

THE LAND OF PARKS AND ENCHANTMENT

SIBILLINI MOUNTAINS



Sibillini Mountains
The Land of Parks and Enchantment
Local Tourist System
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**A TERRITORY
RICH IN CULTURE
AND LEGENDS**



Cristoforo Munari, *Still life with lemons, almond and musical score in tempo di minuetto*, Montefortino, Montefortino, Municipal Picture Gallery



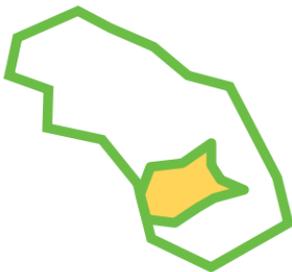


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Territory and Municipal Districts

Acquacarina
Amandola
Belforte del Chienti
Bolognola
Caldarola
Camporotondo di Fiastrone
Castelsantangelo sul Nera
Cessapalombo
Colmurano
Fiastrea
Fiordimonte
Force
Gualdo
Monte San Martino
Montecavallo
Montedinove
Montefalcone Appennino
Montefortino
Montelparo
Montemonaco
Muccia
Penna San Giovanni
Petriolo
Pievebovigliana
Pieve Torina
Ripe San Ginesio
San Ginesio
Sant'Angelo in Pontano
Sarnano
Serrapetrona
Serravalle di Chienti
Smerillo
Tolentino
Urbisaglia
Ussita
Visso



The Land of Parks and Enchantment

The Local Tourist System "The Sibillini Mountains, The Land of Parks and Enchantment", unites 36 Municipalities from the Ascoli Piceno and Macerata Provinces of three Mountainous Communities (Blue Mountains - Monti Azzurri, Sibillini Mountains - Monti Sibillini and Camerino), the Natural Reserves Abbazia di Fiastrea and the Torricchio Mountain, and a vast area of the The Sibillini Mountains National Park. This system is set in the heart of the Marches, in the smooth hills that embrace in their splendid nature, the history of many people that have passed

through or lived in this territory leaving signs of their culture.

The many municipalities situated in the hills and mountains are rich with well visible and preserved archaeology, art and civil and religious architecture.

The presence of The Sibillini Mountains National Park is further proof and guarantee of the high standard of environmental quality of the territory, where an integrated and rich wild life of floral and faunal species can live among the unpolluted lakes, rivers and peaks.

Many open-air sports are practised not only in the summer and winter, but also in the spring when the countryside is richened by the wild flowers in full bloom and in autumn, when the colours



San Ginesio
Ancient pilgrims' hospital

Places to see

San Ginesio
"S. Gentili"
Museum and
Picture Gallery

Info
0733 656072

Sibillini Mountains
Panorama



Tolentino
Cloister of the
S. Nicholas Basilica

History, art, landscape.

Art is the witness of the history of these places. The numerous churches in even the smallest centres are caskets that preserve works of art of important authors that have left clear signs of their passing. There is numerous evidence of the school of Giotto, such as the frescoes in the Chapel of the Basilica of Saint Nicholas in Tolentino, which are excellent examples both for their narrative intensity and figurative quality. Of no less interest is the conservative cycle in the church of San Francis in San Ginesio and in Serrapetrona. Carlo and Vittore Crivelli, two illustrious 5th century venetian artists, both worked here as well as in the Fermo and Ascoli regions. The sumptuous altar of the San Martino church in Monte San Martino has been attributed to both of these authors. The magnificent "Virgin Mary adoring her baby with angel musicians" preserved in Sarnano is the work of Vittore Crivelli.



Monte San Martino
Saint Martin's
church
Polptych
by the Crivelli brothers
0733 660107

Other examples of artists of this period can be seen in the Sant'Eustachio church in Belforte del Chienti, such as the polyptych by Giovanni Boccattori, to name just a few sculptural works, the "Madonna dell'Impollata" preserved in Cessapalombo, not forgetting the numerous highly expressive architectural works such as the main doorway of the Basilica of Saint Nicholas in Tolentino, or the antique boundary wall of Montemonaco or the rustic workmanship of the Piazza Alta in Amandola. Works of art and important authors that testify how this territory was a place of profound and fertile cultural and artistic activity, where art and faith in God have deeply affected the landscape. In fact there are numerous abbeys and convents spread over the hills and valleys, like the Colfano close Camporotondo where, according to tradition,



