

SANT'ANTIOCO

THE ISLAND WITHIN AN ISLAND

TRAVEL BOOK FOR CURIOS TRAVELLERS



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WELCOME TO SANT'ANTIOCO

Sant'Antioco is a wonderful place to visit. The history of the island stretches back to the time of the Nuragic culture, after which the Punic people arrived and built early settlements. During the Roman era, the city of Sulcis was established, the basis of the modern town. It is the largest island in Sardinia, and the fourth largest in Italy, and one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Southern Sardinia. The island has so much to offer: charming beaches, lovely natural coves, unspoilt Mediterranean scrub, Bluefin tuna fishing and a wealth of traditions. All this, combined with a long tradition of hospitality, creates real empathy between the local people and the many tourists who visit throughout the year. The island is also a place of pilgrimage. The people have celebrated the island's saint and martyr Antiochus every year for the last 665 years, with three great annual events. The "Festa Manna" (Great Festival) takes place fifteen days after Easter, followed by the summer celebrations on 1 August, and the religious event on 13 November, the anniversary of the Saint's death.

The island in the island looks forward to welcoming you!

*The Mayor
Ignazio Locci*

As soon as you arrive in Sant'Antioco, make sure you watch one of our sunsets, when the sun plunges into the water in an explosion of colours. The sight of so much beauty will make you feel at peace, and ready to enjoy a real holiday on our island. During your stay, you'll get to know every corner of the island: from the sea around it, with the unspoiled beaches and cliffs, to the inland area with its many sights, exploring the ancient history and ancestral traditions that are so familiar to its people. Sant'Antioco is also an experience for the senses: from the very special food and wine to delightful nature walks, and from outdoor sports to the many events that take place at different times of year. Sant'Antioco is not just a holiday destination, it is a unique place, where every step is like exploring the links between the past and the present. Welcome to this wonderful island, in the hope that you can forget your everyday concerns and rediscover simple pleasures like the feeling of the wind in your hair, the sea on your skin, and the warmth of early morning sunshine.

***The Councillor for Tourism
Roberta Serrenti***





The sky is a deeper blue, and the brilliant whiteness of the light is reminiscent of Africa.

The remains of past civilisations mingle with the Mediterranean scrub, and the lagoon ecosystems and beaches have been called the most beautiful in Italy. Here the Mediterranean has carved out natural pools and created almost mystical desert landscapes: half moons of limpid water, granite rocks and tall white dunes. Far from any stereotypes, and closely linked to its cultural identity, Sant'Antioco is an island within an island where nature, traditions and cuisine all have their own authentic character.

It is the fourth largest island in Italy after Sicily, Sardinia and Elba, and lies to the southwest of Sardinia, connected to its mother-island by an artificial isthmus. This is a land with ancient origins, the landing place for the first seafarers in the Mediterranean, who built the settlement of Sulki here; now shown to be the oldest town in Italy by the discovery of an amphora dating from 800 BC. Sulky was founded by the Phoenicians, and was an important port and centre of trade with the East. Sant'Antioco is now a favourite destination for those who prefer a peaceful holiday, far from the noise and confusion of mass tourism. The wild beauty of its coves has remained unchanged over the years, the fishing villages still retain their traditional atmosphere, the good cooking speaks of everyday customs and the simple life. Sheltered from the winds of change, Sant'Antioco has kept its soul intact by simply being understated.

This Travel Book is divided into three chapters, which are like three stops along a trail. The aim is to encourage you to want to learn more about the extraordinary natural and cultural heritage of this part of Italy, unknown to many tourists but no less important for this reason. The journey introduces you to different people and places which, like the incessant coming and going of the tide, tell the story of a secret corner of Sardinia that needs to be explored slowly: lingering at every turn to enjoy the landscape, stopping to talk to a fisherman, and drinking a cup of coffee in the square. However, you also need to find the time to meet the people who live along these coasts, rugged people, who are proud of their island origins and happily linked to the sea. These are people who learned to come to terms with nature over the centuries, gazing at the sea and the far horizon and imagining opportunities rather than limits. Their lives are marked by rituals and the passage of the seasons, and by the wind that stirs the soul.

You can take this journey in any season, in the clarity of summer, or in the calm times between winter gales, but also in spring and after Easter, retracing the footsteps and deeds of Antiochus, the Saint who came from the sea, patron saint of Sardinia and master of life. The island dedicates a festival to him, one of the most evocative in Italy, filled with colour, songs, splendid clothes and ancient customs. These are solemn, shared occasions, tracing a path through the memory and religion of the island, and showing a way towards a better understanding of the culture of "mare nostrum".



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NATURE

WALK

SIMPLY NATURE

A sunny island to the southwest of another island, San'Antioco defies classification, with its crystal-clear lagoons, fjords and azure water, contrasting with its Mediterranean scrub, rocky cliffs and mountain valleys, where you can walk for miles without seeing another soul. It is both the sea and overseas: two faces of the same beautiful land.

PLEASURE AT THE TABLE

THE ISLAND ON A PLATE (AND IN A GLASS)

Carignan red wine, fish fresh from the lagoon, festival bread: all the best to eat and drink. The culinary tradition is a mixture of cultures and influences, many flavours to sample as you explore the island.



THE SAINT WHO CAME FROM THE SEA

Antiochus sailed from the sandy land of Africa, braving a long, difficult journey with high waves and mistral winds, to finally land at ancient Sulcis, a sunlit harbour at the southernmost tip of Sardinia. But for him, this splendid paradise was simply a place of exile and confinement. Antiochus was African by birth, the son of the governor of Mauritania. He worked as a doctor, treating the physical and spiritual ailments of all who requested his help. He never asked for gifts or payment, but did his work in the name of God, bringing Christianity to a pagan people. Because of this, he was accused of treason by the Roman Emperor Hadrian and was exiled to the island of Sulcis. He remained until 127 AD, the year he died, founding the first Christian community in Sardinia. His fame spread throughout the region and did not end with death. On the

contrary, many pilgrims travelled to his place of his burial to ask for grace and protection, and a church was built on the site of his tomb. It is from here that we start our journey to explore the town of Sant'Antioco; with the cult of a Saint who became the patron saint of Sardinia, and whose life and work has influenced the character and identity of the people.

The Basilica of Sant'Antioco Martire

The Basilica of Sant'Antioco stands at the highest point of the town, and has some of the typical features of Byzantine architecture. The original church was in the form of a Greek cross, but it now has a longitudinal plan with three naves covered by separate roofs. The facade is late Baroque, and the interior is quite plain



Basilica di Sant'Antico



with exposed ashlar and a small niche that houses the remains of St. Antiochus. The original Basilica was built in about the 5th century AD, and was the seat of the first bishop of Sulcis Iglesiente. The church became the focus of celebrations in honour of the Patron Saint of Sardinia. There are three events every year, celebrations that people take part in with great joy and devotion (see box on page 18). You can visit the crypt under the Basilica, and a unique series of **catacombs** with frescoes, inscriptions and arcosolium tombs. It consists of a labyrinthine system of tunnels, intricate pathways that served as burial places around the tomb of Antiochus. His remains lay there from 127 AD until 1615, but now his tomb is at the entrance to the catacombs, an important place of prayer and worship for both pilgrims and tourists. You can get to the

Basilica by walking up Via Regina Margherita to **Piazza De Gasperi**, a large, neat square flanked by cafes and shops. Also, at number 2 Via Castello, you can visit the **Historical Archive**, with its collection of news and stories covering the last three hundred years of the island's life.

Ancient stones: the Archaeological Park

A short distance from the Basilica, you come the Savoy **Fort** or Castle, a fortification built in around 1813, to defend the island from raids by Barbary pirates. The fort is locally known as the "Guardia de su Pisu", and stands on a hill sixty metres above the town. A visit here is of both cultural and scenic interest, for the cannons, narrow stairways, and embrasures with views of the sea. Immediately below it is

the archaeological zone, with the **Acropolis** overlooking the ancient city and the Punic **Necropolis** of *Is Pirixeddus*.

It forms part of a large burial system, lying below the historic centre. About a thousand hypogea tombs were constructed between the sixth and third centuries BC, reflecting the life and wealth of the city of Sulky. Important finds in relation to burial rituals and Latin funerary inscriptions can be seen at the Ferruccio Barreca Archaeological Museum. Indeed, the town has very ancient origins.

The first settlement dates back to Phoenician times, when it was as an important trading centre and port on the Mediterranean.



