive the strength of Italian tradition in Buenos Aires. Italea was conceived precisely to help rediscover these roots. It was a complex project to realize, but seeing such a positive response today gives us further motivation to carry it forward,» said Counselor Giovanni Maria De Vita during his speech, who then presented Buenos Aires Mayor Jorge Macri, son of Italian emigrants who arrived in Argentina after World War II, with gifts, including a copy of the comic "Sotto lo stesso cielo" by Simona Binni, which tells the story of an Italian-Argentine returning to Liguria, the land of her ancestors. As with previous "missions" of Italea, throughout the day, participants were invited to write, with the help of the regional delegates present in Argentina, the place of origin of their ancestors on a large map of Italy at the project's stand.



«Italy and Argentina are strongly connected»

«Italea's participation in the FIT is crucial. Let's start with some data that gives us an idea of the phenomenon: nearly 1.2 million Italians live in Argentina, making it the largest Italian community outside Italy. It's estimated that between 20 and 26 million Argentiniens are of Italian descent. This is a pool of descendants who are naturally connected to our country. Italea facilitates this reconnection, allowing these individuals to engage not only with Italy as it is perceived globally but also with what concerns them more directly—namely, the culture of their grandparents and ancestors who arrived in Argentina from various provinces. This enables them to reconnect culturally and socially with their family roots.» These are the words of Fabrizio

Lucentini, Italy's Ambassador to Buenos Aires. The spread of Italea is a team effort here in Argentina,» the ambassador continued. «All the consular offices are involved; in Buenos Aires alone, there are over 400,000 Italians, and the ENIT office is also here. The participation in the FIT is the peak moment of a year-long effort, which has had other milestones over the past few months. For example, the activities that took place alongside the presence of the Navy Ship Vespucci here in Buenos Aires, when a delegation from the Ministry, including the Director General for Italians Abroad, came here together with the Minister of Tourism, Santanché, to promote Roots Tourism, targeting both the public and industry operators, as we say in the field, comprehensively.»

«An Italian city outside the borders»

«Buenos Aires is not only the most Italian city in Latin America, but it is also the largest Italian city outside national borders. This is because Buenos Aires is home to the largest Italian community in the world,» explained Carmelo Barbera, the Consul General of Italy in Buenos Aires. «Italea, along with the Year of Italian Roots worldwide, has a special significance here for this reason. We want to invite all our compatriots—those who have already been to Italy and those who wish

to go—to embark on a journey that is particularly meaningful for those who are the children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren of Italians,» he added. «This journey of roots is about discovering the many small towns that are often the places from where the grandparents or parents of many Argentiniens departed. It is a journey that primarily means rediscovering one's identity and experiencing a trip filled with emotions.» «The Com.It.Es project to create a museum of Italian emigration, which we are naturally supporting, is an extraordinary and very ambitious initiative: the first museum to tell the story of Italian emigration in this country and, therefore, to narrate the roots of a significant portion of the Argentine population,» Barbera concluded.



Memorable moments from the mission in Buenos Aires



A driver for renewing Italian territories

Mission in Australia for Italea on the occasion of the Italian Festa, during which it presented its project on roots tourism

Roots Tourism proves to be a fundamental driver for the revitalization of Italian territories affected by crises, helping to combat depopulation, generate income, and support employment in key sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and commerce. These aspects were at the heart of Italea's mission in Melbourne, the roots tourism promotion program launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) as part of the NRRP project and funded by NextGenerationEU, which took place during the Melbourne Italian Festa, organized by CO.AS.IT. (Committee for Italian Assistance) in Melbourne. The mission, held from October 4 to 6, brought together a diverse group of "actors," including businesses, regions, artists, and chefs, to showcase initiatives aimed at roots tourists, including itineraries, workshops, benefits, and discounts. In addition to many Italian descendants, local officials also visited the Italea booth, including Jacinta Allan, Premier of Victoria, and Melbourne's mayor, Nicholas Reece.

