

SmartGreen

News from the environment

Post

A JOURNEY TO ITALY

to discover the hidden beauties

ECOTOURISM

From North to South, we will walk the lesser known paths on foot or by bicycle, for a slow and immersive holiday

LIFESTYLE

From green tech to health, passing through cosmetics, all the ways to take care of yourself and improve your lifestyle

SCIENCE

Focus on Etna and reforestation: is planting trees always the right solution against climate change?

SmartGreen

News from the environment **Post**

SmartGreen Post is a blog on the green world, from climate change to separate waste collection. You will always be updated on news from Italy and the world, on the environment, green economy and new technologies. In addition, you can find our tips for a more eco-friendly and healthy lifestyle, as well as a section dedicated to sustainable tourism.

SmartGreen Post is part of a larger Green project that includes SmartRicicla, the separate collection app available in Italy, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, Canada and the United States of America. You can download the app directly on the Play Store. For more information visit the website www.smartricicla.com

SmartGreen Post wants to be a small contribution to the protection of our planet, because to prevent catastrophe it is necessary to know and then act, each in his own small way, with simple but highly effective gestures.





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The voyage consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes

When we started thinking about the third issue of our magazine, they couldn't help but think that August is the holiday month, when the plug finally comes out and we recharge our energies after a difficult year, made even more complicated by the pandemic that has upset our rhythms of life.

We decided, then, to give you a trip to some of the most beautiful and least known areas of Italy, a virtual trip to go with trekking shoes on your feet and backpacker, breathing the good air of our mountains and feeling the fatigue at every step.

Who will be our crew? First of all, a mini guide with eleven green tips for sustainable travelers, who don't want to give up their part in defense of the environment even on holiday. Then there will be the enthusiasm of adventure, the wonder of discovery and slowness.

Slowness, yes. You got it right. Far from the frenetic rhythms of everyday life, the modern tourist loves to carve out spaces of solitude and silence to let himself be amazed by the nature that surrounds him, by the landscape and historical beauties, by the unexpected. He wants to savor the journey, finding himself at every step, rather than reaching a goal.

This year, thanks to Covid-19 which forced us to rethink our lifestyle, we feel the need to immerse ourselves in nature on a sensorial level: our experience involves not only sight but also taste and smell - with the chance to savor local food and wine - touch and hearing every time we stop to hug a tree, listen to the birds singing or the stream of a stream, to talk to the locals knowing the culture and the local traditions.

After our trip, which will take place in slow mode - on foot or by bicycle to always have the possibility to change course and reshape the itinerary - we will return to deal more closely with environmental issues, as is the style of SmartGreen Post. Leafing through our magazine you will see that the editorial staff has grown further and, compared to the second issue, and has been enriched with two new entries that contribute, together with all the staff, to growing our project, which we carry on with commitment and dedication, being able to count on the support of our readers.



Piera Vincenti

Editor of SmartGreen Post, she has many years of experience as a journalist and copywriter, alongside which she has added new skills in the digital and social media management sector. With SmartGreen Post she expresses its true ecological nature.

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< ECOTOURISM

A green holiday, 11 ways to be a more eco friendly traveller

Piera Vincenti

Respect for the environment and sustainable tourism have become an inseparable combination, especially for those who continue to have green behavior even on holiday



Traveling makes us better. It broadens our horizons, goes beyond our borders and allows us to look at the world through a different lens. Traveling, however, also has a downside, that is, it contributes to climate change to a large extent, so it is essential that the tourism industry becomes more sustainable as a whole.

All of this can be summed up in one word: ecotourism. This term indicates traveling responsibly, in places where the environment is respected and the attention to nature is maximum, without forgetting the economic and social aspects of the place you are going to visit. Traveling in a sustainable way means supporting local communities, protecting culture and heritage and trying to pollute as little as possible.

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1. CHOOSE A SUSTAINABLE GOAL

The sustainability of a journey starts with the choice of destination. Planning a trip well and inquiring about the destination is the first step towards an eco-friendly holiday. Among the European capitals, we mention two that are particularly attentive to the environment: Stockholm, which won the title of Green Capital of Europe in 2010, and Amsterdam, which is aiming to eliminate cars inside the historic center.

Wanting to choose exotic destinations, such as Mexico, Kenya or Thailand, it is important to privilege structures born with a view to sustainable tourism, which offer their guests an ecological and close to nature holiday, which

use resources while respecting the environment - using, for example, solar energy, waste reduction and water purification - which guarantee fair wages for their employees, with a strong positive impact on the local economy.

2. IF POSSIBLE, AVOID FLYING

Of all the means of transport, the plane is the one that produces the highest carbon dioxide emissions per kilometer. If possible, take the train. Also, try to avoid stopovers, because they mean longer journeys and higher CO2 emissions. A direct flight not only saves you time, but also reduces the impact on the environment.

3. USE DIGITAL TICKETS

A good practice to respect the environment is to avoid printing tickets and travel documents, preferring digital versions. They are easily downloaded to your smartphone and you can have everything at your fingertips with a significant reduction of paper waste.

4. DO NOT WASTE

Even on vacation it is important to minimize the consumption of electricity and water, especially in developing countries where energy resources are still scarce. Among the behaviors to be adopted, use air conditioning as little as possible, or at least keep it to a minimum, avoid having to change sheets and towels every day, turn off the lights when leaving a room and avoid staying in the shower for a long time. All these actions, in fact, have a very high environmental impact.

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5. AVOID DISPOSABLE PLASTIC

The disposable plastic, already banned in many tourist locations, is to be avoided by favoring a reusable water bottle, preferably in aluminum, and paper bags to store your purchases. Where possible and practiced, it is important to do the separate collection, or in any case you must not leave waste around when visiting a location.

6. PREFER LOCAL GASTRONOMY

A fundamental part of the trip is that linked to the flavors and culinary traditions of the place. For this, it is good to choose local products, taste the local specialties and prefer native food and drinks, for a real immersion in local flavors.



7. MOVED IN AN ECOLOGICAL WAY

The conscious choice of means of transport is the first step. Compared to cars, public transport is a much more environmentally friendly way of traveling, since it consumes less fuel per passenger. Even better, when you are in a place, explore it on foot. It is a great way to experience any place and make new discoveries off the beaten track, with great health benefits too. Wherever you plan to go, do your research on the most efficient way of getting around to reduce travel time and fuel emissions. Public transport can be a viable alternative to renting a car or taxi.



8. TRUST SUSTAINABLE TOUR OPERATORS

Respecting local cultures and customs is at least as essential as protecting nature. For this reason, entrust yourself to tour operators who promote sustainable travel in the name of respect for the environment but also for the lifestyle of the people who live in the places you visit.

9. PREPARE YOUR TRAVEL PRODUCTS BY YOURSELF

Instead of using mini shampoos and body lotions, especially when traveling by plane where there is a limit of 100 ml per pack, prepare your products to reduce waste. Buy empty reusable bottles and fill them with the products you usually use at home. The mini packs will remain and you can refill them for the next trip. Also, bring a foldable cloth shopping bag with you for your purchases and an aluminum water bottle. With these items on hand, you will never have to request disposable items such as plastic bags and bottles.

10. AVOID WALKING ON ANIMALS

Animal walks may seem harmless fun, but it is now known that animals used as tourist attractions are kept in extreme conditions. They are chained, kept in cages and mistreated, hungry and forced to work long hours in the sun or rain. Many died of starvation. Avoiding activities with animals will show that such inhuman practices have no place in the tourism sector and will lead to greater protection of local wildlife.

11. PURCHASE SOUVENIERS WISELY

It's nice to buy souvenirs when you're on vacation, but most of the time it's useless objects that end up in the trash and create waste. For your souvenirs, look for something that is locally manufactured and not imported, that lasts over time, such as ceramics, fabrics or foodstuffs such as local spices or liqueurs. These gifts are sure to be more welcome. Above all, do not buy souvenirs with protected animals or plants (e.g. shells or carved tropical woods).



Each of us has a responsibility to protect the environment and safeguard nature by promoting sustainable tourism. Every action, even the smallest, can contribute to saving resources, reducing natural exploitation and therefore reducing environmental impact.



Dante's way, places and landscapes of the exile of the great poet

Dante's Way is the ring route through the medieval paths and streets that united Romagna and Tuscany traveled by the great poet

Maria Giuseppina Ferrulli



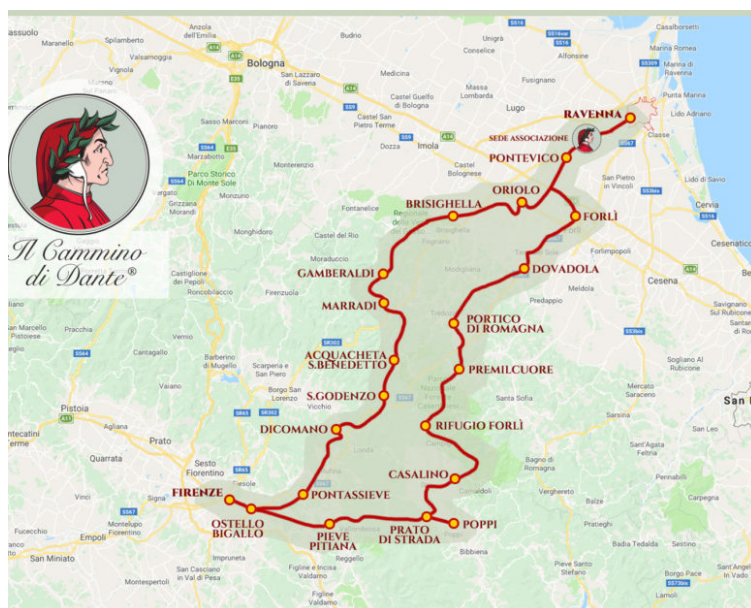
Dante's Way is a ring route that runs through medieval roads and paths, linked to the life and experience of the poet's exile, which united Romagna and the Casentino.