Our route will take you to the **Hypogaeum Village**, certainly one of the most popular tourist sights on the island. It is known locally as the Is Gruttas quarter, and consists of a series of Punic tombs. These were later used as homes by the very poorest families, who occupied them from the mid-eighteenth century up until 1970. Some of these "caves" have been recently restored, together with the furniture and objects used by the people who lived there, offering visitors a unique glimpse into a past life.

Not far from here is the **Ethnographic Museum**, known as *Su Magasino 'e su Binu*. It was once a meeting place for the inhabitants of the Is Gruttas quarter, but now houses displays related to local trades and crafts: from viticulture to the uses of the dwarf palm, bread-making and byssus weaving.

Just a few minutes from here, you come to the **MAB Ferruccio Barreca Archaeological Museum**. The displays recount the history of the Phoenician settlement known as Sulky: built on the eastern shores of the island and famous for being the oldest town in Italy. The exhibition takes you through the geography and history of Sulky, focusing on the three main parts of the settlement since its beginnings. The inhabited area, the necropolis and the Tophet are brought to life with models, videos and unique objects. Of particular note are the limestone lions, the funerary objects, and the section on Punic beliefs. When you leave the museum, your next stop is the **Tophet**, a sacred place for the Phoenicians, where children who died a natural death were cremated and buried in urns.

Basilica of Sant'Antioco - catacombs



Good to know

You will need half a day to visit the entire Archaeological Park, and you may like to use one of the expert guides from **Archeotur Sant'Antioco**, while for an immersive visit you can book one of the hands-on experiences

(parcostoricoarcheologicosantantioco.it).

For example, during the session "Sant'Antioco: Yarns, natural colours and traditions" you can explore the techniques used in the ancient art of weaving, from the use of the loom to colouring fabrics with herbal dyes.



Mab



Hypogaeum Village



It is the largest open-air sanctuary in the Mediterranean, and one of the largest in the world after that of Carthage. About 3500 urns have been discovered, along with 1500 stelae offering thanks to the gods. It is in this area that the **Phoenician Arena** has been set up, with a large stage for hosting concerts, theatrical performances and cultural events. It looks towards the gulf, an evocative setting for the shows.

Tailor-made: arts and crafts

The magic of creativity has been passed down over the centuries, beginning with the use of natural elements. It rethinks traditions and the symbols of collective imagination, involving a constant dialogue between society and the environment, creativity and manual skill.

The story of Sant'Antioco is told by the hands of its people, in the workshops of

carpenters and weavers, and in artists' studios. One of their most special skills is certainly the ancient art of weaving. Among those who keep this tradition alive are **Assuntina and Giuseppina Pes**, who combine enthusiasm with expertise.

They mainly produce tapestries, but also make woven tablecloths and carpets. They use traditional stitching and colours, creating geometric and floral designs that follow patterns handed down from the weavers of the past. Some of their work can be seen in the Basilica of Sant'Antioco during the feast days dedicated to the Saint. For example, the lectern cover and altar cloth are woven from a combination of linen thread, gold thread and byssus. The byssus used for the lectern cover dates back to the 1960s, while that used for the altar cloth is from 1920 and came from the workshop of master Italo Diana.



Byssus is a natural fibre also known as sea silk. It is obtained from the filaments produced by the *Pinna Nobilis*, the largest bivalve mollusc in the Mediterranean; it lives in the Sant'Antioco lagoon, and can reach up to one and a half metres in height. Harvested for many centuries, it is now a protected species. The byssus was used to make rich fabrics, and was much loved by both the nobility and the top hierarchy of the church.

To find out more, you can visit the **Byssus Museum** at no. 168 Viale Regina Margherita, a short walk from the Basilica of Sant'Antioco. You will be welcomed by the mistress of the art of byssus, Chiara Vigo (chiaravigo.it), who knows every aspect of this fibre. Entrance is by appointment only.



Filigree work and ceramics

Sardinia is rich in traditions, many of which have been passed down over the centuries and relate to the history and customs of the region. One of these symbols of local identity is found in the craft of jewellery-making, with a particular link to filigree-work, an ancient art with deep significance. The term "filigree" derives from a combination of the Latin words "filum" (thread) and "granum" (grain). It is a specialist form of gold-working, which consists of interweaving fine gold or silver threads.

After the threads are bent and braided, they are joined together at their points of contact and soldered onto a support, also made of precious metal, to create stylish jewellery with an intricate structure. The pieces you find in the workshops and shops in the town centre are in gold, silver and filigree-work. From a Sardinian wedding-band, with classic or updated design, to a Phoenician-Punic ring with a central flower with white and blue petals in an arched surround: these items evoke the past by linking it to the present.



Then there are those craftsmen who use the art of ceramics to explore the myths and traditions, creating works that reflect the habits and customs of Sant'Antioco. They shape the clay slowly and carefully to create figurines and Sardinian carnival masks such as the Mamuthones, the Boes and the Merdules, that make decorative objects for the home.





LIFE IN THE OLD TOWN



Set right by a navigable lagoon, the town of Sant'Antioco has just under eleven thousand inhabitants. The old centre is built around **Piazza Italia**, surrounded by palm trees and cafés and with a beautiful fountain in the middle.

Pastel-coloured buildings overlook the square and steep, narrow streets branch out around it. A tree-lined avenue connects Piazza Italia to Piazza Umberto, travelling in a straight line and shaded by green foliage. This is **Corso Vittorio Emanuele**, with its rows of shops and bars with tables set out on the smart basalt pavements.

It is somewhere to stop and have an aperitif at one of the many places with tables and chairs.



As you stroll along you'll come to artisan shops selling everything from local jewellery to cutlery. You'll also find works by contemporary artists such as Nicola Obino, an urban artist and painter originally from this island, who goes by the name of **Derf**. He makes colourful, eye-catching works such as "The Martyr", which depicts St. Antiochus outside the religious context in order to emphasise his popularity.

It's time to go down to the lagoon and stroll along the Cristoforo Colombo promenade, which stretches straight down the waterfront. On one side are the old fishermen's houses and café tables, and on the other the fishing boats. On calm days when the lagoon is still and everything is reflected in the water, it looks quite like a painting.





Sa Festa Manna: a big festival

The history and culture of Sant'Antioco have a double connection with the life of the Saint who came from the sea. This bond that is reinforced every year with three special events, creating a deep sense of belonging in the Sant'Antioco community.

The feast of Sant'Antioco is the oldest religious event in Sardinia, with rituals and customs that have always remained the same, a mixture of the sacred and the profane, faith and folklore. The origins of the feast go far back in time, with descriptions handed down by word of mouth until 1360, when its existence is confirmed in a manuscript.

The devotion to the Saint is so deep that the people celebrate him on three occasions during the year. Fifteen days after Easter is *Sa Festa Manna*, followed by the summer festival on the 1st of



August, with music, dancing, art exhibitions, and tastings of local dishes. The last event is *dies natalis* on 13 November, the anniversary of the Saint's death, which is remembered with solemn celebrations.

The festival of *Sa Festa Manna* is the largest and most heart-felt event. It brings together enthusiasts and believers from all over Sardinia, visitors, photographers and video-makers. It lasts for three days and is an explosion of colours, music and excitement. The Monday is particularly special, for it is when the image of St. Antiochus is taken in procession down to the sea, starting from the Basilica on top of the hill. The procession is accompanied by floats, and folk groups in traditional dress who sing and pray. The town is filled with festive decorations, and leaves, aromatic herbs and flowers are spread along the streets in the centre. Banners hang from the balconies and every street is adorned with wreaths and red and white flags.





The local men and women put on their traditional costumes, which they've been keeping carefully in their wardrobes.

They may wear simple, everyday clothes on Saturday, but on Monday they're stylishly dressed with plenty of lace and jewellery. These costumes are carefully sewn and embroidered: real examples of fine craftsmanship. They include kerchiefs and headdresses, long skirts, satin or velvet bodices, and shawls and aprons all embroidered with red: the colour of the robe worn by St. Antiochus. Each garment has a name and a particular form of design. The square-cut bodice made of red velvet with silk embroidery is known as *su gipponi*, while the large square kerchief made from the finest batiste fabric and bordered with handmade lace is called *su muncarori* or *muncaroi biancu*.

The ritual of donning these costumes is accompanied by that of the votive bread, in shapes so elaborate they are almost works of art (this is also recounted in the book and video Inside the Festival produced by Ottovolante: ottovolantesulcis.it).



