

TRAVEL HISTORY CULTURE PEOPLE FOOD

# ABRUZZISSIMO MAGAZINE



*Special Supplement Inside:*

**The Time It Takes:  
Making Cheese in  
San Nicolao**

*page 5*

**And There at  
Tagliacozzo the  
Past Is Present**

*page 9*

**106 Summer Sagre  
and Festivals in  
Abruzzo**

# CONTENTS

**02. EDITOR'S NOTE**

**03. NEWS AND EVENTS**

**04. THE BALSORANO AIR TRAGEDY**

**05. THE TIME IT TAKES: MAKING  
CHEESE IN SAN NICOLAO**

**9. AND THERE AT TAGLIACOZZO THE  
PAST IS PRESENT**

**17. FROM TROY TO SULMONA**

**19. A VIEW TO BUILD ON IN  
MONTEODORISIO**

**21. QUICK STOP, EASY TRAILS**

**22. A POTATO BORN OF A DRAINED  
LAKE**

**23. RECIPES: abruzzese potato bread,  
Angiolina's crostata cake with ricotta  
and chocolate**

**26. SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: 106 SUMMER  
SAGRE AND FESTIVALS IN ABRUZZO  
(FOR PREMIUM SUBSCRIBERS ONLY)**



---

## ON THE COVER:

Tagliacozzo. Photo by Anna  
Lebedeva. Read the story on page 9.

## LEFT:

Tagliacozzo. Photos by Anna  
Lebedeva. Read the story on page 9.

# ABRUZZISSIMO MAGAZINE

www.abruzzissimo.com  
editor@abruzzissimo.com

EDITOR & PUBLISHER  
Anna Lebedeva  
editor@abruzzissimo.com

COPY EDITOR  
Linda Dini Jenkins

CONTRIBUTORS  
Christine Mastrogiuseppe  
Linda Dini Jenkins  
Teresa Mastrobuono  
Angiolina De Angelis  
Anna Swann

*Periodico diffuso in via telematica non  
soggetto a registrazione ai sensi degli  
artt. 3 e 3 bis della legge n. 103 del 16  
luglio 2012.*

Copyright © 2025 ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine. All content copyright ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine, all rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. While we make every effort that the factual content of ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine is correct we cannot take any responsibility nor be held accountable for any factual errors printed. The publisher recognises all copyrights within this issue.

## Editor's Note

There was a flurry of excitement in Abruzzo about the new series *Tucci in Italy*, as the region was featured in one of the episodes. Stanley Tucci visited the communal bread oven in Villa San Sebastiano di Tagliacozzo, which was brought back from obscurity a few years ago by young chef Lucia Tellone (ABRUZZISSIMO featured the story of the forno in the March 2024 issue), ate on a *trabocco*, explored the Pelino Confetti factory, cooked up a meal on a campfire with the “wild” chef Davide Nanni, and tried *arrostiticini* at Campo Imperatore.

In our community [group](#) on Facebook, reactions were mixed. Some felt the episode “didn’t do Abruzzo justice” or noticed that “all the shots were brown and rocky” and wished more towns and restaurants had been shown.

This is often the case with international coverage that Abruzzo has been getting recently: well-meaning, fleeting, and geared toward quick consumption. The emphasis is usually on *arrostiticini* and low cost of living – hooks designed for broad appeal. There is more to Abruzzo. It is a region of astonishing contrasts and overlooked stories, where beauty and difficulty live side by side. Understanding it takes time, attention, and a willingness to listen. That is what ABRUZZISSIMO offers: not a travel snapshot, but an unfolding portrait, issue by issue, of a place that doesn’t fit neatly into a soundbite.

It takes more than a flying visit and a bite-sized, easy-to-digest TV episode to understand and love Abruzzo. This magazine tells its lesser-known stories one issue at a time – stories that Disney+ wouldn’t have the audience for. It is written and published from within the region, by those who call it home year-round.

This month, we talk about the humble potato from the **Fucino plain** – one of Italy’s finest – two sisters who revived their late father’s farm in the hamlet of **San Nicolao (PE)** to make excellent pecorino cheese, two small and fascinating museums in **Loreto Aprutino (PE)**, and a contemporary art installation trail in the mountains near **Pescasseroli (AQ)**.

On page 17, you will find a story about the semi-legendary figure of Solimo who, according to local lore, founded the city of **Sulmona (AQ)**. We invite you to try the recipe on page 22 for peasant potato bread, soft and chewy, born long ago out of necessity to save flour.

It has become our annual tradition to publish a special supplement, unique of its kind, about summer *sagre* and festivals, and this year we list a whopping 106 of them! Our premium subscribers can find the supplement at the end of the issue. If you are a free subscriber, you can [upgrade](#) to premium or [buy](#) the supplement separately.

**Anna Lebedeva**  
Founder & Editor

# DIGEST OF RECENT REGIONAL NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS FROM ABRUZZO NEWSPAPERS



## MORE BLUE FLAG BEACHES FOR THE REGION

Abruzzo shines again in 2025 with 16 Blue Flags fluttering across its coastline and lakes. Fifteen towns have kept their mark of excellence, while **Torino di Sangro** joins the list for the first time, rewarded for efforts in sustainability and climate action. Inland, the mountain lakes of **Scanno** and **Villalago** are crowned once more. Handed out by the Foundation for Environmental Education, the Blue Flag awards the cleanest and most eco-friendly beaches and marinas in the world every year. See the full list of Abruzzo's Blue Flag beaches in our post on [ABRIZZISSIMO website](#).

## YOUTH EXIT ABRUZZO'S BUSINESS SCENE

The province of L'Aquila led Italy in innovative startups per capita, fuelled by government incentives and its proximity to Rome in 2024. Yet across Abruzzo, youth entrepreneurship is rapidly shrinking. A *Confesercenti* (an Italian trade association representing small and medium-sized enterprises) report reveals that youth-led businesses in Abruzzo fell by over 24% in five years, among the steepest drops nationwide. Shops, cafés, and small enterprises run by under-35s are vanishing, leaving behind an aging entrepreneurial landscape. Experts warn that without tax relief, better training, and regional development Abruzzo risks losing its next generation of independent entrepreneurs.



## NEW MURAL HONOURING POPE FRANCIS IN AIELLI

**Aielli (AQ)** has welcomed a new mural by Roman street artist Laika, known for her social activism. Titled *Gli invitati* ("The invited"), the work depicts Pope Francis in heaven, haloed yet displeased as he reads the guest list for his own funeral. Beside it, a pointed caption asks, "But who invited these people?" The mural is an ironic yet respectful tribute to a Pope committed to the marginalized, while also critiquing those who praised him but overlooked the causes he championed. This is Laika's third mural in Aielli's historic centre on a street lovingly dubbed Corso Laika by locals. **Aielli** is renowned for its open-air street art gallery, featuring around 40 murals painted on the walls of houses by international artists.

## COURT SHUTS DOWN DEER CULL PLAN

The Regional Administrative Court of Abruzzo has officially closed the case concerning the controversial deer cull approved last August. The plan had authorised the killing of 469 deer, including 142 fawns, but was suspended following widespread opposition. With hunting season now over, the decree has lost its effect. The decision comes after months of public outcry: over 136,000 people signed a Change.org petition (ABRUZZISSIMO reported on it and many of our readers participated), and 60,000 emails were sent to the regional president. For now, Abruzzo's deer are safe.



## YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ABRUZZO'S SUMMER FESTIVALS

Summer in Abruzzo means festivals and *sagre* in every corner of the region – from traditional pasta feasts in small villages to jazz concerts and street art events. Each year, ABRUZZISSIMO publishes a special supplement dedicated to summer happenings. This year's edition is a bumper guide, featuring 106 festivals and *sagre*, along with travel tips and in-depth articles. It's free for premium subscribers (available at the end of this issue). Free subscribers can upgrade their subscription [here](#) or [purchase the supplement](#) separately.

## ABRUZZO LEADS ITALY'S HOUSING MARKET GROWTH

Abruzzo recorded the highest residential property market growth in Italy in 2024, with 16,496 transactions – a 9.2% increase over the previous year. The data comes from the *Rapporto immobiliare 2025 – Il settore residenziale*, compiled by the Italian Revenue Agency's Real Estate Market Observatory. The increase in the number of sales brought Italy's property market back in line with pre-pandemic figures, the report said. While the national market showed signs of recovery, with 719,578 sales overall, Abruzzo outpaced all other regions. You can see the full report [here](#).

## DID YOU KNOW?

### THE BALSORANO AIR TRAGEDY



High above **Balsorano (AQ)**, on the weather-beaten slopes of Monte Serra Alta, lie the remains of the most devastating air disaster in Abruzzo's history. On the stormy evening of 30 March 1963, Itavia Flight 703 – a Douglas DC-3 – vanished from radar and crashed into the mountainside, claiming the lives of all eight people aboard.

The plane was heading from Pescara to Rome-Ciampino, but the chosen route was unsafe due to severe weather conditions at the time: strong winds, rain, and snow. The flight crew decided to change the route, believing it would allow them to avoid the worst of the storm. With visibility reduced to almost nothing and communications severed, they lost orientation. When lights appeared to their right, they mistook them for Rome and banked in that direction. Moments later, the aircraft struck the snow-covered ridge above Balsorano at 19:36. The impact caused the fuel tanks to rupture, and fire quickly engulfed what remained.

The wreck was discovered by a local resident who, despite the heavy snow, rushed up to the mountains, but there was nothing to do as all onboard were already dead. Today, the mangled remains of the aircraft still lie where they fell, weathered by the seasons and partially reclaimed by the landscape. A memorial stone with the names of the victims stands nearby. Experienced hikers can reach this remote memorial following a challenging [trail](#).



## THE TIME IT TAKES: MAKING CHEESE IN SAN NICOLAO

Text and photos by Anna  
Lebedeva

**In a small mountain hamlet above Caramanico Terme (PE), two young sisters have brought their late father's farm back to life. Today, they produce pecorino cheese and welcome visitors eager to learn about pastoral life.**

In a cool, whitewashed room on the ground floor of a house in *contrada* San Nicolao, the scent of warm milk drifts through the air. A large pot filled with ewe's milk is heating up slowly. Angiolina De Angelis, sleeves rolled up, stirs the milk with a *mnature*, a traditional wooden rod worn smooth by frequent use. Her movements are steady, unhurried. "You can't rush cheese," she says. "It takes the time it takes. We're not very technological here – everything is still done by hand, like it used to be."

The milk begins to thicken. With a change in rhythm, she breaks the curds from the whey. "*Questa fase si chiama 'rompere la cagliata'*," she explains, working quicker, with more force now. Her sister Marina arrives, and together they scoop the steaming curds into perforated plastic baskets. With firm but gentle hands, they press the cheeses into shape, coaxing them into future wheels of *pecorino*.

**Photo: Marina (left) and Angiolina De Angelis at their farm**

“From 50–60 litres of milk, we make about 15 kilos of cheese,” Angiolina explains. “We never pasteurise – this way the cheese holds the flavour of the mountain herbs the sheep feed on.”

During late spring and early summer, production begins at dawn and continues into the evening. They start at six in the morning and stop around eight at night, only breaking for meals. It is a rhythm dictated by the seasons and their animals.

## FOURTH GENERATION

Angiolina and Marina De Angelis, aged 40 and 38, are the fourth generation to tend sheep in this remote corner of the Majella mountains. Their father Antonio once had 800 animals and, in the 1990s, he built a large barn in San Nicolao, continuing the work of his father and grandfather before him. “They used to take the sheep up into the mountains to graze and, like all shepherds back then, carved their names into the rocks – we can still see them today,” says Angiolina. But Antonio died young, and for nearly 20 years, the buildings stood abandoned.

**Photos: (below) fresh pecorino cheese made by the sisters; lambs at the farm**



The sisters tried other paths – helping at the family’s pizzeria in Caramanico Terme – but the frantic pace of restaurant life was not for them. “We didn’t like it,” Angiolina recalls. “The hours were irregular and exhausting.”

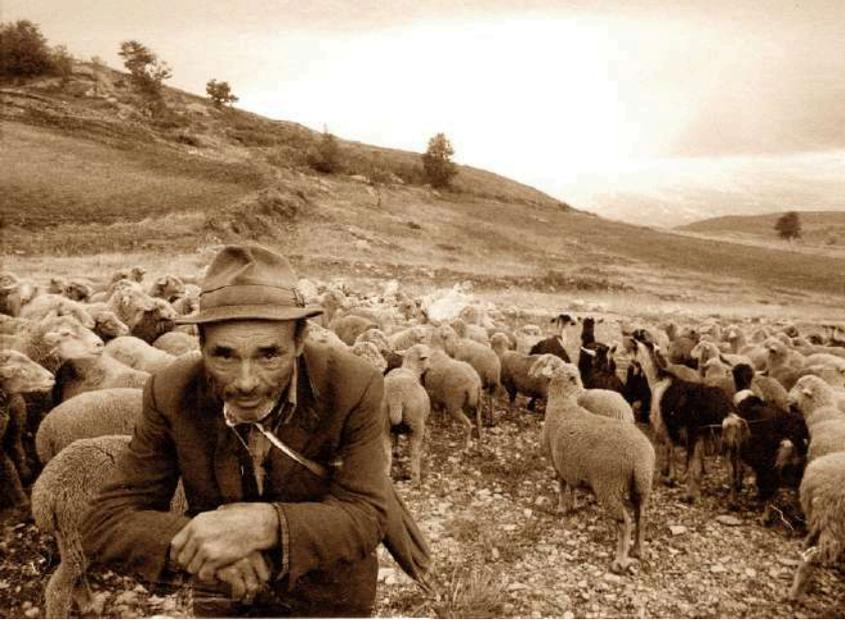
In 2018, they took a leap: reviving their father’s farm and founding *Società Agricola DA come una volta*. The name reflects both their heritage – DA for De Angelis – and a way of life: *come una volta*, like it used to be. “DA was the mark our family used to stamp on the wool, to distinguish our flock from others when the herds shared the mountain pastures,” says Angiolina.

They began with a small flock, a cheesemaking room at the back, and a shop. Today, their 300 sheep graze the meadows in the heart of the Maiella National Park, feeding on wild herbs and grasses that give their cheese its distinct character.

## A WAY OF LIFE

In spring and summer, the days are filled with milking and making cheese. The sheep spend their daylight hours in high pastures under the watch of a hired shepherd. During the winter, the work shifts indoors: feeding the sheep hay, cleaning the barn. They make cheese only from spring to August, following the traditional rhythm of mountain grazing, rather than the year-round cycle of larger farms.





Photos: (above) Nonno Domenico, Angiolina and Marina’s grandfather; (right) his carved name and the year 1928, still visible on a stone in the mountains today; the sisters making cheese

Angiolina and Marina sell unpasteurised *pecorino* and *ricotta* directly from the farm shop, mostly to loyal clients who come from larger towns and cities, as well as to holidaymakers staying at the nearby campsite. In between the milking and cheesemaking, the sisters are raising four children, two each. Their farm is also a *fattoria didattica*, where schoolchildren and city dwellers come to learn about rural life and cheese making. They also organise events with visitors following the flock to the pastures and picnics for hikers and mountain bikers. It’s a family effort: their mother, Diana, helps to look after the children and knits scarves, socks, and hats from the sheep’s wool to sell in the shop, while their husbands lend a hand on weekends.

