



Calabria, a land of heritage and authenticity in the heart of the Mediterranean

From Magna Graecia to historic communities, from national parks to its culinary and wine heritage: the region presents itself as the ideal destination for heritage tourism and authentic experiences

Catanzaro, 7 September 2026 – Calabria is a region of authentic and surprising beauty, located in the heart of the Mediterranean. It is the cradle of Magna Graecia, where unspoilt nature, living traditions and spectacular landscapes converge. It is an ideal destination for heritage tourism, offering culture and authentic experiences far removed from mass tourism. Here, descendants of Calabrian emigrants from around the world can reconnect with the places, rituals and flavours of their origins.

In the inland villages and within the Occitan, Arbëreshë and Greek communities, ancient languages, festivals and crafts endure. Meanwhile, the Sila, Aspromonte, Pollino and Serre parks offer visitors the chance to experience slow tourism and explore the region's natural landscapes and traditional crafts, while also providing an opportunity to reconnect with their ancestral homelands. This journey down memory lane is rounded off by the region's distinctive gastronomic heritage, including bergamots, red onions, 'nduja, native Gaglioppo and Magliocco wines, olive oils, breads, cured meats and traditional cheeses. Every encounter with these welcoming communities is an opportunity to reconnect with one's roots and immerse oneself in the soul of the region.

Calabria's tourism sector is experiencing strong growth and is becoming increasingly international. In the first half of 2026, it was the fastest-growing Italian region in terms of total (+10,7%) and foreign arrivals (+23,19%), with visitor numbers up by 12.5% compared with the same period in 2025. Smaller towns have also performed exceptionally well, with overnight stays rising by 12.1% — almost triple the national average. The most represented foreign markets are Germany, Poland, France, the United States and the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, the growth in non-hotel accommodation confirms the region's broad and flexible hospitality, making it an authentic destination suitable for families and couples who want to avoid the main tourist crowds.

Travellers can enjoy villages nestled on mountain heights with romantic sea views, historic centres rich in history, culture and traditions and the Ciclovia dei Parchi cycle route, which crosses Calabria from north to south along the Apennine ridge. There are also no fewer than 12 walking trails to explore at a leisurely pace, passing through the National Parks (Pollino, Sila and Aspromonte) and the Regional Park (Serre). Treasures such as the Codex Purpureus Rossanensis, a sixth-century illuminated Greek gospel book comprising 188 sheets of the finest purple parchment containing the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, embellished with 15 splendid miniatures, can also be found here (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

The area is brought to life by three historic minority groups: the Arbëreshë, who wear colourful costumes and perform the gjitonìa; the Waldensian-Occitans of Guardia Piemontese, who preserve their language and gold-embroidered garments; and the Greeks of Bovesìa, who are guardians of the Griko language and the Calabrian lyre. Religious

traditions are expressed through intense devotional rituals such as the Varia di Palmi, which is recognised as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage site. Meanwhile, craftsmanship is passed down through activities such as weaving broom, producing silk in Mendicino and San Floro, spinning wool in Soveria Mannelli and making ceramics in Squillace and Seminara. Finally, cuisine is a cornerstone of the region's identity: There are 14 PDO products, 7 PGI products and 270 traditional products, ranging from red onions to 'nduja, from chilli peppers to truffles.

With its natural, cultural and community heritage, Calabria offers a different way of experiencing the Mediterranean: slower, more profound and closer to local areas and one's roots.

For more information on itineraries and travel inspiration, visit the official website "Calabria Straordinaria": <https://calabriastroordinaria.it>

For further information:

Dipartimento Turismo, cultura e identità territoriale
calabriastroordinaria@regione.calabria.it