It is a naturalistic, cultural and literary journey; quotes and parts of the Divine Comedy are posted along the way. It was designed through the selection of roads that avoid asphalt as much as possible, preferring "ridge" tracks dating back to the late Middle Ages or even to the Etruscan-Roman era. The route consists of 21 stages for a total of about 400 km and the two ends of the ring coincide with Dante's Tomb in Ravenna and the Casa di Dante Museum in Florence.

Discovering landscapes, fauna and flora, but also castles, springs and hermitages will be a huge thrill for those who undertake the journey; somehow the path allows to enter in close harmony with the atmospheres and places lived by the poet. In fact, much has remained intact of the ancient landscape, so the difficulties and suggestions of the journey approach the journey that the exile Dante had to make centuries ago.

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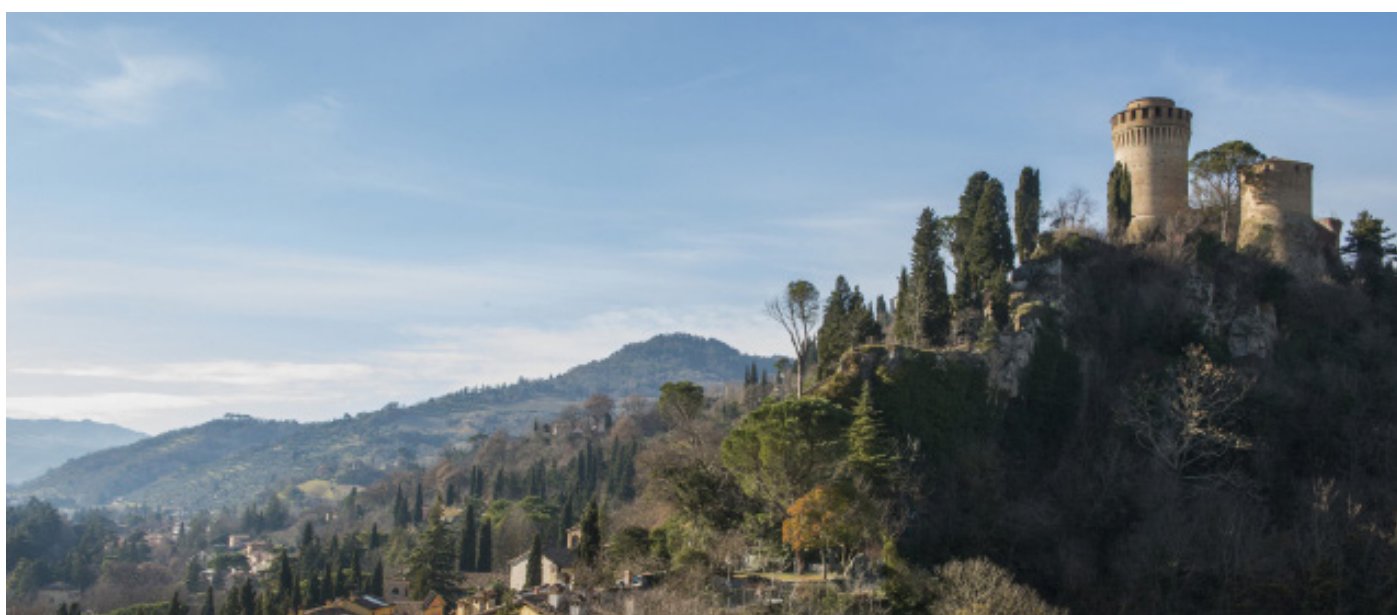


Along the way you can access a series of services and facilities using the “credential” issued by the association together with a map guide, after having paid a registration fee. However, it is necessary to book 2/3 weeks in advance to avoid not finding shelter for the night.

Starting from Dante’s Tomb in Ravenna, the traveler at the hamlet of San Marco, where the headquarters of the Associazione culturale Il Cammino di Dante is located, will be able to collect the guide and credential to take advantage of the discounts and special facilities for the various services disseminated along the way.

Among the stops is the village of Oriolo dei Fichi, a few kilometers from Faenza, where you can visit the beautiful fifteenth-century tower with its small park. Another destination is Brisighella, one of the most beautiful villages in Italy; its origin dates back to the end of the thirteenth century, when the site was chosen to build the most important stronghold of the Lamone Valley. On the hills there are several medieval fortifications and the Sanctuary of the Madonna del Monticino.

A Dante place is the area of the disused church of Gamberaldi; here, at the end of the thirteenth century Maghinardi Pagani da Susinana ruled his fiefdom. Dante quotes him in canto XXVII of Hell to criticize his ambiguous political conduct. Another important center is that of San Benedetto in Alpe, where it will be





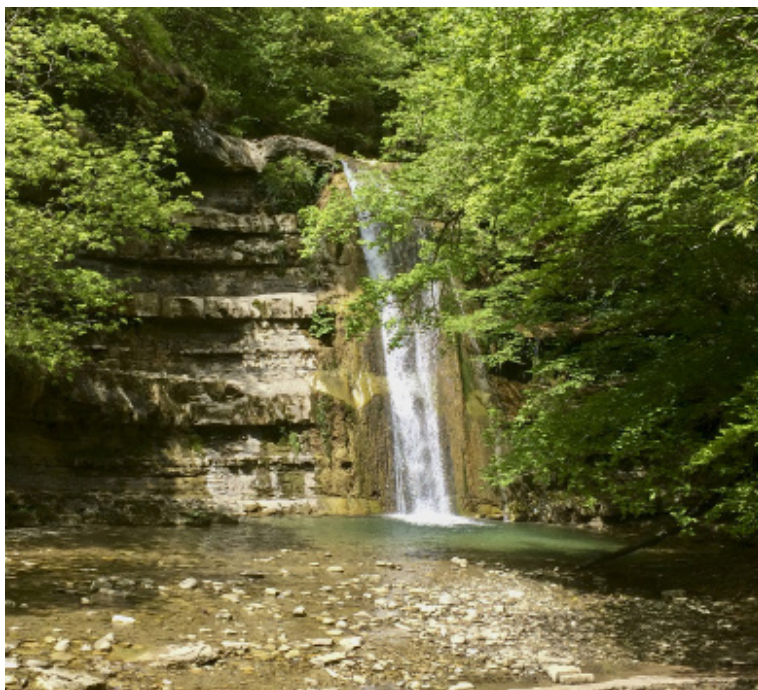
possible to visit the Hermitage of Gamogna (founded by San Pier Damiani in 1053), the Abbey of San Benedetto and the spectacular 90-meter jump of the Acquacheta river, which is mentioned by Dante in canto XVI of *Inferno* where it is compared to the Flegetonte waterfall.

Continuing on an ancient medieval road, we will meet the Hermitage of the Toschi and the Church of San Godenzo, where Dante took part in a meeting of Ghibellines and white Guelphs, who went out to seek in vain an agreement with the Ubaldini. After the archaeological area of Frascole, you reach the Etruscan Museum of Dicomano, the village from which Dante left for his escape to Romagna.

Always Dante is Pagnolle di Pontassieve, where the family estate of the Alighieri and Beatrice Portinari were located; probably the two met in the nearby church of San Miniato. Continue to the Dante House Museum in via Santa Margherita sul Lungarno, where the outward journey ends.

The return journey, through numerous olive groves, villages and woods, passes through the Casentino, rich in towers and fortifications, such as the Castello dei Conti Guidi or the Castello di Romena, where the poet lived for a while during his exile.

Continuing you can visit the Hermitage of Camaldoli, founded in 1012 by San Romualdo; the ridge route offers numerous glimpses of a panorama that extends to the sea. Returning to the valley, there is a path that leads to Premilcuore, where you can visit some buildings and the Museum of the Fauna of the Romagna ridge.



After crossing a medieval bridge with its original pavement, the Ponte della Maestà, you reach Portico di Romagna, where Palazzo Portinari is located, which according to tradition was owned by Folco Portinari, Beatrice's father. In nearby Dovadola the Rocca dei Conti Guidi and other fortifications stand out in the area, together with the Hermitage of Montepaolo, where it was hosted in the thirteenth century by St. Anthony of Padua.

Going up to Castrocaro and Forlì, you return to Pontevico and Ravenna, concluding the itinerary with Dante's Tomb, the place of departure. The last stop is a ring tour of Ravenna that starts from Ponte Nuovo, passes through Classe and the church of S. Apollinare in Classe and, after reaching the sea up to Lido di Dante, goes back to the starting point.

Foto: © Associazione culturale Il Cammino di Dante



From Santo Stefano to Rocca Calascio: trekking between history and nature

Maria Giuseppina Ferrulli

Walk in the pearl of Abruzzo, between breathtaking landscapes and ruins of old castles



At the edge of Campo Imperatore, the vast plateau defined by the well-known mountaineer Fosco Maraini as the “Little Tibet”, there are some of the most famous fortified villages and castles in the Apennines.

The area was highly appreciated in the Middle Ages for its flourishing sheep breeding and, consequently, for the processing of wool; for this reason the Florentine Medici family had acquired these lands and these fiefdoms in 1579. Suggestive is the path that can be taken on foot from Santo Stefano di Sessanio to Rocca Calascio, a symbol of the area with its magnificent fortress. Santo Stefano di Sessanio, a small pearl of Abruzzo, is a fortified village perched on a hill at 1251 meters; the village preserves the limestone houses and streets, offering an indefinable glimpse of medieval architecture.

The Medicean Tower, cylindrical in shape, with the coat of arms of the Florentine family, always dominated the village; due to the 2009 earthquake, however, the tower with many other buildings collapsed. In the village you can move through stairways and narrow streets through stone houses and ancient churches and to discover the house-walls that surround the town; with few windows they serve as fortification of the village.

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Following the provincial road for Calascio for about a kilometer, a dirt road with white-red signs appears on the left; after a few meters along this road, you have to continue to the right along a path that climbs through a wide grassy ridge to the summit of Monte delle Croci (1458 meters), from which you can see the castle of Rocca Calascio. After descending a large saddle, you go up towards the Renaissance oratory of the Madonna dei Monti, also called the church of Santa Maria della Pietà.



