

SARDINIA

Food & Wine



REGIONE AUTONOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA

Fine cheese, meat, and cured delicacies from uncontaminated pastures. Pasta dishes with distinctive names and shapes. Traditional breads that tell ancient stories. Pies decorated like jewels. Recipes rooted in the rural world. Fish dishes shaped by dominations and conquerors. Festivals and celebrations that enliven local customs and flavours. And, of course, regional wines, capturing the scents of Mediterranean scrubs and the freshness of the sea breeze in every glass, their notes evolving with age. Exploring Sardinia means discovering an unexpected diversity of food and wine traditions, one taste at a time. This guide includes 26 itineraries through Sardinia's food heritage and the distinctive pleasures of each area, from the coast to the inland – a wealth of stories, flavours, and traditions. *Here's how this guide is organised:*

This section contains useful information to plan your itinerary. The "Associated itineraries" section highlights points of interest for the area covered in other sections.



The map shows the itinerary.

Detailed descriptions in the following pages are shown on the map.

Links and QR codes redirect you to Google Maps tracks of the itinerary.

The map locates the itinerary on the island.

Introduction: a focus on the contents of the itinerary described in the section.



This box contains insights, fun facts, and useful information for route planning.

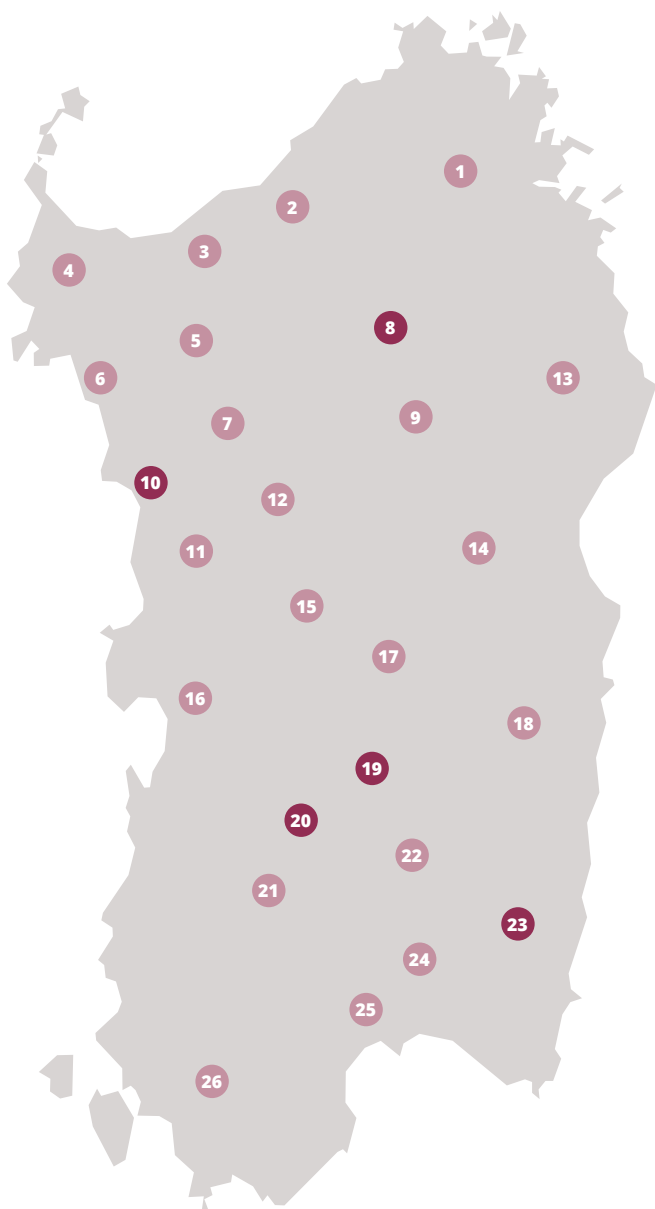
The text describes the itinerary in great detail.



This box contains tips on points of interest and experiences along the way or in the vicinity.

This page explores a few topics in greater detail and/or lists and describes further points of interest along the way.







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Introduction

A MOSAIC OF TASTES AND TRADITIONS

Among the many ways to fall in love with a place – whether dreaming of a first visit or returning once again – **food** and **culinary traditions** play an increasingly important role. They represent one of the most engaging and enjoyable ways to experience a destination. This is especially true of Sardinia. Those who live far from the island may first picture its enchanting beaches and rich historical heritage rather than its remarkable culinary specialities. Those who live far from the island may first imagine its enchanting beaches and rich historical heritage rather than its *malloreddus*, bottarga-topped spaghetti, roasted suckling piglet, *seadas* pastry pockets, and countless other local delicacies. Yet the desire to discover these culinary treasures is undoubtedly one of many reasons Sardinia is such a compelling destination. The island's food and wine heritage, though, is much larger than we can learn from occasional tastings during a holiday or by reading the details in a guidebook.