The bread is known as *coccòi de su Santu*, and women of the village prepare it as a gift to St. Antiochus, decorating it with floral motifs, ears of grain and bunches of grapes. This special bread is also made in the shape of a heart just like an ex voto, and requires considerable work as well as slow baking.

The festival celebrations begin on the Saturday afternoon with a procession just involving women. They take their bread to the Basilica to be blessed, just as the wives and mothers of the island did in the past. They baked bread in honour of the Saint and prayed for protection for their loved ones, asking that they return home safely from war or from the sea.

On Monday, the Patron Saint is carried shoulder-high around the town, to bless the streets as he passes.





After that, there is a firework display over the lagoon, a spectacle best seen from the promenade or just below the Savoy Fort.

Walking in the footsteps of the Saint

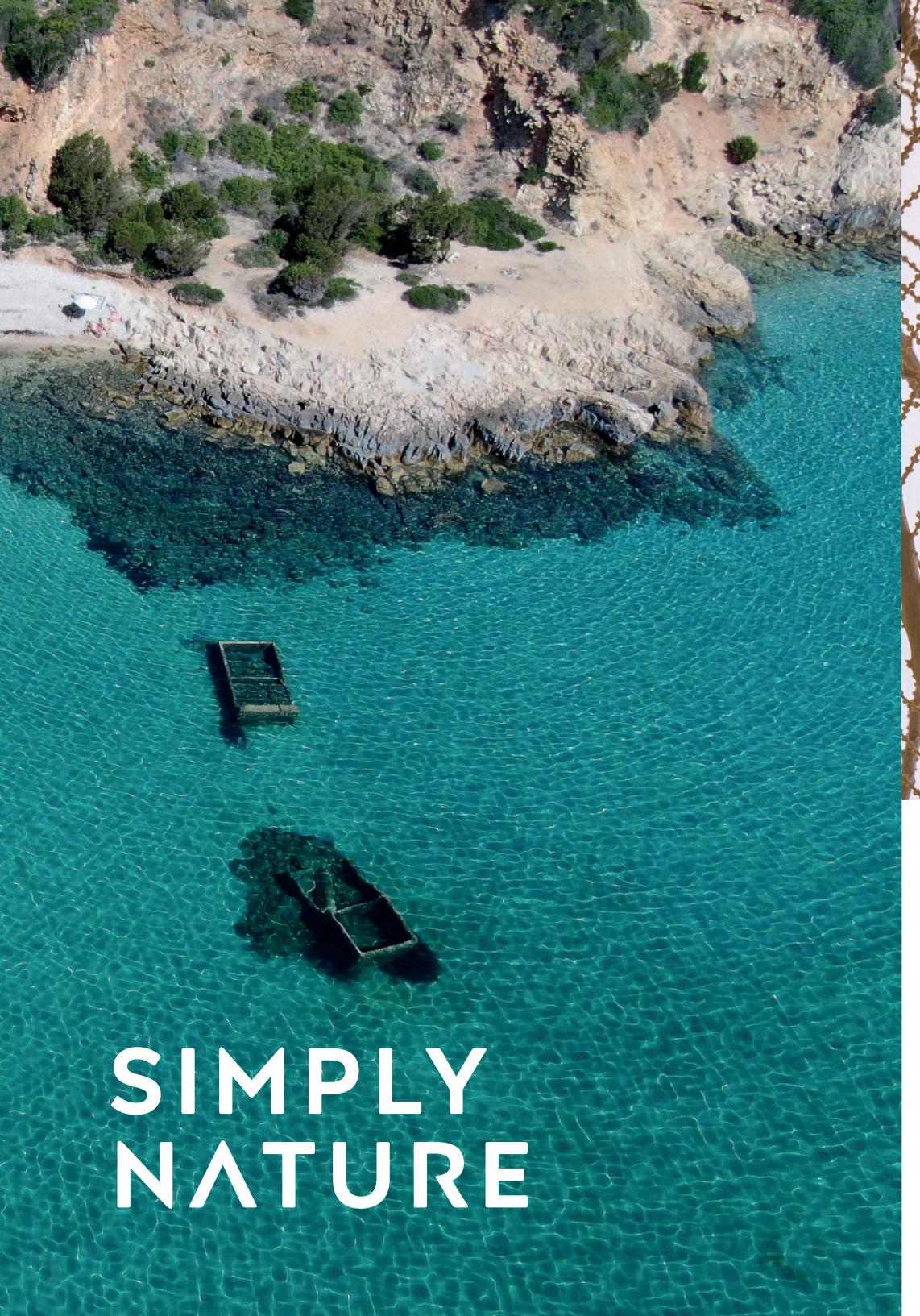
According to the Toltec sages of ancient Mexico, learning to walk is like learning to live, requiring slow steps and deep breaths. The walkers of the third millennium are also aware of this. They are happy to take to the road, driven by a desire to get to know themselves and the world more closely. More and more people are choosing to explore the roads and streets of Italy on foot, an ancient way to travel that is also a way to rebalance your inner self. This is even more true when you're following in the footsteps of a Saint. You start from Coacuaddus and finish your journey in the centre of Sant'Antioco: a route dedicated to the Patron Saint of Sardinia and combining culture, nature and spirituality. It is thirteen kilometres from the beach at Coacuaddus to the centre of Sant'Antioco, via the Maladroxia Nuraghe, Is Prunis and the Cirdu pond and then back to the village. Along the way, you'll encounter ancient stones and reminders of history, as you stop to look at the clear sea and the stretches of beautiful coastline where Antiocchus landed centuries ago. You can visit the Basilica and the ancient catacombs on a trail that combines historical and religious interest with a beautiful landscape.

For a bit of training, there's a path that takes you round the Gardens on the Sant'Antioco promenade. It's named after the local athletes, Giovanni Lai and Peppino Nocco, winners of many competitions at both national and European level. The trail is two kilometres long and was awarded the Blue Flag in 2023 by the Italian Federation of Athletics and ANCI (the National Association of Italian Municipalities) for providing a good space for the well-being and health of citizens.

Street art: in the name of urban regeneration.

“Is Nuus Nous”, or the New Knots is a tribute to the craft of textile-making. Di Giorgio Casu, a.k.a. Jorghe, created this work of street art on the power station in Via Belvedere, Sant’Antioco. It covers the four sides of the building, and the shapes and colours reflect the local tradition of textile-making, as well as details related to archaeology, such as the Phoenician-Punic ring. This work is related to the “Street Art and Urban Redevelopment” initiative, which forms part of the Museo Diffuso project, designed to merge history with nature, archaeology and architecture. This mural paved the way for other well-known artists to contribute works, including Millo, or Francesco Camillo Giorgino, the architect and street artist, who decorated the wall of a building in Via Matteotti. It’s called **“The Sound of the Waves”** and depicts a girl sitting on a red seahorse against a stylised urban backdrop. In the same street, you can see a work by Crisa (Federico Carta) entitled **“Cartogram”**, painted on the side of another substation. It shows a map, with statistical data depicted in the form of drawings, shapes and colours. Meanwhile, Leticia Mandragora is an Italo-Spanish artist, and to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of **Grazia Deledda**, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, she created a portrait in her trademark style using shades of blue. For Mandragora, blue represents the people’s inner, emotional and spiritual life. Her composite mural is in Via Grazia Deledda. The most recent work, on the other hand, is by the French artist Remed, who decorated the basketball court and skating rink in Via Matteotti in an explosion of colour. More new murals are on the way, this is a work in progress.