The church was probably built on a pre-existing Renaissance shrine and has an octagonal external structure. The main portal, closed by a wooden door, is in Baroque style. The building is located on the site where, according to tradition, the population defeated a band of brigands who, coming from the nearby Campo Imperatore in the Papal States, were about to rage in the possessions of the Piccolomini family.

For a ridge of grass and rocks you arrive at the castle of Rocca Calascio, a suggestive fortified watchtower. After being uninhabited, in the 80s Rocca Calascio and the surrounding area were patiently recovered and today it is possible to find here, among the many ruined houses, some renovated structures, where you can stop or stay. The Rocca has undergone various consolidation

works, which allow you to visit it, also enjoying an incredible view of the Abruzzo landscape.

The castle has ancient origins, when already around the year 1000 in this area there was an imposing sighting system, which reached the sea from the Apennines; the fortification allowed the control of the territory both from the defensive point of view and as regards the paths linked to transhumance. In 1463 the fortress passed to Antonio Todeschini of the Piccolomini family, who equipped the structure of the cobblestone walls and four cylindrical towers with Ghibelline battlements.

In 1703 a violent earthquake occurred which damaged the castle and almost entirely destroyed the village below, which had already suffered the destruction caused by the earthquakes of 1348-49 and 1461; only the lower part of the medieval village was rebuilt, while the rest of the population found refuge further downstream, in the current town of Calascio. In the following decades, once its strategic function ended, the fortress went into decline and was gradually abandoned until it was completely uninhabited in 1957.

The fame of Rocca Calascio is also due to the numerous films that have been shot here, thanks to the beauty of the place and the Rocca itself; the most famous is surely Lady Hawke, but the film The Name of the Rose with Sean Connery has also been set there.

In the area it is also possible to taste the many dishes of the Abruzzo tradition, thanks also to those who have been able to enhance a heritage that was in danger of being lost.

Returning to the oratory of the Madonna dei Monti, you can continue to Lake Racollo, which descends to cross a dirt road and continues on the ridge of the Cima delle Serre up to a small pass, where you reach the paved road that connects Santo Stefano di Sessanio with Campo Imperatore. Turning left for a route marked in white and red you return to the village of Santo Stefano di Sessanio, passing through the church of Madonna del Lago, a church just outside the town. Dating back to the 17th century, the small religious building stands on the banks of a small lake; the structure was damaged by the 2009 earthquake.

An itinerary suitable for an easy approach walk, which can be traveled in the months from spring to autumn; a path completely immersed in nature and surrounded by the panoramas of the spectacular peaks of Gran Sasso, Majella and Sirente.



Italy inaugurates the Path of Parks, an itinerary through protected areas

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Ministry of the Environment and the CAI which provides for a more intense collaboration to promote education and environmental issues. In particular, the agreement intends to spread the culture of the environment, biodiversity and sustainable development, and to enhance the paths in the protected areas, promoting the conscious attendance of the Highlands and the realization of that eco-sustainable path that will take the name of "Path of the Parks".

"A hiking itinerary that will touch all 26 national parks in our country, which will have as its backbone the current CAI Italy Path - explains the Minister of the Environment Sergio Costa - National parks are a treasure trove of nature: we must ensure their conservation, but also usability".

The current CAI Italy Path, over 7000 km long, connects all Italian regions along the Apennine ridge and the Alpine arc, from Santa Teresa Gallura, in northern Sardinia, to Muggia, in the province of Trieste. An itinerary that embraces the whole country through the mountains, and which currently runs through 18 of the 26 national parks and has 85 stages, out of a total of about 400, fully or partially included within their borders. Thanks to the agreement with the ministry, specific variants are planned, so as to include all protected areas, in an eco-sustainable visit that combines parks, biosphere reserves, UNESCO naturalistic sites and intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

The aim of the project is to relaunch protected areas as places of conservation and management of nature, which allow residents to create sustainable economic chains.

Piera Vincenti

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A walk in Italy, in the heart of the Majella Park

Maria Giuseppina Ferrulli

The Path of the Spirit is located in the Majella National Park, in a landscape characterized by imposing mountains and wild nature



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The Path of the Spirit is a 73 km long trekking path that can be covered in single stages or you can enjoy all your breath in three or four days. The path starts from the hamlet of Badia di Sulmona and ends at the Abbey of San Liberatore a Majella in Serramonacesca and leads the tourist, on the occasion to the wayfarer, to discover some of the most spectacular and magical hermitages in our country. It is no coincidence that the Path of the Spirit has recently been nominated as a UNESCO environmental, cultural and naturalistic heritage.

In spite of what one might think, this destination is not essentially linked to religious tourism, but it can also be highly appreciated by tourists who want to live an experience of green and sustainable tourism, a moment of cultural leisure or he is simply looking for a more intimate contact with his own interiority and spirit.

It is a journey that must be undertaken in a group or, in any case, in company; long walks in the shade of the woods, trekking through the natural paths of the green hills of Abruzzo, finding refreshment after a long walk at the various water points make this experience fascinating and relaxing at the same time.

Silence helps to fully perceive the flow of the water between the stones of the streams, the noise of the leaves under your steps and the intimate and deep music of nature; deer and roe deer populate almost all the wooded areas of the park, which also host the Apennine wolf and the Marsican brown bear.

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This place, which has always been inhabited by small communities of farmers and especially shepherds scattered in the area around churches and abbeys, was the ideal choice for hermits and mystics who settled in the most inaccessible and isolated points of the mountain, collected in prayer and contemplation of God, far from human presence and in close contact with the harsh and wild nature of the area.

Following the traces of the hermit Pietro Da Morrone, future Pope Celestino V, the path starts from the large Celestinian Abbey in the hamlet of Badia di Sulmona: before climbing towards Monte Morrone, here you can visit the hermitage of S. Onofrio, set on a rocky slope and easily accessible. The most remote and suggestive place of the hermitage is the cave where the hermit went in prayer, whose walls are impregnated with water.

You can then go up to the top of the mountain passing through the hermitage of S. Pietro, a small church located on a relief that constitutes an observation point over the entire Peligna Valley and on the mountain ranges and minor reliefs of the wide western slope.



The Path of the Spirit subsequently climbs the Orfento Valley, offering the opportunity to discover one of the areas of greatest naturalistic value in the Park. Characterized by imposing limestone walls, the valley has beech woods and numerous bridges that allow you to cross the river. From here you reach the heart of the Path, touching three Celestinian hermitages. The first is the hermitage of San Giovanni, obtained from pre-existing cavities used since the Bronze Age, which can be reached by climbing a narrow ladder carved into the rock and, for a short stretch, crawling among the rocks.

After crossing the beech forest downstream, you go up towards the Abbey of S. Spirito, a succession of stairs and tunnels dug into the rock on several levels that lead to some suggestive environments, an evident symbol of the medieval monastic lifestyle. Near the hermitage, there is an equipped area, where the most daring can undertake exciting climbs on the wonderful Bear Wall.

Going down among the ferns towards the valley, we come across the hermitage of S. Bartolomeo in Legio, located on a rocky ridge, perfectly preserved and equipped outside with a gallery, a staircase and a water basin dug into the rock.

The last stage of the Spiritual Path takes place in the territory of Lettomanoppello with the Grotta Sant'Angelo and Serramonacesca with the hermitage of Sant'Onofrio and the Abbey of San Liberatore a Majella.

A wonderful and exciting itinerary that you have to discover.



Cammino Materano, 5 routes for a holiday between nature and history

For those looking for different and unusual destinations for their holidays, in the name of slow and sustainable tourism, a tempting opportunity is around the corner

Maria Giuseppina Ferrulli



Designed for tourism through slow traffic and towards internal areas, normally not considered by traditional circuits, the Materano Way is a way to get in touch with all the resources of the territory: natural, historical-archaeological, cultural, food and wine resources and also human, considering that it is fully in tune with the people and local communities.

The path, to be done strictly on foot, leads the tourist to experience the places and live an unforgettable activity. According to what David Le Breton observed in his *The world on foot*. March praise:

“Walking, in the context of contemporary reality, would seem to express a form of nostalgia, or of resistance. Walkers are singular people, who accept for a few

hours or a few days to get out of the car to physically venture into the nakedness of the world. The act of walking represents the triumph of the body, with different shades according to the degree of freedom of the person. It favors the elaboration of an elementary philosophy of existence based on a series of small things, induces for a moment the wayfarer to question himself, his relationship with nature, with others, to meditate on an unexpected range of issues”.

The Way is therefore a spiritual itinerary in one's interiority and in search of one's identity as a living in the world and in the surrounding nature; it is a journey where the only real goal is the journey and the slow rhythm of the steps and thoughts.

The Materan Way, recognized in the Atlas of Paths of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, consists of five different itineraries, all dedicated to the pre-Roman populations of Southern Italy: Via Peuceta, Via Ellenica, Via Jonica, via Dauniana and via Lucana. The last itinerary is the Via Sveva, dedicated to the extraordinary figure of Federico II, which starts from the castle of Trani and then from Andria, in whose Cathedral the remains of two of Federico's wives are preserved, leads to Castel del Monte and, through the Alta Murgia National Park, in the city of stones.



The Via Peuceta is a path that starts from the Basilica of San Nicola di Bari, a symbol of the pilgrimage in Puglia, and crosses the ancient territory of Peucezia: from the olive forest of the coastal plain to the steppe expanses of the Murgian plateau and the woods of conifers and oaks, up to the blades and ravines of the rock scenery where Gravina in Puglia and Matera rise. Along the 170 km you can discover the rich Apulian and Lucanian cultural heritage, consisting not only of cathedrals, medieval villages, rock churches, Greek and Roman remains, but also of farms, trulli, dry stone walls and the magical gastronomy of the peasant tradition.

Through the Via Appia-Traiana, starting from Brindisi, the fascinating itinerary of the Via Hellenica takes shape; on the way you can meet the two Unesco sites of the Sassi of Matera and the Trulli of Alberobello, the wonderful villages of the Itria Valley and the extraordinary open-air museum of the Gravine Park.

The Via Jonica is a 215 km path along the Ionian coast from Taranto, the city of the two seas, to Leuca, the finis terrae of Italy. The walk takes place in a continuous circle of environments made up of Mediterranean scrub, long beaches with their sixteenth-century watchtowers and numerous unspoiled natural oases.