Sardinia unfolds before you most fully through a “slower” journey – beyond the cities and the coastline, beyond the well-known products and typical dishes of crowded summer resorts. In a region where the **bond between landscape and the steady rhythms of rural rituals** remains deeply rooted, **food** and wine play a crucial role in both everyday life and moments of celebration. Festivals and gatherings bring together communities to share a portion of pasta shaped by skillful hands, a morsel of ritual bread, a rewarding glass of wine that warms up hearts, and desserts crafted like jewels, often concealing surprisingly precious fillings. It is a fascinating blend of sacred and profane, a homage to saints and folk beliefs, a talented glorification of basic ingredients (even leftovers!), and the meticulous preparation of special dishes on important occasions. The list of remarkable typical recipes comprises funny names and odd shapes, whose origins are rooted in Sardinia's history and geography.

A JOURNEY ACROSS SARDINIA'S HISTORICAL AREAS AND TERRITORIES

Historical geography can help reveal the internal boundaries that have shaped Sardinia's subregions, traced over the centuries by political rule, natural barriers, and campaigns of conquest, guiding us in the discovery of Sardinian food and wine traditions.

In general, land-based cuisine clearly prevails over seafood cuisine in Sardinia, even in coastal areas, just as some of the food products mentioned earlier are found across the island and serve as symbols



of its culinary identity. Although Vermentino and Cannonau have long dominated Sardinian wine production, winemakers have recently enhanced the value of several native grape varieties, thereby recovering ancient and once-abandoned vines.

A tasting experience in Sardinia is truly unique, for the immense food and wine diversity due to the presence of mountains, hills, lagoons, volcanic terrains, coastal plains, hunting and fishing practices, populations, and then further diversity provided by where these different terrains meet. Each subregion preserves its own **delights, habits**, and forms of **production**. Even Sardinians themselves may find it difficult to draw precise lines between neighbouring areas, nor can they count and classify them within exact boundaries, given the long history of overlapping identities and age-old disputes. Traditionally, Sardinia is said to comprise thirty recognised subregions, some of which share such close historical and cultural ties that they are often considered together, as in the case of Sulcis and Iglesiente. Even in these instances, however, each area proudly maintains and defends its own distinct characters, including local food and wine heritage. The various “Barbagia regions” offer a representative example of this attitude, to the extent that similar preparations – including handmade pasta, dessert fillings, and panadas – may bear different names from one *biddu* (literally “village”, “hamlet”) to another.





Preparation of traditional desserts - RAS ©

THE FLAVOURS OF SARDINIA

An extraordinary **mosaic of regional flavours** – encompassing renowned products, rural recipes, excellent wines, and refined preparations – awaits discovery in every corner of the island, from north to south and east to west. Sardinian winemaking has been attracting growing interest among domestic consumers, thanks to the commitment of wineries, wine consortia, associations, and restaurants, all increasingly attentive to hospitality. Sardinia's typical food and wine have not only spread throughout the island, but have also crossed the Tyrrhenian Sea to the mainland, with many products of excellence now promoted and distributed through a variety of channels. Whether linked to a fading rural heritage or to special festive occasions, the island's culinary treasures remain deeply rooted in family traditions. These are often home-cooked dishes considered so "humble" and simple that they rarely appear on menus along the most popular tourist routes. Thus, get ready to embrace your adventurous side: venture into Sardinia's hinterland to uncover breathtaking views and unparalleled gastronomic gems in rustic taverns and village eateries, wander around alleys of lesser-known towns, explore bakeries and artisan workshops, and find yourself in lively squares decorated for food festivals and celebrations. Last but not least, trust in local hospitality. Sardinians are known to be reserved by nature. Yet they are deeply proud of their history and culinary traditions; thus, they warmly welcome those who show genuine curiosity for their island. More often than not, they are likely to let you in – sometimes quite literally – for a glass of wine and a slice of cheese, an initiation into the authentic beauty and pleasure of this magic island.



WHAT TO TASTE ACROSS THE SARDINIAN TERRITORIES

Gallura

Pause in Oschiri to sample the local *panada*, filled with pork meat, lard, and herbs. Around Olbia, savour a mussel-based dish, and in La Maddalena, don't miss the traditional *ziminu* (fish stew), best paired with a glass of Vermentino di Gallura DOCG.