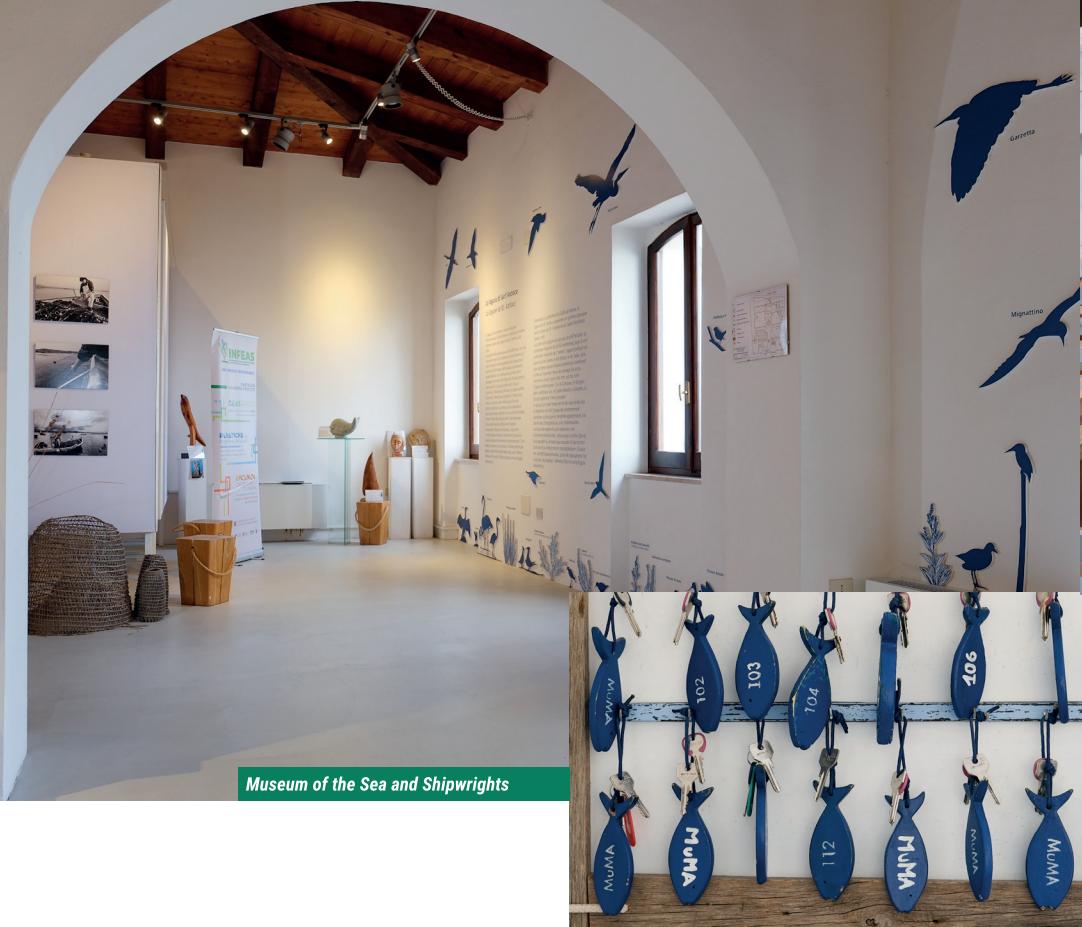
SIMPLY
NATURE



If there were not an isthmus connecting Sant'Antioco to Sardinia at Sulcis Iglesiente, it would simply be an island within an island, a blue and green land scented with myrtle and juniper. The sea and the lagoon advance and retreat, creating some unique ecosystems. The island was a landing place for the first seafarers to navigate the Mediterranean. It was inhabited by the Phoenicians, invaded by the Berbers and controlled by the Romans,

while nowadays it's a hidden corner of Sardinia. It's surrounded by a series of small bays, with rocky spires, sea caves, and dunes of the finest sand.

Next to the isthmus and overlooking the Gulf of Palmas is the Santa Caterina lagoon, a complex system of wetlands rich in terms of biodiversity. It is quite common to see elegant pink flamingos here, as well as marsh harriers, cormorants



drying their wings after fishing, and herring gulls whose calls mark the passage of time on the island.

Although the historic centre of Sant'Antioco is away from the coast, the Cristoforo Colombo Promenade serves as a starting point for a story about the blue (and beyond). For example, the former slaughterhouse here was carefully renovated and reopened as **MUMA**: a multi-purpose structure that houses a hostel, the **Museum of the Sea and Shipwrights**,

and CEAS (the Centre for Environmental Education and Sustainability).

During the year, it hosts film festivals and literary and scientific festivals, and organises guided tours of the Saline di Sant'Antioco and of the island.

The museum is part of a series of spaces dedicated to the sea and seafaring around the four smaller islands of Sardinia, recounting the story of a historical and cultural heritage.





The artisans of the sea

From the fishermen of the lagoon to the salt miners, and from the lighthouse keepers to the shipwrights: the displays in the museum conserve memories of the sea, illustrating the present and looking to the future. The first floor takes you through the story of lighthouses and beacons in Sardinia, tireless guardians of men at sea, while the ground floor focuses on the magical world of boat-building, still a speciality of the island.



With an ability to recognise the right type of wood, skilful hands and special tools for shaping boats, the boatwright is a skilled professional recognised in the Navigation Code, along with engineers and builders. This skilled profession is still practiced today in Sant'Antioco, and is celebrated in **Vele**, an installation by Giorgio Casu on the waterfront.





From the net to the plate

The traditional wooden craft built by the boatwrights and used by fishermen of Sant'Antioco can be seen moored in the lagoon. These colourful vessels, marked by salt and toil, take the fishermen offshore. They may be slipping on oil or facing a storm, but wherever there are fish there are the fishermen. They have wrinkles furrowed by the wind and hands calloused from handling ropes.

They know every secret of the sea thanks to their skills and experience, and the knowledge that is handed down over the generations. And now there are the fishing tourism initiatives, with boats going out every day to bring back fresh fish for restaurant tables. These restaurants with indoor dining-rooms and outdoor tables are on the promenade, close to where the fishing boats are moored. The dishes on their menus are of good quality and in keeping with tradition; they change with the seasons and are never boring.

It's a good way to learn about the seafaring tradition of the island. You make an appointment on one of the fishing tourism boats, and go out on a trip that ends with a lunch prepared from the morning's catch. The excursion includes the Gulf of Palmas, and a visit to bays, inlets and islets that are difficult to reach on foot.



White gold

Leaving Sant'Antioco behind, you cross the Roman bridge of **Ponti Mannu** to get to the Salina di Sant'Antioco. For two millennia, it was the only land connection between Sant'Antioco and the mother island. Today, it is a historical monument, a finely-restored architectural feature. It is opposite the 22-metre-high **Porto Ponte Romano Lighthouse**, built by the Civil Engineers in 1924. The rectangular lighthouse is painted white and is still a reference point for boats at sea. It can be visited on "Open Monuments" cultural days, usually during May.

The entrance to the **Salina** is shortly after this. It covers 1500 hectares and stretches along 20 kilometres of coastline facing onto the Gulf of Palmas. The history of the salt pans dates right back to Roman times. It is a nature area that extends from the Isthmus of Sant'Antioco as far as Porto Pino, with Mediterranean scrub and volcanic and limestone rocks, providing a refuge for many species such as the greater white heron, the coral seagull and the pink flamingo. The salt pans are the only ones in Sardinia apart from those at Conti Vecchi near Cagliari. You can only visit them on any official excursion guided by one of MUMA's environmental experts, and will see the areas where the salt is collected and initially processed.

Above and below the water

As Elio Vittorini wrote in his book "Sardinia Like Childhood", the sea "is always felt" here, shimmering in the air on every side. The sea here comes in a thousand shades, and is so clear you could almost drink it. It laps the island's coves and rocks, and creeps in between the high cliffs to form little inlets. The beaches and inlets are easy to access on both sides of the island, but your choice will depend on the prevailing wind and currents.

The beaches on the east coast face onto the **Gulf of Palmas** and are best when the mistral is blowing. The first one you come to is **Portixeddu**, a cove with fine sand and pebbles. There are no services but there is no shortage of parking. Just beyond that is **Maladroxia**, which is one of the most popular beaches, especially with families, thanks to the shallow water and the sandy bed of the cove, and the presence of kiosks and proper bathrooms.



Coacuaddus is known for the exotic colours of its clear water and is set among little sand dunes and dense green foliage. Opposite it is the Sardinian coast, and in the foreground are the white dunes surrounding the bay of Porto Pino with its limpid blue water. Immediately afterwards, you get to **Turri**, a small pebbly cove which is perfect for snorkelling. If you're looking for privacy, go to **Capo Sperone** on the southernmost tip of the island, with its overhanging rocks and wild scenery. But when the sirocco is blowing, it's better to head to the coves of **Sotto Torre**, **Le Saline** and **Spiaggia Grande** nearer Calasetta. They have beautiful soft sand and turquoise water. Some sections of the coast can only be reached by boat, on foot or by mountain bike, such as the **Nido dei Passeri**, a pair of sea stacks protruding from the water.



The lighthouse of **Mangiabarche** is in a rugged part of the coast and stands on a rocky outcrop surrounded by the sea.