«We are in Melbourne for the Italian Festa to present roots tourism: 2024 is the Year of Italian Roots in the World, and a series of impactful activities have been organized for all travelers of Italian descent, especially those from Australia, who wish to rediscover their origins in Italy,» said Luigi Maria Vignali, Director General for Italians Abroad at the Farnesina.

«This year's Italian Festa is enhanced by the Roots Tourism Project, adding value to an already well-known event, making it an ideal setting to reconnect the Italian community in Melbourne with Italy on all fronts,» emphasized Chiara Mauri, the newly appointed Consul of Italy in Melbourne.

«We are very pleased to have attended the Melbourne Italian Festa. Our participation was well-coordinated, with four regions and the Italees that are part of our network. This highlights how important it is for us to connect with our communities, especially through events like the Melbourne Italian Festa, which strongly reflect our identity,» said Giovanni Maria De Vita, head of the Roots Tourism Project at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. «During these two days of events, we met many people, there was significant interest, and our team was warmly received. We are pleased», De Vita continued, «to have met, among others, the Premier of Victoria, Jacinta Allan, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Nick





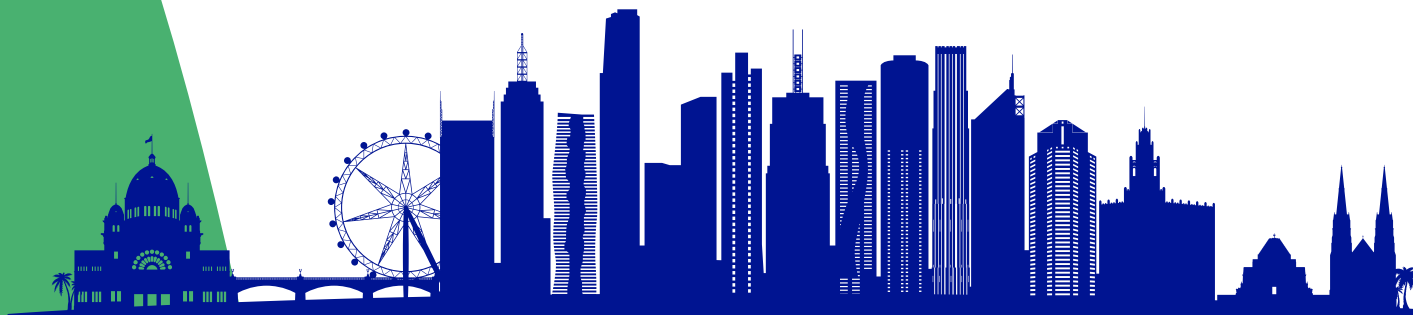
The Italea team with the Consul of Italy in Melbourne, Chiara Mauri



Reece, and Peter Khalil, Member of the Australian House of Representatives. It was an opportunity to connect with prominent individuals of Italian origin who appreciated our project, and whom we aim to involve in promoting our initiative more broadly». Italian communities abroad are «a great resource and an opportunity for our country to foster a new phase of relations», De Vita concluded.

There were also moments dedicated to tourism operators and businesses, featuring presentations and B2B meetings, as well as a focus on food and wine, with cooking demonstrations and tastings. The event was enriched by performances of traditional Italian dance and music. The regions participating in the mission to Australia included Calabria, Lazio, Puglia, and Sardinia, along with the networks of regional Italee from Abruzzo, Campania, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Molise, Puglia, Lazio, and Sardinia.





Memorable moments from the mission in Melbourne



Art of cooking

The Sorrento Peninsula hosted the “Pizza a Vico” event, where discussions focused on how our cuisine can help connect Italian communities around the world

Culinary tradition and roots tourism: the perfect match

The Sorrento Coast and the “Pizza a Vico” event, held in Vico Equense at the end of September, hosted the conference “Vico Equense and Pizza: Roots of Excellence in the World.” This grand pizza festival aims to celebrate the work of master pizza makers and the best local producers, and it has now reached its seventh edition.