Anglona

Valledoria is known for exquisite recipes having the prized Thorny Artichokes DOP as the main ingredient. Castelsardo is ideal for tasting the local *cassola* (fish stew) by the sea, while the hinterland offers hearty meat dishes such as *ghisadu*.

Monteacuto

Ozieri invites visitors to enjoy Greviera cheese along with desserts like *suspiros* and *copuletas*. Pattada is celebrated both for its knife-making tradition and for *sas pellizzas*, rustic semolina pasta usually served with tomato sauce and pecorino cheese.

Alghero

Often called the "little Sardinian Barcelona", Alghero is the perfect setting for Catalan- or Alghero-style lobster and the local interpretation of *paella*, both paired with Torbato di Alghero DOC. The town also boasts a rich dessert tradition.

Romangia

Local pastries like *papassini* with raisin and nuts, and *cozzuli de saba* pair beautifully with a glass of Moscato di Sorso- Sennori DOC. In Sorso, try snacks based on *lu cuggoni*, a stuffed bread loaf with tomatoes, garlic, oil, and salt. A similar preparation appears in Sennori under the name *su fossu*.

Sassari area

Sassari is the place to taste *fainé*, a thin pie made of chickpea flour, alongside traditional aubergine preparations. Near Porto Torres, *ziminata* features grilled offal, while the area is also well known for escargot-based recipes.

Nurra

Usini signature dishes include *andarinos*, spiral-shaped handmade pasta served with *ghisadu* sauce and often enjoyed with a glass of velvety Cagnulari red wine. Stintino offers octopus specialities by its wonderful sea, tuna bottarga, and the sweet *tumbarella*.

Planargia

Bosa's wineries provide a perfect opportunity to sample local Malvasia. Traditional dishes include *s'azzada* – ray in a sour tomato sauce – and *sas alisanzas*, pasta strips served with *ghisadu* meat sauce.



Meilogu

Bonorva is an excellent stop for *su pane de tzigchi*, ideally paired with cured meats and local delights such as *boddidu* bread. Thiesi is renowned for delicious varieties of cheese, *su sucu* made with *fregula*, and local biscuits. Seasonal visitors may also have a feast on the exquisite Bonnanaro's cherries.

Marghine

Local breeding farms are distinguished by Bortigalesa meat and *casizolu*, the characteristic pear-shaped ewe's milk cheese (*prittas*). Macomer is another importance centre of cheese production, while Sindia offers traditional dishes like the savoury *suppa falza*, and the numerous typical desserts.

Goceano

Those drawn to bold flavours should try *pecora in cappotto* from Anela, a traditional Sardinian sheep meat soup. Benetutti features festive cakes and pastries, including *sos pinos* and *sas orilettas*, as well as pecorino cheese in Nule, and above all, one of the rarest wines from the ancient Arvisionadu vine, while Bono offers the traditional *catò*, to top it all!

Montiferru

Local pastures are home to the Sardo-modicana "red ox", a distinct cattle breed originating from a cross between local Sardinian cattle and the Sicilian Modicana breed, prized for both meat and cheese like *casizolu*. Bonarcado is known for *sa petza imbinada*, an age-old preparation of pork marinated in wine, and Cuglieri for celebrated *panadas*.

Oristano e il Sinis

The celebrated *bottarga* of Cabras from mullets fished in the marsh is best enjoyed on bread or with raw artichokes, and pairs wonderfully with delicious Vernaccia di Oristano DOC. Mullet is just as enjoyable when grilled or boiled and wrapped in marsh herbs as in the *sa merca* preparation.



Panadas from Cuglieri - RAS ©



Barbagia

The classical Barbagian “triad” includes carasau bread of Ovodda, Desulo cured meat, and a glass of Nepente di Oliena. Nuoro offers hidden culinary gems like *filindeu*, a thin pasta “net” cooked in sheep’s meat broth, while Fonni and Ollolai provide a sweet ending with their biscuits, *su pistiddu*, and other remarkable dessert traditions.

Baronie

Visit Siniscola for the richly flavoured *suppa Siniscolesa*, a layered bread casserole with meat sauce, pecorino cheese, and broth, along with many other culinary delights featuring *sa pompia*, an unusual citrus fruit somewhere between cedar and lemon. Other local preparations include lamb with olives, wild boar with a sweet-and-sour sauce, and *frattau* bread, seasoned with tomato sauce and egg.