With its shoals and fissures, caves and vertical walls, the seabed around the island is one of the best for diving in the Mediterranean, with the remains of tuna traps, wrecks and statues, and green Posidonia meadows. At **Banco Pomata**, the seabed is jagged and uneven, with some large boulders and fissures, while on the **Island of Toro** the rocky walls plummet right down, and deep-sea fish swim among strong currents.

You can go to certified diving centres at any time of year, and explore the best sites around Sant'Antioco and San Pietro. Depending on the time of year, you may see the bluefin tuna that have been passing through these waters for centuries, or spot manta rays, dolphins, turtles and a huge variety of fish.

Caves and Watchtowers

With its cliffs and flat rocks, the west coast is ideal for a dip. One of the best spots, in terms of its setting and the depth of its water, is **Cala Grotta**, with its rocky walls and natural emerald-coloured pool. To get there, you have to follow the road from the pretty cove of Cala Sapone towards the inlet of Cala Lunga, and turn left just before the Mercury hotel. You need to park on the left and continue on foot along a dirt track, the beautiful setting and scent of helichrysum make up for all the effort. The place to go at sunset is **Cala Sapone**, an arc of sand wrapped between cliffs and with a gently sloping seabed. You can go

to one of the beach bars to stock up on beer and *guttiau* bread (a variant on carasau bread, seasoned with oil and salt), and then walk along the flat, grey rocks to the point where you can only see the sea, shining brightly on the horizon.

An alternative for sunset-watching is **Torre Canai**: the fortress is in the form of a cylinder, and was built in 1757 to defend the coastline from raids by Barbary pirates. The tower stands on the Turri promontory and overlooks the Gulf of Palmas and the islands of Toro and La Vacca. The splendid view and the warm, golden light make up for all the exertion of the walk. The tower can be visited every day from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. from 1 May to 30 September. Inside, a circular room houses a small exhibition about the coastal towers of Sardinia and the ecosystem of the island of Sant'Antioco. An internal stone staircase leads up

to the "piazza d'armi" (weaponry area), where there was once an artillery section and a guardhouse. Outside, you can explore the nature trails designed by the naturalist Sergio Todde, who has classified the native species found in this area.

Away from the waves

The conical nuraghi are recognisable features in the landscape. Indeed, there are thousands of them scattered around Sardinia, dominating the view and inviting visitors to find out more. These nuraghi were built by an unusual civilisation, established in the Bronze and Iron Ages between 1800 and 300 BC. The nuraghi are some of the tallest known prehistoric buildings in the Mediterranean region after the Egyptian pyramids, and emblematic of a flourishing civilisation. There are 58 nuraghi on the island of Sant'Antioco

Cala Sapone





(either standing or ruined), about 16 tombs of the giants, 14 villages, a well temple and two menhirs: the highest concentration of nuragic remains in southern Sardinia. **The Grutt'i Acqua** complex to the west of the Plains of Canai plain is in a wild natural setting, and consists of a nuraghe in the form of a primitive tower surrounded by a walled bastion, probably with four lobes. There is also a pond, a well for collecting water, and two megalithic circles made with the use of huge trachyte boulders. A few hundred metres away, a staircase cut into the rock leads to an underground well temple dedicated to the cult of water.

The nuragic trail continues with a visit to the **Su Niu 'e su Crobu** Tomb of the Giants. It's on a hill not far from the sea at Sa Corona de su Crabi. The tomb is in the traditional form of a very long rectangular chamber for laying the remains of the dead. On the other coast, near Maladroxia, **Nuraghe S'Ega de Marteddu**, is one of the most important and best-preserved sites on the island. It consists of a keep and bastion with three towers. The main tower is still intact, but covered with soil and Mediterranean scrub.

You can see as far as the bay of Maladroxia from here, with the sea tinted green or cobalt blue depending on the direction of the wind.





Barefoot in the water

There are almost a thousand beaches around Sardinia's 1,900 kilometres of coastline. Some are famous and some unknown, some stretch for miles and some are just tiny sandy coves. Here are the most evocative beaches within easy reach of the town of Sant'Antioco, each of them combining all the features that make a day at the beach a special experience.

Portixeddu

This is a cove with a sand and pebble beach, set among pale-coloured rocks and abundant vegetation. The Mediterranean scrub has the scent of herbs warmed by the sun, and is interspersed with rare Phoenician junipers and centuries-old dwarf palms. There are no services but there is no shortage of parking.

Maladroxia

The beach has had Blue Flag status since 2019. It is one of the most popular with families thanks to the shallow water and the sandy bed of the cove, and to the presence of kiosks and bathrooms equipped for the disabled. It is lively from morning to night.



Capo Sperone

This beach is on the southernmost tip of the island, and features iridescent blue water and expanses of pink peonies. Looking out to sea, you can make out the shapes of Vacca and Toro, two small islands that are protected areas and home to Eleonora's falcon.

Coacuaddus

The Caribbean colours of the sea and the long beach of white, coarse-grained sand give this place an exotic atmosphere. The beach is divided in two sections by a large rock and is backed by limestone cliffs. It has had Blue Flag status since 2022 and is also a perfect spot for snorkelling. As well as the free beach, there are also kiosks renting sunbeds and umbrellas, and the beach bars by the road are open from breakfast-time till dinner, when you can order fish tapas and listen to music.

Turri

The beach is at the foot of a promontory and overlooked by the ancient Canai Tower; it's only a few dozen metres long and is in the shape of a crescent, sheltered by two high cliffs. It's a mixture of sand and small pebbles, and the water is lovely for snorkelling. You need to go down a steep path to get there, so it's advisable to wear proper shoes.

Cala Sapone

The beach is in the shape of a crescent, with amber-coloured sand and a few thatched parasols. The flat rocks at the sides of the beach are ideal for sunbathing. When you get right to the end of the cliff, it's like standing on the prow of a ship. The sunsets are really beautiful, with the sea and the scattering of little islands tinged with gold.

Cala della Signora

A rocky inlet tinged with white and pink, and with many caves and crannies. It can only be reached on foot and is the perfect spot for a dip.

Cala Lunga

This inlet between high limestone cliffs has emerald green water, and a long beach stretching far inland that rarely becomes crowded. There are no umbrellas but there's a bar kiosk.





Posidonia

Often wrongly referred to as a type of seaweed, Posidonia is an aquatic plant endemic to the Mediterranean, with roots, stems and long ribbon-like leaves. Sometimes, the prevailing winds and currents can cause large quantities of *posidonia oceanica* to be washed up on the island's beaches. However, those who describe a sandy beach covered with this seagrass as "dirty" are very much mistaken.

Just like terrestrial plants, posidonia performs photosynthesis and enriches the sea with oxygen. This is why it is described as the "lung of the Mediterranean", just as the Amazon rain forest is the lung of planet Earth. It has intertwined stems, or rhizomes, and long leaves which can even slow down the motion of the waves, providing a place of shelter for fish and marine invertebrates. Indeed, the posidonia meadows are one of the most important and biodiverse ecosystems in the Mediterranean, with every square metre of meadow producing up to 14-16 litres of oxygen per day. The natural deposits of posidonia on the shore (known as banquettes) actually play a valuable role in protecting the coasts, holding back the sand, and reducing erosion by the waves.

If you want to find out more about this fragile ecosystem, MUMA organises excursions out on the water, for exploring and learning about the ecology of the lagoon. You go out in glass-bottomed canoes to get a better look at the underwater meadows.



Lighthouse trip

Not far from the coast of Tonnara, a little white tower battered by the wind stands on a rocky outcrop. The islet is called **Mangiabarche** (Boat-eater) and the name says it all. It's in the municipality of Calasetta and is one of the most iconic lighthouses in Sardinia. Constructed in 1935 and equipped with a beacon system, it is surrounded by rocky outcrops that have been the cause of many shipwrecks.

"I saw a large rock, surrounded by smaller ones, of which only the tips emerged from the water. Jagged and dangerous. The waves driven by the mistral crashed against the rocks, splashing against the lighthouse that stood at the highest point. It was clear how the rocks got their name: they looked like the teeth of a sea monster." Thus wrote the crime fiction writer Massimo Carlotto, who drew inspiration for his novel *Il Mistero di Mangiabarche* (*The Mangiabarche Mystery*) from his visit to the white village. At sunset, you can go on a kayak excursion towards the lighthouse. The surrounding water is tinged with green and turquoise, making for a perfect photo.