Places to see

Tolentino
San Nicholas
Basilica
0733 976311

La Rancia
Castle
0733 973349

International
Caricature
Museum
0733 969797

Abbey in
Chiaravalle di
Fiastra
0733 202942

Cessapalombo
S. Salvatore
Abbey Crypt
Info
0733 907132



Camporotondo
Colfano Convent



Tolentino
Cloister
of Fiastra Abbey



Places to see

Urbisaglia
Archaeologic
Park

State
Archaeologic
Museum

Medieval
Fortress

Info
0733 506566

Saint Francis founded a hermitage during one of his journeys in the Marca; the Saint Liberato convent , near San Ginesio, the agostinian one in Tolentino, the Soffiano monastery in Sarnano and also the Macchie Abbey in Ripe San Ginesio with its awesome, gloomy crypt, created around the year 1000. Also worth a particular mention for the impressive and important architecture, are the Chiaravalle di Fiastra Abbey in Tolentino and the Macereto Sanctuary in Visso, founded by the circensian monks in the XII century, situated in the magnificent Natural Reserve of Fiastra Abbey. Not far away there is the *Urbs Salvia* Archaeologic Park, the most important and spectacular in the Marche, that preserves the typical monuments of the Roman city: the theatre, constructed in bricks during the years before 23 AD, the fascinating sacred area, made up of a smaller temple and a large Temple with cryptoporticus painted with frescos, the impressive boundary wall and amphitheatre, that hosts the magnificent Antique Theatre Season during the months of

July and August. A reminder of bygone times, of the human and historic events of these places through the centuries, are brought to life again in certain periods of the year by means of the organization of historic manifestations with tournaments, jousting and parades in clothes of the period. This happens in August, when flag wavers and processions of wonderful costumes bring the San Ginesio Palio to life, in a ring race, in which the skilful horse riders are engaged in a competition that requires strength, passion and training. Another time is when an event is remembered like the Return of the Exiles, those 300 habitants of San Ginesio that where expelled in the XV century, because they were suspected of wanting to yield the town to the Varanoes of Camerino.



San Ginesio
Agostano Palio



Sarnano
Saint Mary's Church

Places to visit

Sarnano
Picture Gallery
and Collection
of Birdlife,
Arms and
Hammers

Info
0733 659923



Places to see

Caldarola

Pallotta Castle
0733 905242
Picture Gallery
of the
Resistance
Movement

Pieve Favera
Antiquarium
Info
0733 905808

The Serafino palio in Sarnano takes its name from the six winged angel in the municipal coat of arms: the tug of war, the jug race, the pole climb and the tree felling contest, are the games that remember the tiring work of past times. Also in Caldarola colours and sounds play a big part in "la Giostra de le Castella" - the Tournament of The Castles - while in the nearby town of Tolentino, every year on the first Sunday of May, the events of what is considered to be the first battle of the Risorgimento are repeated: The Battle of The Rancia. Mock soldiers simulate the phases of the 1815 battle in the natural scenery of the Castle. The nature and beauty of the landscape are also an important enchantment of this territory. First and foremost is the Sibillini National Park which covers around 170.000 acres of territory, really appealing to tourists and day trippers that want close contact with nature.

Spread over numerous hills, meadows and peaks with the presence of lakes and quiet streams, that enable several sports and relaxing excursions to be carried out. The wide spaces also evoke antique legends like the Sibilla Cavern, from which the entire mountain range gets its name, or the Friar's Cave with its antique little church and The Gorges of Fiastrone with their Karst conformation, that create striking and spectacular natural environments to cover on foot. Apart from trekking it is possible to visit these places on a mountain bike, thanks to the numerous cartways and horse tracks that have been made into routes where it is possible to stop for refreshments and meals in the several agritourisms, enabling local food and wines to be tasted: truffles, mushrooms, cheese, cold meats and salami (particularly "ciauscolo") or enjoy the traditional first courses: tagliatelle, vincisgrassi, cappelletti...



Tolentino
Historic
Commemoration
"The Battle of
The Rancia"



Fiastrone
The Gorges
of Fiastrone

Sibillini Mountains Trekking





Sarnano
Flying School



Sarnano
S. Giacomo
Thermal Spa

Horse Riding enthusiasts will find several riding schools available, and above all the extent of the hills and mountains where it is possible to ride freely. For water sport lovers rowing can be carried out in Lake Caccamo, a place where important national and international competitions are held. For those who want to try free flight, the "Sibillini Flying School" in Sarnano holds qualified courses for delta-plane and paragliding. Apart from the beauty of the landscape and the infinite objects of art, this territory can also boast the presence of two important localities with thermal spas that are open all year round: Sarnano and Tolentino, renowned for the quality of the water, the equipment and the highly qualified personnel.