Ogliastra

Tortolì is renowned for its exquisite oysters, best enjoyed on a terrace overlooking the beach. Yet, most signature dishes are based on land ingredients, such as Culurgionis d’Ogliastra, *Us laddesos* (similar to gnocchi) in Baunei, and *S’anguli ‘e cipudda* made with barley flour, onions, vegetables, and cheese.

Mandrolisai

Do not miss tasting the delicious nougat of Tonara as well as *su tzichi* bread in Samugheo. If you love sweets and pastry, Atzara offers a plethora of traditional sweet preparations, while those with a preference for savoury dishes will appreciate Sorgono’s typical *lampazzu* soup, based on *fregula* cooked in broth with herbs, acid cheese, and onions. Wine lovers can opt for full-bodied red wines such as Mandrolisai DOC.

Barigadu

Welcome to the realm of pasta. Busachi’s *su succu* is a rich pasta dish featuring *tagliolini* (or *filindeu*) cooked in broth and cheese. Discover typical *sos cannisones* seasoned with meat sauce in Ula Tirso, while Ardauli is ideal for *culurzones de patata cum nebidedda*, a traditional pasta with a wild herb similar to marjoram.

Sarcidano

Laconi owes its culinary reputation to the many varieties of truffles found and prepared according to the season, as well as desserts such as *pan’e saba*, and *Su pappài biancu*, a type of pudding or blancmange. Notable pasta dishes include *spizzulus* in Orroli, and *is pitzottis* in Serri, often served with rich sauces.

Trexenta

Senorbì and Ortacesus are essential stops along *Le vie del Pane*, the Bread routes celebrating wheat cultivation and traditional bread and pasta preparations. Almonds from Selegas and saffron from Suelli stand out among some of the area’s most prized ingredients. The local



cuisine also features renowned fish dishes such as *baccallari a buddiu* (boiled salted cod).

Marmilla

Sardinia's "wheat belt" has fostered unique bread and pasta traditions, including braid-shaped *lorighittas* from Morgongiori, *marraconis fibaus* from Siddi, and *Cruguxionis* from Baradili, which are unexpectedly sweet. In Sanluri, you can savour minestra con *casu axedu* soup and learn all about *civraxiu* bread.

Medio Campidano

San Gavino Monreale is the centre of Sardinia's saffron DOC cultivation. Enjoy it in both sweet and savoury dishes, including *Cruxionis cun perdusemini* – ravioli stuffed with ricotta, cheese, and parsley – typically found in Guspini, as well as the renowned artichokes of Samassi.

Campidano di Cagliari

Cornerstones of the local culinary tradition include bottarga-topped spaghetti, best enjoyed on Poetto beach; the local version of *burrida* – dogfish with nuts stewed in vinegar – and puff-pastry pizzas seasoned with Selargius capers. Assemini is well-known for its eel-based *panadas*.

Parteolla

Oil and wine dominate traditional recipes. Noteworthy specialities include *Michitus Nieddus* of Dolianova, *maltagliati* pasta made from whole wheat flour and dressed with fresh tomato sauce and pecorino cheese; *favata di Pasqua*, a traditional Easter dish with broad beans and pork; and *Piricchitus Prenus*, lemon-flavoured pastries with a crunchy sugar glaze.

Sarrabus, Gerrei, and Quirra

The aromas of Muravera's citrus fruits enhance both savoury and sweet preparations. Among the many local dishes, a highlight is *Is Cuixionis*, delicious ravioli filled with either ricotta and vegetables or potatoes and cheese. The true culinary gem, however, is *su casu in axrida*, a rare ewe's milk cheese coated in a clay paste mixed with lentisk oil.

Sulcis-Iglesiente

The history of minor islands lives on in Calasetta and Carloforte through the taste of *casca* – couscous with vegetables, beans, and African spices. Back on the main island, try *mustazzeddu*, a savoury rustic pizza flavoured with fresh tomatoes, garlic, and basil.



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8. Monteacuto and its gentle whispers



Trip length: 15 km

Trip time: 1 day

Local must-tries: Sweet or savoury? Suspiros and copulettas or Greviera cheese? This is the question in Ozieri! Our tip is to try them all and then, if you so choose purchase some for your home!

Associated itineraries:

1. Gallura, the spiritual home of Vermentino. *Sa panada* is worth some extra miles to Oschiri.

5. Sassari area for fainé tasting. Visit the principal city of Sardinia for a tour of its restaurants, museum, and marketplace.





Nestled between Gallura and Sassari territory, this small historic region, bordered by the course of the Coghinas river and the Buddusò mountains, is home to the picturesque town of Ozieri – an ideal destination for dessert... and knife enthusiasts alike.