Riding the wave: kitesurfing

The right wind, white crests, and salt on the skin: the top ingredients for riding the waves on a board pulled by a power kite. Kitesurfing is a sport that combines muscle control and incredible excitement. To be able to fly over the water you need good equipment and the advice of experts. There are schools on the island that have all the latest gear, and instructors to teach you the necessary skills. As well as kitesurfing, they also give lessons in windsurfing, surfing and wing foil.

Cycling

It's about balancing use of the brakes with the desire for freedom. Whether you're on a tandem or a top-brand bike, cycling is now the quiet, sustainable choice for those who like to travel slowly. There are some who do it an extreme way, and others who believe in simply taking your time. As Ernest Hemingway wrote: "It is by riding a bicycle that you learn the contours of a country best, since you have to sweat up the hills and coast down them."

There are many cycle paths on the island of Sant'Antioco. They take you round the island, into the scrub, or across the sunny plains. You can, for example, go on a guided cycle ride that takes you on a complete circuit of the island. You start from Sant'Antioco, pass the ponds where flamingos can be seen at certain times of the year, then cross the beaches of Is Pruinis and Su Forru a Macchina, where you can see the remains of an old lime kiln, and continue towards the coves of Su Portixeddu and Su Portixeddu Accuau. From here, the route continues to Maladroxia, and to the plain of Canai to enjoy a look at Cala Sapone and Cala Lunga, on the border between the municipalities of Calasetta and Sant'Antioco. You reach the municipality of Calasetta along an uphill road, passing the cliff with a view of the sea and the Nido dei Passeri and then the Mangiabarche lighthouse. You continue to the Playa Grande tuna fishery and the Savoy Tower.

On the next section, you get a scenic view of Cussorgia with the Cirdu pond, and then one last push takes you back to the Cristoforo Colombo promenade. The entire circuit is about 40 kilometres long, and can be done in 5 hours.





THE ISLAND ON A PLATE (AND IN A GLASS)

Colours, aromas and simple flavours: the island's cuisine has been enriched over time by influences and ideas from different Mediterranean cultures, and is a fusion of techniques that bring out the best in the local products. While the inland areas concentrate more on meat and cheese, on the coast, the focus is on the harvest of the sea, and a new spirit of innovation is combining this produce with the creative approach of contemporary cuisine.

This new trend is embodied in **Achille Pinna** of Sant'Antioco, one of the most renowned chefs in Sardinia. Although he has worked in the kitchens of half the world, he has strong links to the sea and the land where he was born.

His dishes have the simple, immediate flavours of Sardinian cuisine combined with the influences of the many countries that he's visited.

His subtle creations bring out the best in produce such as tuna, without any compromises. Of course, this is the Bluefin or Red Tuna, also known as the Running Tuna because it is caught during its journey towards its breeding ground.

The **tuna** leave Newfoundland, pass through the Straits of Gibraltar and enter the Mediterranean to get to the ideal spot for laying their eggs. It is during this period when the males and females are ready for fertilisation that the tuna flesh has its best consistency.



The workshops of taste

The cooking and processing of this fish is part of life for the people of Sant'Antioco, as well as Carloforte and Portoscuso. They do not discard any part of the tuna, they cook the heart, the stomach, the "lattume" (male gonads) and "buzzonaglia" (dark meat by the spine), in addition to the prized parts such as the belly. The fish is expertly processed, entirely by hand, and preserved in olive oil and salt according to the ancient Phoenician recipe.

In the workshops of local businesses, tuna and mullet "bottarga" (roe) is prepared for sale in vacuum packs or in powdered form, and bluefin and yellowfin tuna (as well as Mediterranean anchovies) are packaged in jars or cans. These are speciality products, as are the island's craft-made liqueurs, that embody the aromas of Sardinia, using ingredients that are gathered and processed according to season: from **myrtle** liqueur aged in barriques, to those made from lemons or prickly pears. Other local products are also packaged in jars, in line with the rhythm of the seasons.

These jams, creams, sauces and preserves in oil are all quality artisan products, as fine as the **sea salt** that results from a combination of three elements: sea, sun and wind. This salt is harvested by the salt workers, the farmers of the sea, in the Sant'Antioco salt pans, and has irregular grains and an intense taste. It is goes well with fish, and is excellent ground raw on vegetables and salads, or used for preserving items in salt.

The art of brewing

Don't leave Sant'Antioco without visiting **Rubiu**, a craft brewery and pub just outside the centre. This is where excellent beers are made, and also sold in bottles in some of the island's wine bars. The brewery is winning over enthusiasts and critics from the sector for the quality of its products and its research efforts, winning plaudits for such experiments as its *Pane Liquido* beer.



It's a blonde beer with a low alcohol content, produced with the use of leftover "civraxiu" bread, which is typical of the area and eaten by farmers during their work in the fields. This beer with its toasted aroma and honeyed notes of cereal has been designed to eliminate food waste and create a circular economy. It's an innovative and sustainable project.



Bread with bread

There's bread that is made for the festival, and there's bread eaten every day: it can be circular or triangular, crumbly, with a crust or with lots of crumbs. There are more than a thousand types of bread in Sardinia, symbols of many local identities the people have developed over time. Baking was a job for women, the practitioners of an art that was necessary for survival. Indeed, the tools required for baking were also an important part of the bridal trousseau. The different types of bread have distinctive textures, shapes and forms of decoration, which vary according to where they are made. In the north of the island, thin soft bread in a circular form is more common, while in the centre, you'll find crunchy, crumbly

breads such as carasau and pistocu. Meanwhile, in the south, they bake thicker loaves such as modizzosu and civraxiu, as well as the coccoi of Sant'Antioco. Coccoi is the typical feast-day bread, designed to propitiate nature, the gods and the saints. Painstakingly made from hard dough, this elaborate bread is engraved with crowns and floral decorations. You can find it all year round in its less intricate forms, beautifully hand-crafted and baked in local ovens. A typical bread from Sulcis Iglesiente is called "pani cun tamatiga", and made from semolina and durum wheat flour. It's baked in a wood oven and then filled with ripe tomatoes, extra virgin olive oil, fresh basil and garlic.

Carignano del Sulcis: the wine of the sea and the wind

Raised on the dunes and resistant to phylloxera, Carignano del Sulcis is an ancient, sturdy vine variety that thrives on sandy soils, whipped all year round by strong, salty mistral winds. It is one of the few ungrafted varieties that can withstand both phylloxera and salty conditions, and is grown in the traditional bush form. The rich wine has an extraordinary flavour with an almost iodised finish that goes well with local cuisine, and was granted DOC status in 1977. It is one of the most interesting Sardinian reds; it has a ruby colour that is reminiscent of the Saint's robe and complex aromas that vary from blackberry to blueberry to vanilla and liquorice, with distinctive notes of myrtle and herbal hints of Mediterranean scrub. One of the best representatives of this terroir, it is a wine to be drunk slowly

at table or tasted in a cellar. At the Sardus Pater winery, for example. This is a Sant'Antioco cooperative that brings together about 200 growers with a production of about 600 thousand bottles a year. Like other enterprises in the area, it organises vineyard tours and tastings. Wine-making was probably introduced onto the island by the Phoenicians in around the 9th century BC. And so, in addition to production, the aim of these wineries is to promote this wine-growing heritage, preserving it for generations to come.



TRAVEL NOTES

Accommodation

Hotel Solki

The Hotel is between the old centre and the promenade and has twenty-two bright rooms decorated in pastel shades. It offers two free car parks and an excellent buffet breakfast. Attentive service.

Piazzale Sandro Pertini, Sant'Antioco
0781 800521 | hotelsolki.it

Hotel Moderno

The first hotel to open in Sant'Antioco in 1955, and still run by the Pinna family whose aim is to offer good hospitality. The hotel's Da Achille restaurant is headed by chef Achille Pinna. Via Nazionale 82, Sant'Antioco | 0781 831005 hotel-moderno-sant-antioco.it

MUMA Hostel

A colourful, welcoming hostel on the Sant'Antioco lagoon. There are also double rooms with private bathrooms, a coffee corner for breakfast, and the adjacent Museum of the Sea and Shipwrights.

Lungomare Cristoforo Colombo 25,
Sant'Antioco | 0781 840070 | mumahostel.it

The B&Bio Trail

It's in the old centre, not far from the cathedral, and has three rooms and a lovely garden where you can have breakfast or read a book. The house has recently been restored in a sustainable way.