The event provided an opportunity to explore the culture, traditions, and gastronomy of the area, with a particular focus on the art of pizza, celebrated by the local pizza makers. During the gathering—held in the Ancient Atrium of the Town Hall—discussions centered around pizza as a bridge between the past and the present, its ability to “connect” Italian communities worldwide, and the concept of Roots Tourism. Among the speakers in the discussion, coordinated by journalist and TV host Francesco Gasparri, was Giovanni Maria De Vita, the coordinator of Roots Tourism, long-term cultural activities, and communication at the Directorate General for Italians Abroad within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

International Cooperation. “Pizza a Vico” was an important occasion for us to present our project,” said De Vita talking about Italea, the program promoting Roots Tourism launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) as part of the NRRP project, funded by NextGenerationEU.

Roots Tourism focuses on «territories and rural areas that serve as destinations for roots travelers,» De Vita continued, «It is crucial for us to interact with these areas, and being here today is significant for highlighting local excellence, which is also recognized abroad. The “pizza a metro” is an iconic dish from Vico Equense that connects many locals around the world: this product has been introduced to communities abroad and serves as an attraction for those with roots in Vico who wish to visit these places to rediscover their heritage», concluded De Vita. «This is the goal of the Italea program, which is actively working in the regions to provide dedicated services for these special travelers.»



Mission to the United States
for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
project, culminating in participation
at the Columbus Day celebrations

New York celebrates Italian roots with Italea

Insights, discussions, and networking with industry experts and enthusiasts: Italea's mission in New York was a success. On the occasion of Columbus Day and the Year of Italian Roots Worldwide, the Big Apple hosted a rich program of events dedicated to the celebration of Italian traditions, culture, and roots. From October 8 to 14, the promotion program for Italian Roots Tourism, launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of the NRRP project and funded by NextGenerationEU, was at the center of a series of initiatives—concerts, exhibitions, conferences, masterclasses, meetings with the press, and tour operators—aimed at introducing the project to Italians abroad and Italian descendants interested in discovering the places and traditions of their origins.

Italea's mission in New York provided an opportunity to enhance Italy's cultural heritage and strengthen ties between Italy and the United States. It kicked off on October 8 with a concert by the Orchestra Teatro Carlo Felice in homage to Lorenzo Da Ponte and Niccolò Paganini at the historic St. Patrick's Old Cathedral, which was repeated on October 9. The event, curated by the Liguria Region, featured the participation of Claudio Orazi, Superintendent of the Carlo Felice Foundation, Fabrizio Di Michele, Consul General of Italy in New York, and Giovanni Maria De Vita, Head of the Italea Project at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Why did the mission start with this concert? Because, if 2024 is the Year of Italian Roots Worldwide, next year we will celebrate the bicentennial of the first Italian opera in the United States: The Barber of Seville, staged in November 1825.

There were many—interesting and well-attended—events promoted by the regional Italeas. For example, Italea Campania invited reflection on the fundamental role of food and culture in building a sustainable future, highlighting the concept of "gastrodiplomacy" and emphasizing the importance of promoting culinary traditions while remembering the link between cuisine and roots. There was also a focus on travel as a powerful tool for learning and enhancing Italy's cultural, environmental, and food and wine heritage. Exhibitions were also showcased, such as "Puglia and its Museums, a Sentimental Journey," curated by Franco Arminio on the initiative of the Regional Council of Puglia, and "A Different Tale - Postcards from Calabria," promoted by the Calabria Region. Books were not forgotten either, with the presentation of The Italian Showbiz Community in New





Here and on the previous page, some images of Italea's participation in the Columbus Day Parade