Church of Sant'Antioco di Bisarcio, Ozieri - Milosk50/dreamstime.com ©

From Switzerland to Sardinia

Ozieri enjoys a well-established reputation as an iconic production area of **Greviera**, a Sardo Bruna cow's milk cheese celebrated as a distinctive example of culinary cross-fertilisation. In the second half of the 19th century, a group of local cattle breeders, impressed by the Swiss Gruyère, chose to import Braunvieh bulls with cheese-making techniques in order to reproduce the cheese locally.



Part of the wider Logudoro territory – known in the Middle Ages as Giudicato di Torres and today corresponding largely to the province of Sassari – **Monteacuto** derives its name from the Spanish administrative district of Encontrada Monteaguto. The name also recalls Monte Santo, the hill on which the Gallura village of Berchidda stands, once crowned by a castle. Despite its name, however, no mountains are visible across this flat landscape, framed by the course of the Coghinas river and the southern valleys of the Limbara range. The only elevated area within this small historic subregion of blurred boundaries is the Buddusò plateau, where the

Coghinas river originates. **Ozieri**, the main town, is widely renowned for its Romanesque monuments and noble palaces, but equally for its refined dessert tradition. A notable 19th-century speciality is *suspiros* (“whispers”), delicate pastry made from almonds, honey, and sugar, often scented with lemon zest and coated with a thin layer of icing. Further sweet treats include *gueffus*, sugar-dusted confections wrapped in tissue paper and historically prepared for weddings and celebrations. Today, local bakeries offer numerous variations – including dark chocolate, orange, and myrtle – commonly presented among the assortment of “Sardinian sweets” served at the end of a meal. Another pastry of particular interest is *copulettas*, distinguished for its elaborate preparation requiring both a careful balance of ingredients and considerable manual skills. A thin shell of pasta *violada* – the traditional dough of flour, lard, water, and salt shared by many Sardinian desserts – encloses a filling of sponge cake, grated lemon zest, and toasted, chopped almonds. A dash of liqueur may be added for an even more intense flavour. By contrast, the signature dish of nearby **Pattada** is savoury: *sas pellizzas* are small semolina gnocchi served with tomato sauce and pecorino cheese.

★ Bread

The thin and soft **spianata**, a staple of many traditional preparations, is known in **Ozieri** as *su pane fine*. Easy to fold and transport, it was once the favourite “snack” of peasants and fishermen.



Pattada, the village of knives

- A short distance from Ozieri lies **Pattada**, long distinguished for its knife-making tradition. Local blacksmiths craft the celebrated *resolza pattadesa*, prized for its fine blades and solid, decorated handles. In 2011, the **Museo Internazionale del coltello "Culter"** was inaugurated in the *Palazzina Giagu-Deroma*, an early 20th-century building. With a special focus on contemporary handmade knife production in Sardinia and beyond, the museum guides visitors through the history of knives from their earliest origins to the present day.



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10. Planargia, the birthplace of Malvasia di Bosa



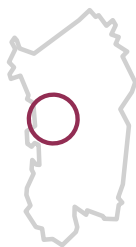
 **Trip length:** 33 km

 **Trip time:** 2 days

 **Local must-tries:** Visit the delightful town of Bosa and stop at a winery for a glass of Malvasia.

 **Associated itineraries:**

6. Alghero, lobster-lovers' paradise. Take the spectacular road that goes from Bosa to Alghero and visit the Catalan city, enjoying dinner looking out to Capo Caccia.





Lying between the valley of the River Temo and Montiferru, mostly in the province of Oristano, Planargia is home to the picturesque town of Bosa, its most precious gem, and the renowned local Malvasia, its most emblematic product.



Tricks and treats

As well as Malvasia, the town of **Bosa** is famous for its lively Carnival, known as Karrasegare 'Osincu, when the streets come alive with people in playful disguises. Sweet rewards for mischievous pranks include traditional desserts such as **sas frisciolas longas** – long, thin rolled fritters – and **sos culinzones de mendula**, ravioli filled with almonds.



A historical sub-region of Logudoro, although today it is in the province of Oristano, **Planargia** extends between the lower valley of the River Temo and the northern slopes of Montiferru. The name refers to the high and flat appearance of the land, with green hills reaching the coastline. The main centre is **Bosa**, a delightful town which looks on to the estuary of the River Temo;

dominated by the medieval castle of the Malaspina family, under the domination of the Aragonese, it was one of the seven royal towns of Sardinia.