## IN THE MOUNTAINS

San Nicolao is a tiny hamlet with around 50 year-round residents and a handful of houses scattered along a winding mountain road. There’s no public transport. No doctor. Just a bakery known for its excellent bread, a restaurant, the De Angelis cheese shop – and all around, magnificent views of the mountains. That’s about it.

“In summer it gets livelier,” says Marina, “when families come to their holiday homes and the campsite fills up.” But winters can be hard. “In 2017, after a heavy snowfall, the power went out for a week,” Angiolina remembers. “We used our *nonna*’s old wood stove for heat, and I and my husband had to



walk in with snowshoes to bring supplies from the car parked on the main road below.” Trips to the supermarket become half-day affairs. Holidays are rare. “The only break I had last year was a day at my mother-in-law’s in Pescara,” Marina laughs.

Still, neither sister would trade it for town life. “I feel lucky,” says Angiolina. “It is beautiful and quiet here. It is home and it is good for our children. These little hardships – they toughen them up and prepare them for life.”

## THE FUTURE

Angiolina notes that fewer tourists have been visiting since the thermal complex in Caramanico Terme closed a few years ago – a loss that dealt a heavy blow to the local economy and left a gap still unfilled. Yet the sisters remain optimistic. They have started cultivating the ancient grain *solina*, plan to expand their flock slowly over the coming years, and begin ageing cheeses longer to add to the fresh varieties they currently sell.

The future of the farm already has names. Angiolina's son Marco is studying agriculture and plans to help to run the farm. Marina's daughter, Antonia, aged ten, has already chosen a plot of land nearby where she dreams of building her

**The family a few years ago: front row: Marina and Angiolina with their mother Dina, and Marco; second row: Marina's and Angiolina's husbands, their sister Monica, and the younger children.**

own home. "Just a few hundred metres from ours," Marina says. "She's made up her mind."

In San Nicolaio, life is measured not in profits or visitors, but in hands that still work the milk, and children who already know they belong.

.....

## VISIT THE FARM

*Società Agricola DA come una volta* will be hosting *La Notte di San Giovanni* celebrations on June 24 with a walk and picnic at the farm. In August, you can participate in the *Notte di San Lorenzo* watching falling stars, listening to live folk music and gorging on the *arrostiticini* and cheese from the farm. For more information, see the farm's Facebook [page](#).

See Angiolina's recipe for a *crostata* cake with *ricotta* on page 24.





## AND THERE AT TAGLIACOZZO THE PAST IS PRESENT

Text and photos by Anna  
Lebedeva

**This elegant town can claim it all — Dante named it, princes ruled it, and artists still find a stage here, amid noble façades and a lively calendar of festivals.**

Not many towns can claim a place in the verses of Dante Alighieri, but Tagliacozzo's name lives on in the Divine Comedy, immortalised in Inferno, Canto XXVIII:

*"E là da Tagliacozzo,  
dove senz'arme vinse il vecchio Alardo."*

*"And there at Tagliacozzo,  
where old Alardo won the day without his sword."*

With this brief yet potent allusion, Dante recalls the pivotal Battle of Tagliacozzo, fought in 1268 on the plains just beyond the town's edge. It was here that Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily, triumphed over the young Conradin of Swabia, dashing the hopes of the Hohenstaufen dynasty and tilting the balance of power in southern Italy for generations.

**Photo: Tagliacozzo (AQ)**

## THE HEART OF THE TOWN

Tagliacozzo sits in the shadow of Monte Civita in the highlands of Abruzzo's Marsica area, just over an hour from the centre of Rome (if you choose your departure time wisely to avoid the capital's traffic). By train, it will take you under two hours to reach the town's railway station, a short walk from the central square, Piazza dell'Obelisco.

Few squares in the region and Central Italy can rival its elegance. A wide space ringed by noble façades in tones of ochre, pink, and soft terracotta, the Renaissance *palazzi* observe the daily rhythm of café tables and summer concerts. Fabrizio Venturini, author of several history books and a member of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, describes the piazza as a striking testament to the town's former grandeur. "Tagliacozzo has been a prosperous town since the early Middle Ages, when it was a fief of the Berardi counts," explains Venturini. "Its position along the border between the Kingdom of Naples and the Papal States brought growing importance over the centuries, turning it into a vital frontier settlement." So much so that in the early 15th century, Pope Alexander V granted Count Giacomo Orsini – the local feudal lord and a member of one of

**Photos: Piazza dell'Obelisco**

Rome's most powerful noble families – the rare privilege of minting his own coin, the *Bolognino di Tagliacozzo*. "Commerce was at the heart of the town's economy: markets and fairs were already well established by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Trade thrived alongside local industries such as ceramics and copperwork, while farming and livestock remained essential to daily life," says Venturini.

## GLORIOUS PAST

Due to its strategic position between the Kingdom of Naples and the Papal States, the feudal lords of Tagliacozzo were always appointed by the Pope. The town served as the capital of a vast territory – first a County, later a Duchy – that at its greatest extent stretched as far as Manoppello, some 110 kilometres away. This gives a sense of the scale of its domain. Unsurprisingly, Tagliacozzo became a prized possession, fiercely contested by two of Rome's most powerful noble families: the Orsini and the Colonna.

The two feuding dynasties shaped the politics and architecture of the region, with formidable



fortresses, *palazzi*, and castles scattered across the landscape. Their Palazzo Ducale still dominates the upper part of the town.

Originally built in the early 14th century, it was expanded under the *condottiero* Roberto Orsini and later became a Colonna stronghold. Its halls once echoed with the footsteps of papal envoys and soldiers; today, the palace remains a symbol of Tagliacozzo's past might and artistic heritage.

Tagliacozzo is a paradise for history buffs. There's a fascinating story around every corner; each *palazzo* holds centuries of noble lineage and shifting fortunes. "Among the more curious aspects of local life is the fact that the people of Tagliacozzo have, for centuries, been divided into informal 'clans' known as *razze*," says Venturini. "These represent a uniquely local way of identifying members of the community. Until about fifty years ago – and sometimes today – it was quite common for a Tagliacozzano, trying to get a better sense of someone they didn't know well, to ask: "*Ma tu 'e che razza si?*" ("Which clan are you from? What's your lineage?"). I published the *Stemmario delle Razze Tagliacozzane*, a light-hearted book in which I listed many of the best-known *razze*." (the book is available on [Amazon](#)).

## NOTABLE FIGURES

The town produced many illustrious figures, politicians, academics, writers. The town gave birth to Ascanio di Giovanni Mari, a Renaissance goldsmith who studied under Benvenuto Cellini and served at the French court. His life inspired Alexandre Dumas père to write *Ascanio*, a novel of artistry and intrigue. Each summer, Tagliacozzo honours his historical figure with a festival (see below).

**Photos: (from top clockwise) a a caffè in the centre of the town; a tabaccaio shop; an old palazzo; Palazzo Ducale**



In 1663, Petronilla Paolini Massimi was born here. Married off before the age of ten to a much older nobleman, she later became a poet whose verses resonated with early feminist thought. One of the earliest female authors in Italy to write publicly about injustice and identity, she was keenly aware of the constraints placed upon her gender: "It is man who tyrannises over our worth."

In modern times, Tagliacozzo's famous sons included Ermanno Amicucci (1890–1955), a journalist and intellectual who directed *La Gazzetta dello Sport* and *La Stampa*. And in the realm of sport, Gino Salica, former president and current vice-president of *ACF Fiorentina* football club, also hails from here.

## CITTÀ D'ARTE THAT LIVES ON

Tagliacozzo has long served as a gateway between Abruzzo and Rome, and its proximity to the capital lends it a certain refined air. Culture runs deep in this town. It is often referred to as *città d'arte* for a reason: it has a splendid 17th-century theatre with an outstanding programme of performances, an annual exhibition of contemporary art, and a

**Photos: (top right) Convento di San Francesco; on the streets of Tagliacozzo**

summer festival that brings world-class international musicians and singers (for more see below). Even the *tabaccaio* on the central piazza carries an impressive selection of books on culture and history.

From the early 20th century, Tagliacozzo began to draw visitors fleeing Rome's summer heat. It remains a popular tourist destination today, but despite the flow of tourists, Tagliacozzo is still a living, breathing town. Bakeries still bake fresh *cornetti*, grocers arrange crates of produce outside their shops, and teenagers gather after school beneath historical *palazzi* to enjoy a slice of pizza or a gelato cone. This is not a town that clings to the past out of nostalgia. Weathered by centuries yet still beautiful, it carries its history with pride and grace.



## WHAT TO SEE AND DO IN TAGLIACOZZO

### WALK IN THE CENTRO STORICO

From the main square, Tagliacozzo begins to ascend and tighten into narrow lanes that climb the slopes of Monte Civita, drawing you into a labyrinth of history. The sound of water grows louder as you approach the River Imele, whose insistent course cuts along the old town's edge before slipping underground.

The street called *Via dei Molini* offers a hint of what once stood here – seven watermills powered by the river's restless energy. To the right, away from the river, Via San Francesco, where grand *palazzi* lean over passers-by, will take you to the **Convento di S. Francesco**. In the beautiful cloister you will find 15<sup>th</sup>-century frescoes depicting scenes from the life of the saint.

### VISIT PALAZZO DUCALE

Originally, the **Palazzo Ducale** was very different from its current form, having undergone numerous expansions and alterations over the centuries that significantly changed its appearance. The Colonna family owned the palace until the first half of the 20th century. Ownership then passed to the Barberini-Corsini family, and eventually to the

Abruzzo regional authority. Despite its historical value, the **Palazzo Ducale** has been long neglected. Restoration work begun in the early 2000s was never completed, resulting in the loss of much of the building's historical character. Few traces remain of its original frescoes and decorations. The palace has been stripped of its flooring, furnishings, and other movable objects, including numerous monumental fireplaces, many of them stolen. Some frescoes were removed and remain temporarily housed at the Castello di Celano museum.

Today, some spaces of the *palazzo* serve as a venue for social and cultural events, such as *Contemporanea*, an annual international contemporary art exhibition. You can visit the palazzo during the exhibition's opening hours (see [here](#)) in spring-early summer. For visits during the year contact the municipality at 339 0863 6141.

### CATCH A SHOW AT THE THEATRE

A few steps from the **Palazzo Ducale** stands the **Teatro Talia**. Originally built in 1686 within a Benedictine monastery, it was officially inaugurated in 1832. Although it suffered fire damage during the turbulent period before Italy's unification and 1960, the theatre was restored

Photos: (below) the theatre; Monastero di Santi Cosma e Damiano



several times. With three tiers of boxes, it seats almost 300. Its programme includes concerts, theatrical performances, readings, and film screenings. See the seasonal programme on the theatre's [website](#) and its Facebook [page](#).

### TASTE CAKES BAKED BY BENEDICTINE NUNS

Just above the theatre, you will find the **Monastero di Santi Cosma e Damiano**, one of the best-preserved examples of Benedictine monasteries in Abruzzo. The original church was built between the 8th and 10th centuries. It has been renovated several times over the centuries, with the current structure largely shaped by alterations made in the first half of the 15th century following severe damage caused by the 1456 earthquake.

The religious complex houses a painting donated to the city and the Duchy of Tagliacozzo by the Colonna family, likely dating from the 17th or 18th century. The artwork depicts the Holy Face of the suffering Jesus, imprinted on Veronica's veil. Every year on the Sunday after Easter (the *Domenica in Albis*), the ancient relic is carried to the Obelisk Square for a blessing in a solemn procession. For this occasion, the nuns living in the monastery bake *palommelle* and *cavallucci*, traditional dove and horse-shaped cakes which recipe dates back to the 1700s.

At the entrance of the monastery, you can still see a revolving wooden hatch – the so-called *ruota degli esposti*, historically used for leaving abandoned newborns to the nuns. In the monastery's small shop, you can buy sweets, biscuits, jams, and knitted baby items crafted by the ten cloistered nuns who reside there. Just ring the bell beside the door and one of the nuns will come out to open the shop.

### ENJOY THE FESTIVITIES

Tagliacozzo hosts some of the region's best festivals. Every summer, the Mid-Summer International Festival draws thousands of visitors and music lovers for world-class classical and pop performances. The Renaissance-themed historical re-enactment **Ascanio**, held in August, is another highlight that fills the town's streets with pageantry and colour. In July, the town celebrates **Birrart**, a festival dedicated to craft beer, while at the end of August, **Gironi Divini** takes over the historic centre



An old palazzo in Tagliacozzo

with three days of wine tastings inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy* (for more about these events, see our supplement *106 Summer Sagre and Festivals in Abruzzo* at the end of the issue). Since 1979, Tagliacozzo has also hosted the **Rassegna Internazionale del Folklore**, welcoming international folk groups every July for a joyful exchange of dance, costume, and music.

October brings **Cantine nella Roccia**, when over 60 ancient rock-hewn cellars open as pop-up eateries and shops for a lively three-day celebration of food, crafts, and rural traditions.

The town's most important and deeply felt celebration is the **Volto Santo di Gesù**, held on the Sunday after Easter. On this day, residents gather in Piazza dell'Obelisco to receive a collective blessing during the solemn exposition of the relic, a moment that binds the community through faith and centuries-old tradition.

### SUPPORT LOCAL ARTISANS

Tagliacozzo is home to many skilled artisans who keep local traditions alive. One such family-run establishment is **Antico Bar Pasticceria Marcello**, opened in 1950, where Giuseppe and his mother

craft traditional cakes and biscuits. Their signature *Pan dell'Obelisco*, a plum cake sweetened with honey, and the rich *serpentone* roll filled with nuts and dried fruit, are not to be missed.

On a small street a few steps from Piazza dell'Obelisco, Linda runs a small shop, **Creazioni lo Sono**, filled with colourful wool and cotton knits, all created on her knitting machine right in the store.

**Antonio Alce** has a workshop near the central piazza where he handcrafts and sells fine leather goods.

A short drive up a steep road brings you to **Caseificio Furia**, a farm shop selling local *pecorino* cheeses and fresh eggs. (Enter "Azienda Agricola Furia" in your Google Maps navigator to locate it).

## HIKE TO THE CASTLE

If you're in the mood for a short walk, drive to the upper part of town along a winding road and park along the roadside near the *Centro Ippico Valle Verde* or the **Chiesa di Santa Maria del Soccorso**. From there, follow the trail that leads to the top of **Monte Civita**, where the ruins of the ancient castle still stand.

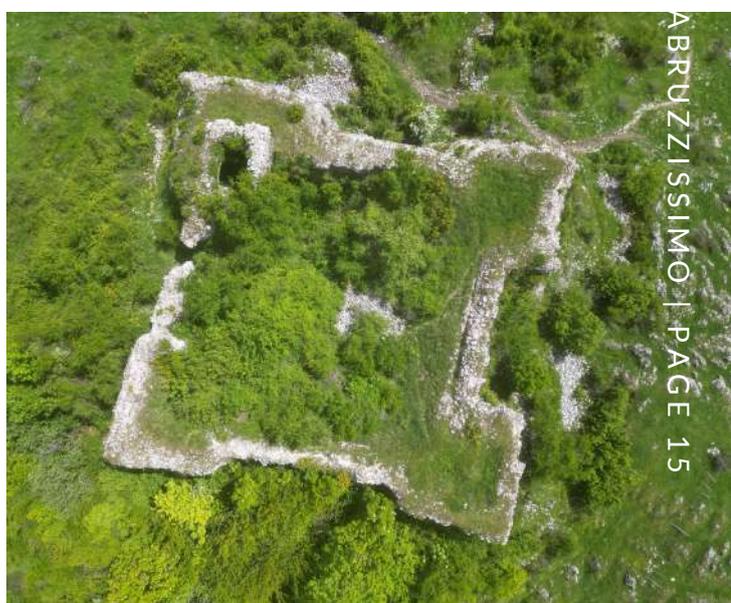
Built over earlier Italic-Roman defences, it was positioned directly along the ancient Via Valeria. The structure was later expanded by the Orsini and Colonna families, serving a primarily military function until it was badly damaged in the 1703 earthquake and gradually abandoned.