Between nature and culture

The territory is characterized by the charm of the landscape, with its unlimited extension of hills that, in harmonic sequence, connect the precipices of the apennine chain of mountains. A warm hearted region that shows evident proof of an antique civilization and religious activity of its inhabitants, in which fortified towns and cities have grown and, even today, show their impressive boundary walls. In our times, in which defense counts less, they have become splendid panoramic balwarks, "balcony towns" and "towns of viewpoint", stretched above the lower valleys, in a natural scenery of incomparable beauty. They are made to measure centres that show signs of thousands of years of history and were present in antique civilization. Agricultural and summer holiday places scattered with country houses, that with their cultivated fields, embroidered with vineyards and olive trees preserving a tradition that exists in time.



Tolentino
S. Lucia Thermal Spa



Sibillini
Corn Field



Montecavallo
Panorama

Places to visit

Amandola
Saints Ruffino
and Vitale
Abbey
0736 840706

Montefortino
F. Duranti
Civil Picture
Gallery
0737 859101

This panorama of culture and nature winds in an ideal itinerary, through places like San Ginesio, one of the most beautiful medieval villages in Italy, Petriolo, Urbisaglia, Colmurano, Gualdo, Penna San Giovanni, Sant'Angelo in Pontano, Ripe San Ginesio, which with their churches and parishes marked the antique routes of the pilgrims, antique routes of communication but also meetings of different mentalities and culture that led to the birth of relationships and economic, cultural and artistic exchanges.

Relationships that have left an indelible stamp in the spirit of the inhabitants of this Marches region.

The itinerary proceeds to Sarnano, thermal spa summer holiday and winter sport centre, with its splendid medieval urban structure. A short distance away is Montefortino, with the "Fortunato Duranti" Picture Gallery and Amandola, with its monuments and its precious works of art, like S. Agostine's

Church with its beautiful cloister and the frescoes of the umbrian-marches school. Acting as a wing to the range of the Sibillini Mountains is the highest town in the Marches: Bolognola, 3510 feet above sea level, in beautiful natural surroundings. Together with Acquaciana it is one of the starting points for many excursions. The municipality of Fiastra with the water of the lake of the same name, perfectly integrated in this natural environment, is an oasis distinguished by its high quality of life, a calm and quiet place, a reality to discover and fully experience.

The surrounding towns richen the history of this territory: Pieveboggiana, Muccia, Montecavallo, Fiordimonte, Serravalle del Chienti, Pievefortina with its roman parish of Saint Maria Assunta and the "Museum of Our Land", a rich collection of agricultural and pastoral machinery, rustic artisan works and object of bygone days.



Amandola
Panorama



Montefortino
Panorama



Petriolo
Historic Centre



Sibillini Mountains



Visso
Historic Centre

Places to see

Monteparo
Museum of
sacred articles
0734 780141

**Belforte
del Chienti**
S.Eustachio
Church
0733 951010

Serrapetrona
Old Mill
National
Museum of
Contemporary
Sacred Art
0733 908321

Ripe S. Ginesio
Contemporary
Picture Gallery
0733 500102

Pievotorina
Museum of
our Land
0737 518032

On the bottom of the valley of the high part of the Nera river, Visso preserves its urban medieval structure almost intact, with narrow roads, well preserved buildings and churches, angles and highly suggestive glimpses. Along the road to Rome it is possible to admire the spectacle of the plunging Valnerina gorge. But it is by following the River Nera that a natural amphitheatre of exceptional scenic value is reached, at the foot of Mount Bove, where the town of Ussita is to be found in the centre and not too far away, Castelsantangelo on the Nera, a pretty medieval town.

On the ascoli side there is Force, the town of the "battirame", where the calderari communicated between themselves with a slang that had its origins from a mixture of dialects of various regions and was incomprehensible to strangers. In the close vicinity, Monteparo, where the most typical traditional cooking of the rural life, such as polenta on the pastry board is made. Montedinove, located in a magnificent natural landscape, Montefalcone Appennino, perched on the crest of a precipice of the Aso valley, Smerillo, a beautiful casket of



Places to see

**Montefalcone
Appennino**
P. Alemanno
Museum
Info
0734 79111



Castelsantangelo
Historic Centre

historic and natural attractions like the "Fesa", a deep rift in the rock where outstanding fossil remains can be found.