If, arriving in **Bosa Marina**, from a distance you can see the colourful houses of the Sa Costa neighbourhood, going further into the lanes leading off from the river front, it is easy to come across one of the many local

wineries that offer a taste of the acclaimed **Malvasia di Bosa**. Thanks to its microclimate, Planargia, especially south of Bosa, is ideal for growing the aromatic white grapes from which this fine oxidised wine is obtained. It unites elegance and a sweetness which is never cloying and perfect for pairing with cheese and dry confectionery and pastries. In Bosa, it is also worth tasting local recipes such as *s'azzada* (ray, boiled and served with a sauce made from tomatoes, vinegar and gently fried garlic and parsley) or *sas alisanzas* (strips of handmade pasta with a crinkled edge) with *ragù ghisadu* (a sauce made from several types of meat). There are other places to stop at in Planargia: **Modolo**, a village surrounded by vineyards and olive groves, and where an excellent cheese is also made; **Tresnuraghes**, St Mark's Day (25 April) is the occasion to taste **boiled mutton**, typical desserts and Malvasia; in **Tinnura**, country life is told through the many murals covering the houses; returning towards Bosa, in **Montresta**, celebrated for crafts turning asphodels into baskets and objects, like the nearby Flussio) you can taste *Bistoccu*, the traditional bread which becomes crisp after being baked twice, so it was ideal for the shepherds to eat when softened with water and topped with whatever they preferred.

★ *Festive Bosa*

In the springtime, the **Bosa Beer Fest**, one of the most important Italian festivals dedicated to craft beer, is held in the centre and brings many interesting breweries into the streets along the Temo, together with music and food.



The road to Bosa

- About 45 km of curves and magic, in an emotion-filled slalom between green hills and the blue sea, along a clifftop studded with asphodel flowers and grazing sheep, which now and again make you think you are in Scotland and not Sardinia: this is the breathtaking scenery offered by the SP105 road (which then gives way to the SP49), the **Secondary Road that links Alghero to Bosa** with a winding route that goes up and down. There are many panoramic points with a sheer drop to the sea from where you can take beautiful photos but always be very careful both when stopping and travelling, by car, motorbike, or bicycle.



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19. In Sarcidano, for spizzulus and truffles



 **Trip length:** 49 km

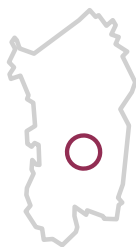
 **Trip time:** 2 days

 **Local must-tries:** Stop in Laconi for its fine truffles and to taste the dessert *su pappai biancu*.

 **Associated itineraries:**

14. Barbagie and the myth of Nepente. Explore the most archaic Sardinia, with traditional recipes and Cannonau.

20. In Marmilla, between Bovale and ancient breads. In Sanluri, discover local history at the castle and the ancient art of *civraxiu* at the Museum of Bread and Bread making.





Forests of oak and chestnut trees, shimmering artificial lakes, scenic paths immersed in nature, picturesque villages, and age-old traditions preserved by skilled craftsmen: in Sarcidano, past and present intertwine – often revealing themselves in unexpectedly delicious ways.



Luciana Squadrilli©

Rare vines

Amongst the oldest vineyards – and often at high altitudes – of Sarcidano, Ogliastra and Barbagia di Seulo, there is a rare and precious varietal: **Niedda Carta**, a black grape which is probably of the same family as the Sgiaccarellu of Corsica. Used to make renowned wines in the 19th century, today it is an endangered variety and is used in blends by some local “guardian winemakers.”



Partly mountainous and in many ways similar to the nearby Barbagia di Seulo, **Sarcidano** is a central-southern region, between Campidano, Marmilla and Barbagie, dedicated to agriculture and livestock. The landscape is characterised by spectacular plateaux and oak and chestnut forests, interrupted by the artificial basins of the Lakes of Mulargia and Flumendosa, which guarantee fertility and are also the ideal spot for rowing races and fishing. However, it is the traditional productive activities that dominate in this area, and they are still carried on by workshops and skilled craftsmen. **Isili**, for example, has a long-standing tradition of weaving and copper work.

★ *Art, vegetables and wine*

Ancient trades, genuine flavours and traditions go on show every September in **Isili**, during **Artis e Ortus**, while in June the Vinisili event brings together local wineries with music and typical dishes.

Gergei, a delightful village developed around two ancient nuraghes, is the birthplace of exquisite cheese and an excellent extra-virgin olive oil, obtained from the rare autochthonous variety of Mallocria. In **Nurallao**, the typical Easter dish is *is tallarinus*, very fine threads of durum wheat pasta cooked in a broth of wether (castrated sheep) with *casu axedu* (a sharp cheese or curd) in a sort of delicious hash.