It's an easy 15-minute walk. Behind an unsightly cement structure at the summit, two benches offer a place to rest and take in sweeping views of the *Piani Palentini* plains below where the Battle of Tagliacozzo took place. At the trailhead, you'll pass the beautiful but closed **Chiesa del Calvario**. Enter through the wooden gate and, beneath the pine trees, you'll find a shaded picnic table – a quiet spot to pause before or after your climb.

## JOIN A GUIDED TOUR

You can join a guided tour organised by TasteAbruzzo to explore the town and the areas around such as Sorbo with its 750-year-old oak and Scurcola Marsicana with its imposing castle.

**Photos: (from top) Linda in her shop; Giuseppe in his pasticceria; castello di Tagliacozzo from above**





## **Experience Abruzzo through the eyes of those who live here**

Our tours are designed for those who wish to discover authentic Abruzzo and find the ideal property.

We will guide you through an immersive experience, where the search for home merges with the discovery of the land. We will visit enchanting villages, taste typical products, have wine tastings, take part in cooking lessons, and visit properties for sale.

**BOOK YOUR**  
**MAJELLACASE EXPERIENCE TOUR**  
**TODAY!**



**[www.majellacase.it](http://www.majellacase.it)**  
**[mext@majellacase.it](mailto:mext@majellacase.it)**



## FROM TROY TO SULMONA: THE MYTH OF SOLIMO

By Christine Mastrogiuseppe

**History is a fragile, flickering flame, easily swayed by the winds of time and fortune. Some names become eternal, etched in stone and sung by poets, while others, though no less valorous, slip into the shadows. One such figure is Solimo, a hero of Troy, whose ancestral spirit is alive among the people of Sulmona.**

In classical mythology, Solimo is a character known only through sparse, precious mentions. The Roman poet Ovid, a native of Sulmo (modern day Sulmona), includes him in his masterpiece, *Metamorphoses*. Ovid recounts how, after the fall of Troy in 12-13<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Solimo followed his friend Aeneas in the perilous search for a new land. But while Aeneas went west to found the lineage of Rome, Solimo continued inland.

According to tradition, Solimo parted ways from Aeneas in the Apennine interior, where he crossed the rugged mountains of Abruzzo and descended into a fertile valley cut by a crystalline river. It was here, around 1200 BCE, that he is said to have founded a new settlement: Sulmo, the ancient city that was later to become Sulmona. The name itself, local lore holds, derives directly from Solimo.

**Photo: Statue of Ovid in Sulmona**

Ovid himself, in his poems, claims descent from this noble Trojan lineage, proudly declaring, *Sulmo mihi patria est*. – "Sulmo is my homeland."

## HISTORICAL MENTIONS

Solimo is a semi-legendary figure, known through ancient Roman and local sources, though not supported by archaeological evidence. Ancient authors like Servius, in his 4th-century commentaries on Virgil's Aeneid, mention Solimo among the followers of Aeneas. He appears as a loyal shield-brother, one of those warriors who survived the sack of Troy and sought refuge on distant shores.

Archaeological studies and historiographical research suggest that Sulmona may indeed have pre-Roman origins. While definitive evidence is yet to be found, some scholars believe that the city's earliest phase coincided with other proto-Italic settlements formed in the late Bronze Age, supporting the timeframe associated with Solimo.

According to oral tradition passed down in Sulmona – and still echoed in its street names, such as Via Solimo – the hero is often mentioned as the city's founder. Some theories propose that the area may have already been inhabited by Italic tribes, and that Solimo, bringing Trojan survivors and military leadership, helped unify and fortify these early communities.

Solimo represents those unsung heroes who shaped history from its margins. In a narrative dominated by kings and demigods, Solimo's story reminds us that empires and legends are not built by the famed alone, but by countless heroes whose names history only sometimes remembers.

## THE CITY'S ANCIENT HERO

Sulmona, situated in the heart of the Valle Peligna, has always celebrated its ancient roots. The city's pride in its connection to Solimo can be glimpsed in historical references and local lore.

During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, chroniclers and humanists frequently revisited the Trojan origin myth promoting the idea of Trojan roots for many Italic cities, and Sulmona – thanks to Ovid's prestige – had its own strong claim.

Ovid's poetry acts as both testimony and bridge: the words of a Roman poet recalling his Trojan ancestor and thus weaving together epochs of memory. As some legends tell us, Solimo's mother was a priestess of Artemis and Jupiter (Zeus), protector of Aeneas, who was invoked as a divine guide for Solimo in his founding mission. According to some historians, temples once dedicated to Artemis and Jupiter stood near the ancient city of Sulmo, which adds a further detail to the myth.

## THE NOVEL

It was precisely this forgotten story, and the yearning to give voice to a hero long overlooked, that inspired me to write *Solimo – The Last Shield of Troy*. The novel reimagines Solimo's final days in Troy, his bond with Aeneas, and his fateful journey across the Mediterranean. I was born and raised in Sulmona, the city of Ovid – a place that, since childhood, has nurtured my passion for Greek and Roman mythology. Reading has always been my faithful companion, allowing me to explore distant worlds and imagine stories rich in adventure, mystery, and emotion. I've known about Solimo since childhood and, walking on the street called Via Solimo, always felt curious to know who it was named after. As I grew, I felt compelled to bring Solimo's story beyond the mere city lore as a matter of historical justice and a way to honour Sulmona, so I wrote my novel, with research drawn from classical sources such as the Aeneid, the myth of the Trojan War, and Homer's Iliad, as well as the historical accounts of Sulmona's origins.

Through Solimo, we glimpse the collapse of Troy not as an abstract catastrophe, but as an intimate human loss. His journey across sea and stone leads to the founding of Sulmo – a new hope for a people without a home. In doing so, the book rekindles a crucial link between Abruzzo and antiquity, honouring a local identity that reaches far beyond medieval walls and Roman roads.

*Christine Mastrogiuseppe is a Sulmona native and author of Solimo – The Last Shield of Troy. The book is currently available for pre-order in Italian through a crowdfunding campaign, which aims to bring the book to bookstores throughout Italy. You can support the project and reserve your copy by visiting the [campaign page](#).*

# A VIEW TO BUILD ON IN MONTEODORISIO

By Linda Dini Jenkins

**Carmine and Cheryl Iannaccone have spent more than a decade traveling between their home in New Jersey and their small flat in Vasto, which they purchased in 2015. When they decided to expand their Italian holdings, they wanted to remain in Abruzzo, feeling the call of the mountains and the sea, and hoped to find a situation that would allow them to be as self-sufficient as possible. That's when Monteodorisio entered the picture.**

"My roots are in Avellino, in the Campania region, but I fell in love with Vasto – and then all of Abruzzo – ten years ago," says Carmine Iannaccone, a retired attorney who was managing partner of a major law practice based in New Jersey. "Our flat in Vasto is right in the *centro storico*, on the Belvedere, with an amazing view of the sea that runs all the way to the Gargano and Isole Tremiti." But the couple felt they needed more space, so they could invite friends and family. In 2021, they started looking for a villa in the countryside.

## FROM SEASIDE TO HILLTOP

After looking at more than 20 existing villas, they were getting frustrated. "We wanted a place with a view of both the sea and the mountains," explains Carmine. "We also wanted land. But building on agricultural land has too many restrictions, so we were stuck." They eventually found what they wanted with a little help from their friends – one in particular: the mayor of Vasto, a long-time friend, who put out some feelers and found the perfect property for them in the commune of Monteodorisio, a short drive from Vasto.

"We started building in October 2022 and thought we'd be finished in two years," smiles Carmine. "We missed that deadline, but we're pretty close. It should be completed this July." As Carmine attests, these things take time.

"The permitting process alone took nine months," he recalls. "And, even though we're not technically in a seismic area, the building codes were changed after



**Carmine and Cheryl Iannaccone**

the L'Aquila earthquake in 2009, so we had to drive 26 piles between 10 – 13 feet into the ground, and have an independent lab come and do testing." Beyond that, Carmine said that it takes 28 days for the reinforced steel used in the project to cure, and that you can't move on to another part of the project until all the inspections are done. So between building codes, bad weather, and an impressive calendar of holidays, the delays were maddening. But, he says, the quality of work is meticulous, highly professional, and well worth the wait.

## LOCAL TALENT

The land Carmine and Cheryl bought is 10km out of town and has views of La Maiella and the sea. On a clear day, they say, you can see Molise and Puglia, as well. Because the land was bare, they had to design and build everything from scratch.



### Monteodorisio; photo courtesy of Comune di Monteodorisio

“We are using local builders from Palmoli, Vasto, Cupello, and other small towns in Abruzzo and Molise,” explains Carmine. “I hired a local architectural and engineering firm in Vasto to draw up plans, get the approvals, and supervise the build. My fabulous project manager, Giovanni, is from Fresagrandinaria and has sourced all the building materials and located the craftsmen.”

One of Carmine’s early challenges was adapting to the metric system. “I had no concept of space when measured in terms of the metric system,” he laughs. “So when our architects told me our *soggiorno* would be 45 square meters and have a floor to cathedral ceiling height of nine meters, I simply had no idea how large a room we were creating.”

The resulting project might be a bit bigger than they originally planned. “It took three times the money and three times as long as we thought,” says Carmine. “But we love to entertain family and friends who live nearby or visit from the States. And we didn’t want our children and grandchildren to have to stay in hotels when they visited.”

## AIMING FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Carmine and Cheryl plan to spend half the year in Abruzzo, split between their *pied-à-terre* in Vasto with more time at the new villa. Vasto, right on the coast, has many fine restaurants, cultural events and a lively rhythm in summer. Monteodorisio, on the other hand, is in the hills, 325 metres above sea level, affords breathtaking views of the countryside and tranquility.

Carmine says the town, with a population of about 2300 people, is small, but very picturesque. It boasts an 11<sup>th</sup>-century Norman fortification and several other notable *palazzi*. The Palazzo Suriani, for example, is now a museum offering tours, as well as being a lookout point for a view of the whole valley.

“Covid really taught us how to retire,” reflects Carmine. “When we were in lockdown — although Cheryl continued her work — we learned how to slow down.” But now retirement means taking a fresh look at how to live, sustainability-wise.

They have added solar and sunk a well with the help of a water diviner, an 83-year-old local, recommended by a neighbour. “Though our engineers scoffed at the notion that he could find water, using their sophisticated equipment, they ended up digging the well exactly where he predicted we would find the most water,” recalls Carmine.

The Iannaccones say they are blessed to know some wonderful people here in Abruzzo and are building new relationships all the time. They take pride in the work they’ve undertaken and in playing a small part in keeping local traditions alive.

*Linda Dini Jenkins is a travel planner and author of several books. Her new book, How Way Leads on to Way, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press.*

# QUICK STOP

## OLIVE OIL AND CERAMICS MUSEUMS IN LORETO APRUTINO



**Loreto Aprutino (PE)** is part of the renowned “Golden Triangle of Olive Oil,” celebrated for the exceptional quality and abundance of its oil.

To explore this heritage, the town’s **Museum of Olive Oil** offers a small but fascinating glimpse into a tradition that dates back to the 4th century B.C. Set inside a former olive press (*frantoio*), the museum displays original equipment including the millstone used to crush olives and a wooden three-screw press that extracted the precious oil. Visitors can take a guided tour to see how olive oil was made using traditional methods.

The mill itself, built in 1880 by local innovator Raffaele Baldini Palladini, was ahead of its time – he pioneered pressing olives immediately after harvest to ensure top quality oil. This museum recently earned first place in the National Competition for “Oil Tourism,” a testament to its unique appeal.

Nearby, the **Acerbo Museum of Castelli Ceramics** complements the story of Abruzzo’s heritage. It houses a carefully curated collection that once belonged to Baron Giacomo Acerbo dell’Aterno of delicate ceramics dating from the early 1600s to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Here you can trace the evolution of styles and techniques from Abruzzo’s master potters.

Both museums are compact but fascinating, perfect for a quick cultural stop. In summer, they are open from Tuesday to Sunday; in other seasons – weekends only. To see the opening hours and ticket prices visit their [website](#). For updates about the events in the museums follow them on [Facebook](#).

# EASY TRAILS

## CONTEMPORARY ART TRAIL IN THE ABRUZZO NATIONAL PARK



- **Length:** about 7km
- **Time:** 2 1/2 hours
- **Starting Point:** the parking lot near the Vallecupa outside Pescasseroli (AQ). See the map on the [ArteParco website](#)

In the National Park of Abruzzo, Lazio and Molise, the **ArteParco** trail is an open-air contemporary art museum. Beginning just outside the small town of **Pescasseroli**, this route winds through an ancient beech forest, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where many trees are about 600 years old. The trail connects large-scale contemporary sculptures by Italian artists.

At each installation, you will find a QR code that links to an audio file (in Italian) and a page with information about the artwork. Since its inception in 2018, a new installation has been added every summer. Each installation is thoughtfully integrated into its natural setting: a giant wooden hand gently holding a young tree; a metal outline of a child who appears to peer curiously from behind a rock; a terracotta sculpture of a fairy set into the trunk of a tree and camouflaged by naturally growing mushrooms and moss; a large graphic heart superimposed onto a tree.

It is an easy walk rather than a strenuous hike, ideal for those who want to enjoy art and nature at a relaxed pace. The trail can be busy in August and on summer weekends, when it attracts many visitors.

You will find more details on the trail’s [website](#).

## A POTATO BORN OF A DRAINED LAKE

By Anna Swann

Abruzzo is home to a humble yet exceptional potato — one of Italy's finest. Known as the *patata di Avezzano*, or by its official name, *patata del Fucino IGP* (Indicazione Geografica Protetta, which means Protected Geographical Indication), it is celebrated for its superior quality and flavour. It is cultivated in the fertile bed of a lake that vanished long ago.

Once the third-largest lake in Italy, Lago Fucino dominated this plateau until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was drained in a bold engineering project completed in 1875 (read more about it in the August 2020 issue of *ABRUZZISSIMO*). What remained was a vast area of fertile soil, rich in minerals and sitting 700 metres above sea level, encircled by the Apennine mountains. This reclaimed land is now one of Italy's most important agricultural zones — and it's here that the story of the Fucino potato begins.

The area stretches across about 12,000 hectares in the province of L'Aquila, 4,000 of which are potato fields where *patate del Fucino* are cultivated under strict guidelines, guaranteeing their traceability and quality. It's not a mass-market product. These potatoes, brushed clean of earth and sold with a distinctive IGP label, are considered among the best in Italy. Their secret lies not in genetic manipulation or intensive farming, but in the soil and the air — clean and mineral-rich.