The Via Dauna is a journey between Molise and Puglia, along the ancient paths of transhumance and pilgrimages. The path passes through ancient villages perched on the rocky spurs of the Dauni Mountains, interspersed with luxuriant oak and beech forests, valleys and breathtaking landscapes. After Melfi, the Norman capital, and Venosa, statio of the Via Appia and seat of the majestic Church of the Incompiuta, the path rejoins the Via Sveva to get to Matera.

Starting from Matera, the path of via Lucana moves through the enchanting landscapes of the Apennines and the Lucanian Dolomites, of the Cilento National Park up to the Tyrrhenian Sea where the temple of Hera stands in Paestum, passing through villages and wonderful natural places.

A tourism to be enjoyed step by step, to rebuild the unchanged and eternal bond created over the centuries between man and nature and to feel truly at home.

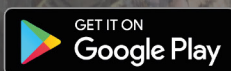


Half of the plastic we use
is not recycled.

Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.

SmartRicola

The App for waste collection.



Pearls hidden in the woods of Basilicata: tourism between nature and history

Maria Giuseppina Ferrulli

All fans of outdoor and wood walks will be enchanted by the extraordinary nature and uniqueness of these two hidden little treasures that are not well known to normal tourist flows



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In the town of Filiano, in Basilicata, there are two beautiful anthropological reserves; completely surrounded by greenery, they would be the ideal destination for an ecotourism that brings together love for nature and passion for history and discovery.

The State Anthropological and Natural Reserve "I Pisconi" extends from the confluence of the Bradanello torrent with the Vallone delle Volpi, at 620 meters, up to the 1030 meters of Serra Carriero. It was born to safeguard a truly relevant archaeological site and to preserve the richness of flora and fauna.

The vegetation consists mainly of Turkey oak, but there are also downy oak, ash, field maple and in the undergrowth there are hawthorn, bramble and dogwood. The fauna is characterized by the presence of wolves, wild cats and animals such as weasels, martens, badgers, foxes and wild boars.

The oldest artistic trace of man in Basilicata has been found in this natural paradise. The locals had already mentioned it for some time, when in 1965 the director of the provincial museum of Potenza, Francesco

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Ranaldi, officially discovered in a wooded area at 879 meters above sea level prehistoric paintings on the part of a large rocky outcrop, known as Tupper dei Sassi. From the name of the discoverer, the site took the name of "Riparo Ranaldi", a natural half-arched shelter, 6 meters high and hollowed in the sandstone, partially collapsed on the sides, as demonstrated by the boulders rolled under the edge of the short plateau.



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On a portion of the surface of the internal wall lie cave paintings, traced with the fingers using red ochre. The color has certainly lost its original liveliness, but it is still possible to appreciate the images traced, even if they have been variously interpreted. Ranaldi had interpreted the painting as a hunting scene with men and animals (deer and goat) as protagonists captured and held in a snare or hit with a weapon. The most interesting figure is a man made up of three oval bodies, to be interpreted as a sorcerer or divinity.

A stratigraphic excavation and further studies have documented the prolonged frequentation of the place by different human groups of passage, as demonstrated by the remains of the lithic industry, fragments of tools, other engravings

discovered above the shelter spur and the paintings, which date back to different moments. The pictorial complex would therefore consist of deer and fallow deer and men in the act of hunting and some of the drawings have been interpreted as trees; the large figure with three ovals at the top would instead be the symbolic representation of an oak leaf. The paintings, in this way, were used to signal the passing hunter the presence of deer and other game in an oak forest. The paintings date back to a period between the final phase of the Paleolithic and the Mesolithic, approximately 12,000 years ago.

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The second pearl is the Agromonte Spacciaboschi anthropological nature reserve, established in 1972 to safeguard a site of considerable historical interest; it is located on one of the terraces overlooking the Vitalba Valley.

The site is accessed from the fountain known as the Sparciavosc dialect term, located on the Iscalunga-Dragonetti provincial road, just before reaching the town of Scalera. From there, following the marked path, after about 500 meters of walking you arrive at the remains of what was once an ancient church, as is evident from the perimeter of the building and the stone decorations.

Going back on the main path, further on there are the remains of an elegant building and an enormous

tank made up of sandstone boulders. These are the characteristic “Palmenti”: hollowed in the upper part, they have a drain hole and, in several cases, in the lower part, an additional collection tray. They would have served for grape pressing, given the presence of many vineyards in ancient times.

Here was the medieval Acermontis, whose oldest testimony dates back to 9 June 1152, mentioned in a list of the farmhouses and parishes included in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the bishop of Rapolla.

The castle and the town had to be damaged during the Ghibelline revolt (1267-1268), under the government of Charles I of Anjou. In 1330 only a small domus remained in Agromonte and a few dozen inhabitants who, in that year or in the decades following the Black Plague of 1348, definitively abandoned it moving towards the neighboring villages.

In this case it is possible to carry out guided visits with the staff of the State Forestry Corps and the particular difficulty of the route makes the visit possible only to an adult public.

Two beautiful discoveries to be reached by car or bike to enter the green and the past with your eyes and soul.



Gran Paradiso, safe excursions between nature, food and wine

The Gran Paradiso National Park organizes ninety-three free excursions with the Park guides on the Aosta Valley side, to discover the protected area, in health and safety, in the summer after Covid-19. In a period in which the keywords are open spaces and proximity, the Park responds by providing its guides for free excursions lasting about 3 hours, suitable for young and old. These are routes with modest differences in height so as to be accessible to everyone, not only simple excursions but small journeys of discovery and reflection, such as the need to seek new well-being, with slower rhythms, to change old habits and importance to safeguard Nature and its balance.

In fact, in each location, themes connected to the nature and culture of the municipalities of the area have been planned: in the Rhêmes Valley, walks are offered combined with yoga and mindfulness activities, and the discovery of traditional production activities, from rye cultivation to breeding. In Valsavarenche excursions to the historic refuges of the Valley and on the wolf, in Valle di Cogne walks among the stars in Valnontey and to the discovery of the bearded vulture, which has nested here since 2015. Water will be a transversal theme, as well as that of food and wine with tastings by operators who have the Gran Paradiso quality seal. Among these, some offer a picnic basket with local products that can be purchased, by reservation, directly in the participating structures.

“The involvement of the Park Guides, professionals trained not only on naturalistic knowledge but also on the environmental and cultural interpretation of the places, will be an added value that will be added to that offered by the beauty of the landscape” explains Italo Cerise, President of the Park.



Sentiero del Brigante: historical and natural landscapes of Aspromonte

Maria Giuseppina Ferrulli

An itinerary far from urbanized routes and that moves along the natural ridge at high altitude, about 1000 meters above sea level connecting the Aspromonte to the Serre



Between the 1980s and 1990s the Aspromonte Hikers Group (GEA) created this path, consisting of 9 stages, for a length of about 140 kilometers and a journey time of 9-10 days. The name of the Way derives from the historical road which, in past centuries, was used by brigands, such as Nino Martino, Giuseppe Musolino and others.

The route can also be undertaken for only a few stages and can be traveled on foot, on horseback or by mountain-bike; always accessible at low altitudes, it can safely be traveled at high altitudes from spring to autumn.

The first stop is Gambarie, a mountain resort located 35 kilometers from Reggio Calabria. Along this route you will come across the natural beauty of the "Rumia" lake, in the famous Monument of Nino Martino (a natural set of overlapping rocks placed randomly one on top of the other, which tradition wants to be piled up to cover the brigand's body by his companions or by the wayfarers in memory of the hero) and the Cip-po di Garibaldi, a majestic tree with a hollow where Garibaldi was placed to rest after the injury to his leg.

Continuing through woods, dirt roads and panoramic points, you reach Zervò where you can see an important site of our most recent history, the anti-tubercular sanatorium, inaugurated in 1929 and abandoned after about three years of activity due to the severe winter weather conditions of the place and for logistical problems. In the 90s, after the restoration, it hosted the Community Meeting of Don Gelmini.

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The third stage, characterized by streams, dense woods and pine forests, reserves a small pearl of history for the traveler: the Zillastro cross. A commemorative plaque commemorates the battle of September 8, 1943 between the Italian troops of the Nembo Battalion, about 400 men, and the Canadian troops of the Nova Scotia and Edmonton regiments, about 5000 men. Unaware that the armistice had been signed on September 3, the VIII Battalion Nembo decided to attack in order not to surrender; many died, 57 were taken prisoner and only very few survivors arrived in the town of Platì, where they learned of the armistice.



The area of the Zomaro, a place rich in spring waters, tells with its fortifications, presumably of Roman age, a very ancient history; between 72 and 71 AD in this area the Roman proconsul Marco Licinio Crasso and the rebel Spartacus fought strenuously.

At the Passo della Limina the Aspromonte finds its end and starts the Serre; near the pass are the village Limina with its church of Maria SS. dell'Assunta and the ancient path of the Greeks, where you can reach the sanctuary of San Nicodemo on foot. The village, now completely uninhabited, was built in the 1950s to house farmers who had lost their homes due to the floods of 1951.

After a journey through dirt roads, chestnut woods and wooden bridges over

the rivers, you reach Fabrizia, a place of lumberjacks and charcoal burners and summer residence of the Prince of Roccella Fabrizio Carafa. Due to the earthquake of 1783, the whole territory had an economic collapse, from which it recovered only with the advent of the French dominion and thanks to the presence of the Royal Ironworks, built during the Bourbon dominion and empowered by the French, in the territory of Mongiana. The Regie Ferriere were closed in 1881 and today, with the attached museum, they are an unparalleled example of industrial archeology.

Of similar importance is the steel park of Chiesa Vecchia, established in 2016; here what remains of the ancient mining village is preserved: the seventeenth-century administrative building, the furnace of the factory, the eighteenth-century church. Nothing remains of the workers' houses, which were made of wood.