Montefalcone
Panorama

Smerillo
Ruins

The Sibillini National Park

The legends

Useful Info

Park Houses

Amandola
T 0736 848598

Fiastra
T 0737 52598

San Ginesio
T 0733 694419

Visso
T 0737 968026

The summits of these mountains have always been surrounded in mystery. Proof of this can be found in the names of several places that recall mythical, fairy-tale like, infernal and mystic characters or places: Passo Cattivo (Bad Passage), Pizzo del Diavolo (Devil's Point), Scoglio del Miracolo (Miracle Rock), Cima del Redentore (Laughing Summit), Grotta delle Fate (Fairies' Cave), Gola dell'Infernaccio (Hell's Gorge), Pizzo Regina (Queen's Point), Lago di Pilato, Monte Sibilla (Mount Sybil), strada delle Fate (Fairies' Road), Fonte del Guerin Meschino, Poggio Paradiso (Paradise Hillock), Ara della Regina (Queen's Altar), Valle Santa (Holy Valley). A vast medieval literature, based on popular traditions, indicates Mount Sibilla as the premises of the sumptuous residence of Sibilla Alcina.



Sibillini Mountains
Lake Pilato

The imaginative tales have fascinated a lot of Italian and foreign writers, among these Andrea da Barberino, who wrote the "Guerin Meschino", and the frenchman Antoine De La Sale writer of "Paradis de la Reine Sibille". Furthermore Mount Sibilla is indicated as the "Venusberg", the mountain associated with the myth of Tannhauser. The Lake of Pilato, a picturesque lake basin of ice age origin, 6365 feet high in the middle of a deep morainic valley under the summit of Mount Vettore (8125 feet), is the theatre of another legend, told by Antoine De La Sale, according to whom, after pronouncement of the death sentence by emperor Tito Vespasiano, the body of Pontius Pilat was put on a wagon pulled by buffalos that, once at the layers of Mount Vettore, they climbed up the steep butresses and then dived into the icy water of the lake, pulling the body down to the bottom. This could be the reason the banks of this lake were often visited by witches, necromancers, and misterious persons associated with occult arts, among these the well known Cecco d'Ascoli.



Macereto
Sanctuary



Monti Azzurri
(Blue Mountains)
Panorama

The environment

The entire mountain range, made up mostly of calcareous Lias, Giura and Cretaceo rock types, distinguishes itself by the presence of narrow and deep valleys that, in some stretches, are transformed into narrow holes in which the silence is broken only by the deafening flow of the torrents.

Among the gorges most representative are those of the Ambro, the Infernaccio and the Fiastrone, together with a series of peaks one after the other, the major part of which exceed 6500 feet in height. The uneven physiognomy of some of the massifs, with high rocky faces with vertical tendency, rocks, spires, calcareous pinnacles and precipices has designed suggestive cirques.

The fauna

The presence of mythicized animals, such as the eagle and the wolf, make the fauna of the Sibillini Mountains extraordinarily interesting. Deers and bears also lived in the woods and forests that covered these mountains in the past and in the high level meadows of the summits, alpine chamois could be found. Today, in the high meadows, alpine Greek partridges, found in only a few other places, have survived.



Sibillini Mountains National Park
Wolves

At high levels, sea crows and corallini, elegant black feathered birds live, making their nests in cavities of the rocky faces of the mountains. Among the birds of prey to be found other than the golden eagle, are the pellegrine falcon and the rare eagle owl. More frequent are the kestrels, the buzzards, the barn owls, the owls, owlets. Along the rivers and the torrents where the trouts and crayfish live, the water-carrying blackbird can be seen to fly. It's not rare to see squirrels, dormice, oak mice, and locate their round nests. Beech-martens, badgers, porcupines and wild cats, that had almost disappeared at the beginning of the second half of the last century, have recovered over the last fifteen years and are now common. Apart from lizards, green lizards and snakes, there is also the common viper and the rare Orsini viper, that lives in very few places of the central appennines, at about 6500 feet: it is the smallest european viper and the most harmless. The most important particularity is a crostaceo, not present in any other place, that lives in Lake Pilato: the chirocefalo del Marchesoni, five feet long, diaphanous and of orange colour.



Comunanza Lake Gerosa



Sibillini
Cesena Thrush



Sibillini
Butterfly

*Sibillini
Flowers
in Bloom*



The plant life

The mountainous relief that wrinkles this suggestive angle of Italy offers a wonderful alpine scenery and a vegetable landscape that comprises almost all the endemic vegetation of the apennines.