The varieties most commonly grown in the Fucino include *Agata*, *Agria*, and *Colomba*, valued for their consistency and delicate taste. There's also growing interest in *Vitelotte*, the purple-fleshed potato that brings a splash of colour — and a dose of antioxidants — to the plate.

Culinarily, the Fucino potato is somewhat of an overachiever. Whether boiled, roasted, fried, or mashed, it holds its shape and flavour beautifully. Locals use it in everything from *gnocchi* and *gateaux di patate* to soups and even bread dough to make the traditional *pane con patate* (see a recipe on the next page).

Since 1971, the town of Avezzano has held an annual festival in its honour (see below). The potato has also been featured on national television and included in international development projects, championed by Italian pop stars and celebrities. More recently, it returned to the spotlight thanks to an innovative patented method developed by local producers and the



University of L'Aquila. This technique enables the potatoes to naturally absorb phosphorus from the soil, reducing the need for chemical fertilisers. So now, beyond being delicious, they are also a symbol of environmental innovation and responsible farming.

In addition to *patate di Avezzano*, the fertile land of the Fucino basin yields carrots, fennel, and prized peas. It is home to some 3,000 agricultural enterprises and employs around 15,000 workers.

### WHERE TO BUY THE FUCINO POTATOES

Supermarkets such as Lidl, Conad, and Carrefour in Abruzzo sell Fucino potatoes in 1.5-2 kg nets, clearly labelled *Patata del Fucino IGP*. You'll often come across mobile vendors as well, parked by the roadside or making their way through towns and villages, announcing their arrival through a megaphone: *Patate di Avezzano! Patate di Avezzano!* Alternatively, you can buy directly from these producers in the Fucino area:

**Azienda Agricola Di Pasquale Giancarlo** (Via Galeone, 28, Avezzano) — they also have an [online shop](#).

**Orto del Fucino** (Via Santa Maria, 102, Luco dei Marsi) — in their shop or [online](#).

### Sagra della patata

Held in Avezzano during the first week of August since 1971, this festival attracts large crowds to Piazza Borgo Via Nuova. The menu is devoted entirely to local specialities from the Fucino area, with the potato as the undisputed star — *gnocchi*, potato soup, potato pizza, chips, sweet potato fritters, and more. Announcements and the full programme are published on the municipality's [website](#).

# ABRUZZESE POTATO BREAD

By Anna Swann

Potato bread (*pane con patate*) is a traditional staple of Abruzzo, especially in the inland provinces of L'Aquila and Teramo. It is officially recognised as a *Prodotto Agroalimentare Tradizionale* (Traditional Agri-food Product) of the region. The dough is enriched with potatoes – an addition that not only enhances flavour and texture but also extends the bread's shelf life. This practice began in the mountain areas, where potatoes were more affordable and easier to come by than flour, offering a practical way to make supplies last.

The result is a rustic loaf with a crisp crust, a soft, moist crumb, and a deeply satisfying flavour. The starch in the potatoes helps the bread stay tender and fragrant for up to a week. Though the process involves long rests and several rises, the outcome rewards the time and care it demands.

The *solina* flour gives the bread a distinctive nutty aroma and open crumb, but it can be substituted with another types of good-quality bread flour. This bread keeps beautifully for up to a week, its moisture preserved by the potato starch.

## INGREDIENTS

### For the pre-ferment (*biga*):

- 300g *solina* wheat flour (or another type of bread flour)
- 135g water
- 3g fresh brewer's yeast

### For the final dough:

- All of the prepared *biga*
- 100g re-milled durum wheat semolina
- 75g water
- 2g fresh brewer's yeast
- 120g boiled, peeled, and mashed potatoes
- 10g salt



## PREPARATION

Prepare the *biga* (pre-ferment starter) one day in advance. In a large bowl, dissolve the yeast in water. Add the *solina* flour and mix briefly – just enough to hydrate the flour. Cover the bowl with a damp cloth and leave to ferment at 18°C for 18–20 hours, or until bubbly and slightly domed.

When it is ready, transfer the *biga* to a stand mixer (or large mixing bowl). Add the semolina, water, mashed potatoes, and yeast. Mix slowly and add salt. Continue kneading until the dough is smooth, elastic, and slightly tacky.

Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover, and let it rise in a warm spot for an hour.

After an hour, turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Gently stretch it into a rectangle. Fold one side into the centre, then the opposite side over it (like folding a letter). Roll the dough from the top down into a log. Return it to the bowl and let it rise for another 1 hour. If the dough still feels loose, repeat the fold and rest again before shaping.

Then, on a clean work surface, gently round the dough into a tight ball, taking care not to deflate it too much. Place it seam-side up in a floured proving basket or bowl lined with a cloth. Let the shaped loaf rest for about 45 minutes, while you preheat the oven to 220°C (fan off). Place a small pan with water at the bottom of the oven for creating steam.

Turn the loaf onto a parchment-lined tray. Score the top with a sharp blade. Spray or splash water into the hot pan to create steam, then close the oven door quickly.

Bake at 220°C for 10 minutes, then reduce to 200°C and bake for 20 minutes. Lower again to 180°C and bake for another 20–25 minutes, until deep golden brown and the loaf sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom.

Remove the bread and let it cool upright on a wire rack, to allow steam to escape and the crust to stay crisp.

# ANGIOLINA'S CROSTATA DI RICOTTA

By Angiolina De Angelis

In my family we make *ricotta* by re-cooking the whey left over after preparing *pecorino* cheese (in fact, *ricotta* means "recooked"). In our family, we eat it often – fresh, still warm, or baked into simple cakes like this quick *crostata*.

Everyone in the family loves this *crostata*. We usually make it when *ricotta* production starts up again in spring, around Easter time, but it's equally delicious in the summer months.

We use *ricotta di pecora* (sheep's milk *ricotta*), but you can easily substitute cow's milk *ricotta* for a milder taste. In my version, I add *centerba*, a traditional liqueur made from 100 wild herbs, produced in Tocco da Casauria. It's strong – 70% alcohol – and intensely bitter, but it adds a bold aromatic note to the filling. Feel free to replace it with any herbal liqueur you prefer.

## INGREDIENTS

**Makes 8-10 portions**

**For the shortcrust pastry:**

- 350g flour
- 200g butter, at room temperature
- 150g sugar
- a teaspoon baking powder
- A pinch of salt
- 2 whole eggs
- A drop of vanilla essence
- Grated zest of orange or lemon

**For the filling:**

- 500g sheep's milk *ricotta*
- A small glass of *centerba* liqueur
- Dark chocolate shavings
- 2 eggs
- Sugar to taste



## PREPARATION

In a bowl, break the eggs and add the butter, sugar, and baking powder. Mix until all the ingredients are well combined.

Gradually add the flour and knead until you have a smooth, even dough. Form into a ball, wrap, and refrigerate for a couple of hours.

Roll out two-thirds of the chilled pastry using a rolling pin. Flip the sheet over into a buttered and floured tart tin (26 cm in diameter). Trim the edges with a knife to create an even border.

For the filling, combine the *ricotta*, sugar, grated lemon zest, and chocolate shavings in a large bowl. Stir gently until you have a smooth, creamy mixture.

Pour the filling into the pastry case and smooth the top. Decorate the *crostata* with the remaining dough. Use your imagination here – classic latticework is always a good option.

Bake in a static (no fan) oven preheated to 180°C for 40 minutes.



**GIVE THE GIFT OF A ONE-  
YEAR SUBSCRIPTION**  
TO YOUR FAVOURITE ABRUZZOPHILE  
**SEE MORE DETAILS ON OUR WEBSITE**

**ABRUZZISSIMO**  
MAGAZINE

**NEXT ISSUE**  
**JULY-AUGUST**

# **ABRUZZISSIMO** MAGAZINE

**TORRE DE' PASSERI**

**A small town with a big past**

**PERDONANZA CELESTINIANA  
IN L'AQUILA**

**The historic annual festival  
honouring Pope Celestine V**

**FROM ROME TO ORTONA ON  
FOOT**

**How a teacher walked the  
Cammino di San Tommaso solo,  
with €20 and a prayer**

**EASY WALKS, TRAVEL TIPS,  
RECIPES**

**NEXT ISSUE IN YOUR INBOX ON JULY 5**

**[Subscribe to ABRUZZISSIMO here](#)**

**[DONATE TO SUPPORT ABRUZZISSIMO](#)**

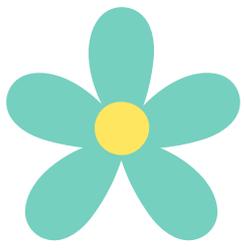


106

FESTIVALS  
AND SAGRE

IN ABRUZZO





# CONTENTS

JUNE FESTIVALS	3
JULY FESTIVALS	6
AUGUST FESTIVALS	23

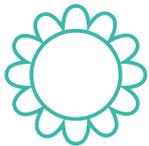
As the summer begins, Abruzzo is getting ready for a season of traditional *sagre* (food festivals), concerts, religious processions, and historical re-enactments. Towns and villages will be abuzz with happy crowds celebrating the region's rich cultural heritage and joyful feasts. Many of the festivals are small and local and finding information about them in advance might be difficult, so we have put together this supplement to help you plan your summer adventures.

In this round-up, you will find up-to-date information about schedules, locations, ticket sales, and other useful details for 106 summer festivals and events. It is an extensive but not comprehensive list, so we suggest that you keep an eye on our [Facebook page](#) and join our [online community](#) where we post many event announcements.

Since many dates were unavailable at the time of writing, we have provided approximate dates based on previous years.

**While we did everything to ensure the accuracy of the information, make sure you check the times and programme in the links provided before heading to a festival.**

#### SYMBOLS FOR QUICK REFERENCE:



TRADITIONAL FESTIVAL



FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL



MUSIC FESTIVAL



HISTORICAL RE-ENACTMENT



HARD TO CLASSIFY, BUT A LOT OF FUN!



ARTS

# JUNE

## FESTA DELLA PASTORIZIA

**When:** June 7

**Where:** Rendinara (AQ)

**Additional information:** See the full programme on the ProLoco's [page](#).



An annual event (it will be the 27<sup>th</sup> edition this year) dedicated to celebrating the local shepherding tradition. Held in Rendinara, a tiny hamlet of the Morino municipality, the festival offers visitors the chance to observe traditional ricotta production carried out by local shepherds. Attendees can also sample typical regional dishes such as *mezze maniche all'amatriciana*, slow-cooked lamb ("*al cotturo*"), lamb grilled over embers, and classic *arrosticini*. In addition to food stands, the festival includes workshops focused on shepherd life, guided hikes, live folk music and traditional dances.

**While you are there:** take a walk to the top of the hamlet and sit on the oversized Big Bench to enjoy panoramic views of the Roveto Valley.

## FESTA DI SAN ZOPITO MARTIRE

**When:** June 7-9

**Where:** Loreto Aprutino (PE)

**Additional information:** See the full programme on the festival's [page](#)



Every Pentecost in Loreto Aprutino, the ancient ritual of San Zopito draws locals and visitors alike. Central to the event is a white ox, raised especially for the event, trained to kneel at key points along a village procession, carrying a girl dressed in white. The ox pays homage to the saint whose relics, legend says, miraculously chose Loreto as their resting place. The celebration includes a blessing of rural guilds, a parade of horses and mules, and a Monday procession with a silver bust of the saint.

## BUCCHIANICO IN FESTA

**When:** June 26-29

**Where:** Bucchianico (CH)

**Additional information:** See the full programme on the festival's [Facebook page](#).



A four-day bonanza of music, dances, food, and wine in the pretty hill-top town of Bucchianico. Food stands will be serving street fare, beer, and wine to enjoy while listening to live pop music concerts. There will be a small market with local farmers selling cheese, cured meats, olive oil, and honey. Put on your disco garb to groove to the 80s and 90s music and enjoy swing, country, and blues!

**While you're there:** Visit the private [Olive Oil Museum](#) located in an 18th-century mill run by a local family to learn about the history and production of the famous local oil. Booking essential.



## NOTTE ROMANTICA

**When:** June 21

**Where:** Scanno (AQ) and other towns

**Additional information:** The programme for Scanno will be available on the ProLoco's [page](#).



Each June, Abruzzo takes part in the Notte Romantica, a nationwide event organised by *I Borghi più belli d'Italia*, an association that promotes and preserves small Italian towns of historical and artistic interest. The event brings twilight concerts, candlelit walks, and guided tours to Abruzzo's most beautiful towns. In Scanno, for instance, you can see local women dressed in the traditional costume for the occasion. Other participating villages include Penne, Tagliacozzo, Casoli, and Opi – each offering their own programme. The event's location will be published shortly on the *I Borghi più belli d'Italia* [website](#).

## CLASSICAL MUSIC IN ALBA FUCENS

**When:** June 29 – September 6

**Where:** Massa D'Albe, Rocca di Cambio, Rocca di Mezzo, Rosciolo

**Additional information:** See the full line-up and book tickets on the festival's [website](#).



The 8th edition of Festiv'Alba brings music and theatre to the stunning ancient Roman amphitheatre of Alba Fucens, medieval churches of Santa Maria in Valle Porclaneta in Rosciolo, Santa Lucia in Rocca di Cambio and the highland plateau of Piani di Pezza in Rocca di Mezzo. The programme includes 31 live performances: concerts of Baroque music, Beethoven, Vivaldi, several operas as well as some rock and pop music.

**While you're there:** Stroll among the glorious ruins of what once was a Roman megacity. Guided tours can be booked in the local tourist office, on the main piazza.

## UN CASTELLO DI BIRRA

**When:** June 17-28

**Where:** Sant'Omero (TE)

**Additional information:** The full programme is available on the organisers' [page](#)



A lively event in the streets and squares of Sant'Omero's historic centre. Showcasing an impressive selection of craft beers from local, national, and international breweries, the festival offers a gastronomic delight with wood-fired pizza, arrosticini, and porchetta. Each evening, there will be live music, followed by DJ sets. Visitors can also explore the town's historic landmarks like the well of Palazzo Tanzj and the Palazzo Alvaro de Mendoza.

## A LOVE SUPREME - CAPESTRANO INCONTRI JAZZ

**When:** June 27-29

**Where:** Capestrano (AQ)

**Additional information:** See the full programme on the organisers' [page](#).



A series of jazz concerts organised by the Associazione Culturale Musicarti. Featuring saxophone and a baroque choir performing jazz improvisations, Bach, Debussy, and Ravel, the three concerts will be performed within the magnificent setting of the church of San Pietro ad Oratorium.

**While you're there:** on the left side of the church entrance, you can see the mysterious Sator Square. It contains a five-word Latin palindrome: Sator, Arepo, Tenet, Opera, Rotas. The text may be read in any direction, rotated 180 degrees and still be read the same way. While these inscriptions have been found in several locations across Europe, their significance is still unclear.

## ABRUZZO IN BOLLA

**When:** June 21-23

**Where:** L'Aquila

**Additional information:** See the full programme [here](#)



This event celebrates the art of sparkling wine production, offering masterclasses, tasting booths, and talks designed for enthusiasts, experts, and industry professionals alike. Visitors can sample wines directly from producers and attend sessions featuring some of the most prominent producers of Italian sparkling wine. The event will be held at Palazzo dell'Emiciclo, the seat of the Regional Council. Show cooking and food corners will be set up under the colonnade and the winter garden. Tickets cost from €18 (purchased [online](#); at the door €23) for four sparkling wine tastings, two food area vouchers, and one cocktail.