It extends immediately after Ferdinandeia, a territory covered by beech and fir woods of 3600 hectares of the Calabrian greenhouses which extends in the municipalities of Stilo, Bivongi, Brognaturo, Mongiana and Serra San Bruno. The hunting lodge, the ironworks, the barracks, the stables, the church and many



other buildings are preserved from the urban complex of Ferdinandeia, built by Ferdinando di Borbone. A combination of hunting lodge and ironworks, the complex enjoyed the proximity of the woods, from which it obtained wood and coal.

Among the artistic and historical beauties of the area we cannot fail to mention the rock sanctuary of Santa Maria della Stella in Pazzano, the Orthodox monastery of San Giovanni Theristis in Bivongi and the spectacular Cattolica di Stilo, founded between the end of the 10th and early 11th century according to the Byzantine model of the "quincunx" churches.

Last stop is the Certosa di Serra San Bruno, the first Carthusian monastery in Italy with a thousand-year history, having been founded in 1090 by Bruno of Cologne.

At the various reception facilities along the way it is possible to request the Carta del Camminante, where your name and surname, the place of departure and arrival and the way of travel (on foot, on horseback or by mountain bike) will be written. By requesting it at the time of departure and showing the stamped Walker's Card, you can also request the Certificate.

A journey steeped in nature and through the history of the area that is worth trying.

Foto: © Sandro Casile



Etna, discovering the good giant between science, history and nature

Angelo Rosiello

Among the most active volcanoes in the world, Etna has always fascinated scientists for its continuous eruptions



The Mt. Etna is the biggest European volcano and one of the most active volcanos of the world; localized in eastern Sicily, it elevates until 3320 m a.s.l. (in 2019) but its altitude and morphology of the top of the volcano is continuously changing because the succession of the eruptions. The volcano covers an area of 1200 km² and it's characterized by a pseudo-oval basal shape, bordered to west by The Simeto river, to east by the Alcantara river and the Ionian Sea coastline, to south by the Catania Plain (separating the Etna from the Ibleian Mts., of volcanic origin but older – ca. 10 My) and to north by the Peloritani Mts., mainly granitic.

The volcano's flanks are disseminated by lots of volcanic cones, made by lateral eruptions, most of which have big dimensions as for Mt. Minardo, Mt. Ilice, Mts. Rossi and Mts. Silvestri, while the others are significantly smaller. Around the 1800 m a.s.l. the volcano's flanks became steeper in correspondence of the Mongibello Cone.

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North-East Crater and South-East Crater, at least one of which is continuously active, with lava emissions or releasing of ash and gases.

When magma is deeper and there are no eruptions, the summit craters are interested by frequent landslides.

From the geodynamic point of view, the Mt. Etna is located in the zone of continental collision between Euro-Asiatic plate to north and the African plate to south, and the volcanism is favoured by the extensional tectonic of the eastern margin of Sicily, permitting the rise of magma from the earth mantle.

Mt. Etna is defined a basaltic stratovolcano characterised by very frequent eruptions both from summit craters and from lateral craters, as demonstrated by the numerous cones around the main volcanic structure. The very complex eruptive story of the Etna region was object of lots of researches and the most recent studies determine more detailed stratigraphic and geochronological results, synthesised in the geological map of Mt. Etna (1:50000).

The authors have recognised 4 phases in the eruptive story, started in

the Middle Pleistocene (ca. 500 ky), when in the area was a marine gulf, in which started the first submarine manifestations (as the pillow lavas outcropping at Rupe of Aci Castello, the sub-volcanic body of the Lachea island and the stacks of Aci Trezza). The tectonic uplift and the continuous eruptions determined the missing of the marine gulf starting the subaerial volcanic activity, migrated in time to north and north-west, until the building of the actual volcanic structure.

During the first (subaerial conditions) and the second phases, the volcanic activity was characterised mainly by fissural eruptions, with big volume of lavas emitted along the fault systems of the Simeto river valley (Adrano Paternò area) and along the Ionian Sea coastline. These eruptions are dated until 110 ky above. In the third phase was recorded an important changing in the eruptive style, passing from fissural to central activity, characterised both effusive and explosive eruptions, building the first eruptive centres of the Valle del Bove.



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Numerous volcanoes subsequently formed in this period and the most important of these, named Trifoglietto volcano reached an altitude of 2400 m a.s.l., finishing its activity ca. 99 ky above. Then, others minor volcanic centres formed and the third phase terminated ca. 65 ky above, with a long period of volcanic stasis, after which started the fourth phase, named of the Stratovolcano (ca. 57 ky above). In this period there was the further migration to north-west, which determined the building of the biggest eruptive centre of the Mt. Etna structure, the so named Ellittico volcano.

It was characterised by both effusive and explosive eruptions, constituting the polygenic strato-cone that reached 3600 m of altitude. In addition it verified also lateral eruptions, determining the areal expansion of the volcano building, with the emissions of lava flows and pyroclastic deposits that radically modified the geomorphology and the hydrographyc network of the area (as the filling of paleo-valley of the Alcantara river or the lava barriers of the Simeto river valley).

© Elsa Tornabene on Unspalsh

The Ellittico volcano ended its activity at 15 ky above, with a series of plinian eruptions that formed a caldera and determined the dispersion of pyroclastic deposits, largely located around the flanks of the volcanic structure. During the last 15 ky, the large effusive activity fully filled the ancient caldera of the

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Ellittico structure, forming a new summit crater, the continuous eruptions (mainly effusive) of which caused the building of the actual volcanic top structures, named Mongibello volcano.

Around 10 ky above, its eastern flank was interested by large landslides, which formed the actual Valle del Bove. These structural collapses highlighted the inner portion of the volcanic centres both of the second phase and of the Ellittico volcano and the debris flows reached the Milo area and the Ionian coastline as the alluvional conoid of Chiancone.



The eruptive activity prosecuted mainly with effusive style, with short period of volcanic stasis, even though in historical times it was verified some large explosive eruptions (as for the 122 B.C. when there was huge damages for the ancient Catania town, excused from the payment of taxes for the following 10 years by the Roman Senate).

From Romans onwards, there was the increasing of urbanization of the Etna area and during this period, numerous lateral eruptions verified, which destroyed whole villages and various portion of the ancient Catania town (as during the Middle Ages), highlighting the high volcanic risk related to buildings and towns.

The lateral eruptions at low altitude may last from few hours to over a year (ex. 1991-1993, 472 days; 2008-2009, 419 days) and may determine huge inconveniences for populous areas and a serious danger for terrestrial and aerial traffic. For these reasons the Etna Mt. is one of the most studied volcano of the world and it is continuously monitored by the INGV of Catania, that emitted weekly and daily bulletins on the basis of the activity states. During the first days of April 2020, it occurred an explosive eruption at summit craters, characterised by strong degasement, lava fountains and the emission of an ash plume, with no particular inconveniences, but that always arouse attention for volcanologists and Civil Protection, because actually in the Etna area live ca. 700000 people. This highlights that living with geological risks must induce to never let down the guard.



The most beautiful itineraries in Italy to cover by bicycle

This summer many travelers will choose the bicycle: here are the places to visit for truly unforgettable holidays

Maria Giuseppina Ferrulli

Social distancing and rules to prevent the spread of Covid-19 seem to put a strain on our holidays. But slow tourism offers many opportunities for choice, which Italians and not only are seriously considering.

Hiking and cycle tourism, together with the possibility of moving through small little-known villages to be explored, will probably be the trend of summer 2020. A cycling holiday could be a really good choice: it allows social distancing, allows you to carry out physical and outdoor activities and, finally, it is a form of ecological tourism!

Those who have already experienced a bike trip know that the path is full of surprises and satisfactions; going at your own pace in the various natural landscapes, savoring the beauty of the landscapes and venturing into countries to discover in continuous harmony and harmony with the territory are experiences of undeniable emotion and unparalleled satisfaction.

Itineraries can be organized for stages of several weeks or a few days; great distances are not important: sometimes great treasures are hidden around the corner! Obviously it will be necessary to calibrate the kilometers to be covered and the type of roads according to one's own competence and physical capacity, taking into account the fact of being more or less trained in this type of activity.

By selecting the itinerary, care must be taken to establish sustainable stages, ensuring adequate breaks to rest and to start exploring the various destinations. It is good to get ready for the night by booking at b



& b, hotels and bike friendly campsites; in some cases, maintenance tools or bicycle workshops may be made available, especially if located along the cycle paths. In this sense, the Abruzzo region has moved, which recently launched the Abruzzo Bike Friendly project, while in South Tyrol there are the Bikehotels, where expert bikers provide advice and advice to better manage the trip.

Despite the difficulties associated with the pandemic, several travel ideas are already available online in Italy, among the Euganean Hills, on Lake Garda, the Adige cycle path. Italy has a network of cycle paths, cycle paths and trails of over 90 thousand km and there are many regions to discover by pedaling.

Emilia Romagna is crossed by the Ciclovía del Sole, the Italian part of one of the most important Europe-

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an cycle paths, which goes from Crevalcore to the border with Tuscany, taking advantage of the existing tracks and secondary roads of the capital. In the city of Bologna, work is underway on the Bicipolitana, which will be completed in 2030 and will connect the city to the surrounding population centers.

In Trentino the Val di Sole cycle path runs alongside the path of the river Noce; the route is not demanding and is made easy by the presence of the Bike Train, to load the bike, and the Bike Bus. Piedmont offers several itineraries in Monferrato; in particular, the itinerary that crosses the Po Park passes through banks, woods and rice fields up to the first hills of Monferrato.

The cycle ring of the Euganean Hills is a tour with a thousand facets that leads the tourist between archeology, art and nature; the area is affected by the presence of multiple floristic species and a great variety of fauna that can be observed thanks to a system of hanging wooden walkways.

Among the Abruzzo routes it is worth mentioning the 130 km long Bike to Coast, which follows the Abruzzo coast and has points of excellence in the stretch of the Costa dei Trabocchi (wooden giants used for fishing) and in the stretch that crosses the ancient region of Marsica; the latter starts from Carsoli and is dotted with medieval villages, natural caves and splendid archaeological sites, such as that of the ancient Alba Fucens.



The Marche Outdoor project, with its twenty-four cycle paths, gives an excellent experience to those who want to immerse themselves in nature; the ring paths connect the mountain to the sea and bring together hermitages, caves, gorges, waterfalls and lakes.

