

7 Days

Abruzzo Italy

day by day

Abruzzo, Italy, 7 Days

① DAYS 1-3: SANTO STEFANO DI SESSANIO AND THE SLOPES OF THE GRAN SASSO-MONTI DELLA LAGA NATIONAL PARK (LAQUILA)

Arrive in Pescara by plane (Abruzzo Airport PSR) or train (Pescara Centrale railway station), rent a car and drive to the *borgo* of Santo Stefano di Sessanio (1hr).

The village, listed among the *Borghi più belli d'Italia* (the “most beautiful villages in Italy”), is built entirely out of white limestone. All the houses have clay tile roofs, providing a harmonious overall view to those gazing down on it from the top of the Medici tower. Its streets must be explored on foot.

Visit Rocca Calascio (*Pic. 17, next page*), a fortress that dates back to the year 1000, and Campo Imperatore, a 19-kilometre-long plateau located at 1,800 metres above sea level. As many as 300 different forage plants have been recorded in the pastures of the Gran Sasso. This exceptional diversity and the dry climate at higher altitudes have created the ideal conditions for sheep farming and the related cheese production (*Pics. 13-14, next page*). Transhumance, the seasonal migration of livestock, is disappearing. The producers are joined together in a consortium for protecting and promoting the *Castel del Monte Canestrato* cheese which is made from the milk of the sheep grazing the pastures.

Eat *arrosticini* (traditional mutton skewers) in Fonte Vetica, Campo Imperatore, and drink Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, DOC red wine.

Have dinner at LOCANDA SOTTO GLI ARCHI (*Pics. 4-5*), Sextantio.

Sleep (2 nights) at ALBERGO DIFFUSO SEXTANTIO (*Pics. 1-2-3-6*), in the fortified medieval village of Santo Stefano di Sessanio. Traditional handcrafts are reflected in the details: natural colours, woollen mattresses; cribs and handmade bedspreads woven on traditional looms. In the restoration of the buildings, the homes in the village retained their original use and are now available as accomodation.

LOCAL PRODUCTS: the lentils from Santo Stefano di Sessanio are a registered *Slow Food Presidium*. They have always been organically produced, belong to a rare and ancient variety which is grown only in arid mountain soil at an altitude of between 1200 and 1450 metres. They are dark brown and very small, with a wrinkly lined surface. Their special flavour has made them famous all over Italy.

Among the local dishes you have to taste the lentil soup served with small squares of bread fried in olive oil. The area also produces excellent lamb, raised on the Campo Imperatore plateau: one speciality is lamb *alla chiaranese*, with cheese and egg.

www.santostefano.sextantio.it

② DAYS 3-5: ALTO SANGRO AND ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK (LAQUILA)

Drive to Castel di Sangro (2hrs).

Stop at Valle Reale in Popoli to taste the wines of Leonardo Pizzolo, in the village of Pacentro (Majella National Park) and in Sulmona for the traditional *confetti*, sugared almonds made after a centuries-old tradition.



Day by Day

Visit the Cianflocca farm in Castel di Sangro and the organic farm and residence run by shepherd and cheesemaker Gregorio Rotolo in the village of Scanno, where you can buy yoghurt and cheeses (Pics. 13-14, next page).

Gregorio Rotolo makes around 15 different cheeses including ricotta, *Caciocavallo Barricato* (a cheese that is aged in oak barrels), *Ricotta Scorza Nera* and different types of *Pecorino*. He has been making unique award-winning cheeses as well as other products such as mutton *prosciutto* since he was 12 years old.

Walk to Pescocostanzo, which is listed among the *Borghi più belli d'Italia* (the “most beautiful villages in Italy”).

Take an excursion to the Gole del Sagittario, or an afternoon on horseback in the Abruzzo National Park, a day of slow rafting, a wolf-sighting trek in the nearby Majella National Park.

Have lunch at ALT (Pic.11), Strada Statale 17, Castel di Sangro, a new project by the “Accademia Niko Romito” professional cooking school. ALT is a comfortable yet informal roadside diner, an easy place to stop off during a trip for a quick lunch break, an informal dinner, a snack or breakfast.