# JULY

## FESTA DEL PEPERONE

**When:** first week of July

**Where:** Sant'Onofrio, Campoli (TE)

**Additional information:** See the full programme and this year's dates on the organisers' [page](#)

A small, joyful food festival featuring the *peperone di Sant'Onofrio*, a pepper specific to the area and the region. The feast's menu features various dishes with the pepper: pancakes, stuffed peppers, pasta, and the traditional local specialty *paparille pummadore ove e saggicce* (peppers and tomatoes with egg and sausage).



## SAGRA DELLA PECORA ALLA CALLARA

**When:** the first week of July

**Where:** Villa Rosa di Martinsicuro (TE)

**Additional information:** This year's dates will be announced on the organisers' [page](#) soon

The festival celebrates one of Abruzzo's oldest, humblest, and most emblematic dishes, *pecora alla callara* – a slow-cooked sheep meat stew – that was once the staple of shepherds along the seasonal migration routes. The recipe has its roots in the pastoral traditions of the region, and likely came about from the need to make use of old sheep no longer fit for breeding or sale. Alongside *pecora alla callara*, the festival's menu will include a variety of other local specialities: *bruschette*, fried treats, sausages, truffle tagliatelle, and *olive all'ascolana*. All accompanied by excellent local wines. The sagra runs for 5 days in the pine grove on Via Franchi.



## SAGRA DEI PIATTI TIPICI

**When:** first weekend of July

**Where:** Corropoli (TE)

**Additional information:** The full programme and this year's dates will be available on the organisers' [page](#).

Now in its 41 year, the sagra spans over five evenings. Opening at 7pm, food stands will sell traditional dishes such as fried cheese, grilled goat meat and sausages, sweet fried cremini, baccalà, pasta alla chitarra with pallotine. All accompanied by good local wine and live music.



## BORGO DI BRACE

**When:** July 8-13

**Where:** Tortoreto (TE)

**Additional information:** The full details are published on the organisers' [page](#).



For several evenings, Tortoreto will celebrate all things grilled with *arrostitcini* leading the way alongside Angus steaks, grilled sausages, panini sandwiches, and baked goodies.

For six days, the air will be filled with music, laughter, and the buzz of family-friendly activities, including inflatable play areas for children. As dusk deepens, there will be live concerts.

## SAGRA DI PIZZA FRITTA

**When:** first weekend of July

**Where:** Turrivalignani (PE)

**Additional information:** Full details and this year's dates will be announced on the Pro Loco's [page](#).



Now in its 23rd year, the sagra takes place in Piazza Berlinguer, in the town centre. Stalls serve hearty street food, with the simple yet much-loved pizza fritta as the star of the event. This plain, deep-fried pizza is topped with just a sprinkle of salt, a humble classic that never fails to draw a crowd in Abruzzo. Live music and traditional dances begin at 9pm.

## ASCANIO FESTIVAL

**When:** mid-July

**Where:** Tagliacozzo (AQ)

**Additional information:** The full programme and this year's dates will be published shortly on the event's [page](#)



The Ascanio Festival is a three-day historical Renaissance reenactment celebration held in the historic centre of Tagliacozzo, honouring the town's renowned goldsmith Ascanio Mari, a protégé of Benvenuto Cellini. The event transforms the town into a lively stage filled with flag-throwers, jugglers, fortune-tellers, and street performers, alongside a medieval craft market and nightly Renaissance banquets (advance booking is required). Local restaurants join in with themed menus, offering a taste of ancient recipes.

## BIRRART CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL

**When:** mid-July

**Where:** Tagliacozzo (AQ)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and full programme will be published on the event's [page](#)



The 14th edition of Tagliacozzo's Craft Beer Festival brings together master brewers from across the region, offering visitors the chance to taste Abruzzo's finest craft beers. Alongside the brews, food stalls and artisans will be selling local crafts and typical products. All of this is complemented by an eclectic programme of live music and street performances.

## MOSTRA MERCATO DEL TARTUFO

**When:** mid- July

**Where:** Quadri (CH)

**Additional information:** The date and full programme will be available on the event's Facebook [page](#)



Now in its 15th year, the Mostra Mercato del Tartufo returns to Piazza del Popolo in Quadri, a small town renown for its quality truffles that earned it official title of Città del Tartufo. The event brings together regional food, wine, crafts and music. Alongside stalls offering fresh truffles, visitors can taste and buy cheeses, cured meats, honeys, preserves and traditional baked goodies. Local artisans will display their work in wood, ceramics and jewellery, creating live on site.

A team of chefs will prepare a truffle-themed menu served both at lunch and dinner, featuring truffle bruschetta, two pasta dishes, a main course with a side, and wine. Among the most anticipated moments is the truffle dog competition, where expert hunting dogs show off their sharp instincts in a friendly, open-air contest.

## PESCARA JAZZ FESTIVAL

**When:** July 8-14

**Where:** Pescara

**Additional information:** To see the full programme and book tickets, go to Pescara Jazz Festival [website](#)



Every summer since 1969, Pescara has welcomed international jazz musicians. Over the years, some of the greatest jazz performers from around the world have participated in the festival. Concerts take place in the city's open-air theatre and some smaller locations that host free concerts.

## SAGRA DELL'AGLIO ROSSO DI SULMONA

**When:** second weekend in July

**Where:** Campo di Fano (AQ)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and full programme will be published on the event's [page](#)



The *sagra* celebrates the local red garlic – a distinctive variety known for its delicate flavour and long shelf life – the festival was founded to safeguard and promote *aglio rosso di Sulmona*, which remains an important source of income for local farmers. Food stalls, tastings, and traditional dishes all centre around the star ingredient – garlic, it is a cheerful (and fragrant) festival that draws big crowds.

## SAGRA DELLA FRITTELLA ORNANESE

**When:** mid-July

**Where:** Ornano Grande di Colledara (TE)

**Additional information:** The date and full programme will be available on the event's Facebook [page](#).



Now in its 19th year, the festival runs for four evenings from 7 pm, with food stands offering traditional foods. The star of the event is the *frittella ornanese* – a dough pressed and fried then filled with prosciutto, cheeses, cured meats, and a special mushroom sauce. In addition to classic fillings, the *frittella* is also served with inventive combinations such as tomato and peppers, eggs and peppers, and the renowned *porchetta* from Colledara. All this is perfectly paired with quality beer. Each evening includes live music. A small, very local, but full of cheer event!

## CALICI DI STELLE

**When:** four weeks, end of July-August

**Where:** Ortona and wineries across Abruzzo

**Additional information:** The full programme will be available in June on the organisers' [website](#).



From the end of July and throughout August, Abruzzo joins in *Calici di Stelle* – Italy's beloved celebration of wine under the stars. Organised by the Movimento Turismo del Vino, the event brings together wineries and music for a month-long toast to summer nights.

The gala event is held at the Aragonese Castle in Ortona, where over 30 wineries offer tastings within the walls of the cliffside fortress, overlooking the shimmering *Costa dei Trabocchi*. Across the region, dozens of wineries host their own evenings with live music, food, and the occasional telescope – inviting visitors to sip, savour, and look skyward.

## FORO IN FESTA

**When:** mid-July

**Where:** Francavilla al Mare (CH)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and full programme will be published on the event's [page](#)



Food festival celebrating the local dish *sagne e ceci* (pasta with chickpeas). Food stands sell other typical dishes and wine. Live music every evening.

## PALIO DEL BARONE

**When:** mid-July

**Where:** Francavilla al Mare (CH)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and full programme will be published on the event's [page](#)



A competition for a banner that commemorates the 1234 visit to the town of Vicar Frederick II, sent by the emperor to visit the Barony of Tortoreto. Features costumed characters representing the dignitaries who visited, a medieval procession of stilt walkers, flag wavers, jesters, musicians, and men in arms.

## SAGRA DELLE 'NDERNAPPE

**When:** Last weekend of July

**Where:** Monteodorisio (CH)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and full programme will be available on the event's [Facebook page](#)



A traditional food festival celebrating one of Abruzzo's lesser-known but historically significant pasta dishes. 'Ndernappe are handmade using tritello flour – a mixture of white flour and wheat bran – blended simply with water and salt. The pasta is served with a rustic sauce made from locally produced ventricina, a slightly spicy, cured pork salami typical of the area. The stalls at the sagra will also be dishing out by cheese-and-egg pallotte casce e ove, another traditional staple in the area.

## CELLARI APERTI

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Castel del Monte (AQ)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published on the event's [page](#).



The annual three-day *Cellari Aperti* event opens the *cellere* – the town's historic cellars – where, walking around the old centre, visitors can taste traditional dishes such as classic *calcioni*, *pallotte cacio e ova* made with Castel del Monte's *canestrato* cheese; *ciafrichigli* with beans, a traditional hand-rolled pasta from the area; *foglie e patate*; crosta with marчетto cheese; focaccia topped with donkey mortadella; and *ferratelle* served with *ricotta*. All of this will be paired with craft beer from the local brewery Mappapels and wine. You will be given a map of the cellar's to visit when you pay for your tasting vouchers at the start of the itinerary. Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon are the busiest times.

## BORGUSTANDO

**When:** Last weekend of July

**Where:** Fresagrandinaria (CH)

**Additional information:** The date and full programme will be available on the event's [Facebook page](#)



A small lively sagra (summer edition; they also have one in December) with food stands set up along the charming streets of the town. Visitors can taste traditional dishes such as *cif e ciaf*, *spezzatino*, *scrippelle* and many other prepared by local women. There will be live folk music and a great atmosphere.

## MONS PAGUS A.D. 1566 FESTIVAL

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Montepagano (TE)

**Additional information:** For more details see the event's [page](#)



The picturesque town of Montepagano, with its Renaissance layout of arched gateways, churches, piazzas, noble palaces and panoramic terraces, offers a natural stage for a historic re-enactment. In its the seventh edition, Mons Pagus A.D. 1566 brings drummers, falconers, flag-throwers, fire-eaters and travelling performers to the streets. Central to the event is the grand Renaissance parade, with over 200 costumed participants.

Visitors will find artisan food stalls inside the old *fondaci*, selling *porchetta*, *arrosticini*, sweet fritters, local beer and more. Entry costs €5 per person, with free admission for children under 12 and Montepagano residents. A shuttle service from Roseto degli Abruzzi will run during the event.

## CORSA DEL CAPPELLO

**When:** first weekend of July

**Where:** Paganica (AQ)

**Additional information:** Full programme and times can be found on the event's [Facebook page](#)



Replicates a relay race between the town's neighbourhoods begun in the town in the 17th century in which hats are used instead of batons to hand off. It took place during the celebrations of the Madonna dell'Assunta, which at that time was the most solemn festival of the year. For a long time, all traces of the "hat race" were lost, but in 1973, the town revived the tradition. Everyone gathers to cheer the runners, and the atmosphere is festive with food and wine at the end of each day.



## DALL'ETNA AL GRAN SASSO

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Citta' Sant' Angelo (TE)

**Additional information:** The full programme and details of activities can be found on the event's [website](#) and Facebook [page](#)

Citta' Sant' Angelo is twinned with the Sicilian town of Nicolosi. The festival celebrates their connection with displays of traditional arts and crafts of Abruzzo and Sicily, a parade of Sicilian carts, dancing in the square, musical and folklore shows, and food stands with typical Sicilian specialties.



## SAGRA & PROFANA

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Loreto Aprutino (PE)

**Additional information:** For more details see the ProLoco's [page](#)

After a long pause, Loreto Aprutino's historic festival Sagra & Profano returned last year, reviving a beloved local tradition. The event fills the town with craft stalls, traditional Abruzzese food, and cultural happenings. A highlight is the *Notte Bianca*, when the historic centre is closed to traffic and lit by torches. The town's museums will be open late at night and artisans will be doing traditional crafts demonstrations.



**While you are there:** Visit the town's small botanical garden, home to a variety of lush plants. It has a viewpoint within a small olive grove with a stunning panoramic view of Loreto Aprutino. Book your visit via the garden's [page](#).

## FESTA DEL CONTADINO

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Forcelle di Tornimparte (AQ)

**Additional information:** The full programme is published on the organisers' Facebook [page](#)



## FESTIVAL DELLA MONTAGNA

**When:** July 25-27

**Where:** Fara San Martino (CH)

**Additional information:** The details will be available on the festival's [page](#) shortly.



## SAGRA DEL VINO

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Controguerra (TE)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and full programme will be published on the event's [page](#)



A dive into the past, the Farmer's Festival evokes the lifestyle of the past. You can participate in haymaking and cheese preparation. Food stands will sell typical local dishes such as *stringozzi alla contadina*, goat and sheep stew, *zamparella*, sausages with beans, peasant soup, and *arrosticini*. Live concerts every evening.

One of Abruzzo's newer festivals, it draws lively crowds to the picturesque mountain town of Fara San Martino. The three-day programme is packed with guided walks for various fitness levels, a trail running competition, a photo exhibition, food and wine tastings, and live music concerts.



During the 38<sup>th</sup> edition of the *sagra* guests can taste typical regional dishes such as fried cheese, pasta *mezze maniche* with Montepulciano d'Abruzzo and *fagioli con le cotiche*. The event proudly showcases the local wines for which the area is renowned. Importantly, the festival also honours its commitment to the environment, using biodegradable plates, cutlery, and glasses throughout. Live music every evening, ranging from traditional folk to rock and pop.



## INTERNATIONAL CLASSIC CARS SHOW

**When:** July 1-6

**Where:** Avezzano (AQ)

**Additional information:** See the full programme on the The Avezzano Circuit – Abruzzo Gran Tour [website](#)



The Avezzano Circuit – Abruzzo Gran Tour is a much-awaited event for Avezzano and the region. It is one of the most important international events for classic car lovers attracting thousands of spectators. The cars will cruise our spectacular mountain roads with sharp bends and panoramic vistas. One of the highlights of the rally is the *Concorso di eleganza*, a public voting that attracts around 6000 spectators who choose the most elegant car by ballot. There you can see the classic cars close up, talk to their lucky owners, and cast your vote.

## GUARDIAGRELE OPERA FESTIVAL

**When:** end of July-August

**Where:** Guardiagrele (CH)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and programme will be announced on the festival's [website](#) and Facebook [page](#)

Summer evenings in the beautiful town of Guardiagrele are filled with classical music. Excellent operas and concerts are held in picturesque squares and the town's churches. Book your tickets early as they sell out fast.

**While you're there:** Visit the permanent exhibition of Abruzzo's Artistic Craftsmanship ([Ente Mostra dell'Artigianato Artistico Abruzzese](#)) to see the masterpieces made by the region's goldsmiths, ceramists, blacksmiths, stonecutters and other artisans.





## TRUFFLE FESTIVAL IN CAMPOVALANO

**When:** mid-July

**Where:** Campovalano (TE)

**Additional information:** this year's dates will be announced on the organisers' [Facebook page](#)



A week-long truffle feast in Campovalano accompanied by live concerts. Food stands will be selling dishes with local truffles every evening. The hugely popular Sagra del Tartufo attracting thousands of people is plastic-free, so only biodegradable plates and cutlery are used.