In the village of **Orroli**, nestled between two lakes and not far from the majestic Nuraghe Arrubiu — one of the most important in Sardinia — locals prepare *spizzulus*, an ancient and flavoursome pasta made by “nipping” the dough (its Sardinian name means “nip”). The dough is worked into a rolled cord and cooked in a rich meat sauce or in stock. In the charming village of **Serri**, perched on the plateau of the same name — often called the “younger sister” of Gesturi — women prepare *pitzottis* by hand for the feast-day of St Lucia (in May and September) and other special occasions. These small gnocchi, similar to *malloreddus*, are served with hearty, tasty sauces. **Laconi**, meanwhile, is renowned for its **truffles** — from the black summer variety to the white truffles that appear in spring — as well as for its sweets, including *pan’e saba* and *su pappai biancu*, a kind of blancmange flavoured with grape must, citrus, and biscuits, reminiscent of the Sicilian version.



Ancient flavours

- While the various areas of Barbagia in central Sardinia host the celebrated Autumn in Barbagia, the neighbouring Sarcidano and Trexenta offer **Saboris Antigus**. Held between autumn and winter, this itinerant event visits several villages across the two historical regions, showcasing local products and specialities while also revealing the culture and traditions of the area. Archaeological tours, workshops, meetings, and tastings alternate with concerts, exhibitions by local artists, and activities for children.



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20. In Marmilla, between Bovale and ancient breads



 **Trip length:** 61 km

 **Trip time:** 2 days

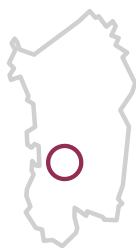
 **Local must-tries:** Sanluri provides an illuminating insight into the Sardinian art of breadmaking, with *civraxiu* being its undisputed ambassador.

 **Associated itineraries:**

19. In Sarcidano, for spizzulus and truffles. Pause in Orroli and look for *spizzulus*, handmade pasta from an age-old recipe.

21. Medio Campidano, where the saffron blooms.

Explore the vast plain covered with olive trees, rice fields, and saffron blossoms.





Situated north of Cagliari, Marmilla is a lesser known yet fascinating land, rich in notable archaeological sites and natural beauty. Wheat, olive trees, and vineyards, deeply rooted in the local farming traditions, yield products of excellent quality.



di Nuraxi, Barumini - fabiano.goretti/caddeo/shutterstock.com ©

Who bets on Bovale

This is the area of **IGP Marmilla** wines, whose reputation has been enhanced in recent years by the work of increasingly quality-focused winemakers. Among the island's grape varieties, Monica for red wines and Moscato and Nuragus for white wines, are widely cultivated here. More recently, Bovale has also gained recognition for its elegant, silky, and rounded red wines.



Midway between Cagliari and Oristano lies **Marmilla**, a captivating territory governed by ancient peasant traditions where natural wonders, such as the vast basalt plateau of Giara di Gesturi – home to its famed wild horses – coexist with man-made treasures like the impressive Nuragic complex of Barumini. The region owes its name to its gently rounded breast-like hills, which define the landscape. Just as breasts nourish mammals, these hills sustain wheat, olive groves, and numerous local vines, alongside delicate bean varieties, and a distinctive winter fruit known as *melone de jerru* cultivated primarily around **Lunamatrona**.

This fruit is grown through dry farming practices requiring minimal or no irrigation, fertilization, or treatment. Local cuisine is dominated by wheat-based products, including pasta and bread. In **Morgongiori**, a village at the foot of Mount Arci, women skilfully prepare *lorighittas*, intricately twisted rings of pasta served with a tasty red cockerel sauce. **Siddi**, by contrast, is renowned for *marraconis fibaus*, a type of spaghetti shaped by twisting the dough between two fingers until it assumes a distinctive curled form. Spring marks the season for *Cruguxionis*, a sweet version of the well-known *culurgiones*, filled with ewe's milk ricotta, sugar, egg, and lemon zest. These are prepared in **Baradili**, a charming village where courtyards resemble flower-filled living rooms, during the Feast of Santa Mergherita. At Easter – or more precisely during the celebrations of Sant'Antioco – **Tuili** offers visitors the opportunity to savour *su pani arrubiu*, or "red bread". Similar to the more widely known *civraxiu*, a speciality associated with **Sanluri**, it is made from durum wheat flour enriched with raisins and saffron. Further traditional dishes appear on local menus, from soups prepared with *casu axedu* (sour cheese or curd) to *sa cordula*, sheep or lamb intestines carefully braided and roasted.