Have dinner at REALE, Cristiana and Niko Romito’s restaurant boasting three Michelin stars and countless other distinctions (Pic. 8). A real ‘laboratory’, where materials, research, simplicity and taste combine to bring tomorrow’s Italian cuisine to life today.

Sleep (2 nights) at CASADONNA (Pics. 7-9-10-12), a 16th-century former monastery, transformed by a bold and understated restoration. The estate covers 6 hectares, at an altitude of 860 metres, and includes an experimental vineyard, a grove of fruit trees and a garden of aromatic and wild herbs. This is the home of the restaurant Reale***, 9 guest rooms, and the “Accademia Niko Romito” culinary academy.

SIGNATURE PRODUCTS: Niko Romito’s *Panettone*. Made following a long and very meticulous process. Flour, natural leaven, vanilla beans, butter, “Sulla” honey, home-made candied orange zests, chocolate pearls of golden raisin: all the ingredients are strictly selected and where possibile produced directly at Reale.

www.nikoromito.com

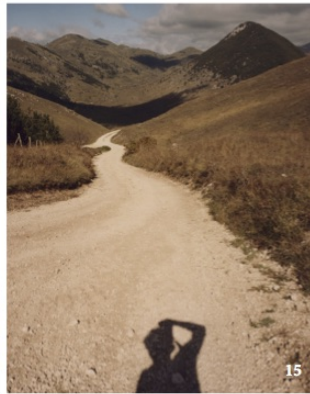
☉ DAYS 5-7: “COSTA DEI TRABOCCHI” AND THE PUNTA ADERCI NATURE RESERVE, ADRIATIC SEA (CHIETI)

Drive to the Punta Aderci Nature Reserve, Vasto (1hr30). The Regional Nature Reserve of Punta Aderci, with its homonymous rocky promontory, protects one of the most spectacular stretches of the Abruzzo coast, which alternates wide and sandy beaches backed by natural cliffs with bays and coves of great beauty.

Along the southern stretch of the Abruzzo coast, between Ortona and Vasto, the famous and celebrated *trabocchi*, compared by Gabriele D’Annunzio to “colossal spiders”, rise up like sentinels on the sea. The *trabocco*, which for centuries represented a livelihood of many generations of fishermen, today has become an icon of the region and in particular a symbol of the southern central coast of Abruzzo which



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has been called the “Costa dei Trabocchi” (Pic. 16). One of the first and oldest written documents that provides information on the presence of *trabocchi* in this area dates back to 1400 AD. The techniques used to build the “fishing machines” are the result of a constructive wisdom that has never been written down, but passed from generation to generation in words and practice.

VISIT/EAT AT: Trabocco “Punta Tufano”, Trabocco “Sasso della Cajana”, Trabocco “Punta Punciosa”, Trabocco Turchino San Vito, Trabocco Fosso del Diavolo Le Morge.

Sleep (2 nights) at the cosy and secluded AGRITURISMO RIFUGIOMARE, Rocca San Giovanni (Piane Favaro), Chieti. It’s a “home” capable of combining the open sea and an undiscovered territory.

www.rifugiomare.it

Drive back to Pescara (1hr).