**While you're there:** During the festival, you can also visit the archaeological site Necropoli di Campovalano, an ancient necropolis, one of the biggest and best-preserved in Central Italy, to see some fascinating artifacts going as far back as the late Bronze Age.

## LA GIOSTRA CAVALLERESCA IN SULMONA

**When:** July 18-27

**Where:** Sulmona (AQ)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and full programme available on the festival's [website](#).



This is one of the biggest summer festivals in Abruzzo attracting thousands of spectators. The city's largest piazza is transformed into a Medieval arena, complete with sand, damsels, galloping horses, and knights. The Knightly Joust features tournaments over two weekends in late July and early August. Before each competition, 600 locals decked out in gorgeous replicas of 15th-16th century costumes walk in a procession along Corso Ovidio to Piazza Garibaldi.

## ATRI A TAVOLA

**When:** two editions in mid-July and mid-August

**Where:** Atri (TE)

**Additional information:** The dates and the full programme will be announced in the coming weeks on the festival's [page](#)



One of Abruzzo's biggest food festivals, *Atri a Tavola* showcases the excellence of Abruzzo's cuisine and culinary traditions. In the town's centre, 50 local producers will set up stalls selling their best products: wines, cheeses, cured meats, truffles, saffron, pasta, jams, honey, and liqueurs offering free tastings. In Piazza Duomo, concerts, workshops, and cooking shows will be hosted every evening, while in Piazza Duchi D'Acquaviva, food trucks from all over Italy will be selling street food. This festival is one of the best in Abruzzo for the quality of food sold with some gourmet dishes created specifically for this event (Hadria sour cocktail, a panino sandwich with local saffron, etc.). Bus shuttles will be running to take visitors from the car park near the Atri hospital to the town centre.

**While you're there:** Visit Il Duomo di Atri to see its magnificent frescoes.

## JAZZ FESTIVAL MUNTAGNINJAZZ

**When:** end of July

**Where:** various locations in and around Sulmona

**Additional information:** See the full programme on the festival's Facebook [page](#) or its [website](#).



The Muntagninjazz festival is one of the biggest music events in the Valley Peligna. The festival aims to bring music to small mountain locations and the venues include such towns as Introdacqua, Bugnara, Pacentro, Campo di Giove, and Sulmona. Some big names in Italian music perform every year. Dozens of concerts, many of them free, will also include open-air piano performances on the beautiful streets of Sulmona.

## FESTIVAL OF SANT'ANDREA IN PESCARA

**When:** last weekend of July

**Where:** Pescara

**Additional information:** The detailed programme of the festival will be published soon on the organiser's Facebook [page](#).



The last weekend of July, the city of Pescara celebrates the Feast of Saint Andrew, the Patron Saint of fishermen. On Saturday evening, food stands are set up on Piazza Sant'Andrea and concerts begin. The morning after, a procession of fishing boats takes the statue of the saint to the harbour. The festival's programme is filled with music and theatrical performances. The following Monday evening it finishes with a grand firework display that is watched by thousands of people from the beach.



## DINING WITH THE BYZANTINES IN CRECCHIO

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Crecchio (CH)

**Additional information:** The dates will be announced soon on the festival's [page](#).



The hugely popular festival *A Cena con i Bizantini* is a throwback to the 6-7th century when the Byzantines settled along the coast of the Chieti province. During the festival's three days the small village of Crecchio is animated with processions in historical costumes, medieval music, and dances. You can taste ancient Byzantine dishes and watch medieval crafts and trades demonstrations.

**While you are there:** Visit the village's medieval castle (haunted, according to the locals).

## CONCERTI DELLE ABBAZIE

**When:** July 15 – September 18

**Where:** Various locations in the province of Teramo.

**Additional information:** the dates, and programme will be published on the festival's [website](#)



Since 2015, every summer, five Benedictine abbeys in the province of Teramo become venues for a series of classical music and jazz concerts. Over the years, many renowned and young international musicians have performed during the festival. The abbeys are located in the scenic valleys between the Vomano and Mavone rivers, which are popular areas for hiking and outdoor recreation. Participating towns include Cellino Attanasio, Pineto, Roseto degli Abruzzo, Mutignano, Mosciano Sant' Angelo. During the festival, guided visits to the abbeys, and towns will be organised as well as wine and traditional food tastings.

## MAJELLA ETNOFESTIVAL

**When:** mid-July

**Where:** San Valentino in Abruzzo Citeriore (PE)

**Additional information:** The dates and full programme will be published on the festival's [page](#).



Majella EtnoFestival is one of the oldest and largest folk celebrations in the Central Apennines. Renowned for its unique atmosphere, where amateur and professional artists freely mingle alongside hundreds of enthusiastic participants, the festival offers a rare blend of concerts, workshops, and dance performances.



Porto turistico Pescara

Birre artigianali • Street Food • Musica dal vivo • Degustazioni • Workshop

## FERMENTI BEER FESTIVAL

**When:** the last week of July

**Where:** Pescara

**Additional information:** keep an eye on the festival's [page](#) for this year's dates and programme



The festival brings the region's small breweries to the Porto Turistico of Pescara. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> edition, it features tastings, workshops, live music, boat excursions, and a gourmet dinner curated in collaboration with Slow Food Abruzzo. Visitors can explore beer and food pairings, meet the brewers and enjoy quality street food. With over 15,000 visitors over five days and 21,000 beers poured at last year's edition, it is one of Abruzzo's biggest events.

## SAGRA DELLA PIZZA SCIMA

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Casoli (CH)

**Additional information:** The dates, list of locations, and full programme will be announced on the event's [page](#)

The festival is dedicated to a traditional local flatbread made without yeast, following an ancient peasant recipe. This crumbly pizza is prepared with flour, extra virgin olive oil, and white wine, and is always broken by hand rather than cut with a knife. In addition to pizza scima, you can try totera, a local dessert, along with other regional products. The full details and dates will be announced on the local news page



## SAGRA DELLA TREBBIATURA

**When:** the end of July

**Where:** Collepietro Mosciano  
Sant'Angelo (TE)

**Additional information:** See this year's dates and programme on the organisers' [Facebook page](#)



A historical re-enactment of traditional threshing. Abruzzo is historically an agricultural region – its economy has been based on farming for centuries and many traditional festivals reflect that. This small event is all about threshing – separating grains from the plants during the harvest. In the past, it was always celebrated as the end of a long season of hard work. The four days of this festival honours the summer harvest rituals and celebration of wheat.

The festival is combined with the *Sagra della fritella* – a humble fried dough delicacy that is enjoyed plain or topped with prosciutto or sugar.

The festival attracts mainly locals and includes food stands, live music, dancing, and games for children. There is also the possibility of horseback riding.

## SAGRA DEI CINGOLI CELLINESI

**When:** the last weekend of July

**Where:** Cellino Attanasio (TE)

**Additional information:** keep an eye on the local tourism [page](#) for the programme announcements.



Like many small towns in Abruzzo, Cellino Attanasio has its own special pasta: *cingoli Cellinesi*. Its origins go back to the medieval times when the town's Franciscan friars enjoyed it during religious feasts. Made with humble ingredients – flour, potatoes, and water – it is served with a tomato duck sauce of Cellino Attanasio.

On festival days, in addition to the *cingoli* pasta, you can taste other local delicacies (one of them is a dessert appetisingly called *l'ombelico del frate*, or the friar's navel). Recently, a vegetarian option of *cingoli* has been added to the festival's menu. The evenings are animated with live music and a crafts market.

## SAGRA DEL TACCHINO ALLA CANZANESE

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Canzano (TE)

**Additional information:** Find more details on the consortium's [website](#).

The programme and menus are posted on the festival's [Facebook page](#) a few weeks before the event



The festival celebrates *tacchino alla canzanese*, a local turkey dish, that was invented in the town a few centuries ago. The meat is flavoured with white wine, garlic, rosemary, and peppercorns, slowly cooked, and served cold. Apparently, the dish was given to American astronaut Neil Armstrong as a provision on his trip to the moon.

At the *sagra* you can enjoy not only *tacchino alla canzanese*, but also other traditional dishes from the Teramo province. It is, undoubtedly, one of the best food festivals in Abruzzo. The turkey meat for the *sagra* comes from a consortium of local farms that organise the event.



## PALIO DELLE BOTTI

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Corropoli (TE)

**Additional information:** The dates and full programme will be published on the event's [website](#) and Facebook [page](#)



The *Palio delle Botti* combines the excitement of a race with the grandeur of a Renaissance historical reenactment. Celebrating its 40th anniversary, this competition involves teams from the town's districts, each selecting pairs of "pushers" tasked with rolling a 70 kg barrel up a challenging course. Recognized by the National Federation of Historical Games, the *Palio delle Botti* is now a highly anticipated and celebrated event, drawing significant attention and participation not only from Corropoli but from across the entire Abruzzo region. On the second day of the event, there is also a competition for local kids pushing lighter barrels. The event is always accompanied by evening concerts and excellent street food.

## SAGRA DI CONTROGUERRA

**When:** end of July

**Where:** Controguerra (TE)

**Additional information:** The full programme with the dates for this year will be available on the organisers' [page](#)



The Sagra di Controguerra is a much-anticipated annual event, now in its 38th edition, set in the picturesque historic center of the town. Over several days, visitors are invited to indulge in a rich array of traditional dishes, such as the renowned *pappardelle* with duck sauce, *maccheroncini* pasta with meatballs, *formaggio fritto*, and many baked goodies. There will be live music performances spanning genres like swing, jazz, and pop, with different bands performing each night in Piazza Garibaldi.



## SAGRA DEL BACCALÀ IN SANT'OMERO

**When:** the third week of July

**Where:** Sant'Omero (TE)

**Additional information:** the dates of the festival and the programme will be published on the organisers' [Facebook page](#).



## FESTA DEGLI GNOMI

**When:** July 25-27

**Where:** Roccaraso, località Fonte della Guardia (AQ)

**Additional information:** Tickets cost between €5 and €15 and can be bought online on the festival's [website](#).



Sant' Omero used to be home to one of the largest importers of baccalà, salt-dried cod. No wonder the town boasts numerous baccalà recipes and is considered Abruzzo's "capital of cod". It is also home to the Sagra del Baccalà, celebrated for over 40 years, which involves the preparation of four tons of dried cod in two huge iron vats. For a week, food stands provide samplings of many delectable cod dishes and wines from the best producers in the Val Vibrata area, where Sant'Omero is located. Only Norwegian cod from certified sustainable fisheries is served during the festival.

In July, during the Festival of the Gnomes, a forested area in Roccaraso turns into an enchanted realm teeming with magical creatures. Goblins, elves, and fairies come out of their secret homes to meet children and adults who believe in magic. It is one of Abruzzo's biggest and most popular festivals for families with dances, games, face painting, and theatrical performances. There will be food tracks and picnic areas. Bring your fairy wings and an elf's pointy hat!

## UN BORGO DI BIRRA

**When:** July 14-20

**Where:** Civitella del Tronto (TE)

**Additional information:** See the programme on the festival's [Facebook page](#)



In 2014, a group of friends embarked on a mission to bring people to the historical centre of Civitella del Tronto by organizing a beer festival. What started as a modest endeavour has flourished over the years. It attracts 30,000 visitors and dozens of international brewers. Last year's edition showcased a staggering selection of 100 craft beers, brewed in Belgium, England, Germany, Sweden, and the United States. Each night, an array of musical bands entertains the crowds, and the pints are accompanied by street food, burgers, grilled meats, pizza, and *arrostiticini*.

## CERASUOLO A MARE

**When:** July-August

**Where:** Pescara, Silvi Marina, Città Sant'Angelo, Giulianova, Francavilla al Mare

**Additional information:** The dates, list of locations, and full programme will be announced on the event's [page](#)



*Cerasuolo a Mare* festival showcases Abruzzo's excellent rosé (*Cerasuolo*) wines, paired with the region's best dishes. Over the span of several weeks, the festival will unfold across coastal location, from Silvi Marina to Montesilvano, offering visitors tastings of *Cerasuolo* from dozens of local wineries at 50 tasting points on central piazzas and beaches.

## THE SAGRA DELLA MARROCCA

**When:** July 23-27

**Where:** Casalincontrada (PE)

**Additional information:** For more details see the ProLoco's [page](#)



A lively festival held in the historic centre of Casalincontrada, celebrating traditional local cuisine with a focus on *marrocche* (corn). Apart from boiled or grilled corn, you can sample gnocchi, polenta, *pallotte cacio e ova*, *pecora alla callara* (slow cooked sheep meat), *arrostiticini*, and tripe, complemented by local wine and beer. During the festival, the town's streets and squares will be filled with street performers, flag-wavers, musicians, and historical re-enactment groups add to the festive atmosphere.

# AUGUST

## SAGRA DELLE LUMACHE

**When:** the first week of August

**Where:** Bellante (TE)

**Additional information:** the dates, menus and full programme will be announced on the festival's [page](#)



At this week-long lively *sagra* you can taste many traditional dishes with... snails: tagliatelle pasta with snail sauce, fried snails, *guazzetto* soup, and other tasty local fare. The town's squares will be filled with music and artisans selling their produce.

## SFILATA DEI PALMINTIERI

**When:** August 14

**Where:** Caramanico Terme (PE)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be available on this [page](#)



On the feast day of Santa Maria Assunta, locals parade in traditional costume along the main street of the village, carrying *palmentieri*, baskets filled with sweet waffles called *pizzelle*. The *palmentieri* are gifts from the community to the patron saint, and the proceeds from their sale are donated to support the patronal festival.

## GARRUFO CON GUSTO

**When:** the first week of August

**Where:** Garrufo di Sant'Omero (TE)

**Additional information:** See the festival's dates for this year on the organisers' [page](#)



Now in its 19th year, Garrufo con gusto is another exciting food festival where you can taste traditional dishes made with strictly local ingredients: *maccheroni di Santa Scolastica* with a rooster meat *ragù*, pasta with sausages and zucchini, chicken stew, olives stuffed with minced beef, fried cheese and many more. The pasta served is made with local *saragolla* heritage grain flour. Add to these some good wine and live music, and you have a perfect week-long festival with a great atmosphere to enjoy on a summer evening.



## BORGO UNIVERSO

**When:** the first week of August

**Where:** Aielli (AQ)

**Additional information:** For the dates and programme see the organisers' [website](#) and Facebook [page](#)



Borgo Universo is a festival that blends Street Art with astronomy, set against the picturesque backdrop of the beautiful town of Aielli. Every year, the festival invites internationally acclaimed artists to create murals, sculptures, and installations that transform the village into an open-air museum. With over 50 artworks currently on display, Borgo Universo has become a dynamic and ever-evolving cultural landmark, drawing visitors from around the world to see artists at work, listen to live music, and look at the stars from the small astronomical observatory located in a medieval tower at the top of the town.

## ROCCARASO VOLA

**When:** August 2-4

**Where:** Roccaraso (AQ)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published on the event's [page](#).



The festival is a vibrant display of static and stunt kites soaring through the skies above the Aremogna mountain. It attracts around 20 kite-flying teams from across Italy. Throughout the three-day celebration, attendees can enjoy candy drops from the sky, a bubble party, and participate in kite-making workshops. The festival also includes the spectacular night-time event "Luci in Volo," with dozens of illuminated kites flown in the night skies.

