



WANDERING the WORLD
INSPIRATIONAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

A Culinary Immersion Tour of Abruzzo with La Cucina di Sandra

Tour Summary

A gastronomic tour through Abruzzo: National Parks, stunning mountain scenery, beautiful medieval villages, accompanied by great food and wine in Italy's green Heart

ESCORTED/HOSTED GROUP

TOUR TRIP LENGTH: 7 Days/6 Nights

DEPARTURE DATES: May 1-7, 2019; May 15-22, 2019

GROUP SIZE: Maximum 12

MEALS: 6 Breakfasts, 6 Lunches & 6 Dinners as per itinerary including wine.

ACTIVITIES: Guided tour as per itinerary hosted by Sandra.

Inclusions as per itinerary.

PRICE FROM: Euro 3,595

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: Euro 820

DEPOSIT: AU\$ 1,500



"We want to tell Italy and the world the story of the extraordinary beauty of our land. We want tourists to discover a unique place, washed by the sea, with two majestic mountains set just a few kilometers from the beach, and with an ancient food tradition that is full of flavour. A holiday in Abruzzo is one away from the tourist traps."

*Walter Nanni,
Filmmaker*



An Invitation from Sandra...

Sandra followed her passion for her homeland food to start La Cucina di Sandra, the most authentic and highly praised Italian cooking school in Melbourne.



I was born in Pescara, the largest city in Abruzzo and migrated to Australia with my family in the 1970's, I have returned to Abruzzo many times to visit my family and to explore my beautiful region. This way I have maintained my deep connection to my homeland and its gastronomy. For many years it has been my dream to take people to Abruzzo and introduce them to the joy of discovering this magnificent but little-known part of Italy.

Abruzzo is quintessential Italy where you will find hospitable, generous people who still tightly hold on to their tradition, lush rounded hills close to the sea which run up to the rugged towering mountains of the Appenines, beautiful medieval villages, many of which remain real working towns, long wide beaches, outstanding gastronomic products, great wines; a region of infinite variety and contrast.

With three of the largest national parks in Italy, Abruzzo is the greenest region in Italy, largely unspoilt and best of all largely undiscovered by the tourist hordes. This is where you can slow down and discover the real heart of Italy. Come with me and you will soon see why I am so passionate about the absolute beauty of my land and the extraordinary riches of its culinary heritage.

When you explore Abruzzo and its food with me you will:

- Stay in unique luxury-class accommodation
- Visit some of the most beautiful villages in Italy
- Eat in outstanding slow food restaurants
- Visit vineyards and discover outstanding Abruzzese wines
- Learn about the food traditions of the region at specially organised cooking classes
- Discover rare and delicious artisan cheeses
- Meet and spend time with locals

I have handpicked the best accommodation, dining and gastronomic experiences to give you a unique insight into the culinary riches of my Abruzzo. All set against the background of some of the most spectacular landscapes in Italy.

DAY 1/ NIGHT 1 Arrive Loreto

Transfers can be arranged from Rome (1.5 hours drive)



Loreto Aprutino is an ancient town with a wonderful hilltop setting and spectacular views over vine and olive tree covered hills to the wild and rugged Apennines. It is the centre of production for the famed Aprutino Pescarese Extra Virgin olive oil DOP. Far from being a museum village Loreto is a real working town where you will be able to observe and join in the life of a typical Abruzzese village.

Our accommodation for the next four nights is set on the highest point of the village. Formerly a fortress founded by the Normans which, after many alterations, became a noble residence and has now been converted to a luxury hotel. The view from the hotel terrace across rolling hills to the highest peaks of the Apennines is breathtaking.





We will wander the streets of Loreto Citta' Vecchia taking in its graceful architecture elegant palazzi and fine churches, you will see the Churches of Santa Maria in Piano with its spectacular medieval frescos and San Pietro Apostolo, the main church of the village.

During our walk we will visit the fascinating Olive Oil Museum and the Ceramic Museum devoted to the world famed maiolica ware from Castelli.

An aperitivo in the hotel will be followed by a visit to Picciano for our welcome dinner. After a short stroll around Picciano, a lovely old town, to sharpen the appetite, you will be introduced to the wonderful flavours of Abruzzese cuisine at a Slow Food endorsed restaurant where you will sample the best of the Cucina Abruzzese with a menu especially designed by Sandra with the restaurant's chef.



DAY 2/ NIGHT 2

Loreto

The more energetic among us may enjoy a pre-breakfast walk to the gardens in Loreto.

Travel to Penne a fascinating town, renowned for the elegance of its many brick palazzi and churches and once the centre of a Medici duchy. We will take a guided tour of the town, one of I Borghi Piu Belli d'Italia (The most beautiful villages in Italy), viewing the most picturesque sites.



