

THE authentic villages of the Taranta: the salento Greece

Have you ever heard of "the Grecia Salentina"? Yes, you read that right (but only if you've noticed the accent on i of Greece)

This area is really special that is located in the hinterland of the province of Lecce just in the heart of Salento. And it is not at all a case of: here on the pulse of the South still feels stronger, roots, and traditions are resistant to modernity, all approval, to the passing of time.

It's a great idea for those who is in the trip and want to explore authentic villages, little visited by mass tourism, and to rediscover the slow pace and the magic of the times, more and more far.

Without forgetting that here, every summer, it hosts the famous Night of the Taranta, the largest Festival of popular music of Italy in the last stage of Melpignano assembles in a single evening more than 200 thousand people.

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Where is the "Grecia Salentina" and why is it called so?

The Grecia Salentina is a geographical and cultural area very particular of the Salento: all of the effects, an island in the peninsula.

Contains 11 Municipalities of the Province of Lecce, included in the national network of authentic Villages of Italy, and covers about 150 square km.

This is Calimera, Carpignano Salentino, Castrignano de' Greci, Corigliano d'ottranto, Cutrofiano, Martano, Martignano, Melpignano, Soleto, Sternatia and Zollino: countries, in some cases, even the very young, who have preserved part of their Greek origin, while defending much of their original identity. Starting from the language: the people, especially the elderly, speak still a language very ancient, and the language, or the ancient Greek, a minority language recognized by the Italian Parliament which includes expressions of the modern Greek, vocabulary, neo-Latin and the languages of Lecce. So, if the influences ellenofone in the rest of the Salento region are gradually lost and, in these Municipalities are still alive and palpable.

"Kalinifita": the Salento music

You want to have a taste of griko and musicality?

Search for "Kalinifita", a sweet serenade of love in griko who, to popular acclaim, has become the one of the hymns the most famous of the Salento. In addition, engaging and compelling, has a truly magnificent: they are the words that a

lover, looking out the window, sing to your loved one.

Tien glicea tusi nifta ti en òria cievò plonno pensèonta `ss`esena / How sweet is this night, how beautiful, I do not sleep thinking of you.

Ideas and tips: what to see in the Grecia Salentina?
The Stone of Fertility of Calimera

In this strip of land of salento, so precious and so ancient, the historical and artistic testimonies in the villages there is no shortage of. One example is the "sacred perforated stone" or "stone of fertility" of the villages of Calimera, in the church of San Vito, which in its symbolism recalls some of the rites of the neighboring Greece.

This stone has a central hole with a diameter of 30 cm: according to some beliefs, magico - religious, those who cross it in the day of the Monday (Easter Monday) will be able to obtain important spiritual advantages, the purification from sin or a blessing propitiatory fertility. This tradition, which is repeated still today, every year, draws inspiration from the cult of the Great Mother, a goddess of fertility who represented the fertility of the earth itself. To accompany the rite, then, a great feast con dances and tasting of typical dishes, accompanied by the dance of the pizzica and folk songs in dialect and griko.

The flying castle of Corigliano d`otranto

If you are fond of art and history, don` t miss the majestic Castle of Corigliano d`otranto, defined "the most beautiful military monument of the sixteenth century in terra d`otranto". The castle de' Monti, this is his name, has faced and overcome the invasions of the turks in 1480, and continuing to this day with undiminished beauty. Today is linked to a project of revival of the villages, "The Flying Castle" and embraces the music, dance, visual arts, food, new trades and crafts. If you are in vacation in the Salento, do not forget to take a look at the events calendar: you will find certainly a lot of interesting evenings.

Between history and legends of the places not to miss

In a journey to discover the villages of the entrorerra, then, it is impossible not to mention Palazzo Granafei in Sternatia , the baroque of the Convent of the Augustinians Melpignano (where you hold the final concert of the Notte della Taranta), the gothic spire of Soleto, according to the legend was built in one night by four devils, the parish church of the the Assumption of Martano or the pozzelle of Castrignano of the Greeks, Zollino and Soleto. They are the true treasures of inestimable historical value.

The feast de lu mieru of Carpignano Salentino

Music and good wine, the winning recipe for a fun the insured. Each year, more than 40 years, the village of Carpignano hosts a huge folk festival, where the absolute protagonist is the good wine of salento, to celebrate the summer and to the new harvest with pizzica and tambourines. The event is scheduled for the first weekend of September. The evening ends with a fun battle call "launch de lu lacciu" throw (celery), vegetable that, according to tradition, is to be dipped in the wine to

be tasted at its best.

The Night of the Taranta, 2019 – the most anticipated event

Not only is there the influence of griko in what now is one of the popular events the most anticipated in Europe: many are the contamination here you have multiplied and interwoven, merging one with the other. The Night of the Taranta is the pivotal event for the Municipalities of the Grecia that in the month of August they host the traveling Festival. A phenomenon that attracts thousands of spectators from every part of Italy and of the world, conquered by the overwhelming rhythm of the pizzica, the music that cadenzava the ancient ritual of treating the imagery bite of the tarantula. The appointment with the expectation the final stage of Melpignano, at its 22nd edition, is the Saturday, August 24, 2019.

on a holiday In the villages of Salento

The sea is not far away, in the villages a real surprise: if you are planning your holiday in Salento, and seek authentic experiences of the area, the Grecia Salentina is certainly a destination to consider. In a few km you can go to the discovery of bellissimin historical centres, live the traditions of Salento, party to the beat of the pizzica.