## FESTA DEL CONTADINO

**When:** the first week of August

**Where:** Atessa (CH)

**Additional information:** See this year's dates and the full programme on the organisers' [page](#)

A four-day celebration of rural life, now in its 44th edition. The event honours the town's farming heritage with traditional food tastings, live folk music, and dancing in the piazza. A farmers' fair and an evening of dialect theatre add to the festive atmosphere. It is part of a summer-long programme of festivals and events in Atessa.



## SAGRA DI TORANO NUOVO

**When:** August 11-16

**Where:** Torano Nuovo (TE)

**Additional information:** The programme also includes live music performances in the town's squares. For more details see the festival's [page](#)



This longstanding annual festival celebrates the culinary heritage of Torano Nuovo, known internationally for its fine wines. Since the 1970s, the event has highlighted the area's key local products: wine, sausages featured in a variety of dishes, and pecorino cheese prepared in a distinctive battered and fried style. You can meet producers, taste and buy a wide range of regional specialties at numerous food stalls throughout the town during the festival's five days.

## SAGRA DELL'ARROSTICINO E DEL FORMAGGIO FRITTO

**When:** August 16-19

**Where:** Isola del Gran Sasso D'Italia (AQ)

**Additional information:** The programme will be published on the ProLoco's [page](#)

The annual festival in Isola del Gran Sasso celebrates two iconic Abruzzese specialties: arrosticini and fried cheese. Alongside these dishes, visitors can enjoy regional wines and other traditional products. Live music and panoramic vistas of the Gran Sasso complete the experience.

## FESTIVAL DEL PEPERONE DOLCE DI ALTINO

**When:** August 22-23

**Where:** Altino (CH)

**Additional information:** the programme and dates are announced on the organisers' [website](#) or their Facebook [page](#)

The small town of Altino hosts a lively festival dedicated to the local red sweet pepper. The town's districts prepare numerous savoury and sweet dishes with peperone dolce: pork belly, turkey, pasta, cakes, ice cream, and more. Visitors pay for tokens and go from one stand to another sampling the festive fare. There are always folk musicians playing on the streets and a great atmosphere.

**While you're there:** Visit the town's sweet pepper [museum](#) to learn about the history and production (exhibit texts are available in Italian and English) of *peperone dolce* in the area.



## SAGRA PIPINDUNE E OVE

**When:** August 2-5

**Where:** Collecorvino (PE)

**Additional information:** See the full programme on the festival's [page](#)



This year marks the 20th edition of Collecorvino's summer festival, dedicated to the traditional dish pipindune e ove – a simple, home-style plate of fried sweet peppers and eggs, once a staple in the kitchens of Abruzzo's farming families.

Held in the town's historic centre, the festival celebrates local flavours with food stalls offering not only pipindune e ove, but also other traditional dishes such as maccharune alla trescatora (bucatini with duck sauce once eaten during the wheat harvest, pimmadore e chicumbre (can you guess what it means? A tomato and tortarello cucumber salad!), local wines and sweets. The event also brings the town's old crafts to the fore, with artisans and artists animating the streets and reopening ancient workshops for demonstrations.

## SAGRA DELLA POLTA IN PACENTRO

**When:** mid-August

**Where:** Pacentro (AQ)

**Additional information:** The date of the festival is announced on the ProLoco Pacentro [page](#)



For some traditional *cucina povera* and a good excuse to wander around the picturesque town of Pacentro head to this small lively evening celebration. The humble traditional dish *polta* that will be served is made with cabbage, beans, and potatoes.

**While you're there:** Visit the 14th century Caldora Castle at the top of the town, one of the best-preserved fortified structures in Abruzzo.

## PORCHETTA FESTIVAL IN CAMPLI

**When:** August 19-24

**Where:** Campli (TE)

**Additional information:** the dates will be announced on the festival's [website](#) and their Facebook [page](#)



One of the oldest food festivals in the region, *la Sagra della porchetta*, will be holding its 53rd edition this year. A dozen Italian *porchetta* producers gather in Campli to compete for the gold medal and, for several days, the town fills up with the divine smells of roasting pork and the sounds of music, as various bands play Italian pop, rock, indie, and Latin American tunes. *Porchetta* is a moist boneless pork roast that has been made in Abruzzo for many centuries.

**While you're there:** Visit [La Scala Santa](#), or the Holy Stairs, which attracts thousands of devotees every year. The twenty-eight wooden steps surrounded by beautiful Baroque frescoes must be ascended on the knees to obtain the remission of sins.

## LA NOTTE DELLE STREGHE

**When:** third week of August

**Where:** Castel del Monte (AQ)

**Additional information:** The programme is published on the event's [page](#)



A costumed re-enactment of the ancient ritual that existed in the town for many centuries for curing children whose illness was believed to be caused by witches. Children's clothes were carried through the town to the outskirts, beaten, then burned. The festival is accompanied by music, theatre performances, and a "witch market" selling local produce and magical trinkets.

## ATRI BLUES FESTIVAL

**When:** first week of August

**Where:** Atri (TE)

**Additional information:** Full schedule is published on the Atri Blues Festival Facebook [page](#). Ticket can be bought online and sell out fast



World class blues musicians presented in rotation on outdoor and indoor stages across the town. Food, wine, and beer stands. The organisers have raised questions about the festival's future this year, but no official updates have been announced at the time of writing.

**While you're there:** Atri is famous for its liquorice. La *Bottega della Liquirizia* (Corso Elio Adriano, 93) is a historic shop that sells liquorice sweets in all forms and shapes (black spaghetti-shaped sweets, anyone?)

## THE BATTLE BETWEEN TURKS AND CHRISTIANS

**When:** Usually the first Sunday of August

**Where:** Tollo (CH)

**Additional information:** the dates will be announced on the event's [page](#)



A historical re-enactment of the events of the summer of 1566 when the Turks threatened to invade the town. More than 300 locals will parade along the streets in medieval costume: ladies, knights, pages, courtesans, Christians, Ottomans, musicians, and flag-wavers.

## SAGRA DELLA VONGOLA

**When:** first week of August

**Where:** Tortoreto (TE)

**Additional information:** See the menu and details on the event's [page](#)



For nearly half a century (this year will be its 47<sup>th</sup>), the Sagra della Vongola has drawn crowds of both locals and holidaymakers. Centred around the clam – prepared in a variety of traditional ways – the event offers a menu that includes pasta mezzemaniche alle vongole, clams in guazzetto, clams alla marinara, and generous servings of fried seafood. There's no shortage of classic sides either, from olive all'ascolana to golden cremini. All dishes are paired with wines from the nearby Teramo hills. Long communal tables are set up in Piazzale Nassirya, where food stalls open each evening for four nights.

## SAGRA DEI DOLCI TIPICI LOCALI

**When:** mid-August

**Where:** Mozzagrogna (CH)

**Additional information:** the dates will be announced on the organisers' [page](#)



Now in its 38th edition, this sagra celebrates the sweet traditions of Abruzzo with favourites like ferratelle, bocconotti, mustaccioli, and more. Held in the hilltop hamlet of Villa Romagnoli (Mozzagrogna), the evening also features savoury local dishes – from pallotte cace e ove to arrosticini – alongside pizza, wine, beer, and live music.

## CORTI ANTICHE

**When:** mid-August

**Where:** Atessa (CH)

**Additional information:** The full programme with the map of the food stands and menus is published on the event's [page](#)



Corti antiche transforms Atessa's historic centre with beautiful old courtyards opening for the event. Visitors follow a route from Piazza Oberdan through old courtyards and alleyways, sampling local dishes paired with regional wines and liqueurs, while enjoying a programme of music, theatre, and dance. The festival is commitment to reducing waste with the use of compostable plates and cutlery and surplus food donated to local non-profit organisations.



## IL CATENACCIO IN SCANNO

**When:** August 14

**Where:** Scanno (AQ)

**Additional information:** Keep an eye out for the programme announcement [here](#)



## MAGNAMAJELLA IN SERRAMONACESCA

**When:** August 4

**Where:** Serramonacesca (PE)

**Additional information:** Tickets cost €30 per person (includes all food and drinks). See the organisers' Facebook [page](#) for more details



One of the most beautiful events in Abruzzo, *Il Catenaccio* (or "*Ju Catenacce*" in dialect), a re-enactment of an ancient marriage procession. Locals, dressed in traditional festive costumes, walk the narrow streets of the medieval village in pairs, led by the bride and groom. The women's costumes are made exactly the way they were in the 1700s. The procession finishes in the central square with dances and traditional music.

**While you're there:** Take a dip in the cool waters of the Scanno Lake which has been awarded Blue Flags for several years for its water quality.

An annual event organised by a local cultural association. Participants walk (accompanied by a guide) from Passolanciano to Serramonacesca stopping at tasting points to sample honey, cheeses, traditional baked goodies, hearty peasant dishes, and wine. The walking trail runs through the Majella National Park and boasts breathtaking mountain views with hermitages and old shepherds' stone huts. It is a very popular event and the number of participants is limited to 600, so book as soon as the event is announced. Participants can park in Serramonacesca and take a shuttle to the start of the trail in Passolanciano.

**While you're there:** Visit the 11th-century Abbey San Liberatore a Majella, one of the most important examples of Romanesque architecture in Abruzzo.



## LA PERDONANZA IN L'AQUILA

**When:** end of August

**Where:** L'Aquila

**Additional information:** For details, go to the [website](#) and the event's [page](#)



Since 1294, the city of L'Aquila has been celebrating La Perdonanza (The Celestinian Forgiveness). Anyone who enters the Basilica di Santa Maria di Collemaggio between August 28 and 29 is granted plenary indulgence. A week-long programme of celebrations includes religious services, opening of the Holy Door, classical music concerts, and a procession carrying the historic 13th-century document, Bolla del Perdono, signed by Celestine V. The Celestinian Forgiveness celebration has recently been declared an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO.

**While you're there:** Take a tour of Abruzzo's capital in an electric mini-bus to see the most beautiful landmarks of the historical centre. Tickets can be booked via [TripAdvisor](#) or at the tourist office on Via Cimino, 11.

## SAGRA DE J'NTREMÈ

**When:** mid-August

**Where:** Gagliano Aterno (AQ)

**Additional information:** The programme and dates will be available on the town's Facebook [page](#)



Now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year, annual food festival returns for three days of regional flavours, live music, and community celebrations. The highlight is *j'ntremè*, a local dish made from lamb innards in a sweet-and-sour sauce, based on a historic recipe from the Poor Clare nuns of the town's Santa Chiara Monastery. Prepared by the local association "Com'è," it's available throughout the event alongside pasta dishes, farro, and the ever-popular *arrosticini*. Each evening features live music and DJ sets in the village square.



## TAGLIACOZZO MID-SUMMER FESTIVAL

**When:** August

**Where:** Tagliacozzo (AQ)

**Additional information:** See this year's dates and the full programme on the festival's [page](#) and [website](#)



In August, the beautiful town of Tagliacozzo fills with the sounds of music. Local convents, churches, and town squares become venues for classical music and jazz concerts, dance performances and book presentations. Watch an opera under the stars, listen to Rossini and Tchaikovsky at sunrise or attend a concert in a beech forest at sunset – there will be plenty of unforgettable experiences. Many concerts are free.

## PECORINO AND PECORINI CHEESE AND WINE FESTIVAL

**When:** first week of August

**Where:** Farindola (PE)

**Additional information:** For this year's dates and programme check out the festival's [website](#) or Facebook [page](#)

Farindola, the southeastern gateway to the Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga National Park, is home to a rare, prized sheep's milk cheese made by only 20 family-run farms. During the festival, you can sample wines by some of the region's best producers (including Pecorino, a white wine made from a native grape variety), taste *pecorino* cheese and traditional dishes made with it (food stalls offer fixed menus), and listen to live concerts. The festival runs for three evenings and offers a chance to escape the summer heat in the cooler mountains.





## RASSEGNA DEGLI OVINI

**When:** August 4-5

**Where:** Campo Imperatore, località Fonte Macina

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published on the Gran Sasso Chamber of Commerce's [website](#) and their Facebook [page](#)



Thousands of visitors and... numerous flocks of sheep gather on the picturesque plateau of Campo Imperatore for the *Rassegna degli Ovini*. For over 60 years, this hugely popular event has been promoting the region's sheep farming. Farmers proudly showcase their ewes (up to 7000 animals are brought there for the occasion) and shepherd dogs with prizes given for the best flocks; dozens of artisans sell excellent local produce such as cheeses, honey, truffles, and saffron; *arrosticini* are grilled and wine is poured.

The show commences around 4pm on August 4, as flocks arrive at their designated fenced areas, accompanied by folk music and bagpipes.

## IL PALIO DELLE PUPE

**When:** August 15

**Where:** Cappelle sul Tavo

**Additional information:** The full programme is published on the municipality's Facebook [page](#)



One of the oldest festivals in the province of Pescara, the Palio delle Pupa is a spectacular pyrotechnical event. It has been hosted in the town of Cappelle sul Tavo for almost 50 years, but the festival's roots go back to the times when fertility rites were celebrated with dances and fire. The town's fourteen neighbourhoods present their *pupa*, gigantic buxom papier-mâché puppet-dolls with firecrackers. The event starts in the afternoon with carts and floats parading through the streets of the town. As the evening falls, the *pupa* dances begin in the town's sports field in front of the spectators. Each doll has a man hidden inside who dances as the firecrackers and flares are set off.

At the end of the evening, the jury chooses the best pupa with the most spectacular firecracker display and announces the winning district. The festival carries on into the night with live music, food and drinks.

## LA RUZZOLA

**When:** mid-August

**Where:** Prezza (AQ)

**Additional information:** The dates of the games are announced on the town's ProLoco [page](#)



Every August in Prezza, locals take part in a traditional *ruzzola* competition. Players use a cord to launch a wooden disc – called a *ruzzola* – spinning down the quiet village streets. The goal is to cover a set distance in as few throws as possible. Teams are divided into men's, women's, and children's categories. It's a popular community event that keeps alive a rural game with ancient roots. While the event is not aimed at tourists, spectators are warmly welcomed. In the past – and still in some Abruzzese towns – a wheel of aged pecorino cheese was used as a *ruzzola*.

## SAGRA DELLA PORCHETTA

**When:** end of August

**Where:** Lentella (CH)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published on the ProLoco's Facebook [page](#)



Now in its 37th year, the *Sagra della Porchetta Lentellese* invites visitors to gorge on slow-roasted porchetta made from locally raised pigs, seasoned with a blend of spices and cooked for several hours to develop its rich, tender flavours. For several evenings, Piazza Garibaldi of Lentella will be filled with food stalls and communal tables for everyone to enjoy the *porchetta*, traditional local jam-filled biscuits, *celli ripieni*, made by village volunteers, and other traditional dishes while listening to live music.

## FESTA DELLA FARA CIPPOLARA

**When:** first weekend of August

**Where:** Fara Filiorum Petri (CH)

**Additional information:** This year's dates and full programme will be published on the municipality's [page](#)



The festival celebrates the delicious flat white onion (*cipolla bianca di Fara Filiorum Petri*) in all its culinary forms – from soups to side dishes, main courses to preserves. The event begins with the traditional blessing of the onions, followed by a market featuring local producers where the *cipolla bianca* is the undisputed star. There are also culinary demonstrations, workshops, meetings with chefs, and numerous stands selling traditional dishes with the white onions.