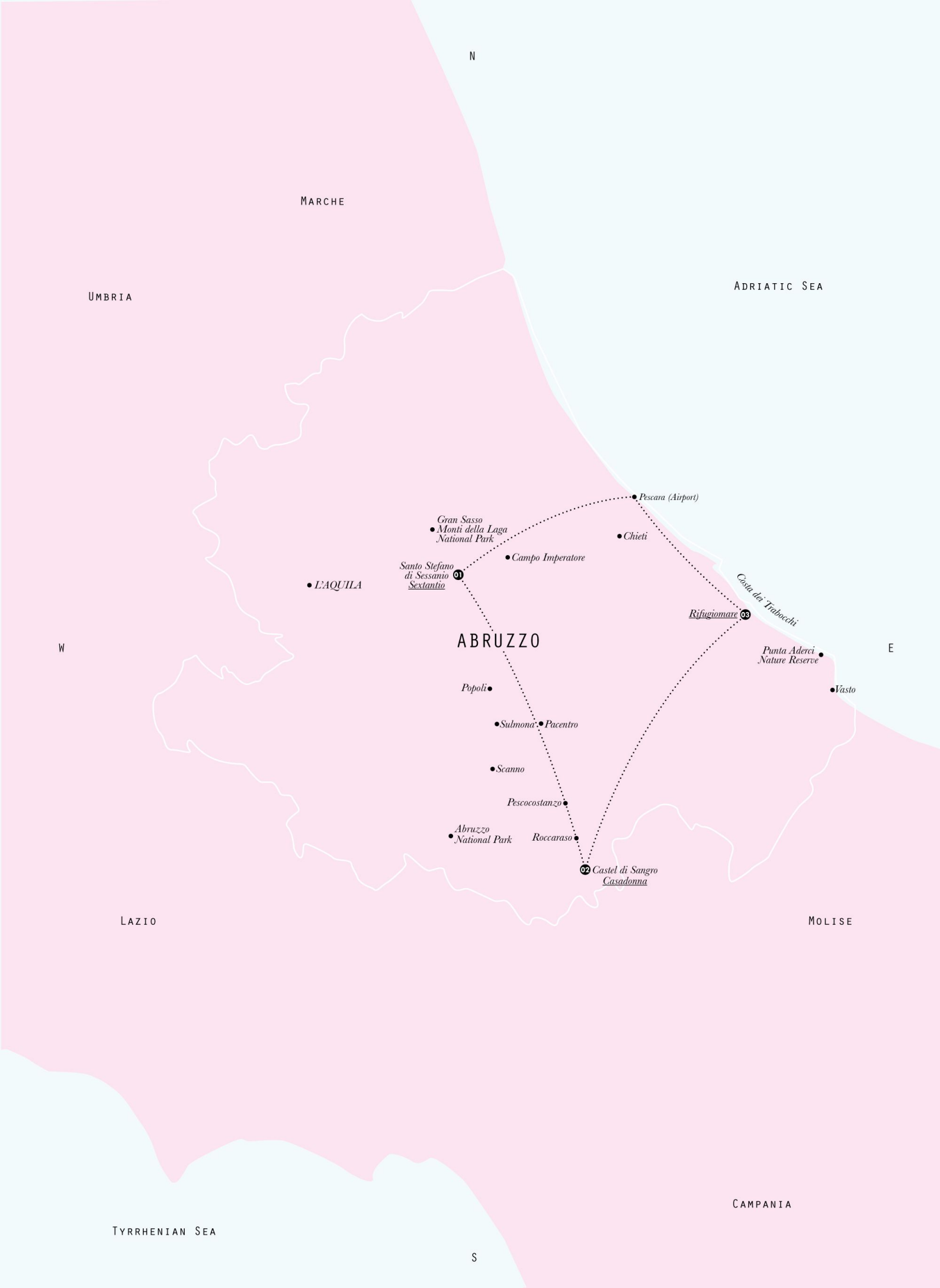
EXTRA FAVOURITES:

Eremo di Sant’Onofrio al Morrone, Sulmona;
 Eremo di San Giovanni All’Orfento, Majella;
 Eremo di San Bartolomeo in Legio, Majella;
 Eremo di S. Spirito a Majella;
 Abbazia di San Martino in Valle, Chieti;
 Borgo di Castelli;
 Santuario di San Gabriele All’Addolorata, Gran Sasso;
 Borgo Medievale di Castelbasso, Teramo;
 Fortezza di Civitella Del Tronto, Teramo.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.abruzzoturismo.it/en

Photo page 272 Courtesy Sextantio Albergo Diffuso.
 Photo page 273 Courtesy Casadonna by Alberto Zanetti,
 Brambilla Serrani, Francesco Fioramonti.
 Photo page 274 Courtesy Paolo Zerbini.



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MARCHE

UMBRIA

ADRIATIC SEA

• Pescara (Airport)

• Gran Sasso
• Monti della Laga
National Park

• Chieti

• Campo Imperatore

• LAQUILA

• Santo Stefano
di Sessanio
Sextantio

ABRUZZO

• Rifugiomare **03**

Costa dei Trabocchi

• Punta Aderci
Nature Reserve

E

• Vasto

W

• Popoli

• Sulmona • Pacentro

• Scanno

• Pescocostanzo

• Abruzzo
National Park

• Roccaraso

02 • Castel di Sangro
Casadonna

LAZIO

MOLISE

TYRRHENIAN SEA

CAMPANIA

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