Via Petrarca 40/1, Sant'Antioco | 345 4489013 ilsentierob-bio.com

Il Nido

Three well-kept, spacious rooms in the city centre. Breakfasts served in a room with wooden beams. There's also a terrace where you can enjoy the breeze from the sea.

Via Nazionale 110, Sant'Antioco | 349 7301923 ilnidobeb.com

Domo Mediterranea

Rooms for rent, decorated in shades of white and cream and with traditional Sardinian touches in the furnishings. The apartment is in a quiet street and looks onto a garden.

Via Donizzetti 43, Sant'Antioco | 347 9275569

Il Melangolo

It's just ten minutes from Maladroxia beach. Each room has a different colour scheme and its own style of furnishings, simple and well-maintained. The day begins with freshly baked pastries and croissants.

Via Nazionale 9, Sant'Antioco | 327 9352767 bbilmelangolo.com

Tenuta Blancamar

This mid-19th-century stone house has a genuine and secluded atmosphere. The interior is in the style of a country house. For those who love nature and the scent of Mediterranean scrub.

Località Piana di Canai | 349 8107062 blancamar.it

Sa Ruscitta

This farm holiday centre is among the hills on the east coast of the island, and offers charming rooms and good food. Everything is genuine, from the vegetable patties to the fried culurgiones (stuffed pasta).

Loc. Cannai | 328 7615002 | saruscitta.it

Camping Tonnara

The site has been upgraded in a sustainable way and offers pitches for tents and caravans, bungalows, a restaurant and a wooden beach bar facing the sea. The sunsets are epic.

Località Cala Sapone | 348 1748503 campingtonnara.it

Glamping Erbe Matte

There are two options with sea views, both sited on a hill covered in Mediterranean scrub: the Capo Sperone B&B in a Mediterranean villa, or luxury camping in geodesic domes and safari-style tents.

Località Strada Vicinale | 348 3182981 agriturismoerbematte.com; bebsemaforocaposperone.it

Il Lentischio

Ideal for those looking for a holiday close to the sea at Cala Lunga. There are four rooms with private bathroom, terraces, and a garden filled of the scent of helichrysum.

Località Cala Lunga | 349 4073067 illentischio.it

Isola dei Mori

A group of white-painted, well furnished holiday homes in varying sizes. They overlook the bay of Cala Sapone. They are comfortable and private, with parking spaces and lots of greenery all around.

Località Cala Sapone | 345 7717855
isolateimori.it

Living Sant'Antioco

The focus is on stylish hospitality, with holiday homes in the centre of the village, and activities and guided tours of the island, ranging from culture to sport.

Sant'Antioco | 379 1965726
livingsantantioco.it

Restaurants



Zefiro

Fish dishes that vary according to the catch of the day, and meat from animals raised outdoors. It's just a few hundred metres from the archaeological park, and has a beautiful terrace overlooking the lagoon.

Via Giosuè Carducci 15, Sant'Antioco
0781 828014 | ristorantezefiro.it

Da Zia Pinuccia

The restaurant is in a 19th-century house with an internal courtyard, and uses traditional recipes handed down by the women in the family. It feels just like home. By reservation only.

Via Palestro 22, Sant'Antioco | 349 3262045
homerenestauranthotel.com

Renzo & Rita

The restaurant has served typical Sant'Antioco dishes over the course of three generations. It also makes delicious pizzas in a wood oven. Above the restaurant, there are well-furnished apartments available to rent.

Via Nazionale 44, Sant'Antioco | 347 7128566
renzoerita.com

I due fratelli

It's been run by a family of fishermen for generations, with fresh fish delivered to the kitchen every day. Dishes include octopus soup with olives, and stewed capon. Advance booking advisable.

Lungomare Cristoforo Colombo 72,
Sant'Antioco | 366 8397107
ittitourismoiduefratelli.com

Stema Beef

Urban and contemporary style. Fine meat prepared traditionally but with a creative touch. Char-grilled to respect the flavour.

Lungomare Cristoforo Colombo 86,
Sant'Antioco | 338 8703321 | stemabeef.com

Rubiu Brew Pub

Gourmet brewery and pizzeria. Special flours and toppings using local products. Unfiltered craft beers: completely genuine, like the place where they're made.

Via Bologna 25, Sant'Antioco | 346 7234605
rubiubirra.it

Sa Mesa

Trattoria offering a range of dishes made to local recipes. Meat cooked on the grill. Good pizzas.

Via Trieste 19, Sant'Antioco | 348 3297200

Ca' Sarda

Simple interior, grilled meats, salami and cheese platters: all in line with the genuine local tradition.

Lungomare Amerigo Vespucci 37,
Sant'Antioco | 347 4986200

Bocadillos

Selection of tasty sandwiches and colourful bruschetta, but also ham and salami platters and hamburgers. In addition to the inside room, there's also outside seating in the Public Gardens. Also ideal for an aperitif.

Lungomare Amerigo Vespucci 26,
Sant'Antioco | 340 2681126 | bocadillos.it



TRAVEL NOTES

Del Passeggero

In business for over fifty years, offering dishes cooked with carefully selected ingredients. Attractive interior with orange motifs and mosaic walls.

Lungomare Amerigo Vespucci 52,
Sant'Antioco | 348 7240508

Il Rifugio

Stone walls, beers, and typical local products. Selection of grilled dishes, mixed salami and cheese platters, and pinsa bread filled with local products.

Via Garibaldi 87, Sant'Antioco | 376 0485668

La Luna nel Pozzo

Menu with a selection of dishes cooked to Sardinian recipes. Specialities include fresh pasta, spit pork, grilled meat and fish: a real taste of tradition.

Località Fontana Canai | 379 2713452

Shopping



Caterina Espa

Filigree and designer jewellery: Caterina Espa's shop and atelier offers a selection of finely crafted items.

Via Regina Margherita 53, Sant'Antioco
347 1841620

Terra mia

Giuseppe Pezzer's workshop and atelier specialises in masks and ceramic sculptures, taking a new look at these symbols of Sardinia. Via Regina Margherita 137, Sant'Antioco
348 6437564

Il Vecchio Pescatore

Delicious produce from the sea, with excellent bottarga processed by hand. Fresh fish available every day.

Via Regina Margherita 133, Sant'Antioco
349 5889041

Calabò

The oldest bakery in Sant'Antioco, offering Sardinian breads, typical cakes and pasties, and light dishes for lunch or a snack. High quality, carefully selected flours.

Corso Vittorio Emanuele 138, Sant'Antioco
0781 83014 | panificicalabro.it



Su Triaxu e Sa Terralia

Shop and cultural association, presenting the best of Sardinian artistic craftsmanship. Rotating exhibitions of works by contemporary artists in the room next to the shop.

Corso Vittorio Emanuele 126, Sant'Antioco
349 3262045

Edicola Libreria Uras

Opened in 1988, the shop sells local, national and foreign newspapers, magazines, and fiction and non-fiction books. It is also a pick-up point for the main couriers.

Corso Vittorio Emanuele 93, Sant'Antioco
328 7152449

Carmen

Fabrics of all kinds, including those associated with local folklore. There are also shawls, embroidered kerchiefs, and mantillas. Swimming costumes, beach robes and bags.

Corso Vittorio Emanuele 101, Sant'Antioco
347 8823802

L'Officina dello Stile

Men's and women's clothing in industrial and vintage styles. The interior furnishings make use of recycled materials.

Piazza Italia 43, Sant'Antioco | 342 0819040

Emporio Ventura

A long-established business selling Sardinian crafts, souvenirs, typical local jewellery, household goods and furnishings.

Piazza Italia 36, Sant'Antioco | 0781 435813

Piccole Canaglie

Clothing for children and teenagers aged 0 to 16, colourful and fun.

Via Roma 23, Sant'Antioco | 347 6593669



Sardus Pater

Winery specialising in the production of red wines made from indigenous grape varieties, in particular Carignano del Sulcis DOC. They also organise guided tours of the vineyards and production area with tastings.

Via della Rinascita 46, Sant'Antioco
0781 83937 | cantinesarduspater.it

Binu Forti

Family-run enterprise producing grapes for Carignano DOC wine. This grape variety is grown on ungrafted vines and as "alberello latino" bushes. The proprietors organise visits to the vineyard and food and wine evenings.