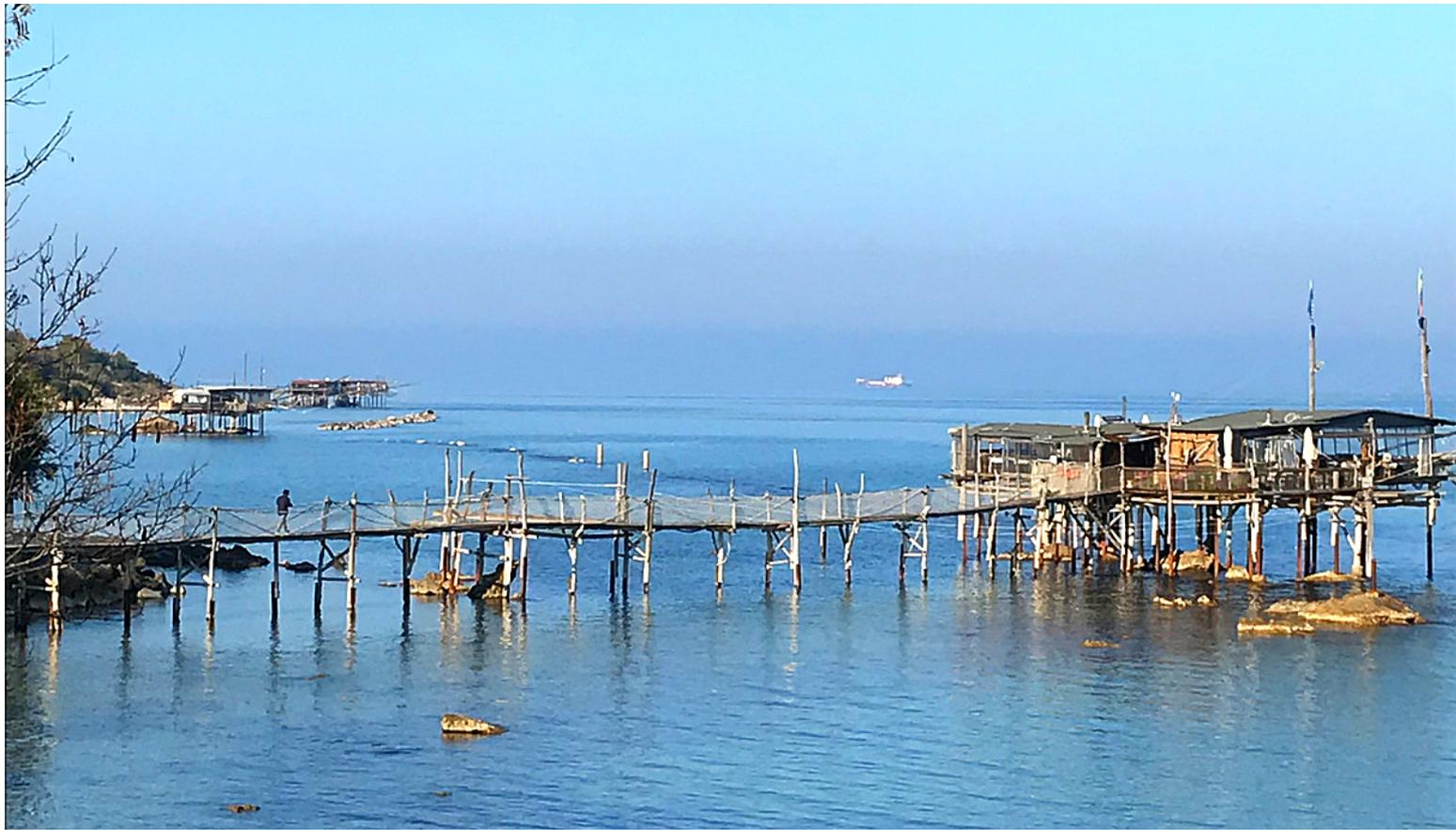
We then begin a day in the region's best vineyards and experience why the delicious wines of Abruzzo have a growing reputation for their outstanding quality.

To begin we will tour and taste (wine, cheese and salumi) one of the regions' best and the oldest commercial wine producer in Abruzzo (since 1853). This vineyard has a spectacular setting with views across the vines toward Gran Sasso, the highest peak in Italy outside the Alps.

When we return to the hotel there will be time for you to relax on the hotel terrace, take a swim or continue with your exploration of the village.

After this relaxing interlude we will drive through lush, hilly countryside to Torre Raone - where an organic producer of award winning wines will offer a tasting, then onto a nearby typical local agriturismo restaurant set on a spectacular hill for dinner with a menu selected by Sandra featuring Abruzzo's specialties and seasonal produce.





The Trabocchi Coast - Drive along the Trabocchi Coast and visit San Vito Chietino for the wonderful view over the Adriatic coast and then on to the ancient and peaceful San Giovanni in Venere Abbey which has an incredible setting above the sea.