★ *Golden bread*

Each spring, **Setzu** hosts the **Sa Fregua and de Su Pani Indorau Festival**, celebrating two local specialities: handmade *fregula* served with meat sauce, and "golden" (egg-dipped) fried bread.



Museum of Civraxiu bread in Sanluri

- Since 2017, the museum complex within the beautiful **Castle of Sanluri** – the main venue for the historical reconstruction of *Sa Battalla* – has included the **Museo del Pane e della Panificazione del Civraxiu**. The museum offers visitors a historical and anthropological journey dedicated to the staple food of Mediterranean culture. As part of Sardinia's rich bread-making tradition, where flavour and nutritional value intertwine with symbolic and ritual significance, the museum celebrates civraxiu, a bread found across various parts of the island but especially associated with the Sanluri community. These large, fragrant, round loaves, evoking the sun and its warmth, were once an essential component of farmers' meals in the fields and continue to hold an important place in the local diet.



Food & Wine

23. In Sarrabus, Gerrei and Quirra, following the scent of citrus



 **Trip length:** 141 km

 **Trip time:** 2 days

 **Local must-tries:** Head to Escalaplano to immerse yourself in pristine landscapes and savour the rare *casu in axridda*.

 **Associated itineraries:**

18. In Ogliastra, from oysters to cherries. Tortolì is an essential stop for savouring local oysters by the beach.
25. Campidano di Cagliari, between the city, the sea, and the countryside. Enjoy the beauty and the liveliness of the capital city while exploring its rural and coastal surroundings.





The three sub-regions nestled between Cagliari and Ogliastra are well worth a visit for their enchanting beaches, renowned seaside resorts, flourishing citrus groves, distinctive cheeses, and time-honoured pastoral traditions.



Tower of Porto Giunco, Villasimius - D. J. Shutterstock.com

Livestock branding

On the day of the Ascension, the village of **Villasalto** in the Gerrei area, facing the historic region of Salto di Quirra, hosts the traditional **Su Sinnadroxiu**, an ancient pastoral festival celebrating livestock branding (*su sinnu*). Along with the blessing of the animals, the event features cheese tastings, religious rituals, and cultural gatherings.



Places such as **Villasimius**, **Costa Rei** and **Muravera** are widely known as popular summer destinations, attracting visitors with their spectacular beaches and vibrant yet relaxed atmosphere. Fewer people, however, are aware that this historical territory is known as **Sarrabus**, a name likely derived from the ancient Phoenician-Punic port city of Sarcapos, and that it preserves a strong agricultural and pastoral identity alongside its deep-rooted maritime connections. This character is especially evident inland, where it gives way to **Gerrei**, a subregion dotted with archaeological sites and often associated with Sarrabus due to their shared historical ties to the Giudicato of Cagliari.

Further north, along the border with Ogliastro, lies the small centre of **Quirra**, also known as Salto di Quirra (Sartu de Chirra in Sardinian, more precisely translated as “the countryside of Quirra”). The area preserves the ruins of an ancient castle that once dominated the Gulf of **Villaputzu**, as well as the surrounding hills and ponds. While coastal cuisine naturally reflects the influence of the sea, traditional dishes here revolve primarily around ingredients drawn from farming and pastoral life. **Muravera**, the principal town of Sarrabus, is particularly renowned for its fragrant citrus fruits, from lemons to oranges. Among the area’s distinctive pasta dishes are *Is Cuixionis*, square ravioli filled with ricotta and vegetables or potatoes and cheese. In **Villasalto**, within the Gerrei territory, visitors encounter *Su Calladeddu*, freshly curdled milk cut into cubes and consumed before it turns sour, unlike *casu axedu*. This preparation survives as a remnant of ancient pastoral customs.

★ *Sa Festa*

Springtime in **Muravera** marks the celebrated **Citrus Festival**, one of the season’s most vibrant events, paying homage to the fragrant oranges of Sarrabus through float parades, music, and folklore.



Archaic cheeses

- For a distinctive cheese experience, head to **Escalaplano**. Here, a local farmer has revived the **axridda** or casu in axridda, listed among Sardinia's Traditional Agri-Food Products and recognised as a Slow Food Presidium. This ewe's milk cheese matures slowly, wrapped in a clay "crust" (axridda) blended with fragrant lentisk oil, which shields it from the external environment while imparting slightly spicy and tangy notes. A robust pecorino variety known as **su casu e murgia** is produced between Escalaplano and Villasalto. Made from casu axedu preserved in brine, it was traditionally crumbled and added to soups and vegetable stews to enhance their flavour.

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