Beech is one of the most widely spread arboreous species: it grows between 3200 and 5900 feet above sea level frequently creating forests with wonderful centuries old examples. Particularly striking beech forests are those of the Valle dell'Ambro, of the Valle del Tenna (San Leonardo) and of the Val d'Aso (le Svolte and the woods of the Frondosa). Lower down, thick copses of black hornbeam, manna-ash and Pubescent Oak develop,

while in several protected and sunny areas holm oaks can be found. On the highest and most inaccessible peaks some floristic species of notable naturalistic and scientific interest grow, like the nigritella dell'Appennino - a pink orchid, the edraianto and the edelweiss.

Furthermore splendid examples of floristic varieties are present in the Natural Reserve of the Torricchio Mountain and in the Natural Reserve of Abbazia di Fiastra, that preserves several hundreds of acres of uncontaminated woods.



*Sibillini
Flowers*

The rivers and valleys

The streams of water that furrow through the territory originate in the mountains. The River Tenna originates from the eastern side of Mount Bove and runs through the Pizzo della Regina and Mount Sibilla. Lower down it becomes turbulent, the valley becomes narrower and assumes the aspect of a narrow crack, a narrow gorge dug out by the river over thousands of years.



*Sibillini
Edelweiss*

*Mount Vettore
Panorama*



The wild gorge of the Infernaccio, is an environment of awful beauty enclosed between plunging rock faces. After overcoming the Infernaccio the valley widens and the River Tenna receives, from the left, the water of the Ambro torrent, that comes from the other side of the Pizzo Regina (Queen's Point), the second highest peak in the Sibillini range (7650 feet). Further ahead the Tenna touches on the hillocks on which Montefortino and Amandola stand, passes the Abbazia dei SS. Ruffino and Vitale, under the cliff of Smerillo and continues its course towards the foce. The Aso gushes from a pool near Foce di Montemonaco at 3100 feet, at the foot of Mount Vettore, in a valley modelled by Karst phenomena, then proceeds furrowing a valley covered in orchards. Close to the Ascension Mountain a torrent is formed, not too extensive but of extreme importance to the landscape for the lined harshness of the ravines.



*Tenna valley
Infernaccio
gorge*



*Monti azzuri
(Blue Mountains)
Mountain
Scenery*

The Fluvione torrent springs from the steep eastern face of the massif of the Vettore, then flows through Montegalfo, carves a deep valley covered in woods and, before Roccafluvione, bends to the south towards the River Tronto, into which it merges. The valleys of Nera, of the Fias-trone, of the Chienti and of the Fiastra, fervent with agricultural activity and rich with production sites, have for centuries represented privileged routes of communication with the main consular arteries.



*High plains
of Castelluccio
Panorama*



Amandola

International Theatre Festival "Terra delle Sibille"

august
info 0736 840704

"Diamanti a Tavola"

Exhibition / Market of the tartufo

october/november
info 0736 848706

Bolognola

A Musical Day in the Name of Filippo Marchetti

august
info 0737 520265

Caldarola

Giostra de Le Castella (Tournament of the Castles)

august
info 0733 905529

International Canoa-Kayak

Regatta

basin of Lake Caccamo
september
info 0733 905529

Mountain Community of San Ginesio

Literary Festival

"Tra...monti e pagine"

july/august
info 0733 656890

Loro Piceno

Sagra del Vino Cotto

august
info 0733 509112

Montelparo

Folklore in the World and its Gastronomy

august
info 0734 780099

San Ginesio

"Battle of the Fornarina"

july
Palio "Giostra dell'Anello"
august
info 0733 656072

Sarnano

Historic Procession

august
info 0733 657144

Palio del Serafino

august
info 0733 657144

Serrapetrona

Sagra della Vernaccia

august
info 0733 908321

Tolentino

Tolentino Humour

september
info 0733 969797

Urbisaglia

Antique Theatre Season

Roman Amphitheatre

july/august
info 0733 506566

Massimo Urbani National award

Abbadia di Fiastra
september
info 0733 506602

Visso

Torneo delle Guaite

july/august
info 0737 95421



Useful Info

IAT Centres

Abbadia di Fiastra

T 0733 202942

F 0733 305042

Amandola

T 0736 848706

F 0736 848706

Sarnano

T 0733 657144

F 0733 657343

Tolentino

T 0733 972937

Muccia

Local Tourist

Office

T 0737 647184