DAY 3/ NIGHT 3
Trabocchi Coast/
Travel to Vasto



Driving on to Vasto (a small city with pre-roman origins.) we will meet our guide who will lead us on a short exploration of the old towns' historical centre with its castle, magnificent Palazzo d'Avolos and simply breathtaking views over the Adriatic coast.

"I've always liked and appreciated the products of this splendid region; whose green hills of pastures are a contrast to the stunning majesty of Grand Sasso. Abruzzo is a place of authentic beauty and values, still not made the most of and acknowledged in full. I think that Abruzzo, with its lovely landscapes and hospitable people will become a favourite venue with tourists world wide"

Heinz Beck

Michelin Starred Chef

La Pergola Rome

Today's highlight is a scrumptious lunch which includes a wine tasting and a cooking demonstration. Our chosen vineyard produces lovely wines from the area, they mill their own flour and have designed a special day just for our group. A gorgeous saltwater swimming pool is set on the property, so remember to pack your swimmers.

A walk through the vineyards, a visit to the cellar and sit and taste, pairing each wine with a different Abruzzo specialty will be part of the experience. We will take a journey among the most authentic flavours of the region, with very rare local cheeses and salumi, as well as many "bites" according to the availability of produce from their organic garden. The selected chef will demonstrate the preparation of regional dishes which will form a part of our lunch.

In the evening we will take a leisurely stroll through the town centre of Loreto for aperitivo with the locals followed by a late dinner a-la-carte - in Loreto set on the grounds of the old Valentini Corsi Palace.



DAY 4/ NIGHT 4

Moscufo/ Farindola

This morning we will travel to Moscufo to an Organic Olive Oil farm for an Extra Virgin Olive Oil degustation, we will visit the property, the frantoio and enjoy a private tasting of the different oils produced at this frantoio.



Then we travel through lush green hill country with ever changing views to Farindola, a typical Abruzzese village in a spectacular mountain setting. Farindola is the Pecorino (Sheep's) cheese capital of Abruzzo and is a link to the region's pastoral history. Here we will visit a producer of this renowned cheese. Recognised as one of the best Pecorinos in the area and the recipient of many awards. We will be able to visit the "Caseificio" and witness the cheese making process. The Pecorino made in Farindola is a Slow Food Presidium Product. These products are among the rarest and most culinary significant in Italy.

Next, on to La Cuccumella for a cheese tasting. La Cuccumella is set above the village and has an incredible view of the nearby Apennines. A light lunch and cheese tasting will be enjoyed on the terrace of the Restaurant. The evening meal is a truly memorable dinner to farewell this part of Abruzzo at one of three Michelin starred Restaurants in the region. An aperitivo, followed by a specially selected menu for our final dinner in the hills.





DAY 5/ NIGHT 5

Maiella National Park/Pacentro

Transfer to our superior accommodation in the mountains. Today we leave the coastal hills and drive into the mountains. We will travel to Caramanico Terme and Sant'Eufemia, and via Passo San Leonardo to Pacentro on the first part of our journey. This is a truly spectacular journey between mountains and through the wild splendour of the Maiella National Park. We will pause to buy fresh locally produced cheeses in Sant'Eufemia's Caseificio and stop on the way for a small simple picnic (morning tea).

We arrive at Pacentro, another of the Most Beautiful Villages in Italy, set high above Sulmona and nestled under Monte Morone. This gem of a village with its imposing castle and ancient winding streets is an ideal place to stroll and admire the workmanship of the porticoes and carved wooden doors of the harmoniously grouped stone houses fine churches and palazzi. We will take time to absorb the medieval atmosphere before a light lunch at a typical restaurant.