Between the hills of Chianti and Val d'Orcia or along the coasts and valleys wind the many cycle routes of Tuscany, where it will be possible to discover not only landscapes, but also local culture, food and good wine.

With its badlands and roads on the sea, Basilicata has also opened its borders to cycling tourism; one of the paths starts from Rotonda and reaches the heart of the Pollino National Park up to Terranova del Pollino. On the way there are some villages of Arbereshe culture, where even the roads and signs are written in two languages and particular customs and foods can be discovered.

Starting from Castelmezzano you can live a cycle-touring experience with an electric bike: you get to the top of Monte Caperrino and go from the panoramic point of Tempa delle Forche; the route includes a short trek to majestic monumental trees and to discover the history and landscape of the place.

The goals are many and all really interesting; all that remains is to get on the saddle and set off on a new experience!



Not a solution: reforestation's risks and limitations

Gaia Lamperti

While trees are a fantastic effort to mitigate climate change, it is important to understand that these measures are just partial, or rather counterproductive when not planned carefully and judiciously



Te Big times for tree lovers. From reforestation apps aiming to become the 'Tinder for trees', to Trump's commitment to join the One Trillion Trees Initiative, this year has seen a real boost in governments and start-ups' efforts to repopulate forests.

Last month during the States General, a nine-day think-in on how to revive Italy's economy, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced his intention to plant one million trees with an EU 1 bln investment.

Beyond the doubts about cost coverage, Conte's plan has revived the debate around reforestation investments and their effectiveness. While they are a fantastic effort to mitigate climate change, it is vitally important to understand that these measures are just partial, or rather counterproductive when not planned carefully and judiciously.

In this regard, a University of Utah study published on Science last week highlighted how the use of forests to offset carbon emissions comes with risks to be taken into account when investing in reforestation as a climate change solution.

Biologist and author of the study William Anderegg said in an interview with SmartGreen Post that forests' stored carbon might not remain stable over the long term due to several different factors.

"Major climate risks like droughts and fires could actually cause a massive die out of forests which would then emit the stored carbon into the atmosphere and accelerate climate change," he explained. Circumstances which are likely to increase in severity and extension in the warming world.

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Also, planting trees does not always have a net cooling effect on the climate, he pointed out. At northern latitudes, like in Canada, upper US or Russia, snow-covered non-forested areas reflect a lot of incoming sunlight back to space. If those areas were to be reforested, they would lose their reflectiveness properties, which are not compensated by the trees' carbon offsetting. Under these circumstances, forest repopulation would actually heat the planet.

To guarantee forests' permanence in the long term, and therefore their effectiveness, Anderegg stressed the importance of directing reforestation investments to appropriate landscapes and areas less likely to be hit by fires, droughts, invasive species, or pathogens. "[Reforestation] could play a meaningful role only if we do it wisely and informed by the best available science."

This also means planting new forests in an ecologically and socially responsible way. Reforestation projects should focus on ensuring diversity of species, effective land ownership regimes, and the monitoring of new trees for years.

Another key factor is involving indigenous communities on the ground by making sure their rights and wishes are respected and that they will properly use and maintain the reforested area.

However, tree repopulation alone is not enough. Evidence shows that forests could contribute only as much as 20% of the full mitigation potential of all net emissions.



Despite a last year's paper argued that tree-planting is the single most promising mechanism available for climate change mitigation, Zeke Hausfather, UC Berkeley climate scientist and analyst, was among those who dismissed such findings.

According to Hausfather, reforestation has been inaccurately portrayed as the solution to global warming, whereas it is an important but still relatively small part of the overall set of crucial action we need to take.

"A world where we have reforestation is better than a world where we don't have reforestation," he said to SmartGreen Post, "but there is not a single solution that is going to solve climate change."

Despite forests' increasing important role, putting across the idea that planting trees will solve the complex issue of global warming risks becoming a dangerous distraction from the causes of the problem. "We want to make sure that we are not using it as a way to escape responsibilities or taking real actions to reduce emissions," Hausfather said.

"The only way to fundamentally stop climate change is to get emissions to net-zero and that would automatically reduce fossil fuels emissions," he concluded. "Reforestation cannot be a replacement for that."



Research at the service of forests: their future is in our hands

An interesting project by the University of Basilicata, Legambiente and WWF Promotes the protection of forest areas to preserve their biodiversity

Maria Castellaneta



© Michele Colangelo

“Too precious to lose” is the slogan for the 2020 edition of the International Day of Forests promoted by ONU, which highlights the indissoluble union between forests and biodiversity. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) also reminds us that forests are a treasure trove of terrestrial biodiversity, providing habitat for ~60 thousand plant species.

For several millennia, forest land has been used indiscriminately according to human demand. Thanks to their uniqueness, forests represent an excellent opportunity to test biodiversity promotion and monitoring actions and preserve “natural archives” to carry out scientific research. The coming years will therefore be crucial to reaffirm the importance and centrality of forests relating to the phenomenon of climate change.

Due to rising temperatures, changes in precipitation, and increasing frequency of climate extremes, climate change is having an impact on forests. Climatic variables and their interaction with the onset of decline phenomena are the main factors influencing forest species and the dynamics of their dependent communities both in the short term, for example by influencing the growth and the reproductive cycle of trees, and in the long term, inducing shifts in both latitudinal and altitudinal distribution.



Recently, scientific research, both at the national and international levels, focused on the study of these phenomena. In the last years, many die-off episodes are reported in the Mediterranean forests, particularly in Italy and Spain. So, science-related studies aim to acquire new knowledge about decline episodes, that affect several forest species. An emblematic case is represented by the lowland oaks forests, in terms of the spread of decline and mortality.

The ecological values of the planitian oak groves are currently recognized. In the past however they such a peculiar forests have been subject to intensive exploitation which has often reduced their extension and fragmented their distribution, making the system extremely weak.



© Maria Castellaneta

enchanted forest...": with these expressions, the English narrator and essayist George Gissing wanted to describe the Ionian forest. A place outside of time, almost fairy-tale: this is what you can still perceive today when you walk through the part of the forest that is still almost intact, but that is in danger of disappearing.

An example is the Regional Oriented Reserve "Bosco Pantano" in the Policoro territory, that preserves the testimony of what was one of the most interesting lowland forest formations in Southern Italy and probably one of the very few remaining strips in southern Europe. A true spectacle of nature, able to fascinate foreign travelers visiting the South of Italy since ancient times.

"A sacred forest ... dominated by the silence and mysterious darkness that reigns under the immense oaks as old as the world ... populated by a peaceful crowd of animals and all kinds of game; from the wild boars ... not to mention the martens and squirrels of which we saw a great deal walking on our heads, from tree to tree".

This was the description that the French writer and archaeologist Richard de Saint-Non used to represent the Bosco Pantano of Policoro at the end of 1700. "Imagination had a fascination that was half made of fear, I had never seen an



The aim of the research and, specifically, of the project “L’ultima foresta incantata”, is to save the hygrophilous forest and its symbolic species which is *Quercus robur* L. This project, financed by Fondazione con il Sud, involves several partners: University of Basilicata but also the National Research Council, Legambiente, WWF, Province of Matera and other non-profit associations.


A series of interventions will be put in place to restore and preserve the forest places of the past and, above all, to make them accessible. Another good example is the “ResQ project - Decline of lowland oaks forests: multidisciplinary approach for the selection of resistant genetic resources”, promoted by the Lombardy Region. In the Ticino Park, the phenomenon of oak decline (*Quercus robur* L. was the most affected species) began as early as the late 1990s, interesting thousands of hectares of forest.

These are ecosystem of great interest from a naturalistic point of view and perhaps one of the few examples of natural forests still to be found in the Pianura Padana. The project aims to study and understand the causes of the decline and then intervene to improve the resilience of these forests. Two projects that have a common denominator: safeguarding and restoring these areas through studying and monitoring.

This shows the importance of research as a fundamental element of knowledge of forest ecosystems and the dynamics connected to them. Only this approach can provide the information needed to be able to intervene and “save” these extremely important and beautiful forest environments.



© Francesco Ripullone



We produce 2 billion tons annually of CO₂
to produce 340 million tons of plastic,
70% is thrown into the oceans.

Protect the environment.

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How Vitamin D improves health and lifestyle after lockdown

Vitamin D is essential for numerous physiological functions, including the regulation of the immune system and bone metabolism

Maria Carmela Padula



In recent months, with the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic, we have heard a lot about vitamin D because of its multiple physiological functions, including a significant role in regulating the immune system, as well as in bone metabolism. The need for adequate levels of vitamin D underlines the importance of having an adequate weight, a targeted diet and above all a correct lifestyle that includes correct sun exposure (and physical activity in the open air).

The actions of vitamin D are to be attributed to its active metabolite, 1,25-dihydroxycholecalciferol [1,25 (OH) 2D3 or calcitriol], produced thanks to various enzymatic steps, starting from cholecalciferol or vitamin D3, depending on the exposure to the sunlight. In fact, the diet is not the main source of vitamin D, as the amount of calciferol deriving from

food is very low and most of the vitamin is synthesized in the skin by the action of ultraviolet light.

The main foods rich in vitamin D3 are the fattest marine fish (especially salmon, sardines, herring and cod liver oil), liver, egg yolk and mushrooms (shiitake), as well as milk, whole yogurt and fatty cheeses.

Vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin and is absorbed in the intestine (duodenal and jejunal) and distributed to the adipose tissue, from which it is subsequently released in small quantities. An excess of fat mass "traps" vitamin D, which is why the lack of vitamin D is higher in obese subjects.

It should be specified that vitamin D status is classified as follows:

- sufficiency: > 30 ng / ml (> 75 nmol / L)
- insufficiency: 21-29 ng / ml (51-74 nmol / L)
- deficiency: <20 ng / ml (<50 nmol / L)

Hypovitaminosis D is an extremely common condition, as it affects up to 50% of the general population during the winter months in the northern hemisphere. The chances of hypervitaminosis D (overdose of vitamin D), through the diet or through properly taken and formulated food supplements, is remote. Hypovitaminosis D, not only can result in lower bone mineral density and an increased risk of reduced bone density (osteoporosis) or bone fractures, but can also influence the regulation of the immune response.