Località Sa Scrocchitta | 370 1016996



Experiences with guides

Sirena Sardinia Diving School

Certified diving centre, open all year round. They arrange technical diving and dives for the disabled, courses at every level and guided snorkelling trips.

Via Nazionale 176/C, Sant'Antioco
389 9173185 | sirenasardinia.com

Blu Wave

Dinghy excursions to explore the islands of Sant'Antioco and San Pietro. Trips are either half-day or 8 hours, and stop off at several beaches.

Lungomare Caduti di Nassirya, Sant'Antioco
340 0507375 | bluwavesardegna.it

I Due Fratelli - Fishing Tourism

Spend a day aboard a fishing boat and learn the importance of fishing to the island. Explore the waters of the Gulf of Palmas Porticciolo Turistico, Sant'Antioco | 328 2855195 | ittiturismoiduefratelli.com

Nuova Antonina - Fishing Tourism

You set sail from the marina for a fishing trip that ends with a lunch prepared from the morning's catch.

Sant'Antioco Marina Turistico | Sant'Antioco | 329 9612195 | nuovantonina.it

Centro Nautico Asd Marinai D'Italia

School offering lessons in sailing, canoeing and SUP, but also kayaking and sailing trips around the lagoon and the Gulf of Palmas. Località Ponti | 328 8485733

Archeotur

Expert-led visits to the archaeological sites around Sant'Antioco. They also organise workshops for adults and children. Via Ugo Foscolo 4, Sant'Antioco | 389 0505107 archeotur.it

Ziru Tour

Kayaking trips from sunrise to sunset. Open all year round, also for e-bike excursions and hikes. They offer guided tours, and food and wine tours by minivan.

SS 126, chilometro 1, Sant'Antioco
349 6431706 | zirutour.com

Carolina Ranch

Guided excursions on American horses, following scenic trails to explore the island, including areas with nuraghi and archaeological sites. The ranch also organises special astronomy evenings.

Località Cala Sapone 11 | 348 6553944 carolinaranch.it

Bike Island

Guided and themed cycling excursions, following cycle paths and dirt roads, coastal trails and inland tracks. Fun and exciting.

Via Roma 47, Sant'Antioco | 379 1380133 santantiocobikeisland.it

Sardinia Adventure

Off-road excursions in 4x4s with aperitifs at sunset and spin and bass fishing. The company follows the practice of catch and release fishing, to help protect the environment.

CORSO Vittorio Emanuele 108, Sant'Antioco
392 5680236 | sardiniadventure.it

Italia Nostra

Visits and cultural events at Torre Canai. The permanent exhibition focuses on the natural and cultural aspects of the coastal towers in the south of the island.

Località Turri, Torre Canai | 340 7651267

TRAVEL NOTES

Operators providing Tours, Accommodation and Experiences

Association of tourist services, accommodation and experiences on the Island of Sant'Antioco.
Loc. Cannai Medau is Basciu | 0781 1836012
lovesantantioco.it

Services



Bar Arcobaleno

Breakfasts, lunches and aperitifs with musical entertainment.
Piazza Ferralasco 30, Sant'Antioco
349 1842052

Bar Centrale

Breakfasts, coffee shop and artisan gelateria.
Pizzas baked in a wood oven in the evening, also to take out.
Corso Vittorio Emanuele 85, Sant'Antioco
0781 83592

Is Solus Bistrot

Dishes based on local products, available from breakfast to dinner.
Viale Trieste 15, Sant'Antioco | 379 1501762

Santiago

Stop by early in the morning for fresh pastries and cakes. In the evening, aperitifs and platters with own choice of Sardinian salamis and hams, plus a good selection of wines.
Piazza Ferralasco e Piazza Italia | 340 7991001

Coconut

Cocktail bar and gelateria, also offering savoury Romagna piadina and platters of Sardinian salami and ham. Aperitifs and live music.
Corso Vittorio Emanuele 108, Sant'Antioco
351 7736819

Profumo di Caffè

Bar, tobacconist and artisan gelateria. There's a small exhibition of Sardinian costumes on the premises.
Via Roma 27, Sant'Antioco | 349 1564800

Tabaccheria del Corso

Tobacconist and self-service shop, with games, Sardinian crafts and leather goods.
Corso Vittorio Emanuele 64, Sant'Antioco
0781 801158

L'arte della barberia

A smart, professional barber's shop and grooming service.
Piazza Repubblica 11, Sant'Antioco
342 5673546

Euromoto

Rental of cars, motorcycles and bikes.
Via Nazionale 57, Sant'Antioco | 347 8803875
euromoto.info

Noleggio Uras Marco

Car, scooter and bike rental.
Via Garibaldi 171, Sant'Antioco | 349 6248839

Marina Lido Sant'Antioco

Rental of dinghies, jet skis, touring bikes and canoes.
Lungomare Cristoforo Colombo 1, Sant'Antioco
389 08904800 | marinalidosantantioco.it

Tutto Santantioco

Agency specialising in tourism services: from renting a house to booking hotels and experiences on the island.
Viale Trento 72 | 393 2813406
tuttosantantioco.com

Penelope

Two bathing stations with rental of sunbeds and beach umbrellas, canoes, SUPs and berths. They also include beach bars with music and events.
Coacuaddus and Maladroxia beaches
345 5838144



Texts by:

SILVIA UGOLOTTI

Travel Writer

Describing the world is her profession. She has been doing this for years, writing articles and reports for major Italian magazines. She's been on many sorts of journey, travelling from the north to the south of the world and engaging with different cultures and traditions. She's met artists, chefs, designers, entrepreneurs and writers, and put their stories down on paper. In her work for companies, she creates publishing and storytelling projects, travel books and corporate magazines, using the services of professional photographers, graphic designers and web designers. She's worked with Ryanair, Trentino Marketing, Parma Capital of Culture, Destination Emilia and the Po River Basin Authority.

Her travel reports have appeared in Dove, Lonely Planet Italia, Traveller, Marco Polo, Qui Touring, Donna Moderna, Grazia, Io Donna, Style, and Panorama. And before that in Gente Viaggi, I Viaggi del Sole, Weekend e Viaggi, Flair.

In 2018, she won the first ADUTEI (Association of Official Delegates of Foreign Tourism in Italy) press award in the periodical category for her report: "Sol Levante Attimi di Puro Zen" (Rising Sun, Moments of Pure Zen), published in Dove magazine.

She wrote "L'Inquietudine delle Isole. Piccole fughe tra atolli e arcipelaghi" (The restlessness of the islands. Small escapes among atolls and archipelagos)

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Graphic design:
Dado srl - Cagliari

Translations:
Dema Solutions s.r.l.

Photos by:
Comune di Sant'Antioco
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Roberto Baroncini
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Shutterstock
Silvia Ugolotti

Printed by:
Grafiche Ghiani s.r.l.



Getting there

Cagliari airport is 80 kilometres from Sant'Antioco. It has flights to national and international destinations (www.sogaer.it).

You can rent a car at the airport.

By ferry: the main shipping companies are Tirrenia, Moby, Sardinia Ferries and Grimaldi, with ferries to Cagliari, but also to Olbia, Porto Torres, Arbatax, and Golfo Aranci.

It's convenient to get to, and equally convenient to live in.



Getting around and what to pack

The best way to get around the island is by car or motorbike, giving you access to all the beaches. You don't need to pack much: some books, a sarong, a pair of swimming goggles and a mask and snorkel for gazing at the seabed. The island lifestyle is relaxed and informal.



The surrounding area

Calasetta

It's a white-painted village sloping down a hill towards the harbour. The first inhabitants arrived from Tunis and Algiers in 1770, and you feel as if you're in a North African town as you walk around, with the small, white houses, the narrow streets and the Moorish dome of the church. The symbol of the village is the watchtower; built of volcanic stone blocks, it stands up on a rock and looms above the houses. Immediately below the tower is the MAC Museum of Contemporary Art (www.fondazionemacc.it), a white cube based in the town's former slaughterhouse. The museum's collection covers the artistic trends that developed in Europe between 1960 and 1970: from Sonia Delaunay and Yves Popet to Italian artists such as Lucio Fontana and Luigi Veronesi. Calasetta may seem sleepy during the day but comes alive in the evening around Piazza Belly and the pedestrianised Via Roma, with a string of clubs, small boutiques and craft shops.



For info:

welcometosantantioco.it

visitsantantioco.info

parcostoricoarcheologicosantantioco.it

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