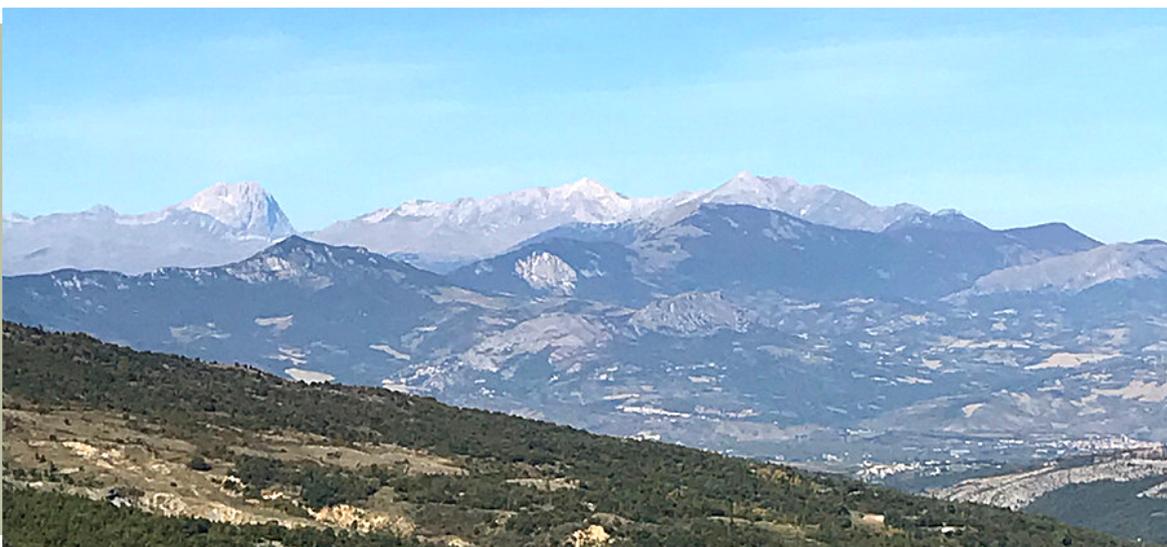




Following lunch, we continue onto Santo Stefano di Sessanio. This is another outstanding scenic drive along the Peligna Valley, over the mountains, through the Navelli plain and up to Santo Stefano di Sessanio, a pastoral village once controlled by the Medici.

Our luxury accommodation for the next two nights is the transformation of some abandoned village houses into this superb hotel, and as guests we will experience a sense of living in a past time. Free time is allocated to explore the village, the shops, wonder at the hardiness of the people who lived in this remote spot and take the time to admire the sublime mountain vistas. Later we will gather in the Piazza for Aperitivo.

The Hotel has a stunning wine bar, carved out of atmospheric medieval buildings. The handmade interior is a representation of how the ancestral mountain people worked with wood. The crowning glory of the scene is the stone fireplace in which now as in the past, meals of the day are kept warm. We will enjoy a private tasting of superb Abruzzese wines, followed by an unforgettable feast featuring typical local fare and a menu designed especially for our group by the Hotel's Chef and Sandra.



DAY 6/ NIGHT 6

Santo Stefano di Sessanio /Campo Imperatore

After breakfast there will be time to leisurely explore Santo Stefano di Sessanio before joining in a cooking class organised especially for our group. This is a two-hour course, getting to know the Chef, learning how to use regional cooking utensils, preparing simple, delicious dishes using the finest local ingredients.

After our morning activities we drive to Campo Imperatore at 1800 metres above sea level. This is a high plane of incredible natural beauty with views of the tallest mountains south of the Alps. The stupendous vistas impart a sense of peace and wonder. In the past this was pasture where great flocks of sheep grazed and even today it is possible to meet shepherds with their flocks guarded by snow white dogs.

This spectacular drive through the mountains will lead us to lunch in the open air in true Abruzzese style with arrosticini (Traditional lamb skewers), BBQ meats, traditional cheeses and salumi. Typical shepherd's fare and still a great favorite throughout the region.

Return to Santo Stefano di Sessanio through the spectacular Parco Nazionale del Gran Sasso - a spectacular drive stop for a stroll through Castel Del Monte, a village of rare beauty perched on a hilltop. As you wander you will soon appreciate why it has formed the backdrop to many films.

This evening we will meet in the piazza for Aperitivo before our farewell dinner at a renowned local restaurant set in an ancient palazzo. We will savour a menu designed by Sandra in conjunction with the local chef.



DAY 7

Calascio and Onward Travel

As a truly memorable end to our trip we will visit Calascio a village a few minutes away. Above the village is one of the most impressive places in Abruzzo. We will walk to an ancient fortress, Rocca di Calascio, the highest castle in Italy. The atmosphere and the incredible panorama over wild and mountain country and fertile high planes will stay in your memory forever.



After a well-earned coffee in Calascio, a village being restored to life by private citizens, we next travel a short distance to L'Aquila, the regional capital, to visit one of the city's leading contemporary restaurants for the best pizza in Abruzzo or some of the great dishes on offer on the menu at this exquisite gem of a restaurant. This will be a delicious finale to our journey of discovery together.



Tour Summary and Booking Information

Wandering the World specialises in creating and tailoring exceptional walking, trekking and touring holidays in some of the most beautiful places on earth. This includes both escorted small group and self-guided trips, as well as individually tailored itineraries for privately organised trips.

We are passionate about sharing the places we love and offer our expertise to ensure our travellers enjoy rich and authentic travelling experiences. Wandering the World select authentic and comfortable accommodation and our itineraries are focused on immersing travellers in the local culture and uncovering the hidden gems of a destination.

We are committed to ensuring our travellers have a trip of a lifetime.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

OR TO MAKE A BOOKING:

PHONE: +61 402 910 552

EMAIL: Glenyce Johnson

glenycej@wanderingtheworld.com.au

VISIT: www.wanderingtheworld.com.au

Full booking conditions and payment details
available on request.