In light of the role of the hormone in our body, it is essential that the serum levels of vitamin D are adequate. The lockdown of the previous months has significantly reduced sun exposure, exacerbating the risk of vitamin D deficiency. Hence the importance of taking advantage of the summer season for correct sun exposure, in the less hot hours, even better while practicing physical activity outdoors. Although the ideal sun exposure times may depend on the season, the skin and various other factors, sun exposure of at least 15 minutes a day could be a good practice to add to the behaviors implemented within one healthy lifestyle.



Food and climate crisis: Europe must decrease meat consumption by 71%

Healthy nutrition, animal protection and respect for the environment go hand in hand. The need to reduce the consumption of meat to safeguard the planet has been stressed several times, reducing intensive farming and drastically lowering the CO2 emissions that derive from it.

According to an analysis carried out by Greenpeace, meat consumption in the European Union must decrease by 71% by 2030 and 81% by 2050 to sufficiently reduce the contribution of agriculture to the climate crisis. Translated into numbers: an average per capita of no more than 460 grams of meat per week by 2030 and 300 grams in 2050, compared to the current European average of 1.58 kilograms.

The positive figure comes from an Ipsos survey which highlights how knowledge of the concept of sustainability has increased over the years, which is important for 9 out of 10 consumers today. 45% of Italians say they are available to introduce meat replacement products. Among the youngest, under 24, the percentage grows to 60%. So almost one in two Italians would be willing to grill with eco-sausages or eat a vegetable burger in the sandwich without having to sacrifice animals.

However, the survey carried out by Ipsos for Findus also finds that, at the moment, this type of product has superficial knowledge, so much so that the largest percentage of the sample interviewed (40%) said they knew them "by name only", against 28% who already know them or have tried them. However, 29% of the sample said they wanted to introduce them to their diet in the near future. There is therefore curiosity and openness towards this sustainable alternative.

Piera Vincenti

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Sun acne: how to prevent summer pimples with natural remedies

Ste Vi

Is the sun really good for your skin? Not always: in many cases, acne worsens in summer and pimples increase. Find out why and how to avoid it with our advice



Is it true that the sun dries out pimples improving the appearance of the skin? The issue has long been debated but unfortunately we have to dispel the old popular myth. In fact, some people are “allergic” to the sun and incorrect exposure does nothing more than induce what is commonly called summer acne. However, there are various ways in which photodermatitis can manifest itself. Often it occurs in a mild form and resolves by decreasing or moderating the times of exposure to the sun, taking care to wash with fresh water after swimming in the sea and before exposing yourself again.

The most common photodermatitis is solar erythema, even of a minor

entity, which affects almost all people in the first days of the sea, i.e. until the melanocytes synthesize more melanin which will darken our skin by defending it from the sun's rays.

Less known but quite common is the so-called “sun allergy” which occurs with summer acne, which usually has two triggering causes: a predisposition induced by the consumption of foods, medicines and cosmetics not suitable for sun exposure and a predisposition genetics.

The first case is often associated with the use of medicines – such as antibiotics, sulphonamides and pain relievers – or perfumes, disinfectants and cosmetics that may contain photosensitizing substances such as citrus derivatives, calendula, verbena, rue, fig, hypericum and centella. More rarely the allergy to the sun is triggered by particular foods, which however can accentuate the sensitization of an individual. These foods are all citrus fruits, especially lime and shellfish.

The second case of sun allergy is due to a genetic predisposition. It generally affects women between the ages of 20 and 40, especially if they use the birth control pill, even if today the estrogen load is much less important than 20 years ago. Allergy to the sun is often manifested by the same initial symptoms as other allergies: itching, thickening of the skin and the appearance of small rashes. These small rashes are the so-called “summer acne” that occurs due to the response of our immune system to sun exposure.

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Obviously, as in all allergies, there are much more important cases and reactions that must be treated with steroid drugs, local or by oral intake, antihistamines or, even in the most serious cases, immunosuppressants.

The phenomenon of summer acne can be prevented and alleviated with very simple precautions. If we are subject to this type of annoyance, often more aesthetic than physical, we begin to prepare in advance by following these simple tips:



1. expose yourself to the sun even outside the summer months, in order to get used to the skin; limit exposure to the sun, avoid sunbathing especially during the most intense hours of radiation (between 10 and 16);

2. use sunscreen with a high protection factor (at least 30), above all to block the action of ultraviolet rays A and B. The products must be applied generously on the skin every two hours or more often if you get wet or sweat;

3. use protective clothing, such as wide-brimmed hats and specific fabrics to cover the arms and legs, avoiding thin fabrics that allow ultraviolet rays to pass;

4. use creams after sun with a very mild fat fraction and that do not contain alcohol or alcohol derivatives. If possible, use aloe vera juice fresh from the fridge as after sun.

If our face is affected by summer acne, instead of using anti-acne creams that still contain a fat base,

we can make compresses of water and bicarbonate, suitably cooled. We will get a double benefit: the fresh pack will surely be soothing after sun exposure and the astringent properties of the bicarbonate will greatly reduce the unsightly effect of summer acne. We try to sweat as little as possible by staying in fresh and ventilated environments and we take foods that contain Beta-Carotene.

Finally we remember that our body needs time to get used to the rhythms and stresses of a beach holiday: often while we are lying in the sun resting the mind, we ask our skin for a remarkable job because, after being covered for a long time from clothing, we expose it a whole day in the sun. We also give our skin time to prepare and defend itself from the aggression of the sun.



Choosing a sunscreen that won't harm you or the environment

What we spread when we sunbathe must respect not only the balance of our skin but also the ecosystem

Piera Vincenti



Exposing yourself to the sun correctly is essential to avoid the risk of melanoma, but not all sunscreens are safe for our skin and, above all, for the environment. The chemicals contained in solar products, in fact, contribute to the bad health of corals all over the world.

The situation, in numbers, is alarming: every year 14,000 tons of sunscreen end up in the oceans; 82,000 substances contained in personal care products that arrive in the water, preventing or slowing down the growth of the coral.

Many sunscreens are composed of chemical substances such as benzophenone, oxybenzone, homosalate, octocrylene, ingredients of synthetic origin derived from oil, which are harmful not only for your health but also

for the environment. The first thing to do when buying a solar is to read the INCI, carefully avoiding buying those that contain the components mentioned above.

The most common creams protect the skin thanks to chemical filters, that is a sort of artificial melanin that blocks UVB rays, preventing them from being absorbed by the skin and intervening on our hormonal balance. These ingredients can cause irritation, especially in the most sensitive skin, even leading to allergy and eczema.

The damage caused to the environment is no less serious. When we bathe with sun cream, chemical compounds such as oxybenzone, benzophenone, cinnamate or PABA, end up in water and are absorbed by corals, compromising their ability to reproduce and their growth cycle and causing their whitening. Absolutely avoid the spray cream, which ends up on the sand and is captured by the ocean.

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What is the solution then? Stop using sunscreen? Of course not. In fact, there are solar products that are not harmful to the oceans and which at the same time ensure the right protection against UV rays. The recommendation is to choose natural products that contain physical and biodegradable filters, able to protect the skin and the marine ecosystem. The ideal is to use sun cream friendly to coral reefs, without oxybenzone, mineral based that are formulated with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, particles that are not ingested by corals.

Alongside ecofriendly sunscreens, it is also good to adopt other measures to protect yourself from the sun and, at the same time, safeguard the environment. Among the rules that are always valid there are wearing hats, t-shirts and other items with UV protection, avoid exposing yourself in the hours when the sun is stronger, choose areas of shade to play and bring an umbrella with you.

Hawaiian legislators were the first to protect marine ecosystems and the coral reef. On May 1, 2018, they approved a bill that banned the sale of sunscreen containing oxybenzone and octyl methoxycinnamate, another harmful chemical compound. Hawaii is the first state to have approved a similar measure, which could become law by January 1, 2021.

Even the small island nation of Palau, a pristine archipelago that is home to one of the largest marine reserves on the planet, has announced that it would have banned the sale and use of sunscreens containing dangerous chemical compounds for corals.

The destruction of coral reefs would not only mean a great deal of damage to the marine ecosystem and to the planet, but would also entail serious repercussions on the economy of many countries, where diving holidays and snorkeling attract thousands of tourists every year.



Europe's seas face uncertain future, European Environment Agency says

Piera Vincenti

Faced with the increased threats posed by overexploitation of marine resources, pollution and climate change, urgent action is needed to bring Europe's seas back to good condition



"We still have a chance to restore our marine ecosystems if we act decisively and coherently and strike a sustainable balance between the way we use of seas and our impact on the marine environment", Hans Bruyninckx, European Environment Agency Executive Director, says.

The current condition of Europe's seas is generally poor according to the EEA report 'Marine Messages II'. This is bad news for people as it affects our quality of life, livelihoods and economies. The condition of our seas determines their capacity to supply, amongst others, oxygen, food, a habitable climate, and certain raw materials, and it also supports our recreation, leisure and health.

Historic and current use of our seas — from the Baltic to the Mediterranean — is taking its toll, resulting in changes in the composition of marine species and habitats to changes in the seas' overall physical and chemical make-up. Added to these complex problems is climate change, which is worsening the impacts of the other threats. The combined effects of these changes are currently on a path which could cause irreversible damage to marine ecosystems, the EEA report says. There are, however, signs of marine ecosystem recovery in some areas as a result of significant, often decade-long, efforts to reduce certain impacts like those caused by contaminants, eutrophication and overfishing, the report says.

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“Our seas and marine ecosystems are suffering as a result of years of severe over-exploitation and neglect. We may soon reach a point of no return, but, as our report confirms, we still have a chance to restore our marine ecosystems if we act decisively and coherently and strike a sustainable balance between the way we use of seas and our impact on the marine environment. In this context, the new EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 and other elements of the European Green Deal bring renewed hope that urgent and coherent action for protection and restoration will be underway,” said Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director.