York and the Birth of Italian-American Cinema by author Giuliana Muscio, which was followed by a lively debate. At the Italian Cultural Institute in New York, four short films on the theme of Roots Journeys were screened, while at the Culinary Institute of America, the famous school where the best American chefs trained, an exclusive event celebrated Italy's extraordinary gastronomic traditions: a masterclass taught by internationally renowned Italian chefs. There were also more glamorous events: Italea was the special guest at the Columbus Citizens Foundation Gala Reception at Cipriani, where the project was presented to both U.S. and Italian institutional guests. The atmosphere was made even more magical by musical interludes from Antonio Castrignanò and his Taranta Sounds. They also performed on Italea's float during the October 14 Columbus Day Parade along 5th Avenue. Representatives of the Regions, Italea, and the regional Italeas also took part in

the parade. In addition, the National Association of Italian Masks (80 members representing 16 regions), the Italian Music Band (31 members), and the Torch of the Torino 2025 Winter World University Games paraded as well.

«Columbus Day offers a space to introduce new generations to Italian traditions, history, and culture. It also highlights the positive impact that Italian-Americans have had on American society, from art to music, from the economy to cuisine, to cinema. Participating in a parade like this helps build a sense of community and belonging, and strengthens ties between Italy and the Italian-American community here in New York. To all of them, we extend an invitation: come take a roots journey to Italy and discover the origins of your ancestors. We'll be waiting for you!» said Luigi Maria Vignali, Director General for Italians Abroad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.





Memorable moments from the mission in New York



The initiative promoted by the Municipality of Fallo (Chieti) and funded by the MAE-CI led to the creation of a 92-meter mural by three South African artists



Johannesburg closer to Italy thanks to the "Narevè" project

"Narevè" in Abruzzese dialect means "will not return." "Narevè" embodies the fear of those who see their loved ones emigrate, leaving for distant lands with hopes and courage packed in their bags. "Narevè" is also the title of a project promoted by the Municipality of Fallo—a small town of just over 100 inhabitants in the province of Chieti, in the woods of inland Abruzzo—in collaboration with the WOO association and the African center Artist Proof Studio.

The project was selected and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the cultural activities grant for Italian descendants worldwide, in celebration of the Year of Italian Roots. The initiative resulted in the creation of a 92-meter-long mural in Fallo by three South African artists. Therefore, rather than not returning, "Narevè" became the protagonist of a beautiful story of return tourism, which brought the Mariano family back to Fallo, emigrated to Johannesburg, South Africa, in the name of Gianni Mariano, who served for many years as the chairman of the board at the South African excellence center Artist Proof Studio. Having passed away just over a year ago, Gianni Mariano promoted art and culture in South Africa through the Artist Proof Studio.

The artists selected by the center have now returned to the homeland of the Mariano family to realize one of Gianni's dreams: a work of art that connects his two homelands. In the presence of his family and the South African ambassador to Italy, Nosipho Nausca Jean Jezile, the mayor of Fallo, Gianluca Castracane, inaugurated the mural on Sunday, October 13, which the three artists—Maphoso George Mokwena, Mohau Moholane, and Bekithemba Mdluli, better known as Themba—worked on for two months.

The work, dedicated to Gianni Mariano, thus closed a circle. «We are children of two countries, raised speaking



many languages,» said his brother Maurizio. The inauguration of the artwork, which depicts symbols of the small Abruzzese town and the great South African city, launched a message of unity among peoples. A wish for peace in a world of wars that transcends through art. «This combination of art and cultural intertwining will forever link Fallo to South Africa through the Mariano family,» said the ambassador. «A bridge of closeness and brotherhood,» defined by Abruzzese Senator Etelwardo Sigismondi. «A wall that does not wall, but rather unites,» to quote Abruzzese Deputy Luciano D'Alfonso. «This event is highly significant of what Italea aims for, the Roots Tourism promotion program,» said Dario Cortese from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. «One of its main objectives is, in fact, to make known the places of origin of our emigrants. And often, they are small enchanting towns, like Fallo, which are outside the classic tourist itineraries».