## VAL FINO AL CANTO

**When:** beginning of August

**Where:** Arsita (TE)

**Additional information:** If you are planning to stay in the village, make sure to book a room well in advance. A camping site will be set up for those who bring their own tent. The programme is published on the festival's Facebook [page](#)



This event, in the unlikely location of a small, picturesque village of Arsita in the Gran Sasso Mountains, attracts thousands of people and is often mentioned in the media as one Europe's top music festivals. It celebrates folk music from all over Italy and beyond. For four days, bands stroll or play in various locations around the village. Spectators are swept up by the flow of music and caught up in singing and dancing that go on through the night.

Come hungry and well rested – the festivities are combined with generous portions of the traditional *coatto* – a pastoral lamb stew in a tasty tomato sauce served with bread or potatoes – and can last until the wee hours of the morning.

## SAGRA DELLA SCRIPPELLA

**When:** the first half of August

**Where:** Elice (PE)

**Additional information:** The dates have varied over the past years, so keep an eye on the festival organisers' [page](#) for announcements



Celebrated since 1990, this *sagra* is dedicated to the humble *scrippella*, a fried pizza, (in other parts of Abruzzo it is called *pizza fritta*, *frittella* or *pizzonta*). Elice goes all out and offers *scrippella* of every type – stuffed with sausage, *prosciutto*, and vegetables. Other typical Abruzzese foods such as *gnocchi* with truffles, *arrosticini*, and *porchetta* are also available. There is live music, a small artisan market, and plenty of cheer.

Festivals dedicated to fried pizza (*Sagra della pizza fritta*) are also celebrated in Colledara, Francavilla al Mare and Turrivalignani in July.

## LA FIERA DI SANT'EGIDIO IN LANCIANO

**When:** August 31

**Where:** Lanciano (CH)

**Additional information:** The full programme is published on the ProLoco Lanciano Facebook [page](#)



From afternoon until night, Piazza Plebiscito and Corso Trento e Trieste are filled with the chiming and jingling of bells. More than 100 vendors from across Italy come to Lanciano to sell thousands of handmade bells of all types as well as toys, kitchenware, and various gifts. The fair has ancient roots and is dedicated to Sant'Egidio, a Benedictine abbot, protector of the sick and lepers who lived in the 7-8th century. In the old days, they travelled with a bell tied to a stick to signal their approach. Over time, the bell became a symbol of love, exchanged by couples and friends, and a symbol of the city's long tradition of big fairs. The fair opens a three-week-long festive programme, *Feste di Settembre di Lanciano*, that brings concerts, book reading, and theatre performances to the town.



## IL MASTROGIURATO (THE MEDIEVAL WEEK IN LANCIANO)

**When:** starts on the last Sunday of August

**Where:** Lanciano (CH)

**Additional information:** The festival's programme is published on the organisers' [website](#) and Facebook [page](#)



The week-long medieval festival in Lanciano celebrates the city's fairs and *mastrogiurato* (Master adjudicator) tradition, dating back to the 13th century. Originally appointed by Charles II of Anjou, the *mastrogiurato* maintained peace among traveling merchants who were trading at the big market in the city. The commercial competition was fierce, so the *mastrogiurato* carried a weapon and could arrest those who became too rowdy or aggressive. The festival features historical re-enactments, music, dancing, a medieval-style village market, food and wine stalls, and entertainment for all ages. The highlight is a grand parade (*il corteo storico*) with 500 locals dressed in historical costumes, accompanied by flag throwing, drums, trumpets, and another pageantry.

## SAGRA DELLE CAMPANELLE DI SAN ROCCO

**When:** August 16

**Where:** Vasto (CH)

**Additional information:** The festival's details can be found on the municipality's Facebook [page](#)



Another traditional fair that celebrates bells is held in Vasto. It is dedicated to the saint who, struck by the plague, wandered the continent leaning on a stick with a bell to notify his presence. Being a pilgrim, San Rocco became a patron of wanderers and travellers. For this reason, back in the 1960s, the city's tourist board, decided to organise a festival celebrating the numerous tourists visiting the city of Vasto. Since then, every year, Piazza Rossetti hosts a large market of Abruzzo handicrafts with dozens of stalls selling bells in all sizes, colours, and materials. Their constant melodic jingling accompanies folk choirs' performances, traditional local dances, good food, and a great atmosphere.

## SAGRA DEI CECI E DELLO ZAFFERANO A NAVELLI (AND DONKEYS!)

**When:** the third weekend of August

**Where:** Navelli (AQ)

**Additional information:** ProLoco di Navelli who organises the festival posts the programme on their Facebook [page](#)



A celebration of what is considered by many to be the best saffron in the world grown in the plain below the picturesque town of Navelli. At this festival, you can sample dishes made with Navelli saffron, such as local chickpeas, *risotto*, pasta, and *suppli*. Additionally, you can see a traditional crafts exhibition showcasing wrought ironwork, lace, and embroidery, listen to live concerts and dance to traditional music. The event's highlight is the thrilling donkey races through the town. The race was born in 1980 as an irreverent imitation of the famous *Palio di Siena*, through the replacement of superb steeds with cute little donkeys whose task is to lead one of the eight districts to victory. The donkeys with riders run for two hundred metres, often changing direction, or refusing to continue to the laughter of the public. It is forbidden to use any form of violence to make the donkeys move. Once the winner is crowned, celebrations continue in the main square with entertainment and traditional dishes.

## SAGRA DEGLI GNOCCHI OPIANI

**When:** end of August

**Where:** Opi (AQ)

**Additional information:** See the ProLoco's [page](#) for the dates and full programme



A much-loved summer tradition, this annual *sagra* draws thousands of visitors year after year for its handmade *gnocchi opiani*, prepared by local women following a traditional recipe. Organised by the town's ProLoco, the event brings together generations for a celebration of local food, wine, music, and community spirit. Evenings are filled with live performances and end with fireworks over the historic centre, all set against the backdrop of the Abruzzo National Park.

**While you are there:** arrive early to take a walk along the ArteParco trail to see contemporary art installations immersed in nature (see page 20). See our mini-guide to Opi in the April 2025 issue available [here](#).

## LA MAGIA DELLA LUCE

**When:** mid-August

**Where:** Opi (AQ)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published in July on the ProLoco's [page](#)

During this annual event, the town's streetlights are turned off, and the medieval historic centre is illuminated by 12,000 small lanterns. Hundreds of people gather for a romantic communal dinner in the main piazza, accompanied by live music. The programme also includes guided walks through the town's narrow streets and alleyways, along with tastings of local food and wine specialties.



## SAGRA DEL PANE CASARECCIO

**When:** August 1-3

**Where:** Penna Sant'Andrea (TE)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be available shortly on the organiser's [page](#)



The annual sagra takes place alongside the 47th edition of the International Folklore Festival, which brings together folk groups from across Italy and around the world. The programme includes traditional singing, dancing, concerts, and a lively parade of the folk groups in colourful costumes through the village streets. The food stands sell regional specialties, a variety of homemade breads and local delicacies.

## SAGRA DEL PROSCIUTTO AND FESTIVAL OF THE DDU BBOTTE

**When:** second week of August

**Where:** Basciano (TE)

**Additional information:** The full programme and dates for this year will be published on the ProLoco's [page](#)



Held in the historic centre of Basciano since 1968, this is one of Abruzzo's oldest and most beloved summer events. Each year, Piazza Vittorio Emanuele becomes the setting for a lively celebration that combines local food with traditional music.

The star of the *sagra* is the region's prized prosciutto, served alongside a range of other local specialties. The event takes place alongside the Festival Abruzzese del Ddu Bbotte, dedicated to the traditional two-bass organetto, a symbol of Abruzzo's rural musical heritage. Each evening, folk groups animate the stands with live performances, making this a must-visit for anyone interested in the flavours and sounds of Abruzzo.

## LE RUELLE DI LU PAESE

**When:** second week of August

**Where:** Scerni (CH)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published on the municipality's [page](#)



During the two-day festival in Scerni's historic heart, local restaurateurs, agriturismi and associations serve traditional dishes along a route that winds through the town's stone-paved lanes, accompanied by wine and music. The dishes include slow-cooked lamb, pizza frita with ventricina sauce, mezzemaniche pasta with rich tomato and snail sauce, ravioli with ventricina and many more.

## SAGRA DELLA VENTRICINA

**When:** mid-August

**Where:** Guilmi (CH)

**Additional information:** More details and this year's dates will be published on the organisers' [page](#)

Now in its 45th year, the Sagra della Ventricina is a beloved annual event in the hilltop town of Guilmi. Visitors can sample the town's signature *ventricina* – an elongated cured meat, sliced like salami and served with the rich, amber-hued *vino cotto* produced in the area. The menu also features dishes such as pasta dressed with *ventricina* sauce and traditional Guilmesse baked goodies. Live music completes the festive atmosphere.



## SAGRA DEI CAVATELLI CON LA SALSICCIA

**When:** mid-August

**Where:** Tufillo (CH)

**Additional information:** The full programme and dates for this year will be published on the ProLoco's [page](#)

Held annually in Tufillo's Piazza Fuori Porta, the sagra celebrates a simple local dish: small handmade cavatelli pasta served with a hearty tomato and homemade sausage sauce. Now in its 38th edition, the festival is organised by the local Pro Loco and features food stalls opening at 8 pm. Live music and a DJ set provide a lively soundtrack to the evening.



## SAGRA DEL VINO

**When:** second week of August

**Where:** Vittorito (AQ)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published on the ProLoco's [page](#)

Now in its 26th year, Vittorito's Wine Festival celebrates the town's centuries-old winemaking tradition, with nearly every family owning a vineyard. During the three-day event, visitors can sample wines from the Valle Peligna region, where winemaking has been practised since Roman times, and enjoy a variety of local and regional specialties at food stands open each evening from 8pm. Live music fills the air, setting the tone for warm festive nights.



## FESTIVAL DEL PEPERONCINO PICANTE

**When:** August 21-24

**Where:** Filetto (CH)

**Additional information:** The details will be published on the organisers' [page](#).



Now in its 45th year, the Sagra della Venticina is a beloved annual event in the hilltop town of Guilmi. Visitors can sample the town's signature *ventricina* – an elongated cured meat, sliced like salami and served with the rich, amber-hued *vino cotto* produced in the area. The menu also features dishes such as pasta dressed with *ventricina* sauce and traditional Guilmesese baked goodies. Live music completes the festive atmosphere.

## SAGRA DELLA PATATA

**When:** August 23-24

**Where:** Barisciano (AQ)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published on the festivals' [page](#).



The Sagra della Patata in Barisciano is a historic food festival dedicated to celebrating the region's traditional potato varieties and their cultural importance. Established in 1980, the event honours the role of the potato as a staple and vital source of sustenance for the local farming community. You can taste a range of classic potato-based dishes, including gluten-free options, such as *gnocchi* with sausage, *pecora alla cottora* with potatoes, potatoes with salt cod, and potato *zeppole*. The festival is complemented by live music and a market showcasing local crafts and produce.

## STREET MUSIC FESTIVAL

**When:** the end of August

**Where:** Controguerra (TE)

**Additional information:** The full programme will be published on the organisers' [page](#).



The Controguerra Street Music Festival transforms the historic town centre into a music stage over two evenings. Featuring more than 20 international musicians, the festival spans a diverse range of genres—from jazz and country blues to singer-songwriter and experimental music. Alongside the live performances, visitors can sample Controguerra's renowned wines and craft beers and enjoy an array of street food. The festival's lively atmosphere culminates with swing dancing in the central square, inviting all to join in the celebration.



## SAGRA DEGLI GNOCCHI

**When:** end of August

**Where:** Sant'Egidio alla Vibrata (TE)

**Additional information:** The full programme and upcoming dates will be published on the ProLoco's [page](#)

Held annually in Sant'Egidio alla Vibrata, the Sagra degli Gnocchi is a long-standing summer festival now in its 29th edition. The event brings together residents and visitors with generous portions of handmade gnocchi, traditional fritters, arrosticini, and other hearty dishes. Alongside the food, evenings are animated by live music and entertainment for all ages.



## GIRONI DIVINI

**When:** end of August

**Where:** Tagliacozzo (AQ)

**Additional information:** For details see the event's [website](#)

Three evenings dedicated to Abruzzo's finest wines. From 8 pm each night, you can participate in open wine degustation featuring a curated selection of local wines, organised by grape variety and category. Two blind tastings per evening offer guests a chance to sample wines in competition and contribute to the selection of the public's favourite. Tickets cost €20 per person and include unlimited tastings.



## SAGRA DELLA PATATA

**When:** first week of August

**Where:** Avezzano (AQ)

**Additional information:**

Announcements and the full programme are published on the municipality's [page](#)



Since 1971, Avezzano has celebrated its famous *patate del Fucino*. The festival attracts large crowds to Piazza Borgo Via Nuova. The menu is devoted entirely to local specialities from the Fucino area, with the potato as the undisputed star – *gnocchi*, potato soup, potato pizza, chips, sweet potato fritters, and more.

To learn more about the Fucino potato read our article on [page 20](#).

## SAGRA DELLA PAPPARDELLA AL SUGO DI PAPERA

**When:** end of August

**Where:** Cermignano (TE)

**Additional information:** See this year's dates and the full programme on the organisers' [page](#)



The five-day festival celebrates one of Abruzzo's most beloved dishes: pappardelle pasta dressed in a rich duck *ragù*, simmered slowly as local grandmothers once did. Each evening from 7:00 p.m., food and drinks stands offer generous servings of pappardelle, fritters, sausage sandwiches, and *arrostiticini*.

## ENOTIRINO WINE FESTIVAL

**When:** August 30

**Where:** Bussi dul Tirino (PE)

**Additional information:** Buy tickets in advance to save €5-10 on the Enotirino [website](#)



Enotirino 2025 is dedicated to wine lovers interested in exploring local producers and learning about the stories behind each label. You can taste wines while speaking directly with the producers, meet local food artisans and sample their products, including cheeses, cured meats, rustic bread, and hot dishes to complement the wine tastings. The event will be held in the beautiful, recently-renovated Castello di Bussi with panoramic views of the surrounding valley, particularly striking at sunset. Price: €25 at the door (for unlimited tastings).



## CECI DELLA SPOSA

**When:** first week of August

**Where:** Pescasseroli (AQ)

**Additional information:** Keep an eye on the organisers' Facebook [page](#) for this year's date and programme announcement



This little-known festival brings back an old tradition of so-called "bride's chickpeas" (*ceci della sposa*) which is still alive in Pescasseroli. It is a family celebration, with the bride and groom's families, neighbours, close friends, and the group of elderly women experts (known as *ceciare*) getting together to prepare the chickpeas as a symbol of fertility and abundance. The event consists of a demonstration of the preparation of *ceci* (always accompanied by singing) followed by a tasting, an exhibition of antique hand-embroidered linens, and a small vintage wedding dress show.

**While you are there:** take a short drive to the Barrea Lake for a refreshing swim or visit the wolf sanctuary in Civitella Alfedena to observe these magnificent animals in a semi-wild state.

---

Editor: Anna Lebedeva

**Copyright © 2025 ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine**

All content copyright ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine, all rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law. While we make every effort that the factual content of ABRUZZISSIMO Magazine is correct we cannot take any responsibility nor be held accountable for any factual errors printed. The publisher recognises all copyrights within this issue.