EU Member States are unlikely to achieve in all their waters by 2020 the ‘good environmental status’ goal of the EU’s Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the main EU law for marine environmental protection. Still, significant progress and achievements have been made since the Directive is in place. These conclusions are echoed by the European Commission’s own report, reviewing the current state of implementation of this Directive. The EEA’s report feeds into the Commission’s review and suggests solutions that can help the EU achieve the legislation’s goal of clean, healthy and productive seas, mainly through ecosystem-based management.

All the data reported by EU Member States to the Commission is made public for the first time at a dedicated website on WISE-Marine, as well as data products and visualisation tools that provide an overview of the status of the marine environment in the EU.



Food waste: fruit and vegetables thrown away because imperfect

Piera Vincenti

Imperfect but good,
NaturaSì and Legambiente
launch products against food waste



Every day our production system rejects an enormous quantity of food just because it is not homogeneous in shape and size. In other words, less 'beautiful' food but good anyway, which does not meet an ideal of 'perfection' or 'standard', which is wasted or not used for food. In Italy, 36 kilos of food per person are calculated every year along the entire production, distribution and consumption chain, which cost us around 1% of the national GDP, with an estimate ranging between 12 and 16 billion EUR.

In Italy and the rest of Europe, 21% of the waste of fruit and vegetables, according to FAO data, occurs directly in the fields. Foods that are discarded, left on the ground or used to make compost, often due to imperfections, of failure to comply with the standards that the food industry has imposed at first but which has then become an essential condition for acceptance by of consumers.

It is precisely to challenge this model that NaturaSì launches with Legambiente an initiative intended to strongly reduce the waste of food in the fields. The organic farm has decided to make available so customers, imperfect products, only a little larger or a little smaller or simply with an unusual shape. But good the same because they contain the same nutritional properties as any other biodynamic and organic product.

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"By recovering and marketing what is just smaller, or just bigger, or just different, we go from a 20% of product discarded on our fields to a maximum, almost physiological, of 4%", Fausto Jori Jori, CEO of NaturaSì, explains. "In our 500 stores there are now what we have called the *cospernatura*, products sold with a reduction that reaches up to 50% of the price of the same standard products. This is a contribution that we want to make to a real turnaround in agriculture, food and even culture".

"Food waste is one of the problems we have faced for years, through constant action by our local network committed to promoting concrete actions and raising public awareness of sustainable lifestyles also in food consumption – Stefano Ciafani, National President of Legambiente, declares – In this new phase, we are called to rethink our consumption patterns and guide our choices, also and above all among the shelves, abandoning the consumerist logic based on the standardization of agricultural products and favoring foods that guarantee an ecological and ethical use of energies and resources used for their production. It is undoubtedly one of the challenges on which it is also necessary to confront at national level, in the context of the European Green Deal, to further promote our country's agroecology. Greater concreteness is needed to prevent food waste, among the factors that contribute to the increase in climate-changing gas emissions".



And that it is possible to change course is shown by the data. During the trial phase of the *sopernatura* project, in a single month, from the end of April to the end of May, the products made available in stores by NaturaSì reached 795 tons. The goal is to recover 2,500-3,000 tons of "imperfect" fruit and vegetables more per year. This means, according to the numbers, that the ambitious path of "zero waste" of the crop has already been undertaken. With an advantage for everyone. The need to be beautiful by force, in fact, as well as damage to agriculture and the environment, entails a significant economic loss. The homogeneity of the shape and size of agricultural products, in fact, raises the price to the consumer for waste and reduces the farmer's income.

"With *cospernatura* we contribute to making biodynamic and organic products more accessible also in terms of price, remaining ever closer to those who buy and those who produce. The *sopernatura*, in addition to reducing waste, give space to non-hybrid and indigenous seeds, selected for their vitality and productivity, cultivated according to the principles of biodynamic and organic agriculture. Seeds that farmers can freely sow. This step forward can give a boost to a regulatory review that rewards anti-waste activities or at least that does not punish them" Jori concludes.



Sustainable packaging, the device that allows fruit and vegetables to breathe

The innovative technology that allows fruit and vegetables to breathe has been developed by the University of Basilicata, in Italy

Piera Vincenti



Packaged fruit and vegetables can finally breathe thanks to a new technology developed by researchers at the University of Basilicata. The device, called Blow Device, is applied on traditional or biodegradable plastic fresh food packaging and promotes gas exchange with the external atmosphere, prolonging the conservation of the packaged product, up to doubling it in some cases.

The innovative technology was developed within the “MyPack” project which, funded by the European Commission within the Horizon 2020 program, brings together 21 research bodies and private companies in a European partnership, including the University of Basilicata with the group of “Machines and plants for the food industries” of the School of Agricultural, Forestry, Food and Environmental Sciences (Safe). Project managers for Unibas are Professor Giovanni Carlo Di Renzo and Ninetek Innovations for Agro-industry, a university spin-off that operates in a Safe laboratory under the coordination of researcher Francesco Genovese.

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The Blow device has dimensions comparable to those of a 5 cents coin and is applied on the package containing the fruit and vegetable product, whether it is a plastic bag or a polystyrene tray covered with film. Thanks to its particular microstructure, this device manages the gaseous exchange between the inside and outside of the packaging in conditions of cold storage, avoiding the total consumption of oxygen available for the fruit and vegetable product.

In this way, the modified atmosphere initially present in the package is kept constant enough to reduce the degradation phenomena and fermentations caused by excessive exposure to conditions of oxygen deficiency and accumulation of carbon dioxide. In some cases, the life of the product can be extended by 100%.

The research and development activities carried out in Unibas's "MacLab1" laboratory have enabled the characterization of the innovative device's behavior in different applications on fruit and vegetables, including ready-to-eat salads, rocket, strawberries, cherries, table grapes. Blow, in fact, is designed to be developed in the material that best matches with that of the packaging, precisely to preserve the life of the product longer regardless of the type of packaging used to pack it. So far, the device has so far been made of fossil-based plastic materials and bioplastics (MaterBi and PLA).



With the contribution of the spin-off, the design, assembly and development of a machine prototype for the application of "BlowDevice" on the packaging films usually used in the food industries were also developed.

The next phases of the project foresee the technological transfer of innovation to the producers of ready-made salads and other fruit and vegetable products, which have already been interested in the use of the patent and the know-how relating to the packaging of the fruit and vegetables in a modified atmosphere.

The University of Basilicata and the research group coordinated by Prof. Giovanni Carlo Di Renzo are very active in the study of technological and plant innovations for the post-harvest of fruit and vegetables. In recent years, attention has been paid to the development of systems for the management of products at controlled temperatures and atmospheres and a technology capable of allowing packaging in a modified atmosphere, without bringing the product into anoxic conditions.

These breathable packages could represent a turning point in the field of the fight against food waste. Increasing the shelf life of some products up to more than 100% would mean not only less fruit and vegetables that end up in the trash but also a lot of plastic hand to be recycled, with many advantages for the environment and the wallet.



Separate collection: how to recycle organic waste

What can you throw in the wet and what not? And what kind of bag can you use?
The answer to these and other questions in the article in collaboration with SmartRicicla



MaMaking a correct separate collection is the first step to take to protect the environment. Separating and recycling materials is essential to avoid waste. Even the organic fraction, which contains mostly food waste, is a precious ally of the planet because it allows the production of compost which is then reused in agriculture.

However, we do not always have clear ideas on what should be thrown into the wet container and, above all, on what are the most suitable tools for this particular type of waste. First of all, the general rule is that all food preparation waste, both of vegetable and animal origin, and leftovers must

be thrown into the staff. In addition, it is possible to throw the wilted or dead flowers that can be part of the composting process, return to the earth and contribute to new blooms, and cork which is a natural and biodegradable material. It is not possible to transfer glass, metal, plastic and cans: all these materials must be correctly differentiated in the other bins, not in that of the collection of the wet.

To make a correct collection of staff, it is important to start by choosing the container. The wet, in fact, needs to aerate so it is preferable to opt for a perforated basket, associated with the compostable bag. These two tools avoid the excessive deterioration of waste and the consequent bad smell. Used together they allow the evaporation of condensate and consequently the reduction of the volume of wet waste, with a weight loss of up to 15%, and of odors. Thanks to aeration, the waste does not ferment, the formation of liquids is avoided and the resistance of the compostable bags increases as they always remain dry inside the bucket.

Before throwing the organic waste in the bag, it is advisable to drain it and not to press it: it is better to reduce the larger ones into small pieces. However, it is good to avoid waste to reduce the amount of waste, properly store perishable foods and reuse leftovers.

From the separate collection of the wet, once started in the composting plants, compost is obtained, a natural fertilizer that can be used to return organic matter to the earth. The last frontier in the sector of the

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valorization of organic waste is represented by biomethane, biofuel that can be used to replace fossil fuels and which contributes to responding even more efficiently to the principles of the circular economy.

Compost can also be used in the garden, for a base fertilization that promotes good nourishment for plants. It can also be used as a fertilizer for planting trees and shrubs as well as for mulching: it allows the control of the growth of weeds, it favors the maintenance of a correct soil humidity and the reintegration of organic substance.

When you go on vacation to another city, it is good to inquire about the methods of collection or the days of transit of the vehicles. It is possible to find the recycling calendar and the refusal on SmartRicicla, the app for separate collection in Italy, where you can also consult where the waste must be thrown in order to recycle it correctly.

What you can throw:

- Kitchen waste (cooked or raw)
- Kitchen leftovers (cooked or raw)
- Fruit and vegetable waste
- Green waste (flowers, grass, twigs, leaves)
- Small bones
- spoiled and expired food
- Wooden sticks for ice cream
- Extinguished ashes of the fireplace
- Coffee grounds and coffee pods
- Tea filters
- Napkins and paper handkerchiefs, provided they are not printed
- Pet droppings
- Natural bedding for pets

What you can't throw:

- Hair
- Animal hair
- Dust or filters of the vacuum cleaner
- Weeds or sick plants
- No type of liquid (including oil, which must be collected separately and brought to the ecological islands)
- Metals
- Wood treated with chemicals
- Diapers and sanitary towels



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