Comic book

Author Simona Binni showcased her latest work at the Museum of Italian Emigration in Genoa



Celebrating Italian Heritage through a graphic novel

Titled "Sotto lo stesso cielo (Under the Same Sky)," the comic book by Simona Binni is inspired by the project on roots tourism launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. It was presented last month at the MEI, the Museum of Italian Emigration in Genoa. The story follows Cintia, the protagonist, who embarks on a journey "to return to her roots," departing from Argentina to reach Italy, specifically in the western region of Liguria, in search of her family. The event featured Paolo Masini, president of the MEI Foundation, and Giovanni Maria De Vita, responsible for promoting the Roots Tourism project.

First presented at the Turin International Book Fair, this graphic novel aims to engage a younger audience in the project targeted at Italians and their descendants abroad, inviting them to return to Italy to rediscover the places where their ancestors lived. The volume will be distributed in many Italian schools and will be translated into English, Portuguese, Spanish, and French. The goal is to create an increasingly welcoming environment for those living abroad.

«The Roots Tourism promotion project, Italea, evokes a technique that helps propagate a plant. It is an allegory of our Italian communities around the world,» explained Giovanni Maria De Vita. «Each has developed differently in the countries where they settled, but all remain connected to the 'trunk' of Italian identity, which has its roots in traditions, culture, language, and dialects. We are proud of this initiative and are pleased that Simona Binni has ac-

cepted to collaborate with us, telling this story in a new and innovative language.»

«This comic is based on the idea that 'under the same sky' we can all meet and find a home where we feel our heart and roots,» shared Simona Binni. «Cintia, from Argentina, seeks her roots in Liguria, where she discovers something deeply connected to her past and identity, but also something that will bind her to that land. Roots, therefore, represent both a return to the past and a promise for the future,» she added. «We are looking for new ways to talk about emigration, and the comic is a wonderful tool we plan to use with students in our schools,» declared Paolo Masini. «As the MEI, we aim to introduce Italy to Italian descendants. There is no need to transmit the love for Italy because those with Italian grandparents or parents often have it within them already. The real challenge is to bring them here with a new idea of tourism to repopulate those villages that are slowly depopulating.»



The story

Andrea Grieco, an Argentinian from Lanús, visited the small village in the province of Campobasso where her ancestors came from

From Diego's hometown to Duronia: Andrea's Journey

More than eleven thousand kilometers separate Lanús, one of the main urban centers near Buenos Aires, famous for being the birthplace of footballer Diego Armando Maradona, from Duronia, a small village in Molise, in the province of Campobasso, which today has just 400 inhabitants. Two distant and different places, yet connected by the thread of stories of Italians who emigrated from their hometowns in search of work and opportunities in South America. Among them was the grandfather of Andrea Grieco, an Argentinian woman from Lanús but of Italian descent, who this year fulfilled her dream of visiting the town where her ancestors were born and raised before deciding to leave in the last century, seeking fortune in Argentina.

With the help of the Italea Molise network, Andrea, who is deaf, managed to find the house where her grandfather and father lived before emigrating. It was an incredibly emotional moment for Andrea, visiting Italy for the first time: «I love that you are accompanying me in this search for my roots. It is an overwhelming emotion for me.» These are Andrea's words, who in Duronia not only found the places of her origins. The greatest emotion was, in fact, meeting her relatives for the first time. In the medieval alleys of the small Molise village, Andrea was able to embrace her distant relatives for the first time, find similarities, and hear stories from those who shared a part of life with her father and grandfather before they decided to leave.

In addition to the on-site research, the Italea Molise team also provided support in translating from Spanish to Italian and vice versa, to help Andrea and her relatives communicate and share stories about their family history. This is the essence of roots tourism: it is not just a simple journey to discover villages often overlooked by mass tourism, but places rich in charm and history. It is much more than that; it is a journey home.



Experiences

From Modena to Isnello: Italy offers immersive activities with the aim of evoking memories and emotions

Modena



Discovering the authentic tradition of balsamic vinegar

Discover the authentic tradition of balsamic vinegar with a guided tour of a historic vinegar factory, operating since the late 1800s. You will closely follow the entire production process, from grape to the prized vinegar, and taste various types of balsamic. You will discover an ancient farming traditions, reliving the stages of grape harvest and the delicate ritual of transferring the vinegar. At the end of the visit, you will participate in a cooking workshop where you will learn to prepare “tortelloni” using fresh, seasonal ingredients. The experience will conclude with a delicious lunch and a relaxing moment in the charming gardens and spaces of the vinegar factory, both indoors and outdoors.

Isnello



From the Madonie Mountains to the mysteries of space

Just 30 minutes from Cefalù, Isnello is a charming village where you can experience unspoiled nature and old traditions in just a few short hours. The ancient Menzil Al-Hamār—Isnello’s Arabic name—is traversed by a trail that starts from the heart of the village and quickly leads to mountainous landscapes. You can also discover the art of embroidery, still thriving today. At sunset, the rocks are tinged with a bright red, testament to the geological history of these peaks, which were once part of a coral reef. Don’t miss the International Center for Astronomical Sciences Gal Hassin, known for the discovery of an asteroid named “Isnello,” located between Mars and Jupiter.

Belluno



The history of emigration in an interactive museum

If you wish to delve into the history of emigration, the MiM Belluno is the perfect destination. The museum is located within the headquarters of the Association of Bellunesi in the World, a vibrant and active place that has been a reference point for emigrants, former emigrants, and new immigrants welcomed in the area for years. The heart of the museum consists of the stories and testimonies of these individuals, which through a multimedia journey allow visitors to explore the universal experience of migration. The MiM is an open and interactive space, designed to engage schools with workshops and educational meetings, and to integrate with the local community.

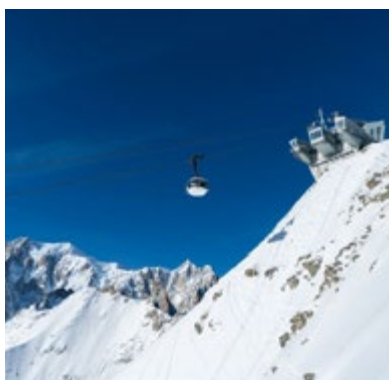
From Assisi to Rome



A journey through spirituality and history: the Way of St. Francis

The Way of St. Francis, a pilgrimage route that crosses Lazio, offers a unique and engaging experience for roots tourists eager to explore the cultural and spiritual richness of this fascinating region. The journey, which can be undertaken in various ways—not just on foot—allows travelers to immerse themselves in places steeped in history and beauty. The journey begins in the enchanting Assisi, a symbol of peace and spirituality, and concludes in Rome, the Eternal City, where it connects with the French route to reach St. Peter's Basilica. Its stages include Rieti, Poggio Bustone, the village of Greccio, Poggio San Lorenzo, and Casperia.

Courmayeur



Photographing Mont Blanc from the Skyway cable car

In the heart of the magnificent Italian Alps lies an extraordinary engineering masterpiece: the Skyway cable car. Its construction was completed in 2015, and since then it has captivated visitors from all over the world. The structure consists of three different stations: the departure station in Courmayeur, the intermediate station at Pavillon du Mont Fréty, and the arrival station at the summit of Mont Blanc. Thanks to this experience, you can closely observe the breathtaking beauty of Mont Blanc, the symbol of the Aosta Valley. At the arrival stations, you can reconnect with the panorama of your ancestors and take memorable photographs of one of the most magical places in the world.

Udine



"Roots to Hear": the oral heritage of Friuli Venezia Giulia

Sounds create words, voices, songs, and the languages of our culture: the oral heritage represents a precious treasure, rich in identity peculiarities, to be passed down to new generations. "Roots to Hear – The Sounds of Memories" is an immersive roots workshop exploring the sounds of different languages and the oral heritage of Friuli Venezia Giulia. The activity unfolds during a convivial aperitif, an informal and sharing moment where a glass of local wine, a nectar gifted by the ancients, frees the spirits to listen and feel the musicality of the words spoken by grandparents who emigrated in the past. During the aperitif, a language workshop will be conducted by an expert.

italea

The journey to your roots



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